

that allow their children to be a part of the program. The conflict between the traditional Italian society and the PCI is best highlighted when the PCI activist and Pachiochia argue outside of the train. Both women hold sway over the crowd even though they have competing ideologies.

The movie shows the impact of women in the Italian political movements, domestic industries, and as homemakers. War serves as the catalyst for different political thoughts and action. The resilience of the Italian people during the post war era reveals necessity of change in the face of uncertainty.

Alberto Cordova

RaMell Ross, director. *Nickel Boys*. Plan B Entertainment, 2024.

Nickel Boys, directed by RaMell Ross and written by Ross and Joslyn Barnes, is primarily set at the peak of the Jim Crow era in the 1960s in Tallahassee, Florida. The story follows the lives of two black teenagers, Elwood Curtis (Ethan Herisse) and Turner (Brandon Wilson), who befriend one another after meeting at the Nickel Academy, a segregated reformatory run by a white man addressed as Spencer (Hamish Linklater). The academy turns out to be a horrific school where boys are mentally, physically, and sexually abused, taken advantage of for labor, and even killed. Even though much of it is not explicitly shown on camera, it is implied through scenes of students' screams being heard behind closed doors. Further, there is a scene where Elwood is taken to the school hospital after being reprimanded for being involved in a fight after defending one of his own from a possible sexual assault. Evidence of abuse is further portrayed by cut-away shots from official investigative photos, where objects like rusted buttons and belt buckles are discovered interred after authorities perform a thorough investigation of the academy's grounds. These objects are remnants of bodies that were discovered in unmarked graves to cover the school's crimes.

The film is an adaptation of a novel by the same name, which is based on the Dozier School, a real-life reform school for young men. Nearly 100 boys died between 1900 and 1973 at Dozier, some

of them from gunshot wounds or blunt force trauma. Stories of the assaults have recently surfaced from many of the men who have come forward to recount their experience at the reform school. This resulted in the state of Florida awarding \$20 million to be divided among the school's surviving victims as restitution. The school was officially closed in 2011 after investigations and news reports of the abuse came to light.

The story alternates from the main characters' first-person point of view (POV). The film is shot directly from the point of view of the character that is being addressed. In turn, the audience sees exactly what Elwood sees, as if the dialogue is being directed specifically at the spectator. Cinematically, Ross intended for the viewer to be part of the story by experiencing the world and events through the character's perspective. This yields an intimate occurrence that can produce empathy for the two main characters, as we see the abuse they endure while at the academy.

Elwood is sent to Nickel Academy after being wrongfully implicated in a case of car theft. Elwood comes into full view when the point of view is observed through Turner's eyes while they dine in the school's dining room. It is here that a friendship between the two is cemented and carried throughout the film. Alternating between shots during their time at Nickel Academy and an older Elwood, now living with his wife, we are witness to the atrocities rendered by the school. Along with Elwood, the audience follows the discoveries of the unmarked graves found outside of the school grounds, displaying the magnitude of the horrors that systemic racism created in the segregated institution. Not every story has a happy ending, and this feature is certainly not one of them. In a scene where both Elwood and Turner are attempting to escape, Elwood is shot and killed by an academy staff member. We come to find out that the character telling the story as Elwood in the early 2000s is actually Turner, who ended up getting away and taking the identity of his friend.

This film is for anyone unfamiliar with the history of the Jim Crow era and what African Americans endured throughout the period leading up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Watching a film such as this one is an excellent way to delve into lesser known parts of U.S. history that are both deeply disturbing and enduringly relevant in

today's landscape. Rather than simply reading about segregation laws, systemic racism, and carceral abuse, following the lives of Elwood and Turner gives the audience an easier way to understand the Jim Crow era and how the lack of rights affected the individuals involved. By attaching historical events to characters, the film builds an emotional connection, which makes the film historically meaningful.

Carlos Gil

Kleber Mendonça Filho, director. *The Secret Agent*. MK Productions, 2025.

Kleber Mendonça Filho's *O Agente Secreto (The Secret Agent)* is an arresting political thriller period film set in Brazil during the military dictatorship that existed between 1964 and 1985. Shot on location in the director's native country, the film stars Wagner Moura as Armando Solimões, a widowed former professor who becomes involved with a group of anarcho-communist political dissidents opposed to the dictatorship amidst the vibrant and kaleidoscopic backdrop of the Brazilian Carnival.

The film is set during "a period of mischief:" Carnival in 1977, 13 years into the dictatorship that began with the Brazilian military's coup d'état against then-President João Goulart in 1964. Backed by the United States as part of its greater anti-communist endeavors during the Cold War, the dictatorship employed heavy censorship and numerous human rights violations against its citizens. The film opens with Armando traveling to the northeastern city of Recife when he stops at a gas station with a dead body lying out front; the police arrive, but instead of investigating the body they search Armando's car and shake him down for a bribe.

Arriving in Recife, Armando, using the alias Marcelo, meets with Elza, the head of the local resistance movement and takes an undercover job at the city identity card office to help Brazilians escape from their tyrannical government. Armando uses his office position to search the archives for information about his mother whom he has no memories of, whilst attempting to reconnect with his estranged son Fernando and father-in-law Arlindo. A subplot follows Euclides,