Entre paisagens e passagens: the dialectics of the road in three Brazilian road films

Bye bye Brasil, *Andarilho* and *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*

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時有風吹幡動。一僧曰風動。一僧曰幡動。

The wind was flapping a temple flag, and two monks started an argument.

一僧曰風動。一僧曰幡動。

One said the flag moved, the other said the wind moved;

議論不已。

They argued back and forth but could not reach a conclusion.

惠能進曰。不是風動。不是幡動。仁者心動。

The Sixth Patriarch said, "It is not the wind that moves, it is not the flag that moves; it is your mind that moves."

二僧悚然。

The two monks were awe-struck.

(Wumen Huikai (1228) "Koan 29: Not The Wind, Not The Flag", from *The Gateless Passage of the Zen Lineage*. Retrieved from: http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/zen/mumonkan.htm)

Table of contents

Introduction

Tom Cochrane famously sang "Life is a highway / I wanna ride it all night long" (1991) and he is by no means the only one to have attached the concrete imagery of travel and paths to the more abstract concept of life. The 1860's board game *The Game of Life*[1] in which the player progresses over a track simulating their travels through the stages of their lives; the concepts of a career and a *curriculum vitae* that are deeply embedded in an etymology of 'moving through life' as the former stems from the Latin word *carrus*, which means chariot, and the latter would translate as 'the course of life'; or a religious concept like the Buddhist *Noble Eight-Fold Path* that offers a way to live a proper life, all built on the same conceptual understanding of life as a path that one follows – leaving the past behind, being (spatially and temporally) in the now and moving ever forward into the days ahead. In the visual language of this last metaphor, 'the days ahead', time is envisioned "as a path into physical space" (Spivey, Joanisse, & McRae, 2012:493), resulting in humanity's general understanding of the timeline. Most languages have based their temporal orientation on the bodily experience of moving forward and leaving something behind, thus postulating the future as a destination in front of the subject and the past as his or her point of origin, behind their current location. Núñez & Sweetser (2006), however, have described a different orientation of chronological distribution they found in the Andean language of the Aymara. For the Aymara, the past does not lie behind them but in front of them – as the past is that which is already known and therefore is thought of as something visible from the subject's point of view – whereas the future is still unknown and is entered blindly and backwards by the subject, locating it behind the centre of orientation. It is as difficult to argue with the logic of the Aymara as it is to argue with the more common conception of life as a path into the future. Luckily this is not an either-or scenario; both orientations have their merits and both make use of the human body as a compass to spatially map the cognitive understanding of time.

In the study of road movies, it is very useful to take note of the Aymara exception of the location of time, as it makes it possible to critically evaluate the apparent self-evident logic of visually imagined movement. The way we move, conceptualize travel and imagine movement has a specific meaning that is not universal, but culturally determined. The awareness of the existence of alternative logics can be used

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[1] In Dutch known as *Levensweg*, which would translate to English as something like 'The Path of Life', or 'The Course of Life'.

productively to avoid confining a genre to its stereotypes and to divert from the well-trodden road of interpretation. Instead of assuming all road movies follow a similar orientation, forwards, they can be analysed on the basis of the basic quality of the genre that is not steeped in a particular tradition – namely the representation of displacement. Cultural differences in the road movie imagination cannot take away this basic constituent. The large variety of approaches to filming this particular type of movie causes each film to redefine the genre and thus the definition. Much like the universes it depicts, the genre itself is a field of movement. For an article in the New York Times Brazilian filmmaker Walter Salles reflected on the process of directing road movies and in his consideration one might also read a comment on the difficulty of defining the genre:

> I believe that a defining aspect of this narrative form is its unpredictability. You simply cannot (and should not) anticipate what you will find on the road — even if you scouted a dozen times the territory you will cross. You have to work in synchronicity with the elements. If it snows, incorporate snow. If it rains, incorporate rain (11 November 2007).

This thesis does not aim to meddle in the politics of genre, as this would be an entire research project in its own right. The discussion above about the genre's reduction to its core characteristic merely served as a starting point to plot a route through the different dimensions of the field of study – hoping to make this work of research original in its approach and opening up space for new lines of inquiry. While an unpredictable genre, there are nevertheless two elements all road movies share between them: they always depict some sort of *displacement* and this movement will, de facto, never take place inside a vacuum – there will always be *surroundings* to the journey.

The interplay between *space* and *displacement* forms a constitutional basis for road movies. Both pillars have often been researched independently through the concepts of *landscape* and *mobility*, respectively, yet there so far has not been a study that analyses the fundamental dynamic between these two concepts. It is this thesis' aim to fill the gap this has left in the research on road films. To this end, it hopes to answer the following research question: How do road films establish the relationship between the journey and the spaces through which is travelled? In order to answer this question, three sub-questions have been formulated: 1. What is the relationship between *landscape* and *mobility* in road films? 2. What kind of a space is the road in a road film? 3. How is the viewer involved in the process of assigning meaning to

movement and space? Being addressed both directly and implicitly, these sub-questions will form the basis upon which all chapters will be structured. It will be argued that in road films landscape and mobility form a dialectical duality, with the road serving as the physical space that connects both concepts.

In this thesis the relationship between landscape and mobility will be analysed in three Brazilian road films, namely *Bye bye Brasil* (1979), *Andarilho* (2006) and *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* (2008). These three films have yet to be studied together in a comparative analysis; the reason for this might be that at first glance these films may seem dissimilar in their approach to the road movie genre. It will be argued, however, that all three of these films operate within the same conceptual field of force – albeit at different ends of the spectrum. It is exactly because of these films' diversity in style and consensus in concepts that they make productive case studies for the research of the dialectics of the road.

The scope of this thesis is primarily limited to the context of the Brazilian tradition of road movies, although the conceptual framework that is built could also be applied to the general category of the road movie as a global genre. The landscapes that are explored in this thesis, however, will be primarily Brazilian and the concept of mobility will be used to express a way of experiencing and giving meaning to movement that is specific for the tradition of Brazilian cinema.

Reflecting the general structure of this thesis, in the next subchapter first a short literature review of the theoretical framework of this thesis shall be given followed by a brief survey on recent literature about Brazilian road films. Then the most relevant literature for each film will be discussed individually.

Literature Review

In human geographer Tim Cresswell's influential book *On the Move* (2006) the concept of mobility is studied from almost every angle. It examines the manner in which movement inscribes places, spaces and actions with meaning in an ideological context. The definition of mobility that is presented in his work serves as one of the two building blocks upon which this thesis structures its theoretical framework. Despite the book's extensive approach to the concept, landscape is never considered as a theoretic counterforce to mobility. In fact, Cresswell has dismissed landscape as a productive concept altogether, rejecting its potential for scientific relevance due to the discourse that surrounds the concept (Merriman

et al., 2008:196). Although there have been several studies that do name both mobility and landscape in the same context, they are never conceptualized as parts of a reciprocal duality. In Brigham and Marston (2002), for instance, landscape is studied from the perspective of mobility, but mobility itself is never critically evaluated from the landscape perspective. This too is the case for the panel discussion on "Landscape, Mobility and Practice", which was held at the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference in 2006. The aim of the panel was to discuss the ways the people move through landscapes and the dynamics of power and representation that accompany these displacements and although both concepts were thoroughly explored there remained very little mention of their interconnectedness (Merriman et al., 2008). John Wylie's seminal *Landscape* (2007) also relates the eponymous concept to movement in one of its subchapters, marking the connection between travel writing and landscape but does not do so extensively nor does it elaborate on the exact nature of the relationship between the journey and the landscape. The works described above approach the subject matter from the perspective of (cultural) geography, but can be used productively as a frame of reference for the cultural analysis of road movies as well. In the thought-provoking article "On Landscape in Narrative Cinema" (2011), for example, Martin Lefebvre analyses the manner in which cinema is able to explore the tension between the geographer's perspective on landscape and the representation of landscape in both still and moving media art.

In recent years there has been a boom in literature about the Latin American road film – and the Brazilian road film in particular. In 2013 Sara Brandellero's *The Brazilian Road Movie: Journeys of (Self) Discovery* was published. In this book, the recent and historical developments of the Brazilian road movie are explored and the general understanding of the road movie genre is re-examined and reworked to function within a Brazilian context. *The Latin American Road Movie*, edited by Verónica Garibotto and Jorge Pérez, analyses a series of different road films from different Latin American countries in their attempt to capture and re-examine "the ideological grounds of national and regional discourses" (2016:2). The Latin American road movie is presented as a unique tradition within the global genre, due to

> the tense relationship of Latin American countries with modernity as epitomized by the
> precarious infrastructures and the uneven access to motorized vehicles and other modern
> technological advances; and the use of nonprofessional actors, shooting on location, and
> natural lighting as neorealist techniques to showcase such tough realities of the region as

persistent poverty, class differences, and marginalization of indigenous populations (ibid.).

And finally, Nadia Lie's very recent *The Latin American (Counter-) Road Movie and Ambivalent Modernity* (2017) offers a comprehensive survey of the contemporary Latin American road movies. By emphasizing the road movie's quality of representing (social) realities in relation to (apparent) modernities, it is argued that the road film is key to understanding contemporary Latin American cinema and culture.

One of the most studied Brazilian road movies is *Bye bye Brasil*; it is a classic movie in Brazilian cinema and as a result most works on Brazilian cinematic history reference or zoom in on the film. A fundamental work in this context is the collective and elaborate essay by Robert Stam, Ismail Xavier and João Luiz Vieira "The Shape of Brazilian Cinema in the Postmodern Age", in Randal Johnson and Robert Stam (eds.) *Brazilian Cinema* (1995). This essay investigates the film's position within Brazilian history of cinema and its relation to the political currents that flowed in the period of the film's release. The manner in which this film represented the difficult political situation of the country and the effects that this had on popular culture (and vice versa) is further elaborated in Stephanie Dennison and Lisa Shaw's *Popular cinema in Brazil: 1930 – 2001* (2004) who observe the film's parallels to the mythical quest for El Dorado. Also commenting on the course and the influences of the 1980's idea of modernity that *Bye bye Brasil* brings to the screen, Brandellero's chapter "*Bye bye Brasil* and the Quest for the Nation" (2013) explores the various dynamics of power that are represented and questioned in the film and frames it within a context of postcolonialism. She notes how the film critically engages with questions of the place of different social and cultural groups in the forward driven nation of Brazil and points out the film's ironic undertone regarding the promise of modernity. *Bye bye Brasil* is a film about Brazil's transition period at the end of the country's military dictatorship and the many other transitions that accompanied the process. This thesis will argue that in order to show the national and cultural developments, *Bye bye Brasil* predominantly adopts a mobility perspective as it captures the country in motion. It will be contended that the film's perception of mobility – manifested both in its central subject and the perspective that is employed to capture this subject – leaves little room for the landscape perspective and effectively turns the travelled space into setting.

Not much has been written about the second film of this thesis' analyses, Cão Guimarães' *Andarilho*; what little that has been written the filmmaker has conveniently collected and displayed on his professional website. The general consensus and focus point of most analyses is that *Andarilho* establishes a difficult relation between documentary and fiction. Rafael de Almeida (2014) has investigated what he calls the film's 'dilated temporality' and points out how the film fictionalizes real characters and real spaces to the point where they become indistinguishable from fiction. This is further elaborated by André Brasil (2007) who relates the film's delirious displacement and the trancelike aesthetics to the world of the drifters that is able to form a connection with the natural surroundings. The drifters are attributed a specific way of seeing and being in the world, which is closely linked to the film's aesthetics. Migliorin (2007) argues that through the film's surreal aesthetics "a common space between the universe of the wanderers and the universe of the film" is created that becomes accessible for the viewer to enter. In this thesis the aesthetics of the landscape will be explored as a new way of framing the road and the movements that it accommodates. The chapter on *Andarilho* opens with a discussion on the conceptual field of force in which the road films operate, before offering a detailed analysis of this film's re-imagination of the road space. In this film, the landscape perspective is developed into a very particular kind of aesthetics that is primarily set against the background of a dynamic relationship between landscape and *bare movement*.

Finally, the last chapter about Karim Aïnouz and Marcelo Gomes' *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* (2009) will bring the landscape and mobility perspectives together in the overarching framework of the dialectics of the road. Jens Andermann also uses Lefebvre's concept of landscape to analyse this film in his chapter "The Politics of Landscape" (2017) in Maria Delgado, Stephen Hart & Randal Johnson's (eds.) *A Companion to Latin American Cinema*, but steers it in a different direction. Rather than focussing on the landscape that is presented in the film, Andermann opts to jump from it to other landscapes within Latin American cinematic history and traces a development in Latin American films that "ushers in a new regionalism, beyond 'landscape'" (148). This thesis aims to linger a little longer on Aïnouz and Gomes' supposedly "*flattened, clichéd landscape*" (ibid., emphasis added) in order to explore the dimensions of this film's landscape multiverse. This also entails traversing into intertextual landscapes that are called forth by the landscape like ghosts from Brazil's cinematic history. As Brandellero analyses in "The Contemporary Brazilian Road Movie: Remapping National Journeys on Screen in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*" (2016) the film directly quotes from *Bye bye Brasil* and retraces the films routes.

Indeed, the landscapes in *Viajo porque preciso* are pregnant with memory. Thiago de Luca further underscores this claim when he writes that: "With its superimposed layers and temporalities, I Travel Because I Have to is a vertiginous *mise en abyme* through which cinema, understood as the conduit of personal and collective memories, is exposed as a historically dynamic practice" (2014:37). The movement through this stratified space can be understood as both a journey through space and through time whenever the landscape on screen becomes unhinged from the flow of the narrative. By applying the framework of the dialectics of the road, both journeys can be investigated simultaneously. It will be argued that the dialectics of the road does not entail the fusion of two perspectives into one hybrid way of seeing, but rather a continuous dialectics of shifting perspectives – whose emphasis depends largely on both the filmmaker and the viewer. This chapter hopes to explore the manner in which character and viewer can navigate both journeys.

After this final analysis the concluding chapter will retrace the lines of argumentation of this thesis to provide an answer to the main research question that was formulated earlier in this introduction. The journey captured on screen moves through a conceptual field of force that renders mere glances into perspective; it will be argued that the dialectics of the road can function as an axis system that is concerned with the signifying exchange between landscape and mobility and posits a reciprocal relationship between space and movement. By theorizing the dialectics of the road, the interplay of space and movement can both be considered as a thematic object of analysis and as a theoretical framework to explore the dimensions of the road movie genre.

Chapter 1. Landscape and mobility

Landscape and setting

As Brandellero summarizes the words of filmmaker Walter Salles (2007): "Part of the attraction of the road movie genre lies in the blurring of boundaries between fiction and documentary, given that the outside "real world" is incorporated by definition into the diegesis" (Brandellero, 2013:xxiii). The landscapes the films show were already there before the film reality visited and are simultaneously added to the diegesis while gaining an intertextuality themselves from being in the film. This way a dimension of reality is added to the film while the scenery receives fictional histories, thus blurring the lines that separate narrative from the natural world. The car window, for instance, establishes a connection between the film world and that of the viewer as it resonates with the physical dimensions of the cinema or television screen – both the characters and the viewers see the road and the landscape pass by through framed glass. Road films oftentimes begin when the journey takes off and end when the journey has reached its conclusion; the experiences that the travelling subject has gained along the way can be aptly contrasted to their situation at the beginning of the film as there usually is a clear point of origin of the journey and a clear conclusion to it at the end of the journey – at the end of the film. This causes the narrative and the movement depicted by the narrative to become strongly intertwined; the dimensions of the film makes the travel story told in the movie a visual echo to the actual movie itself (the motion picture) and always exhumes a degree of metafiction that adds to the film's embedding and embeddedness in reality.[2] The embedding of the movie into reality (and the embedding of reality into the movie) is further elaborated by the inclusion of the natural landscape – most road films cannot be shot in a studio and have to be filmed at locations that also exist outside of the film's narrative. Adopting the phrasing of Courtice Rose (1981) it can be called a process of *textualizing* the surroundings, making that space accessible for literary, film and art analysis. After seeing *Vidas Secas* ('Barren Lives', Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1963), for instance, a political film about the extremely harsh living conditions in the dry and poverty-stricken

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2 This is further elaborated by Walter Moser who analyzes the intricate relationship between on-screen locomotion and what he calls *mediamotion*, "*une forme de mobilité que nous procurent les médias mais qui, dans un certain sens, remplace ou redouble le déplacement physique en offrant aux êtres humains une expérience presque paradoxale : le contact à distance*" (Moser 2008:9). Brandellero (2013:xxii) and Lie (2017:18) both reference Moser to highlight the self-reflexive nature of the road film that follows from this distant contact; the road movie journey explores both the physical spaces through which is travelled and the medium of cinema itself. Moser, W. (2008). "Présentation. Le road movie: un genre issu d'une constellation moderne de locomotion et de médiamotion", *Cinémas: Journal of Film Studies*. 18/2–3, pp. 9–30.

Northeast of Brazil, one cannot visit this region without reliving parts of the experience of watching the movie. *Vidas Secas* is a film that pertains to the cinematographic movement of Cinema Novo, which sought to capture Brazil's harsh realities on screen from the early 1950's until the late 1970's. This film's visual framework corresponds with the "The Aesthetics of Hunger", named so in Glauber Rocha's eponymous essay of 1965; the Aesthetics of Hunger sought to visualize the themes of hunger by not only showing the arid scenes and poverty, but also by taking on an uncomfortable and harsh imagery that made for an aesthetically starved viewing experience as well. The objective of these political aesthetics was to lay bare the harsh reality of life in the Northeast of Brazil; Rocha states that "hunger in Latin America is not simply an alarming symptom; it is the essence of our society. Herein lies the tragic originality of Cinema Novo in relation to world cinema. Our originality is our hunger and our greatest misery is that this hunger is felt but not intellectually understood" (1995:70). One of the ways in which the political Cinema Novo accomplished this objective was by inscribing the landscape with the framework of hunger, creating an intertextual awareness in the geography. The 'texts' of the Cinema Novo films became inscribed in the map, so that one could no longer think about the Northeast of Brazil, without the awareness of the social and physical hunger.

Even if the visited landscape does not correspond with or cannot be recognized as the one shown or imagined in film, there will still be an intertextual connection, as those views of nature will be characterized by being different from the ones in the movie. Through the incorporation of real backgrounds in films, parts of reality leak through onto the screen and new landscapes are painted over the physical scenery that will now forever be intertextual. David Melbye refers to a quality similar to this intertextuality as the allegorical dimension of the landscape: "Once a natural landscape has become encoded with meanings specific to a particular culture, this landscape can come to symbolize something beyond itself to the people who make up that culture. That is, it takes on an allegorical dimension" (Melbye, 2010:3). The landscape then ceases to be mere backdrop and gains the faculty of being readable to the culturally initiated. For both the visual arts and more textual media this implies an immediate, reciprocal relation between the culture and history of the landscape depicted in the narrative and the narrative itself that is contemplating the landscape from a storytelling perspective. Hence, the landscape gives new meaning to the story by functioning as an anchor in 'reality' and the story immediately comments on that reality by showing the landscape in a different, narrative context.

During the 1980s and continuing in the early 1990s cultural geographers also started to use the toolkit of disciplines from the humanities to develop the landscape idea (for instance Samuels, 1979; Rose, 1981; and Muir, 1981). To find new openings for the interpretation of both the concept and the actual space that was being studied, the landscape was reimagined as a readable space (Wylie, 2007:71). This 'textual turn' of human geography has also produced a new academic discourse that confuses some critics. In a panel discussion held at the Royal Geographical Society Tim Cresswell produces a lengthy summary as to why he dislikes landscape as a concept; in his last point Cresswell comments on this new discourse:

> Sixth point: representation and writing. One of the things I think is best about what cultural geographers are doing with landscape is a wonderful, expressive prose. (…) I would love to write like that, and develop some of those ideas. But does this poetics preclude engagement, or does it engage in a different way? I find it very hard to intervene in texts that are written in poetic form like that. With a traditional social science structure there are a series of points, making it easier to intervene (if not so enjoyable to read or listen to!). (…) Articles can be almost hermetically sealed, beautifully written stories, but how do you intervene? Do you intervene aesthetically? Or do you intervene in another way? (Merriman et al., 2008:196).

Cresswell argues that the 'poetic' way in which is written about landscape impedes the academic scholar to critically engage with the concept. For Cresswell, the discourse concerning landscape makes it an unproductive concept as it becomes difficult to employ in an academic context – he questions if one is able to participate and intervene in an academic debate about landscape at all. In regard to his questions, the present text hopes to be a constructive example of such an intervention in the landscape debate.

As Wylie points out, engaging questions arise when landscape is framed in a textual metaphor; the most interesting one perhaps being: "Who is it that has written the landscape?"(70) Without resorting to mysticism, the answer might actually be found in the exact opposite of the spiritual: the bodily experience of the human eye. As will be argued later in this chapter, it is the viewer that 'writes' the landscape. And consequently, in the case of film, it is the filmmaker that creates the first text, but that text is then edited, rewritten and re-appropriated by the eye of the viewer who adds their own textuality to the

landscape-text. The layering of all these texts creates for an intricate web of meanings that provides the landscape with its intertextual nature. Duncan & Duncan emphasize the merits of a textual approach to landscape analysis as "[t]exts have a web-like complexity, characterized by a ceaseless play of infinitely unstable meanings. This picture is interesting, not only from a literary standpoint, but also because it resembles landscapes in many respects" (1988:118). The intertextual nature of the landscape engages the viewers to contribute their own experiences to the text written on – and perhaps also *by* – the landscape.

> (…) landscape seems less like a palimpsest whose 'real' or 'authentic' meanings can somehow be recovered with the correct techniques, theories, or ideologies, than a flickering text displayed on the word-processor screen whose meaning can be created, extended, altered, elaborated and finally obliterated by the merest touch of a button (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988:8).

But not all sceneries acquire this type of agency or engagement. Depending on the film's depiction of the scenery, it can either become a self-reflexive space that also invites the spectator to participate in its meditation, or a natural background that serves no purpose of its own other than supporting the plot – a context without a context. Martin Lefebvre defines the former as *landscape[3]* and the latter as *setting*. "Landscape", Lefebvre writes, "has come to signify a view of nature emancipated from the presence of human figures and offering itself for contemplation" (2011:62). The distinction pointed out above has not always existed; it is the result of a process of emancipation that has been ongoing in Western still media art for centuries. Although the general consensus among art historians dates the birth of the landscape to the early seventeenth century, it is difficult to make any definitive claims to the exact moment the landscape first appeared in art history. Earlier paintings have shown (in hindsight) strong elements of landscape and there are later paintings that still depict the scenery in the traditional, passive manner that existed before 'the invention of landscape' (Lemaire, 1970; Melbye, 2010; and Lefebvre, 2011). During this process of emancipation the natural scenery developed from mere background into an autonomous subject. Human figures could still be featured in the image or could be left out completely – depending on the painter –, but in no case did they dictate the central theme or topic of interpretation of the painting any longer. Landscape became a "depiction of a natural space freed from any emphasis on the representation

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3 Up until this point the present text has used the word 'landscape' without further conceptual dimensions, referring to a general understanding of the term as a natural scenery or background. From this point forth *landscape* will only relate to Lefebvre's understanding of landscape as a concept and this text's elaboration of the concept.

of human figures and eventhood" (Lefebvre, 2011:63). If landscape is indeed the depiction of space freed from eventhood, then setting must be the space of required eventhood. Settings only exist in relation to a human presence – to the plot or the narrative; once the phenomenon is over, the setting disappears and what is left is unattached, undefined space. Its function is to create context, although it cannot have a context of its own. Settings are the product of human action, they reflect the characters' inner states of mind, highlight difficulties or experiences in a character's development or a necessary element to the progress of the unfolding event, but can never exist independently from the larger narrative. In an adaptation of the classic thought experiment, one might conclude the following: If a tree falls in a landscape and no one is around to hear it, it will make a sound for its fall is added to the textuality of the landscape and can be contemplated regardless of its relation to the human eye; the sound has its own unscripted narrative. If a tree falls in a setting and no one is around to hear it, there will be no sound and it will de facto not matter if the tree once stood at all; the fallen tree has no narrative, nor can it be embedded into one for its fall is excluded from eventhood.

It might be difficult to imagine a road film containing anything other than setting; indeed the common denominator for all road films is that they feature characters travelling through some sort of space – whether that be through nature, cityscapes or cosmic space. The journey is the main event around which the scenery revolves – often quite literally imagined by the *mise-en-scène* with shots making the road and the travelling characters the central component of the frame, with the surrounding terrain an accommodating space for the displacement. The question, then, becomes if there can be a non-anthropocentric perspective or an autonomy of space in such an image. In the following, the matter of the landscape perspective will be elaborated, in order to facilitate the discussion of its dimensions for the analyses of the movies in the chapters to come.

Landscape as perspective

Parallel to the evolution of the landscape idea of event-free representations developed the (art) historical advances in representations with a linear perspective. In his influential "Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea" Denis Cosgrove traces the correlation between the conceptual idea of landscape and the introduction of the linear perspective in art history – and consequently in his own field of study: (cultural) geography. In fact, it is argued that "the basic theory and technique of the landscape

way of seeing *is* linear perspective" (1985:45, added emphasis). The earliest forms of visual representation typically sized the depicted objects hierarchically according to their narrative or thematic relevance; their relation to the position of the viewer was not yet considered. Cosgrove cites Ronald Rees when he writes that "pre-perspective urban landscapes show not so much what the towns looked like as what it felt to be in them" (Rees, 1980:63, as cited in Cosgrove[4], 1985:49). The representation of urban scenes was preceded by the painter's (subjective) experience of the environment. Rather than attempting to capture places from an assumed objective point of view, the represented space is visually dependent on human presence, for the depicted scene cannot exist outside of human experience or observation. In other words the painted scenes are not so much renderings of the places they represent, but rather of the eventhood that presupposes them. To explain the difference perspective has made to representational art, Cosgrove contrasts two instances of representations of urban life, one painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti with a pre-perspective technique and one which does employ perspective, painted by Pietro Perugino. Cosgrove analyses that Lorenzetti's *Effetti del Buon Governo in Città* (1338 – 1340) "shows us the city as an active bustling world of human life wherein people and their environment interact across a space where unity derives from the action on its surface" (1985:49), while in the latter category, to which Perugino's *Consegna delle chiavi* (1481 – 1482) pertains, "humans scarcely appear. They [the ideal townscapes painted with perspective] have no need to for the 'measure of man' (…) is written in the architectural façades and proportioned spaces of the city, an intellectual measure rather than sensuous human life" (49-50). That is to say, in the first instance the representation of the city is only comprehensible because of the event that is taking place in the city, whereas in the second instance the city becomes intelligible by the inclusion of perspective. Perspective defines and organizes undefined spaces as human spaces, readable by the human viewer. According to Cosgrove, after the foundation of the linear perspective the viewer's eye gained "absolute mastery over space" (48) as it was the viewer that dictated the organization of that space. This was a move with discursive consequences. Space became the ideological playground for both painter and (bourgeois) viewer: "Visually space is rendered the property of the individual detached observer, from whose divine location it is a depended, appropriated object" (49). The depicted natural or urban scenes became a testimony of man's dominion and control over these spaces, as they were shaped

4 In Cosgrove's notes the article is referred to as "Historical links between *geography* and art"; this probably is the result of a Freudian slip, as no article of that name can be found in the Geographical Review – the actual title reads: "Historical Links between *Cartography* and Art".

into the image of his eye. Borrowing the phrasing by John Berger, Cosgrove concludes that landscape is a way of visually organizing space:

> Landscape is thus a way of seeing, a composition and structuring of the world so that it may be appropriated by a detached, individual spectator to whom an illusion of order and control is offered through the composition of space according to the certainties of geometry (55).

The appropriation of space by a specific authority or discourse is one of the essential issues in feminist critique of landscape. Catherine Nash, for instance, problematizes the evident link between Cosgrove's idea of a vision-based dominance over space and the problematic masculine gaze by analysing examples from a collection of male landscapes created by a woman's perspective (Nash, 1996). A consequence of this gaze is a gendering of the landscape (Wylie, 2007:82); a male control over the land that could easily result in natural fallacies in discussions on gender, basing arguments for instance on the fertility of Mother Earth, and man's need to explore and occupy the female body as terra nova. The feminist critique on landscape is one of many; examples of other discursive readings of the commanding gaze on the landscape include a Marxist reading of the landscape as a space of class struggle, and the present text that seeks to relate the subjugation of space to the mobility perspective.

Cosgrove's conceptualization of landscape as an appropriation of space would seem to oppose Lefebvre's understanding of landscape as an autonomous space. Indeed, if landscape is humanity's way of subjugating the natural world to his image, nature has no autonomy and remains burdened under the weight of human eventhood – this time not by the eventhood of its characters but of its viewers themselves. Consequently, landscape would be stripped of any self-engaging qualities it might possess. "Landscape distances us from the world in critical ways, defining a particular relationship with nature and those who appear in nature, and offers us the illusion of a world in which we may participate subjectively by entering the picture frame along the perspectival axis" (1985:55). And according to Cosgrove "this is an aesthetic entrance not an active engagement with a nature or space that has its own life" (ibid.). Without a further refinement of Cosgrove's definition of landscape the element of power and control will always

emanate from the viewer's perspective – an element he refers to as the 'visual ideology' of landscape (ibid.).[5]

It can be argued, however, that employing the landscape perspective actually *can* provide exactly this type of active engagement, leading to representations of space not only freed from eventhood but freed from the visual command over the land as well. Lefebvre's elaboration of the landscape concept can be used to add a subtlety to Cosgrove's argument, so that landscape indeed can be thought of as a way of seeing, but without the absolute dominance of the human eye – which effectively constructs the image as setting. The supposition is that an autonomous landscape cannot exist, if, as mentioned earlier, "space is rendered the property of the individual detached observer" (48). Lefebvre highlights a similar assumption that could be made about "dominant cinema's ability to represent landscapes" (2011:64), as the existence of pure landscapes in films can hardly be called self-evident:

> The problem, it would seem, lies in the subsumption of space to the demands of narrative. The distinction between *setting* and *landscape*, one might say, is one of pictorial economy: as long as natural space in a work is subservient to characters, events and action, as long as its function is to provide space for them, the work is not properly speaking a *landscape* (ibid.).

The narrative seeks to maintain a visual command over the scenery, much in the same way Cosgrove argues the spectator's eye holds an absolute mastery over space. Nevertheless this command is never absolute; not by the narrative, nor by the eye. The filmmaker's eye – the director of the narrative – is unable to assert absolute dominance over the landscapes, because landscapes are able to attract, enchant, repulse, cause wonder or disappointment in arrested moments that can "interrupt the forward drive and flow of narrative with 'distracting' imagery" (65). Sometimes one cannot help but look – somewhere else, somewhere unintended. During a scene in which characters are partaking in some sort of event relevant to the narrative, the viewer's eye can be attracted/distracted to a part of the natural scenery that incites them to contemplate the effect the scenery has on them. When this happens, landscape becomes capable of engaging. In these instances "views of nature (…) become 'unhinged' from the narrative in such a way as to

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5 More on the subject of landscape and power can be found in William Mitchell's *Landscape and Power* – Mitchell, D. (2002). *Landscape and Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

exist in their [the spectators'] consciousness as 'autonomous' landscapes, irrespective of the filmmaker's intention to produce such an effect" (ibid.). Lefebvre makes a distinction here between the *narrative* and the *pictorial* landscape. The former relates to the landscape in the way it is (re)presented in the film – a part of the flow of the narrative –, while the latter exists predominantly in the mind of the spectator, consisting of an 'arrested image' of the landscape that has been disrupted from the progression of events – simultaneously disrupting this flow. In other words, there is a specific way to look at the natural settings that makes use of the spectator's "ability to mentally 'extract' and to 'arrest' landscapes from the flow of narrative films" (66). This view relies on a tension that arises between the movement of the film and the stillness of the isolated image; a tension that also exists between landscapes and the forward drive of the plot. The moving/moved landscape is shaped into the image of the filmmaker and 'invites' (or compels) the spectator to adopt the same perspective. But this intended perspective has no absolute claim over the natural vista, for the spectator's eyes, and mind, can reassert the landscape's autonomy whenever they wander to an unintended space. Even during the progression of the plot "the spectator can still direct his or her attention toward the landscape in such a way as to momentarily *break* the narrative bond of subordination that unites" (ibid, added emphasis) the setting to the events.

This way of seeing constitutes a more specific version of the landscape perspective than the one elaborated by Cosgrove. For what Cosgrove proposes in his article on the landscape idea might ultimately be considered as the *spectator's perspective* looking for an affirmation of themselves in the landscape – effectively *setting* themselves as the event that the natural surroundings have to accommodate. The *landscape perspective* proper, then, can be seen as a way of seeing, *contemplating*[6], nature as an autonomous space freed from control; in this perspective the scenery is not shown, but shows. Although it is true that the viewer remains the one with a definitive control over the scene – as the viewer still can decide to close their eyes or avert their gaze in order to take away both image and perspective, as well as being able to allow their eyes to wander, or *dwell* (72), through and to unintended spaces – the forward gaze of the narrative can be temporarily crossed by the landscape perspective. In reference to the textual metaphor of landscape mentioned earlier in this chapter, it can be summarized as follows: The scripted landscape, written by the eye of the filmmaker, is complemented by an unwritten, intertextual landscape

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6 Both in the word's meaning of gazing at or observing something, as well as in its meaning to consider something thoroughly – to meditate it. To regard an object both visually and mentally.

created by the viewer's relation to the scenery. This unwritten new meaning is being inscribed as the film progresses into both the landscape, as that space gains a new textual dimension from the filmmaker by being included in the film, and into the mind of the viewer, for their conception of the landscape is now tied to the experience of watching it as part of the film.

The spectator's gaze oscillates between a course through the scenery set by the filmmaker (the narrative flow dictating the lines of the filmmaker's perspective) and an unscripted path through the landscape, inspired by the landscape. The arrested landscape can work as an alternative focal point from which new perspectives are set into motion, while the moving plot focuses the gaze on a fixed meaning with the natural scenery left out of focus as a supporting element for the plot – the movement of the narrative rendering any natural scenery mere *setting*. These two angles "often co-exist in a state of tension in a film" (65), with landscape interrupting the movement and the movement excluding/ignoring autonomous landscapes. The manner in which these perspectives influence and interact with one another will be further elaborated in the chapters to come.

The filmmaker, however, should not be antagonized as the destroyer of landscapes; landscapes do not exclusively appear when they escape the grip of some kind of controlling director. Contrary to what Victor Freeburg writes (also in Lefebvre, 2011:65), the interruption from the forward movement of the plot by the landscape does not have to be accidental or undesirable (1918:151-152). Freeburg emphasizes the importance for filmmakers to use a 'neutral setting', in order to avoid diverting the spectator's gaze from the plot: "There can be no objection to the neutral setting if it is really neutral, if it really gets no attention whatsoever from the spectator" (ibid.). In this normative view of how settings should indeed stay mere backdrop, the intrinsic value a landscape perspective may add to the scene is overlooked and denied. Similar to what was written earlier about the Aymara exception on the spatial distribution of time, a detour from the unidirectional linear plot progression can add a new dimension to the scene – to the whole plot even. If anything, allowing the spectator to shift attention to the landscape can add layers of reality to the film; the spectator is transported to the scene and fully immersed in the diegesis. When the filmmaker does not try to obtain an absolute control over the perspective, making space for a landscape connection to form between spectator and image, landscapes can be included in the narrative without becoming subservient to the plot. Using a Derridean term, Lefebvre writes that landscapes are able to

haunt the experience of the spectator: "In ghostly fashion film landscapes appear momentarily only to disappear, often seconds later, existing in a regime dominated by the ebb and flow of spectatorial consciousness, wherein narrative and pictorial qualities may both vie for attention" (2011:66) – chapter 4 will expand on this in the analysis of *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*. The landscape is able to linger and gains a sense of duration and is extended beyond the dimensions of the arrested moment. This 'unscripted' landscape is the result of an 'improvisation' dynamic between the viewer and the views of nature; a dynamic that writes a new text over the landscape, inspired *by* the landscape, without command or subjugation by the human gaze. If and when the narrative does not weigh too heavily on the image, the landscape perspective can form exactly the active connection between the spectator and the space Cosgrove was hesitant to attribute to landscape. An engagement that is more than mere aesthetics is elaborated. Given enough space, the arrested image of the landscape can also be more than just an unmoving landscape – also motion pictures of landscape can gain autonomy and still images can become images with duration. This largely depends on the type of movement, as will be demonstrated in the next chapters.

Road films take the tension between space and movement as their central theme. The road becomes a metaphor for the dividing line between these two conceptual counterparts. The road alternates the role of representing agent of the linear perspective that foregrounds the importance of the movement, with the role of a path that leads into the landscape – offering an alternative to the linearity of perspective and plot – or as a physical space that is a part of the landscape. The interchange of these ways of looking forms the crossroads where perspectives meet.

Mobility and setting

Following Lefevbre, landscape and setting can be seen to form a conceptual duality whose parts both compete for a dominant view on the surroundings. Which perspective takes precedence over the other never constitutes an absolute decision, as the perception and appreciation of a natural scene remain a subjective matter in the eyes of the viewer – and may even vary upon repeated viewings by the same viewer. In their consciousness unchanged surroundings can at one moment appear as mere backdrop and the next as autonomous space. As the previous chapter argued, the emancipated landscape perspective is able to take hold of a scene even when this goes in against the filmmaker's supposed intentions.

For the road movie genre this makes for an interesting dynamics, since by definition these films rely heavily on the appearance of settings/landscapes. The same movement through the same space will show two very different journeys if this space is experienced as a setting or as a landscape. Either the movement is given visual priority or the space is given autonomy; in the first case the journey itself is the central event that is framed by the scenery, while in the second case the traveller is merely a passer-by in a landscape that is independent from their presence. The type of movement and the manner in which this movement is captured strongly influences the kind of journey that is shown and the kind of relation the traveller establishes with their surroundings.

Cresswell makes a distinction between two kinds of movement, occupying different ends of the motion spectrum: On one end there is simple movement; this entails the "general act of displacement before the type, strategies and social implications of that movement are considered" (Cresswell, 2006:3). This thesis draws on the terminology of Giorgio Agamben to name this specific form of displacement: *bare movement*. In his seminal work *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), Agamben contends that the act of living takes place within a politicized domain that classifies life either as politically qualified life (bios) or as mere biological existence (zoê). Bios refers to "a particular way of life" (1), in which the rightful existence of the living subject is acknowledged and is given the meaningful context of a life recognized by the eyes of the sovereign – a meaningful subject. Zoê, by comparison, is *bare life* that has no further qualifications other than the simple act of living and being there – a biological object. In other words, bios can be thought of as the life of identity, of participation in the centre of the polis, and zoê as the bare life of faceless, biological existence – before the type, strategies and social implications of that existence are considered, if considered at all. *Bare movement* can be thought of as displacement's equivalent of zoê; both concepts relate to an unqualified existence that is not inscribed with meaning and has no voice or narrative – for this would deem it qualified.

On the other extreme we can find the concept of *mobility*. Mobility differs from bare movement as it consists of a movement that "is given or inscribed with meaning. Furthermore, the way it is given meaning is dependent upon the context in which it occurs and who decides upon the significance it is given" (Adey 2010:36). "[M]obility can be thought of as an element in the play of power and meaning within social and cultural networks of signification" (Cresswell & Dixon, 2002:4). Mobility gives an identity to movement,

coding it for instance as "travel, nomadism, routes, or lines of flight" (Cresswell, 2006:2). It is the narrative of movement, the story of displacement. "It is a structuring dimension of social life and of social integration" (Kaufmann, 2002:103). Cresswell elaborates the concept in three dimensions: Firstly as human mobility, referring to unideological human movement as it happens and can be registered in the world (e.g. migration, passenger flows in train stations and movement patterns in the super market). Secondly the ideological dimension of represented mobility is investigated. In representational media such as film or photography, a narrated picture of movement often produces meaning or is the agent of an idea that is being communicated. "Thus the brute fact of getting from A to B becomes synonymous with freedom, with transgression, with creativity, with life itself" (Cresswell, 2006:3). Within the context of representation, the concept becomes available for film analysis, both as a tool and a research topic. Finally mobility is analysed as a way of being in the world. The human sensibility is added to the analysis of movement: What is the personal (human) relation to the movement and how is this movement experienced? *How* do we move – how does one feel during (and about) the mobility?

These last two dimensions of the mobility concept are closely linked, as the way "we experience mobility and the ways we move are intimately connected to meanings given to mobility through representation" (4). That is, our embodied understanding of movement derives its sense to a certain degree from representational connotations; we feel free on a motorcycle because films like *Easy Rider* have bestowed the vehicle with a meaning that transcends the purely physical presence of that vehicle – we ride the image as much as the actual bike. Vice versa do representations rely on the personal experience of mobility, as these experiences provide a conceptual framework from which metaphors and allegories derive their meanings. The representational and embodied elements of the mobility concept make it such a productive tool for the purpose of this paper, i.e. to study the meaning of movement in Brazilian road movies. To analyse the representation of mobility in these films, means both to analyse the ideological aspects of the depicted movements and the lived experience by character and viewer of this outlook.

Yet, mobility does not only impregnate movement with meaning, as it also has an effect on the space through which is moved. Spaces gain connotations and contexts from mobility: A road is more than a mere strip of asphalt as it becomes a part of the mobility – it becomes something else then, a path, a road to freedom, a connection. This way mobility also inscribes spaces with meaning. When the mobile event has

passed – the car is out of sight, characters have reached their destination –, however, the physical road returns to its state before it was 'discovered' by mobility and becomes undefined material again.

One cannot help but notice the symmetry of Cresswell's contrast between (*bare*) movement/mobility and Lefebvre's distinction between landscape/setting elaborated in the previous chapter. In the road film the experience of the journey will be the result of alternating perspectives between a landscape view on movement and a mobility approach to space. If a scene is characterized by a context of mobility, movement becomes the primary object of meaning, the central event of the scene. Consequently the travelled space, the visited places and the views along the way gain a function as setting. These spaces function as points against which the story can push itself off in order to propel the narrative. The meaning that is inscribed in the spaces always will be meaning in relation to the movement. Mobility presupposes eventhood, as it inevitably "refers to the ability to move between different activity sites" (Hanson, 1995:4). Opposed to this is the idea of bare movement as "mobility abstracted from contexts of power" (Cresswell, 2006:2). The moment a landscape appears – when the scenery is able to have an unscripted effect on the viewer or character –, the movement that is shown is temporarily extracted from the flow of mobility and can then briefly exist outside of any context of power. The movement that is laid bare, then, is not inscribed with meaning, and therefore does not subject the landscape to the dimensions of an event or human presence. It can pass through or dwell in any place without compromising that place's autonomy. This can happen at any time, all the time at once or never at all.

In the example of the two different road films earlier, it was argued that the same motion through the same space will tell two different stories – *show two different journeys* – depending on the dynamics of setting and landscape. This premise can now be further specified by adding the distinction between bare movement and mobility as a signifying factor. Landscape becomes a lens to lay bare simple movement, while mobility functions as a lens that concentrates the space as a setting for the narrative. The perspectives are mutually exclusive as one cannot exist while the other is in effect, but they do not have an absolute hold over the image as they depend on the oscillation in the mind of the viewer. In that way, the image can escape the filmmaker's intention; nevertheless, a narrative film will have a stronger emphasis on mobility and setting than a nature documentary and the eyes of the viewer will be strongly invited to adopt the mobility perspective over the more unconstrained landscape perspective.

The tension between the two perspectives is a field of friction that not only exists in the viewing experience. It can also lay at the heart of the film's central theme, in which case the film would actively seek to show confrontations between movement and the space through which is moved. In the following it will be argued that Carlos Diegues' film *Bye bye Brasil* explores the contexts of power that surround this friction.

Chapter 2. To Altamira and beyond: *Bye bye Brasil* and the tolls of passage

Bye bye Brasil (1979) follows the Caravana Rolidei, a travelling circus group, on a journey through a changing country that seeks to re-establish itself. Illusionist Lorde Cigano (José Wilker) is the leader of the group, he drives the truck and decides the way. The other two stars of the ensemble are Salomé, the exotic dancer (Betty Faria), and strongman Andorinha (Príncipe Nabor). The circus band travels throughout Brazil in search of small town audiences that might be interested in their form of entertainment. The group is completed by accordionist Ciço (Fábio Jr.) and his wife Dasdô (Zaira Zambelli), who both join the Caravana at the beginning of the film hoping to leave the sleepy town where they grew up in search of adventure and a more exciting life.

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, landscape and mobility are two reciprocal perspectives that greatly influence one another – this is especially the case in road films. The relationship between these two perspectives is taken as the focal point of this chapter's analysis. Firstly, a short political context to the making of the film and the country's period of transition shall be given to create a frame of reference for the film's interpretation. Consequently, one of the film's central themes, i.e. Brazil's transition(s) and the government's new approach to establish connections with the nation and the land, shall be explored. To this end, a close reading of various scenes throughout the film will be given; this will be used to highlight specific elements of the narrative and their relationship to the plot as a whole. It will ultimately be argued that *Bye bye Brasil* demonstrates the way in which mobility influences the surroundings of the road and how the landscape perspective can be used as a critique on mobility – in this case the Brazilian mobilities of progress.

Context to the film

The film is shot and set in 1979, during the dictatorship of the Brazilian military government that controlled the country from 1964 until 1985. In the 1970s the administration sought to kick start modernization processes based on the so-called 'economic miracle' ('milagre econômico'). This was a period of exceptional economic growth that was accompanied by strong migration towards the cities and large investments in infrastructure and big public projects. "Fast economic growth through incentives for foreign capital in exchange for monetary facilities and cheap labour costs" (Vieira, 2013:210)

characterized the administration's policy then. 'Miracle' is an ambivalent term in this context as the period of economic progress coincides partly with the 'Years of Lead' ('Anos de chumbo'), a time of great human rights abuse and increasing social inequalities (Johnson & Stam, 1995:41). João Luis Vieira writes that the economic miracle "*inflicted* [the process of modernization]" (2013:200, emphasis added); his choice of words highlights the disruptive forces that were unleashed by the boundless search for progress. In 1971 president Médici presented the First National Development Plan aimed at increasing the rate of economic growth especially in the remote Northeast and Amazonia. A big, prestigious project of the new policy was the build of the Trans-Amazonian Highway that ran through Paraíba, Ceará, Piaui, Maranhão, Tocantins, Pará and Amazonas to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.[7] The highway was one of the so-called 'pharaonic works' ('obras faraônicas'), due to its size and ambition. The construction was primarily an attempt to integrate the impoverished Northeast[8] of Brazil with the rest of the country and to create a connection with international markets. "The Transamazon Highway project (…) tapped Brazil's aspiration to reach out into the huge unoccupied distances within its borders" (Skidmore, 1990:147). It was to be both a monument to the nation, modernity and globalization:

> Building the Transamazon had great symbolic value. To cut through the jungle forest and build a pioneer highway appealed to those many Brazilians whose romanticized view of Amazonia did not differ from that of the average North America[n] or Western European. It also appealed to the large construction firms [that] (…) stood to profit handsomely from huge contracts in the Amazon valley [while also furnishing] important support for [the Minister of Transportation's] presidential ambitions (146–147).

The road was never fully paved due to the global energy crisis at the end of the 1970s that led to big development expenses and high costs involved with the razing of the rainforest. The construction of the highway would also lead to deforestation in the long run, as the newly built road facilitated the travel of all sorts of transport – promoting the traffic of logging trucks. The environmental cost of the economic miracle was astounding, as the whole country was set to be dug for cultivation (Skidmore, 1990; Vieira,

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7 Other projects aimed to integrate the Northeast economically with the rest of the country include the *Projeto Radambrasil* and the *Zona Franca de Manaus*.

8 The Northeast and other historically peripheral and remote regions, as the featured region of Manaus does not pertain to the Northeast.

2013). Not only the Brazilian government participated in the ploughing of the rainforest in pursuit of economic progress, also its international partners exploited the natural resources, bulldozing obstacles out of the way. A modern way of relating to the land was established; nature became the setting for the country's search for progress.

Brazil was going, in many ways, through a time of transition. Firstly, 1974 was the year the *Abertura* (literally: 'opening') began: a period of slow democratization and less oppressive leadership that would take years to finally convert the country into a democracy in 1985 and give it its constitution in 1988. The biggest transition can therefore be said to be the transition from dictatorial rule into democracy. Secondly, the (attempted) transition from land into country through the repopulation of so-called 'underpopulated' areas; as Skidmore quotes Médici about the Programa de Integração Nacional: "[It was to be] the solution to two problems: men without land in the Northeast and land without men in Amazonia" (1990:145). Brandellero calls the large infrastructure projects of this national integration program a project of "internal colonization", part of the administration's nationalistic propaganda (2013:50–51). The road development was to promote and facilitate the spread of the idea of nation – an integrated nation under the common denominator of modernity and progress. Thirdly, there was the transition into an urban society and lastly the cultural transition that followed from all the others. Progress functioned as the prime directive for any decision to be made, both national and personal; this was captured by the shibboleth 'Pra frente Brasil!' [Go forwards, Brazil!]. The zeitgeist inscribed all movements with the meaning of progress. Urbanization, economic migration, fortune seeking, recolonization of the interior, cargo traffic, displacement, social progress and (international) exploitation are all examples of the mobilities of progress to which the era gave rise. The experience of changing times brought forth a dichotomy between what was and what was about to be; tradition was juxtaposed to modernity as opposites of the temporal spectrum.

Bye bye Brasil plots a course exactly through the middle of that dichotomy, exploring both sides of the dividing line.

Progressing through the landscape

The narrative begins in the town of Piranhas, in the north-eastern state of Alagoas. The colonial architecture, shots of handicraft and herbal medicine, folkloric music and slow shots of the landscape all contribute to the impression that this town is a place of tradition. The slow tone is then disrupted by the Caravana rolling into town, moving the film "to an allegorical register tempered by a carnivalesque atmosphere" (Johnson, 1984:125). From here the Caravana takes off expectantly in the direction of what is supposed to be a better future. This puts the story on a clear track from the past into the future, establishing a connection between the journey and the chronology of events – progress on the trip equals progress in time –; a connection between the narrative and the country's transition.

Struggling to make ends meet, the Caravana seeks a new market for their form of entertainment that runs the risk of soon being outdated and replaced by new mass media. In a race against the advance of television they head inwards, hoping to find parts of the more developed regions of the country that are still beyond the reach of this modern invention. Effectively looking for parts of the country that have not yet been connected to the rest of the country and to the outside worlds, their journey is a quest in the same direction as the state's attempts to connect the whole country to the nation. The journey becomes a challenge to outrun the effects of national integration and globalization, eventually ending with the choice between compromise and continuing along the same road (in different directions). The former applies to Ciço and his family who have successfully reinvented themselves by modernizing their traditional performances – even appearing on the television –; the latter applies to Salomé and Lorde Cigano who now also have a new flashy truck, but whose business model as travelling entertainment still depends on the gullibility of small town communities.

Exactly halfway through the film Diegues makes a visual statement about the film's main theme of change and transition. With 53 minutes on both sides of the clock the director has included a thirty seconds shot of the moving Caravana (fig. 1). In this short scene a beautiful antithesis is created, a contrast that signals the central tension that Diegues explores in *Bye bye Brasil*.

Figure 1. Quadriptych of the Caravana approaching the camera with the dark night sky behind the truck; the camera follows the truck driving past it and then captures the back end of the vehicle driving towards the morning light.

The Caravana approaches the camera head-on, its headlights give its presence away long before the actual truck can be seen. In this dark part of the shot, the truck and its details are visible due to the off screen morning light. When the truck passes the camera, the camera follows the movement of the vehicle – never breaking 'eye contact', but losing focus and fragmenting the image due to the sudden proximity of the moving object. For a moment solely the thundering truck can be seen; there is no background, only sound and motion. Then, in the second half of the shot, the camera concentrates on the complete vehicle once again; only the dark silhouette is discernible against the morning light, as it slowly and anonymously disappears in a cloud of dust. Given the linear trajectory of the road, and the position of this scene exactly in the middle of the narrative, it would seem that this scene can be seen as a representative analogy for the film as a whole – halfway on the nation's timeline with the future in front and the past behind the Caravana. The transition from one phase to another, from night into day, works as a *mise en abyme* for the movement from tradition to modernity. The present, in this analogy, is blurry and out of focus; the now is a very short, confusing moment but can soon be put into perspective with a look in the rear-view mirror. The times of tradition that mark the beginning of the film and the journey are portrayed as dark and dim;

at first glance these times might *seem* like something to leave behind in favour of the morning light. But what is clear to see is that the identity was unambiguously defined then – one could still identify the Caravana, just like one used to know what it meant to be Brazilian. The future is much more uncertain, casting the shadow of anonymity over the individual. And even though progress is promoted and presented in a favourable light, the future seems to be associated with a sense of loss. This is further elaborated by the contraposition of the two lone trees that top the left side of the road(s): The bare tree at the end of the shot mirrors the leaf-bearing tree from the beginning, indicating that something has been lost in the transition from past to future. The transition from tradition to modernity is inscribed with a sense of loss. Modernity allows for people to be connected through multimedia and a more integrated country; it makes it possible for people to displace themselves for economic improvement, but at the same time it also pushes unfortunate fortune seekers into wandering – forcing them to move with the dream of economic improvement elsewhere. The meaning of the metaphor of progress becomes intertwined with the actual act of moving. The truck acts as a vehicle for the changing times, which perhaps is imagined best in figure 2. Here Lorde Cigano is seen in the front seat of the truck, sitting sideways with his legs and face facing the side of the road. If the future indeed lies ahead of the truck and the past behind them in the traditional space of Piranhas, the truck symbolizes the now.

Figure 2. Lorde Cigano sitting in the truck, with the Portuguese word 'HOJE', meaning today, written next to him

The Circus band finds it hard to adjust to the new ways and in this era of interconnectedness on all levels actually struggles to connect with the new times. As the story progresses, the Caravana explores the

consequences of modernity and discovers the hardships of progress. Their movement gains significance from the passage from one phase into another; it is a type of movement that is characterized by transition. This mobility can be considered the push of modernity and as such it parallels the political situation of the country.

The objective of the large infrastructure projects like the Trans-Amazonian Highway was to colonize the interior of Brazil by integrating the Amazonian regions with the rest of the country. Land had to become country. The journey of the Caravana is set to a background of the nation's expansion of the road network; bringing order to the capricious jungle, creating an infrastructure of progress for the whole country. The heavy machines that are there to pave the way towards the interior for the modern Brazilian are at once a monument of man's dominion over nature and an image of the need to progress with abandon. There is an uncomfortable sensation of prestige given to the construction vehicles as their appearance (fig. 3) is a part of a series of shots of the journey that mark the progress the Caravana is making on their way to Altamira, accompanied by Chico Buarque's uplifting soundtrack for the film.

Figure 3. The Caravana and the Caterpillar bulldozers.

Even though the image of the big machines ploughing through the rainforest is framed in a happy melody, this idea of progress is instantly questioned as the roaring engines brutally assert their presence and soon take over the senses. The dynamics of power that are re-enacted in this shot can be explored by examining the image of the road. The first way to look at the road is to see it as a testimony of human endeavour and a celebration of man's progress. Man has conquered the jungle and subjected it to his spatial preferences. From this perspective nature is the setting for human achievement; roads are built and are then able to function as connections, for both people and commerce. The nation is able to spread and the land gains a new meaning from the human presence. The second way to look at the image places a stronger emphasis on the relation to the landscape. The violent disposition of the road then becomes apparent: The road does not only connect, it severs at the same time. It runs through the landscape as a scar inflicted by the need for progress. The display of power by the machines creates a very uncomfortable sensation as it demonstrates the violence of man's relation to nature. These two perspectives place the image in a dialectical crossfire, as the viewer either looks at the natural scenery through the lens of mobility, or uses the landscape as a lens to look at movement.

Part of the same montage, included immediately after the shot with the Caterpillar bulldozers, is a shot of a run over *tatu*, a species of armadillo native to Brazil. The tatu-bola is a very popular animal in Brazil – it was used as the national mascot for the 2014 FIFA World Cup – and now faces extinction as an endangered species. The inclusion of the image of the dead tatu in the montage of the journey suggests that its death should be seen as collateral damage of mobility and progress; a popular national symbol has died. In the background the tones of the same cheerful melody still sounds, this time almost drowned out by the buzz of the cutting of trees. The uplifting music now becomes ironic as it continues to sound when images of dead and barren trees are shown (fig. 4). They are views on the landscape, taken perpendicularly on the road as if watching out of the side window of the lorry. The interesting quality of these images is that they are among the rare travelling shots that do not feature any visible presence of the road or the lorry – not even the frame of the window is visible. The absence of the road and the vehicle takes away mobility's context of power; both the journey narrative and the national call for progress are temporarily abstracted from the scene. All that remains is an autonomous scenery that is briefly able to address its existence and the state of its existence without the argument of progress. In this brief moment the viewer is invited to contemplate the effects of mobility after the event has left the scene. The stillness of these shots breaks the

flow of the moving images that came before them. They evoke the sensation of a slideshow of pictures, temporarily extracted from the story; in their isolation they function as a type of evidence that has not been compromised by the arguments of progress, but they bear the impact of so-called progress.

Figure 4. Two shots of barren trees.

The body as a landscape

It has been noted by critics how the body of Salomé can be read as an analogy for the exploitation of the land. Brandellero cites Ania Loomba when she points out how colonial discourse can lay claim on "female bodies as territories 'available for plunder, possession, discovery and conquest'" (Loomba, 1998:151, as cited in Brandellero 2013:60). In the exchange between Salomé and her male-dominated environment – her audience and Lorde Cigano – one can read a metaphor for the interaction between the Brazilian landscape and the modern desire to control it.

This is perhaps best illustrated in a scene at the beginning of the film. The troupe have just reached their first destination, the coastal town of Maceió, and are confronted there by a general apathy to their presence. The townsmen are all captivated by the recently installed village television and cannot take their eyes off the screen; even when they are handed flyers for the Caravana's performance by a scarcely clad Salomé they do not make eye contact. This lack of interaction – of recognition, in fact – prompts Lorde Cigano to perform a trick that blows up the television. Johnson states that the opposition between the two forms of entertainment "would seem to suggest that television is responsible for the destruction of Brazilian indigenous and folk cultures as well as for the homogenization of cultural expression in Brazil" (1984:125.), naming the 'fishbone' antennas as a symbolic sign of this opposition. Nevertheless, there is, according to Johnson, also an analogous link between the relationship Lorde Cigano establishes with his

audience and the relationship between cinema and its public (ibid). Both forms of entertainment deal in illusions and the only real difference appears to be the degree of cultural penetration both spectacles achieve – with the carnival not being able to compete with the mass medialization. Johnson then concludes that this extreme level of cultural penetration is not the root of the problem, but rather that the television medium is predominantly controlled by global multinationals causing this form of entertainment to hollow out Brazilian cultural standards and replacing them with standardized and globalized values (126). In this light, the trancelike state of the townsmen who are watching (or worshipping? (Stam, Vieira & Xavier, 1995:422) the television seems to suggest that the colonial exploitation of resources is thus continued in the minds of Brazil, controlled once more by foreign powers. In the next scene the company is asked to leave the area; Lorde Cigano reacts by saying that they wanted to leave anyway and heads inside the Caravana's tent camp. There he starts to undress and move around the naked body of Salomé, while proclaiming loudly:

> [Lorde Cigano entering the tent:] They do not deserve what you have to offer them, Salomé. They do not deserve to know your pleasure cave, your slit of dreams, your grotto of love. Let them keep their TV, while I hold the purple fig of the Queen of Rumba. [Exits the tent to briefly state:]Let them shove their antennas up their ass – excuse me. [Goes back inside]
>
> > To your north is your face.
> >
> > In your centre, your navel.
> >
> > In your South, everything I want.
> >
> > My feijão, my coat!
>
> [Salomé:] Then, do it well. As only you know how to do it.
>
> [Lorde Cigano:] I want to die of love, my poor little dove, trapped in your velvet claws (Diegues, 1979).

During large parts of the scene he is not visible on screen, but his voice remains audible while the camera stays focused on Salomé. The dramatic tone with which Lorde Cigano speaks in this scene puts him both in and outside of the diegesis, as the image of his body temporarily leaves the shot and his voice takes over the role of narrator. He "functions as a fictive surrogate for the cineaste. He represents a latter-day incarnation of a typical Cinema Novo character, the mediator, (…) at once inside and outside the fiction"

(Stam, Vieira & Xavier, 1995:422). Even in this relatively intimate setting – they are alone, but it is clear that Ciço and Dasdô are still able to hear them – he does not break character and makes a performance of their act of lovemaking. It is a commanding voice with the cadence of an announcer; a narrator that not only addresses those present on screen, i.e. Salomé, but whose proclamatory style of speaking postulates the existence of an extradiegetic audience. The leader of the Caravana Rolidei then proceeds to explore the geography of Salome's body, emphatically describing her anatomy in cartographical terms. Her face is the north of the map, her navel is the centre and her sex is the south. The intonation of his narration makes it sound like a declaration of discovery or property, effectively laying a claim on her body as a territory. He calls her vagina a purple fig, thus employing the male discourse that reduces a woman's body to terms of nature, while he 'discovers' and owns her lands. His voice is, in this instance, the vocal representative of what Laura Mulvey calls the *male gaze*: "The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly" (1975:11). Similarly to the way a human's eye can turn a landscape into setting, the male gaze turns the female body into image. The body loses its autonomy as a sovereign presence and is subjected to a meaning-inscribing perspective. It acquires a function from and in its relation to the spectator – for both Lorde Cigano and the audience Salomé's body becomes a spectacle. Her presence serves "as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen" (11–12).

The mapping of Salome's body blurs the lines between the female body and the fertile earth. Her vagina is a cave, a grotto, a fig; she is his *feijão* – his typically Brazilian bean stew –, that which provides him with nourishment and shelter. The map is a representation of power, in this case male power – as geographer John Harley puts it: "Cartographers manufacture power: they create a spatial panopticon. It is a power embedded in the map text. We can talk about the power of the map just as we already talk about the power of the word or about the book as a force for change. In this sense maps have politics" (1989:13). Lorde Cigano gives the body of Salomé its orientation – he is the compass to her physique. It is not so much a map of the physical body, as it is a map of male fantasy. To look at her body as a map implies a physical hierarchy of power in which the man stands vertically over the horizontal woman; indeed, a body can only point north when it is laying down – on its back. "[M]aps, by articulating the world in mass-produced and stereotyped images, express an embedded social vision" (Harley, 1992:14). In this case the map represents

a dynamics of dominance and subjection, of possession and exploitation. The male gaze defines the female landscape; he is the colonial explorer asserting his dominance over her territory. The scene shows this landscape first partly by zooming in on the top half of Salomé's body, followed by a shot of her whole body and subsequently lands on an extreme close-up of her groin under Lorde Cigano's hands. The camera folds the image of her body as a map, finally settling on a chart of male desire. The scene ends with a shot of his hands grabbing her lower body that slowly dissolves into a landscape with a sailboat sailing along the coast, completing the suggestion of colonization in the scene.

Like Johnson wrote: "The film develops metaphors of prostitution and penetration as it reveals the pollution and the destruction of the country's natural resources and the homogenization of its indigenous and folk cultures" (1984:121). The metaphor of the body as a map reveals a conceptual framework of exploitation and fantasy that turns into allegory when it is applied to the film as a whole. The map establishes a strong relationship between Salomé's prostitution and the country's exploitation, in which modernity becomes the gaze that seeks to subject the landscape to its vision of the future – to the fantasies of nation.

When the Caravana lose their truck halfway through the film, it is Salomé, working as a prostitute, that brings in the money that allows them to continue on their journey. The parallel here is poignant: In order to break the hiatus of their itinerary, it was necessary for Salomé to sell her body to a group of violent men, just like the film demonstrates the logics of a country to continue on its journey *pra frente*. Towards the end of the film the parallel is confirmed once more, it is clear that the new truck was bought from money that Salomé made while working once again as a prostitute and that Lorde Cigano earned while smuggling minerals – he calls this "the future of Amazonas".

The overlook of Altamira

Bye bye Brasil's position as a document marking the inbetweenness of the times is most clearly reflected by the troupe's initial quest to go to the city of Altamira. Lorde Cigano gives this place a legendary status, describing it as the "Heart of the Transamazônica"; a beautiful, and precious, land where there is supposed to be enough money and wealth for everyone. It is the promised land. When they arrive they discover that the place is not the affluent and rural town they thought and that it has been exposed to the influences of modernity. The now highly developed city has no place for the Caravana and the group actually end up

losing their truck to a local hustler who poignantly, as Johnson points out, is "in the service of a multinational corporation" (1984:123). The characters are forced to pause their journey as they have to find a way of regaining a means of transportation. The interrupted flow of the group's movement forms a stark contrast to their search for progress; this contrast can be used to contemplate the journey so far and the road ahead. Altamira literally translates as 'high look' and can in this context be interpreted to represent an overlook. Ton Lemaire has elaborated on the concept of the overlook in his *Filosofie van het Landschap*:

> *Waar anders zou men de echte ruimte kunnen ontdekken dan vanuit een vergezicht? Ook wandelaars die verdwaald zijn, zoeken ter oriëntatie een uitzicht over hun omgeving. Wil de ruimte zich tot landschap ontplooien, dan is daar een wijde blik voor nodig. (...) Het uitzicht is dat moment van de wandeling waardoor de wandelaar zichzelf als wandelaar bevestigt, door namelijk de praktijk van zijn bewegingen met de theorie van het uitzicht te verenigen*

> [Where else could one discover true space then from an overlook? Hikers also use a vantage point over the landscape to find their bearings when they are lost. If space is to become landscape, it requires a broad perspective. (...) The view is the moment of a trip when the hiker confirms themselves as hiker by merging the practice of their movements with the theory of the view] (1996:14–15). [9]

In other words, an overlook helps the traveller to find their place – both spatially and metaphorically. The vantage point lets them know how far they are on their journey and shows them what lies ahead. The overlook creates a perspective on the journey, this way the passage can be evaluated and the traveller's relation to the bigger picture becomes clear. In Altamira the promise of modernity is critically examined – the fantasy of the place has inspired people to move, has mobilized a whole society, but the reality is disappointing and provides little means of moving forwards. The characters are temporarily stranded here and do not know how to progress. The promised land has proven to be a lie; the myth of progress at all costs has been debunked.

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9 All translations in brackets are my own.

The quest for Altamira can be read as the film's objective of creating a testimony of the country's transition. *Bye bye Brasil* tracks the roads that have led to the film's events and their socio-political context and takes a moment to pause and reflect on that. The mobilities of modernity have brought Brazil to the place where it was in the late 1970s, but a lot has been destroyed and lost along the way and it is questioned whether this truly constitutes a movement of progress. Subsequently it also aims to look forwards; the film orientates the viewer towards the future as the characters eventually leave Altamira and go ahead to find a place for themselves in modernity.

The form and shape of the future are left ambiguous in *Bye bye Brasil*. The film ends with an initial suggestion of progress as Salomé is seen behind the wheel of the new truck which could be interpreted as a consequence of her social mobility and emancipation. Alternatively, it can be regarded as a further decay of her social position as Lorde Cigano is now being driven by her, effectively turning her driving into a testimony of servitude – under the guise of female independence.[10] The absurdity of the transition into modernity is highlighted by the rebirth of the Caravana in a new, 'modern' form. The spelling of the English name of the group has been 'corrected' from *Rollidei* to the more international, but still erroneous, *Rollidey* and the lights in the hair of Salomé reflect her attempt to go along with her time but frankly looks a bit absurd. Brandellero has noted how her dyed afro haircut reflects "the extreme artificiality of the Caravana's new identity (…) [while underscoring] the fragility of black identity on screen" (2013:62), inferring that the film's imagination of mobility also partakes in the discussion on racial inequalities. Finally, their new quest to go even further inland to amaze the crowds there with their performances shows that they have learned very little from their journey so far. Their offer is to bring "civilization" to those parts of the country, but it remains to be seen if by the time they get there the places they will go to have not yet already been integrated in the network of the nation. Except for the visual update the Caravana has received, there is no indication that their performance has been modernized as well, leading one to wonder if their audiences will still be impressed by fake snow and magic if the television can bring them the same experience. *Bye bye Brasil* demonstrates, with a degree of irony, the illusion of progress. By selling the land one tries to buy a nation, but this comes at the cost of great exploitation and destruction.

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10 Oscar Wilde wrote that "the worst slave-owners were those who were kind to their slaves, and so prevented the horror of the system being realized by those who suffered from it, and understood by those who contemplated it" (292), thus maintaining the status quo and impeding revolution. Wilde, O. (1891). The Soul of Man under Socialism. *Fortnightly Review*, old series 55, new series 49 (February), pp. 292–319.

The film thus functions as a reflection of the path that has lead Brazil to the doorway of modernity and as an exploration of the times ahead. Modernity's promise of the reinvention of civilization is critically investigated as the merits of a perpetual movement forward are questioned. Dasdô and Ciço opt for the certainty of a stationary life in Brasilia and are quite successful in their attempts of finding a place in the new, modern context. The Caravana, on the other hand, are seen continuing their journey into the unknown future. Their faith is left ambiguous as their interpretation and appropriation of the idea of modernity – the flashy outfits, Salomé's newly dyed blond hair, and the neon truck – suggest a desperate attempt to adapt to the new times. It is left open if they will succeed; the way they drive off into the sunset might suggest the beginning of a new adventure into the open landscape, but can also be interpreted as an escape under cover of night.

Snow in the sertão

To conclude this chapter, a final key scene of the film shall be analysed that can be argued to act as a *mise en abyme* for the larger narrative of the entire film. At the beginning of the film, before the Caravana leaves Piranhas, they first give a show in their tent camp. The scene that ensues is a classic within the history of Brazilian cinema. Lorde Cigano's face appears from behind the curtain, making direct eye contact with the audience that have gathered in the tent. Under the sound of a drum and a trumpet he slowly takes the stage where he performs a small cliché magic trick that is met with applause. He then announces in a dramatic voice that he, "the master of dreams", is about to fulfil the dream of every Brazilian. He asks the audience what that dream might be; the local administrator's suggestion of "*muita fartura e progresso*" (abundance and progress) is ignored as it was probably too close to the correct answer which would take away some of the built suspension, and it is not immortality as somebody in the audience suggested. The dream of every Brazilian, Lorde Cigano reveals, is to make it snow in the hot and dry sertão. And after casting his magical catch phrase "Para Vigo me voy", Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas' starts playing and it indeed starts 'snowing' inside the tent, to which the prefect responds that he cannot believe that it has actually snowed during his administration. Lorde Cigano dreamily replies: "Indeed, it is snowing in the sertão; just like in Switzerland, in Germany, la France, like in old England, *saudade*, and Europe in general and the United States of North America. Just like all civilized countries in the world, Brazil now too has snow" (Diegues, 1979). Dasdô notes that the 'snow' is in fact just desiccated coconut. Then it abruptly stops snowing and Salomé's exotic dance is announced as the next act.

In this scene civilization is declared to be the shared dream of every Brazilian, which embeds the spectacle within the framework of progress that the dictatorship sought to install in the minds of the Brazilian people – everybody wants this type of modernity, and if not, like the member in the audience who wished for eternal life, they are corrected because they should want it. The control over nature is presented by Lorde Cigano, "guide to the clouds and the weather", to be a token of modernity so Brazil would be finally equal to other, wealthier countries in terms of civilization. But this control, just like the myth of civilization, is – as Dasdô remarks – an illusion. It is Brazilian snow, made of a typically Brazilian product that is not available in the countries mentioned by Lorde Cigano. But rather than celebrating the unique, Brazilian character of this magical phenomenon, it is framed to look like something foreign that it is not. This seems to suggest that the quest for progress does not look at Brazil's own qualities, but in its approach hopes to imitate other countries. The cheesy music and the absurd claim that snow (made out of coconut shavings) constitutes civilization adds a sense of irony to this spectacle – and by extension to the processes of modernity. But, as the rest of the film then demonstrates, similar ideas of progress have had a great influence on the country. The idea that the subjugation of nature would equal progress is illustrated by the great ecological damage that the pursuit of modernity inflicted during this time; this destructive project was turned into a spectacle in order to promote nationalistic feelings about the great infrastructure developments; the desire to displace the culture of the European mainland to Brazil is heeded by the welcoming of foreign multinationals and of the influence of globalization. It is ironic that the enchantment uttered by Lorde Cigano comes directly from a Cuban song about migration, as if it is implied that migration is the magical answer to make the Brazilian people's dreams come true and the magical solution to the country's quest for modernity. Furthermore, this magic act has no root inside the Brazilian repertoire but had to be imported and thus constitutes a foreign idea of the road to progress.

The mobilities of progress have reshaped the landscape to accommodate the dream of modernity. The whole country was to become a monument to humanity's control over their surroundings and had to exhale the nationalist prestige of this accomplishment. In a way, one could conclude from this that the landscape was being mobilized to testify of the modern civilization that could control its natural surroundings while paving the way for its ambitions of progress. Nature had to become the setting for the growth of the nation. *Bye bye Brasil*, however, uses the landscape as a visual critique against the discourse of modernity. The destruction and control over the landscape is framed within a context of

disenchantment. The landscape perspective shows the costs of the unbridled pursuit of progress and invites the spectator to reflect on this while they are on the threshold of modern times. Lorde Cigano's role as a magician claiming to be able to fulfil the dreams of all Brazilians with his illusions, his colonial gaze over and exploitation of Salomés body, the smuggling of the precious stones and his apparent lack of a moral compass – he does have a metaphorical compass, one that is always pointing forwards (Johnson, 1984:130): "We have to keep rolling. Otherwise we will fall off and screw ourselves" – make him the embodiment of the relentless pursuit for progress. The film is dedicated to the Brazilian people of the twenty-first century as they are about to enter into the future; *Bye bye Brasil* is a testimony of the country's transition – the film's critical representation of progress advocates a new way of experiencing mobility for the new generation. The road in this film is a bridge between the past and the future, characterized as a space of continuous movement – and if one is unable to move then at least as a space of aspired movement. Its surroundings are subservient to the movement forwards and almost exclusively appear as setting for the displacements. In the next chapter, however, the road will be considered as a static space; in *Andarilho* the road is shown not as what Marc Augé would define as a *non-place* (1992) that connects other places, but as a proper place in its own right, accommodating different logics and different perspectives than solely the dominance of mobility.

Chapter 3. Landscape and movement in *Andarilho*: reflections on the road

If *Bye bye Brasil* can be said to be a film about the costs of moving forwards – both physically and metaphorically, with a truck being the vehicle of transition, *Andarilho* is "[a] film about the connections between walking and thinking, in which the ever-changing nature of things turns life into a place of mere passing" (Guimarães, 2006). The film follows the movements of three drifters as they wander over and around the highways of the central state of Minas Gerais. The three drifters, Valdemar, Nercino and Paulão, are never formally introduced and there is not much attention to their personal biographies. They are simply there. And they move around. Sometimes they meet. The film does not delve into their biographies, but shows their connection to the surroundings and their way of relating to the world. As they walk, they philosophize – about life, God, the human mind and negative spirits. Their personal backgrounds remain vague, their mental state is never diagnosed – or questioned. The film does not guide the viewer through the shown material, but rather lets them wander through a mosaic of landscapes and sounds. Sometimes the images become abstract, or the sound becomes unhinged from its context. The road is always present, but not always visible. The movement of the drifters is characterized by a sense of *errance*; *errance* or 'errantry', is a concept of movement theorized by the Martinican philosopher Édouard Glissant in his influential *Poétique de la Relation* (1990). "Directed by Relation, errantry follows neither an arrowlike trajectory nor one that is circular and repetitive, nor is it mere wandering-idle roaming. Wandering, one might become lost, but in errantry one knows at every moment where one is-at every moment in relation to the other" (Wing, 2010:xvi).

Documentary or fiction

At first glance *Andarilho* could not be more different from *Bye bye Brasil*. Indeed, both films are set in Brazil, but the former is filmed in Minas Gerais, a state in the interior Southeast of the country, while the latter is set in the Northeast of the country and both films are shot some thirty years apart. Both films are about the road, but differ in genre and approach. Consequently, the cinematography is very dissimilar and the distinct use of the camera raises the question whether it can still be said that both films pertain to the same domain of representation. The narrative of *Bye bye Brasil* flows, whereas the interchange of *Andarilho*'s slow shots and edited monologues make for a more staccato viewing experience. Yet these

films are not totally isolated, as they both engage in the same thematic dialogue. As discussed in the previous chapter, Carlos Diegues' *Bye bye Brasil* poses questions about the relationship between progress and nature – between humans and landscape. Similarly, *Andarilho* too places itself in the middle of the force field of mobility and landscape, ultimately becoming a reflection about humanity and humanity's relation to landscape.

Andarilho is not only featured in this thesis for its contrast to *Bye bye Brasil*; the film itself is a producer of meaning in its own right and formulates a unique perspective on the relation to landscapes.

Before this chapter's analysis of *Andarilho* begins, it is important to emancipate the film from the definition of genre so that it can speak for itself without being censored by conventions. In the opening credits of the film, *Andarilho* is classified as a documentary, yet it exhibits many characteristics that transcend that categorization. The film lacks the context that would normally function as an important feature to a documentary – the film takes off without an introduction; there is no guidance from a voice over, nor is the voice of the documentary maker audible at any point; the characters in the film do occasionally give their testimony directly to the camera but these monologues take on the form of a feverish stream of consciousness, evoking the sensation of a coincidental encounter, rather than an organized documentation of their reality. Instead of framing the world that is shown in the structure of a documentary, the film shows a patchwork of sounds and images that are taken from reality and are subsequently mystified and fictionalized by the camera: "*Cao Guimarães consegue transformar, através do posicionamento de seu olhar, seus personagens "reais" em ficcionais*" [Through the placement of his eye, Cao Guimarães manages to transform his "real" characters into fictional characters] (Azzi, 2012). The film does not intend to document a reality as it is, but rather shows an otherworldly version of reality. It makes no claim of objectivity and celebrates subjectivity:

> *Se o meu assunto é a realidade, não estou isento dela e nem ela está isenta de mim. Neste exercício da reciprocidade, da generosidade da entrega, vários graus de subjetividade estão interagindo entre si. A questão não é objetivar o olhar diante da realidade mas mesclar sua subjetividade com a subjetividade do outro. Às vezes esvaziando-se no sentido zen budista do termo, às vezes potencializando o seu 'eu' até o total transbordamento. Não existem*

regras definitivas, tudo funciona como uma espécie de pacto fundamentado na cumplicidade recíproca.

[If my subject is reality, I am not exempt from it, nor is it exempt from me. In this exercise of reciprocity, of the generosity of surrender, various degrees of subjectivity are interacting with each other. The issue is not objectifying the gaze before reality but merge its subjectivity with the subjectivity of the other. Sometimes emptying itself in the Zen Buddhist sense of the term, sometimes potentializing its 'I' to the full overflow. There are no definitive rules, everything works as a sort of pact based on reciprocal complicity]. (Guimarães, 2007:1).

To confine a film to the boundaries of its supposed genre would mean to ignore the intimate, subjective relationship the filmmaker has made with the film and to impede the viewer of forming a personal connection as well. Furthermore, in this case the film's fantastical aesthetics would have difficulties functioning in the context of an objective reality. The subjectivity that is inscribed in the film is a vital component of the film's experience and the perspective it develops. This shall be worked out further in the next parts of the chapter.

Similarly, *Bye bye Brasil* can be said to pertain to the general category of narrative film: It has scripted dialogue, and tells the fictional story of the travelling Caravana Rollidei. There are, however, elements making this film's genre more ambiguous as well. While a fictional story, it strongly refers to a very real set of historical circumstances; the landscapes shown are real landscapes and have an actual existence outside of the film. Randal Johnson notes the documentary style in which the opening scene was shot, commenting on the length of the shot and the inclusion of the local villagers consumed by their daily activities (1984:124). As was discussed previously, road movies often blur the distinction between reality and fiction, which makes it a complex matter to trace the threshold between documentary and fictional narrative. It can be argued that the pro-filmic in most films has some sort of extradiegetic root in the reality outside of the film; *Bye bye Brasil*, however, takes the connection to the geography and the Brazilians as its central theme. Even a film with a narrative as clearly defined as *Bye bye Brasil* is never isolated to its own fiction as the real world always manages to seep through. The context of Brazil's transition period was embedded as a part of the narrative – it was the reason why the plot unfolded in the

way that it did – and simultaneously displaced the narrative from the screen by commenting on that context. That is to say, there is a reciprocal relationship between film and reality as film shows a representation of reality while at the same time that representation becomes a part of that reality through the way that it address that reality as a theme.

Both films exhume to a greater or lesser extent qualities of their respective genres, but are able to transcend the conventions that are often used to delineate a films range of influence. Because of this blurring of the lines of the filmic format, both films can be regarded to operate in the same realm of representation, even if they do so at opposite ends of the spectrum. The shared conceptual force field allows the films to address similar themes, albeit with different approaches. By using the same concepts the films are able to take part in a dialogue that includes both ways of seeing. In the next chapter this conceptual force field will be further elaborated.

Andarilho is an aesthetically rich film that relies strongly on the visual experience of the imagery and concentrates less on dialogue or plot. The present chapter will aim to study the aesthetics of the film's representation of landscape and movement.

Re-imagining the road

In order to analyse the film's aesthetics, a close reading of its visual representations is required. This subsection will therefore concentrate on the first scenes of the film as a short case study, starting at the first scene and ending with the introduction of Nercino. In this close reading some threads will be laid bare that will be followed up later in the chapter.

The film opens with a close-up of Valdemar, half hidden by the roadside grass, looking directly at or through the camera. The clothes and skin of Valdemar are covered in dirt, giving his raggedy appearance a context of being in between territories: In his image "[h]*omem e natureza se confundem*" [man and nature are blended] (Sbragia, 2016:94). The palette of his colours match the colours of his surroundings and the dirt road behind him. The scene continues with an improvised proclamation about the relationship between Earth and God. "*A cena (...) não foi construída com o auxílio de um roteiro. Guimarães fez o registro de forma espontânea, apostando no inesperado, na reação do personagem na frente das câmeras, no*

improviso" [The scene (…) was not constructed with the aid of a script. Guimarães made the registration spontaneously, betting on the unexpected, the reaction of the character in front of the cameras, on the improvisation] (ibid.). During his monologue, the shot is clearly edited several times to combine several takes into one; this way not only the various places that the monologue take place are fused together, but the timeline of his speech is also compressed by visibly cutting various times in his speech while the audio and his voice keep talking. The role of editing is to highlight the constructed nature of the film's representation and effectively fictionalizing the very real words that Valdemar speaks.

The shot of Valdemar is followed by one of the highway. It is a recurring trait of this film that scenes that prominently feature the drifters are alternated with a series of shots of the road. These shots are often filmed with unexpected camera angles or overexposed cameras, or contain mirages that blur the dimensions of the road. The surreal imagery of the road is juxtaposed to the relatively straightforward shots of the drifters. The shot after Valdemar's introduction to the screen shows a slow movement forwards while looking down on the road from a high camera position. The music is ominous and the shot is very dark; the colours of the road verge are saturated in deep, dark green tones. After half a minute of slow forward progression the film's title is superimposed over the road, as if to specify the eponymous *andarilhos* as drifters on the road (fig. 5). The angle of the camera manages to eliminate the horizon from the screen, giving a new twist to the classic road movie shot of the road disappearing into a sublime vanishing point at the horizon. This film is not a road movie about an escape into an open future filled with possibilities, this film is a road movie about the actual space of the road. By not showing the point where the road dissolves into the horizon, the film does not romanticize the idea of an open journey into the unknown, instead it physically frames the road as an enclosed space. The limited view of the surroundings makes the stretch of asphalt anonymous, there is no indication of landmarks or context giving elements in the landscape. The high saturation of the dark colours of the road verge casts dark shadows over the road side vegetation; because so little of the background is visible, the movement of the camera cannot be contrasted to a fixed point to mark the distance travelled. The broken line surface markings of the road follow each other sequentially, indicating movement, but the repetition of the same broken line evokes the sensation of being on a loop: the lack of context removes the idea of distance and the seemingly endless repetition makes the temporal length of the movement meaningless. There is an unequivocal movement in

this scene, but the camera simultaneously takes away the signification of that movement by framing it in a vacuum of connotations of progress – the movement is marked to be *bare movement*.

Figure 5. Title superimposed over the surface of the road.

Then a dark screen is shown with a grey, abstract strip running through the middle of the shot. The scene gains a context from a car that drives over the strip and eventually disappears at the top of the screen. The image of the empty road lingers for a few second, making the absence of the car visible. The uncommonly high angle of the camera makes it difficult to recognize the strip as a road and after the car has left the scene returns to a semi-abstract image of something that could be a road – but solely based on the image one cannot be sure of that (fig. 6). This raises the question of what the road is when there is nobody around. The road is a space that gains its significance from human presence and that becomes ambiguous in their absence. The angle of the camera again excludes the horizon from the picture, underlining once more the film's approach of the road as a space in its own right, not necessarily leading towards a destination. The camera does not follow the car, but remains fixed on the asphalt. This emphasizes the fact that the film concentrates less on displacement, or the movement from place to the next, but instead focusses more on the geographies of the road. The use of fixed camera positions gives the film a staccato quality that is juxtaposed by the movement that takes place in front of the camera. Almost every scene of the film produces a similar contrast – ranging from the slow movement of the drifters in comparison with the cars that come speeding by, to the steady landscape that is set to the rush and flow of traffic noises.

Figure 6. Three images of the road. First as abstract line without context; secondly as road due to the presence of the car; finally as semi-abstract road that now has a context of traffic and is thus recognizable as a road, but in their absence can still be easily interpreted as something else.

In the next shot the camera takes on a very low position on the road; the photography is very dark again. This time there is a horizon, but it is not a definite line. The contrast with the sky is not well-defined; the road dissolves into the sky – or vice versa – as the warmth of the road distorts the boundaries between asphalt and air. The heat becomes a visible force that denaturizes the material and solid features of the road (fig. 7). In fact, one can hardly recognize a road in this scene – one can only deduce from the rest of the film that this too probably is a road. In the earlier shots the road is given spatial qualities that are not normally associated with the specific image of the road, this scene adds to the process of reshaping that image by softening the hard lines that usually mark the difference between the two worlds. The road does no longer pertain to a different realm from natural elements like the air, the heat or the sky. In *Bye bye Brasil* the road cut through nature, indicating the absolute difference between nature and the manmade world. The road functioned as an absolute boundary that severed the landscape and separated it from the flow of human movement. The image of the road was axiomatic, an unchanging constant. By showing the road at unusual angles, the defining presence of the horizon is taken away and the stereotypical qualities that the road has in Western film are dismantled – the road no longer equates unrelenting motion, a path to freedom or linear speed, but instead is presented in a new way that gains its meaning from actual interpretation rather than from connotation and association. A new, more fluid image rises, which results in a surreal image that questions the absoluteness of the road.

Figure 7. A distorted horizon and hints of asphalt. Despite the surrealist and fluid qualities of the shot, the colour palette gives the scene an earthy undertone. The camera is positioned close to the road and looks into the undistinguishable distance.

This process is then continued in the next scene. A person cycles over an uphill road that is flanked by trees; the character moves towards a small opening of air at the top of the screen. The air is shivering from the heat and at the bottom of the screen the image of the road is distorted again by a mirage, giving the road an uncomfortably organic quality. The 'organicity' of the road confuses a pre-established set of assumptions about the road – both as in-between space and as actual space. There appear to be no strict boundaries that distinguish it from nature. The reality of the road, as becomes apparent, is no certainty; it flows and oozes, it passes into a state of nature by osmosis. In *Bye bye Brasil* there is a very similar shot that can serve to illustrate the difference in approach to representing the image of the road (fig. 8). In both shots a lone figure – respectively a cyclist and the Caravana – is seen moving over the road; the road appears to cut through the surroundings, it runs through the middle of the screen and interrupts the natural environment. The difference, however, lies in the way the contrast between the road and the surroundings. In *Bye bye Brasil* the difference between road and side of the road is absolute and unquestioned, whereas in the image taken from *Andarilho* the borders between asphalt and landscape are much less clearly defined. The mirage challenges the notion of separate domains and allows the road to be considered a part of the environment, as its boundaries dissolve. Furthermore, the visible heat on the road

takes away the air of sterility that usually surrounds the road; indeed by demonstrating that the road is susceptible to natural influences, it is shown to be able to interact with nature – instead of being a manmade phenomenon that was superimposed on nature and to which a different set of rules applies. This also is reflected by the representation of the wanderers whose dirty and ragged appearance suggests that they do not exclusively move inside the sterile domain of culturized nature, but are able to move between realms.

Figure 8. In the image on the left, a mirage denaturizes the concrete nature of the road in Andarilho; it loses its solidity and structure. In the image on the right taken from *Bye bye Brasil*, the road has a more absolute presence.

After two more shots of different roads the camera settles on the side of the road; the music has stopped and a human figure, Nercino, is slowly emerging from behind the bushes – there is no visible road in this shot. One can hear the wind blow and birds sing. Then suddenly a car crosses the screen and its engine noise lingers for a few seconds after it has passed. By only including the presence of the road through sound and the distorted image of a car rushing by, the shot establishes a dichotomy between two spatial systems. On the one hand there exists the landscape at the side of the road, on the other there is the off-screen sphere of influence of the road. The road, then, functions as an external influence in this scene – while it is technically true that it still exists inside the film reality of the shot (just outside of the view of the camera), it has acquired an otherworldly quality in relation to the landscape; the landscape is an other place, belonging to a different realm of signification. It could be argued that, to a certain extent, the landscape engages thematically in a metadiegetic relationship to the road, as the side of the road appears to be embedded as a system of logics within the larger system to which the road pertains. The road acts as a frame, both metaphorically and physically (as it is the invisible underline to this shot), to define the view as the side of the road – a different place. This side of the road is the viewer's frontal experience and the road itself is perpendicularly positioned on the viewer's perspective. A truck passes, this time from left to

right, and its speed and noise are a short, violent invasion into the slow and quiet world of the road verge. Then there is a cut to Nercino standing at the side of the road. Using a large stick as a cane he starts to slowly cross the road, as if he were wading through a river with his stick as support. The camera slowly follows Nercino to track his movements. On the other side of the road he picks up some gravel, throws it on the ground and repeats the action a couple of times; then he walks out of the screen. The next few minutes Nercino is filmed undertaking some small activities around a small building on the side of the road until the image finally settles on a long frontal shot of him sitting in front of the camera. He begins to mumble indistinctly and then his voice is drowned out completely by the noise of the traffic, after which his speech slightly improves and he starts talking about a man who could not walk any more.

Nercino came out of the bushes to cross the road and was able to interact with that space by picking up the pieces of gravel. His displacement is illogical, marginal and unqualified, which designates it mere or *bare movement*. There is no meaning to be deduced from his movement and the absence of any kind of narration to guide the interpretation of the shot, invites the viewer to adopt a landscape perspective to look at this image. In the absence of traffic, the road, for the moment, is an accessible space that now, temporarily freed from meaning and eventhood, can be analysed as part of the landscape. The contrast between Nercino's mumbling in front of the camera and the roadway noise symbolizes the dynamics of the relationship between mobility and landscape: both perspectives cannot be merged into a single approach, but alternate between each other in their influence on the scene. Mobility forcefully establishes its presence, overwhelming the scene with its sound, and landscape is able to come out when mobility's rush is temporarily interrupted by the absence of traffic.

### The surreal road, the inhabitable road and the invisible road

The road is present in every scene of the film – even when it is not visible as was the case in Nercino's scene above; the shape and form of its presence, however, varies greatly. This analysis distinguishes between three different categories of representation that appear in the film: the surreal road, the inhabitable road and the invisible road. In the following all three shall be elaborated.

The surreal road

In the analysis of the first few scenes of the film, it has been described how the road acquires a fantastical and disorienting dimension. Unconventional camera positions and angles, overexposed scenes and the

many recorded mirages all serve together to alienate the viewer from their prior associations with the road. The shots of the road between scenes of the characters function as a means of connecting the characters and the space upon which they dwell and drift. This way the primary function of roads, that is: forming connections, is retained in a metaphorical sense: The scenes that feature the three main characters are connected to one another by the inclusion of shots of the roads between those scenes. The reinvention of the road imagery suggests that the places these roads connect do not belong to the world of factuality or documentary, but to a surreal fictionalized version of that world. Much has been written about Cao Guimarães predilection for manoeuvring the borders of fact and fiction; specifically about this film it has been noted how "*as imagens de Andarilho entram em um regime de indeterminabilidade e começa a perder a importância a distinção entre o que é subjetivo e objetivo*" [the images of *Andarilho* enter into a frame of indeterminability and the importance of the distinction between the subjective and the objective starts to dwindle] (De Almeida, 2014:1125).

The scene with Nercino described above is followed by a new series of surreal shots of the road that lasts until the beginning of a new scene with Paulão pushing his trolley over the highway. His appearance on screen is the result of another interference of the filmmaker – the scene has been cut and montaged to accommodate his presence, as can be seen in figure 9. Announced by a loud wooden thud in the soundtrack Paulão and his trolley suddenly are a part of the scene.
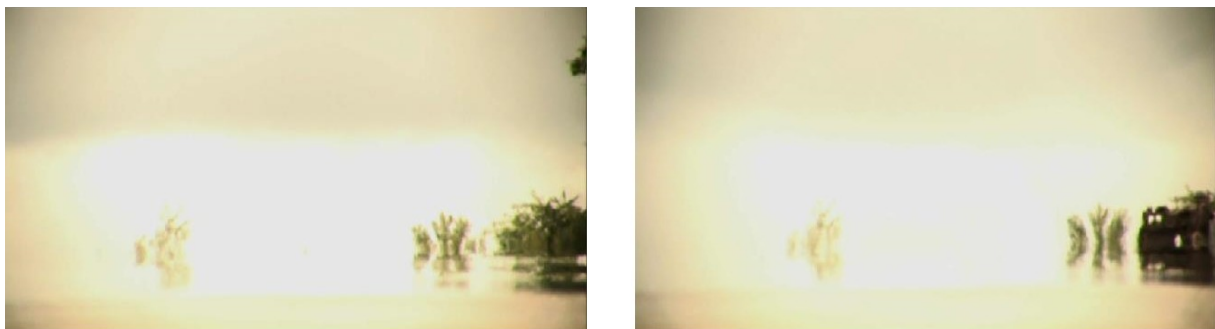
Figure 9. Two screenshots taken seconds after each other. On the left there is an overexposed image of the road, on the right Paulão and his trolley have been added by montage.

As can be seen here and in the earlier example from the montage of Valdemar's scene, the filmmaker openly intervenes in the film's reality. The way the scenes that feature the drifters are edited highlights the artificial character of the film. "*O filme cria um ambiente distorcido e anamórfico, próximo à irrealidade,*

uma paisagem que, de tão sublime, ganha ares de artificialidade" [The film creates a distorted and anamorphic atmosphere, close to unreality, a landscape, that is so sublime that it gains an air of artificiality] (Brasil, 2007). The artificiality is a way of allowing Guimarães' subjectivity to enter the film, making the whole film part of a single, subjective reality. Guimarães writes that "[a] *realidade é uma coisa híbrida, multifacetada pela incidencia de olhares diversos, espelho sem fundo de um homem, uma cultura, um país*" [[r]eality is a hybrid matter, it is multifaceted from the occurrence of various looks, a bottomless mirror of a man, a culture, a country] (3). Through the use of montage and editing a specific tempo is created, scenes become interconnected and a world perception is elaborated. The surreal imagery strips away the usual connotations from the image – therefore the road ceases to exist as solely a non-place or an in-between-place; it is turned into a space that does not only accommodate high tempo traffic and is open for slow movement. The surreal aesthetics of the road and the landscape connects the different locations of the film in the image of a single (dreamlike) space. In this space the boundaries between road and landscape are blurred; mirages turn the road's image in a liquid substance that pertains to the domain of nature as much as it does to the domain of man. The film's aesthetics lead to a *poetic* approach to the world, that, according to Foster (2007), Migliorin (2007) and Sbragia (2016) that allows the film to operate in the reality of the drifters:

> *Consegue inventar uma forma de estar com esses indivíduos através do compartilhamento de um viés poético em relação ao mundo e às coisas. O filme é a invenção de um espaço comum entre o universo dos andarilhos e do filme, e esse espaço é fundamentalmente estético.*

> [He has managed to invent a way of being with these individuals by sharing a poetic bias towards the world and the things. The film is the invention of a common space between the universe of the wanderers and the universe of the film; this space is fundamentally aesthetic] (Migliorin, 2007).

While it is true that the film demonstrates a specific way of perceiving the world – indeed, one could revisit the actual locations of the film and never see the same universe that is shown in *Andarilho* –, one should practice some degree of hesitance to ascribe such essentializing (and romanticizing) qualities to the marginalized world of the drifters. The surreal road aesthetics do function as a de-establishing element

that introduces a new way of thinking about the concept of the road, inspired by the *andarilhos*, but to claim that this *is* the way in which the drifters see or experience their universe means to reduce them to an exotic otherness.

The inhabitable road

The road is generally a place of movement that serves the purpose of transit and transition – in fact it could be argued that the road is more like a *phase* than a space. Indeed, the physical dimensions of the road as a space are often left unexplored in favour of the anticipation of the next place to which the road will lead. The road is the connection between the point of origin and the destination and exists, as such, as a place of departure and a place of promise – a place of transition; it marks the difference between its extremities and connects the old to the new. By removing the horizon from the road and showing the asphalt at a steep angle, the road becomes disassociated from other places and the movement towards those places. The in-betweenness of the road is stripped away, which removes the assumed movement from the image. The road is shown as a space of being instead of going, this reinvention of the road makes the space accessible for exploration. By redefining the image of the road – or perhaps by de-defining it – the viewer is invited to enter the reality of the drifters who roam the highways on foot.

One of the ways the film achieves this reframing of the concept of the road is by including shots in which the asphalt can be seen but that, due to the context, make the viewer question the relationship between humans and the road. In the close reading of the first scenes it was already pointed out that an uncommon camera angle and position can remove the connotations of traffic from a shot. In addition, the presence of the drifters on the asphalt breaks the taboo that highways are only accessible to motorized traffic. The drifters occupy this space that was never intended for them, reclaiming it as a part of their realm and including their personal experience in their system of meaning. The earlier analysis of Nercino's scene also is indicative of the road's duality and its potential to not only accommodate mobility, but the drifter's bare movement as well. In figure 10 Valdemar can be seen walking over the middle of the highway; he could have walked just as easily over the side of the road, but instead chooses to follow the yellow marked line in the centre of the road. There is no traffic, so for the moment this road serves no function as a setting for (mobile) eventhood - Valdemar's drifting does not steep it in a context of power. His movements are erratic and explore the space for no apparent reason other than to experience its geography. At the end of the

scene he stops on the road to touch its surface; stopping and standing still on the highway is an action that defies the logics of highways – sometimes one has to stop on the highway because of traffic or an accident, but this is never voluntarily or the result of a choice. In Valdemar's moment of touching the surface he breaks a set of unwritten rules about highways: They are not there for touching, they are there for moving. This scene can be interpreted in two ways, that both support the re-conceptualization of the road space. Firstly in Valdemar's touch one might discern a childlike gesture as if he is (empirically) re-discovering the space. This would imply that his zoê-status as a marginalized – and delirious – drifter, and the bare movement that follows from this status, have provided him with a perspective that ignores the conventional structure of meaning, namely the road as a space inscribed with mobility meaning. Due to the film's complex relationship between documentary and work of fiction, however, one could also assume that Valdemar is aware of the camera and touches the road surface to demonstrate the alternative way of relating to the road space to the viewers. Be he child, delirious or guide, by touching the road, he shows that this space is not transitory as might be suggested from notions of mobility – by that logic it would always serve movement –, instead it is shown to have a permanence to it as well; the road space has a physical dimension. Because the drifters move on foot, they are directly connected to the road. For this means of travel does not only have consequences for the speed at which they move, but allows them to experience the road differently as well. By being in direct contact with the surface of the road, without a car or a different kind of vehicle as an intermediary, they are subjected to the physical dimension of the road. They personally perceive and touch the asphalt, feel its warmth and collect its dirt. This way the road is de-anonymized from a random and replaceable space, to a particular place. It becomes accessible for human presence.

Figure 10. Valdemar touching the highway.

The road in these shots is not surreal or invisible, but an actual space that can be travelled upon by *bare* movement and not necessarily by movements of mobility. By following the *bare* movement of the drifters it becomes an intrinsic space that does not depend on its instrumental value as a means of getting from point A to point B. The pace of the drifters liberates the road of its transitory meaning; it allows the image of the road to consolidate, instead of whooshing by from a car's perspective.

Andarilho does not feature the 'classic road movie shot' that has the camera looking expectantly at the distance, implying a motion towards the future and a notion of progress. Instead, it features many shots that are taken from a perpendicular angle to the road: full frontal images of the side of the road, as can be seen in figure 11. The effect of this camera perspective is that the road becomes connected to the world besides it, rather than to the world in front of it or behind it.

Figure 11. Shot of Valdemar walking on the side of the road (left) and him crossing the road (right).

By becoming an inhabitable space and by having an existence that is independent from mobility, the boundaries between the road and its verges become less fixed. The dichotomy of the mobile perspective that distinguishes between the spaces through which one can move and through which one cannot move does not serve to differentiate between the road and its verges when one can move just as easily in both spaces like the drifters do. When regarded as a consolidated space, the side of the road becomes an integral part of the road's total concept; they are not separated by their significance or purpose – the only contrast is their difference in materiality, like the grass also differs from the water. The sides of the road and its natural surroundings are able to assimilate the road in their realm of existence. As a consequence, mobility's monopoly over the road as an exclusive agent for meaningful displacement is discontinued and the road, depending on the context and representation, can be conceptualized as a part of the landscape as well.

The invisible road

The third image of the road is not actually an image, as it concerns the instances when its presence is implied by the sound of traffic, but the road itself is not actually visible. In various scenes that take place at the side of the road its presence is inescapable as the loud noises violently penetrate the visual reality. In Nercino's first scene his voice is muted by the intersecting sound of the traffic that rushes by behind the camera. In the shots of the surreal or the inhabitable roads the traffic sounds are much less prominent; it is ironic that in the only shots where the road is not actually visible, its presence asserts itself so dominantly. The reason for this contrast might be found in the limits of the reinvention of the road that was described above. The strategies applied to reconceptualize the image and its connotations all relied on new visual approaches to the road; it is much harder to aesthetically reframe an invisible concept.

The invisible road haunts the scenes with a reminder of its context and provides a perpetual sense of tension to the landscape. The visual spectacle of traffic – and eventhood – is kept off-screen so as to allow a landscape perspective to come through. The tension that is created, though, is a necessary element for the landscape to establish itself in relation to the road and the movement on the road. Wylie argues that "landscape", in fact, "*is* tension" (2007:1, emphasis added), for it always rises out of the contrast with another element. In the road film, this other element is formed by displacement; the invisible road prevents the landscape from becoming nature by allowing it to push off against mobility.

The landscape perspective

In the beginning of this chapter Guimarães' description of the film was cited when it was described as a film about the connections between walking and thinking. The walking in this film's context and in contrast to the traffic mobility can be seen as (bare) movement; thinking, then, constitutes a way of relating to the surroundings. This relation to the world is elaborated in a perspective that redefines the spaces through which is moved. *Andarilho's* focus on the drifting movement over the displacement of mobility is demonstrated in the use of the camera in regards to both kinds of movement: Throughout the film, the movement of vehicles are always filmed with a fixed camera, whereas the movement of the drifters is followed with a moving camera. That is to say, an engaging juxtaposition is created by contrasting the fast movement filmed by an unmoving camera with the drifters' slow movement that is actually followed by the camera. By focussing on bare movement over mobility the film adopts a landscape perspective.

The road is imagined as a new space without the connotation of mobility; it is a place of bare movement that can exist intrinsically without the presence or influence of eventhood. In *Bye bye Brasil* it was shown how new roads were built for the purpose of national and personal progress, emphasizing the instrumental functionality of those roads. *Andarilho*, however, seeks to re-establish the roads as a new space that is freed from functionality. The image of the road in *Andarilho* lies at the other side of the spectrum than that in *Bye bye Brasil*, representing the axle of landscape and bare movement in the dialectics of the road. Figure 12 shows the way the road is imagined as a different space in the landscape perspective. In contrast to the road in *Bye bye Brasil*, this road does not cut through the landscape, but

flows through it – organically, not imposed on the landscape but following it. In the next chapter the exact

mechanism between both axles will be analysed in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*.

Figure 12. The final shot of *Andarilho*; the road flows like a river through the landscape and does not cut violently

through it.

# Chapter 4. The dialectics of the road: perspectives in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*

The dialectics of the road

The analyses in the previous chapters have made clear the manner in which the image of the road can be framed in different perspectives in road movies. In order to do so, this paper has elaborated the categories of landscape (landscape and setting) and the categories of movement (mobility and bare movement) and made these categories available for film analysis. However, these two conceptual pairs of landscape/setting and mobility/bare movement do not exist isolated from one another, but operate within the same field of force. Different films can lay emphasis on different sides of the scale, resulting in a particular inclination towards a specific perspective, yet it is important to underline the fact that both perspectives are not mutually exclusive for the duration of the entire film. Even within the most landscape orientated of road films, there shall always be a defining element of movement involved that marks the displacement as a journey, just as in a heavy mobility orientated road film a landscape view shall always be able to (temporarily) discontinue the flow of the narrative. *Bye bye Brasil* is a film about Brazilian mobility and makes use of a mobility perspective, nevertheless the landscape perspective seeps through onto the screen and comments on the film's themes. Similarly, Cao Guimarães' *Andarilho* documentary stylized narrative exhumes a world filled with autonomous landscapes that invites the viewer to take on a landscape frame of reference that is there to frame the road in its relation to the surroundings. This does not mean, however, that movement in this film is insignificant or irrelevant – the roadway noise, for instance, often off-screen, asserts mobility as a different system of logic and this perspective is used to reflect on the road space and its immediate surroundings.

The field of force where these two perspectives meet can be seen as a dialectical system in which both ways of seeing are represented, albeit to different extents, depending on the particular film. The road is the space where the perspectives cross and that, as such, becomes a dialectical image of their reciprocity. Susan Buck-Morss elaborates Walter Benjamin's example of natural history as a dialectical system in her seminal work *The dialectics of seeing* (1989), explaining the manner in which these systems arise and how they produce meaning:

The method relies on juxtaposing binary pairs of linguistic signs from the language code (here history/nature), and, in the process of applying these signs to material referents, crossing the switches. The critical power of this maneuver depends on both the code, wherein meaning arises from binaries of signifier/signifieds independent of the referents, and the referents, the materially existing objects, which do not submit to language signs meekly, but have the semantic strength to set the signs into question (59 – 60).

This paper has sought to make apparent the conceptual interdependence of the binary pair of movement and landscape in road films. In this type of film, landscape is used as a lens to regard the category of movement and mobility becomes a lens through which the (natural) surroundings of the movement can be considered. It is a chiasmus of crossing perspectives that produces meaning whenever one notices their reciprocity. The double intersection of the concepts demonstrates their interrelatedness through a reversal of structures; its function is to create a particular frame of reference that aids in the interpretation of the road space. One stroke of the chiasmus represents the landscape perspective, the other relates to mobility as a way of seeing. When the landscape perspective is used on a category of movement, it becomes a movement that is emancipated from meaning; when mobility is used to gaze upon a category of landscape, the space surrounding the road is inscribed with the meaning of mobility and thus becomes setting. In figure 13 the dynamic relationship between landscape and movement is visualized in a diagram. Because it is a dialectical relationship, the system remains binary and will not lead to a hybrid perspective that co-opts elements of both ways of seeing. Instead, following Adorno's interpretation of the dialectics of natural history, a dialectical relationship opts for a continuous alternation between the two perspectives: where the lines of the chiasmus cross, both conceptual categories "do not dissolve into each other, but simultaneously separate and cross into each other, in such a way that" (1973:360) one can act as a sign for the other's significance and vice versa. That is to say: there is no unified perspective of the two frames of reference, but rather a oscillation between both of them, resulting in the road movie's quality as a genre able to simultaneously reflect on movement and static space within its imagery.
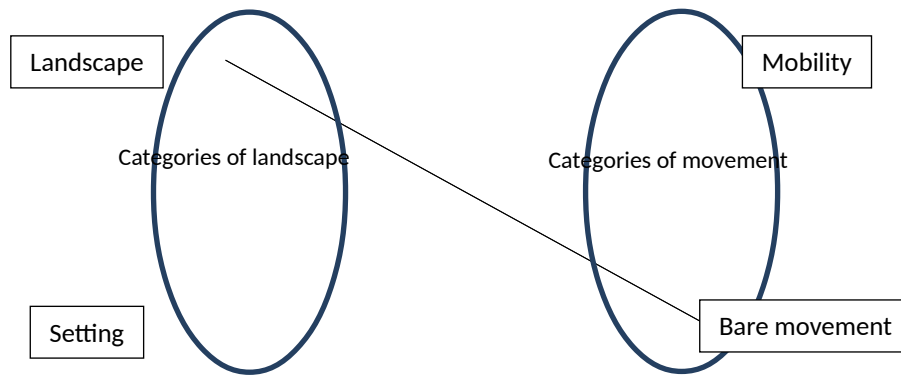
Figure 23. A schematic diagram of the dialectics of the road as proposed in this thesis: movement through the lens of landscape becomes bare movement; a physical landscape through the lens of mobility becomes setting.

Not only the filmmaker influences the road film's reflective potential, the viewer also has agency in this process, since, as has been argued previously, they have the opportunity to mentally dislocate images from the stream of images. The viewer is invited to adopt a certain perspective – in a more narrative oriented road film, the movement of the characters, and by extension the moving plot, directs the viewer to regard the road space from a certain momentum that inscribes the space with meaning, whereas in a slower paced road film they are capable of letting their mind wander, thus adding personal and cultural intertextualities to the screen.

In road films the road is the space where the ways of seeing interact with one another; it is a space that acquires no essence from either landscape or mobility, but establishes itself in the relationship between the character or the viewer and both concepts. It is the centre of the dialectical exchange between landscape and mobility; a crossing of gazes that brings forth a third perspective that is able to alternate between the two ways of seeing. It might be tempting to equate the road as a dialectical space in road films to Walter Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image, as the latter "rests on a dialogical model in which the essence of 'imageability' is not contained in the image itself but in the relationship between the viewer and the object. In this way, the dialectical image is a method of seeing rather than an inert sign" (Lipton, 2016:76), just like the dialectics of the road offers a critical approach to seeing both sign and signified. The dialectical image, however, differs from the road dialectics as for Benjamin the dialectical image has to exhume a fundamentally textual quality of bridging history to the now; "the dialectical image is that form of the historical object which (…) is the primal phenomenon of history" (Benjamin 2002:474 [N 9a,4]).

Dialectical images are particles of history that lay bare the historical Ur-mechanics of the immediate present, which in Benjamin's eyes, is marked by commodification processes of modern industrial capitalism (Buck-Morss, 1989:176). "It is the caesura in the movement of thought" (Benjamin, 2002:475 [N10a,3]); by juxtaposing fragments of history and seemingly incompatible concepts (e.g. *natural history* – nature is juxtaposed to history) the flows of logic are interrupted and culture can be dissected as the present's expression of its historical fundaments.

The list of literature that either describes, uses or mentions the concept is long and still not definitive; the dialectical image is an idea that still inspires new interpretations, methodologies and studies, but one that has not yet inspired general consensus over the exact dimensions of the concept. Benjamin's focus on capitalist religion, however, generally does place the concept in a framework of modern capitalism and its discontents. Although a very interesting framework indeed, this paper's specific aims do not intend to relate its analyses to the large realities of capitalist paradigms or a general conceptualization of history; instead it purely seeks to offer a more specific interpretation of the road as a dialectical space between *paisagens* and *passagens*. The underlying mechanism that constructs the dialectical image, however, does appear to be analogous to the structure analysed in the dialectics of the road: both theories make use of a juxtaposition of seemingly mutually exclusive concepts – nature and history versus landscape and mobility – and both methods of seeing make use of interruption as a tool to mentally extract images from the flow of logics; that is to say, the inherent quality of the landscape perspective to make images unhinged from the narrative and allowing those images to provoke critical thought can be said to be comparable to the dialectical image's ability to arrest moments: "To thinking belongs the movement as well as the arrest of thoughts. Where thinking comes to a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions – there the dialectical image appears" (Benjamin, 2002:475 [N10a,3]). The dialectics of the road make uses of a similar structure which ultimately makes it available as a tool for critical analysis.

The two previous chapters have each focussed on a specific arm of the dialectical chiasmus, while simultaneously establishing proof of the crossing perspectives by acknowledging the presence of the other arm: the chapter about *Bye bye Brasil* analysed the mobility perspective in relation to the control over nature and also presented the landscape perspective as a critique on too much emphasis on mobility; the analysis of *Andarilho* concentrated on the film's landscape aesthetics and the manner in which they

influenced the film's conceptualization of movement – synchronously considering mobility's effects on the space of and surrounding the road. The current chapter's analysis shall conclude the triptych by focussing on the 'crossroads' of the chiasmus, the centre of the exchange: the dialectics of the road, in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Engagement on the road</h3>

Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo is a film made by Marcelo Gomes and Karim Aïnouz. The film largely consists of filmed material that was collected during a trip Gomes & Aïnouz took in 1999 to gather information and video footage for a fiction film they were planning on shooting. The land they encountered was familiar to them as they roughly came from that area – they come from the coastal region of the Northeast – and yet it felt completely foreign to them as they had never visited the hinterlands of the area and never actually been to the sertão (Aïnouz, 2013). On their trip they took with them any type of recording device they could find, amongst which tape recorders, a 16mm camera and a super 8 camera, and ended up making a personal archive of their explorations. Their intimate personal archive is first brought out in 2004 in the form of a short documentary, indexing the findings of their trip, called *Sertão de Acrílico Azul Piscina* [Sertão in Swimming Pool Blue Acrylic]. In 2008 it was used again, in combination with new footage, in a larger project, namely their intimate work *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*. In this film the archival video footage is connected on-screen by the off-screen voice of Irandhir Santos who plays the character of José Renato, a thirty-five-year-old geologist, on a surveying trip in Brazil's north-eastern sertão. The actor never makes a physical appearance in the film, as the entire film is shot from a first-person perspective with Santos' voice acting as the principal motor to the narrative. The objective of the trip is to conduct research for an irrigation canal from a regional river, fictitiously named in the film as the *Rio das Almas*, or 'River of souls'. The places visited by Renato are likely to be flooded in the film's intradiegetic future, leading to a large forced displacement of many of the local inhabitants. The trip is framed within a personal narrative of loss and loneliness, as Renato, during his journey, is coming to terms with the end of a relationship. As an introduction to the lecture series: *Experiments in Thinking, Action, and Form: Cinematic Migrations* (2013) Karim Aïnouz positions the film between traditional narrative and documentary – a quality shared with the previously discussed films, which, according to Verónica Garibotto and Jorge Pérez is part of a trend in Latin American road films (2016:17). During

Aïnouz' lecture, he warns the audience that the film might lull them to sleep in the first fifteen minutes, after which it will pick up.

Indeed, the film's beginning can be considered somewhat slow-paced; the first scene is filmed by a slow rocking, unfocussed camera that can see a few meters ahead in the dark of night and is accompanied by a soothing musical melody. Then the scene cuts to a daytime view of the road and Renato's voice is audible for the first time. Without much enthusiasm he starts listing the equipment he brought along for the trip in a drawling tone. In general, enumerations are by definition not very exciting as they are narrations without a plot or suspense; in this case the slow listing of the inventory and the emotionally detached voice seem to suggest that this is a routine trip, one that leads through prior visited territory. At the beginning of the film the camera mimics Renato's apathy to the surroundings and to the road as it keeps losing focus; the disengaged gaze of Renato, camera and – by extension – the viewer often drifts to the bottom corner of the windscreen of the car (fig. 14). As a consequence, the road is imagined as a non-place that has is marked by the transitory nature of in-betweenness; it is there only to accommodate the traffic's movement and has no meaning of its own other than the meaning that is being assigned to it by Renato's displacement. The geologist's perspective is marked by mobility and renders the road space instrumental setting.

Figure 14. Renato's disengaged perspective.

Furthermore, the technical equipment that is named is relatively meaningless to layman's ears, which makes the long list sound even more detached and distant from the scene. Everything seems to indicate that this trip is a professional, obligatory journey, without personal pathos for the particular aspects of this journey – *viaja porque precisa*, he travels because he has to. This attitude precludes all forms of engagement between the narrator and his displacement and the landscape, which is ironic because as he so meticulously has listed: all the geological equipment to study the landscape is present – "*escalímetro, planímetro, curvímetro, altímetro*". The list is cut off poetically by the emphatically spoken final word: *facão* [machete].

The narrator's voice announces that the next scene takes place the following day and he states the official objective of the trip. The voice then proceeds to give dry information about the exact height and climate type of the current location. These abstract facts contribute to the geologist's research about the location, but give no information about his experience of being there – the relationship between the character and the space remains distanced and impersonal; there is still no direct engagement with the landscape. This fact is further underlined by the absence of a body in the film. Only the voice, the agent of ratio, is present; the body is left out of the equation. The voice describes the location based on the cartographic reality of the road: BR 432, Km 45. These coordinates refer to an experience of place that is detached from personal involvement with the place; they are meaningless for a personal interpretation of the location – his presence there is a sterile one.

A disparity starts to arise between the geological identification of the landscape and its physical reality. In the chapter "Identity without the Person" of his book *Nudities,* Giorgio Agamben describes a similar development that he observes in questions of personal identity: In the past a person's identity was determined on the basis of social recognition and social prestige, but in the second half of the nineteenth century "a system of criminal identification of anthropometric measurements and mug shots" (2011:49) for recidivist criminals came into place. This system was further supplemented in the following years by the implementation of fingerprint identification, which lead Agamben to conclude that "[f]or the first time in the history of humanity, identity was no longer a function of social 'persona' and its recognition by others but rather a function of biological data, which could bear no relation to it" (50). He then extrapolates this development to the rise of modern identification methods such as biometric identity

cards and preparations for DNA archives that will contain the genetic 'fingerprint' of every citizen. Official identity becomes a matter of biology, extracted from personal cognition. This makes the constitution of the subject a very problematic matter as there is no relationship between an individual's experience of their identity and the official identity based on their genetic code. "What relationship can I establish with my fingerprints or my genetic code? How can I take on, and also take distance from, such facts?" (52). Ultimately, the individual will no longer be able to identify with their identity.

In a similar way, the concept of a physical place becomes unhinged from experience and becomes rooted in abstract geological data – also the social dimension of a place can be informatized into geographic information systems, or GISs. In *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* the voice of the narrator plays a role in the identification process of the filmic space and landscapes and articulates the tension between identity, description and physical reality. In figure 15 an early shot of arid, rural terrain can be seen. The relationship between the voice of the narrator (that, for argument's sake, is visualized in the image by the inclusion of subtitles) and the scene is ambiguous. In the words of the narrator the landscape becomes abstracted to a point where the description fits the scene both highly accurately and yet becomes completely detached from the image. The landscape is reduced to an objective, geological truth that has excluded personal engagement; the landscape's 'genetics' are analysed without any reference to the scene's appearance or the space's phenomenology. One would not be able to recognize the scene based on its description alone – it is like calling a person by their social security number, rather than their name. This evokes a sense of dissonance between the description and the image, underscoring once more the disengaged relationship of the geologist's perspective to the landscape.

Irene Depetris Chauvin notes a similar relationship between the instrumental reality and the bodily presence of Renato, but signals an intimately physical relationship between the body of the geologist and the field work he is conducting:

> [A] series of close-ups of the ground and the measuring instruments the geologist uses for
> his mapping work are intercut with medium and long shots of the surroundings. Although
> what is staged here is in part an instrumental relationship to the territory that aims to
> reduce the latter to numerical variables, the way the sequence is set up never lets us

forget the 'sense of touch'. We are not shown the product – abstract measurements or the finished map – but rather the bodily process and the field work that precedes it (2016:474).

The absence of a body throughout the film and Renato's monotonous voice as he analyses the coordinates and the geology of the land, however, actually suggest that this scene places more emphasis on the omission of bodily touch, rather than placing him inside the scene and the landscape – by not showing his body, the 'sense of touch' that is implied in this scene further underlines the absence of engagement.

Figure 15. A still of a rural scene with English subtitles. "Cambrian limestone clay, composed of arenites, stiltites and reddish-brown ferruginous conglomerates"; the narrator's voice describes the landscape; his words simultaneously describe the image very accurately down to the molecular level and fall short to explain the image's basic signifiers: a tree, a small house, red earth, blue sky a cloud and people. One would not be able to recognize the scene based on the narrator's description.

Directly following the quote in figure 15 the narrator also notices the dissonance between geographic reality and experience when he adds: "This region is called Charquitos [small puddles] – though there is not a meadow anywhere in sight" (Aïnouz & Gomes, 2009), that is to say that the cartographic reality does not match his own, personal experience of the region. This addition is an indication for the narrator's own ambivalent position: On the one hand he employs the geologist's perspective, resulting in the detached

enumerations and descriptions, but on the other hand he criticizes that perspective by pointing out how this depiction of reality does not correspond with the world that is perceived by the senses. The duality that follows from this position is further elaborated during the film and is also referenced by the film's title: He travels because he has to, for his job, employing the disengaged geologist's perspective but he returns 'because he loves you', marking his regained sense of engagement to the landscape. Quoting Franz Boas, one of the pioneers of modern anthropology, one could summarize this duality as follows: "While physical science [e.g. geology] arises from the logical and aesthetic demands of the human mind, cosmography has its source in the personal feeling of man towards the world, towards the phenomena surrounding him. We may call this an "affective" impulse, in contrast to the aesthetic impulse" (1887:139).

Boas' description of geology largely corresponds to the previously elaborated mobility perspective, looking to give human meaning to physical space, whilst lacking the affective connection to that space inspired by the surroundings. Through the development of the narrator's perspective, the film addresses the tension between the autonomous landscape that is able to provoke experiences and meaning, and the regarded, defined, setting that gains its meaning from the eyes that gaze upon it. The geologist's perspective is dull, both to the character who repeatedly expresses his discontent with the length of his trip (fig. 16) and to the audience who were warned beforehand of the film's slow opening; the drowsiness Aïnouz attributed to these first scenes can be seen as a device to make the viewer participate in Renato's apathy and his inability to establish a personal connection to the landscape.

Figure 16. The narrator vocalizes his opinion on the length of his journey.

"By introducing a geologist as protagonist of the film, the relationship between the human and the landscape is established as one of the movie's central concerns" (Brandellero, 2016:241), but it would appear that the geologist himself also has to rediscover the relationship between himself and the landscape. Just like is the case for the geologist, up until this point the viewer has not yet been able to engage with the landscape either, signalling an intimate connection between Renato's journey and the viewer's experience of watching the film. In fact, Renato even lists a few types of camera, amongst which a super 8 camera – just like one of the cameras used by Aïnouz and Gomes – as part of his equipment, reinforcing the interrelatedness between the film footage and the geologist's research – effectively including the viewer in the quest for engagement. Every shot is filled with the potential of relating to the landscape, with the potential of confirming its autonomy, but the voiceover does not allow this to happen by constantly distancing himself and the viewer from a geologically abstracted interpretation of the landscape. Jens Andermann notes that the establishment of a landscape connection is impeded by the voiceover: "The film (…) is playing a perverse game with us, every single shot tempting our gaze to dwell on the singularity of *place* whilst the sonorization (…) incessantly draws us back into diegetic *space* (2017:133, emphasis in the original). Filling the landscape with a mobility oriented spatial presence renders it mere setting – a means to fulfil the geologist's research objective.

As the film progresses, however, there is a shift in the protagonist's experience of the space through which he travels. Brandellero analyses: "[h]is glazed look onto the landscape is replaced by a keen eye for a multi-layered, kaleidoscopic view of the North-East that eludes the monochrome vision of poverty and violence. At the same time, José Renato's interactions with locals increase; he records conversations and anecdotes from daily lives" (2016:247). Becoming aware of other people's personal ties to the land – their forced displacement due to the irrigation project no longer an abstract movement planned by distanced policymakers, but an emotionally invested migration – reinstates the narrator's inclusion in the world of the landscapes. Following the development of the geologist's increasing engagement to the landscape, the film ends with José Renato stepping out of his car and climbing the stairs to the overlook in Piranhas. Although still not corporeally represented, a hint to his regained engagement to the landscape can be discovered; in this scene the viewer cannot only hear his voice, but his breathing and the sound of his footsteps as well. The camera does not solely look forwards to the stairs that still have to be climbed, but also turns around and looks down on the path that he has followed so far, as if reflecting on the journey – and on previous, intertextual, journeys, as will be argued in the next sub-chapter. The silhouette of Renato can be seen as a shadow on the stairs, indicating that he has lost some of his detachment to the landscape and is able to move through its physical space, rather than looking at it from a distance – the distance of the mobility perspective (fig.17).

Figure 17. The narrator's silhouette is scene for the first time in the film.

"The directors have revealed they wished José Renato's tone to change over the course of the film, from an assertive, determined voice, reflecting his position as middleclass geologist enjoying a stable, orderly life, to one of increasing disorganization" (Mendonça Filho, 2009 – in Brandellero, 2016:246). The stability of a linearly lived forward oriented life is interrupted by an increasing connection to the landscape. The disparate collection of footage that he initially sought to weave together in the single narrative of the journey interrupts his disconnected movement and unhinges the shots of the surroundings so that they can be complemented by his own intertextualities. This is possible within the framework of the dialectics of the road, as the road inspires a forward movement but is simultaneously capable of relating that movement to the landscape, reflecting on it and including alternative experiences of the spaces travelled. What Mendonça Filho described to be an increasing sense of disorganization, is in fact the alternation of perspectives with which the protagonist is coming to terms. His singular forward movement and perspective, which he has questioned and criticized from the beginning of the film, are complemented by a plurality of personal relations to the landscape. The now erratic nature of Renato's movement in relation to the chaotic lines of the narrative can be deemed unqualified, bare movement. The film's unconcealed use of montage makes the project a thought-provoking exploration of the dialectical approach to road films, complementing the idea of linearity with crossing perspectives: "Benjamin was (…) convinced of one thing: what was needed was a visual, not a linear logic: The concepts [in a dialectical system] were to be imagistically constructed, according to the cognitive principles of montage" (Buck-Morss, 1989:218); in fact, the dialectics of the road itself can be considered to be a montage of the landscape and mobility concepts.

The rediscovered personal engagement is not only available to the geologist; the absence of a coherent narration towards the end of the film allows the viewer as well to break free from the diegetic charm and to thus add other realities to the landscape images. Moreover, these intertextual relations are not necessarily exclusively personal, the film also seeks to relate itself to parts of the cinematic history of Brazil by shaping its meaning with clear references to other films.

Navigating the memories: Ask the sertão

Referring to Renato's voice, Andermann notes how "this place is always already pregnant with narrative" (2017:133), indicating that the voiceover lays a strong emphasis on the film's narrativity. This

interpretation could be extrapolated to also include intertextuality as a candidate for fatherhood of the film's pregnancy. Indeed, the layered nature of the landscape embeds any movement through its space in an intricate webbed structure of other narratives. As since the beginning of Cinema Novo the sertão has been the backdrop to an important collection of films within Brazilian cinematic history, this film can be said to visually echo a part of that history. Adapting the famous quote of Oscar Wilde, this thesis concludes that *most landscapes are other landscapes*.[11] Intertextual links relate a particular landscape to other spaces and other landscapes and therefore, "[b]efore it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock" (Schama, 1995:6–7). Landscapes are memories of places and places of memory. In this context Thiago de Luca notes how the film's location in the sertão situates *Viajo porque preciso* in the space between being "both a real 'place [Aïnouz and Gomes] knew from memories' but also a 'mythical place' manufactured by the cinema" (2014:30), as the sertão is also an intertextual landscape that has been visited by many important films in Brazilian cinematic history. This layered nature of this film can be difficult to navigate, as the journey on screen is filled with a presence of history and it becomes increasingly complex to trace the film's displacements in a spatio-temporal field. Renato's journey in the film acquires meaning both in regard to its own movement and in regard to previous movements through the visited space in other films. Due to the archival nature of the film footage and the focus on the materiality of the space that comes from the grainy camera, De Luca calls Renato's displacement a "mnemonic journey" (ibid), seeped in the personal memories of Renato and the filmmakers. The narrative journey inscribes its movement with the meaning of this personal memory but is simultaneously influenced by the cultural memory that is evoked by the landscapes.

> Superimposed upon its unplanned documentary quality are added textual layers that, consciously or not, dialogue with tropes, conventions and the iconography identified with the sertão. Not only does the film evoke in some respects the cinema of the 1960s, and radicalize conventions and characteristics of the recent cinema of the 1990s, it travels even further back in time to reappropriate foundational sertão narratives (ibid.).

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11 The original quote by Wilde comes from *De Profundis*, a letter he wrote during his imprisonment in Reading Gaol, to his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas. It read: "Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation" (1908:97). Wilde, O. (1908). *De Profundis*. London: Methuen and co.

The personal memories that inscribed this journey with the meaning of personal remembrance made this journey lean to the mobility side of the spectrum: Similar to the manner in which Renato was unable to connect with his surroundings because he was assigning a specific meaning to the visited spaces – effectively rendering them the setting from his perspective – the mnemonic journey by itself is incapable of engaging with the space that was pregnant with personal memories. The unhinging qualities of the landscape, however, are able to break open this mnemonic narrative and consequently evoke the cultural memory, tapping into the film's intertextuality.

By (re)visiting the sertão the film gains the ability to break free from its own narrative momentum and is able to linger on the arrested landscape that arises from the intertextual backdrop. Martin Lefebvre addresses this ability in his article on landscape and setting and makes a connection to the work of Los Angeles-based artist Cindy Bernard, entitled "Ask the Dust" (c. 1988-1992) (2011:66). In this serial artwork, Bernard revisits landscapes and non-places that are featured in famous films and then photographs the now empty scenes. The aim is "to reproduce the framing from a given scene in a film" (ibid), in order to demonstrate the tension that exists in these locations: "[B]ecause the photographs are about films as much as they are about actual locations in the world (…), the space for the suggested journey is only partly real (…). Indeed, the spaces represented in the photographs are, at one and the same time, real and fictional and their referencing oscillates between both universes" (68). These intertextual memories are able to *haunt* (70) the image, and so is cultural memory. Similar to the way the empty scenes captured by Bernard are haunted by the presence of intertextual characters and events, the film set in the sertão is haunted by echoes of cinematic history and the cultural memory of the sertão as a place of cultural resistance. There is a strong parallel to be drawn between Bernard's artwork and *Viajo porque preciso* in the penultimate scene of the movie when Renato enters the town of Piranhas.

Brandellero describes this scene as a direct quote from *Bye bye Brasil*'s opening scene, making use of similar camera techniques and directly referencing shots from the 1979 movie (2016:248). Aïnouz and Gomes' film revisits the exact same locations, retracing the film footage of Diegues' film from 1979. When Renato arrives to the town, he comments on its emptiness as it will soon be flooded by the new canal. He calls it a *ghost town*. Akin to the revisited scenes in Ask the Dust, the town is completely deserted upon its revisit, creating the perfect canvas for the intertextual connection to be formed. In the absence of

eventhood, the landscape perspective is able to permeate the scene and establish the presence and influence of the older film. *Bye bye Brasil* documented and commented on the changes that were taking place in Brazil during the late 1970's; most of these changes were concerned with the illusion of so-called progress and the paths of modernity that would lead to accumulated wealth. By haunting the scene from *Viajo porque preciso*, a direct link is established between the scepticism in the face of modernity from *Bye bye Brasil* and the situation on-screen; the traditional town of Piranhas is on the brink of disappearing and the modernity that has replaced its 'outdated' reality has left nothing but a tangible sensation of loss. Renato comments that when the canal is finished, this will be the first place to disappear. Brandellero notes that it is poignant how "in Aïnouz and Gomes's deliberate quoting of *Bye bye Brasil*, the emphasis is much more clearly on the catastrophic consequences of human drastic intervention on the landscape and the environment" (2016:249). By juxtaposing the beginning of *Bye bye Brasil* and the ending of *Viajo porque preciso*, the film demonstrates the trajectory of modernity; it contrasts the past to the hollow feeling of the present and implicitly draws a connecting line from the processes of modernization that were shown in 1979 to their end results in the present day, indicating how the promise of modernity was accompanied by more destructive costs than actual progress.[12]

By stepping out of the car, however, Renato breaks free from the logics of the endless forward drive – putting an end to the detached logics of mobility and the incessant enumeration. Instead, he hopes to find some form of engagement to his surroundings, and the first step is promising as his shadow, when he ascends the stairs, is the first sign that Renato is actually present in the space.

The dialectics of the road can function as an instrument to navigate the crossroads between main text and intertext; giving the intertextual landscapes a place in the narrative while still leaving space for the original story to unfold. The dialectics of the road does not entail the fusion of two perspectives into one hybrid way of seeing, but rather a continuous dialectics of shifting perspectives – whose emphasis depends largely on both the filmmaker and the viewer. The road films are able to operate between documentary and fiction as their imagery can slide on the axis of the dialectics. By allowing other narratives to speak without silencing the film's own narrative a unique way of seeing is created that does

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12 The expression of a "Pyrrhic victory" comes to mind here – a *Piranhic* victory of modernity on the traditional ways of being.

not merely show the existence of the other narratives, but actively relates them to and intertwines them in the new story – it is not a passive intertextual image museum in which the landscapes are sterilely put on display, but rather an active montage that incites engagement and participation. It creates a consciousness about the existence of other texts that have been inscribed into the landscape and consequently establishes the ways in which these texts have contributed to and still influence the new narrative. The road in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* at once opens up space for the film's own narrative and all the intertextual journeys that preceded it. The end result is a dialectical journey through the many layers of the sertão – it is simultaneously a fiction story in its own right that creates a new layer of intertextuality and a documentary about the region's strata of cultural memory; a forward movement and a meaningful return.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to plot a course through the conceptual field of Brazilian road movies, landscapes and mobilities. Along the way, the films that were discussed have added elements to the central idea that the road functions as an axis system of crossing perspectives; the films are not featured as mere examples to the theory, but have actively contributed to its development. Now that the destination has been reached, a short reflection on the journey so far, the present text, must be given. This thesis' analysis has been limited to only three films and it would make for an interesting follow-up project to study more films in order to further investigate the relationship between landscape and mobility and to properly assess the usefulness of the dialectics of the road as a conceptual tool. An extension of this thesis' topic should also include discussions on modern technology, personal identities and matters of ethnicity – all of which are themes that are closely connected to both landscape and mobility but have not been elaborated in this thesis due to size restrictions and out of fear for deviating too much from the research objective. Furthermore, the last chapter of this thesis touched on the conceptual field and discourse of spectrality and hauntology in order to describe the ways in which intertextual landscapes can present themselves in modern narratives; this thesis does not expand on this subject matter, which does not do justice to its complexity. A film study that focuses on spectral landscapes in Brazilian road movies would also make for a productive analysis.

This thesis has aimed to investigate the spaces where the Brazilian road film takes place. These spaces, that is the road and its surroundings, are defined by the interplay between two alternating perspectives whose presence vary from film to film. The perspectives that have been elaborated are the mobility perspective and the landscape perspective. The former foregrounds a film's movement as the central event of the narrative; mobility can be used as a lens through which travel is regarded and given meaning. The latter focuses on the influence of the surroundings on both character and viewer and is able to interrupt the flow of the narrative. The dynamics of these two counterparts is one of alternating focus; when brought together, both perspectives help reflect on the allegorical dimension of the road movie as an extensive metaphor for cultural developments in the relationship between humanity and the spaces it visits or occupies.

The dialectics of the road can be used as a productive tool to help conceptualize the allegorical dimension of the road film. It seeks to offer an axis along whose lines both the narrative and the space in which the narrative is set can be investigated. The road in the road movie runs exactly through the middle of this dialectical crossfire; as a signifier it pertains both to the category of landscape and to the category of movement and is able to effortlessly change its signified meanings depending on the eye of the filmmaker and of the viewer. This makes it possible for the image on screen to exert both a landscape and a mobility's perspective. The road then functions alternately between being a non-place of movement – acquiring its meaning from movement, serving the motion and effectively becoming the setting to mobility's eventhood – and being a physical space with its own dimensions to explore, suspending the movement to the background.

The three road films that have been elaborated in this thesis all take the intricate relation between the characters and the spaces through which they move as a central theme to their narratives. The road in these three films is represented as a space of critical evaluation of the relationship between the journey and its natural surroundings in the Brazilian context. In *Bye bye Brasil* it was shown how the processes of modernity that were aimed to recolonize the interior of Brazil indeed created the migratory movements and mobility it had hoped to achieve, but the so-called progress this was supposed to entail was inscribed with a sense of loss instead. 'Progress' came at the cost of great natural destruction and the revitalized exploitation of the land. One can note a shift in focus from the way the land was seen as an instrument to help further the building of the economy and the nation in *Bye bye Brasil*, to a more modern alternative way of relating to landscape that, using slow filming techniques, underscores the intrinsic value of the land itself in *Andarilho*. In this film, an alternative system of logics is presented through the use of marginalized characters that have shed the speed of the forward drive and now move slowly on and around the highways of Brazil's interior. The film's aesthetics break away from the stereotypical representation of the road as a non-space, aimed at accommodating the need for progress, and instead reframe the road as a physical space with material dimensions. The bare movement of the drifters forms a stark contrast to the search for the myth of progress articulated in *Bye bye Brasil*. In *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* the tension between the two perspectives is explored as a complex dynamics of relating to the landscape for both character and viewer. The film upholds the idea that a mind orientated on the personal narrative does not necessarily exclude a sense of engagement with the landscape and its cultural memories. It is no

either or, but an alternation between two lenses that seeks to describe and define the relationship between the traveller and their surroundings. Through the dialectics of the road it becomes possible to analyse the filmic space both in its own narrative and within the network of intertextual other narratives that inevitably come to the screen when a landscape is included in the image. By revisiting the town of Piranhas, an iconic site within Brazilian cinematic history, a direct connection with *Bye bye Brasil* is established. The road to modernity and progress upon which the *Caravana Rollidey* embarked in the classic film has reached a dead end; the sense of loss that was suggested in *Bye bye Brasil* has been consolidated in the ghost town of Piranhas. The space is haunted by the intertextual presence of a once thriving rural community – the contrast between their spectral presence and the emptiness of the town exhumes the sense of deprivation that has been inscribed in the space. The character of José Renato struggles with his own apathetic relationship to his surroundings and when he arrives in Piranhas he expresses his desire to reconnect with his life and his surroundings. In order to do so he quite literally takes the first step when he steps out of the car and ascends the stairs in the penultimate scene. The symbolism of this movement is unmistakeable: By stepping out of the car he abandons the vehicle of modernity and steers away from mobility's linear course forwards – hoping to find more engagement in a different direction; *volta porque te ama*.

The three films occupy different locations in the landscape and mobility spectrum. By using the dialectics of the road as an instrument for cultural analysis, they can be considered in the same analysis, and the relationship between the journey and the spaces through which is travelled can be studied comparatively. When driving a car it is impossible to simultaneously look ahead, watch the scenery and occasionally check the rear-view mirror; in a similar way the landscape and mobility perspective are in a constant state of alternation during the road movie journey. The framework that has been elaborated in this thesis gives the viewer the ability to focus on the road ahead while keeping track of their position on the road and their relationship to the surroundings. This way the stereotypical forward orientation of the road movie can be complemented by different contexts and other logics, opening up the road for new interpretations and establishing the travelled space as a crossroads of perspectives.

Filmography

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Sertão de Acrílico Azul Piscina ('Sertão in Swimming Pool Blue Acrylic', Karim Aïnouz & Marcelo Gomes, 2003).

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