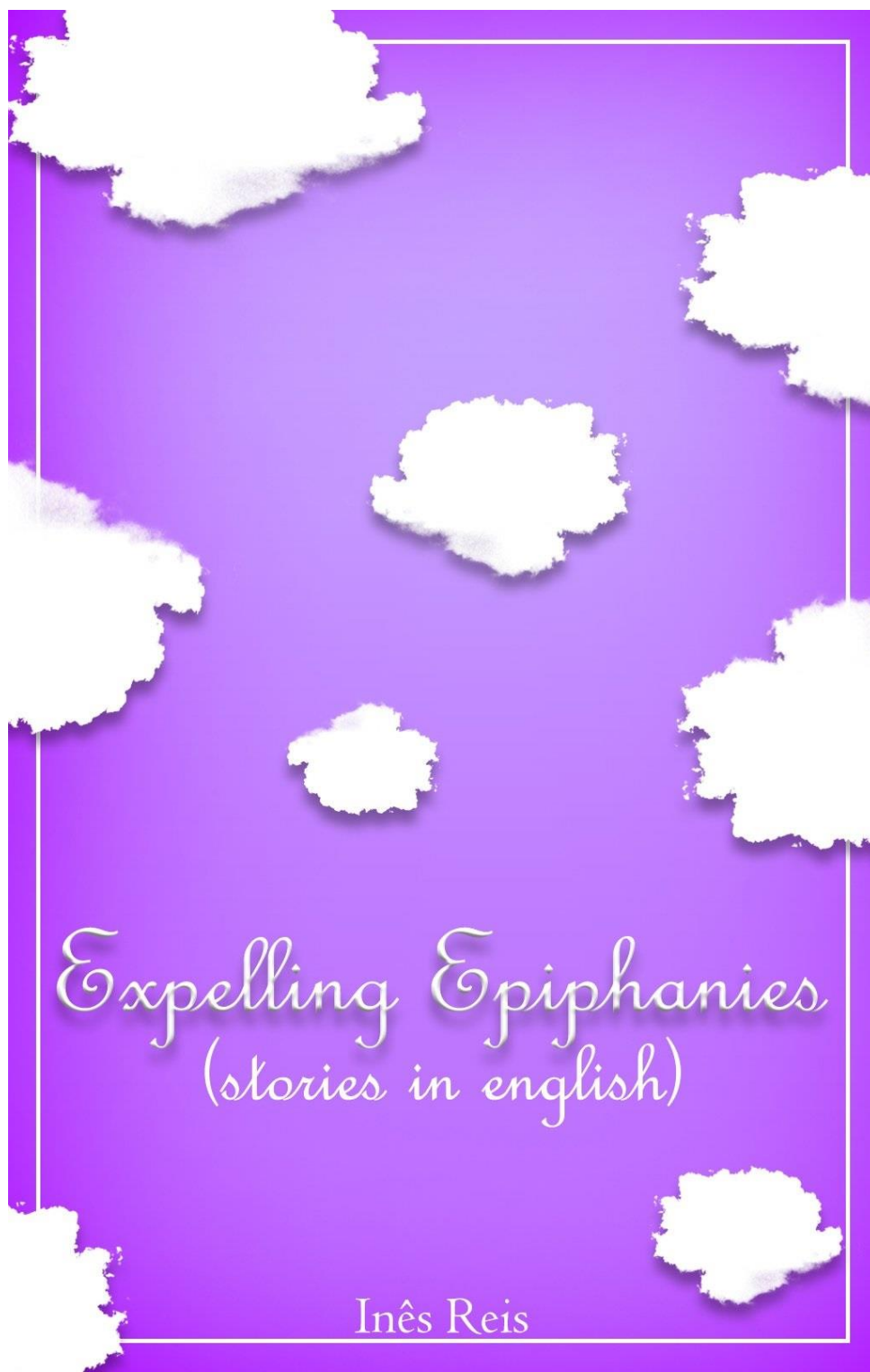


Expelling Epiphanies by Inês Reis

Cover by Diego B. Monti



English Writing

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Film Review of Bicho de Sete Cabeças // Brainstorm

Recommended by a friend, the movie was based on the autobiographical book *Canto dos Malditos* ("Corner of the Cursed"- hopefully well translated) by Austregésilo Carrano Bueno.

This is/was a real and raw story lived by a young man who at the age of only 17, saw his life suffering an imaginable turn when his father forced him to be sent to a psychiatric institution when a marijuana cigarette was found among his belongings. A turn that leaves us thinking: are things really as they are? Are we deeply informed about what happens when life changing decisions are made? Are we willing to accept the consequences?

Austregésilo Carrano Bueno was a national representative of users in the psychiatric reform of Brazil, having received on May 28th of 2003, a tribute by the former Brazil president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, for his fight and commitment in the construction of the national network of substitutive works to psychiatric hospitals in Brazil (translated from: <https://oqlobo.globo.com/cultura/morre-aos-51-anos-austregesilo-carrano-bueno-escritor-que-inspirou-bicho-de-sete-cabecas-3615829>). He died at the age of 51, in 2008.

Neto (interpreted by the international Brazilian actor Rodrigo Santoro), was an adolescent leaving a normal life in the streets of Brazil.

The relationship with his father was, in my opinion, one of core aspects (if not the most important) the movie allows us to see a negative gradation from the beginning to the end. They had their disagreements, a situation quite normal for a teen. However, Neto smoked marijuana, something he would never tell to his parents, and something he was never expecting them to know. So when his father innocently grabs his jacket dropped on the floor and sees the cigarette, that would be the last drop. Something had to be done. Neto would have to suffer consequences.

From this point to the end, the movie focuses on what it was meant to show: what happens behind closed doors.

Psychiatric institutions should be a place where people would be helped with in this case, with their addictions, with their psychological states and forwardly, with their reintegration to themselves, to who they "goodly" were. The History of psychiatric institutions goes back to the medieval era, and even before, having arisen as a threat to the order and social peace. People were considered "mad" or "crazy" without an understanding of the real situation, and many of them were kept in convents to be "treated" (many torture techniques were used in order to keep the patients calm, for example through the electrical shock- situation addressed in the movie-, or the use of straitjackets). After the 19th century, there was an "upgrade" to this facilities and it is possible to say they gain a certain statute, even though many of them kept unregulated and unclear, as a way of isolating the individual rather than treating him as we see on the movie.

So getting back to the review, strong scenes were used to demonstrate the poor, cruel and inhumane conditions this "hospitals" kept their patients in. Along the movie, Neto tries to explain to his family and especially to his father (who put him there), what was happening and how he desperately needed to get out of there because he knew the doctors didn't care. No one cared. In fact, he even hadn't been examined. The answer? It was the corruption who kept these institutions going. Money kept them going. A situation confessed by the doctor itself and passed by the ears of Neto's father without any sense of critic. No one listened to the young man situation, so it only got worse when to keep him calm, electric shocks were given. And he became numb. Neto at that moment was gone. Instead of being helped, the institution was contributing to a growing alienation and madness.

Considered then more relaxed and "better" he returned home in an attempt to reintegrate him back into the society, but right after he returned to another hospital. This was his life from there on. Due to his behavioural issues, always without any attempt of examination or even a simple talk, he was continuously sent to mental hospitals.

That young and free teenager would never come back. So in the bottom of desperate, he sets his own cell on fire as a way of setting himself free from that life. However, the guards were alerted and he managed to survive. After that, his father took him out but their relationship was over. A long time ago.

After watching the movie, I think it's also possible to analyse the subjects around Neto and how the lack of information was the engine that triggered all the plot. His mother was a

woman passive in life, she seemed to not care, was submissive and accepted the solutions provided. His sister, lived outside the reality which can be supposed when confronted by Neto (who said that he had to get out of the hospital), replies: "But the garden is pretty". And then, his father who faithfully believed in a corrupted system, judged and rejected his son as a generalized preconception of what kind of person he was being associated with drugs and, most importantly, didn't give his son a chance to explain.

I think that the most important factor missing in this traumatic story was the ability to Listen. Adolescence is a confusing time where people are finding their selves. There is a huge social pressure to correspond to the ideals of what we should be or not to be, of what we should do or not to do. Without patience, a bit of understanding and help, it is a phase that can be complicated to get through. And that was what happened to Neto.

In regards to the movie, there are two symbols worth to be noticed: a cap that is given by an old veteran man in the institution, to Neto with the objective of protecting him from the cold. But the real message of this object is to reinforce the need to stay sane. To not dive in that decadent life. To stay strong. To protect his mind from that maddening reality. The second was a letter Neto wrote to his father. This symbol represented the only time his father gave him attention to what he had to say, the only time he listened to his son. The problem, however, was that it was too late now.

At the end of the movie before the credits, we get to know that in 2001 (the year the movie was released), 70 thousand people were kept in mental institutions in Brazil. A scary reality that leaves us thinking, that all of that didn't have to happen if only an opportunity was given, the system was made to take care of the patients and giving them a chance to have a future reintegration into the society, and if there was enough information of what it's done inside this asylum institutions. Transparency was missing. A need to change was missing. This fact reinforces the need to never forget the importance of people as individuals and stimulates an implantation of a Psychiatric Reform that never stops improving.

In the final, the movie justifies the original Portuguese-Brazilian title "Bicho de Sete Cabeças" (1), through a song by the Brazilian musician Zeca Baladeiro with the same name, as a critic to this autobiographic story. (You can listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mykdSOJJQxY>)

(1) Portuguese expression used for something simple that can be solved, but due to factors such as a misunderstanding, turns to be a big confusion/disgrace.

Consumerism

TODAY, AUGUST 2ND 2017

Today's day is marked by being the Earth Overshoot Day. We have by now used MORE than the Earth can give us for a whole year. "We use more ecological resources and services than Nature can regenerate through overfishing, overharvesting forests, and emitting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than forests can sequester". After today the continuously amount of consume we make will represent proportionally a bigger debt to our planet and to the future generations. [Learn more at <http://www.overshootday.org/>]

We have been consuming MORE, buying MORE and wasting MORE. 99,9% of the things we buy we do not need. So why do we buy them? We are a CONSUMERIST society and the only thing we care about is us. We always want to have the latest versions of things whether to gain some kind of status, feel good about ourselves by media misleading, peer pressure or to publish the new acquisition with a fake smile on Instagram.

Marketing has something to do with this and in the future, I hope to be able to make my impact in the opposite way: change the compulsiveness idea of being satisfied with things to an education of what really matters. Because the truth is that there are ways to turn the situation around.

Living according to Minimalism is one of them: is to be free of things. To have control of our life and happiness without depending on them at the same time we gain a sense of consciousness. [Read more about it at <http://www.theminimalists.com>]

After today, reflect: do you think it's really worth to continue to live like this?

⚠️ #EARTHOVERSHOOTDAY ⚠️

The Cupcake Killer

This horror story is based on experiences lived by children who were lucky enough to escape from this terrible monster.

We're in the year of 1940 in the Second World War. In a remote place, far, far away from what we can see or think, lives a Jewish baker. He has no family and is isolated from the world. However, he has the dream of ending the war.

To achieve that, he created a weapon to destroy all the mean and cruel people. Since he lived near an abandoned nuclear factory, he had the idea to grab and gather some things to help him in the project. But what he didn't know was that the old things which he had collected were infected by nuclear waste. It was radioactive.

The baker was extremely confident in what he was going to do. But the result was what he didn't expect: he had created a monster. He gave life to a self-thinking cupcake weapon. "This couldn't have happened"- he thought. The baker felt guilty for his horrible creation and decides to destroy it.

The cupcake discovers the baker's plan and to prevent his death, he grabs a knife and chops off the head of his creator. With anger, the cake runs away to the woods.

He walks for days until he finds a town full of children. The horror had arrived.

At the entrance, the cupcake laughed in a creepy way and smiled to the knife he had in his hand. He had work to do. The cake ran through the town and cut off all the children's heads, then hanging them in the trees. No one survived.

The cupcake looked around, smiled and even covered with blood, he wished he had more and more blood.

The true ending of this story was never revealed.

Some people say that the children's parents arrived to the town and hunted the cupcake. Others say that with the blood, the cupcake faded away. But one thing is certain: the cupcake was never found and is suspected that he's still alive, what makes grow even more the mystery and the terror until today.

The World Around Us- Drinking Water from the Sky

Everyday we place our trust in the water we need for our daily routine. We believe that the water used to brush our teeth, take a simple shower and to cook is safe. But can you imagine if that same water in your glass wasn't totally cleaned? If it was contaminated?

New York, known as the city that never sleeps, the big apple or just the city where every dreams come true, it's the most populous city in the United States, with an increasing record established last year of 8, 33 million of people.

Being this an urban area well developed and overpopulated, the edification of the city- which has inspired many film directors to use the endless buildings and the skyscrapers as scenario- had to find a way of carry the water to all its residents. We're talking about water supply systems.

The rooftop water tanks have been part of the drinking water distribution system since the 19th century as buildings grew taller and taller, and this because the pressure exerted by the normal pipes couldn't overcome the force of gravity to upper floors. These tanks can provide water and maintain water pressure. Thus, New York City required that all buildings higher than six stories were equipped with a water tank. Currently it is estimated that 12,000 to 17,000 of them are in use.

As to its construction, despite existing water tanks made of different kinds of materials, wooden ones are preferred because they can be easily transported to rooftops in parts being built on the scene and cost less.

And if you are wondering how do they work, the answer is extremely simple: the water that comes from six giant upstate reservoirs in the Catskill Mountains, passes through treatment plants that ensure the water is clean and safe for drinking (potable) –this waters are regularly tested-, and then travels via underground tunnels and smaller water mains until it arrives to every city neighborhood. When it does, a standard pump placed in the basement of the building lifts the water to the tank and when someone needs to use the water, gravity assures a natural downwards flow and sufficient pressure from the tank.

This "water warehouses", can hold fifty times the amount of a normal backyard in-ground swimming pool which contains about 20 000 to 30 000 gallons- almost five million liters! And it's never empty: when water drops below a certain level, a float valve in the tank sends a signal to the pump and this one will lift the water to the tank refilling it, a mechanism very similar to a toilet.

Practical and helpful the idea of a "water bottle" in the sky seems perfect, but there is a worrying problem: the majority of these rooftop water tanks have not been cleaned or

inspected in years. And it all starts when assuring water quality becomes the responsibility of property owners.

Respecting the city's own survey, sixty percent of the landlords do not certify that their tanks adhere to health regulations. The New York City Health Code requires that owners of buildings equipped with the tanks must take samples to analysis and inspect them, at least annually. Clearly in reality this does not happen, because the owners aren't required to submit proof to the city that cleanings and inspections have been conducted.

Logically this lack of cleaning and maintenance has consequences: they could present a potential health hazard to the million of residents who get their drinking water from them.

Samplings taken by the New York Times (an American daily [newspaper](#)), from water towers at twelve buildings found E.Coli and coliform. Both are bacteria, commonly found in the intestines of animals and humans, and whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. They are used by public health officials to predict the presence of viruses, bacteria and parasites disease-causing. A positive result for either sample means that the water isn't fit for human consumption.

Looking for an expert opinion, The NYT consulted a prestigious doctor and public health microbiologist. Stephen Edberg who studies bacteria found in the environment (also the inventor of the test for bacterial contamination in drinking water), said: "Fecal contamination means that the towers are subject to animal intrusion like birds or even squirrels" alerting to the fact: "if any part of the tank gets contaminated, all of it is contaminated".

There is one particular case related to environmental contamination in water tanks: a man was concerned about its water supply since his tank was eight years old and had never been cleaned. When he opened the tank, he found pigeon droppings. Inside, the water was brown. He complained to his landlord but this one said the tank was fine. He called to the health department but no one answered. Ultimately he drained the tank himself and found layers of muck at the bottom. Then, he tried to clean it with specialized products but couldn't get it all out. This case was only solved when one day he found a pigeon bone in a strainer and it was here that the owner agreed to have the tank professionally cleaned.

Attending to the NYT report, the buildings in the survey were fined. Nevertheless, the health department said it has no plans to expand the enforcement of the laws on water tanks. However it will be continue to consulting the property owners about rooftop water tanks inspections, cleanings and requirements.

(Adapted from The New York Times)

Some people have the lucky to open a simple tap in their homes, such as New Yorkers and the water flows naturally through it, even though its source may not be totally

“transparent” as we know. But in other areas of the world the situation is radically different.

We’re in 2014 and 780 million people still lack access to clean drinking water. Places like Africa and Afghanistan suffer from water scarcity. This problem is becoming one of the most critical issues of mankind.

The good news is that there is a solution capable of saving lives. The Sawyer water filter is being used by many NGOs who help these people. It’s a simple system: *“a bucket with a thin hose attached to a nozzle that can clean million liters of water.”*- citing *The Guardian* (a British daily newspaper).

“This filter is based on the technology used in kidney dialysis machine. Each filter is made up of tiny tubes with pores hundreds of times smaller than the diameter of a human hair. These pores remove deadly bacteria and allow only clean water to pass through for drinking. Water from rivers, ponds, puddles and rainwater can be filtered through the system and safely drunk.”- TG. Therefore is highly efficient.

People who live in this condition frequently drink the almost nonexistent water they find wherever they find. They drink water from the sky.

Curiously, this spring is in action the Water Tank Project, a project that has the aim and the intention of raising awareness about water scarcity as well as water conservation. To achieve that, several artists, notable figures in music and science and local public students will all contribute with their designs to transform 100 water tanks across New York City in pieces of art.

Almost a hopeless problem, efforts are made every single day to ensure our lives and our health. Because we’re not protecting the water, we’re protecting ourselves!

We are water!

11th Grade

-Written by Inês Reis, No. 11

-Discipline: English

-Due date: 11th May 2014 (Sunday)

That House

The house is now just an empty chest of memories. It had gained life when a young couple moved to the Island. Both were ambitious and happy, enjoying the breeze at sunset and observing every gesture of every people in the small town. There was never anything that could separate them. No conflicts, only a peaceful harmony.

One day, they went sailing. The weather was good and a joyful calmness in the air was even possible to taste. It was the perfect day. But the boat never reached to dock. Some say their adventurous spirits made them cross dangerous waters and the worst happened, others say they temporarily left and that someday will come back.

It could have sounded the ideal love story if only this note had not been left: " You can only stay when you truly belong".



(Inspired by a photo I took in Oban Bay, looking at the Isle of Kerrera) April 2017

Teenagers in the 21st Century

When talking about teenagers, the first thoughts coming to our minds are negative: they're wild, irresponsible, immoral and violent. But if we look carefully to their situation, adolescents are just the product of our actual society. Nowadays, teens have to face serious and several daily problems related to the economical crisis, peer pressure or family issues and have almost the obligation of being always connected to the on-line world.

However, there is another side of teenagers which is often forgotten. In the 21st century, teens have an important role: they innovate, change and make the difference in the world. An example is the so many apps they create. Teens also place high value on honesty and hard-work, they're creative and quick-learners and the majority is involved in positive activities like volunteering and international organisations.

It is said that teenagers are naive but the truth is the future couldn't exist without them. It's in their hands.

Free Societies

Freedom of speech is one of the human's basic rights which are protected in the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights. This means that every human being has the right to express themselves through every means of speech.

The freedom of speech constitutes one of the basis of democracy where each one of us participates actively in the decisions made by the politicians. People can practice their right to vote to elect the government, for example. With this, everyone has a voice.

Everyone is a singular individual with their own personality and therefore, a society is said to be free when their citizens are respected according to their own voices.

However, this right still suffers attacks when exercised, such as what happened with the French satiric newspaper Charlie Hebdo whose freedom of speech was condemned by censure (there is no coexistence between these two opposite terms).

Representing an unlimited concept of ideas and opinions, freedom of speech is the only way a society can progress because if it did not exist, free societies would not exist as well.

Gravity

It was the light that held you from drowning. At the edge, you felt already immersed.

Shining, she divided you into two halves. One to remind you who you were. Other to show you your new path.

The light had been so strong that smoothly, managed to control Gravity.

"You won't fall" she said. You heartily listen.

Today you still slip sometimes, however, you had never thought of surrender again.

We

For a long time, it was thought that the human being was the result of a determinant code inscribed in the millions of microscopic cells of the organisms, but the times changed, as well as the mentalities and theories.

The brain, present in animal species, has specialized functions that are unique to Man. As far as he is concerned, although we all belong (without exception) to the "building" of the human species, we do not live all in the same apartment. Each one of us is born with a brain that will become with the time, individualized and therefore different from all the others. This means that each person will be the architecture of their "mental city" and will draw their map, just like their fingerprint. Thus, the process of cerebral individualization is essential in the construction of the Man as an individual.

We are biological beings inserted in a society and a culture and these components are not independent, quite the opposite, they interrelate. The well-known phrase "We were not born human, we became human", can be verified here.

The Man is like a piece of clay waiting to be shaped or a "kit" to be assembled. In the intrauterine environment, the first interactions of the still individual embryo, begin with the environment. Later, he will be taught by the society and marked by the culture in which it's inserted. And so it will become a bio-socio-cultural being until the end of life, a status gained thanks to the slowness of the brain development.

It is known today that the brain and the human body itself need about two decades to complete its development and that the phases of childhood and adolescence will be very long periods to provide it with the necessary time. This 'slowness', however, is beneficial, because it enables the brain to adapt to a certain context and its resulting outcome. This is one of the characteristics of neoteny (maintenance of characteristics and young traces for a long time).

Another characteristic that makes the human being an individual is the fact of being born unfinished and premature. This immaturity or biological prematurity will aid in its construction. Only with 25%

of its development, the remaining 75% will be a product of its ability to adapt and interact with the environment. This incompleteness is something that constitutes a great advantage, if not the greater, the capacity of learning.

By contrast with other animal species, Man has an open genetic program, allowing its modification when interacting with external factors, that is, with the environment, being that it isn't what we have inscribed in the genes that make us humans, but rather what we do in the middle with what was transmitted to us hereditarily. This genetic opening is only possible due to the biological immaturity of the human being.

We could have been born with claws to hunt or fins to swim, but we would be limited due to this great specialization, since in another context that not destined, we would not be able to write nor to walk, for example. We are "open" to the world and we learn. We are flexible and versatile, rather than determined to be in a certain fixed and immutable way, in which case we would lose our ability to adapt and learn.

It is said that "Man is a creature of habits" and is well said, because if we want to be in a certain way, we can become as such, with no barriers to knowledge, change and adaptation. For this, another factor, the cerebral self-organization, contributes: this organ modifies itself according to the mode of response to stimuli of the environment. It strengthens the stronger, more used and requested bonds, cutting and destroying the unnecessary ones. In this way, it provides a great level of efficacy and specialization to the individual with respect to a certain activity, for example, and reduces the waste of neurons that would work without purpose, thus having a great autonomy.

It also reveals its plasticity, being a "brain map" continuously altered depending on the experiences lived by the individual. This is an aspect that greatly favors the possibility of the human learning. It should also be noted that the human being can be programmed and/or deprogrammed. For example, a person who is dependent on drugs or alcohol can learn to leave this bad habit, taking help preferably because it is a difficult process.

Adjacent to all these concepts, there is the epigenetic theory also called constructive theory, which says: we construct ourselves, the interaction with the environment being an action on the genes themselves. We are influenced by the environment and we are not destined to fulfil our genes alone.

There is then no brain equal to the other, not even in homozygous twins, since that from our birth to our physical death, we are creating a history influenced by innumerable stimuli. Our own story. We are a carton of cards that is only completed when we die until then we fill it with our experiences and personal experiences that only Life can provide. And the best is that there is no other like this!

(Text written for Psychology in the 12th grade; 18years; 19.5/20)

I tried to translate the best I could, sorry for any mistakes.