



Lúcia Nagib

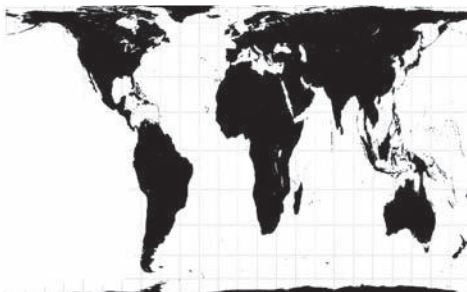
BRAZIL ON SCREEN

CINEMA NOVO, NEW CINEMA, UTOPIA

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BRAZIL ON SCREEN

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BRAZIL ON SCREEN

Cinema Novo, New Cinema, Utopia

Lúcia Nagib

I.B. TAURIS

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i> by Davi Arrigucci Jr	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	xvii
1. Images of the Sea	1
2. The Centre, the Zero and the Empty Utopia	31
3. To Be or Not To Be a Cannibal	59
4. The Black Paradise	81
5. An Interrupted Utopia	99
6. The Urban Dystopia	115
<i>Notes</i>	133
<i>Filmography</i>	143
<i>Index</i>	157

ILLUSTRATIONS

Images captured from the films by the author.

1. *The 400 Blows*, pp 10-11
2. *Black God, White Devil*, Tempo Glauber, pp 12-13, 14, 50, 55
3. *Land in Anguish*, Tempo Glauber, pp 16, 19, 20
4. *I Am Cuba*, p 17
5. *Foreign Land*, VideoFilmes, pp 21, 22-3
6. *Corisco and Dadá*, Rosemberg Cariry, pp 24-5
7. *Believe Me*, Bia Lessa and Dany Roland, pp 26-7
8. *Behind the Sun*, VideoFilmes, p 28
9. *Germany, Year Zero*, p 35
10. *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, p 36
11. *Central Station*, VideoFilmes, pp 39, 43, 45, 46
12. *Midnight*, VideoFilmes, pp 50, 52
13. *Latitude Zero*, Toni Venturi/Olhar Imaginário, pp 53, 55, 56
14. *Hans Staden*, Luiz Alberto Pereira, pp 62, 76-7
15. *Novo Mundo*, Amerigo Vespucci, p 73
16. *Duas viagens ao Brasil*, Hans Staden, p 76
17. *Viagem à Terra do Brasil*, Jean de Léry, p 77
18. *Orpheus*, p 84
19. *Black Orpheus*, pp 84-5
20. *Orfeu*, Carlos Diegues/Rio Vermelho Filmes, p 85
21. *City of God*, Fernando Meirelles, p 107
22. *The Trespasser*, Drama Filmes, pp 120-1, 125, 126, 129, 131
23. *The Scream*, 1893, Edvard Munch, Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo/The Bridgeman Art Library, p 129

To Stephen

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FOREWORD

Since its rebirth in the mid-1990s, Brazilian cinema has consistently demonstrated, in a coherent and dynamic fashion, that fiction continues to be an important means for gaining a better understanding of Brazil's contemporary historical experience, set against a backdrop of various failed political projects.

Indeed, films have provided Brazilians with not only an outlet for their dreams, even when there is little to dream about, but equally a means for getting to grips with their self-image, their inner turmoil, even when they find it difficult to recognize themselves in the mirror, given the extent to which they have been disfigured over the years. Cinema has almost always, even when it has got it wrong, acted as a kind of moral opinion poll, sounding out the collective soul of the Brazilian people, as well as playing a significant role in documenting the nation's historical process.

The distinction between what is an effective artistic accomplishment, with the power to shed light on the historical process, and that which is nothing more than a record of facts or raw document, is not always easy to achieve. The same is true of the role of the mere document within artistic production with a realist intent. But this study takes a risk in its very undertaking, which reflects a sense of daring without which meaningful criticism could not exist. One only has to consider the lamentable spectacle of reviews published in newspapers or top-selling magazines, which no longer take any risks and habitually demonstrate a total lack of care in their preparation or the most blatant commercial self-interest, reproducing the prejudices of the editorial staff with no evidence of intellectual rigour or investigative impulses and, much less, any attempt to try to say something that, from an artistic point of view, could be deemed of critical importance.

The first merit of this book is that it takes on the challenge of presenting in an organized and elucidating manner, in clear prose that shifts effortlessly between multiple approaches to very different films, central

aspects of the rich and complex material that contemporary Brazilian cinema attempts to shape.

The organization of such a varied subject, which has no obvious common thread, so as to convey to the reader with thorough coherence a problematic theme, is no mean feat. Lúcia Nagib, whose observational skills and stylistic flair have already been evidenced in numerous essays and articles on Brazilian and world cinemas, reveals once again her great ability for getting to the crux of a question, namely, that of utopia and its variations, a topic which today is almost exclusively referred to in disheartening terms, but which the author uses as a means for organizing her wealth of material.

In the thesis put forward in this book, the question of utopia finds its historical roots within the decisive current of Brazilian cinematic tradition, that of Cinema Novo, and spreads its branches through all contemporary film production. The latter is the main focus of Nagib's critical approach, which unearths from recent political events and their deep-rooted historical origins the basis for the current cinematic landscape.

Nagib's analysis focuses first on the matrix found in the work of Glauber Rocha, at a time when utopia was identified with revolution. In his films the utopian vision drew on imagery of the sea – 'The *sertão* will become the sea, and the sea will become the *sertão*' – a motif whose genesis Nagib researches at length in order to shed light on all its subsequent symbolic reworkings.

This becomes clear when the author studies the films of Walter Salles, in which the inaugural sense of the Glauberian sea is still central to the image of the nation, as well as in the vision of the *sertão*-sea of filmmaker Rosemberg Cariry. But the motif continues to echo throughout her analysis when it focuses on the new Brazilian utopia in more recent films, made in the wake of the virtual paralysis of film production during the Collor government. The study recognizes images linked to the formation of Brazil and national identity, highlighting the nostalgic reworking of myths from the past, which to a certain extent represents a characteristic feature of postmodern cinema's vision of history.

However, it is also in Glauber Rocha's work that the author searches for the roots of anti-utopia. After the revolutionary perspective of *Black God, White Devil*, the schism, that is, the dissociation between utopia and the Edenic myth, is already perceptible in *Land in Anguish*. In this film, Eldorado is turned into the stage for bourgeois decadence, and the utopian sea, linked to the genesis of Brazil, into the origin of authoritarianism and class oppression.

Glauber Rocha's dual and contradictory view of the future of Brazil shows how a film can act as a seismograph, sensitive to a film artist's reactions to the directions that society is taking and the intricate feelings of those affected by the expectations the country inspires. The filmmaker's visionary antennae capture these subtleties in the art form, through which the complexity of historical experience is expressed in its totality, symbolically condensed in the film.

Capturing the various dimensions of a totality is, as ever, no easy task. This book's second major achievement is that it makes us aware of this, even when it insists on detailing the good intentions of films such as Carlos Diegues's *Orfeu*, a film which, in my opinion, does not live up, in terms of its artistic merit, to the author's meticulously crafted critical reconstruction of his project. However, even in this case, it must be admitted that the richness of the material collected, in itself illuminating, makes it worthy of discussion.

The book's forte lies in showing how a given artistic intention is translated into film language. The author's aptitude for critical analysis comes to the fore when confronted with this most delicate and subtle challenge. The high points of the book include, first, the incisive study of the nuances and differences between the various films that focus on cannibalism and issues of national identity; second, the shrewd analysis that formulates, in general terms, through meaningful details, the distinctions between the prose of Paulo Lins's novel *City of God* and the language of Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund's film version. Nagib's achievement is that she does not reduce the former to the latter, but rather looks for structural correspondences, affinities between their sometimes very disparate stylistic devices and narrative modes, judiciously evaluating the film's artistic merits, which in my opinion are superior to those of the novel, which I consider powerful mainly as a document.

The strength of this study lies, above all, in its treatment of urban dystopia in relation to Beto Brant's film *The Trespasser*. The author provides an illuminating and penetrating analysis of the limits of the document in the construction of a work of fiction. The analytical dismantling of *The Trespasser* inverts, from the outset, certain audience expectations created by some of the film's images themselves and to a large extent by its critical reception. It captures the contradictions between the naturalism, with its allegorical intent, of the metaphors for corruption, and the truly creative and innovative aspects of the film, in the grotesque and expressionist style in which it characterizes the central protagonist and deals with the São Paulo cityscape.

I believe that this book's principal critical revelation lies in this line of analysis, which demonstrates that fiction does not directly translate immediate reality. Rather, a film invents its own imaginary truth by means of language techniques and structural devices, distancing itself from the mere document. In the last analysis, this invented human truth is much more vivid and revealing of historical experience and of a terrifying reality than any attempt to simply reproduce facts relating to an apparent reality. The author's reasoning allows the reader to infer that expressionist deformation and other techniques of film language that hold symbolic power do not constitute an obstacle to the creation of an impression of true reality, something that *The Trespasser* ends up transmitting via ugly, base, frightening elements, which produce powerful metaphors of highly evocative effect. The result is a film that, turning its back on immediate realistic facts, ultimately results in a work of extreme realism.¹

In this way, the study recognizes, with a finely tuned critical ear, the intense poetry that permeates the most penetrative and complex images of *The Trespasser* in the midst of the ugliness and poverty of the outskirts of São Paulo. Similarly, the author captures the pervasive power of the rapper Sabotage, who himself becomes, beyond the work of art which he 'invades' as a trespasser, a symbolic figure, since, as we know, he subsequently became yet another victim of Brazil's urban war shortly after the film was completed. This unexpected blurring of reality and fiction points to the precariousness and the unavoidably ironic, tragic quality of our own art, when it focuses on class conflicts in a society whose overlapping historical stages and clashing lifestyles move the population further and further away from the civilized co-existence and utopian dreams that films have sometimes evoked. This encounter with the poetic where one would least expect it, in the most debased aspects of the city, perhaps holds the key to another dream, one that is unrelated to traditional utopias.

Ultimately, when the book is viewed in its entirety it becomes apparent that, while providing an organizing principle around which to structure the varied subject-matter of the films analysed so as to create a coherent thread of discussion and debate, the theme of utopia ends up also restricting further development of the analysis. The latter is its most incisive precisely when it turns to issues that stray beyond the overarching thematic structure, taking an unexpected detour.

From the very way in which the language and structure of the films, together with their relationship to reality, are dealt with, it becomes apparent that the theme of utopia and its corollaries facilitates, on the one hand, the general organization of the subject-matter. On the other

hand, however, when applied to all the films as an obligatory theoretical framework, the theme ends up moulding them to an externally imposed perspective, which is not necessarily the one that we are most likely to draw from the internal structure of a given film or even from the auteurist intentions it contains.

The choice of an overarching point of view can lead to a predictable format in the evolution of the argument. In this case, however, it does not hinder the free movement of the author's critical gaze, which is always attentive, alert and astute in its treatment of concrete details, which are fundamental for the understanding of individual films in isolation, and subsequently in linking each to the wider theme of the book.

Thus, notwithstanding the contradictions that the very choice of a fixed thematic approach could lead to, the book is a lively and knowledgeable guide to contemporary Brazilian cinema in all its many guises. The richness and impact of the analyses and the precise choice of the films as a whole will allow readers to gain a firm foothold in both the inner workings of the films themselves and, at the same time, the world to which in some way they relate, enabling them to evaluate for themselves the subtle and expressive relationships between the two. You cannot ask more of a critical work.

Davi Arrigucci Jr

INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 marks the end of the socialist utopia and the victory of postmodern anti-utopian neo-liberalism. A few months later, in 1990, Francis Fukuyama was already publishing his polemical article 'The End of History and the Last Man', which was expanded into a bestselling book that elaborated on the end of history as conceived by Hegel and Marx, expounding the virtues of liberal democracy over communism.¹

Fredric Jameson defined this era as 'late capitalism', characterized by the end of hermeneutics, dialectics and the 'utopian gesture',² and the installation of intellectual, counter-revolutionary *ressentiment*. It was the realm of superficiality and simulacra, derived from the postmodern condition, which levelled inner and outer worlds, appearance and essence, signifier and signified.³ In relation to cinema, Jameson identified in this era the 'nostalgia film', which trained the spectator 'to consume the past in the form of glossy images'.⁴ Indeed, tied as it was to a present without a future and devoid of any avant-garde ambitions, cinema tended, from the mid-1980s onwards, to recycle the past through citation, parody of conventional genres and aestheticized violence, a trend epitomized by the likes of David Lynch and, a little later, Quentin Tarantino, whose films combined historical scepticism with black humour and political cynicism.

In 1990, Jean-Luc Godard made a symbolic film about the fall of the Wall called *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*. Revolving around the end of history in reunified Germany, the film evokes the Berlin razed to the ground of Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero*, shot just after the end of the Second World War, as well as the ruins of narrative and the death of cinema itself. In Brazil, 1990 was cinema's real year zero. It saw the sudden closure of Embrafilme, the state film company, by the newly elected President Fernando Collor de Mello, which brought film production to a halt for the

following two years. Before that, Brazilian cinema had also undergone a brief phase of postmodern self-reflexivity and disbelief in history and narrative. With headquarters in the São Paulo district of Vila Madalena, a group of filmmakers including Guilherme de Almeida Prado, Chico Botelho, Walter Rogério and Wilson Barros, and musicians such as Arrigo Barnabé, had been producing urban films, conceived as parodies and citations of the American film noir and vaguely akin to the porn output of the Boca do Lixo (literally, the 'garbage mouth', or the red-light district). Basking in scintillating neon effects, which illuminated nostalgic cinephilia in artificial settings, these films cultivated the ludic superficiality of the cartoon and the electronic game,⁵ and remained immune to the nation's cultural peculiarities.

This was the Brazilian response to a process that, throughout the 1980s, had kept cinema under the threat of imminent death through narrative dissolution, nostalgic metalanguage and the rise of video, whose adepts rejoiced in forecasting cinema's complete disappearance. But it somehow managed to survive and even experienced an international boom after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which Godard had suggested was cinema's own end. The emergence of cultural studies, which made room for the expression of ethnic and sexual minorities, accompanied the return of the film *engagé*. At the same time, new, enlightened audiences, no longer motivated by old left-wing imperatives, but duly imbued with political correctness, were formed around the proliferating film festivals and alternative venues. Gradually, the interest in local and national peculiarities reappeared in response to the cultural homogenization entailed by globalization, as well as to the postmodern deconstructive superficiality.

From the end of the 1980s onwards, new cinemas started to appear in various parts of the world, particularly in Asia (Iran, China, Taiwan and Japan), all of them strongly narrative and committed to the recuperation of history. Filmmakers such as Zhang Yimou, Edward Yang, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Abbas Kiarostami and Mohsen Makhmalbaf demonstrated that the mastery of a wide range of aesthetic tools, including the deconstructive ones, made them all the more capable of apprehending and analysing the historical processes of their own countries.

In the mid-1990s, it was the turn of Latin America, where, after repeated declines and silences, cinema returned with renewed energy, especially in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. In these countries, the film revival derived in the first place from the establishment of democratic governments, which instituted favourable cultural policies and film incentives. But it also resulted from a global situation which welcomed multicultural

expressions, especially when they combined auteurist impulses with local colour and certain doses of conventional genres. In Brazil, the utopian gesture, lost in the past of Cinema Novo, returned with a new impetus, particularly notable in the first years of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's neo-liberal reforms, propelled by a euphoria which reflected the return of the belief in Brazil as a viable country. However, this new utopia never attained full development, subjected as it was to another realistic tendency which pointed to the continuation of the country's historical problems.

This book studies the resurgence of the utopian gesture in Brazilian cinema from the mid-1990s onwards, as well as its variations and negations. The analysis identifies trajectories of rise and fall, which reflect oscillations in the political scenario, and includes a retrospective look at utopian traditions of the Brazilian cinematic past, in turn derived from the nation's foundational myths. At the same time, it considers the ways in which recent Brazilian film production transcends Cinema Novo's national project to interact with modern, postmodern and commercial cinemas of the world, thus benefiting from and contributing to a new transnational cinematic aesthetics.

Chapter 1 introduces the dialectic matrix of utopia and anti-utopia which was established by Glauber Rocha in the films he shot immediately before and after the 1964 military coup. Focusing on images of the sea, it begins by looking at Brazilian cinema's most famous utopian prophecy, presented in Glauber's *Black God, White Devil* (1964): 'The backlands will turn to sea, and the sea into backlands.' The formula combines the discoverers' dreamed paradise with popular millennialist beliefs as a means of proposing revolution in the present. The chapter goes on to describe the prophecy's anti-utopian inversion which is presented in Glauber's *Land in Anguish* (1967). Here, the opening maritime images, rather than fulfilling utopian prophecies, lead to a rotten Eldorado in the New World, which accounts for the failure of the revolutionary project in the present.

The work of retracing the genesis of Glauber's maritime imaginary finally leads to Thomas More's island of Utopia itself. My argument here is based on Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco's creative cartography, which locates Utopia on the island of Fernando de Noronha, in the northeast of Brazil. Described by its first European visitor, Amerigo Vespucci, in one of his letters as paradise regained, the island caught More's fancy and led him to install his perfect society, by mere chance, in Brazil. Rather than this geographic coincidence, what draws my interest is the obsession with the mythic 'island' that moves the characters in *Black God, White Devil*.

Remaining invisible to the spectator, the main character's dreamed island stands for a project which is both practical and unfeasible, or the 'best place' and the 'no place' encapsulated by the ambivalent term 'utopia'.

Endowed, like the myths at their origin, with foundational power, Glauber's images offered an effective aesthetic resource to recent film directors who were interested in reconnecting with the nation. Walter Salles, an intellectual filmmaker who is entirely aware of the imaginary he manipulates, was the first to return to Glauber's maritime tropes. In his programmatic film *Foreign Land* (co-directed by Daniela Thomas, 1995), he uses images of the sea to mark the end of utopia and Cinema Novo's national project during the Collor period. Centred on the mythology of discovery and including in its title the word 'land' borrowed from Glauber's films,⁶ *Foreign Land* is the starting point of the recent utopian curve, which follows an ascending trajectory in the two following years, reflecting the country's momentary economic improvement.

Many films produced in this brief period revisit Cinema Novo's dry backlands with an updated yet nostalgic look. Works such as *Corisco and Dadá* (Rosemberg Cariry, 1996), *Perfumed Ball* (Lírio Ferreira and Paulo Caldas, 1997) and *Believe Me* (Bia Lessa and Dany Roland, 1997) present colourful backland settings in combination with sea and water imagery, which indicate the possibility, or even realization, of the promised paradise. In the following years, however, the utopian project is challenged, especially in the films about the *favelas* (slums) set in urban territories of exclusion. The utopian curve comes full circle with *Behind the Sun* (Walter Salles, 2001), in which the final sea is cinephilic abstraction, reminiscent both of Glauber and of Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959), which inspired the ending of *Black God, White Devil*.

Chapter 2 extends the boundaries of the maritime imaginary to include the motifs of the zero and the centre, which turn around the search for the nation and its definition. In focus are again two films by Walter Salles, *Central Station* (1998) and *Midnight* (co-directed by Daniela Thomas, 1999), as well as Toni Venturi's *Latitude Zero* (2000). The analysis draws parallels between them and new-wave films which also elaborate on the motif of the zero, with examples picked from Italian neo-realism, the Brazilian Cinema Novo and the New German Cinema. In *Central Station*, the homeland is re-encountered in the archaic backlands, where political issues are resolved in the private sphere and the social drama turns into family melodrama. *Midnight* recycles Glauber's backlands-sea prophecy in the new millennium's hour zero, when the earthly paradise represented by the sea is re-encountered by the middle-class character, but not by the poor north-

eastern migrant who dies on the beach. Finally, *Latitude Zero* focuses on an emptied, 'zeroed' Eldorado in an abandoned goldmine in the heart of Brazil, to mark the end of the masculine predatory utopia and the installation of the feminine principle.

Chapter 3 returns once again to the mythology of the discovery to discuss the famous 'anthropophagic utopia', a centrepiece of the 1920s modernist project inspired by the Renaissance ideal of paradise regained in the land of Brazil and the classical theory of the noble savage. Under Oswald de Andrade's leadership, the modernists defined the anthropophagic Indian as the holder of the national identity, an idea which was re-elaborated by late Cinema Novo, especially in *Macunaíma* (Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, 1969) and *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1970–72), and more recently in *Hans Staden* (Luiz Alberto Pereira, 1999). Seen in sequence, these three films describe yet another curve of rise and fall, this time with reference to the cannibal Indian, and present an interesting migration of the national identity through Brazilian society's different ethnic components. Originally proposed by the modernists as a libertarian attitude, anthropophagy is turned, in the film *Macunaíma*, into the general rule of a self-devouring humanity. In *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, it is celebrated as sexual revolution that unites the oppressed among both the natives and the European colonizers. Finally, *Hans Staden*, at the end of the 1990s, focuses on cannibalism through the European's exclusive point of view and dismisses it as a relic of the past, devoid of any utopian potential.

Another mythology that has found fertile ground in Brazilian cinema is the Greek, with the invention of the black Orpheus. This is the theme of Chapter 4, which looks at Vinicius de Moraes's play *Orfeu da Conceição* and its adaptation into the world-cinema classic *Black Orpheus* (Marcel Camus, 1959). The analysis includes other related artistic landmarks, such as *Rio, Northern Zone* (Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1957), a precursor of Cinema Novo which influenced Camus and its idyllic vision of Rio's *favelas*; Cocteau's various films on Orpheus; and, more importantly, Sartre's negritude project as expressed in 'Black Orpheus', his preface to an anthology of black poetry in French. The objective is to evaluate the way in which the racial question is presented in a more recent film, *Orfeu*, by Carlos Diegues (1999), which proposes to update the image of the black and the *favela*. The idealized black paradise, staged in previous re-workings of the Orphic myth, receives, in this film, a realistic counterpoint which includes problems such as overcrowding, criminality and drug trafficking that pervade Brazilian present-day *favelas*.

The last two chapters dispense with the method of historic affiliation and comparison, as the films in question, unlike those analysed in the previous chapters, do not present a structure of citation, nostalgia and revision. Chapter 5 is devoted to *City of God* (Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002), Brazilian cinema's greatest international success of all time. The film's inventive narrative structure, I argue, owes much to the extraordinary novel it was based on, Paulo Lins's *City of God*. The book's language, which incorporates the *favela* slang and the speed of the gunshots that put an end to lives barely begun, is turned, in the film, into realistic acting and quick-fire editing to describe the inferno of crime that interrupted the *favela*'s 'golden age' of samba and solidarity. However, the valorization of the protagonists' personal stories is directed towards ensuring that the interruption of utopia will not put an end to history, thus decidedly taking the side of narrative cinema against postmodern fragmentation.

Finally, Chapter 6 focuses on *The Trespasser* (Beto Brant, 2003) as a dystopian portrait of urban Brazil. The film, which describes the social ascent of a professional killer from a São Paulo *favela*, was regarded by many critics as revelatory of Brazil's moral decadence. In my analysis, I suggest that its revelatory quality is of an aesthetic kind: the representation of the supposedly protected universe of the ruling class is in fact permeated by the misery that surrounds it. Such an aesthetic contamination, I argue, passes for an ethical diagnosis of Brazil as a whole thanks to the film's skilful combination of genre and documentary elements.

The interest of recent Brazilian film production – the variety of which is by no means exhausted in this book – goes necessarily beyond the way they update the national project. Films such as *Central Station* and *City of God*, which turned their directors into international names, are products of globalized culture as much as of Brazil, a theme I have been exploring elsewhere.⁷ Walter Salles feels equally at ease making films in Portuguese, English and Spanish, as proven by his recent Latin American work *Motorcycle Diaries* (2004). Salles's and Fernando Meirelles's latest directorial outputs, respectively *Dark Water* (2005) and *The Constant Gardener* (2005), are international productions to which present-day critics are drawn, just as Truffaut was towards the American cinema in his time, to decipher their secret auteurist features. If the Brazilian utopia is still far from reality, that of Brazilian cinema, at least on the aesthetic level, seems to have come about.

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGES OF THE SEA

Films

Black God, White Devil (*Deus e o diabo na terra do sol*, Glauber Rocha, 1964)

Land in Anguish (*Terra em transe*, Glauber Rocha, 1967)

The 400 Blows (*Les quatre cents coups*, François Truffaut, 1959)

Foreign Land (*Terra estrangeira*, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1995)

Corisco and Dadá (*Corisco e Dadá*, Rosemberg Cariry, 1996)

Perfumed Ball (*Baile perfumado*, Paulo Caldas and Lirio Ferreira, 1997)

Believe Me (*Crede-mi*, Bia Lessa and Dany Roland, 1997)

Behind the Sun (*Abril despedaçado*, Walter Salles, 2001)

IMAGES OF THE SEA

Danger and the abyss God gave the sea,
But gave it a mirror for the sky to see.

(*Deus ao mar o perigo e o abismo deu,
Mas nele é que espelhou o céu*)

Fernando Pessoa, 'Portuguese Sea' ('Mar português')

In 1964, *Black God, White Devil* formulated Brazilian cinema's most famous utopia: 'The backlands will turn to sea, and the sea will turn into backlands' ('*O sertão vai virar mar, e o mar vai virar sertão*').¹ The phrase is the chorus of a song in *cordel* style,² which punctuates the film, and is sung by Sérgio Ricardo, who wrote the music to lyrics by Glauber Rocha. This prediction is also the *leitmotiv* of the dialogues. It is uttered both by the religious leader Sebastião and the *cangaceiro* Corisco,³ then repeated by the cowherd Manuel, who successively follows these two leaders in an attempt to free himself from the *sertão's* poverty and drought. The film ends with the apparent fulfilment of the utopian prophecy: the famous image of the sea, which replaces that of the backlands.

New meanings are added to the Glauberian sea in *Land in Anguish* (1967), whose opening sea imagery harks back to his 1964 film. An aerial camera glides across a silver, round, cosmogonic sea that fills the entire frame, arriving at green coastal mountains, over which appears the title 'Eldorado'. The arid backlands, with their wretched characters yearning for a revolutionary miracle, are here substituted for a land of opulence, confirming the existence of paradise which, it seems, remains beyond the reach of the poor.

Thanks to its richness and complexity, Glauber's maritime imagery became the main source of utopian motifs available to recent Brazilian cinema. The Film Revival of the mid-1990s brought back inaugural myths and impulses attached to Brazil's formation and national identity, favouring the return of utopian thought. But in a globalized, post-utopian world,

virtually devoid of political ideas, where national projects have long since given way to transnational aesthetics and relationships, a new Brazilian utopia could only emerge as a reference to the past and a re-evaluation of old proposals centred on the nation. Thus, as it sought to recover a utopian nation lost in time and space, recent Brazilian cinema followed the route of the 'nostalgia cinema', which Jameson once classified as 'the current dominant Western or postmodern form of telling history'.⁴ Nostalgia, homage, cross-reference and a desire for historic continuity gave shape to the utopian sea which has re-emerged with all its symbolic power in the new cinema.

Ismail Xavier has written extensively about the totalizing capacity of Glauber's backlands and sea as national allegories.⁵ Xavier has also detailed the dialectics of this process, which is capable of incorporating both the unifying myth and the fragmented discourse and narrative. As a result, he says, the utopian prophecy of the backlands-sea contains in itself an anti-utopia.⁶ In line with this thought, I propose to examine, first, the Glauberian sea's genesis and aesthetic characteristics and how it is propelled by impulses of affirmation and negation of the utopia; and, second, the way it has been re-appropriated by recent Brazilian cinema.

From its beginnings Brazilian cinema has abounded in sea images, although no other filmmaker before Glauber had provided them with such symbolic power. The pioneering filmmaker Humberto Mauro, who was fond of water and river images to the point of defining cinema as 'waterfall', made a founding film about the Portuguese navigators, *The Discovery of Brazil* (*Descobrimento do Brasil*, 1937), in which the sea's scattered appearances are merely decorative. The famous *Limit* (*Limite*, 1929-31) by Mário Peixoto, who has a legion of worshippers among contemporary filmmakers, including Walter Salles, evolves around maritime images which are romantic expressions of subjective deserts rather than suggestions of social utopia. The films *Black God*, *White Devil* and *Land in Anguish* will therefore be considered here as aesthetic matrices, as they describe a trajectory of rise and fall of the maritime utopia, from the revolutionary early 1960s to the decline following the military coup in 1964, which is mirrored in the curve of the rise and fall of the neo-liberal, globalized utopia of the 1990s.

Foreign Land (Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1995) offers a starting point for the recent utopian trajectory. It portrays the dark period of President Collor's government, when the transition to democracy seemed doomed to failure, Brazil had become a nation of emigrants, and the sea, once crossed by the Portuguese discoverers, led the characters towards

defeat and death instead of the expected paradise. From that moment on, the curve rises, with the advent of films that return to Cinema Novo's dry backlands with an updated yet nostalgic look. Films like *Corisco and Dadá* (Rosemberg Cariry, 1996), *Perfumed Ball* (Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira, 1997) and *Believe Me* (Bia Lessa and Dany Roland, 1997) present colourful backlands alongside sea and water imagery, pointing to the possibility, or even realization, of the promised paradise. The trajectory comes full circle with *Behind the Sun* (Walter Salles, 2001), in which the final utopian sea is cinephilic abstraction, reminiscent both of Glauber and of Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (*Les quatre cents coups*, 1959), which inspired the ending of *Black God, White Devil*. Another kind of solution, completing the utopian curve's downturn, is offered by *Midnight* (*O primeiro dia*, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1999), to be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. In this film, the earthly paradise represented by the sea is re-encountered by the middle-class character, though not by the poor northeastern migrant who dies on the beach.

As well as these works, several other recent Brazilian films present images of sea and large expanses of water, either in their opening scenes or at key moments in which they acquire totalizing, allegorical meaning. Examples are *Landscape of Memory* (*Sertão das memórias*, José Araújo, 1996), *Bocage, the Triumph of Love* (*Bocage – o triunfo do amor*, Djalma Limongi Batista, 1998), *Friendly Fire* (*Ação entre amigos*, Beto Brant, 1998), *Sea Land* (*Terra do mar*, Eduardo Caron and Mirella Martinelli, 1998) and *Hans Staden* (Luiz Alberto Pereira, 1999). The list itself, by no means exhaustive, attests to the importance of the maritime trope in recent Brazilian cinema and to Glauber's inaugural role in the formation of Brazil's cinematic imaginary.

The inaugural sea

The genealogy of Glauber's sea overlaps Brazilian history, popular myths and the history of cinema. According to Glauber, the images of sea in his films convey, above all else, 'the *sertanejo's*⁷ primal obsession, which is to see the sea'. He says:

The northeastern migrants always move towards the shore. As for 'The backlands will turn to sea, and the sea will turn into backlands', this was Antônio Conselheiro's widespread prophecy, and while it does not really contain such an idea, it gives you the liberty to interpret it in a revolutionary way. I appropriated the symbol and used it in my film.⁸

Glauber ascribes the prophecy's authorship to Antônio Conselheiro on the basis of two main sources: the book *Rebellion in the Backlands* (*Os sertões*)

by Euclides da Cunha, and the northeastern oral tradition. In Euclides's book, which recounts the rebellion led by the messianic leader Antônio Conselheiro in the hinterlands of Bahia in 1896–97, the prophecy actually announces that 'the backlands will turn into seacoast and the seacoast into backlands'.⁹ Its authorship remains unclear, as it was transcribed by Euclides from small apocryphal notebooks found in Canudos, where the rebellion took place. The term 'seacoast', in its turn, conveys a more practical sense than 'sea', as it suggests the rich coastline beyond the reach of the poor *sertanejo*. But the grandiose idea of the sea seems to have suggested utopian possibilities also to Euclides, who drew on controversial ideas of the period to create the 'geological fantasy', in Roberto Ventura's words,¹⁰ according to which the recent formation of the *sertão*, in the state of Bahia, indicated the previous existence of a sea:

however inexpert the observer may be, upon leaving behind him the majestic perspectives which unfold to the south and exchanging them here for the moving sight of Nature in torment, he cannot but have the persisting impression of treading the newly upraised bed of a sea long extinct, which still preserves, stereotyped in its rigid folds, the agitation of the waves and the stormy deeps.¹¹

Glauber was also familiar with the northeastern oral tradition, which is equally riddled with aquatic prophecies. The filmmaker and researcher Rosemberg Cariry, who reworked the Glauberian backlands–sea binomial in *Corisco and Dadá*, suggests that the origin of the prophecy is linked to the belief in an 'enchanted lake', passed down from Cariri Indians to their living descendants as the mystic seat of creation. According to him, the Cariris believed that,

the giant water snake slept underground, with its tail curled up inside the Batateira Rock. ... The Cariri shamans (*pajés*) prophesied that the rock would tumble, water would flood the Cariri valley and in its fury would devour all the bad men who had stolen land and enslaved the Indians. Once the waters had settled, the land would once again be fertile and free, and the Cariris would return to inhabit Paradise.¹²

Cariry believes that, in the days when Antônio Conselheiro wandered through the backlands of the state of Ceará trading sugar cane spirit (*cachaça*), he heard this legend from local Indians (*caboclos*). He then used it to formulate his own prophecy that 'the backlands will turn to sea, and the sea into backlands', which he later spread throughout the hinterlands of Bahia. Still according to Cariry:

This messianic discourse found favour with the *caboclos* living in the backlands of Bahia. Cariri Indians from Mirandela and Saco do Morcego, who had been converted by Capucin monks, provided 300 archers to help defend Conselheiro's Sacred Empire of Canudos.¹³

Hélène Clastres, in her classic book *The Land Without Evil: Tupi-Guarani Prophetism*, which is certainly among Cariry's sources, had already observed the importance of deluge mythology among Guarani and Tupi Indians, including stories of vast, regenerative cataclysms that lead the way to paradise, or the 'land without evil'. Clastres also emphasized the fact that sixteenth-century writers associated such indigenous myths with the biblical deluge.¹⁴

Indeed, the Bible is full of myths about large bodies of water, which, combined with Brazil's native mythology, left an indelible mark on the nation's imaginary. The historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda describes the ways in which beliefs in the earthly paradise have been linked to water since the book of Genesis. In it, the Garden of Eden is the cradle from which springs a large river, which splits into four branches, forming the earth's main rivers. He writes:

Paradise motifs, inseparable from that myth [of Eldorado], have acquired new consistency here [in Brazil] with the parallel drawn by some authors between the rivers São Francisco and Plate, on the one hand, and the Nile, on the other, whose waters, according to an old tradition, found their true sources in Eden.¹⁵

Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter, Jean de Léry's and André Thevet's books, letters written by Jesuit missionaries and many other documents left behind by Europeans who visited Brazil in the sixteenth century fuelled the myth of an Eden-like country which was perpetuated in the Brazilian imaginary. This amalgam of legends, corroborated by the specific geography of a country rich in an immense coastline and abundant rivers, were skilfully combined by Glauber, in *Black God, White Devil*, with stories of popular uprisings in the backlands, such as those of Canudos and Pedra Bonita.

In the film, although the sea is the main utopian figure, utopia itself is represented by 'the island', a realm of fantasy, lacking graphic representation, announced by preacher Sebastião thus: 'God separated Heaven and Earth, but it went wrong. When he separates them again we will see the island' (*Deus separou o céu e a Terra, mas tava errado. Quando separar de novo, a gente vê a ilha*). According to Sebastião, in the island, 'Horses feed on flowers and children drink milk from rivers. Men eat bread made from stone, and dust of the earth turns to flour. There is water and food in

abundance as in heaven' ('*Os cavalos se alimentam de flores e os meninos bebem leite nos rios. Os home come o pão feito de pedra e poeira da terra vira farinha, tem água e comida, tem a fartura do céu*'). Such lines are again inspired by the prophecies transcribed in *Rebellion in the Backlands*, which forecast a 'promised land, where milk flows in rivers through banks of corn cakes' ('*terra da promessa, onde corre um rio de leite e são de cuscuz de milho as barrancas*').¹⁶ But Glauber is drawing even further back on an inaugural moment in Brazilian imaginary, which gives these prophecies both historic and mythical resonances.

'The island' is a constant feature of legends relating to paradise regained in the New World. It is usually depicted as a distant, steep mountain, access to which is invariably obstructed by rough seas or deep rivers. Christopher Columbus, whom Buarque de Holanda described as a man fearless of the impossible, preferred to compare the paradise island to 'a woman's breast, or the pointed half of a pear, rather than to any rough mountain'.¹⁷ The most famous of all mythical islands is Utopia itself, described by the Renaissance English writer Thomas More in his book *Utopia*. Here, the island's paradisiacal qualities are well protected by all sorts of barriers. Surrounding More's island,

other rocks lie under water, and are very dangerous. The channel is known only to the natives, so that if any stranger should enter into the bay, without one of [the Utopian] pilots, he would run great danger of shipwreck; for even they themselves could not pass it safe, if some marks that are on the coast did not direct their way; and if these should be but a little shifted, any fleet that might come against them, how great soever it were, would be certainly lost.¹⁸

A curious detail of this fictitious island, home to the perfect society, is that its origins are associated with Brazil. In the classic book *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa (The Brazilian Indian and the French Revolution)*, Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco defends the thesis that More's Utopia is a fictionalized account of the island of Fernando de Noronha, in the northeast of Brazil, which the English author had found out about in Amerigo Vespucci's letters.¹⁹ Vespucci, in his turn, describes it as 'blessed with abundant fresh water, infinite trees and countless marine as well as terrestrial birds ... so gentle that they fear not being held in one's hands'.²⁰ Arinos completes his hypothesis:

The English philosopher needed a vague land like this in which to place his perfect human beings. A land he could turn into the birthplace of social peace and justice, into a fortunate island rising high above a rough sea of cruelty, misery and oppression, which was the world he lived in.²¹

An essential aspect of Utopia is its impossibility. The word, invented by More, brings together the Greek term *topos*, or 'place', and the combination of two prefixes, *ou*, which is negation, and *eu*, meaning 'good quality'. Thus 'utopia' signifies both 'good place' and 'no place', an ambiguity aimed at camouflaging More's plans of social change designed for his own country, England. Originally a practical project, Utopia was eventually universalized with the meaning of the impossible dream of an ideal society, whose very perfection makes it unfeasible.

A similar dialectic construct, which simultaneously confirms and denies Eden, lies at the core of *Black God, White Devil's* maritime utopia. From the top of Monte Santo, Manuel and the preacher Sebastião look out on to the endless scorched backlands before them, dreaming of the island of plenty, which never appears to the camera. 'The island doesn't exist, but it lives in our soul!' ('*A ilha não existe, a gente traz ela dentro da alma!*'), murmurs Sebastião, confirming that utopia is nothing but a manifestation of faith. Glauber's mythic backlands-sea formula expresses the harrowing feeling of this utopian country that could have turned out right but was fated not to from the day it was discovered. This is how Sebastião's truncated speech, echoed in the film's discontinuous editing, summarizes the history of Brazil: 'Dom Pedro Alves discovered Brazil and made the stairs of stone and blood [of Monte Santo]' ('*Foi dom Pedro Alves que descobriu o Brasil e fez a escada de pedra e de sangue [de Monte Santo]*'). This synthetic account mixes Dom Pedro, the emperor, with Pedro Álvares Cabral, the discoverer, in a succession of trials and disasters that continue to the present. The aim of Glauber's dialectics is, thus, to restore the utopian myth in order to prove that its antithesis rules the day.

Aesthetic matrices

Although conceptually tied to Brazil's history, Glauber's sea imagery drew its aesthetic inspiration from a foreign model, François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*. In the final sequence of this *nouvelle vague* milestone, young Antoine Doinel, played by Jean-Pierre Léaud, runs headlong towards the sea he has never seen before.

The maritime utopia here translates liberation, and it is indeed the search for freedom that drives the plot. The film's original title was *La fugue d'Antoine*, drawing on the musical form of the fugue to signify the protagonist's flights. Indeed, Antoine manages to flee his school, his family and, in the end, the reformatory where he is doing time for petty misdemeanours. In the end, unlike Manuel in *Black God*, he actually meets the utopian sea and touches it with his feet before immediately recoiling. The



The sea at the end of *The 400 Blows* is reduced to a blur behind the hero's frozen close-up, which asserts the supremacy of the individual over objective reality.

camera then closes in on him to capture his puzzled look in freeze-frame, while the sea is reduced to a blurred background.

Filmed on location around Villers-sur-Mer in the Pays d'Auge, the sequence is remarkable for its realism, in vogue in Europe since Italian neo-realism. The use of sequence-shots brings to the fore the physical exertion of Jean-Pierre Léaud, forced to run long stretches without breaks, while the wintry, inhospitable set further torments him. Even the climactic encounter with the sea is a let down. It does not correspond to a project of cosmic inversion, as in Glauber's film, nor does it offer an end to the hero's afflictions. The sea that gently ripples along this fenced-in, domesticated beach is monotonous, cold and uninviting in its vastness. Unsurprisingly, the boy immediately rejects it after a brief touch with his feet still in socks and shoes. The context and, in particular, nature appear devoid of interest for a character who had previously shown a predilection for secretive, sealed spaces, such as his friend's bedroom where he could smoke and drink, or the dark cinema auditorium. The frozen close-up of his face thus confirms the supremacy of the individual's psychological drama over the objective reality.

Doinel's final enigmatic expression suits the film's general ironic atmosphere, corroborated by the self-reflexive actor that Léaud has been from childhood. In *The 400 Blows*, there is no room for any serious political discourse such as Glauber's, and yet *Black God's* final sequence bears a number of resemblances to that of its French predecessor and is an undeniable citation: the protagonist who runs towards the utopian sea he had



never seen before; the use of sequence-shots to emphasize the actor's physical strain; the individual's heroic battle against everything and everyone, including Manuel's wife, who falls over and is left behind by him in his desperate race.

But the differences are just as striking. *Black God's* sea, rather than presenting a cold, placid geometry as in the French film, is a dynamic mass, as noted by Ismail Xavier:

The moving camera shows us the sea from above, in such a way as to avoid the composition of a smooth surface, delimited by the horizon's stable line. The sea affirms itself as a living mass, with the ebb and flow of the waves.²²

Rather than being the focus of interest, the hero is summarily abandoned in a brusque cut, while the *sertão* miraculously turns to sea by the editor's sleight of hand. The filmmaker, who a while ago was keen to free his hero from the influences of god and the devil, becomes God himself, imposing a solution through editing and provoking revolution through art.

Coherently, throughout the film, Manuel had proven his determination to endure all measures of sacrifice to realize the backlands-sea prophecy. His final dash makes actor Geraldo Del Rey's real suffering under the location's blazing sun all too apparent, echoing other passages of the film, such as his climb up Monte Santo's hundreds of steps on his knees with a heavy rock on his head. The blood that trickles down his head at the end of this feat looks, and is, real, a fact confirmed by testimonies of crew and



The sea at the end of *Black God, White Devil* causes the hero to disappear under the waves of revolution.

cast members.²³ His complete disappearance under the agitated sea thus consummates the immolation of the individual for the sake of social transformation.

The way in which Glauber cites an auteurist, personal film, such as *The 400 Blows*, in a film which champions rebellion and violence against class oppression, actually inverts its meaning. In the early 1960s, Glauber was fascinated by the *politique des auteurs*, idealized by Truffaut and his colleagues of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the 1950s, to give directors maximum power. But he interpreted it according to his own convenience, that is to say, as the revolutionary action of a leader who is at once an artist and a politician. Dismissing his French colleagues' devotion to American cinema, Glauber defined auteur cinema as non-commercial cinema and the film director as a revolutionary leader, as he proclaimed in his early writings:

The politics of a modern auteur is revolutionary: nowadays one needn't even qualify an auteur as revolutionary, because the word auteur is a totalizing noun. To say that an auteur is reactionary, in cinema, is the same as saying he is a commercial director: this is situating him as craftsman: as non-auteur.²⁴

Truffaut's and Glauber's sea images thus present two opposite poles of the individual and the social utopia. But these will merge together in Brazilian recent cinema's reinterpretation of the maritime utopia.



The anti-utopian matrix

Black God, White Devil, filmed in 1963, at a time when there was great political hope in Brazil, draws a progressive hero who finally frees himself from the country's retrograde and anti-republican influences. The film presents a true utopian agenda, much in the style of Thomas More, 'who was a progressive, an evolutionist and even a revolutionary in the legitimate sense of the word', according to Afonso Arinos.²⁵ In its turn, *Land in Anguish*, made after the 1964 military coup, is a post-utopian film, which speculates on the errors that led to the demise of the revolutionary project, blaming the very formulators of the Brazilian Eden myth for its failure.

Land in Anguish is about the mythic sea that transported the European discoverers to an Eldorado of privileges, which bears little resemblance to More's socialist Utopia. The beginning of the film is a long and slow aerial sequence-shot of the sea occupying the totality of the frame, with a *candomblé* song²⁶ in the background suggesting a mystic trance. The camera that slides from left to right captures the sea's rounded surface as if it were the globe itself illuminated by the sun's metallic glow. Credits are superimposed on the images, while the camera glides away over mountains covered with dense forest, followed by a valley through which a river winds its way. There are no signs of human presence in this pristine scenery, over which appears the title in parentheses: 'Eldorado, inner country, Atlantic'.

This majestic, placid opening, enacting paradise regained, bears striking similarities to the opening of *I Am Cuba (Soy Cuba)*, a Russo-Cuban production directed by Mikhail Kalatozov in 1964.²⁷ Reinterpreting



The composition of the sacrificial hero includes the actor's real physical strain (Manuel, in *Black God, White Devil*).

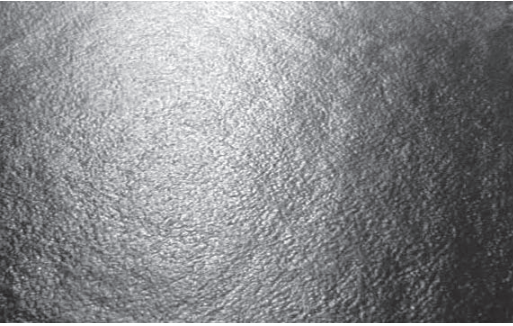
Cuban revolutionary utopia, *I Am Cuba* begins with long, smooth aerial shots of the sea, leading to the Caribbean island's immaculate hills and palm-tree forests. In the black and white photography the sea presents a metallic glow, while the palm trees acquire a white shine under the sun – an effect achieved with the use of negative sensitive to infrared rays.²⁸ The camera eventually stops before a white wooden cross at the sea shore, bearing an inscription which marks Christopher Columbus's visit to the island. 'Cuba's' female voice-over recites:

Once, Christopher Columbus landed here. He wrote in his diary: 'This is the most beautiful land ever seen by human eyes.' Thank you, Señor Columbus. When you saw me for the first time, I was singing and laughing. I waved the fronds of my palms to greet your sails. I thought your ships brought happiness.

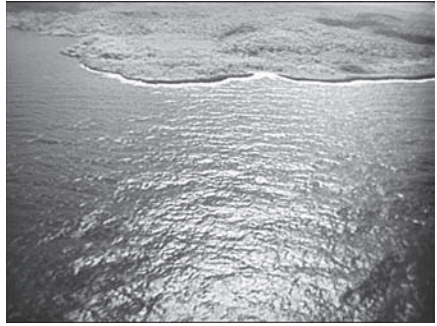
This is followed by a narrative of miseries and tears at the time of colonial exploitation.²⁹

In *Land in Anguish*, Eldorado allegorizes Brazil as much as all other Latin American countries, connected with each other through their colonial history. As in *I Am Cuba*, paradise regained is presented only to be immediately denied. The solemn arrival in Eldorado is abruptly interrupted by the insertion of various sequences of action and violence. We are now on the terrace of a palace, where the populist leader, Vieira, surrounded by assessors and press agents, prepares his resignation speech. Loud, extradiegetic jazz drumming clashes with the overlapping voices in the diegesis. Machine gun in hand, journalist and poet Paulo Martins calls for a revolutionary stand, but is rejected and flees in his car accompanied by Sara. Two policemen chase after them and wound him. Throughout his long agony on the sand dunes, Paulo Martins delivers a monologue that forms the basis for the flashback of his story.

Sea imagery again fills the screen, with more extradiegetic *candomblé* drumming and singing, given new meaning by the dramatic scenes of defeat just shown. A character alights on the beach as if he were the first European to do so and presides over an inaugural Mass with three other figures representing the clergy, the Indians and the kingdom; the last two are wearing carnival costumes. The newly arrived leader is Porfirio Díaz, a name borrowed from the famous Mexican dictator and applied to a Brazilian character to indicate historical similarities across Latin America. The blank expression on the faces of all of them, the enormous black flag stuck in the sand by Díaz and the deserted beach where only the representatives of the elite can be seen create a funereal atmosphere. The utopian sea, tied to the genesis of Brazil and the Americas, is then revealed as the very



The European discoverers' mythical sea leads to a post-utopian Eldorado, in *Land in Anguish*.



The discovery mythology in *I Am Cuba*: as in *Land in Anguish*, images of the sea introduce a tale of misery.

origin of the continent's anti-popular authoritarianism and class struggle.

Land in Anguish's carnivalized theatre of the discovery stages the end of the dream of paradise for the oppressed poor like the cowherd Manuel in *Black God*. The desperate trance of most characters, and of Paulo Martins in particular, who finds no outlet other than poetry for his revolutionary fury, dissolves all constructive action into multiple vicious circles, exemplified by strident popular rituals and the ruling classes' hysterical sex orgies. Thus, in the successive political disasters the film presents, utopia dissociates itself from the myth of Eden, in an Eldorado turned into the stage of bourgeois decadence.

Nostalgia

Both *Black God*, *White Devil* and *Land in Anguish* were produced in the 1960s, a historical moment when the national project lay at the centre of political debate. This concern fell off Brazilian cinema's agenda a long time ago. National concerns and political themes withered throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Embrafilme, the Brazilian government's film-funding agency, started its downturn at the end of the 1980s, culminating in its shut-down by the Collor government in 1990. During the short Collor period, baleful cultural policies delivered a fatal blow to the film industry, forcing many filmmakers to leave the country and work elsewhere or give up filmmaking altogether. It was a time when the myth of the promised land could not be further from Brazilian imagination. But less than two years later, in 1992, Collor was impeached and, with the instalment of a new government, cinema began a slow recovery.

This short period of artistic hiatus is reflected in the film with the suggestive title *Foreign Land* (Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1995), a typically transitional work, released just after the crisis. Using the same word 'land' (*terra*) recurrent in the titles of Glauber's films,³⁰ *Foreign Land* travels the inverse route of the discoverers, describing the loss of the paradise regained five centuries ago, while taking its Brazilian characters back to their European fatherland, Portugal. Walter Salles reveals that the idea for the film came from Jean-Pierre Favreau's photograph of a ship run aground next to a beach. The image struck him and his collaborators, Daniela Thomas and Marcos Bernstein, as an 'emblem of exile', as they explain:

No longer a political exile as in the dictatorship years, but a new, economic exile that has turned the Brazil of the 90s into a country of emigration for the first time in 500 years. The image of a foreign land is offered as a solution, albeit an idealized one, for the absence of perspective, self-image, identity.³¹



Scenes of action and violence disrupt the configuration of the utopian sea in *Land in Anguish*.



The carnivalized theatre of the discovery puts an end to the dream of paradise for the oppressed in *Land in Anguish*.

This programmatic statement shows how conscious Salles was of his intention to reconnect with a certain strand of Brazilian cinema, which had been left behind with the suppression of the national agenda. His search for an 'identity', however, asked for a detour abroad, through which he could establish a dialogue with other international tendencies and conquer a share in the global market. Let us see how it happened.

The image of a sea unable to take a ship to its final destination is indeed central in *Foreign Land*, functioning as a metaphor for the loss of identity. Salles travelled to Cape Verde in search of the wrecked ship in Favreau's photograph, and there he shot emblematic scenes of a couple gone astray against the backdrop of the sea and the ship that never found its course. The lack of ties and the lack of direction are the film's main themes, through which the directors join a certain international current preoccupied with modern uprootedness. A particularly relevant influence is Wim Wenders and his films of the 1970s, such as *Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*, 1976), whose characters are permanently in search of their lost homeland. Salles and Thomas borrowed from Wenders not only these characters of modern eternal foreigners, but also the Portuguese locations, where the German filmmaker had previously shot *The State of Things* (*Der Stand der Dinge*, 1982) and *Lisbon Story* (1994).

Shot in sophisticated black and white, reminiscent of the American film noir, *Foreign Land* is in every respect a cinephile's work, marked by nostalgia. Nostalgia also characterizes Wenders's independent productions such as *The State of Things*, a film which reflects on Wenders's own problems with *Hammett* (1978–92), which he was directing in the USA at the same time. *Hammett* is another homage to film noir, and, had Wenders's wish prevailed, it would have been shot in black and white, but this was not allowed by its American producer, Francis Ford Coppola.

Foreign Land is full of citations and references which will not be dealt with here. But the parallel with Glauber is illuminating of the utopian myth's trajectory in Brazilian cinema. In *Land in Anguish* the anti-utopian

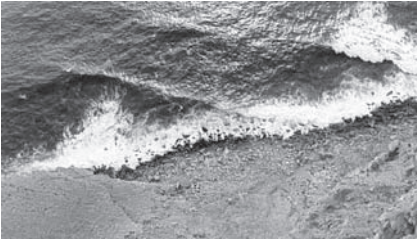
movement is represented by Díaz's rise to power, allegorizing the 1964 military coup. Similarly, in *Foreign Land*, utopia is disrupted by the televised image of the newly appointed finance minister, Zélia Cardoso de Melo, announcing the plan to freeze all bank accounts in Brazil, in March 1990. This documentary footage is then linked up to the fictional story: on hearing about the confiscation of her paltry savings, a widow who dreamed of visiting her native land, the Basque country, has a stroke and dies. Her only child, Paco, gets mixed up with diamond smugglers who send him on a clandestine mission to Portugal. There he meets Alex, an older Brazilian girl who finds herself equally disorientated after the death of her partner, a drug addict also involved in smuggling precious stones.

Although political facts are constantly referred to, politics never becomes a theme in the film. The focus is on the individual destinies of middle-class characters, affected by the economic recession but not by class struggle. While in *Land in Anguish* the utopian Eldorado is flawed from the outset because it is a project of the ruling classes for their own benefit, in *Foreign Land* it responds to a positive belief of the middle classes, endorsed (as a loss) by the enunciation. Glauber's symbolic characters, driven by the urge to change the world, are thus replaced by common individuals, moved by personal aspirations. In keeping with this, 'fatherland' is substituted by 'father', and politics by religion.

It is typical of Walter Salles, an intellectual filmmaker entirely aware of the concepts he manipulates, to express his choices in didactic dialogues. Paco's mother dies murmuring the word 'father' in Basque. Prior to that, she had compared Paco to her own father, whom she longed to see again in her homeland. The metaphor of the holy Trinity is further elaborated when Paco is called 'Christ the Redeemer' by a neighbour, when he stretches his arms out in a Christ-like fashion while trying on a shirt made by his mother, a sewing lady, a detail that suggests his final sacri-



The shipwreck stands for the loss of identity in *Foreign Land*.



The sea in *Foreign Land* represents nostalgia for the discovery utopia.

fic. Paco is also described as a descendant of the old Conquistadors, who once thought they had discovered paradise in the Americas. It is in this role that he gets tied up with smuggling the same precious stones that the first colonizers so desperately sought. This reference is made explicit by his name, 'Eizaguirre', exaggeratedly pronounced as 'Ex-Aguirre' by theatre actor Luiz Melo in the role of Igor, the Mephistophelean dealer who gets him into smuggling. Igor laughingly compares Paco to Lope de Aguirre, the Spanish Conquistador who famously sailed to South America in search of Eldorado.

Such nostalgic allusions to a past of great deeds, or great hopes, typically culminate with a sea scene. Alex and Paco find themselves in Cabo Espichel, Europe's farthest westerly point, seated at the edge of a precipice beyond which lies the vast open sea. For a moment the sea fills the frame, before the camera drifts back to capture Alex and Paco from behind, looking out to the sea before them. The explicative dialogue that follows relates to the discovery mythology and the maritime utopia.

Alex: You have no idea of where you are, do you? This is the tip of Europe (*flinging her arms open*). This is the end! What courage, don't you think? To cross this sea 500 years ago. ... Just because they thought paradise was there. (*She points left towards the horizon.*) Poor Portuguese ... they ended up discovering Brazil.

Paco laughs. Alex remains serious.

Alex: What are you laughing about?

The derisory joke about Brazil shows the frustration of a generation that has been prevented from climbing up the social scale and must find solace in the personal sphere, that is to say, in a love affair. Within the plot, the sea in *Foreign Land* is nothing but nostalgia for the utopia of a paradisaical country that once really existed for the middle classes, who are now



reduced to exiles. And on an aesthetic level, the sea works as homage to a cinema in which it still had a political meaning. It is not with anti-colonial rebellion, but with nostalgia that the film looks back to these lost fathers and fatherlands – Portugal, Spain, Paco’s grandfather – and to past cinematic fathers. The resulting utopia, even though stemming from politics or a politicized period, is not enough to define a political proposition (as Jameson observes, ‘utopian visions are not yet themselves a politics’).³²

Reduced to a pre-political stage, the protagonists derive their charm from occasional displays of their artistic gifts, frustrated by the economic coup. Before his mother’s death, Paco was studying Goethe and wanted to be a theatre actor. Alex’s boyfriend was a saxophonist and composer. Even Alex proves to be a singer at the end of the film: at the wheel of the car in which Paco lies in agony on her lap, she delivers the song ‘Vapor Barato’ by Luís Melodia and Waly Salomão, whose lyrics typically talk about a flight ‘aboard an old ship’.

These sensitive beings, forced by their new immigrant status into inappropriate jobs like waitressing or smuggling, deserve another chance, the film indicates. And that is exactly what happened in real life in Brazil a few years after the period depicted in the film. With the change in government, life instantly became better for the middle classes, as well as for artists, with clear reflections on film.

The backlands that turned to sea

A new era was ushered in by the Real Plan, launched during Itamar Franco’s provisional government (1992–94) by the then finance minister, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, which brought new hope to Brazil’s political scenario. In January 1995, Cardoso took office as president and was thus able to complete his economic reform.



The backlands turn to sea in *Corisco and Dadá*.

The year 1993 saw the release of the Brazilian Cinema Recovery Award (*Prêmio Resgate do Cinema Brasileiro*), which reallocated the assets of Embrafilme, awarding 90 film projects, 56 of them for long feature films. That same year the Audiovisual Law was passed, through which private companies were given fiscal incentives to invest in film production. As a result, Brazilian annual feature-film output, which had been reduced to near zero in the early 1990s, rose to 20 titles in 1995 and to an average of 30 titles in the following years. This small and short-lived economic improvement lifted the country, all of a sudden, out of its limbo of underdevelopment to the illusion of economic strength, as the new currency, the *real*, was level with the dollar. The middle classes felt empowered as they could even afford trips abroad. To be a tourist in Europe, rather than the immigrant of the Collor period, constituted a considerable change of status for middle-class youths like those portrayed in *Foreign Land*. And this had important consequences for a cinema that was being revived in the wake of the country's new cultural policies.

The shame of being Brazilian, as depicted in *Foreign Land*, saw a turnaround in films released only a couple of years later, entailing a rebirth of the national consciousness. Filmmakers felt an urge to film Brazil. Films such as *Corisco and Dadá*, *Perfumed Ball* and *Believe Me*, all released between 1996 and 1997, exude a passionate curiosity for Brazil's landscapes, physiognomies, language, regional accents, habits and beliefs. In 1998, Walter Salles made a film with the suggestive title of *Central do Brasil* (literally, 'the centre of Brazil'), to be discussed in detail in the next chapter, which sent him back to the heart of his native country after a disillusioned trip to the foreign land.

With the trend towards a 'rediscovery' comes the recycling of the

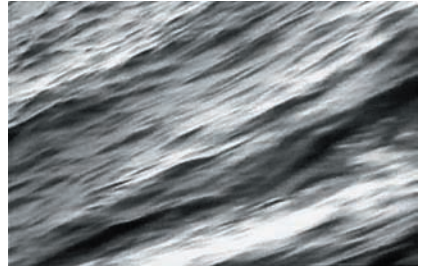


utopian sea. This reappears attached to the arid backlands, with implicit and explicit references to the Glauberian backlands-sea formula. *Corisco and Dadá* (1996) makes direct allusions to Glauber. Its director, Rosemberg Cariry, from an intermediary generation between Cinema Novo and the new cinema of the 1990s, confirms his main source:

I decided to make films when I saw Glauber's *Antonio das Mortes* [O *dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro*, 1969]. We have many things in common, the *sertão*, the same imaginary and archetypes, and the same epic drive.³³

Corisco and Dadá reveals from the outset that its main conceptual source is Glauber's *Black God, White Devil*. The initial credits are followed by a sequence of images of a wide sea, basking in the suave light of both dusk and dawn. Here, as well as in the nostalgic *Foreign Land*, the sea's utopian vocation is made explicit in the dialogue. A female storyteller tells a group of fishermen gathered around her on the beach the story of the *cangaceiro* Corisco and his companion Dadá. She starts by saying, 'The backlands is the sea', and then the story unfolds in flashback.

The opening maritime scene, replayed at regular intervals throughout the film, gives indeed the impression that the backlands have become the sea. The story is told in the form of a past full of horrors in the backlands, in which Corisco has to face nature's adversities, police persecution, the merciless sun, the death of his newborn children, solitude. But in the present everything seems calm, pacified. The seascape is tranquil and pretty, even bearing a touch of advertising *kitsch*, recalling the 'glossy' superficiality Jameson attributes to the nostalgia film.³⁴ The storyteller offers cakes and coffee to those around her and everyone eats and listens peacefully to the story of their forefathers. Glauber's tempestuous sea has



Images of the sea combine with the account of the biblical Genesis in *Believe Me*.

moved on to a more advanced, Eden-like stage, as if utopia had come true, without the need of any aesthetic or political revolution. Cariry does not hesitate to compare his sea to paradise lost and regained:

I open up to the cosmos. The indigenous myths – of the land without evil, which is actually the sea – are also evoked by me. The sea as a symbol of paradise, the backlands that turns to sea, the Tapuia water myths from the northeast. I work with the backlands–sea duality, the endless *sertão* that somehow resembles the sea. As Guimarães Rosa says, ‘the backlands lacks a lock’. Corisco’s story is told by the sea, to balance out the film’s dramatic construction and its look.³⁵

Perfumed Ball (1997) deals with the same themes as *Corisco and Dadá*, even including the same documentary footage of *cangaço* made by the Lebanese peddler Benjamin Abraão in the 1930s and utilized by Cariry in his film. In *Perfumed Ball*, it becomes even clearer that the conflict between backlands and sea, as it had been formulated by Glauber, has now been overcome. The scrubland where the *cangaceiro* Lampião hides out is lush (the film was shot after a rare rainy period), and water, from rivers or the sea, appears with more frequency than the backlands themselves. In one of the initial sequences, the camera, pulling away from Lampião, rides on a long aerial shot over the arid *sertão* until it encounters the abundant, agitated waters of the São Francisco river. A sense of continuity, even identity, is thus produced between the backlands and the sea, both dominated by the figure of Lampião.

In his turn, the *cangaceiro* no longer appears as the coarse bandit formed by northeastern poverty. Lampião has become a kind of dandy who is given to dancing, dressing up, using perfume, drinking whisky and even going to the movies in town. Backlands and sea, as well as town and country, have become part of the same universe. Ismail Xavier thus



describes the difference between this vision and Glauber's backlands-sea conception:

The universe of the *sertão* [in Glauber] has a dignity and a wholeness that depends on isolation and scarcity. ... Backlands and littoral belong to separate worlds. ... *Perfumed Ball* takes the opposite direction. The backlands are no longer a sealed cosmos, a place of isolation. Everything circulates and is inserted in a circuit of exchange. The connection between backlands and littoral is signalled by a variety of products, from the perfume to the whisky bottle in Lampião and Maria Bonita's camp, from the dark cinema auditorium in the city to the filmmaker who films the *cangaceiros* in the middle of the backlands.³⁶

Perfumed Ball breaks free from Glauber's insular utopia to create an atmosphere suggesting a globalized co-fraternization, in which a Lebanese man is drawn to a Brazilian *cangaceiro* and vice-versa. The film's music, of a genre called 'mangue-beat', by Chico Science and Fred Zero Quatro, creates the same mix, by fusing northeastern rhythms like the *baião* with American pop. The film founds a new genre in Brazilian cinema, the 'árido movie', another blend of things, that proposes to approach Brazil through internationalized means and tools which are quite foreign to the purism of the national project that fed the early Cinema Novo.

Another film shot in the northeastern backlands during this period is *Believe Me* (1997). It also opens with images of a large expanse of water, with a long tracking shot over the sea. At first, it cannot be precisely defined, suggesting the primordial chaos from which God created the world. From this image, which fills the frame with light blue undulations, emerges in fade the hand of an old man who is narrating the biblical Genesis. His speech lends an almost matter-of-fact tone to God and his miracles:



The sea in *Behind the Sun* is nostalgia for a cinematic utopia.

And there's a page that goes like this: When God Almighty created the skies, with the planets ... Now, on the second day He made Earth and on the third day He created all the little animals that live on the face of the Earth. And there's a page that goes like this: God made us in His own image and likeness and He grabbed a rib and made woman. Ah, you, my lady, are the bone from my bones, the flesh from my flesh - Eve! He was the one that called her Eve.

The mention of the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve were created, merges with the sea imagery to transform the backlands, yet again, into paradise regained.

Directors Bia Lessa and Dany Roland are clearly fascinated with the rediscovery of the northeastern backlands, with their colour, popular festivals, music and religion. This is a far cry from the Cinema Novo films, in which these elements appear in the tragic setting of drought and poverty. These backlands turned into sea reflect another mixture that resembles the blend of international pop and regional northeastern music of *Perfumed Ball*. Lessa and Roland's background in theatre came into play in the series of workshops they coordinated with amateur actors from the interior of Ceará state, in which they reworked excerpts from Thomas Mann's novel *The Holy Sinner*. The end result combines erudite and popular cultures, as the actors' improvisations, in a way, restore the origins of the medieval oral tale of Mann's cultivated text. Thus high and low cultures fuse together in a popular celebration where there are no oppressors or oppressed, victims or defendants, in an Eden-like northeast where the backlands have merged with the sea.

Virtual utopia

These three films - *Corisco and Dadá*, *Perfumed Ball* and *Believe Me* - belong to a recent, but short phase in Brazilian cinema, which includes other films such as *Landscapes of Memory*, with its waters penetrating the arid backlands, and *Bocage, the Triumph of Love*, with its opening sequence of a stunning sea that carries the Portuguese poet to his libertine paradise. A euphoric impetus animated these productions during a brief optimistic phase of the Brazilian economy, reflecting an initial belief in the benefits of neo-liberalism and globalization.

However, this enthusiasm over the rediscovery of Brazil soon cooled off, giving way to a new realistic trend which acknowledged the permanence of the country's same old social problems. Many of the more recent films feature *favelas*, or shanty towns (especially in Rio, but also in other locations), drug and arms dealing, migration from the northeast and the

gulf that separates social classes. A significant example among these is *Midnight* (1999), in which a northeastern migrant turned bandit in a Rio *favela* finally reaches the sea, only to be murdered on the beach. (For a full analysis of this film, see Chapter 2.)

A similar destiny is given to the protagonist of a music video, made in the same period, for the song 'My Soul' ('A minha alma') by rap group O Rappa. In it, a *favela* boy decides to go to the beach on a Sunday but, before he can, he is murdered by the police that raid the *favela* hill. Once again, the utopian sea is refused to the poor. The video was directed by Kátia Lund (a member of the Salles brothers production company) and Paulo Lins, the author of the celebrated novel *City of God*. This book alone has inspired a whole series of films about shanty towns in Rio, where disenchantment and criticism of public institutions predominate. In all these films, as well as in the award-winning *City of God* (*Cidade de Deus*, Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002, the theme of Chapter 5), the access to the maritime paradise remains a privilege of the upper classes.

As it has become increasingly distant, Brazilian cinema's utopian sea has finally re-encountered Truffaut. In the closing scene of *Behind the Sun* (*Abril despedaçado*), directed in 2001 by Walter Salles, Tonho, a *sertanejo* caught up in a feud between two families over land, walks through the arid backlands until he reaches a sea that cannot be justified in terms of geography or storyline. It is a magical event, originating from citation, and as such it dispenses with the realistic techniques used in *The 400 Blows* and *Black God, White Devil*. Here, the hero, played by leading man of the moment, Rodrigo Santoro, does not run in the long sequence-shots used in the old films to accentuate spatial continuity and the actor's real physical exertion. Instead, he walks calmly in a series of short takes across the scrubland before finally appearing, thanks to the editing, on top of some sand dunes by the sea.

Reverse-shot editing shows that the character is deeply moved by the sea's grandeur, while Antônio Pinto's music in the background and the waves' thundering sound reinforce the melodramatic atmosphere. Towards the end, the camera zooms in on his face to show that he is holding back his tears. Another shot shows the hero from behind, centre frame, looking out to the sea as the waves tumble at his feet. Sentimental and inexplicable, this finale is pure nostalgia for Truffaut's individualistic cinematic utopia, combined with Glauber's social dream. The northeast's poverty-stricken protagonist, a descendant of Manuel, seems to have finally reached Antoine Doinel's sea of liberation. But this is a virtual utopia that does not belong to society or the individual, but to cinema only.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CENTRE, THE ZERO AND THE EMPTY UTOPIA

Films

Central Station (*Central do Brasil*, Walter Salles, 1998)

Midnight (*O primeiro dia*, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1999)

Latitude Zero (*Latitude Zero*, Toni Venturi, 2000)

THE CENTRE, THE ZERO AND THE EMPTY UTOPIA

In this chapter, I look at three Brazilian films, shot at the turn of the millennium, in which utopian gestures and inaugural desires with relation to the nation are expressed in their own titles. They are: *Central do Brasil* (literally, 'the centre of Brazil', or *Central Station*, Walter Salles, 1998); *O primeiro dia* (literally, 'the first day', or *Midnight*, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1999) and *Latitude zero* (*Latitude Zero*, Toni Venturi, 2000). All three seem to revolve around the idea of an overcrowded or empty centre in a country trapped between past and future, in which the zero stands for both the announcement and the negation of utopia.

As I have observed elsewhere,¹ the reconstruction of a national utopian imaginary during the film revival from the mid-1990s onwards included the geographical exploration of the country with renewed curiosity about the human element and its typicality. Behaving like Brazil's first discoverers, several filmmakers undertook journeys aimed at mapping the national territory. For a few years, Brazil became an obsessive object of research, in films devoted to a passionate scrutiny of its peculiarities, such as *Central Station*, or a bitter criticism of them, such as *Chronically Unfeasible* (*Cronicamente inviável*, Sérgio Bianchi, 1999), both set in locations from north to south of the country. Brazil offered sumptuous scenarios in films such as *Bocage, the Triumph of Love* (*Bocage – o triunfo do amor*, 1998), shot in seven different states, and *The Oyster and the Wind* (*A ostra e o vento*, Walter Lima Jr, 1997), set on paradisiacal beaches in the states of Ceará and Paraná. In these exploratory expeditions, particularly attractive for those directors who were returning from sojourns abroad, such as Walter Salles, the search for a 'centre' and a 'point zero' became a recurrent gesture.

As was the case in previous new waves, the filmmakers invested with

the mission of reviving Brazilian cinema also felt the urge to be novel. This was not an easy task, since the return to zero was not meant to turn film history into a *tabula rasa*, but, on the contrary, to reconnect with old cinematic traditions. This seemed to be the only way in which to reformulate utopian projects and reach a coveted state of ‘Brazilianness’, a term Walter Salles picked up from Hélio Pellegrino’s comments on Glauber and turned into the very definition of *Central Station*.²

The new zero meant, therefore, to recycle previous zeros, such as Glauber’s, who once called Brazilian culture a ‘culture year zero’, adding, ‘From zero, like Lumière, Cinema Novo restarts at every film, stammering a brutal alphabet which tragically means “underdeveloped civilization”.’³ ‘To start from zero’ had been a favourite slogan of many new waves of the world, reaching extremes of romanticism, for example, in the case of Werner Herzog, who in the early days of the New German Cinema used to define filmmaking as an ‘art of illiterates’, which should start from zero ‘as if film history did not exist’.⁴

On the other hand, the Brazilian film revival was reacting against the negative period immediately before it, the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the zero had made a return to express the ‘end of history’ and postmodern scepticism. Both meanings are symbolically encapsulated in a film made by the master of puns Jean-Luc Godard, precisely in 1990, whose title is a real treasure: *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro* (*Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*). Here the French word *neuf* means both ‘nine’ and ‘new’ and refers to the fall of the Berlin Wall as well as to the film *Germany, Year Zero* (*Germania anno zero*), shot by Roberto Rossellini in 1947 in a Berlin razed to the ground after the Second World War. The revival directors obviously felt closer to Rossellini’s zero, that suggested negation but also inauguration. On the one hand, it allegorized a devastated country and Europe, where desperate children committed suicide. On the other, it created the *tabula rasa* where young filmmakers from Germany and other countries – such as Godard and his *nouvelle vague* colleagues – could inscribe a new film aesthetics, free from the taints of a brutal past that had turned to dust.

In an insightful essay on Rossellini, Sandro Bernardi quotes Walter Benjamin with reference to *Germany, Year Zero*, saying:

With death, what had been part of history falls back into the domain of nature; what had been natural falls back into the domain of history.

Germany, Year Zero, writes Bernardi, ‘constitutes a journey into the world of death and of ruins’. But, he continues,



Germany, *Year Zero*: a new cinema arises from the rubble of war.

the war and the catastrophe of ideologies have brought the world back to its starting point and have plunged the space that once was a city back into the state of nature.

As an illustration, Bernardi observes that, in the documentary footage that opens the film, grass grows amid the ruins of Berlin. Rossellini himself had once identified utopia with autopsy, saying that the discovery of the new could only be achieved through an archaeological study of the dead under the rubble.⁵

More than 40 years later, Godard, in *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*, returns to Berlin to collect the debris of history amid the rubble of another ideological catastrophe, the end of the socialist utopia, thus updating Rossellini's worldview for contemporary filmmakers. The film stars Hans Zischler, who had featured alongside Rüdiger Vogler in *Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*, 1976), in which two *flâneurs* travel along the border between West and East Germany on a romantic search for the lost link between history and a homeland torn apart by war. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Wim Wenders patiently applied himself to the reconstruction of the narrative structure and the fable, bombarded by his idol Godard. His road movies, whose characters are endlessly searching for a story and a home, left their mark and created a school of which Brazilian filmmaker Walter Salles is a keen pupil. For his part, Godard enjoys nothing more than deconstructing his own followers by means of parody precisely when they quote him, and producing gems of self-reflexive humour, such as these lines in *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*:

Pieces of history for sale! Parts of the wall for ten cents. Books, flags, shirts, buttons, come closer, ladies and gentlemen and buy!⁶

A film made up of citation and deconstruction, with references ranging from Goethe to Conrad in the best postmodern style, *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro* blends Second World War ruins from the 1940s with the destruction of the Wall in the present, thus reducing history to random fragments of time and space and denying existence to the nation and its narrative potential. Laura Mulvey observes in Godard the recurrent return to zero, which acquires at each time a different meaning, referring both to the origin of cinema and the feminine myths created by the American classical cinema.⁷ At each return, the utopian gesture is interrupted by the deviations of history and the cyclical death of cinema itself.

Looking at the same themes as Godard did in *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*, the films analysed here take an opposite route and offer some sort of happy ending to Wenders's nostalgic searches. While focusing on the zeros of nation, history and film history, they adopt the utopian gesture as a way to recover their integrity. Rejecting postmodern deconstruction, they take a step forward which, in fact, implies a return to certain conventions of genres such as melodrama. Although none of them are aesthetically radical, they all refer to moments of radicalism in Brazilian cinema, in particular, films by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Ruy Guerra and Glauber Rocha. The dry backlands, once the focus of attention of these three filmmakers, become the cradle of 'Brazilianness' in *Central Station*, in which the move-



The ruins of the Berlin Wall turn into 'pieces of history' in *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*.

ment towards the sea, undertaken by Glauber's characters in *Black God, White Devil*, is reversed, with characters who return from the littoral to the *sertão* animated by the curious utopia of paradise in the backlands. *Midnight*, in its turn, re-enacts Glauber's backlands-sea prophecy in Rio, in the zero hour of the new millennium, presenting the daily sea of Rio's upper classes as unattainable for the poor northeasterner. Finally, *Latitude Zero* depicts an emptied, 'zeroed' Eldorado at an abandoned goldmine in the heart of Brazil as the end of the macho utopia and the installation of the feminine principle.

The utopian backlands

Central Station epitomizes the passionate rediscovery of Brazil, and was celebrated internationally as the landmark of the Brazilian Film Revival, coincidentally in the symbolic city of Berlin, where it won the Golden Bear at the 1998 film festival. Back in his native land after his adventure with *High Art* (*A grande arte*, 1991), an international production in English, and *Foreign Land* (*Terra estrangeira*, 1995), filmed in Brazil, Portugal and Cape Verde, about Brazilians in exile, Walter Salles and his co-scriptwriters found in Wim Wenders (already a strong influence in *Foreign Land*) a good road to the journey back home. The chosen model for the storyline was *Alice in the Cities* (*Alice in den Städten*, Wim Wenders, 1974), a transnational plot about a German pre-adolescent girl who lives in Holland, is abandoned by her mother in a New York airport and falls into the hands of a German journalist suffering from writer's block, who takes her back to Germany to look for her grandmother. In *Central Station*, it is the young boy Josué who finds himself abandoned in Rio's central station when his mother is run over by a bus. He then falls into the hands of Dora, a former primary school teacher now degraded to writing letters for the illiterate. At first she sells him to a gang that deals in human organs, but subsequently regrets her decision and takes him on a long journey through the northeast to search for his father.

Both films revolve around improbable encounters⁸ between a lost child and a solitary adult, both of whom, after a long period of estrangement and rejection, regain the feeling of family. Clear though the connection with Wenders may seem, it is just part of a wider strategy. Marcos Bernstein and João Emanuel Carneiro's minutely elaborated script actually contains a number of incidents aimed at accommodating references to Brazil's cinematic past as a means to legitimize their current approach to the nation and draw the film towards its conciliatory ending. Wenders had also gone back to his cinematic fathers, such as Fritz Lang, Godard and John Ford,

to forge a style entirely based on homage. But for Salles, going back to Brazil meant, above all, re-enacting Cinema Novo's national project, structured by two poles of poverty: the rural backlands in the northeast and the urban *favelas* in Rio.

And so the film's journey begins in Rio, whose slums and train station, Central do Brasil, had once been the locations of Nelson Pereira dos Santos's *Rio, Northern Zone* (*Rio, Zona Norte*, 1957), and it culminates in the northeast in such locations as Milagres, already utilized by Ruy Guerra in *The Guns* (*Os fuzis*, 1963) and Glauber Rocha in *Antonio das Mortes* (*O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro*, 1969). Salles even managed to insert a reference to Glauber's birthplace, Vitória da Conquista, through the actor Othon Bastos, a Cinema Novo icon, who, in *Central Station*, plays a Protestant lorry driver (Glauber also had a Protestant background) born in that town.

Thus the romantic nostalgia for an undefined homeland, typical of Wenders's characters, is substituted by the euphoria of the re-discovered fatherland. In the process, the written word is also recovered: instead of a blocked journalist, we have a professional scribe whose pen, at the end of the film, flows freely in a letter that details her own story. The restoration of the narrative gift is intimately tied to the retrieving of 'Brazilianness' and the effusive enthusiasm for the rediscovered homeland, something totally absent in *Alice in the Cities* and other Wenders films, in which the theme is precisely the impossibility of a nation or a fatherland. The allegorical title of *Central do Brasil* asserts a belief both in the country's wholeness and its point zero, its core, which is the Rio station where migrants from all over the country converge.

The film begins with location shots focusing on a series of illiterate Brazilians, chosen from Central do Brasil's real-life passengers, who dictate letters to the scribe Dora (Fernanda Montenegro, whose performance won her the Silver Bear in the 1998 Berlin Festival). The emphasis on illiteracy, a recurrent theme among new-wave directors such as Glauber and Herzog, here receives humanist overtones. The illiterate speakers are first shown in shot-reverse shot montage, but they soon monopolize the camera's attention, which closes in on their faces, while their speeches are reduced to the names of the towns and states they come from. A young woman, unable to properly address her letter, is from Mimoso, Pernambuco. The following speakers, taken in frontal close-ups, simply say: Cansanção, Bahia; Carangola, Minas Gerais; municipality of Reriutaba, Ceará; Muzambinho, Minas Gerais. Beyond the curious names of these towns, pronounced with naive pride, there is the specific geography established by the states,



The gallery of faces at the opening of *Central Station* composes a portrait of Brazil.

all located north of Minas Gerais, that is to say, in the Brazilian northeast. The choice is clear: there are no southerners among the illiterates.

This gallery of faces is so striking and became so famous because the eye that looks at them through the camera is clearly fascinated by their peculiar racial features, ranging from white European to black African. It thus suggests, even before its physical discovery later in the film, a northeast full of colour. The characters' speeches, marked by their original accents and slang, are recorded with enhanced clarity, as if captured by an innocent ear that had never heard such a tongue before. Old and young fraternize in the moving simplicity of poverty, and their speeches are invariably closed with a calm, tolerant smile.

This array of common people plays an important role in the configuration of a realist, documentary-style backdrop. The first person to dictate a letter, addressed to her husband in prison, is a tearful Socorro Nobre, an ex-convict in real life who had previously been the subject of a documentary by Walter Salles himself. Hers is the most touching speech, if not for the echoes of her personal tragedy, certainly for her exceptional talent as an amateur actress. In this sequence, the image and sound editing reproduces verbal metaphors, such as 'I'll remain locked outside here, waiting for you'. The camera is placed behind rows of bars and columns to create a station full of fences, while the sound of gates slamming suggests a prison that finds no support in the diegesis. The purpose is to smoothly blend the film's realist base with the fiction superimposed on it, without alienating the audience. Two of the protagonists, the northeastern Ana and her son Josué, emerge from this array of faces as the prototype of the common Brazilian, and are given, as if naturally, more time, heavier make-up and longer dialogues.

The way the Brazilian people are presented in this opening of documentary intention seems to echo at least two aspects of what Marilena Chauí calls 'Brazil's foundational myths', which, she says, obstruct political action: (1) Brazil has a peaceful, orderly, generous, cheerful and sensual people, albeit one that suffers a great deal; (2) Brazil is a country devoid of all prejudices including those of race and creed, and practises the mingling of races as a means of strengthening its character.⁹ Indeed, these smiling, well-groomed, gentle illiterate people, exhibiting a colourful racial mix that includes details of comic simplicity, such as the boy who calls his beloved 'hot pussy' in the letter he dictates to Dora, seem at one with life, irrespective of their poverty.

The problem, as it were, is not with them, but with the station itself, which the film, in its totalizing impetus, portrays as the concentration of

all evil. In the station, among unemployed people degraded to informal vendors, and abandoned children turned to shoplifters, circulate at large murderers and human organ dealers, while outside the station chaotic traffic kills innocent pedestrians, like Josué's mother. Because reality is adapted to fiction, and not vice-versa, the logical causality is replaced by fate. Ana's death is not attributed to a breach of traffic regulations, but to the spinning toy Josué carries with him as a memento of his carpenter father. When he stops to pick up the toy he had dropped on the asphalt, his mother turns back to call him and is hit by an oncoming bus. Thus Josué, who seems to have no other relatives or friends, instantly joins the legions of abandoned children in the big city which remains oblivious of him.

The cause of these ills is not investigated, since class conflict, as well as a hypothetical, if at all existing, ruling class, remains outside the filmic space, hence outside the central station and beyond what is recognized as Brazil. Fiction becomes natural thanks to the use of the document, and the central station itself turns into wild, adverse nature. As such, it gives shelter to the villain Pedrão, a security guard hired by the station vendors, who murders pickpockets and operates a scheme of organ trafficking. Devoid of class or background, Pedrão is a mere representation of evil that disappears without a trace as the story develops.

The lack of an oppressive power allows for the action to be transferred from the collective to the individual realm. What draws Josué and Dora together is not the economic hardship they face, but their biographical coincidences: she was also abandoned by her alcoholic father and lost her mother when she was the same age as the boy. The solution, then, is to find the father and not, as suggested by Gilberto Vasconcellos in a bout of humour, to enrol Josué in a Rio Ciep (or a free boarding school), with which deed Fernanda Montenegro's character 'would have gained ethical density'.¹⁰

The search for the father, in the diegesis, is equivalent, on a meta-linguistic level, to the search for the home country lost in the Cinema Novo past, where the filmmaker of the present hopes to find historical affiliation. Needless to say, nostalgia for the fatherland and father figures had never been an issue for the Cinema Novo, whose filmmakers never doubted the land they belonged to and turned their backs on preceding filmmaking traditions. This was typical of most new-wave directors, from the 1950s to the 1970s, determined as they were to negate their predecessors, referred to as *cinéma du papa* in France, or *Papas Kino*, in Germany. In the Brazilian *Cinema Marginal* (or *Underground Cinema*), at the end of

the 1960s, the assassination of the father, represented by Cinema Novo, acquired Oedipal proportions, as described by Jean-Claude Bernardet in *O vóo dos anjos*.¹¹

In *Central Station*, the need to recognize the homeland and the search for the reassurance of an affiliation indicate the narrator's external position in relation to the narrated object. In the second part of the film, in which Dora and Josué journey through the arid northeast by bus, truck and *pau de arara* (back of trucks), the stunning images of Brazil's poor areas, captured in glorious colour by the celebrated director of photography Walter Carvalho, have something strange, even uncanny about them. Their advertising chic prompted Ivana Bentes to develop, with reference to the New Brazilian Cinema, the concept of 'cosmetics of hunger', as opposed to Glauber Rocha's 'aesthetics of hunger'.¹² Though he draws on his experience as a documentarist to render the lives of common people, Salles's poverty is so clean and aestheticized that one immediately senses the narrator's remoteness.

Fernão Ramos has already observed the recurrence in recent Brazilian cinema of characters of foreigners who embody a kind of superior conscience to the native Brazilian plagued by an inferiority complex.¹³ Indeed, the revival filmmakers, all of them from the upper classes, seem torn between an affinity with the foreigner, who is also the former colonizer, and their sincere compassion for, and sympathy with, the poor and oppressed native. They still seem to be tormented by the syndrome of Antônio das Mortes, a prophetic character in Glauber Rocha's films, who, according to Jean-Claude Bernardet in his classic book *Brasil em tempo de cinema*, represents the middle classes in perennial hesitation between the perks of the ruling class and the real needs of the poor.¹⁴ By approaching a class other than his or her own, the filmmaker becomes the guilt-ridden ethnographer in search of redemption through a benevolent, idealized representation of the other.¹⁵

The drought and poverty of the northeastern homeland are shown as picturesque details that have no consequences for the lives of its inhabitants and require no intervention. Actually the film, as a typical example of its period, rather than retrieving the nation, makes clear, through its detached stance and citation structure, that the re-enactment of the national project is no longer possible. Utopia can only be realized as an absence, a hypothetical reunion with a father called Jesus who never materializes and is only conceivable as fiction or myth. In order to make this unlikely father and fatherland credible, the narrative moves towards melodrama and the characters migrate from the modern universe full of such

threats as the central station to the secure and comfortable isolation of archaic Brazil, and, in so doing, they take the inverse route to that followed by real northeastern migrants.

Justification for such a conservative solution, which goes against the logic of rural exodus, is found in religious faith. The journey back home corresponds to the retrieval of Christian dogmas, reiterated in the film's iconography. Icons of the Madonna with the baby Jesus abound in the decorations of houses in both Rio and the backlands, and serve as counterpoints to Josué's expressions of yearning for his mother. Alone in the station after Ana's death, he kneels before an altar of the Virgin Mary with child. His prayers are answered when he meets his surrogate mother, Dora, who helps him fulfil his destiny. In Dora's Rio apartment, the boy sees a cottage in the countryside painted on a china plate on the wall. A shot of the plate is followed by a reverse shot of Josué who smiles, and then the camera focuses on an icon of the Madonna with child. The utopian triangulation of home-Virgin-boy is set into motion, and it is up to Dora to make it happen.

Though she starts off as cruel and insensitive, Dora gradually reveals her good side thanks to Josué's influence. This process culminates in



The Virgin Mary with Child is a central element in the configuration of home in *Central Station*.

Dora's trance amid the fireworks, candles and hymns of a religious procession. The spinning camera during Dora's trance is another citation of Glauber, who used similar techniques to portray popular trances, but in his case with a critical view of the alienated masses, who were easily manipulated by 'a cross or a sword'. In this reading of Glauber against the grain, the result is the miracle of revelation: the cynical scribe who used to destroy the letters dictated to her becomes aware of her sins, regrets them and decides, from then on, to post the letters. At the end of the trance Dora awakens on Josué's lap, in an inverted Pietà composition purposely idealized by Salles,¹⁶ through which the son is identified with the father called Jesus, just as in the Christian myth. Subsequently, Dora and Josué have their photographs taken with a cardboard figure between them representing Father Cícero, a religious and political leader of the early twentieth century and still revered as a major paternal figure in the northeast. The photo becomes each one's prize possession and guarantees the film a happy ending when they separate and are left alone, choking back the tears as they independently smile at the photo.

Ismail Xavier has already observed the affinity between the concept of the nation, in its totalizing reach, and the meaning of the sacred.¹⁷ In *Central Station*, the promise of the Madonna and Pietà icons finally comes true through the photographs that reconstitute the sacred family, reuniting and identifying homeland and home. The photograph, described by Charles S. Peirce as the icon par excellence owing to its resemblance to the object,¹⁸ is a constant in Wim Wenders's films, in which the characters keep trying and always failing to obtain proof of the real. In *Central Station*, the enunciation sanctions popular religion as Cinema Novo had never done. The family is portrayed as equivalent to the homeland in its symbolic wholeness in a similar way to that of the American hegemonic cinema. This is how it recovers the fable, though not social history, turned superfluous with the internalization of the drama. Though the film flirts with the postmodern citation cinema and Wenders's romantic modernity, it ends up playing by the rules of the domestic melodrama.

With the insertion of Father Cícero's image, the homeland is confirmed as the iconography of the past, exerting a pacifying influence on the present. Just like the photograph, the backlands are also frozen in a utopian, archaic territory, immune to time and the ills of modernity, which have been left behind in central station.



Dora's trance culminates in the tableau of the inverted *Pietà* in *Central Station*.



Nation and family come into being under the sign of the sacred, represented by Father Cícero in *Central Station*.

The zero and the empty utopia

Such an interpretation of Brazil was obviously not unanimous in the late 1990s, which marks the peak of the film revival. In *Midnight*, again directed by Walter Salles, in partnership with Daniela Thomas, just a year after *Central Station*, Brazilian society becomes the stage for injustices that find no solution in the archaic *sertão*, but are perpetuated in the urban violence of the present. The inaugural myth is formulated in a tone of hope within the film title, *O primeiro dia*, which refers to the first day of the millennium. But it is then denied by the storyline: of the four main characters, three die violently between New Year's Eve and the year's first day, and the fourth survives a suicide attempt.

Midnight is one of a series of films about *favelas*, supported by the production company VideoFilmes, which includes directors such as Kátia Lund, Eduardo Coutinho, João Moreira Salles and even writer Paulo Lins, as part of a project of social intervention through which the filmmakers become involved with the communities in focus. The documentarist João Moreira Salles, Walter's brother and director of the remarkable documentary about drug and arms dealing in Rio, *News from a Private War* (*Notícias de uma guerra particular*, 1998), won notoriety for financing the autobiography of Marcinho VP, a drug dealer wanted by the police and eventually murdered. Paulo Lins wrote his famous book *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*), which was turned into a film directed by Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, based on anthropological research carried out in a *favela*. Finally, Eduardo Coutinho has been for decades documenting and discussing Brazil's social inequality from the *sertão* to the *favelas* in an entirely political and self-committed way.

Though deriving from an essentially Brazilian project, *Midnight* originated abroad. It was financed by French television channel ARTE, which commissioned films about the turn of the millennium from new filmmakers from ten different countries: Germany, Belgium, Brazil, the United States, Spain, France, Hungary, Mali and Taiwan, resulting in the series '2000 vu par ...'. Its production structure does not differ greatly from that of *Central Station*, which was financed by both national and international producers. However, the target audiences of *Midnight* could be seen as potentially more sophisticated, since the ARTE series included markedly auteurist directors such as Tsai Ming Liang (Malaysia/Taiwan) and Abderahmane Sissako (Mauritania/Mali).

As in *Central Station*, documentary techniques and materials are largely employed to construct the backdrop to the fictional story. But in spite, or rather because, of the scarcity of means and the mere three weeks in which it was made, the film conveys a sense of urgency which is more favourable to the expression of the real. Problems with police corruption, sub-human prison conditions, arms dealing, tensions between social classes and Rio's generalized violence are expressed in a tone of denunciation, often through location shots. Sets which had already been used in *News from a Private War*, such as the Kafkaesque corridors of a confiscated arms depot, lend the film a revelatory quality which cannot be found in *Central Station's* scenic essays of the *sertão*.

Necessarily synthetic, as it needed to summarize the millennium in little more than an hour, *Midnight* has gaps which were incorporated into the plot. The characters have no past history and barely constitute individuals. As a result, the film tends to produce stereotypes through which the poor are associated with the good, and the powerful with the evil. Even the blackmailer Chico, from the *favela*, extorts money from the police for a noble cause, which is to finance his wife and son's New Year's Eve commemorations. The protagonists are called João and Maria (John and Mary), blatantly fictitious names, like 'everyman', or a certain man and a woman, who are nothing but exemplary social figures. The secondary characters also remain undefined as individuals and thus follow the same pattern of social types.

An effective resource used to lend credibility to such precarious protagonists was to envelop them in silence. João is a convict who is privileged enough to have his own cell in a crowded prison, until another prisoner, Vovô (Grandpa), is transferred there. Even when urged to talk by his new companion, João says that he 'only wants to sleep' and remains silent. Maria, a young middle-class woman, is more eloquent, but she has the

peculiar job of teaching sign language, which also lends her an aura of living with silence. Other script devices complete this composition: when Pedro, Maria's partner, abandons her, she breaks the phone in a fit of rage, ruling out any further possibility of communicating with her beloved, who incidentally is the film's most laconic character. Later, on the verge of suicide, Maria refuses to talk to her rescuer, João, saying, just like him, that she 'only wants to sleep'.

As an exemplary character, João, played by Luís Carlos Vasconcelos, is reminiscent of other moments in Brazilian cinema. He is the typical heroic cowherd/*cangaceiro* who has migrated to a Rio *favela*. Such a reference is discernible not just for those who had seen him two years earlier as *cangaceiro* Lampião in *Perfumed Ball*: he is betrayed by the typical laconicism of the dry backlands, the markedly northeastern accent of his few lines and his foreign, superior attitude inside the *favela*. His friend Chico calls him 'the man of silence' and 'samurai', emphasizing his character of noble warrior in contrast to the ordinary *favela* inhabitants.

This bandit, notable for his strong hand and shooting skills, is a kind of updated version of the northeastern cowboy of *The Big City* (*A grande cidade*, Carlos Diegues, 1966). Played by the emblematic actor Leonardo Villar of *The Given Word* (*O pagador de promessas*, Anselmo Duarte, 1962), Diegues's hero leaves the *sertão* to try his luck in Rio and ends up a *favela* thug. João's foreignness brings him close to yet another emblematic character of Glauber's films, Antônio das Mortes. In the same way that Antônio takes money from the 'colonels' (land owners) and the church to kill the preacher Sebastião and *cangaceiro* Corisco, João buys his freedom in exchange for murdering a friend. And he lets himself fall for Maria, a middle-class character, from whom he gets a brief glance of liberation, and who, thanks to him, experiences revelation. His arrangement with the ruling class combined with his sympathy for the oppressed turns him into a tortured, solitary being, just like Antônio das Mortes, and condemned to a tragic ending.

But it would perhaps be inaccurate to classify such characters as allegorical. In their incompleteness they are rather nostalgic reminiscences of past allegories, of a time when starting from zero was possible, cinema was really new and the characters, in their revolutionary impulses, dragged the masses with them. Such a nostalgic charge can be felt, for example, in Pedro, played by Carlos Vereza, famous for his role as the writer Graciliano Ramos in *Memories of Prison* (*Memórias do cárcere*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1984). Pedro is so fragmentary and inexplicable that he seems to have stepped into the wrong film. In one of his scanty lines he reacts to

Maria's remark that he is old by saying, 'And you are such a young girl ...'. In fact Pedro does not seem to belong in Maria's contemporary reality. His work as a solitary writer does not fit there, but is trapped in the time of *Memories of Prison*, from 14 years before. In the end, he and his computer disappear mysteriously, leaving Maria perplexed. Pedro's presence in the film is so ephemeral that Maria's overblown reaction would hardly be credible were it not for Fernanda Torres's convincing performance.

Another nostalgic character is the old prisoner Vovô, played by seasoned samba composer Nelson Sargento, who at a certain point delivers the chorus of one of his famous songs: 'Samba, you agonise but never die/ A rescuer always comes by/ Before your last sigh ...'. Though essentially a homage to the real composer, the character of Vovô ends up playing a central role. His endless gibbering, typical of the '*samba do crioulo doido*' ('the mad black's samba'), is presented as a mysterious prophecy. While he awaits his amnesty, he repeats:

It will turn, nine will turn to zero, the other nine will turn to zero, yet another will turn to zero and one will turn to two. The year 2000 is the year of freedom!

But then, realizing that he will merely be transferred to another cell, he shouts:

It will all turn to zero, nobody will remain to tell the story, you damned guards!

Later, when he is dying, he pleads: 'João, it'll turn to zero, you'll do what has to be done, won't you?'

One cannot but associate these utterances with the prophecy repeated in *Black God, White Devil*: 'The backlands will turn to sea, and the sea will turn into backlands.' However, in *Midnight*, the prophecy is not connected with promises of riches in a paradisiacal island, or with revolutionary hopes of the oppressed classes. The change refers only to the coming of the new millennium, expressed as a 'turn to zero', that is to say, as an empty utopia.

The film's ending guarantees its fulfilment. After killing his friend, João takes refuge on the roof of a high-rise where he finds Maria, who is preparing to commit suicide. When she opens out her arms, imitating the statue of Christ the Redeemer on the distant Corcovado, and gets ready to jump, she is held back by João. They end up making love at the millennium's zero hour to the light and sound of the fireworks. At this climactic moment, reinforced by Antônio Pinto's dramatic music, the Glauberian backlands-sea utopia and the zero metaphor are re-elaborated.



The 'turning to zero' in *Midnight* recycles Glauber's backlands-sea prophecy.

The camera, turning in the opposite direction to that of the spinning couple, who dance in each other's arms, reminds us of Dora's trance in *Central Station*, as well as other trances suggested by spinning cameras in Glauber's films. Meanwhile, João shouts the prophetic announcement he had learned from Vovô:

It will turn, nine will turn to zero, another nine will turn to zero, yet another will turn to zero and one will turn to two. Everything is going to



Maria's night of love with the bandit in *Midnight* is reminiscent of Rosa and Corisco's adulterous encounter in *Black God, White Devil*.

turn around. Right will turn wrong, wrong will turn right and those who killed will now save.

This ballet of camera and actors accompanying the 'turn to zero' reveals itself as an insightful solution, as it turns around the surface of Glauber's backlands-sea prophecy and the northeast millennialist beliefs without actually formulating them. At the same time, it cites the trance of Rosa and Corisco, in *Black God, White Devil*, who spin in each other's arms to the sound of Villa-Lobos in their adulterous transgression. But the announcement of a social revolution is replaced by the conquest of a vague individual freedom, and the year turning to round numbers suggests nothing more than numerological superstition. Thus the hour zero turns around itself in a kind of empty prophecy, exhausting itself in the nostalgic citation of a past utopia and negating the very inauguration of the millennium the film's title announces. Purposely configured as citation, the zero in *Midnight*, unlike Rossellini's, does not aspire to change the world or pave the way for new cinematic languages, but only to express the desire – devoid of a project – for communication between different social classes. Indeed, its messenger is finally reduced to the nothing he himself called for: he is shot dead in a moment of distraction when admiring his middle-class lover as she, and only she, bathes in the paradisiacal sea.

The backlands man almost reaches the sea, but dies on the beach. The everyday sea of the Brazilian wealthy classes, there for their sole entertainment, remains out of the reach of the poor northeasterner. Accordingly, two different concepts of sea are presented in the montage. At first the frame is entirely filled by the sea where Maria bathes; in the next shot, João is sitting on the sand, watching her from a distance. These two shots, edited together, are striking for their discrepancy. The first, from João's point of view, is a dream-like image, the sea is green, calm, too clean to be true. The second, from Maria's point of view, is the realistic sight of a man sitting on a dirty beach the day after a New Year celebration, surrounded by the party's sleepy stragglers.

Whereas in *Black God, White Devil* the straight-line tracking shot of the character running towards a hypothetical sea expresses the teleology that breaks the vicious circle of the religious trance,¹⁹ in *Midnight* it is João's gunshot fired into the sky and mixing with the fireworks at the millennium's zero hour that unleashes a revelation to the middle-class character. But its content remains unexplained. When she opens the window on the year's first day and comes face to face with the shacks cramming the *favela's* hillside, Maria is bathed by a light that suggests some kind of religious illumination which finds no backing in the story and is reduced



The utopian sea of the oppressed contrasts with the ordinary beach of the middle classes in *Midnight*.

to a rhetorical effect. The fact remains that the *favela* is now part of the bourgeois experience, in a country that still has no inclination to change.

The empty centre and the twilight of the male

Latitude Zero is set in the actual as well as metaphorical centre of Brazil: Poconé, state of Mato Grosso, close to the Equator, hence the reference to the zero latitude. It derives from a project of low-budget cinema designed by its director, Toni Venturi, together with a group of São Paulo filmmakers, which resulted in the launching of a low-budget film financing line by Brazil's federal government. By way of cost reduction, but also as an aesthetic option, the film has only two actors. They rehearsed their parts exhaustively before moving to the locations, in order to reduce shooting time and material. The cast's state of readiness allowed for a great number of long takes, aimed both at saving money and emphasizing the performers' theatrical style.

Venturi's purpose was to inaugurate a viable production system for the Brazilian cinema while preserving its auteurist vocation. But *Latitude Zero*, in its drive for originality, can be seen as a 'film of auteurs', for it carries different fingerprints through which the interaction between the director and his collaborators can be observed. First of all, the film is marked by the presence of Débora Duboc, a stage actress and Venturi's wife, who is the object of a fascinated camera gaze that sets her free to develop her own conception of acting and confer a feminist perspective on the entire film. Cláudio Jaborandy, in his first important role on the screen, was also granted freedom to develop his own performance, which makes use of a wide palette of emotional states between sanity and madness.

The playwright Fernando Bonassi is a central figure within this São Paulo group, which has been working across boundaries between film and

theatre since *Starry Sky* (*Um céu de estrelas*, Tata Amaral, 1997), a violent drama about a couple which anticipates several elements of *Latitude Zero*. Bonassi is the author of the play *The Evil Things in Our Minds* (*As coisas ruins de nossas cabeças*), turned into a film script by Di Moretti, Venturi's collaborator since his first short films. His is the idea of the synthetic title that suggests the centre of Brazil, the earth's point zero and the annihilated characters who restart from scratch. The composer Lívio Tragtenberg, who wrote the film score, is another important name within the São Paulo cinematic revival. From film to film he has been exploring the thin line between 'symphony and cacophony', as expressed in the title of Jean-Claude Bernardet's film about São Paulo (*São Paulo, Symphony and Cacophony/São Paulo, sinfonia e cacofonia*, 1994), also with music by Tragtenberg, which has set the tone for a number of recent São Paulo productions.

Regional characteristics aside, the title is a clear national allegory. But, in keeping with the need for cutting costs, rather than the crowds that make the country's bustling centre in *Central Station*, the option was to stage an empty, post-utopian centre. The location is an abandoned goldmine where the only remaining inhabitant is Lena (Duboc), in an advanced state of pregnancy, who runs a bar devoid of patrons. In the monumental natural scenery, the pocked walls of red earth are reminiscent of the hundreds of busy hands that once worked there. Now they are the Eldorado that has fallen apart, the ruined utopia, the paradise once dreamed of by the discoverers, now lost; the sea that turned into backlands.

Roughness is suggested from the outset, as the opening credits appear to the sound of nails being hammered. We then see Lena who, in the dark interior of her bar (later revealed as the *Dama de Ouro* or 'Queen of Diamonds'), is banging nails into boards to seal its door. We begin at the end: a bar is being closed by its grotesquely dirty, dishevelled owner, who



The ruins of Eldorado in *Latitude Zero*.

is getting ready to abandon ship. Once the door has been sealed and the packing done, Lena devotes a few moments to relics of the past she keeps in a little box, together with the money for the trip: a chain with crucifix, which she kisses, and her picture with Matos, later revealed as the man responsible for her pregnancy. But she soon sets these objects aside and stretches out on a chair where she starts to massage her own tired body, in gestures that culminate in masturbation.

Her solitary sex, in the present, is thus the negation of religion and the man, shown in the form of a dead past inside a box. The long take of the camera spinning around her while her moans increase produces an opposite effect to that of Dora's religious trance in *Central Station*, or that of Maria's explosive ecstasy in *Midnight*. Here it is a solitary woman who climaxes with a primal, beastly scream, without the attenuating effect of music, thus overcoming everything with her own physique and no metaphysics.

Laura Mulvey, in her analysis of *Hail Mary* (*Je vous salue Marie*, Jean-Luc Godard, 1982), comments on how Godard equates female dissimulation with cinematic illusionism through the religious symbol. She says:

Belief in God depends on belief in the woman's impossible virginity which represents her 'wholeness', an evisceration of the psychologically threatening and physically disgusting 'inside'. It is only as 'whole' that woman can drop the mask of artifice with which she both deceives man and conceals the truth of her body.²⁰

Still with reference to *Hail Mary*, Mulvey comments on the meaning of the netball Maria plays with, which is 'round and complete, the circle of the feminine once again, but impenetrable, with no *hole*', thus constituting 'a denial of the wound, the open vagina, the hole'.²¹ *Latitude Zero*, on the contrary, stresses the carnal aspect of the pregnant woman who thus becomes the reverse of the Hollywood feminine revered, and criticized, by Godard. Her main attribute is precisely the obscene orifice which is constantly about to expose itself to the camera. Instead of negating sexual activity in order to sanctify the foetus, the film reiterates Lena's sex drive in the present, thus eliminating the possibility of the sacred.

In contrast to the present-time female carnality, a male idealism gone stale is presented in the person of Vilela (Jaborandy), a fugitive soldier who comes to stay at Dama de Ouro following 'Colonel' Matos's directions (the grade of 'colonel' referring to both militarism and an oligarchic, archaic Brazil). Vilela interferes with Lena's departure and convinces her to re-open the bar. She finally gives in, but retains her typical pragmatism. While refurbishing the restaurant she brings an intact wedding



The wedding imaginary among poor women in *Black God, White Devil* and *Latitude Zero*.

dress and bridal wreath out of a box, tries on the wreath and admires the dress for a minute before tearing it in half and using it as a curtain. This scene is reminiscent of other strong moments in Brazilian cinema featuring the imaginary of unrealized weddings among poor women: the solitary bride on the banks of the Tietê river in *The Margin* (*A margem*, Ozualdo Candeias, 1967), and, again, Rosa, in *Black God, White Devil*, who dances through the scrubland wearing the wreath of the bride who has just been violated by Corisco.

The parallel between Lena and Rosa could go further, as far as the clash between female pragmatism and male idealism is concerned: Rosa gives no credit to Manuel's account of Sebastião's miracles and carries on pounding manioc flour; Lena also grinds manioc, while suspiciously listening to Vilela's impossible plan to reactivate the gold fields. In Glauber's film, male idealism finally leads to political revolution, at least on the artistic level, when the sea floods the backlands through an editing effect. In *Latitude Zero*, the man is not even granted the gift of art, since the deserted land is a result of his past projects.

Lena and Vilela's relationship develops on the basis of misunderstandings. Their dialogues are rather parallel monologues (which expose the

artificiality of the film's theatrical staging). The utterances from both sides are connected by association of terms, rather than meaning. Vilela says, for example, that his obsession with his ex-wife is a 'disease', and Lena replies that you can always tell someone's life story by the 'diseases they've had'. This dialogue of the deaf, similar to the famous dialogue of the couple in *Barren Lives* (*Vidas secas*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1963), blocks, by means of its artifice, any possibility of melodrama. The fleeting moments of tenderness between the two, resulting from pure physical urge, also reinforce the opposition between masculine and feminine projects, leading to Lena's inevitable repulsion that causes Vilela to rape her.

Indeed, Vilela, who is a throwback to Brazil's dictatorial past as much as his boss Matos, knows no other than the predatory way. His frantic activity is obviously doomed to failure as it echoes the reasons for the current devastation, namely, the extractivist mentality, formerly applied to gold and now to wood. Meanwhile Lena just wants to rid herself of all male oppression, both past and present. Her battle is bolstered by the feminine attribute of maternity. Against the macho utopia that resulted in an excavated, hollow land, she sets her round, full belly. To photograph her is tantamount to showing her concrete, physiological needs, and in this sense the film is like an immersion into the female womb, whose boiling state is indicated by images of the sun, the burning forests, the red earth, as well as her own explosions. The pregnant woman thus acquires a threatening, proto-revolutionary character, which culminates with the birth scene in which she sits with her legs wide open facing the camera, surrounded by hundreds of burning candles.

Reduced to the toughness of the survival and reproduction instincts,



The pregnant woman acquires a proto-revolutionary character in *Latitude Zero*.

Lena evades the typical Christian dilemma between the Virgin mother and the prostitute, which Godard regularly revisits in his different year zeroes. *Latitude Zero* also lambasts the dream of the father and the fatherland, fixed, in *Central Station*, on the *tableau* of the inverted Pietà, in which the son becomes both father and hero. Brazilian foundational myths in this case are conspicuous by their absence: the rich land, as well as the multi-racial people that exploited it, have evaporated, leaving behind nothing but a vast desert.

The story, then, starts from zero, with the first encounter between man and woman, correcting the previous error of male domination. Unlike *Midnight*, in which the man is eliminated by alien forces and the woman is inexplicably redeemed, in this film it is the woman who eventually kills the man, sets fire to the useless home and the false hopes of the family trinity, and leaves on the back of a truck with her son on her lap. Instead of *Central Station's* inverted Pietà *tableau*, *Latitude Zero* offers a portrait of the Madonna in which the woman is the protective and providing figure for the man-child, thus configuring the twilight of the male. The new Brazilian utopia seems to be, in this auteurist, independent cinema, the country of the Amazons.

CHAPTER THREE

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A CANNIBAL

Films

Hans Staden (Luiz Alberto Pereira, 1999)

How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman (*Como era gostoso o meu francês*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1970-72)

Macunaíma (Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, 1969)

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A CANNIBAL

The ability to look at oneself as the Other – a point of view from which one arguably obtains the ideal view of oneself – seems to me to be the key for Tupi-Guarani anthropophagy.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *A inconstância da alma selvagem*¹

The film *Hans Staden* (1999) opens with a grandiose image of the sea on which travels a caravel, framed in aerial shot. The location is actually the river Tagus, a convenient choice, as Portugal was one of the film's co-producers and had a replica of Vasco da Gama's caravel. But the large water expanse filling the frame stands for the great sea once crossed by the discoverers. It thus reproduces the utopian sea, which this time serves as an introduction to another important aspect of the discovery mythology, cannibalism.

The film's protagonist is the famous adventurer from Hessen, Hans Staden, who in 1554 was held captive by the Brazilian Tupinambá Indians. His story is recorded in a book he wrote which became an invaluable document of one of Brazilian history's foundational moments.² The book's greatest attraction is the detailed description of the Tupis' cannibalistic customs, of which Staden himself, according to his account, was a victim who miraculously escaped alive.

Pereira's decision to focus on the cannibal as part of Brazil's foundational mythology situates him within a tradition in Brazilian art launched by the modernist movement in the 1920s and theorized by Oswald de Andrade, the formulator of the 'Anthropophagic Utopia'. As to his aesthetic references, the main source was the film *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos in 1970 and released in 1972. Nelson had also extracted elements from Staden's book to express



The maritime opening of *Hans Staden*.

his vision of Oswald's anthropophagy, which he combined with political and social utopias of the late 1960s. Proving its enduring centrality in the national imaginary, the figure of the cannibal reappears in the globalized context of the 1990s, albeit devoid of the utopian features which, in the past, had turned it into an art object. Though reduced to a relic of the past, it still carries the sensationalist features which have been responsible for its popularity since the sixteenth century.

The cannibal's trajectory in Brazilian cinema reflects an interesting migration of the national identity through Brazilian society's different ethnic components. In this chapter, I will first investigate the origins of the cannibal myth, then move on to a brief review of *Macunaima* (Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, 1969) and its cannibalistic allegories, followed by more detailed analyses of *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* and *Hans Staden*, which discuss the place of cannibalism in the national imaginary.

The good and the bad cannibal

The cannibal, both as a real and imaginary figure, has been associated with the New World from the outset. As observed by Afonso Arinos, some maritime maps of the time of the great discoveries referred to the country as 'Brésil Cannibale', that is, the dwelling of a monster with a dog's face.³ Like other fantastic creatures believed to inhabit the lands overseas, it was

not originally associated with human beings and much less with noble savages. Even the sixteenth-century Huguenot travellers, such as André Thevet and Jean de Léry, who were frequently deferential towards the Indians and admired some aspects of their social organization, found it hard to forgive their anthropophagic practices. It was Montaigne, an important source of Oswald de Andrade's utopia, who for the first time linked cannibalism to the idea of the noble savage. His main sources were the accounts by Staden, Thevet and Léry, and interviews he himself conducted with three Tupinambá Indians taken to France probably in the year 1566.⁴ In his famous essay 'Of the Cannibals', in which the society of native Brazilians is described as a true paradise, he concludes:

I conceive there is more barbarity in eating a man alive, than when he is dead; in tearing a body limb from limb by racks and torments, that is yet in perfect sense; in roasting it by degrees; in causing it to be bitten and worried by dogs and swine (as we have not only read, but lately seen, not among inveterate and mortal enemies, but among neighbours and fellow-citizens, and, which is worse, under colour of piety and religion), than to roast and eat him after he is dead.⁵

This commentary, which became widely known and provided the basis for the Enlightenment theory of natural goodness, allows for different readings. Frank Lestringant questions the degree of seriousness contained in such 'unexpected praise of naked, anthropophagic peoples', given the blatant amount of irony and humour it contains.⁶ In fact, Montaigne's intention, in 'Of the Cannibals', was to criticize the society of his time rather than to understand the Brazilian Indians' behaviour. For this reason, he often resorted to what Christian Marouby termed a 'negative rhetoric',⁷ a technique in vogue at his time and apparent, for example, in the following passage:

I should tell Plato, that it is a nation wherein there is no manner of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name of magistrate or political superiority; no use of service, riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividends, no properties, no employments, but those of leisure, no respect of kindred, but common, no clothing, no agriculture, no metal, no use of corn or wine.⁸

Rather than to the savages, this definition applies, through negation, to Montaigne's own society. The Indians themselves remain entirely idealized and their social structure ignored, for their occupations, agricultural activities, kin relations and laws are summarily dismissed as nonexistent. '[His] positive evaluation [of the Indians],' says Todorov about Montaigne's relativism, 'derives from a misunderstanding, the projection on the other

of an image of oneself – or, more precisely, of an ideal of oneself, which, for Montaigne, was incarnated by classical civilisation.’⁹

These are the ideas that, filtered by the eighteenth-century illuminists, inspired the Brazilian modernists in the 1920s. They provided the basis for the Anthropophagic Movement, whose principles are detailed in Oswald de Andrade’s famous ‘Anthropophagic Manifesto’, first published in the *Revista de Antropofagia* in May 1928. The great novelty introduced by the modernists is a reversal of perspective, through which the idealized other becomes the anthropophagic self, who devours the colonizer in order to incorporate his power. Building on the defence of the native formulated in his ‘Brazil-Wood Poetry Manifesto’ in 1924, Oswald de Andrade championed the devouring of cultural and artistic techniques imported from the developed countries to turn them into export products. To that end, he preached the return to an indigenous primitivism free from the constraints of civilized society. In a poetic pun, Oswald expressed the need to recover the creative ‘idleness’ (*ócio*, in Portuguese) which had got lost somewhere between ‘priesthood’ (*sacerdócio*, literally ‘holy idleness’) and ‘business’ (*negócio*, literally the ‘negation of idleness’), brought in by the European. ‘Tupi or not Tupi, that is the question,’ he exclaimed in his ‘Anthropophagic Manifesto’, which elects the Indian as the keeper of the national identity.¹⁰

The basic sources for the Oswaldian utopia are the Renaissance ideal of paradise regained in the land of Brazil and the Enlightenment theory of natural goodness. Montaigne, Léry and Thevet’s writings, Caminha’s famous letter reporting on the discovery of Brazil, as well as Rousseau and the French illuminists are objects of constant citation. As for modern references, Oswald borrows from Engels, Freud and Nietzsche to condemn all messianic cultures founded on paternal authority, private property and the state, and to reassert the belief in a classless, matriarchal society which would emerge from technological progress. Echoing the primitivist vogue launched by Francis Picabia’s ‘Manifeste Cannibale Dada’ (1920) and cultivated by the French avant-garde, Oswald’s utopia is a combination of primitivism and futurism, according to which the ‘man of the primeval hordes’, free from social and sexual oppression, would incarnate the ‘man of the future’ with all ‘the phallic power of the Brazil-wood’.¹¹

The revolution caused by Oswald’s utopia is primarily due to the identification of the Brazilian with the anthropophagic Indian in a subaltern society, eager to forget its origins and imitate the European colonizer. It was obviously a metaphorical cannibalism he defended, which, far from the actual devouring of human flesh, contented itself with the absorp-

tion and digestion of abstract concepts and techniques. Even with relation to the Indians from the time of the discovery, Oswald's view of anthropophagy was highly idealized. He did not conceive of anything other than ritual cannibalism, motivated by noble reasons and practised against the enemy as an extreme act of revenge. In a dignifying note, he observes that 'the Anthropophagic ritual among the Greeks had already been annotated by Homer', and continues:

Seen as *Weltanschauung*, [anthropophagy] can hardly lend itself to materialist and immoral interpretations such as those rendered by the Jesuits and the colonizers. Rather it belongs, as a religious act, to the primitive man's rich spiritual world.¹²

Hence the choice of the word 'anthropophagy', which, for him, carried a ritual and communal connotation, as opposed to cannibalism, which 'means anthropophagy for greed and also anthropophagy for hunger, as registered in chronicles of besieged cities and lost voyagers'. Drawing on Freud, Oswald proposes to turn taboo back into totem 'through a meta-physical operation connected to the anthropophagic rite'.¹³ Once removed from cannibalism's physical needs, anthropophagy is purified and invested with a romantic character which is entirely attuned to the theory of natural goodness.

Roberto Schwarz observes that Oswald's primitivist euphoria was due greatly to the coffee prosperity in São Paulo state at that time, and could only have stemmed from an intellectual of the economic elite. For Schwarz, the basis of Oswald's poetics were to be found in

the future coffee was projecting ahead. The universe of quasi-colonial relations it produced did not appear to him as an obstacle, but as an element of life and progress, and, as it were, of a progress which was more picturesque and humane than others, as none of the parties would be doomed to disappearance.¹⁴

With the development of anthropological and archaeological studies, the sources have multiplied and today there is a rich bibliography on the Brazilian Indian's cannibalistic habits in all their variations, which are certainly more complex than they are described in Oswald's noble anthropophagy. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, for example, defines cannibalism as the Amerindian's primordial way of connecting with the world, which is a 'relation of cannibalistic predation and incorporation'. In such a system, oppositional terms such as 'subject' and 'object', or the 'self' and the 'other' give way to a set of relations between variable terms. This view is the basis of Viveiros de Castro's 'perspectivism' theory:

The basic idea behind the term ‘perspectivism’, which I have borrowed from the Western philosophical vocabulary and applied to Amerindian thought, is that the relation precedes the substance. Thus subjects and objects are before anything else the effect of the relations in which they are located. They are thus defined and redefined, produced and destroyed according to the changes in the relations through which they were constituted.¹⁵

Suggestive though they are, such ideas have had no artistic repercussion so far. The formulators of the Brazilian anthropophagic utopia, even the more recent ones, do not seem to have taken an interest in scientific researches on the Brazilian Indians’ true customs. When the native cannibal re-emerges in the late Cinema Novo, and again in the New Brazilian Cinema, it is still the idealized noble native, extracted from the Renaissance literature and Brazil’s foundational myths, which had inspired an intellectual and economic elite in the 1920s. The problem of a split identity between the native savage and a civilized foreigner still seems to occupy an essential part of the national imaginary.

Consumer cannibalism

In the 1960s, Brazilian cinema seemed to define itself by the stomach – to use a phrase with modernist overtones. In the early years of the decade, it was animated by the ‘Aesthetics of Hunger’, as expressed in the title of Glauber Rocha’s famous manifesto and translated into images in his classic *Black God, White Devil* of 1964, which expressed the revolutionary hopes that the ‘backlands would turn to sea’ and the oppressed would come to power (see Chapter 1). In the same year, the Brazilian left wing’s revolutionary hopes were frustrated by the military coup and buried forever by Institutional Act number 5 (AI-5), decreed at the end of 1968. At this point, the Aesthetics of Hunger gives way to anthropophagy, which finds expression in two exceptional films: *Macunaíma* and *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*.

Macunaíma was conceived at the height of the Tropicalist movement, which was particularly strong in the field of popular music. Tropicalism proposed cannibalization in every sense: between popular and high cultures, fine art and *kitsch*, good and bad tastes, all the while keeping its distance from left-wing political correctness. Similar features can be observed in *Macunaíma*, in which Oswaldian anthropophagy appears reinvigorated but charged with destructive power. Based on Mário de Andrade’s modernist novel *Macunaíma*, published in 1928 (the same year as Oswald’s ‘Anthropophagic Manifesto’), the film presents anthropophagy

as a general rule of a self-devouring humanity. Anthropophagites are both underdeveloped peoples and capitalist imperialism. In a bitter manifesto, written shortly after the passing of the AI-5, Joaquim Pedro describes cannibalism as the basic mechanism of all consumerism:

Every consumer is reducible, in the last analysis, to cannibalism. The present work relationships, as well as the relationships between people - social, political, and economic - are still basically cannibalistic. Those who can, 'eat' others through their consumption of products, or even more directly in sexual relationships. ... The Left, while being devoured by the Right, tries to discipline and purify itself by eating itself - a practice that is simply the cannibalism of the weak.¹⁶

Anthropophagy, for Joaquim Pedro, is moreover

an exemplary mode of consumerism adopted by underdeveloped peoples. In particular, the Brazilian indians, immediately after having been 'discovered' by the first colonisers, had the rare opportunity of selecting their Portuguese-supplied Bishop, Dom Pedro Fernandes Sardinha, whom they devoured in a memorable meal.¹⁷

Although based on the modernist proposal, Joaquim Pedro's vision of anthropophagy carries a dose of disillusionment that disqualifies it as a utopia. The film bears similarities with other anti-utopian films of the period, such as *Pigsty* (*Porcile*, Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1969) and *Week-end* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967), both featuring scenes of cannibalism, which Joaquim Pedro himself considered akin to his film.

Anthropophagy as a social rule, in the film *Macunaíma*, is far removed from the libertarian, cheerful carnivalization of the book at its origin and closer to a 'mechanism of predatory appropriation', in Ismail Xavier's words.¹⁸ Randal Johnson goes as far as asserting that in the film the protagonist Macunaíma is shown in an exclusively negative light.¹⁹ Despite the remarkable sense of humour with which the adventures of Macunaíma, 'the hero without any character', are narrated, and despite his seductive personality, anthropophagy is seen, in the last analysis, as the country's structural vice. Industry owners devour their subordinates, the oppressed devour each other and in the end the hero himself is allegorically devoured by Brazil.

As a syncretic character, Macunaíma brings together the basic ethnic elements which form the Brazilian: he is black by birth, lives in an Indian hut in the jungle and, as the story unfolds, becomes European white. Conceived as Brazil's representative par excellence, he embarks on a journey through the country in which cannibalism is a frequent event. In various moments, he eats or tries to eat human flesh, for example, when he

tastes a bit of Currupira's leg.²⁰ Macunaima himself is almost cooked and devoured by the wife of Piaimã, the industrialist giant, whom he finally manages to throw into a human *feijoada*.²¹ Macunaima nearly experiences autophagy when he crushes and tries to eat his own testicles. His relocation from the jungle to the city introduces him to unrestrained consumerism, and he becomes an avid buyer of all sorts of useless products and gadgets. His melancholic end could only be an anthropophagic apotheosis: he is devoured in the river by Uiara, who turns his green and yellow Brazilian flag jacket into a pool of blood.

The film, in short, rather than limiting anthropophagy to the primitive, turns it into a general rule for the rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed, condemning society as a whole to cannibalistic self-destruction.

Amorous cannibalism

How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman takes the opposite route to *Macunaima*. Rather than an allegorical updating of inaugural myths, it provides an allegory of contemporary Brazil by sending it back to the sixteenth century and the anthropophagic Tupis. The film recounts the adventures of Jean, a Frenchman under the command of the Calvinist Villegagnon, who in the mid-sixteenth century set foot in the area which is today Rio de Janeiro in an attempt to occupy Brazil. To protect the region, called 'Antarctic France' by the French, he built the Fort of Coligny. While fleeing from Villegagnon's forced labour and austerity, Jean is captured by the Tupiniquims, Portuguese allies, and fights on their behalf. He then falls into the hands of the Tupinambás, French allies and enemies of the Portuguese, who take him for a Portuguese and hold him captive while they prepare for his ritual killing and devouring.

The basic storyline was extracted from Hans Staden's book, but the main character was turned into a Frenchman, and excerpts from a number of other sixteenth-century accounts were added, such as those by Jean de Léry, André Thevet, Villegagnon, Father José de Anchieta, Father Manoel da Nóbrega, Pero de Magalhães Gandavo, Gabriel Soares de Souza and Mem de Sá. Nelson's intention, as he declared in an interview with Helena Salem – although this is not necessarily the point the film itself makes – was to render a cinematic translation of Oswald's utopia by adopting, like him, the notion of noble anthropophagy:

The [film's] plot tries to recover that bit of Brazilian culture, which has been colonized for centuries. The theory of anthropophagy is one whereby the Brazilian (and the Indian) assimilates foreign culture. The Indian ate

his enemy to acquire his strength, not to feed himself physically. It was a ritual. The more powerful the enemy, the tastier he was thought to be.²²

Still in his interview with Salem, Nelson explained that he first had the idea for the film in the early 1960s when he was shooting *Barren Lives* (*Vidas secas*, 1963), based on a Graciliano Ramos novel, in the state of Alagoas, on the site where Bishop Sardinha was devoured by the Caeté Indians. This event is at the origin of another Ramos novel, *Caetés*. Nelson says:

Ramos wrote his novel in an attempt to recover Brazilianness, as if he were screaming: 'We are all Indians!' He was trying to establish an internal point of view and find within himself what could have survived from Brazil's early Indians – an Indian capable of devouring a bishop – and make him feel as 'a man of his time'. I found this starting point interesting, although I did not draw on Ramos's story, which is psychological.²³

Nelson's intention to identify the main point of view with that of the anthropophagic Indian is already indicated in the title of the film, *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, formulated in the first person, from the perspective of Seboipepe, a Tupinambá Indian woman. The content of the title is validated by the fact that, at the end of the film, she devours the Frenchman, thus fulfilling Oswald de Andrade's utopian and metaphorical proposal of devouring the European dominator. Whether Seboipepe is representing the Brazilian in general, and whether her point of view is the one which actually prevails in the film, is another matter. The fact is that the film makes use of a number of alienating and distancing techniques, typical of 1960s self-reflexive cinemas, and, as a result, the production of spectatorial identification becomes a rather complex process. Let us start by examining the use of language.

Two main languages, French and Tupi, both of them foreign to present-day Brazilians, are spoken in the film, entailing the need for subtitles even in its original version. The use of Tupi could be seen as a radical search for national identity, harking back to indigenist and patriotic currents from the early twentieth century, which defended the adoption of Tupi as Brazil's official language. The choice can also be seen as a homage to Humberto Mauro, the patriotic director of *The Discovery of Brazil* (*Descobrimento do Brasil*, 1937), in which the Indians also express themselves in Tupi, although they readily accept the European catechism. The Tupi dialogues of *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* were translated by Mauro himself. However, the foreign-language dialogues work primarily as an alienation effect, which is accentuated by their association with humour.

An example is the scene in which the Tupinambás are trying to estab-

lish the nationalities of Jean and two other Portuguese men they have just captured. The Indians point to their own tongues and summon the foreigners to speak. Jean recites a strophe of Etienne Jodelle's poem, 'Ode on the singularities of André Thevet's Antarctic France' ('Ode sur les singularitez de la France Antarctique d'André Thevet'):

Ces barbares marchent tous nuds,
Et nous nous marchons incognus,
Fardez, masquez.

(Those barbarians walk about quite naked,/ Whereas we walk about incognito,/ Powdered and masked.)

The Portuguese, in their turn, recite a recipe of lamprey stew, in an unequivocal allusion to the Indian cannibalistic rituals.²⁴ The comic effect of these speeches derives from the fact that they are delivered in an automatic, detached manner by the speakers, who offer ironic comments about themselves alluding to the end they will meet as a gastronomic treat. As for the ode by Jodelle, a member of the Pléiade group, which is dedicated to Thevet, it compares, in its following verses, 'the savage and the civilized man in a manner largely favourable to the former'.²⁵ Here is some more of it:

Celuy là fait beaucoup pour soy
Qui fait en France comme moy,
Cachant sa vertu la plus rare,
Et croy veu ce temps vicieux,
Qu'encore ton livre seroit mieux
En ton Amerique barbare,
Car qui voudroit un peu blasmer
Le pays qu'il nous faut aymer
Il trouveroit la France Arctique
Avoir plus de monstres, je croy
Et plus de barbarie en soy
Que n'a pas la France Antarctique.
Ces barbares marchent tous nuds,
Et nous nous marchons incognus,
Fardez, masquez. Ce peuple estrange
A la pieté ne se range.
Nous la nostre nous mesprisons,
Pipons, vendons et deguisons.
Ces barbares pour se conduire
N'ont pas tant que nous de raison,
Mais qui ne voit que la foison
N'en sert que pour nous entreuire?²⁶

These verses are another interesting instance of negative rhetoric by a poet who criticizes his own society through an idealized description of the other.

Such use of self-commentary has already prompted Richard Peña to say that the film 'declares its independence from the point of view of any character'.²⁷ Indeed, irony and self-reflexivity contradict the title's suggestion that Seboipepe is the first-person narrator. The story is actually told by a combination of various verbal and visual texts, enunciated by different subjects, including Seboipepe and the Frenchman Jean. Contradictory testimonies by Léry, Thevet and Villegagnon are set side by side and illustrated with images and dialogues which are also in disagreement with them. Before the opening credits, a voice-over announces: 'Latest news of Antarctic France sent by Admiral Villegagnon'. This voice-over is the only speech in current Brazilian Portuguese in the whole film and refers to Villegagnon's letter to Calvin dated 31 March 1557. The letter was partly reproduced in Jean de Léry's book *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil* (*Histoire d'un voyage faict en la Terre du Brésil*), first published in 1576.²⁸ The voice-over then renders the letter:

The country is deserted and uncultivated, there are no houses, no roofs, nor any country accommodations. On the contrary, there is much unfriendly and savage company, lacking in courtesy and humanity. So very different from us in their habits and education. With no religion and no knowledge of truth, virtue, justice or injustice, true animals in human bodies.

The style of this initial paragraph is once again reminiscent of Montaigne's negative rhetoric, now directed against the Indian, the abject 'other' in need of redressing. Voice-overs usually impart a third-person, omniscient point of view, which sets up the perspective for the entire film. But, in this case, irony brings the voice-over's authority into question, as the speaker imitates the typical style of official newsreels produced at the time of the dictatorship, which reported on governmental achievements. The background music is another ironic comment, as it stems from the French newsreels ('Actualités françaises') shown in Brazilian cinemas in the 1960s.

The clash between the voice-over and the images results in parodic effects. While in his letter Villegagnon complains about his subjects' lack of discipline, the images show them suffering like slaves under his rule.²⁹ Towards the end of the letter, the voice-over describes the rebels being released to defend themselves, while the images show the opposite: Jean, in chains and tied to an iron ball, is hurled into the sea in a summary

execution (from which he eventually manages to escape).

Among the film's different narrative materials are prints extracted from the books by Hans Staden, Thevet and Léry; written texts by various authors presented in the form of intertitles; and diegetic and extradiegetic music, ranging from authentic Indian war chants to Zé Rodrix's experimental exercises. Dib Lutfi's camera work further obstructs the formation of a unified point of view, with its long shots, unexpected zooms on secondary or indistinct objects and focus on empty spaces, not to mention the montage based on *faux raccords* and jump cuts. This, however, is nothing but the film's strategy to convey an opinion on its subject. The contradictory narrative materials and the discontinuous editing are meant to disavow the testimonies given by the European discoverers, as well as, reaching the present time, the supposed neutrality of the dictatorship's official documentaries.

Echoes of Oswald de Andrade's libertarian ideas are noticeable when, behind the back of Calvinist Villegagnon's puritanical repression, natives and Frenchmen rejoice in the exercise of communal meals and sex. Sexual freedom is a central element and permeates the entire film, turning historical facts into allegories of the present. The Indian women who ostentatiously rid themselves of the gowns imposed by the French are reminiscent of the young Parisians who burned their bras in May 1968. The freedom and impudence with which the camera frames the cast's frontal nudity, including that of the Frenchman, hints at the climate of sexual liberty typical of the 1960s communes (unsurprisingly, the film faced many problems with censorship both in Brazil and abroad). Nelson himself, together with his team, lived in a community during the shooting of *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, a method he adopted for the several films he shot in the area of Parati on the southern coast of Rio de Janeiro state.

In a way, *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* can be seen as a celebration of the communion of bodies that occurs both in cannibalism and the sexual act, two activities the film treats as libertarian and anti-authoritarian. The Portuguese title, *Como era gostoso o meu francês*, contains a pun on this double meaning, as *gostoso* means both 'tasty' and 'sexy'. The film as a whole plays with the verb *comer* (to eat), which also means to have sex. To be sure, the convergence of cannibalism and eroticism is a fact that has been exploited since the discovery. Already Amerigo Vespucci described the native Brazilian women as 'well shaped, solid, meaty, with firm breasts; unfortunate ones who exhibit them flaccid or drooping are not to be found',³⁰ only to subsequently turn these beauties into cannibal monsters.



Amerigo Vespucci's arrival in the New World, in a Renaissance print. Fully dressed and carrying the symbols of European technology, Vespucci meets a naked beauty whose raised forefinger is both an invitation to sex and an indication of the European visitor's end in a cannibalistic feast, like the one shown in the background.

In the film's pivotal scene, between Jean and Seboipepe, these two paths cross. Romantic as much as realist, the scene shows Seboipepe explaining to Jean, in a body language which soon evolves into caresses, the way in which he should behave during the ceremony of his killing and devouring. The brunette Ana Maria Magalhães and the blond Arduino Colassanti, both at the peak of their youth and beauty, run naked over a large boulder in the idyllic landscape of sea and forest. Seboipepe pretends to pull her lover on an invisible rope tied to his neck, then lies on top of him to show how each of his limbs will be severed, finally reaching his neck, the part she is going to eat. The lesson on ritual cannibalism ends in sex, a moment in which cannibalism and eroticism become synonymous.

Sexual cannibalism, in the film, has a further meaning of racial integration, which is also fulfilled in the realms of languages and customs. Reciprocal learning and a playful mix of tongues take place between natives and foreigners. Seboipepe keeps muttering French words, while the Europeans communicate in Tupi. Rather than being shocked, the French seem comfortable with the Indian lifestyle, delivering their enemies to cannibalistic banquets (a fact which draws on historical documents) and using hoes, just like the Indians use their *ibirapema*, to knock down, with a single blow on their heads, their untrustworthy compatriots.

The final ceremony of Jean's execution is an apotheosis of racial inte-

gration. Jean reacts according to Seboipepe's instructions. Only, at the end, he utters the vindictive phrase in French, not in Tupi as he had been told: 'My friends will avenge my death, and there will be none of you left on this earth.' At this point, there is no difference between the French and the Portuguese (Jean has been killed as a Portuguese), or between Tupinambás and Tupiniquims (he had been captured by both). There is only the order of the devourers and the devoured, in a combat where not just the Indians but the insubordinate Europeans will be defeated.

The last image is a text plate quoting Mem de Sá, the governor general of Brazil, who announces the annihilation of all Tupiniquim Indians, the Portuguese allies, by official decree. As is known, both Tupinambás and Tupiniquims, the largest Indian populations in Brazil at the time of the discovery, were exterminated by wars and diseases brought in by the Europeans. In *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, this annihilation happens at the very moment when the utopian alliance between colonizers and colonized, preached by Oswald de Andrade, could have taken place. But this is prevented by the oppressive powers on both sides, represented by such figures as Villegagnon and Mem de Sá. The anthropophagic utopia fails in much the same way as, in 1960s Brazil, revolutionary hopes that united an intellectual elite with peasants and workers were crushed by the military coup.

As in *Macunaíma*, the intention is to convey a synthesis of Brazil capable of allegorizing the country's current political situation. In *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, the fault is found at the very foundation of the country, a moment in which the Brazilian identifies with both the native cannibal and the European adventurer. Together, they could have experienced an idyllic communion, but their projected paradise was destroyed by repressive powers on both sides.

The other cannibal

The 500-year anniversary of Brazil's discovery, celebrated in 2000, prompted a series of historical events and constituted the ideal occasion in which to rethink the country and its Indians at the time of the arrival of the Europeans. The film *Hans Staden* was born in connection with these events, corroborated by the fact that its director and scriptwriter, Luiz Alberto Pereira, comes from Taubaté, near Ubatuba (in the north coast of São Paulo state), and was therefore familiar with the region where the historical events portrayed in the film took place.³¹

Various aspects of *Hans Staden* point to both Staden's book and the film *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* as its primary sources. The Tupari

song at the opening, collected and reworked by Marlui Miranda, echoes the title of Nelson's film, saying 'You are good [*gostoso*/tasty], I am going to eat you.'³² This war chant provides the background for the opening credits, as in Nelson's film, which opens to the sound of a similar song. And as in Nelson's film all characters speak their own tongues (or modern versions of their mother tongues), entailing the need for subtitles.

Although a clear homage to *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, *Hans Staden* also betrays an intention to 'correct' the historical and visual infidelities of its model. Luiz Alberto Pereira has declared in several interviews that, as far as the film's concept is concerned, he tried to remain as faithful as possible to Hans Staden's account, searching for historical foundation for locations, music, dance, body paint and Indian customs in general. 'Nelson used painted chicken feathers, whereas I obtained the authentic ones,' he once stated.³³ This well-intentioned striving for precision and faithfulness has prompted Robert Stam's ironic comment that 'Pereira seems to be the last person alive who actually believes it possible to show "exactly what Brazil in the sixteenth century was like".'³⁴ To be sure, both films share the purpose of discussing this formative moment of the Brazilian people, when contact (and conflict) first takes place between the 'civilized' European and the 'savage native', raising the question of national identity. However, the answers they come up with are opposed to each other.

To begin with, the option for a faithful depiction of Hans Staden's account leads to the establishment of a single narrative point of view. The story is told in the first person by the actor Carlos Evelyn, who plays Staden, in voice-over commentary (betraying a slight São Paulo accent behind his fluent German). The images appear as a faithful illustration of his narrative, as opposed to the conflictive narrative layers of *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*. As a result, the Brazilian Indian (the Tupinambá in this case) is presented from the outset as the exotic 'other', since its image derives from the narrator's suspicious and defensive look. The classical shot-reverse shot editing is used to reinforce the hero's subjective point of view, who, again in contrast to *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*'s detached camera work, is granted repeated close-ups.

Because they are seen through foreign eyes, the Indians' 'authentic' features are exaggerated to the point of expressionist deformation. When they sing and dance, everything about them is menacing: the whites of their eyes stand out against the red of their body paint; their singing mouths are like grimaces; their gestures, their chants, all is uncanny. Marlui Miranda and Lelo Nazário's music, based on research with indigenous peoples and



Hans Staden takes centre stage as the holder of the voice of reason, in Luiz Alberto Pereira's film. The compositions are clearly inspired by the Renaissance prints that illustrate Hans Staden's and Jean de Léry's accounts, in which balance is attained by placing the European character in the centre of the frame.



combined with atonal instruments and effects, contributes to the general atmosphere of exoticism even when it is diegetic.

Rather than being based on ethnographic research or any real indigenous choreography, the circles of dancing Indians are actually reminiscent of the Renaissance prints that illustrate Léry and Staden's books, with their respect for classical equilibrium and geometry. The reduced behavioural repertoire of the Indians, who seem incapable of any reaction other than chanting and dancing at each new event, turns the film into a sort of jungle musical which offers little enlightenment on their true habits. The Indians are thus excluded from the configuration of the point of view, as opposed to *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, in which room for the native's view is made by the conflicting versions of the official history.

The decision to follow Staden's account literally caused *Hans Staden* to turn its back on the document and plunge into fiction and the genre film, in this case, the narrative of adventures. It is common knowledge that the accounts provided by the first travellers to the Americas contained a high degree of fantasy. Mythological creatures, such as dog-faced men (the cannibals), feature in accounts as early as Columbus's letters. Impressed by the New World's novelties and secure in the knowledge that hardly any witnesses would come forward to contradict them, travellers felt free to vent their fantasy, often resorting to Greek and Latin mythologies, which were fashionable at the time, as well as to biblical legends. This is the reason why Staden insists on the veracity of his account so as to avoid being taken for yet another impostor. He writes:

Certainly many an honourable man in Castilla, Portugal, France or even Antwerp, in Brabant, who has been in America, will testify that things were indeed as I described them. Before those unfamiliar with such foreign lands, I call for these witnesses and God above all.

Staden then draws up a list of names of potential witnesses.³⁵ However, the lines that follow soon reveal a considerable degree of imagination. In order to attach credibility to his entire account, one would need to believe in miracles, for, according to Staden, it was God who inspired and saved him from the perils he faced. Thanks to this divine intervention, he acquired the power to summon or halt rain when necessary and to cure sick Indians with a mere touch of his fingers or blow of his breath, among other feats, thus impressing the Tupinambás and managing to escape their cannibalistic intentions. The end of the book summarizes the miraculous nature of his whole adventure:

Dear reader! I only briefly recounted my voyages over land and sea, as all I wanted was to describe their beginning, when I was in the hands of a cruel and savage people. I only wished to show how the Saviour of all evil, Our Lord and God, with His powers, freed me when I least expected from the hands of the savages.³⁶

In its fidelity to the book, the film also becomes a narrative of miracles, realized or partially faked by a clever European, who was bound to get the upper hand over uncultivated and naive Indians. In tune with Staden's account, the Indians are portrayed in an infantile manner, starting with the women's shrill, childish chanting. Pereira's satirical verve, already apparent in his previous films, such as the comedy *Man in the Box* (*O efeito ilha*, 1994), contributes to the caricature of the Indians, who are constantly in clownish situations, making faces, crying or drunk. Despite the film's good intentions, the indigenous customs, including cannibalism, appear, just as in genre films, as barbarian acts perpetrated by an uneducated people, a condition that fully justifies the good hero Staden's struggle to rid himself of them and reach the happy ending.

The differences with Nelson's film are striking. In *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, the subject is a war in which both parties are fighting to win. Chief Cunhambebe urges the French to give him gunpowder and cannons, dismissing traditional gifts such as scissors and mirrors, which the Europeans offer in exchange for pepper and Brazil wood. Conversely, *Hans Staden's* infantilized Indians cannot think of anything beyond the toys of European technology. At a certain point, Staden's Indian lover asks the French tradesman for 'many cannons' in exchange for her parrot. Her request, made in the film's prevailing infantile tone, is shown as a joke that sparks off the Frenchman's laugh, as much as it should do to the spectator.

The Indian's otherness is crystallized in the key scene of cannibalism, when a Maracajá prisoner is killed and devoured by the Tupinambás. The ritual is shown in minute detail, as in Staden's book, in its several stages: the dances, the painting of the *ibirapema*, the painting of the prisoner's body, his vengeful replies to the executioner's insults, the fatal blow, the general screaming, the preparation of the feast and its swallowing. The cannibalistic details had been omitted from *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, which merely shows Seboipepe administering a short bite on what one presumes is her dead lover's neck, followed by a close-up of her indifferent eyes. But in *Hans Staden*, the meticulous and sensationalist description of the cannibalistic meal is even more graphic than in the book, with details such as the pair of ears that float to the top of the stew.

At this point, Staden, who was at first out of focus in the back of the frame, comes into focus shaking his head in disgust, while the other Indians blur in the background to the sound of their chewing mouths. Thus Staden is configured as the superior conscience, at the centre of the frame, supported by the camera's attention, which defines the enunciation's point of view. His figure in such moments reclaims the same central position it enjoys in the Renaissance prints that illustrate Staden's book, where it functions as the point of equilibrium in a chaotic and convulsive world.

Hans Staden offers an updated version of the national identity, in tune with the globalized spirit and commercial cinema, rather than with the utopian propositions typical of the 1960s and 1970s, while focusing on the same foundational moment of the Brazilian nation. Its uncritical adoption of a single character's point of view, depicted in a book which is undoubtedly a valuable historical document, but necessarily partial, fails to include precisely that of the Indian. Cannibalism appears as a curiosity of a people gone extinct in a remote past, leaving no traces behind, and now only useful as a source of black humour.

The present-day Brazilian, the film seems to suggest, prefers to identify with Hans Staden, a European like so many who still live in the country and characterize its cultivated classes. The narrator seems to endorse the dream achieved by this heroic foreigner of returning to a civilized Europe which has been duly cleansed from the anthropophagic, libertarian and erotic threats that so fascinated the modernists in the 1920s and cinema at the end of the 1960s. Instead of utopia, the film offers a mere happy ending.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BLACK PARADISE

Films

Orfeu (Carlos Diegues, 1999)

Black Orpheus (*Orfeu negro/Orfeu do carnaval/Orphée noir*, Marcel Camus, 1959)

Play

Orfeu da Conceição (Vinicius de Moraes, 1955)

THE BLACK PARADISE

noir messenger d'espoir
... tu connais tous les chants du monde
'Bois-d'Ébène', Jacques Roumain

The black theme, a frequent political banner in Brazilian cinema between the mid-1950s and the late 1970s, practically disappeared from the screen after the early 1980s, with the decline of the left and the progressive depoliticizing of the arts. *Orfeu*, directed by Carlos Diegues in 1999, could be seen as a step towards reviving the race issue. The film is primarily based on the play *Orfeu da Conceição* (published in 1955 and performed for the first time in 1956), Vinicius de Moraes's daring proposal for turning *favela* characters into heroes of Greek mythology, to be played by an all-black cast.¹ *Orfeu* is also a re-interpretation of the film *Black Orpheus*, directed in 1959 by Marcel Camus and based on Vinicius's play. The title 'Black Orpheus' harks back to Jean-Paul Sartre's famous 'Orphée noir', a celebratory preface to *Négritude*, written for an anthology of black and Madagascan poetry which was edited by the Senegalese poet and political leader Léopold Sédar Senghor.²

Diegues's *Orfeu* contains, furthermore, some echoes of *Orpheus* (*Orphée*), shot in 1949 by Jean Cocteau, in whose oeuvre, including poetry and theatre, Orpheus is a recurrent theme. One of the first films to take the Orphic myth to the screen, *Orpheus* stars Jean Marais in the role of a hero who travels through the mirror and inhabits both the land of the living and the dead. The film provides a sequel to *The Blood of a Poet* (*Le sang d'un poète*, 1929), a surrealist film akin to *An Andalusian Dog* (*Un chien andalou*, Luis Buñuel, 1929) and *The Golden Age* (*L'âge d'or*, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1930), in which the poet bridges two worlds. Cocteau only drew the theme to a close in his film-testament, *The Testament of Orpheus* (*Le testament d'Orphée, ou ne me demandez pas pourquoi!*), released, like *Black Orpheus*, in 1959.



Jean Marais' marble beauty in *Orphée* is reflected in the Greek statues at the opening of *Black Orpheus*, which explode to make room for Orpheus, played by Breno Mello. Toni Garrido in Diegues's *Orfeu* has already overcome all problems of race.

Unlike previous Brazilian interpretations of Orpheus, which focused on the black, and like Cocteau's *Orpheus*, which explores Marais' marmoreal beauty and classical profile, Diegues's Orpheus has no additional names; he is simply Orfeu, albeit played by a black actor. The reason for this is clear from the opening images. They present a well-off and well-adapted hero, whose problems with class and race seem nonexistent, or at least already resolved. With a house in the most privileged spot on a *favela* hillside, with a picture-perfect view of Rio de Janeiro, Orfeu is a kind of dandy, who sports a collection of designer shirts and suits, his hair carefully styled in tiny braids, reading spectacles which give him an intellectual air, a mobile phone always at the ready like a businessman, and a latest-generation laptop on which he types his musical scores. He is surrounded by children of all shades of colour, from blond (one of them is referred to by the name of Russo, or 'Russian') to dark black, a multi-coloured palette also reflected on the tiles on the front of his house, his shirts and the exuberant carnival costumes under preparation around him. Orfeu, with his immaculate chocolate skin, is only one among so many colours.

In Camus' *Black Orpheus*, which opens with images of Greek statues as does Cocteau's 1949 *Orpheus*, the static white marble of the statues explodes to give way to black men dancing samba to the sound of drumming in the *favela*. In Diegues's *Orfeu*, the Greek myth is no longer used as a term of comparison; the hero is presented as if the myth itself had always referred to a black man from the Brazilian *favela*. His skin colour and social status are naturalized in order to rule out any suggestions of protest.

This is somewhat curious, as *Orfeu* is part of a wave of *favela* films



launched in the wake of Paulo Lins's book *City of God* (*Cidade de Deus*), in which the racial issue is explosive and lies behind all conflicts. Lins, who is black, contributed personally to the dialogues of *Orfeu*, and Carlos Diegues's own cinematic past is that of a militant for the black cause. He had been dealing with *favela* and black-related themes from his very early works, such as 'Escola de Samba Alegria de Viver' ('Alegria de Viver Samba School'), a segment he contributed to the film *Favela Five Times* (*Cinco vezes favela*), produced by the Centre for Popular Culture (CPC) in 1962. Later, at the height of Cinema Novo, he directed *Ganga Zumba* (1964), a film about the rebel slave who became the leader of the Quilombo dos Palmares (a famous hiding camp for fugitive slaves), a historical drama set in the seventeenth century, with an all-black cast, which allegorized the problems faced by African-Brazilians in the present.

Xica (*Xica da Silva*, 1976) and *Quilombo* (1984) are his further incursions into the slave period, which allegorize situations of oppression and rebellion in the present. Many black Brazilian actors owe their celebrity to these films, such as actress Zezé Motta, who was introduced in *Xica* and since then has been directing an NGO which recruits and finds placements for black actors. In *Orfeu*, a new black actor was revealed, Toni Garrido, the Cidade Negra band leader, who plays the title role, alongside an older generation, including again Zezé Motta, in the role of Conceição, the protagonist's mother, and Milton Gonçalves, as Inácio, his father.

However, recent Brazilian cinema, which is still predominantly in the hands of white directors, shows no signs of interest in racial questions, even when it comes to *favela* films. Mentions of the oppression of blacks are occasionally to be found, for example, in Eduardo Coutinho's docu-

mentaries such as *The Mighty Spirit* (*Santo forte*, 1999) and *Babilônia 2000* (2000), but they rarely interfere with the main plot. Also the *favela*'s ethnic profile varies from film to film, from predominantly black, as in *City of God* (2002), to mostly white, as in *Midnight* (1999). The casting for the inhabitants of the *favela* in *Orfeu* shows a concern for ethnic variety that is reminiscent of the multi-racial style of contemporary American cinema. Good and evil are unrelated to skin colour: Lucinho (Murilo Benício), the top drug dealer on the *favela* hill, is white, whereas his right-hand man is black, and there is even a girl, the character of Be Happy, in command of the gang, an uncommon event in *favela* books and films. The black woman in *Orfeu* has indeed been emancipated: Mira, Orfeu's girlfriend before Eurydice's arrival, is a *Playboy* cover girl, quite an achievement if you consider the real status of black Brazilian women. Even Eurydice, who arrives by boat in *Black Orpheus*, arrives in *Orfeu* by plane, a considerable progress which prompts, in the story, Conceição's remark that in her time it took 'almost three days by bus' to travel from Bahia to Rio.³

The characters' new status shows how *Orfeu* is removed from the Brazilian social films of the 1950s, in particular from an inaugural Orphic character, such as the black composer Espírito da Luz, played by Grande Otelo in the classic film *Rio, Northern Zone* (*Rio, Zona Norte*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1957). An undeniable influence on *Black Orpheus*, Nelson's film tells the story of an illiterate, destitute, short, black, but musically gifted man, who has his songs stolen by a bunch of smart white guys. This plot establishes a clear division between good and evil, the former on the side of the poor, endowed with artistic talent, and the latter with the white characters, who become rich by exploiting the poor.

In the era that ushers in the new Orpheus, such a division has become outdated. Good guys can also be winners, as is the case with the protagonist, who could easily be living away from the *favela*, as he is constantly reminded by the other characters in the film. But, in order to become a hero, Orfeu first needs to rid his community of its bad elements. His struggle faces no racial obstacles, though a few mentions of race are made, such as the policeman called 'Paraíba' (indicating someone coming from the mostly white, though poor countryside of the northeast) and the designation of Eurydice as an 'Indian', even though the actress who plays her, Patrícia França, displays a mix of African and Portuguese features. Eurydice can even be seen as the personification of the myth of the three races (Indian, African and European), whose blend configures Brazil as a supra-racial paradise, governed by love and music. If such a paradise fails to come to fruition, it is solely due to the fatal interference of chance.

Nevertheless, the configuration of this utopian island, which is the *favela* in the new *Orfeu*, includes the challenges it is constantly facing, portrayed in another, 'realist', dimension of the film. This comprises the hill's negative side, absent from both Camus' and Nelson's films, where drug dealers and murderers terrorize a population who only mean well as they merrily go about the preparations for carnival. It is among these criminals that the question of social exclusion, so crucial in Paulo Lins's writings, finally comes to light. Take, for example, this dialogue between Orfeu and Lucinho:

Orfeu: Go away, Lucinho, leave this hill while you still can. Get out of this life.

Lucinho: And do what? Become a road sweep or a cleaner, which is what the people down there want us to be? Spend my life cleaning other people's toilets and die in the shit just like that loser of my father did? At my age I've already given my mother and siblings a house to live in.

Orfeu: You won't live long, Lucinho.

Lucinho: The little I live I'll live well.

In this case, social exclusion is unrelated to racial issues, as opposed to what occurs in Paulo Lins's *City of God*, in which similar exchanges cannot be separated from the colour factor. As this dialogue progresses, we are informed that Lucinho had to engage in crime because he lacked Orfeu's musical gifts, as if artistic talent were enough to define social status. Let us examine how the film develops such a view.

The reinvention of Orpheus

Ever since the first Western opera, *Orfeo* (Claudio Monteverdi, 1607), the myth of Orpheus has been revisited by all kinds of writers, painters, poets, musicians and artists, confirming its inaugural vocation. It comes as no surprise that cinema, as much as other arts, should continue to revisit the myth, which contains foundational narrative motifs. It is primarily the story of creation itself, in which Orpheus, god of Thrace, son (or disciple) of Apollo and the Muse Calliope (or, in Vinicius's version, Clio), invents the lyre, which he uses to enchant all creatures, including trees, rocks, animals, children and, above all else, women. In short, Orpheus is the one who breathes life into things.

The myth also contains the matrix of romantic love, which is the exclusive and eternal love he feels for the nymph Eurydice. This love, in its turn, unleashes the basic feelings of envy and jealousy which cause the story's 'sudden change' (*peripeteia* in Greek). According to the legend, Eurydice is also coveted by the envious Aristaeus, and when she tries to flee from him

she steps on a venomous serpent and dies of its bite. After losing Eurydice, Orpheus becomes mute and silences his lyre, showing the identity between love and art. He then undertakes a trip to the underworld (interpreted as 'hell' in Christian cultures) to recover his beloved. Once again he plays his lyre and enchants Charon, the ferryman who transports the dead, and Cerberus, guard dog of the underworld, as well as Hades (or Pluto), god of the dead, and Persephone, his wife. They let him recover Eurydice on condition that he never looks back on his way out from the underworld.

This is the temptation, similar to the one in the legend of Sodom and Gomorrah, that Orpheus succumbs to when, on reaching the daylight, he anxiously turns round to see Eurydice and she instantly disappears. He then becomes a recluse and decides to avoid women forever, thus incurring the jealousy and wrath of the Maenads (or Bacchantes), used to a life of orgies. They kill him, tear him apart and throw his head and lyre into the river. These reach the island of Lesbos, which thenceforth becomes the capital of lyrical poetry.

Though revisiting such an over-exploited theme, Vinicius de Moraes's approach is nonetheless innovative in several senses. The Black Experimental Theatre (Teatro Experimental do Negro) was in full swing at the time, and plays featuring all-black casts were not novel. And yet, as Vinicius himself emphasized, it was the first time an all-black cast ascended to the stage of Rio's Municipal Theatre, gaining unprecedented press coverage owing to the author's prestige.⁴ *Orfeu da Conceição* also inaugurated one of the most celebrated musical partnerships, both in Brazil and the rest of the world, between Vinicius and the then young conductor Antônio Carlos Jobim. The songs they wrote for the play, with the addition of those later composed for Camus' film, have become worldwide classics. The staging of the play, as well as bringing celebrity to its black actors, such as Haroldo Costa (who later became a filmmaker), Abdias Nascimento (a writer and political activist) and Lea Garcia, featured a set designed by the architect Oscar Niemeyer, whose first theatrical design this was.

But the foremost pioneering aspect of Vinicius's play was the adaptation of the myth to the black universe. According to the poet, the idea behind the black Orpheus dated back to 1942, and preceded not only the African Negritude movement but also Sartre's 'Orphée noir', written in 1948. This is how Vinicius describes his invention:

It was in 1942, at a dinner with my friend, the American writer Waldo Frank, that something one could call the embryo took shape from which, a few months later, was born the idea of *Orfeu da Conceição*. At the time I was accompanying the author of *America Hispana* on all his visits to *favelas*,

macumba [African-Brazilian] rituals, black clubs and festivals in Rio, and felt particularly imbued with the spirit of the race. In one of our chats, we suddenly became aware, through a series of random associations, of the feeling that all those celebrations and festivities we had been witnessing were somehow related to ancient Greece; as if the black, in this case the black from Rio de Janeiro, were a Greek in rough stone – a Greek still deprived of culture and of the Apollonian cult of beauty, but no less affected by the Dionysian lust for life.⁵

The first act of the play, which would later be called *Orfeu da Conceição* – *tragédia carioca* (*Orfeu da Conceição: A Rio Tragedy*) was written in this period. However, the final and full version would only come to light 13 years later, according to a chronology published at the end of the play and included in the volume *Theatre in Verse* (*Teatro em versos*), which specifies: ‘Niterói, 1942; Los Angeles, 1948; Rio, 1953; Final version for publication: Paris, 19 October 1955’.⁶ By the time of the last version, Negritude, Sartre and Cocteau had already been and gone, and Camus’ *Black Orpheus* was being made with a title taken from Sartre.

Vinicius’s position in this historical context is interesting. Even though overcome with admiration for black music, he saw it as a rough diamond that needed cutting, like ‘a Greek in rough stone’, in his words, who although ‘deprived of culture and the Apollonian cult to beauty’, possessed ‘a Dionysian lust for life’. His play points in both these directions: on the one hand, there is Orpheus’s music, stemming from the heights of the *favela* hill and inspired by a spiritualized Eurydice; on the other, there is the unconstrained, sensual carnival, played in the lower city, which stands for the hell where the hero loses his Eurydice.

The perception of black culture as a spontaneous expression of nature resonated with the world’s left wing at the time, which was beginning to wake up to the cause of Africans and African descendants. In his famous preface, Sartre praises the black poet’s proximity to the forces of nature and myth, both already far removed from the European:

the black is closer than us to the great time when, as Mallarmé says, ‘the word created the Gods’. It is almost impossible for our poets to reconnect with popular traditions: ten centuries of cultivated poetry separate both and, moreover, the folklore inspiration has dried out: we could, at most, imitate its simplicity from the outside. The blacks from Africa, on the contrary, are still in the great period of mythical fecundity, and the black poets of the French language do not go about their myths as we go about our songs: they let themselves be enveloped by them so that at the end of the incantation, magnificently evoked, Negritude emerges. This is the reason why I call *magic* or incantation this method of ‘objective poetry’.⁷

The mention of a period that is 'still' mythical in which the blacks live reveals an evolutionist vision of culture, similar to Vinicius's, which would find no resonance nowadays. For Robert Stam – whose factual chronology is slightly mistaken here, given that the idea of a Brazilian Black Orpheus, as we saw, precedes Sartre's article on Negritude – Vinicius leads on from 'the tradition of European primitivism and of the Negritude movement, which posited Greece as reason and Africa as emotion'. For him, 'de Moraes saw Afro-Brazilian performances as bringing a Dionysian dimension to an Apollonian theme'.⁸

The play's first staging was not devoid of conflicts and setbacks, and led, at one point, to an actors' revolt for lack of remuneration.⁹ Some of them, such as Abdias Nascimento, later turned against the poet's mythological project:

Black-faced white actors, Black Christ, Black Orpheus: in the last analysis they all conspire in the historical rape of my people. African religious culture is rich and alive in our religious communities all over Brazil. We have no need to invoke Greece or the Bible in order to raise it to the status of mythology. On the other hand, Greece and Europe owe to Africa a great deal of what they call 'Western Civilization'.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the recourse to classical mythology allowed Vinicius to reverse perspective: by making black the universal colour, the black was removed from the customary role of passive object of the white's gaze, and transformed into the subject of action, free of all stigmatizing difference. Sartre sought the same role reversal when he resorted to the Orphic myth to define the new black poets:

Here are black men who stand up and look at us, and I invite [the reader] to feel with me the emotion of being looked at. For the white enjoyed for three thousand years the privilege of seeing without being seen.¹¹

Sartre characterizes the black poet as author of the 'only great revolutionary poetry' in the French language, at that time,¹² a poetry he calls 'Orphic',

because the black's tireless descent into himself makes me think of Orpheus going to Pluto to reclaim his Eurydice. It is thanks to an exceptional poetic felicity, delivering himself to trances, rolling on the ground as possessed by his own self, singing his wrath, regrets and hatred, exposing his wounds, his life torn between 'civilisation' and the old black depths, in short, becoming more lyrical, that the black poet reaches with more certainty the great collective poetry.¹³

Orfeu da Conceição, even though set in the *favela* and spoken in popular

language, was conceived in such a way as to avoid all realism, so that the universality of the myth could flourish. Vinicius specifically warns against turning the 'myth of Orpheus into a realist tragedy'.¹⁴ His interest in setting the story at carnival time was due precisely to the inversion that takes place during this period, which allowed 'the blacks to free themselves of their poverty in the luxury of costumes bought with an entire year's savings'.¹⁵ Another of Vinicius's anti-realist demands was the exclusive use of black actors. He justified this by saying, 'It seems to me that it would be, so to say, to go against [the play's] Hellenic spirit to cast racially mixed actors.'¹⁶

This purism, while favouring the exaltation of African descendants, paved the way, with its rejection of realism, for folkloric readings such as Marcel Camus'. And indeed *Black Orpheus* simply returned the theatrical drama back to its real locations, on the streets and hills of Rio de Janeiro, without adding any realist basis to them, thus reducing the black Olympus idealized by Vinicius to naive primitivism. The blacks, in Camus' film, constitute a poor and yet happy population, sensual yet innocent, leading a life with no conflicts but those of love and dancing samba all day long, even when they have to cart water on their heads up the hill. Stam observes, with humour, that *Black Orpheus*,

offers a highly idealised view of life in the *favelas*: spacious, cheerfully painted, rustic cabins, complete with coloured curtains, metal bed and menagerie, offering the best views in Rio. Indeed, the film's treatment of the *favelas* at times resembles a real-estate ad; anyone would love to live there.¹⁷

Two points of view result from the above, which are intertwined and yet divergent: that of Vinicius, providing an all-black universe in which African descendants transcend their condition to become equal to gods; and that of Camus, which provides the black with an idealized life of perfect happiness. The new *Orfeu* seems to have sought to unite and overcome these two visions by combining the Greek myth with a vision of the black's real life in the *favela*. Diegues and his co-writers' endeavour was to establish a realist dimension without losing sight of the myth and the tragedy, a complicated equation to solve.

The realist dimension

In the *Orfeu* pressbook, Diegues tells about his long-held desire to shoot a new version of *Orfeu da Conceição* which would 'correct' Marcel Camus' interpretation of the play in the film *Black Orpheus*. This film had generated an international perception of Brazil as a black and musical paradise,

which was furthermore sanctioned with the awards of the Golden Palm at Cannes and the Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 1959. Vinicius himself was famously dissatisfied not only with the cinematic version of the play but also with the way his music, written in partnership with Tom Jobim and Luiz Bonfá, was utilized. Despite the film's international accolade and the fact that it continues to attract legions of viewers throughout the world, a section of Brazil's film critics, especially a young generation which would later launch the Cinema Novo, rejected it categorically. Diegues recalls his own disappointment:

In 1959, with a few shorts behind me, and immersed in the primal soup of people and ideas that would later spawn Cinema Novo, I felt a wave of disappointment as I watched *Black Orpheus*, a French production directed by Marcel Camus and based on *Orfeu da Conceição*. Despite its sincere sympathy for Rio de Janeiro's geographic and human scenery, and even a certain affection it demonstrated for its subject matter, the film went down the way of a touristy and exotic view which betrayed the meaning of the play and missed all of its fundamental qualities. I felt, to tell the truth, personally offended, and from then on I started to dream of the film which has become our *Orfeu*.¹⁸

In 1980 Diegues presented his *Orfeu* project to Vinicius de Moraes, who offered him the copyrights for the screen and volunteered to write the screenplay with him. His death in July of that year brought the project to a halt. After American producers took a momentary interest in it around 1991, it was in Brazil, in 1998, that an entirely new version of the script eventually managed to raise funds, and the film was finally released in 1999.

There is no doubt that *Orfeu* was true to the 'spirit of the play', as far as Vinicius's demands are concerned, as it maintains its black protagonist and many of its original dialogues, poems and songs. However, the decision to have a mixed-race cast interferes with 'the myth's integrity' or 'the Hellenic spirit' Vinicius talks about. This seemed to be a necessary step in order to update the story according to the *favela's* current profile in real life. Sérgio Augusto summarizes Diegues's thoughts, according to which,

the *favelas* are currently undergoing their third historical phase. Until the 1950s, representations of the *favela* hill, in samba songs, on stage and on the screen, were mostly lyrical. This was the way with *Favela of My Loves* (*Favela dos meus amores*), directed by Humberto Mauro in 1935, in *Tudo azul* (by Moacyr Fenelon, 1951), *Orfeu da Conceição, Rio, 40 Degrees* (*Rio, 40 graus*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1956) and *Black Orpheus*. In the past, notions of purity and even privilege with relation to *favela* were widespread, for it was believed that 'those who lived up on the hill were

near to heaven' (*quem mora lá no morro vive pertinho do céu*), as proclaimed Herivelto Martins's samba song. Today such a view would be unacceptable, for the *favelas* have become a far cry from the peaceful, bucolic and scarcely populated places they used to be. Urban growth and disorganised migration turned them into overcrowded spaces and paved the way for violence and criminality, giving rise to what Diegues calls the 'plaintive phase', when living up on the hill became like living close to hell. A new phase would take over in the 1990s: that of the fight for affirmation, of pride of being a *favela* inhabitant, despite all its adversities. *Orfeu* attempts to provide a faithful portrayal of this phase.¹⁹

The obvious aim of this description is to convey a positive view of the *favela*. Vinicius's intention was no different, when he found in the legend of the 'Greek Orpheus or Black Orpheus ... a perfectly positive story, which represents man's struggle ... to promote, through music, his total integration into the lives of his fellow creatures'.²⁰ Such a view corresponds to an emphasis on one's 'pride in being a *favela* inhabitant', even though problems of overcrowding, criminality and drug trafficking are still far from any solution in Brazil's real *favelas*. A director who is not averse to popular appeal, Diegues placed particular emphasis on the spectacular aspect of *favela* life, especially during carnival time, and went on to stage and partly document a carnival parade in all its details.

But the film's most innovative aspect is its focus on the modern aspect of the present-day *favela* as a reflex of its dwellers' expectations of ascending the social scale. The concern with fashion is reflected in the way *Orfeu* dresses and styles his hair, the clothes and accessories the drug dealers wear, the slang they use, the up-to-the-minute trainers sported by kids like Máicol (a misspelling of 'Michael' Jackson), who are still dithering between the paths of good and evil. The attachment to gadgets such as *Orfeu*'s mobile phone and laptop completes the configuration of this technological *favela*, through which the black is given access to the imaginary of consumerism.

This is the *favela* which, duly updated and idealized through unrestrained sympathy, is intended to provide a realist basis for the myth. From its opening sequences, aerial shots of a stunning Rio de Janeiro are interspersed with shots of a mass of shacks buried deep in the heart of the city, revealing the contrast between social classes. These introductory images are reminiscent of the famous opening of *Rio, 40 Degrees* (1956), in which the city is presented as 'the name before the title', or, as it were, the leading actor. A realist technique par excellence, it contextualizes the drama and offers a social backdrop for individual relations. But the shots of the hill that follow are cut together in the fast pace typical of music

videos, and accompanied by the sound of a rap beat mixed with the voice-over of a speaker from Voz do Morro (The Voice from the Hill), a pirate radio station. The use of music video, which is essentially a commercial product, though a place of integration between cinema and music, plays a double role: on the one hand it brings to the fore the aggressive aspect of the hill, with quick cuts between shots that bring the *favela* closer and closer, as if they were being 'shot' at the viewers' eyes; on the other, it celebrates the creativity of a community, which, despite its poverty, is capable of dictating musical trends. Throughout the film, rap music is used to create a contrast to the samba played in smooth *bossa nova* style, setting an aggressive novelty against a well-established, passive rhythm.

A rap song disrupts the trance of the carnival parade, in the middle of the *samba-enredo*²¹ composed by Caetano Veloso for the fictitious samba school Unidos da Carioca (Carioca United).²² Composed by Gabriel o Pensador, the rap song evolves in an abrupt rhythm that mimics the shot fired at Eurydice at the very moment when Orfeu is presenting his number at the carnival. Though an imported musical form, rap is shown in this scene as an evolution of Brazilian samba, whose past phases are carefully outlined in Caetano's *samba-enredo*. The chorus sings: 'When Hilário left/ Pedra do Sal/ Rei de Ouro emerged/at carnival'. These lyrics refer to Hilário Jovino Ferreira, one of the thousands of African descendants from the state of Bahia who migrated to Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century and who was the founder of the *rancho* Rei de Ouro (King of Diamonds), drawing on Catholic and *nago* (yoruba) traditions of Bahia and a precursor of the present-day carnival *blocos* of Rio.²³

Alongside such self-reflexive musical commentaries, meta-cinema is utilized to produce a realist effect. An example is the brief insert of a famous scene from the *chanchada* (musical comedy) *Carnaval Atlântida* (José Carlos Burle, 1952), shown on the television set in the room where the samba school's women try on their costumes. In the scene, black actor Grande Otelo, disguised as a Greek, dances carnival steps with Helen of Troy. Given that this is the same comic Grande Otelo who plays the Orphic character in *Rio, Northern Zone*, this completes the reconstruction, in the background, of the humble origins of the successful present-day Orfeu of Diegues's film.

Indeed, references to real and cinematic characters from the past provide the new Orfeu with a historical backdrop. The current musical trend, which breaks free from the 'Brazilian authenticity' of *favelas* and samba rhythms of the past by absorbing international and pop influences, includes a homage to old musical traditions and is sanctioned by a series

of real celebrities who make special appearances in the film. Among them are the veteran samba composer Nelson Sargento, Caetano Veloso, who performs one of his songs in an entirely extradiegetic scene, the samba school leader Joãozinho Trinta, and the filmmaker Carlos Diegues himself, who makes a brief appearance as a barman.

Orfeu's perfection being inevitably idealized, his 'realist' counterpart is the white Lucinho, who stands for Aristaeus in the myth. In an age when black people and black music have supposedly conquered the world and the charts, the white man has become frustrated and bitter, though not for reasons of social or racial oppression. Lucinho's bitterness, both in the tale and in Vinicius's play, derives from personal reasons. In love with Eurydice in the mythical version, Lucinho, in this case, is more interested in Orfeu, his childhood friend, for whom he nurtures a homosexual crush, which comes to the fore in the scene where the two kiss on the mouth, when Orfeu kills him.

Because such characters, fictitious as they are, are meant to provide *Orfeu* with a realist picture of contemporary life on a *favela* hill in Rio de Janeiro, special care was taken with the language they speak, something that corresponds to one of Vinicius's few realist recommendations: 'because this is a play where popular slang plays a very important part, and because popular speech is extremely prone to change, current [linguistic] conditions should be taken into consideration when it comes to restaging this play'.²⁴ The dialogues in *Orfeu*, to which Paulo Lins personally contributed, capture in minute detail the slang used by drug traffickers, policemen, young artists, evangelical Christians, samba performers and other sectors of the *favela*. Finally, the bloodbath, which draws the curtain on Eurydice, Lucinho and Orfeu, in a typical Greek tragic style, finds resonance in the drama of real *favelas*, where violence is the daily bread, a fact made explicit in the scene where a boy is exterminated by a drug gang just because he had sex, by mutual consent, with an adolescent.

These elements, conceived to produce realist effects, are not meant to affect the positive and idealized vision of the *favela*. Though the aerial shots render images of real *favelas*, *Orfeu*'s plot is staged on an artificial film set, built to showcase and stylize local colour, shown in the literal sense of the coloured graffiti, clothes, homes and skin tones, as well as sordid details. The labyrinthine stairs, the filthy sewers and rubbish heaps also add colour, in a certain way, to the 'Brazilian mix' which constitutes the *favela* world. Everything there is familiar, homely and trustworthy, like the cosy bars where the old samba players gather, or the small evangelical temples where people hide from drink or the temptations of the flesh.

Even the shots from the drug wars, which fill in for the fireworks set off by watchers who warn the criminals when the police arrive, acquire a daily life tone.

Myth and transcendence

Sex and temptations of the flesh are central to all the works analysed here. In Cocteau's and Sartre's depictions, Orpheus is a transgressive character. In Cocteau's *Orpheus*, the hero scorns his puritanical and domestic Eurydice, who carries a child of his, in order to cross to the other side of the mirror by means of a diabolical pact, and meet Death, a *femme fatale* played by Maria Casares, with whom he falls madly in love. Sartre's black poets turned into Orpheuses resuscitate the power of the earth and the flesh in a 'sexual pantheism' which unites them with 'black Africans' phallic dances and rites'.²⁵

Conversely, Vinicius's couple, Orpheus and Eurydice, are punished after a sexual encounter in which she loses her virginity and, on her way back home, is knifed by Aristaeus. In Diegues's version, the puritanical nature of sublime love is even more accentuated. The beautiful erotic scene that opens the film, in which Orfeu makes love to his girlfriend Mira, immediately points to the carnal dimension he must overcome to become a hero. Mira, the sultry and 'easy' woman, is quickly dispatched with a 'get out' which Orfeu flashes across his computer screen. The only night of sex he manages to enjoy with the, until then, virgin Eurydice is not shown, indicating the spiritual bond between them, which is presented as better suited to the myth – but which actually is conservative and typical of the melodrama.

In keeping with this, Eurydice, who is already in her carnival costume, does not attend carnival, choosing instead to visit the evangelical temple where Inácio, Orfeu's father, a former alcoholic and samba player, tries to put his bohemian past behind him. Orpheus's 'descent into hell' is linked, in Sartre as well as in Vinicius and Camus, to African or African-Brazilian religious trances and magic, as experienced in *umbanda* and *macumba*.²⁶ Diegues turned his back on the usual use of *umbanda*, which is a widespread cultural expression in the *favelas* and provided *Black Orpheus* with its most powerful, phantasmagorical scenes. His Orfeu seems far removed from his African cultural roots and too cultivated to adhere to such popular beliefs. The trance is thus transferred to the carnival parade itself, which includes images of an actual parade of the samba school Viradouro, from Niterói, headed by Joãozinho Trinta, who had coincidentally chosen 'Orpheus' as the theme for the 1998 carnival.

The trance-like atmosphere, configured by the thunderous drumming and the repetitive chorus of the *samba-enredo*, sets the tone for the final events: the death of Eurydice, who is accidentally shot by Lucinho, the recovery of her body by Orfeu in a rubbish dump below a precipice, Orfeu's murder of Lucinho, and the murder of Orfeu by the jealous Maenads. The general tragedy is then turned into music by both Máicol, the boy painter, fan of Michael Jackson, and Mr Inácio, the renovated samba player who, in the thick of the moment, regains his musical vocation. The former with his rhythmic shouts and the latter with his whistle create a new musical form, a samba-rap that fuses old and new, the ideal and the real.

As the film draws to a close, the *favela* hill returns to its everyday violence after the 'great illusion of carnival' is over, as sung in 'Felicidade', a song by Jobim and Vinicius, delivered with innocent simplicity by Jobim's adolescent daughter, Maria Luiza Jobim, who plays a minor role in the film. The Orphic paradise lasts no longer than the three days of carnival. Nevertheless, the last image of the film shows Orfeu and Eurydice dancing samba together in the carnival parade, denying the film's realist dimension and reaffirming, to the benefit of a positive vision of the black and the *favela*, the reality of the myth.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN INTERRUPTED UTOPIA

Film

City of God (*Cidade de Deus*, Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002)

Book

Cidade de Deus (Paulo Lins. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997)

AN INTERRUPTED UTOPIA

Words fail. Bullets talk.
Paulo Lins, *Cidade de Deus*

In both the book and the film *City of God* the degree of ‘realism’ is striking. It is impossible not to be impressed by the ‘insider’s point of view’, as identified by Roberto Schwarz,¹ through which an intellectual from the *favela* as well as the characters drawn from this location speak in their own voices, from both the page and the screen. In this chapter, the film and the book *City of God* will be looked at as outstanding examples of recent works on the *favela*, whose realism interrupts the utopian gesture. The analysis will identify the elements that give the novel and the film what I would term their ‘realist aspect’ and reveal the laborious process through which this is produced. As I will endeavour to show, the creation of the apparent ‘spontaneity’ which predominates in both works requires a considerable dose of artifice.

Since its publication in 1997, the novel *City of God* has made its mark, raising its author, Paulo Lins, to the status of one of Brazil’s greatest writers.² It has given literary expression to an issue that is today central to Brazilian society and politics, namely the ‘favelization’ (spread of *favela* communities) and the war on drug dealing. This topic, as approached by Lins, has subsequently provided rich pickings for Brazilian cinema (within which, furthermore, the *favela* represents a traditional genre). Several films about *favelas* were made in the wake of this novel’s publication, such as *Midnight* and *News from a Private War* (see Chapter 2), and some of them, like *Orfeu*, even called on the skills of Paulo Lins when it came to writing the dialogues (see Chapter 4). Lins even co-directed music videos for the rap group O Rappa on the same subject (see Chapter 1). But, naturally, adapting the novel itself for the screen was a far greater challenge in view of its extraordinary quality.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that in various ways the film *City of God*, directed by Fernando Meirelles with the collaboration of Kátia Lund, proved to be a worthy match for the novel on which it is based. Consequently critics are faced with the difficult task of identifying, within the intersemiotic translation, the corresponding and equally successful techniques in both of the works. I would suggest that a good place to start such a study is the most original aspect of the book, that is to say, its use of language. The thing that first strikes you about *City of God* is the revelation that a vast number of Brazilians speak a language that not only differs from educated Portuguese, but is totally unknown among the upper classes. The inventive use of slang, that verges on a dialect in its own right, results in an agile, precise, synthetic and quick-fire language, which is highly expressive of contemporary Brazil. In my view this language constitutes the main source of the realism of the novel, and, through indirect ways, also of the film.

Murdered words

When someone refers to the 'insider's point of view' in relation to the novel *City of God*, you immediately think of the background of its author, who was born and brought up in a *favela*, managing against all odds to break out of the lifestyle predestined for him and to bridge the gulf between the social classes. His entrance into the world of literary fiction came about as a result of an ethnographical research project, coordinated by Alba Zaluar, entitled 'Crime and Criminality among the Popular Classes', which was intended to give a voice to a community that never appears in the media, unless through the mouthpiece of the ruling classes. But the origins of the author and his previous research do not adequately account for the realism of the novel. Lins's writing is far removed from the spontaneous testimony of popular writers, who, unfamiliar with erudite conventions, 'write like they speak'. It is true that the narrator of the novel insists on maintaining the narrow insider's vision of someone who is ignorant of 'life outside' and the causes of his misfortunes. However, the extreme linguistic sophistication that is obvious from even the opening lines of the novel leads us to reject the idea that Lins is using direct register.

The Brazilian critic Antonio Candido, in his famous essay 'A Dialectic of *Malandragem*', used the term 'structural reduction' to refer to how realist writers used to manipulate non-literary material in order to make it 'part of an aesthetic order ruled by its own rules, not the rules of nature, society or the individual'. However, according to Candido, 'nature, society and the individual seem to be present on every page'.³ Something similar

happens with the manipulation of language in *City of God*, which seems to contain in its own structure the materiality extracted from the facts.

Let us take as an example the first ten pages of the book, written in a deliberately poetic way, full of alliterations, rhymes and figures of speech. The first paragraph contains a series of alliterations of the letter 'b': '*Barbantinho e Buscapé fumavam um baseado à beira rio, na altura do bosque de Eucaliptos*' (meaning 'Stringy and Rocket were smoking a joint by the riverside, near the Eucalyptus wood'). This is a reference to two secondary characters who, in the present day within the story that is dominated by a war between drug gangs, are enjoying a moment of contemplation. Although they are still young, they are recalling their own childhood and what the City of God was like in the past, as if it were way back in time. The soft consonant 'b' continues to feature in the words *bagana* (joint), *braçadas* (strokes), *arrebentação* (surf), *boiando* (floating) and *brincar* (playing), words that introduce a description of a Golden Age, when the City of God was still 'one big farm'. Before the encroachment, according to the narrator speaking in the third person, of that 'such a modern world', with its property speculation and factories, the characters enjoyed a rural childhood, when they used to buy fresh milk, dig up vegetables, pick fruit in the fields, ride horses on the hills, go fishing and hunting for rodents and sparrows to eat with manioc flour. In those days, herds of cattle passed by 'in the tranquillity of those unaware of death'.

That tranquil river, on the banks of which the characters recollect a past crushed underneath houses and the other buildings of a new *favela*, then begins to turn red, a colour that precedes the appearance of human bodies - corpses from the war that is now being waged. At that point, the narrator stops dead, in order to make a comment in the first person, the only time that he does so in the whole novel: 'Poetry, my benefactor, illuminate ... the shades of my words', he pleads, before plunging headlong into a prose that will have 'bullets flying into phonemes'. This abrupt cut occurs in a kind of mini-chapter of just 13 lines, that is entirely poetic in its format, containing metre, cadence and rhyme, and which ends with two phrases that announce the nature of the prose that is to follow: 'Words fail. Bullets talk.'

From that point on, the narrator in the third person takes the reins of the plot, and we witness the evolution of a language that, through onomatopoeia, synthesis and aggression, attempts to materialize gun shots, the cut and death. The prose that follows is radically different from the opening pages of the novel, although it continues to draw on similar poetic techniques. The initial introspection gives way to action, leaving no room

for description or reflection. The words themselves cease to be passive signifiers to become active referents. The initial softness of the letter 'b' is replaced by the percussive 'p' of *rapá* (man or bro), the obsessive vocative that marks the end of many of the conversation lines and punctuates the whole novel.

The noun *rapá* is a shortened form of the word *rapaz* (boy), derived from the term *rapace*, a word with a curious etymology: *rapace* in Latin means 'a person who steals' and in the Middle Ages it was used to refer to servants or lackeys. When transformed by the inhabitants of the *favela* into the form of *rapá*, an oxytone that eats up the resting end syllable of the usually paroxytone Portuguese words, the final 'pá' produces an onomatopoeic effect that evokes the aggression of a gun shot. The 'ra', in turn, brings to mind the repetition of machine gun fire, or at the very least, repetitive percussion rhythms, as captured in the word 'rap', a music that articulates the protests of American blacks as well as other marginalized groups throughout the world. Thus you could say that the single word *rapá* encapsulates the essence of the entire novel, since it single-handedly evokes virility, bullets, high speed and abrupt halt, which is death.

This technique, which dictates the choice of the words used throughout the novel, gives language an almost absolute power, enhanced by the sense of speed, repetition, accumulation and massification. Writer Guimarães Rosa, who elevated the uneducated language of Brazil's backlands to the status of erudite literature, unearthed from it a universalizing ethics charged with mythical power. Paulo Lins's achievement, although similar, has the peculiarity of showing the appropriateness of the language spoken by deglamorized criminals, children who are enslaved by a logic that they neither know of nor can control, and which ultimately annihilates them. In Lins's hands this quick-fire language of shortened words and phrases acquires an interesting poetic quality, like a poem that before attaining philosophical status comes to an abrupt halt, as the 'bullets penetrate the phonemes', and that ends up being nothing more than a collection of clichés and prejudices. The characters tend to express themselves in proverbial forms, but because these are not preceded by any explanatory discourse, the result is often nonsense or black humour, as in these examples: 'When one Brazilian pees, all the others pee', or 'The blond child was the son of God, the white one God brought up, the dark child was his bastard son and the black one was shit by the Devil.'

The language of *City of God* is so authoritarian that it manipulates the very characters who speak it. If you just think of the names of the characters, practically all of them are known by nicknames, which in just

one or two words sum up the life story of each individual and imprison them in certain characteristics. There is no shortage of examples: the name Cabeção (translated as 'Melonhead' in the film), which is given to a policeman, instantly reveals that he is from Brazil's northeast, where people supposedly have 'flat heads', and also reflects the prejudice against northeasterners, which he also suffers and which, to a certain extent, justifies his violent and vindictive behaviour towards blacks. The 'good guy' is called Mané Galinha (translated as Knockout Ned in the film), from which we deduce that, despite being black, he is 'Mané', an abbreviation of the name Manuel, a very common name in the Portuguese community and which became in Brazil synonymous with the unintelligent. (The Portuguese have traditionally been the butt of jokes in Brazil for their legendary stupidity.) 'Galinha', on the other hand, refers to this character's ability to attract women.

Thus the language of the novel reveals the prejudiced nature of a culture that has neither time nor space for reflection. In this land of tough guys who kill and die like flies, life is described in ready-made phrases that are loaded with conservative morality, such as the following: 'Women are like dogs. They soon get used to new owners.' Such discrimination is directed at gays, the Portuguese, blacks, northeasterners, whites, in a word: all the characters who, in the narrative, are slaves to their linguistic labels.

In the novel *City of God*, words also die young, like the characters, children who are turned into adults and then die before they are 20 years old. Given this context, pre-formed ideas are not only natural but essential, since there is no time to hesitate or to choose. In gang warfare whenever a character is about to 'unwrap an idea' he is killed by his interlocutor, or he kills the latter before any dialogue can take place. Repentance is also offset by more deaths, with the result that everything is reduced to the indifference of mass production or, to put it more accurately, mass annihilation. The speed of the bullets interrupts and remedies the slow pace of the speech.

In order to guarantee some kind of existence, however ephemeral, nouns need to be concise and radical, reducing, for example, workers to idiots (*otário* or 'sucker/mug') and criminals to animals (*bicho-solto* - 'wild beast'), qualifications that often correspond to their death sentences. The murdered phoneme is also a murderer, in a world dominated by speed and ephemerality. In fact, the verb *matar* ('to kill'), among the gang members, is replaced with *passar* (literally 'to pass' or 'waste'). 'Pass him, pass him!' shouts over and over again Li'l Zé, the most prolific and quick-working

criminal, who does not sleep or relax, but compulsively snorts cocaine, which keeps him both desensitized and yet alert enough to 'waste' anyone who crosses his path. Death is just an incidental occurrence in the vicious circle of life.

Concentration

Unlike the novel, the film adaptation was not tied to words, and could rework the linguistic devices into other aspects of the film, such as the performance of the actors, the photography, the editing, the dialogues, the music and so on. Not to mention the script, written by Bráulio Mantovani, who brilliantly performed the arduous task of eliminating countless characters and incidents, as well as merging together many others. As far as the realism is concerned, what perhaps stands out most of all is the cast. Audiences in Brazil and all over the world have been fascinated by the 'authenticity' of the children and teenagers whose faces bear witness to their own origins, as well as those of the characters they are portraying, namely the *favela*. The appearance on screen of real-life *favela* inhabitants, with their varying shades of dark skin, their frequently semi-naked, raw beauty, seems to emphasize the characters' veracity and restore the reality that gave rise to this fictitious story. Without a shadow of a doubt, the film has the revelatory quality of a 'hidden reality' that previously characterized neo-realist films that depicted the ravages of war, or the films of the Brazilian Cinema Novo movement that depicted the misery of the Brazilian backlands. However, given that the film is not a documentary and that the actors are not nor could ever be the gangsters they portray, its realist aspect is clearly not due to a mere attempt at copying reality.

We know from press releases and interviews given by the filmmaking team that the casting was a laborious and costly process, which took a whole year to complete. In several *favelas* (or communities, to use the team's politically correct terminology), amateur theatre schools and young people's associations, 2,000 people were interviewed, from which 400 youngsters were chosen to take part in a theatre workshop. The workshop, which concentrated on improvisation exercises, was directed by Guti Fraga, the founder of the Nós do Morro group, an acclaimed amateur theatre group composed of *favela* inhabitants. As a result of these improvisation exercises, which were observed and reported on by the directors and other members of the team, the 60 main actors and 150 supporting cast of the film were selected.

But the training given to the cast was still not over. Each actor was then coached by Fátima Toledo, and a short film was made, entitled *Palace*



Visual rhyme and suggestions of cutting in *City of God*: the knife, Li'l Ze's teeth and the chicken's beak and claws.

II, which acted as a screen test but also as a run-through for the directing, set design, camera work and editing of the feature film *City of God*. During this process radical changes were made to the script, the dialogues and the performances, all with the intention of 'naturalizing' what was believed to be the 'reality' of the *favela*. It was via this intense and prolonged period of coaching that the filmmakers managed to achieve shockingly and almost unbearably realistic scenes, such as the one featuring the two children tortured by Li'l Zé, who end up shot, one of them lying dead. Given the energy that was channelled into achieving this level of technical mastery, it is clearly inadequate to attribute the film's realist aspect simply to the physical appearance and origins of the cast. The film's realism must, therefore, stem from its form.

Let us take as an example the opening scene of the film. It adapts the poetic style of the first pages of Paulo Lins's novel, combining it with an incident when a chicken is chased through the *favela*, that takes place almost at the end of the book. The images and the editing aim to create a visual rhyme, in the style of Eisenstein. The film opens with the preparation of food for a meal, adopting the metaphor of the knife (you could say that at the beginning of the film 'knives do the talking') and other cutting objects: the blade being sharpened alternates with the beak of a live chicken, the claws on the feet of other dead chickens and a close-up of the protruding, snarling teeth of Li'l Zé (the most feared gangster in the *favela*, as we subsequently discover). The sound of the knife being sharpened on the stone disrupts the samba rhythm – a forewarning of the violence that will bring an end to the Golden Age of the community, which is described in the following scenes to the sound of old samba songs. Then we hear the first phrase shouted by Li'l Zé, that ends with the synthetic word *rapá*: 'Grab the chicken, *rapá*!' Both the escaped chicken and the people who are chasing it are in danger of taking a bullet.

In this brief prologue, the virile nature of the story is established, a story that is composed essentially of male characters (a story of 'rapazes'/ 'boys'), and that is conveniently full of phallic imagery: the chicken (the 'cock'), the knife, the carrot being peeled, and the gun itself. Here it is worth remarking on the visual/linguistic pun with 'chicken' and 'carrot', words used as nicknames of Li'l Zé's two enemies whom he wants to kill and eat, as he jokingly says later in the film. In this sequence, the personality of Li'l Zé is also established, as is his relationship with the other residents of the *favela*, and the spatial and temporal setting of the film, all scanned by the fast pace of a diegetic samba percussion. This is how cinema can translate the rules of synthesis, metre and rhyme, incorpo-

rating into its form the features of its subject-matter. The violence of the language used here becomes as palpable as, or even more so than, the violence of the action on screen. Incidentally, it is important to remember that explicit scenes of violence are rare in the film. Virtually no blood is shown, and you do not see the customary severed limbs of Hollywood thrillers. The violence is contained in the form of the film, especially in the editing, and for this reason is all the more powerful.

But now we are touching on a more complex question. Eisenstein defined his montage of attractions by the degree of aggression contained in the images and by their capacity to elicit an emotional response from the audience. In the film *City of God* the aggression is conveyed not only via the imagery and signs of cutting and death, but also by the abrupt cuts in the editing. Cuts, as we know, are traditionally seen as contravening the conventions of realist cinema. The great theorist of film realism, André Bazin, writing after the Great War and appalled by violence, defended the sequence-shot and the deep-focus cinematography, techniques that, according to him, respected the integrity of the time and space of phenomenological reality. Eisenstein, in his revolutionary, combative films – rejected by Bazin – championed cuts, aggression and shock treatment.

Obviously, the film *City of God* is also in tune with the precepts of classic editing, the objective of which is not to achieve realism but a ‘reality effect’. The violence, whether contained in the plot or the language, cannot fail to produce the same effect desired by American commercial cinema, namely, the illusionistic catharsis. The frenetic rhythm of the novel is translated into the quick-fire cuts of the digital editing, in the style of an advertisement or music video. In truth, the film could easily have gone down the route of the postmodern language of a cinema of citation, such as that of Tarantino, who only ‘surfs’ on the surface of reality. The film could equally have reproduced the easy gimmick of contemporary American cinema, infinitely repeating attractions that relegate the narrative to a secondary place.⁴ But the film, just like the novel, avoids such schemes via the importance it gives to the narrative. Paulo Lins’s great achievement was precisely to find a language with which to portray the encounter between the most violent modernity and the narrative power of the myth. As a consequence of the bullets and the brusque cuts, the tale is not fragmented but rather is shrunk and condensed.

One line in the film, adapted from the novel, exemplifies this process. The words are spoken by a boy of just eight years of age, called Steak ‘n’ Fries, who works as a look-out for Li’l Zé’s gang. The following is how he responds when he is dismissed as a ‘child’ by Knockout Ned: ‘Who are

you calling a child? I smoke, I sniff, I've killed, I've robbed. I'm a man.' During his brief existence so far, this character, who considers himself an adult, has not missed any stage of his life but radically shortened all of them. Already an experienced man of the world, this eight-year-old adult is not only ready to kill but also ready to die, which is predictably what happens to him soon after.

The weight of history

The three-part structure of both the book and the film reflects the desire to create a sense of balance and completeness. The novel is deliberately divided into three 'stories': (1) Shaggy's story, (2) Benny's story, (3) Li'l Zé's story. The emphasis placed on the word 'story' (*história*, in Portuguese, means both 'story' and 'history') is not incidental or unwitting: on the contrary, it indicates that the life stories of these criminals – who in real life are only known for their crimes – are urgently crying out to be told. By foregrounding story and history, the novel continually reinforces the importance of its connection with reality.

The same is true of the film, the three-part structure of which hinges on the characters of Shaggy, Benny and Knockout Ned (three 'good' gangsters) and on three different timeframes: the end of the 1960s, the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, each with their respective costumes, fashions and music. The development of the mythical structure is made even more apparent with the references to 'Paradise', 'Purgatory' and 'Hell' in relation to the three different phases in the history of the City of God shanty town. In the novel, the passage from one phase (or story) to the next is marked by a speeding up of the narrative, which in the final part ends up summarizing entire life destinies (invariably tragic) in just a few, frantically paced lines. In the film, the editing gives this sense of increasing speed, together with the lighting and sound effects, use of colour and camera work.

In the first part of the film, which I referred to earlier as the Golden Age of the community, we are conveniently confronted with golden sunlight and the orange hues of the unpaved roads of the City of God *favela*. Exterior shots from a static camera predominate, as well as long dialogues. In the second part of the film the number of interior and night-time shots increases. As the number of dead bodies pile up, the camera frees itself from the tripod, and when Benny is murdered the images become confused owing to the unprivileged position of the camera and the fragmentation caused by the strobe lighting at the disco where the scene takes place. The final part of the film, that deals with Knockout

Ned's revenge on Li'l Zé, who raped the former's girlfriend and killed members of his family, is the darkest. The camera, frequently hand-held, becomes unsteady as it goes in search of objects that hide in badly lit locations. The cuts become ultra-fast and abrupt. The close of the film, as in the novel, shows the Runts (a group of very young delinquent children) taking the place of Li'l Zé and planning a series of murders. Thus their own premature deaths and the even shorter lives of future generations are implicitly predicted.

This structure, which begins in paradise and ends in hell, suggests a romantic nostalgia for the past. As we know, the myth of the Golden Age or of Paradise Lost differs from the utopian myth. The former consists of a past that is lost and now unattainable, whereas utopia, the ideal place conceived of not by the gods but by man, shapes up the *telos*, reaffirming faith in reason and the possibility of a better future.⁵ Nostalgia, more easily identified in the novel than in the film, refers to a vision of the *favela* as a rural space, although implanted in an urban context.⁶ The utopian *telos* is disrupted by modernization, represented by the arrival of guns – which again takes us back to the real and symbolic rupture caused by bullets. This rupture corresponds in the novel to the establishment of the 'neofavela' that buries alive the previous rural world.

As I have already commented in the previous chapters, several recent Brazilian films articulate a nostalgia for a past when utopian thoughts were possible. In particular, some of the films that deal with *favelas*, like the previously mentioned *News from a Private War*, *Midnight* and *Orfeu* (all of which tellingly involved Kátia Lund and/or Paulo Lins), attest to the changes caused by the appearance of guns, which marks a dividing line between two separate historical periods. Carlos Diegues, when he conceived of his film *Orfeu*, was also convinced of the radical changes that drug dealing and firearms brought with them to *favela* communities. As explained in Chapter 4, he divides the *favela* history into three phases: (1) the phase of the lyrical samba, up to the end of the 1950s, when 'those who lived up on the hill were near to heaven'; (2) the 'plaintive' phase, which started with the waves of chaotic migration that brought overcrowding and criminality to the *favelas*, making them closer to hell; (3) the phase of the pride of being a *favela* inhabitant, despite all its adversities.⁷

In the film *City of God* the lyrical samba of the time when the *favela* was synonymous with being close to heaven is used to recreate the mood of what I referred to as the community's Golden Age. This first part of the film opens to the strains of the samba 'Alvorada' ('Dawn') by Cartola and Carlos Cachça, which goes:

Dawn up there on the hill
 How beautiful!
 Nobody is crying, there's no sadness
 Nobody is unhappy
 The colourful sun is so pretty, so pretty

Another samba by Cartola, 'Let Me Go', brings this section of the film to a close, accompanying the death of Benny:

Let me go, I need to leave
 I'm off to try
 To laugh so as not to cry⁸

It is also worthy of note that the criminals in the *favela* during this Golden Age were still a kind of social bandit, who shared out the fruits of their robberies among the poor population, such as when they hold up the gas delivery truck. The emergence of drug dealing, particularly involving cocaine, marks the transition to crime on an industrial scale, which ceases to have a social function and is motivated by purely personal issues of rivalry and revenge. As Ismail Xavier has stated in an excellent essay, recent Brazilian cinema is full of characters whose discomfort stems from the fact that they are stuck in the past and obsessed with the desire for revenge.⁹ Now that the political motivations that previously inspired social bandits, as portrayed in Cinema Novo, have been exhausted, the criminals in New Brazilian Cinema only act out of resentment, and their aggressive behaviour is turned against their own kind, when not against themselves.

An interrupted utopia

Aggression for trivial reasons, as practised by Li'l Zé and the other gang members in *City of God*, who kill someone because 'he's a pain in the ass', interrupts the utopian trajectory that was beginning to emerge in several different ways: via religion, work and studying. However, it does not hinder the full development of the several short stories that make up the narrative of *City of God*. In Chapter 1, I considered the utopia of the sea in Brazilian cinema, which from Glauber Rocha's films onwards has promised the poor a share in the wealth of the coast. In *City of God* the picture-postcard Rio de Janeiro, with its coastline and beautiful scenery, remains a privilege of the rich, attainable only as a 'vision' for the inhabitants of the *favela* (as in the case of the character Clipper who, after having a 'vision', chooses religion as his way out). As an image, the beautiful Rio is merely a hazy silhouette on the horizon in the film. The sea is only attainable for Rocket, the social climber who has to get close to the 'groovies', that is, the white inhabitants of the City of God.

Rio de Janeiro is thus presented as a divided city (to use Zuenir Ventura's term),¹⁰ containing, on the one hand, the sea of the rich and, on the other, the *favela* of the poor. However, this division, which interrupts the utopia and destroys young lives, does not lead to an 'interrupted spectacle', to use Robert Stam's term with regard to anti-illusionistic techniques.¹¹ Consequently, none of the self-reflexive techniques used in the film create a distancing effect, the most obvious one being the alter-ego of the filmmaker personified by the character Rocket, the omniscient narrator of the film. Devised as a middle-man, with access to the middle classes, he is also the film's conscience, suggesting an identification with the editor himself sitting at his editing table. Behaving as the truth keeper, he organizes, with his voice-over, the facts that make up the narrative, dictating at whim the freeze-frames, flashbacks and fast forwards, zooms and long shots, thus exposing the mechanics of digital editing.

Several times, after a flashback, the story, under the control of the narrator's voice-over, returns to the same point, showing the identical scene from a different point of view. This is the case, for example, when Li'l Zé takes Blacky's 'mouth' (drug-selling turf). Explaining the story of each of the characters involved, Rocket's commentary takes the narrative back to the beginning three times, as if the editor is testing the different points of view offered by three different cameras. At no time, however, is the story called into question, and thus the repetition of the scene from different angles does not ultimately discredit the narrator, unlike, for example, in Sérgio Bianchi's film *Chronically Unfeasible* (*Cronicamente inviável*, 1999), which uses a similar technique.

Rocket can still be interpreted as a reference to filmmakers/photographers of the past, when he takes a photograph of Li'l Zé and his gang, just as in the 1930s Benjamin Abraão famously photographed and filmed the bandit Lampião and his followers, unwittingly leading to his capture and subsequent death. This subject has been repeatedly exploited by filmmakers in Brazil as a form of self-reflexive commentary, in such works as *Memories of Banditry* (*Memórias do cangaço*, Paulo Gil Soares, 1965), *Corisco and Dadá* (*Corisco e Dadá*, Rosemberg Cariry, 1996) and *Perfumed Ball* (*Baile perfumado*, Paulo Caldas and Lirio Ferreira, 1997). Likewise in *City of God* the publication of the photograph of Li'l Zé and his gang on the front page of the *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper prompts the police to begin to hunt them down. The police do not kill Li'l Zé but they force him into an extortion racket and take his money, making him vulnerable to the gang of Runts, who shoot him dead in a 'Soviet attack'. Thus, indirectly, the camera becomes the murderer of the object that it captures, analogous to a

gun, as has been extensively studied in film theory.¹²

The self-reflexive position of Rocket is what in fact guarantees the realist quality of the performances of the actors. Indeed, the highly polished, exquisite dialogues in the film, which draw on the very best of the novel, would not be possible if the narrator did not take on the didactic function of presenting and explaining the characters and their stories. Stripped to the bare essentials, the speech has none of the superfluous information common in film dialogues, which is intended to contextualize the speakers. Rocket, who, unlike the other characters, is not in a hurry, has all the time in the world to explain, in voice-overs, how drug dealing is organized in the *favela*, even providing a glossary of the hierarchy of the drug business, from the 'look out' to the 'manager'. This is an example of didactic, ironic and good-humoured self-reflexivity, as created by Jorge Furtado, in his short film *Island of Flowers* (*Ilha das Flores*, 1989), which led to an entire school and today is regularly used in TV series such as *City of Men* (*Cidade dos homens*), inspired by the film *City of God*.

The essential speech of the characters, resulting from their ignorance of educated norms and the creative lack of awareness with which they express prejudices and clichés, brings to the fore the childlike innocence of these serial murderers, rapists and mutilators. This for me is the most moving reality that emanates from *City of God*. The extreme skill in the use of linguistic devices in the novel, and cinematic techniques in the film, is directed towards avoiding an interruption of the utopia that would put an end to history. Although aimless, these armed children, who were born to kill many people and die young, are the essence of Brazil's contemporary history, and probably that of many other countries.

CHAPTER SIX

THE URBAN DYSTOPIA

Film

The Trespasser (*O invasor*, Beto Brant, 2002)

THE URBAN DYSTOPIA

'*The Trespasser* is ... the portrait ... of Brazil trapped in a moral and social cul-de-sac.' This phrase, extracted from Neusa Barbosa's essay in the press release for *The Trespasser*, summarizes the film's intention to reveal a 'chronically unfeasible' country, to cite the title of Sérgio Bianchi's film (*Chronically Unfeasible/Cronicamente inviável*, 1999). It is easy to verify the effectiveness of such a proposal through the reactions of the critics. Acknowledging *The Trespasser*, as I do myself, as one of the best recent Brazilian productions, most of them were ready to confirm its power to reveal a national situation. Walter Salles, for example, wrote that *The Trespasser* shows the 'Brazilian social structure upside down. Wherever you look it is Brazil, unveiled by a camera held in a radical, organic way by director of photography Toca Seabra.'¹ Mario Sergio Conti, in turn, identified the very structure of the film with that of Brazilian society, stating that:

The script follows a general idea with a long tradition in Brazilian art: the tension between centre and periphery, captured in the heart of underdevelopment. This tension, in the film, leads to the investigation of an increasingly visible aspect of contemporary Brazil, which is the extra-legality of capitalism.²

Luiz Zanin Oricchio also considered the film's main revelation to be 'the predatory character of capitalism Brazilian style.'³ My purpose here is not to evaluate the judgement that the film supposedly conveys about Brazil, but rather to ask: What does *The Trespasser* actually reveal about the country? How far can a fiction film be taken as evidence of the ethical condition of a real place? And is the country in the film really Brazil?

Document and fiction, conflicting elements as well as basic prerogatives of cinema, constitute the main problem in relation to this film as much as its key. Let us begin with the subject-matter, which seems so convincing as a denunciation of Brazil's moral decadence. Although set

in a scenario entirely recognizable as contemporary Brazil, the film is not based on a real story but on a fictional idea by Beto Brant's faithful collaborator, novelist Marçal Aquino, and turned into a screenplay by Aquino, Brant and Renato Ciasca. Two of the protagonists, the engineers Ivan and Gilberto, are presented as prominent figures of the São Paulo business class. Some of their actions, such as the payment of a bribe to a government officer – a transaction vaguely mentioned, the aim of which is not explained – are easily identifiable with similar events that proliferate in Brazilian political life. Others, such as keeping a deluxe brothel and hiring a professional killer to eliminate their third partner, Estêvão, cannot be immediately connected with specific facts, and their accumulation on the character of Gilberto suggests the usual devices used to shape a villain in a fiction film.

A third protagonist interacts with Ivan and Gilberto, Anísio, the professional killer and the 'trespasser' of the film's title, brilliantly performed by singer and composer Paulo Miklos. His 'trespassing' derives from his being a man from the *favela* who, after carrying out his contract killing, decides to mingle with the men who commissioned him, blackmailing them until he succeeds in being upgraded to their social class. What could be deemed 'realist' about such a character? Marcelo Coelho made an interesting observation in this respect:

If I am associating [the character of Anísio] with ETs and animation characters, this is because in some way Paulo Miklos's performance, pitch and style are not really a caricature, but intentionally unrealistic. No, unrealistic is also not the word. Anísio looks real, but real like a pop painting, like an Andy Warhol work; it is as if he were lit by a fluorescent light.⁴

In my view, it is not Miklos's performance that is unrealistic, but the very character he plays. As we know, capitalist societies in general, and the Brazilian one in particular, are structured on exclusion. The poor in these societies, even if they succeed in becoming rich through drug dealing and other crimes, are prevented from climbing the social ladder by the sophisticated defence mechanisms of the ruling classes, which include the support of the police and the army. Even *favela* artists, who come to prominence through the legitimate exercise of their talent, are confronted with barriers within their own communities, ravaged by gang wars. An eloquent example here is the rapper Sabotage, the great revelation in the cast of *The Trespasser*, who was murdered soon after the opening of the film as a result of an ongoing gang war. Characters like Anísio are, therefore, very rare beyond the fictional universe, and I will attempt to demonstrate that his origins are to be found in genre cinema rather than in the crime chronicle.

In addition, it is worth mentioning a fourth more discreet, but equally central character in the film: Marina, the daughter of Estêvão, the major shareholder of the construction company, who is murdered together with his wife on the orders of his two other partners. Marina is young, attractive, but alienated to the point of automatism, thus becoming easy prey to her parents' murderer, who seduces her and takes her on a continuous round of bars, drugs and clubs. Fictitious though her character may seem, her relationship with the murderer proved to be a kind of premonition of a new social phenomenon (or disease). Soon after the film was released, a rich businessman and his wife were murdered in São Paulo by the delinquent boyfriend of their daughter. A similar case occurred more recently in Rio de Janeiro involving a Shell executive and his wife, turning this kind of crime into a symptom of our times. Nevertheless, besides the astonishing similarities between Marina's story and those two subsequent real cases, such as the daughters' attending parties just after the double murders and their involvement with drugs, there are also significant differences. A notable one is the fact that the real-life crime, at least in the São Paulo case, was commissioned by the daughter herself, confirming her active role in opposition to Marina's passivity in *The Trespasser*. Another difference is that the murderer in the real São Paulo case, a young man of poor origin, was immediately imprisoned and removed from society, in contrast to the film's trespasser, a winner who takes possession of his victims' property and their daughter.

The importance of such details will be examined below. Meanwhile, let us summarize the three basic types of material contained in the film's subject-matter. First, the allegorical example extracted from the real political scene, garnished with fictitious elaboration. Second, the imaginary situation of a *favela* criminal allowed to ascend the social scale. Finally, the social analysis later confirmed by real-life events.

Now let us examine the modes through which these different types of narrative material, which include the contemporary political scene, the fiction and the critique, can produce not only the usual illusionist reality effect but also the impression of revealing the reality of a country. Even though the fictional material predominates, it does not impair the documentary effect, suggesting that this derives not from the story but from the way it is told. A closer look at the narrative technique of *The Trespasser* may therefore offer the key to the film's impact.



Snapshots of the four-minute sequence-shot in which the logic of capitalist exploitation is explained in *The Trespasser*. In the background we can see the nanny Gilberto is furtively flirting with, and building foreman Cicero.

The document

In the film, the most effective way in which fiction is given the status of reality is, obviously, the use of real locations. From the first image to the last the set is insistently characterized as the city of São Paulo. Phrases like 'Take the 23' (or the 23 de Maio Avenue, an important São Paulo artery) are duly accompanied by long tracking shots through the Anhangabaú and Ibirapuera tunnels, along the Dr Arnaldo flyover, Paulista Avenue, the several *marginais* (or riverside expressways) and Águas Espraiadas Avenue (a newly constructed road which dissected a huge *favela*, the remains of which are still visible on either side of it).⁵ These are geographically coherent itineraries, which link the different city zones and are easily recognizable to those who are familiar with São Paulo and plausible to the foreign viewer. The contextualization of the plot in the city of São Paulo is reinforced by multiple tracking shots through the city suburbs, capturing the populace in their daily activities in front of their houses, shops and bars.

The locations are also emphatically real even in the interior shots. Bars, nightclubs and even a leisure centre (such as Body One, in the Vila Madalena district, which appears here in a case of discreet product placement) are real, identifiable premises, into which the camera, often in sequence-shots, penetrates from the outside to indicate the spatial continuity. This is what happens, for example, in the scene in the Liberdade district, in which the camera, coming from the nocturnal street with its typical Japanese lanterns, enters a karaoke bar with East Asian customers and an amateur singer, reproducing a typical São Paulo scene.

The sequence-shots and the deep-focus cinematography, with their obedience to real time and space, as well as natural lighting and the hand-held camera used to create the spontaneity of the newsreel, are employed



in various moments to bind cast and locations together and give the impression that the fiction emerges spontaneously from a real context. An example is the long four-minute sequence-shot in which, in a discussion, Gilberto outlines his worldview to Ivan. During the conversation the camera turns rapidly, as if following the character's unexpected movements, to catch in the background a nanny that Gilberto is furtively flirting with, and then, in a reversing pan, building foreman Cícero at the door of the construction site. Gilberto says:

This is how the world is, old man. Cícero may have a stupid face. But if need be he becomes a beast. ... In reality, these folks want your car, your position, your money, your clothes. They want to fuck your wife, Ivan. They are just waiting for a chance. This is what we are going to do to Estêvão: we will take advantage of our opportunity before he does the same.

The sexy nanny and the oppressed building foreman, although obviously played by actors, are shown as integral parts of the real city in the background, upon which the protagonists from the upper class are superimposed in the foreground. The logic of capitalist exploitation in the fictional plot is thus presented as the logic of the real city.

An element that characterizes the cast as an extension of the documentary cityscape is the use of the accent and vocabulary of the São Paulo middle classes, as well as those of the drug and crime gangs from the *favelas*. These details are aptly combined with the rap, rock and hip-hop music of local artists Paulo Miklos, Sabotage, Pavilhão 9 and Tolerância Zero. The construction of Miklos's vocabulary, which included the contribution of Sabotage himself, was particularly effective as a realist reproduction of *favela* slang.

These contextualizing elements bring to the fore the ugly, dirty, inharmonious and awkward aspects of the city, confirming *The Trespasser* as the recent chapter in a certain current of São Paulo cinema, which emerged with the so-called 'Marginal Cinema' of Rogério Sganzerla in the 1960s and continued with Carlos Reichenbach's films in the 1970s. Interestingly enough, this cinema, identified as it always has been with a specific geography and aesthetics (or anti-aesthetics), was always divided into two strands, both stemming from the São Paulo Boca do Lixo (literally, 'Garbage Mouth', the red-light district where film production companies were located): the semi-documentary production of filmmakers such as Ozualdo Candeias and the outspokenly fantastic strand of a primitivist such as José Mojica Marins, aka Coffin Joe. And since Sganzerla's time this production has taken the form of a self-reflexive, citation cinema, resulting in the 1980s in a certain postmodern current, also derived from the Boca do Lixo cinema, but more akin to artifice, studio, cartoon and cinephilia, such as the films by Guilherme de Almeida Prado, Wilson Barros and Chico Botelho.

Beto Brant and his team's output is a combination of these elements, and we will see how, in *The Trespasser*, documentary images of the disorderly, polluted, ugly city become the source of horror fantasies.

The rotten side

The Trespasser is the product of a recent trend in Brazilian literature intimately connected with the cinema, to which novelist Marçal Aquino belongs. This literature, the most influential precursor of which is arguably the work of Rubem Fonseca, specializes in crime-genre narrative. As well as for *The Trespasser*, Beto Brant turned to the crime thriller for his two previous feature films, both also based on Aquino's novels and eloquently entitled *The Killers* (*Os matadores*, 1997) and *Friendly Fire* (*Ação entre amigos*, 1998). Thus *The Trespasser* is connected to genre from the outset.

It is recognized that genre, both in literature and cinema, is an expression of the *Zeitgeist*. Even though made up of rules that are repeated from work to work, a genre's boundaries are fluid, being constantly reshaped according to contemporary phenomena, thus ensuring its survival through time. São Paulo, as a peripheral, chaotic metropolis, typical of late capitalism, provides the ideal setting for the updating of the crime thriller, with its typical mixture of blackmail, conspiracy, greed, murder and general pessimism.

The German abstract-expressionist artist Anselm Kiefer gave the title of 'Lilith' to his series of huge paintings based on photos of São Paulo city,

seen in all its monstrosity from its highest skyscraper, the Itália building. The title refers to the demonic goddess of Hebrew mythology, Adam's first wife, whose occupation was to ruin men and slaughter new-born babies. *The Trespasser* also leans towards the expressionist style, as far as expressionism, with its exaggerations, deformations, paroxysms and contrasts, favours the development of the crime-thriller genre. Originating in the periods of crisis around the First World War, European expressionism instituted urban chaos as the epicentre of fear, a feature later re-elaborated by the film noir, which reflected the influence of European immigrants in the United States during the Second World War.

The expressionist city, with its crowds of anonymous, solitary souls, is the home of automata or 'docile subjects', to use Jonathan Crary's terminology, typical of modernity. The epitome of expressionist modernity in cinema is the somnambulist Cesare, the protagonist of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (*Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1920), who, under Caligari's diabolic spell, becomes a murderer. In *The Trespasser*, the 'docile subject' is Marina, hypnotized by the repetitive rhythm of techno music and sedated by drink and drugs, who becomes a body devoid of 'political force', to use Crary's words once more, falling under the spell of her parents' assassin.⁶ The proof that this character, although echoing Brazilian reality, also incorporates genre elements, is precisely her automatism. In the real story that occurred in São Paulo, as pointed out above, the woman was the crime's originator, while in the film she is reduced to a passive role. She thus acquires the features both of the expressionist automaton and of the misogyny prevailing in the crime genre, where the mind and the action are male attributes.

Music, combined with music-video techniques, is the element of fashion employed to update the genre. In a typical music video, images do not have their own meaning, but are also 'automata' in as much as they follow the hypnotic pulsation of the music, thus preventing concentration and comprehension and favouring diversion, distraction and dispersion. In *The Trespasser*, the combination of quick cut, artificial lighting, cold colours (especially green), grainy exposure and shock montage, accompanying songs of an often frenetic beat, is aimed at deforming and fragmenting the object and ultimately negating the objective real.

São Paulo, with its social contradictions apparent even in its wealthy quarters, the awkwardness of which betrays the misery that inhabits their fringes, provides the ideal set for the destabilizing intervention of the music video, which reduces the documentary surface to fragments. Such a technique resembles the structure of the romantic fantastic tale,

in which the apparently stable bourgeois reality is disrupted by the sudden emergence of a ghostly, supernatural dimension, i.e. a hidden reality. Here the sequence-shot, usually so faithful to reality, acquires an opposite function with the camera mimicking the protagonist's trespassing movements. The violence with which the camera, coming from the exterior, penetrates private, intimate realms, unveiling the characters' inner reality, causes the vertigo of fear typical of suspense, while destabilizing the documentary settings. The often nocturnal ambience of this other dimension, in contrast to the daylight bathing the world of appearances, is a clear element of genre inherited from the noir and expressionist styles.

The unexpected appearance of Anísio in the bourgeois universe causes the crack on the surface of the illusory real, through which emerges that other, chaotic, cruel dimension, presented as 'truer' in the film. 'Welcome to the rotten side of life,' Gilberto tells Ivan after they hire the killer, thus evidencing the bi-dimensional conception of the world which governs the film. Finding no exact parallel in the real universe of a São Paulo *favela*, which he supposedly represents, Anísio bears more resemblance to a Mephistophelean demon. He is short, acne-scarred, hoarse, with a big nose, in short, the embodiment of the grotesque. However, just like Mephistopheles, he casts a spell over people through his cunning. Anísio could be seen as a kind of 'return of the repressed', which, for Freud, may occur in the individual as well as in the social sphere. His grotesque figure could be translated as the underdeveloped portion which Third World ruling classes do their best to hide, but which springs up when least expected through the 'scars of repression' on the thin crust of their world.⁷

Although the documentary techniques in *The Trespasser* aim to naturalize the actions of this diabolic character, they would be hardly conceivable in a real-life context. Anísio, odd as he is, invades a private company without identifying himself and, instead of being stopped, he inspires respectful behaviour among all the staff and even the Rottweiler dog trained to attack intruders like him. His immediate familiarity with this Cerberus, which lets itself be petted like a lamb, suggests an affinity between him and the canine race, as if Anísio himself were 'the dog', a synonym of the devil in Portuguese and other languages. The metaphor is developed into a symbol when Anísio gives Marina a little dog to be the girl's guard in her constant trance of drugs and clubbing. Thus Anísio's beastly nature becomes apparent, as usual in the horror tale, in which malign characters are often identified with vampires, hyenas, spiders, and so on - not to mention the literary versions in which Mephisto displays a 'dog's face'.⁸



Anísio, the Mephistophelean character who identifies with the Rottweiler dog and manipulates Marina through his cunning in *The Trespasser*.

In an article about Guimarães Rosa's novel *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, Davi Arrigucci Jr notes the kinship between the devil and animals such as the horse and the python, and their power of 'mixing themselves in everything', which, in the novel, results in 'inversions, mixtures and reversibilities of various kinds'.⁹ In *The Trespasser*, Anísio, the diabolic keeper of the knowledge, penetrates and disorganizes the bourgeois world, mixing up the public and the private, rulers and subjects, the rich and the poor.

As has been the case since Goethe, the spectator is led to identify and sympathize with the Faustian character, namely Ivan. This is achieved through the skilful manipulation of the point of view. In the novel *The Trespasser*, Ivan is the first-person narrator, which facilitates his configuration as a hero ruined by a fault of character. But in the film, thanks to the possibilities of the medium, there are multiple points of view, which vary

according to the alternation between documentary and genre techniques. Let us consider the example of the opening sequence, in which the pact with the devil takes place.

Ivan and Gilberto enter a bar in the poor periphery of São Paulo and face the camera, positioned in Anísio's subjective point of view. Anísio is thus not visible; we only hear his voice asking for payment for the murder he has been commissioned to carry out. Ivan's face, looking mutely at the camera, is the sheer expression of horror. The dark make-up around his eyelashes enhances his wide-open eyes on his serious face, his low chin forcing his look upwards and creating a contrast between his red cheeks and the whiteness of the sides of his face. At this moment, as in many others in the film, he is the pure expressionist man, who 'does not look, but sees', in the famous definition by Kasimir Edschmidt.¹⁰ As in the old expressionist films, in which big wide-open eyes obsessively occupy the centre of the screen, Ivan's deep eyes seem to reach beyond the object they are looking at, producing a 'metaphysical vision', which is the exteriorization of his inner world. Ivan's visions of horror, provoked by his feelings of guilt and regret, will contaminate the whole narrative from the beginning. After signing the pact with Mephisto, the Faustian character will spend the rest of his days contorting in 'pain, affliction, moans, tears and tremors', as the Faustian state of mind has been described.¹¹

Ivan's trance, which alternates with moments of clairvoyance of an equally expressionist kind, begins in the next sequence when Gilberto drags him to a luxurious brothel, which is later revealed to be his own property. The music-video technique is then put into action, in a quick editing of crooked, grainy shots, bombarded by green and red lights.¹² Ivan, pushed into the arms of a prostitute, is led into a bedroom and at this point the shots, in a temporal zigzag, alternate past, present and future images, including one of him arriving home and finding his wife asleep, a fact which will only occur later when he actually returns home. This is a



Ivan's expressionist look in *The Trespasser*.

kind of premonitory flash-forward both of Ivan and the film itself, conferring on Ivan's expression of his inner world the status of reality.

Madness and a persecution complex, typical ingredients of the expressionist *Weltanschauung*, are recycled here through this visionary character who suddenly 'discovers the truth' about his partner and friend and is convinced that he will be the next victim. Thus the sequences in which Ivan is present are often the representation of a disorderly world, with quick, discontinuous shots, cold, artificial lighting, an unstable camera and grainy images, reinforcing the character's absolute isolation in the city. An example is the scene in which Ivan, after buying a gun, rolls and groans in a hotel bed, devoured by fear and guilt, conveniently bathed in green light. Near the end of the film, the scene in which he walks along the deserted, nocturnal avenue, again enveloped in green light and flanked by shapes of shacks, is reminiscent of the famous picture 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch. This foundational expressionist work portrays a solitary human being, crossing a straight bridge through the meandering landscape, his thin body like a flame, his head reduced to a skull and dominated by the orifices of the eyes and the mouth forming an 'Oh!' of sheer terror.

Thus fear and death, extrapolating the supposed attributes of a decadent Brazil, fuse into a mythic master narrative, of which *The Trespasser* is only a recent version.

The mixture and the modern

One of the best and most original devices employed in the film for the updating of the crime-thriller genre is to combine the trespasser's hypnotic power over people and animals with the lysergic effect of the music-video montage. Thus the grotesque figure of the demon becomes the complete expression of late capitalism, and the union between Anísio and Marina a merging between archaic and modern.

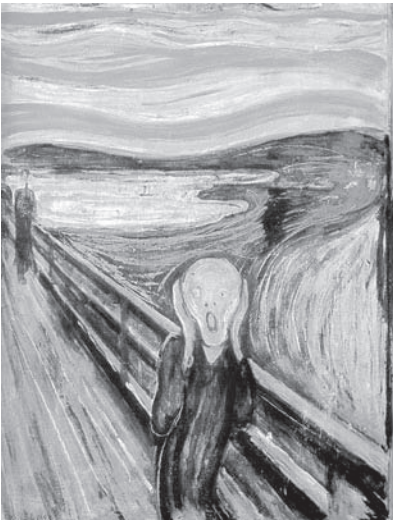
As befits his Mephistophelean character, Anísio takes Marina on hallucinogenic tours through the impoverished São Paulo suburbs. But instead of a magic carpet flying over exotic countries, we have tracking shots on land, collecting documentary snapshots in sequences which are nothing but music videos of Sabotage's songs about the miserable Southern Zone and its 'difficult daily life'. At this point, thanks to the jump cuts, the *favela* appears as a natural continuation of the rich centre. The breaking of geographic boundaries caused by the brusque cuts results in striking and entirely recognizable evidence of the state of aesthetic communion among Brazilian urban social classes, although, of course, they still remain economically apart. Marina just smiles at this mixed universe where everything seems equivalent and all is diversion.

As a form of closure to his revenge, the trespasser finally parks the car on a deserted hilltop in the poor periphery. A very similar, if not the same, location is presented earlier in the film, in a scene showing Gilberto, Ivan and Estêvão's father examining the car where the bodies of Estêvão and his wife have been found and from where they have just been carried away by the mortuary van; in the background, a song by Tolerância Zero screams: 'Welcome to the nightmare of reality.' Marina, arriving at the same place, feels slightly frightened and asks whether it is dangerous. Anísio replies, 'No, this is the *favela's* paradise', pointing to the landscape below which is no more than a few pale blinking lights. Being thus reassured, and after snorting cocaine, she delivers herself to sex with the trespasser.

This horrific scene, in which a murderer plays with his victim's total alienation, summarizes the dystopia to which the metropolis's 'paradise' is finally reduced. Anísio here could almost be seen as a representative of the oppressed who, through cunning, seizes the power from his oppressors. He does indeed seem at times to demonstrate awareness of his social class's political position, for example, in the brilliant and most documentary-like scene of the film in which he imposes on Ivan and Gilberto the inventive and political art of rapper Sabotage. A black, tall, skinny, gap-toothed young man, singing a rap in an engineering office, Sabotage is the irruption of nocturnal reality into the illusory daylight. However, Anísio is for the most part acting single-handedly and in his own interest, with no profit for his peers, being no more than one of those resentful characters described by Ismail Xavier as the successors, in contemporary Brazilian cinema, of the social bandits of the past.¹³

Ivan, persecuted and swallowed up by the monstrous metropolis, where betrayal lurks in every corner, regrets the loss of the utopian dream. In a scene at the seaside, succeeding the one of Anísio and Marina in the *favela* 'paradise', he enjoys a provisional peace with his lover, who soon after will be unmasked as Gilberto's spy. He then tells her that this Edenic sea was once the site of the pleasures of his youth, in a mythical past now definitively buried.

At the end of the film, Marina sleeps with the pet dog given to her by the demon, after a night of clubbing, group sex and drugs. Meanwhile, Anísio and Gilberto, who have become partners and are conspiring at Marina's place, receive Ivan who arrives handcuffed in a police car, his face even more startled when he realizes that he has been delivered into the hands of those he was escaping from. It is the end of the Faustian utopia and the dystopia come true, in a city and a country dominated by evil.



Ivan, haunted by paranoia and a persecution complex, is reminiscent of the character in Edvard Munch's 'The Scream'.

Conclusion

At this point, we may perhaps return to the initial questions about the revelatory character of the film, its value as a document and its references to Brazil, and suggest some answers.

The revelatory character of *The Trespasser* does not seem to lie where it is normally found, that is in the main plot. Although suspicious deals between construction companies and the government are customary in Brazil, such an event is only vaguely mentioned in the film, being nothing more than a pretext for the main action of the double homicide. Realist fiction privileges the detail, while the generality observed in *The Trespasser* is typical, precisely, of the generic art. Murders by commission, treachery, blackmail and Mephistophelean characters are equally typical of the generic art and cannot be read as revealing of a real, single country. Therefore, in my view, the pessimistic conclusion that Brazil is an 'unfeasible country', to return to Sérgio Bianchi's term, on the basis of this storyline, is not justified.

Nevertheless, the way in which the critics as well as the publicists themselves immediately qualify the film's atmosphere of amorality as typically Brazilian calls for further reflection. Indeed, it could be argued that the impact caused by the film indicates a revelatory quality. However, I tend to believe that the novelty here is of an aesthetic kind: the representation of the protected universe of the ruling classes permeated by the ugliness and abjection that surround it. The fact that, in the film, the aesthetic contamination passes for an ethical diagnosis of Brazil as a whole is due, in my view, to the skill with which genre elements are articulated with the document. As to the city's periphery invading and taking over the rich centre, be it individually or collectively, this is for the moment a highly improbable scenario in Brazil. Thus the trespasser himself appears as the least realist and most genre-like character of the film.

The abundance of documentary images enables the audience to recognize a country and, more specifically, a city. Scenes like the musical intervention by the rapper Sabotage constitute precious documentary evidence, on celluloid, of a key moment in São Paulo's cultural history. But the organization of these documentary images and songs by means of the fashion element of music video, far from a condemnation *in toto* of the country, tends to insert contemporary Brazil into a globalized culture. A part of this cultural output, including the political raps by Sabotage and others played in the film, is shown from an entirely positive perspective. Globalization is indeed the very content of Sabotage's lyrics, which say, for example: 'I don't know what kills more/ the hunger, the gun or Ebola/



The rapper Sabotage makes an impressive appearance in *The Trespasser*.

who suffers more/ the blacks from here or from Angola.' The element of fashion contributed greatly to the film's success, and it is not just a coincidence that the rap 'Quem que caguetou?' ('Who's the Squealer?'), by Tejo, Black Alien and Speed, included in the film's soundtrack, was turned into a music-video advertisement for the Japanese car Nissan, recently shown in several European countries.

Finally, *The Trespasser* is a fiction film, but fiction can be even more revealing than documentary through critical analysis. This is what happens on the level of the film form, which updates the crime thriller with the introduction of music-video language as a privileged space for the representation of contemporary alienation. In this sense, the character of Marina, living exclusively for entertainment and fuelled by drugs and clubbing, in a time devoid of political proposals, is probably the main revelation of a symptom of late capitalism. However, this is of course a transnational situation.

'There is a collective therapy to be performed on the victims of depoliticization,' says Fredric Jameson in relation to our post-utopian era.¹⁴ This is one possible message conveyed by *The Trespasser*. Another is that the devil is part of a universal imaginary from which cinema can still extract good profit.

NOTES

Foreword

1. An effect of extreme realism, obtained, paradoxically, via symbolic means in opposition to the realistic treatment of external reality, was the object of a famous analysis by Erich Auerbach of the work of Baudelaire. See 'Les fleurs du mal di Baudelaire e il sublime', in Erich Auerbach, *Da Montaigne a Proust*, trans Giorgio Alberti (Bari: De Donato, 1970), pp 192–221.

Introduction

1. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992).
2. Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
3. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London/New York: Verso, 1991).
4. Jameson, 'Nostalgia for the Present', in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p 287.
5. 'Diversões eletrônicas' (or 'electronic pleasures') is the title of one of Arrigo Barnabé's famous songs of that time.
6. Glauber Rocha has directed a so-called *trilogia da terra* (or 'land trilogy'), composed of *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (*Black God, White Devil*, 1964), *Terra em transe* (*Land in Anguish*, 1967) and *A idade da terra* (*The Age of the Earth*, 1981).
7. Cf. Lúcia Nagib, 'Going Global: The Brazilian Scripted Film', in Sylvia Harvey (ed), *Trading Culture: Global Traffic and Local Cultures in Film and Television* (Eastleigh: John Libbey, 2006).

Chapter 1. Images of the Sea

1. *Sertão*: the dry and poverty-stricken hinterlands of the Brazilian northeast.
2. *Cordel* literature is a kind of popular poetry from the northeast of Brazil,

- often illustrated with wood-block prints and sold in pamphlet form.
3. A *cangaceiro* was a kind of social bandit from the Brazilian northeast, active mainly during the first half of the twentieth century. The activity of the *cangaceiros* is called *cangaço*. Corisco was a notorious member of the gang led by Lampião, the most legendary *cangaceiro* of all time.
 4. Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; London: BFI, 1995), p 118.
 5. Cf. Ismail Xavier, *Sertão-mar: Glauber Rocha e a estética da fome* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983), and, by the same author, *Allegories of Underdevelopment: Aesthetics and Politics in Modern Brazilian Cinema* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
 6. Ismail Xavier, 'Eldorado as Hell: Appropriations of the Imaginary of the Discovery', in John King, Ana López and Manuel Alvarado (eds), *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas* (London: BFI Publishing, 1993), pp 192–203.
 7. *Sertanejo*: the *sertão* man.
 8. '1964 – Glauber Rocha, Walter Lima Jr, David Neves, Leon Hirszman – *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol*', in Alex Viany, *O processo do Cinema Novo* (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 1999), p 62.
 9. Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, trans Samuel Putnam (London: Picador, 1995; first edition, University of Chicago Press, 1944), p 193.
 10. Roberto Ventura, *Folha explica Os sertões* (São Paulo: Publifolha, 2002), p 46.
 11. Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, p 20.
 12. Interview with Rosemberg Cariry in the press release of the film *Juazeiro – The New Jerusalem (Juazeiro – a nova Jerusalém, 2004)*.
 13. *Ibid.*
 14. Hélène Clastres, *Terra sem mal*, trans Renato Janine Ribeiro (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1978), pp 24ff.
 15. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Visão do paraíso* (São Paulo: Nacional, 1977), p 61.
 16. Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, p 243.
 17. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Visão do paraíso*, pp 156–7.
 18. Thomas More, *Utopia*. Accessible on the Internet at <http://www.d-holliday.com/tmore/utopia002.htm>.
 19. Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2000), pp 135–51.
 20. Américo Vespúcio, *Novo Mundo – as cartas que batizaram a América*. Presentation and notes by Eduardo Bueno (São Paulo: Planeta, 2003), p 116.
 21. Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa*, p 139.
 22. Ismail Xavier, *Sertão Mar – Glauber Rocha e a estética da fome*, p 73.
 23. Cf. Interviews in the extras of the DVD of *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol*, Prefeitura do Rio/Seleções DVD.

24. Glauber Rocha, 'Introdução', in *Revisão crítica do cinema brasileiro* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, edição do Espólio Glauber Rocha, 2003), p 36.
25. Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa*, p 150.
26. *Candomblé*: African-Brazilian religion, which worships deities called *orixás*.
27. *I Am Cuba* was shelved for decades and only relaunched in the early 1990s.
28. The negative stock utilized by the director of photography, Sergei Urusevsky, was provided by the Russian army, according to information given in the film *Soy Cuba – the Siberian Mammoth* (*Soy Cuba – o mamute siberiano*), a 2005 Brazilian documentary directed by Vicente Ferraz.
29. Besides this opening, there are other astonishing similarities between *Land in Anguish* and *I Am Cuba*, suggesting that Glauber might have seen this film in the period between *Black God, White Devil* and *Land in Anguish*, although I have not been able to confirm this hypothesis.
30. I am referring to Glauber's *trilogia da terra*, or 'land trilogy', which includes *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol*, *Terra em transe* and *A idade da terra*.
31. For this and the film's dialogue quoted here, see Daniela Thomas, Marcos Bernstein and Walter Salles, *Terra estrangeira* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1996).
32. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p 159.
33. Interview conducted by Helena Salem, in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 7 March 1996, p D1.
34. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, pp 181ff.
35. Interview conducted by Helena Salem.
36. 'O cinema brasileiro dos anos 90', interview with Ismail Xavier, in *Praga*, no. 9 (São Paulo: Hucitec), p 144.

Chapter 2. The Centre, the Zero and the Empty Utopia

1. See, for example, 'Tendências do cinema brasileiro atual', in *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, no. 18 (1999), pp 19–32.
2. On the desire for 'Brazilianness', see Walter Salles's interview with Jurandir Freire Costa, 'Um filme contra o Brasil indiferente', in *Folha de S. Paulo, Mais!*, 29 March 1998, pp 5–7.
3. Glauber Rocha, *Revolução do Cinema Novo* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2004), p 133.
4. Quoted in Lúcia Nagib, *Werner Herzog: o cinema como realidade* (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 1991), p 136.
5. Sandro Bernardi, 'Rossellini's Landscapes: Nature, Myth, History', in David Forgacs, Sarah Lutton and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (eds), *Roberto Rossellini: Magician of the Real* (London: BFI Publishing, 2001), p 51.
6. In the original, in German, in lower cases, without punctuation and in verse: 'hier stück geschichte/nur zehn pfennige/mauersteine aus Berlin/koppeln/bücher/fahnen/hemden, knöpfe/kommen sie heran/meine herrschaften, kaufen sie'. Cf. Jean-Luc Godard, *Allemagne neuf zéro: phrases (sorties d'un film)* (Paris: P.O.L., 1998), no page numbers.

7. Cf. Laura Mulvey, 'The Hole and the Zero: Godard's Visions of Femininity', in Laura Mulvey, *Fetishism and Curiosity* (Bloomington, Indianapolis and London: Indiana University Press/BFI, 1996).
8. Ismail Xavier uses the expression 'unexpected encounter' for similar events, in his chapter 'Brazilian Cinema in the 1990s: The Unexpected Encounter and the Resentful Character', in Lúcia Nagib (ed), *The New Brazilian Cinema* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2003).
9. Marilena Chauí, *Brasil: mito fundador e sociedade autoritária* (São Paulo: Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2001), p 8.
10. Gilberto Felisberto Vasconcellos, 'Capitalismo popular e privatização do imaginário', in *Folha de S. Paulo, Ilustrada*, 2 May 1998, pp 4-6.
11. Jean-Claude Bernardet, *O vóo dos anjos: Bressane, Sganzerla* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1991).
12. Cf. Ivana Bentes, 'The sertão and the favela in Contemporary Brazilian Film', in Lúcia Nagib (ed), *The New Brazilian Cinema*.
13. Cf. Fernão Pessoa Ramos, 'Humility, Guilt and Narcissism Turned Inside Out in Brazil's Film Revival', in Lúcia Nagib (ed), *The New Brazilian Cinema*.
14. Jean-Claude Bernardet, *Brasil em tempo de cinema* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1967).
15. See, in this sense, Michael Renov, 'Domestic Ethnography and the Construction of the "Other" Self', in Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (eds), *Collecting Visible Evidence* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
16. See Walter Salles's comments in the extras of the DVD of *Central Station* (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2002).
17. Cf. Ismail Xavier, 'Historical Allegory', in Toby Miller and Robert Stam (eds), *A Companion to Film Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).
18. Cf. Charles S. Peirce, *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic*, ed James Hoopes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
19. Cf. Ismail Xavier, *Sertão mar: Glauber Rocha e a estética da fome*.
20. Mulvey, *Fetishism and Curiosity*, p 85.
21. *Ibid.*, p 92.

Chapter 3. To Be or Not To Be a Cannibal

1. In the original: '*Essa capacidade de se ver como Outro – ponto de vista que é, talvez, o ângulo ideal de visão de si mesmo – parece-me a chave da antropofagia tupi-guarani.*' Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *A inconstância da alma selvagem e outros ensaios de antropologia* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2002), p 281.
2. The original title of Hans Staden's book reads: *True story and description of a land of naked, cruel savages, who eat human flesh, situated in the New World of America, which was unknown before and after Jesus Christ in the lands of Hessen, until the last two years, given that Hans Staden, from Homberg, Hessen, made its acquaintance through his own experience, and he now brings it to public knowledge through this printed work.* I used here the Brazilian edition: Mary Lou Paris and

- Ricardo Ohtake (eds), *Hans Staden: Primeiros registros escritos e ilustrados sobre o Brasil e seus habitantes*, trans Angel Bojadsen (São Paulo: Terceiro Nome, 1999).
3. Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2000), p 38.
 4. *Ibid.*, pp 92ff.
 5. Michel de Montaigne, *Os ensaios: livro I* (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2000), chapter xxxi, p 313. English version available at www.orst.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/montaigne/montaigne-essays-2.html.
 6. Frank Lestringant, *O canibal: grandeza e decadência* (Brasília: UnB, 1997), p 142.
 7. Cf. Christian Marouby, *Utopie et primitivisme: Essai sur l'imaginaire anthropologique à l'âge classique* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), pp 115ff.
 8. Montaigne, *Os ensaios: livro I*, p 309.
 9. Tzvetan Todorov, *Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), p 70.
 10. Oswald de Andrade, *A utopia antropofágica* (Rio de Janeiro: Globo, 1990), pp 10-11.
 11. An excellent analysis of Oswald's ideas can be found in Benedito Nunes, 'Antropofagia ao alcance de todos', in Oswald de Andrade, *A utopia antropofágica*.
 12. Oswald de Andrade, 'A crise da filosofia messiânica', *ibid.*, p 101.
 13. *Ibid.*
 14. Cf. Roberto Schwarz, 'A carroça, o bonde e o poeta modernista', in *Que horas são?* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987), p 24.
 15. See 'A filosofia canibal', Eduardo Viveiros de Castro interviewed by Rafael Cariello, in *Folha de S. Paulo, Mais!*, 21 August 2005, pp 5ff.
 16. Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, 'Cannibalism and Self-Cannibalism', in Randal Johnson and Robert Stam (eds), *Brazilian Cinema* (expanded edition) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp 82-3.
 17. *Ibid.*
 18. Cf. Ismail Xavier, *Allegories of Underdevelopment: Aesthetics and Politics in Modern Brazilian Cinema* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p 144.
 19. Cf. Randal Johnson, 'Cinema Novo and Cannibalism: *Macunaima*', in Johnson and Stam (eds), *Brazilian Cinema*, p 181.
 20. Currupira: a legendary forest dwarf, whose feet point backwards.
 21. *Feijoada*: black bean and pork stew.
 22. Quoted in Helena Salem, *Nelson Pereira dos Santos: o sonho possível do cinema brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1987), p 261.
 23. *Ibid.*, pp 257-8.
 24. A lamprey is an eel-like jawless fish, with a sucker mouth, horny teeth and a rasping tongue.

25. Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa*, p 159.
26. 'He who behaves as I do in France/ does much to his own advantage/ Hiding his most precious virtue/ And in view of these corrupt times, I think/ That your book would be even better/ In your barbarian America/ For whoever would criticize a little/ The country we should love/ Would find that Arctic France/ Has more monsters, I believe/ And is itself more uncivilized/ Than Antarctic France./ Those barbarians walk about quite naked,/ Whereas we walk about incognito,/ Powdered and masked. That strange nation/ Does not adopt an air of piety./ We scorn ours,/ We trick, sell and disguise it./ In their conduct, those barbarians/ Do not show as much intelligence as we do,/ But he who / whoever sees only the crowd/ Uses it merely to harm us.' Translation generously provided by Honor Aldred. For more comments on this poem, see Luís Madureira, 'Lapses in Taste: "Cannibal-Tropicalist" Cinema and the Brazilian Aesthetic of Underdevelopment', in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (eds), *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p 122.
27. Richard Peña, 'How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman', in Johnson and Stam (eds), *Brazilian Cinema*, p 193.
28. Edition used here is Jean de Léry, *Viagem à terra do Brasil*, trans and notes by Sérgio Milliet (Belo Horizonte/São Paulo: Itatiaia/Edusp, 1980).
29. The images of the French's suffering under Villegagnon are clearly inspired by Jean de Léry's account.
30. Quoted in Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa*, pp 53ff.
31. This information was obtained through a private talk with the director.
32. This information was obtained through a private talk with the singer and composer.
33. Luiz Alberto Pereira's statement was made in a seminar at the Centre for Cinema Studies, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 27 September 2000.
34. Cf. Robert Stam, 'Cabral and the Indians: Filmic Representations of Brazil's 500 years', in Lúcia Nagib (ed), *The New Brazilian Cinema*, pp 224-5. Stam is drawing on Luiz Alberto Pereira's interview with Paulo Santos Lima, 'Hans Staden mostra os dentes no cinema', *Folha de S. Paulo*, 17 March 2000.
35. Paris and Ohtake (eds), *Hans Staden*, pp 115-16.
36. *Ibid.*, p 115.

Chapter 4. The Black Paradise

1. The edition used here is Vinicius de Moraes, *Teatro em versos*, ed Carlos Augusto Calil (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995).
2. The edition used here is Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir', in Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 1998; first edition, 1948).

3. This detail was introduced, according to the film's pressbook, as a homage to Godard, who once said, about Camus' film, that Eurydice should have arrived in Rio by plane rather than boat, so she could see one of the world's most astonishing landscapes.
4. Cf. 'Vinicius de Moraes pede para fazer o seguinte comunicado aos artistas', in Vinicius de Moraes, *Teatro em versos*, p 113.
5. Vinicius de Moraes, 'Radar da batucada', in *Teatro em versos*, p 47.
6. *Ibid.*, p 109.
7. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir', p xxiv.
8. Robert Stam. *Tropical Multiculturalism: A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), p 168.
9. See 'Vinicius de Moraes pede para fazer o seguinte comunicado aos artistas', in Vinicius de Moraes, *Teatro em versos*.
10. Quoted in Stam, *Tropical Multiculturalism*, p 169.
11. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir', p ix.
12. *Ibid.*, p xii.
13. *Ibid.*, p xvii.
14. Quoted in José Castello, *Vinicius de Moraes: O poeta da paixão* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994), p 182.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p 49.
17. Stam, *Tropical Multiculturalism*, p 174.
18. *Orfeu Pressbook*.
19. *Ibid.*, pp 22-3.
20. Vinicius de Moraes, 'Radar da batucada', in *Teatro em versos*, p 48.
21. *Samba-enredo*: a narrative samba song performed by a samba school during carnival.
22. *Carioca* is applied to the natives of Rio de Janeiro.
23. *Rancho*: a group of people who parade during Epiphany. *Bloco*: a group of people in costume who dance and sing to the sound of carnival music. For the story of Hilário Jovino dos Santos, see Roberto Moura, *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Carioca, 1995), p 88.
24. Vinicius de Moraes, 'Radar da batucada', in *Teatro em versos*, p 54.
25. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir', p xxxii.
26. *Umbanda* and *macumba*: two syncretic African-Brazilian religious forms, combining several African religions with Catholic and spiritualist rites.

Chapter 5. An Interrupted Utopia

1. Roberto Schwarz, 'City of God', in *New Left Review* 12, November-December 2001, pp 102-12.
2. I have used here the first edition of the book: Paulo Lins, *Cidade de Deus* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997).

3. Antonio Candido, 'Dialética da malandragem', in *O discurso e a cidade* (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1993), p 9.
4. See Linda Williams, 'Discipline and Fun: Psycho and Postmodern Cinema', in Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (eds), *Reinventing Film Studies* (London: Arnold, 2000), pp 351-78.
5. See the chapter 'A Utopia de Thomas Morus', especially p 151, in Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *O índio brasileiro e a Revolução Francesa* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1976).
6. On the favela as a rural space, see Jane Souto de Oliveira and Maria Hortense Marcier, 'A palavra é: favela', in Alba Zaluar and Marcos Alvito (eds), *Um século de favela* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1998), p 90.
7. Cf. *Orfeu Pressbook*, pp 22-3.
8. Fernando Meirells told me an interesting detail about this song: it was written on the death of the composer's daughter, who was a cocaine addict.
9. Cf. Ismail Xavier, 'Brazilian Cinema in the 1990s: The Unexpected Encounter and the Resentful Character', in Lúcia Nagib (ed), *The New Brazilian Cinema*, p 56.
10. Zuenir Ventura, *Cidade partida* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997).
11. Robert Stam, *O espetáculo interrompido* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1981).
12. See, for example, Paul Virillio, *Guerre et cinéma* (Paris: l'Etoile/Cahiers du Cinéma, 1991).

Chapter 6. The Urban Dystopia

1. Walter Salles, 'Centro e periferia se misturam em *O invasor*', *Folha de S. Paulo, Ilustrada*, 16 February 2002, p E10.
2. Mario Sergio Conti, 'Estilhaços viram um todo multifacetado', *Folha de S. Paulo, Ilustrada*, 5 April 2002, p E10.
3. Luiz Zanin Oricchio, *Cinema de novo: um balanço crítico da retomada* (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 2003), p 181.
4. Marcelo Coelho, 'A história do bandido que roubou o filme inteiro', *Folha de S. Paulo, Ilustrada*, 14 April 2002, p E6.
5. This road was subsequently renamed Jornalista Roberto Marinho.
6. Cf. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2000), p 74.
7. Cf. Sigmund Freud, 'The Return of the Repressed', in *Moses and Monotheism: An Outline of Psycho-Analysis and Other Works* (London: Vintage, 2001).
8. J.W. Smeed, *Faust in Literature* (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), p 34.
9. Davi Arrigucci Jr, 'O jagunço cansado', in Ana Pizarro (ed), *América Latina: palavra, literatura e cultura. Vanguarda e Modernidade*, vol. 3 (Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 1995), p 449.
10. Quoted in Rudolf Kurz, *Expressionismus und Film* (Zurich: Hans Rohr, 1965).
11. Smeed, *Faust in Literature*.
12. Beto Brant has revealed to me that here the lighting is an effect produced in

the lab.

13. Cf. Ismail Xavier, 'Brazilian Cinema in the 1990s', in Lúcia Nagib (ed), *The New Brazilian Cinema*.
14. Fredric Jameson, 'Utopianism and Anti-Utopianism', in *The Seeds of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

FILMOGRAPHY

CHAPTER ONE

Deus e o diabo na terra do sol (Black God, White Devil)

Brazil, 1964

DIRECTOR: Glauber Rocha

PRODUCER: Luiz Augusto Mendes

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: Jarbas Barbosa and Glauber Rocha

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION: Agnaldo Azevedo

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: Paulo Gil Soares and Walter Lima Júnior

ORIGINAL STORY: Glauber Rocha

SCRIPT: Glauber Rocha and Walter Lima Júnior

ART DIRECTORS: Glauber Rocha and Paulo Gil Soares

PHOTOGRAPHY: Waldemar Lima

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN: Paulo Gil Soares

TITLES: Lygia Pape

SOUND DESIGN: Agnaldo Azevedo and Geraldo José

WOOD-BLOCK PRINTS: Calazans Neto

POSTER: Rogério Duarte

CONTINUITY: Walter Lima Júnior

EDITING: Rafael Justo Valverde

MUSIC: Heitor Villa-Lobos

SONGS: Sérgio Ricardo and Glauber Rocha

LOCATIONS: Monte Santo, Feira de Santana, Salvador, Canché (Cocorobó) and Canudos, in Bahia

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION COMPANY: Copacabana Filmes

BW, 35mm, 125 mins

CAST: Othon Bastos (Corisco), Maurício do Valle (Antônio das Mortes), Geraldo del Rey (Manuel), Yoná Magalhães (Rosa), Lídio Silva (Sebastião), Sônia dos Humildes (Dadá), Maria Olívia Rebouças, Marrom (Cego Júlio), João Gama (the priest), Roque Santos, Regina Rosemburgo, Billy Davis, Antônio Pinto (the 'colonel'), Milton Rosa (Moraes), Mário Gusmão and inhabitants of Monte Santo.

Terra em transe (Land in Anguish)

Brazil, 1967

DIRECTOR: Glauber Rocha

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Zelito Vianna

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: Luiz Carlos Barreto, Carlos Diegues, Raimundo Wanderley
and Glauber Rocha

ORIGINAL STORY AND SCRIPT: Glauber Rocha

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: Antônio Calmon and Moisés Kendler

MANAGER: Tácito Al Quintas

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Luiz Carlos Barreto

CAMERA: Dib Lutfi

CAMERA ASSISTANT: José Ventura

STILLS: Luiz Carlos Barreto and Lauro Escorel Filho

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK: José Medeiros

ELECTRICIANS: Sandoval Dória and Vitalino Muratori

ENGINEERING: Aloysio Vianna

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN: Paulo Gil Soares

PERIOD COSTUMES: Clóvis Bornay

WARDROBE: Danusa Leão and Guilherme Guimarães

EDITING: Eduardo Escorel

EDITING ASSISTANT AND TITLES: Mair Tavares

NEGATIVE EDITING: Paula Gracel

SOUND EDITING: Sérgio Ricardo

CONDUCTOR: Carlos Monteiro de Souza

SINGERS: Gal Costa and Sérgio Ricardo

MUSIC: *O guarani*, by Carlos Gomes; *Bachianas 3 and 6*, by Heitor Villa-Lobos;
overture of *Otello*, by Verdi; *Canto negro Alué* of Bahia Candomblé; *Samba de
favela* of Rio de Janeiro

LOCATIONS: Rio de Janeiro and Duque de Caxias, Rio de Janeiro state

CO-PRODUCTION: Mapa Filmes and Difilm

DISTRIBUTION: Difilm

LAB: Líder Cinematográfica

SOUND STUDIO: Cinematográficas Herbert Richers

BW, 35mm, 115 mins

CAST: Paulo Autran (Porfírio Díaz), Glaube Rocha (Sara), Jardel Filho (Paulo
Martins), José Lewgoy (Felipe Vieira), Paulo Gracindo (Julio Fuentes), Paulo
César Pereio (student), Hugo Carvana (Álvaro), Danusa Leão (Sílvia), Modesto
de Souza (senator), Mário Lago (capitão), Flávio Migliaccio (a common man),
Thelma Reston (Felício's wife), José Marinho (Jerônimo), Francisco Milani
(Aldo), Emanuel Cavalcanti (Felício), Zózimo Bulbul, Antônio Carnera,
Ecchio Reis, Maurício do Valle, Rafael de Carvalho, Darlene Glória, Ivan
de Souza, Elizabeth Gasper, Irma Alvarez, Sônia Clara, Jofre Soares, Clóvis
Bornay, Guido Vasconcelos

Les quatre cents coups (The 400 Blows)

France, 1959

DIRECTOR: François Truffaut

ORIGINAL STORY: François Truffaut

SCRIPT: François Truffaut and Marcel Moussy

PRODUCER: François Truffaut

ORIGINAL SCORE: Jean Constantin

CAMERA: Henri Decaë

EDITING: Marie-Josèphe Yoyotte

SET DESIGN: Bernard Evein

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION: Georges Charlot

MANAGER: Jean Lavie

ASSISTANT MANAGER: Robert Lachenay

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Philippe de Broca

SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: Robert Bober, Francis Cognany and Alain Jeannel

SOUND: Jean-Claude Marchetti

SOUND ASSISTANT: Jean Labussière

EDITING ASSISTANTS: Cécile Decugis and Michèle de Possel

PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS: Alain Levent

OPERATOR: Jean Rabier

BW, 35mm, 94 mins

CAST: Jean-Pierre Léaud (Antonine Doinel), Claire Maurier (Gilberte Doinel, the mother), Albert Rémy (Julien Doinel, the father), Guy Decomble ('Petite Feuille', the French teacher), Georges Flamant (Mr Bigey), Patrick Aufray (René), Daniel Couturier, François Nocher, Richard Kanayan, Renaud Fontanarosa, Michel Girard, Henry Moati, Bernard Abbou, Jean-François Bergouignan, Michel Lesignor, Luc Andrieux, Robert Beauvais (the headteacher), Bouchon, Christian Brocard, Yvonne Claudie (Mrs Bigey), Marius Laurey, Claude Mansard, Jacques Monod, Pierre Repp (the English teacher), Simone Jolivet, Laura Paillette, Jean-Claude Brial (man on the street), Jacques Demy (a policeman), Jean Douchet (the lover), Jeanne Moreau (a woman with a dog), François Truffaut (a man in the fairground)

Terra estrangeira (Foreign Land)

Brazil and Portugal, 1995

DIRECTORS: Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas

PRODUCER: Flávio R. Tambellini

CO-PRODUCERS: Paulo Dantas (Brazil) and Antônio da Cunha Telles and Maria João Mayer (Portugal)

SCRIPT: Daniela Thomas, Walter Salles and Marcos Bernstein

ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE: Millôr Fernandes

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Walter Carvalho

SOUND DIRECTOR: Geraldo Ribeiro

ART DIRECTOR: Daniela Thomas

COSTUME DESIGN: Cristina Camargo

EDITING: Walter Salles and Felipe Lacerda

MUSIC: José Miguel Wisnik

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: VideoFilmes and Animatógrafo

DISTRIBUTION: Riofilme

BW, 35mm, 100 mins

CAST: Fernanda Torres (Alex), Fernando Alves Pinto (Paco), Alexandre Borges (Miguel), Laura Cardoso (Manuela, mother), Tcheiky Karyo (Kraft), João Lagarto (Pedro), Luís Melo (Igor), Beth Coelho, Gerald Thomas

Corisco e Dadá (Corisco and Dadá)

Brazil, 1996

DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER: Rosemberg Cariry

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Jefferson de Albuquerque Júnior and Maria Juruena de Moura

ORIGINAL STORY AND SCRIPT: Rosemberg Cariry

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Ronaldo Nunes

SOUND DESIGN: Márcio Câmara

ART DIRECTORS: Jefferson de Albuquerque Júnior and Rosemberg Cariry

SET DESIGN: Walmir Paiva, Zé Tarcísio and Fábio Vasconcelos

COSTUME DESIGN: Renato Dantas

MAKE-UP: Antônio Pacheco

EDITING: Severino Dadá

MUSIC: Maestro Toinho Alves and Quinteto Dantas

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Cariry Produções Artísticas

DISTRIBUTION: Riofilme

COLOUR, 35mm, 103 mins

CAST: Chico Diaz (Corisco), Dira Paes (Dadá), Antônio Leite, Abidoral Jamacaru, Chico Chaves, Denise Milfont, Luiz Carlos Salatiel, Virgínia Cavendish, Regina Dourado, B. de Paiva, Teta Maia, Maira Cariry

Crede-me (Believe Me)

Brazil, 1997

DIRECTORS: Bia Lessa and Dany Roland

SCRIPT: Bia Lessa and Dany Roland, loosely based on *The Holy Sinner* by Thomas Mann

CONSULTANT: Violeta Arraes

TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS: Carlos Klachquin and Marcello Dantas

VISUAL DESIGN AND TITLES: Fernando Zarif and Dora Levy

EDITING: Sérgio Mekler

EDITING ASSISTANTS: Tiago Borba and Eduardo Quintino

FINISHING: Helgi Thor and Cia. de Imagem

SOUND MIXING: Rob Filmes

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Bia Lessa Produções Artísticas

DISTRIBUTION: Riofilme
 COLOUR, Beta/35mm, 75 mins

Baile Perfumado (Perfumed Ball)
 Brazil, 1997

DIRECTORS: Paulo Caldas and Lírío Ferreira
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Marcelo Pinheiro, Aramis Trindade, Lírío Ferreira, Paulo Caldas and Germano Coelho Filho
 SCRIPT: Hilton Lacerda, Paulo Caldas and Lírío Ferreira
 DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Paulo Jacinto dos Reis
 SOUND: Geraldo José
 DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION: Cláudio Assis
 ART DIRECTOR: Adão Pinheiro
 SOUND DIRECTORS: Valéria Ferro and Renato Calaça
 SOUND EDITING: Virgínia Flores, César Migliorin and Fernando Ariani
 EDITING: Vânia Debs
 MUSIC DIRECTION: Chico Science, Fred Zero Quatro, Sérgio 'Siba' Veloso, Lúcio Maia and Paulo Rafael
 HISTORY CONSULTANT: Frederico Pernambucano de Mello
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: Saci Filmes
 DISTRIBUTION: Riofilme
 COLOUR/BW, 35mm, 93 mins
 CAST: Duda Mamberti (Benjamin Abraão), Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos (Lampião), Aramis Trindade (Tenente Lindalvo Rosa), Chico Diaz (Cel. Zé de Zito), Jofre Soares (Padre Cícero), Cláudio Mamberti (Cel. João Libório), Germano Haiut (Ademar Albuquerque), Manoel Constantino, John Donovan (boy), Giovanna Gold (Jacobina), Daniela Mastroiani (woman in Recife), Rutilio Oliveira, Roger de Renor, Geninha da Rosa Borges (Arminda)

Abril despedaçado (Behind the Sun)
 Brazil/France, 2001

DIRECTOR: Walter Salles
 PRODUCER: Arthur Cohn
 ASSISTANT PRODUCER: Jean Labadie
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Maurício Andrade Ramos, Lilian Birnbaum and Walter Salles
 SCRIPT: Walter Salles, Sérgio Machado and Karim Aïnouz, based on the book *Froides fleurs d'avril* by Ismail Kadaré
 ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE: João Moreira Salles and Daniela Thomas
 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Sérgio Machado
 DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION: Marcelo Torres
 ASSISTANT PRODUCER: Andrea Wiemann
 DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Walter Carvalho
 SECOND-UNIT PHOTOGRAPHY: Toca Seabra

ART DIRECTOR: Cássio Amarante

COSTUME DESIGN: Caio Albuquerque

EDITING: Isabelle Rathery

LOCATIONS: States of Bahia and Tocantins

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: VideoFilmes (Brazil) and Bac Filmes (France)

COLOUR, 35mm, 99 mins

CAST: Rodrigo Santoro (Tonho), José Dumont (father), Ravi Ramos Lacerda (Pacu), Rita Assemany (mother), Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos (Salustiano), Flavia Marco Antonio (Clara), Caio Junqueira (Inácio), Everaldo de Souza Pontes (Isaiás's grandfather), Mariana Loureiro (Isaiás's wife), Servílio de Holanda (Isaiás), Wagner Moura (Mateus), Gero Camilo (Reginaldo); special appearances: Othon Bastos (Lourenço), Vinícius de Oliveira (Ferreira family), Sôia Lira (Ferreira family), Maria do Socorro Nobre (Ferreira family)

CHAPTER TWO

Central do Brasil (Central Station)

Brazil/France, 1998

DIRECTOR: Walter Salles

ORIGINAL STORY: Walter Salles

SCRIPT: Marcos Bernstein and João Emanuel Carneiro

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Elisa Tolomelli, Lilliam Birnbaum, Thomas Garvin and Donald Ranvaud

DIRECTORS OF PRODUCTION: Marcelo Torres and Afonso Coaracy

PRODUCERS: Martine de Clermont-Tonnerre and Arthur Cohn

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Walter Carvalho

EDITING: Felipe Lacerda and Isabelle Rathery

ART DIRECTORS: Cassio Amarante and Carla Caffé

COSTUME DESIGN: Cristina Camargo

CASTING: Sérgio Machado

MAKE-UP: Antoine Garabedian

ORIGINAL SCORE: Antônio Pinto and Jacques Morelenbaum

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Kátia Lund

SET DESIGN: Mônica Costa

SOUND: Jean-Claude Brisson, François Groult and Mark A. van der Willigen

SOUND MIXING: Bruno Barrière

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: VideoFilmes, Riofilme and MACT

DISTRIBUTION: Riofilme

COLOUR, 35mm, 112 mins

CAST: Fernanda Montenegro (Dora), Marília Pêra (Irene), Vinícius de Oliveira (Josué), Sôia Lira (Ana), Othon Bastos (César), Otávio Augusto (Pedrão), Stela Freitas (Yolanda), Matheus Nachtergaele (Isaiás), Caio Junqueira (Moisés), Socorro Nobre, Manoel Gomes, Roberto Andrade, Sheyla Kenia, Malcon Soares, Maria Fernandes, Maria Marlene, Chrisanto Camargo, Jorseba

Sebastiano Oliveira, Andréa Albuquerque, Sidney Antunes, Rita Assemany, Parícia Brás, João Braz, Marcelo Carneiro, Telma Cunha, José Pedro da Costa Filho, Estelinha Moreira da Silva

O primeiro dia (Midnight)

France/Brazil, 1999

DIRECTORS: Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas

PRODUCER: Elisa Tolomelli

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Beth Pessoa

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION: Maria Carlota Fernandes

SCRIPT: Daniela Thomas, João Emanuel Carneiro, Walter Salles and José de Carvalho

PHOTOGRAPHY: Walter Carvalho

DIRECT SOUND: Heron de Alencar

SOUND EDITING: Luiz Adelmo

DIALOGUE EDITING: Ana Chiarini

ART DIRECTOR: Carla Caffé

COSTUME DESIGN: Verônica Julian and Cristina Camargo

EDITING: Felipe Lacerda and Isabelle Rathery

MUSIC: Antônio Pinto, Eduardo Bid and Naná Vasconcelos

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: VideoFilmes, Riofilme and Haut et Court

DISTRIBUTION: Lumière and Riofilme

COLOUR, 35mm, 75 mins

CAST: Fernanda Torres (Maria), Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos (João), Matheus Nachtergaele (Francisco), Nelson Sargento (Vovô), Tônico Pereira (prison warden), Áulio Ribeiro (José), Luciana Bezerra (Rosa), Antônio Gomes (Antônio), Nelson Dantas (the chemist), Carlos Vereza (Pedro), José Dumont

Latitude Zero

Brazil, 2000

DIRECTOR: Toni Venturi

PRODUCER: Toni Venturi

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Daniel Santiago and Lilian Sola Santiago

SCRIPT: Di Moretti, based on the play *As coisas ruins de nossas cabeças* by Fernando Bonassi

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Jacob Solitrenick

CAST-COACH: Marcio Aurelio

SET DESIGN: Helcio Pugliese

DIRECT SOUND: Miguel Angelo

SOUND EDITING: Eduardo Santos Mendes

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Amilcar Claro

ART DIRECTOR: Andréa Velloso

MUSIC: Lívio Tragtemberg

EDITING: Idê Lacreata

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Olhar Imaginário
 DISTRIBUTION: Riofilme
 COLOUR, 35mm, 85 mins
 CAST: Débora Duboc (Lena) and Cláudio Jaborandy (Vilela)

CHAPTER THREE

Hans Staden

Brazil/Portugal, 1999

DIRECTOR: Luiz Alberto Pereira

PRODUCER: Luiz Alberto Pereira

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Jorge Neves and Henrique Espírito Santo

DIRECTORS OF PRODUCTION: Ivan Teixeira and Henrique Espírito Santo

SCRIPT: Luiz Alberto Pereira, based on the book *Duas viagens ao Brasil* by Hans Staden

CAST-COACH: Walderez Cardoso

CAST TRAINING: Fátima Toledo and Marlui Miranda

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Uli Burtin

ORIGINAL SCORE: Marlui Miranda and Lelo Nazário

SOUND ENGINEER AND DIRECT SOUND: Jorge Vaz

ART DIRECTOR: Chico de Andrade

SET DESIGN: Zeca Nolf and Clíssia Moraes

COSTUME DESIGN: Cleide Fayad

MAKE-UP: Sônia Silva and Uirandê de Hollanda

SOUND EDITING: Nério Barbéris

EDITING: Verônica Kovensky

SOUNDTRACK: Nério Barbéris

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: Lapfilme Produções (Brazil) and Jorge Neves Produções Audiovisuais (Portugal)

DISTRIBUTION: Riofilme

COLOUR, 35mm, 92 mins

CAST: Carlos Evelyn (Hans Staden), Beto Simas (Nhaêpepô-oaçu), Stênio Garcia (Pajé), Sérgio Mamberti (Jacó), Cláudia Liz (Marabá), Darci Figueiredo (Ipiruguaçu), Milton de Almeida (Alkindar-miri), Ariana Messias (Nairá), Walter Portela (Abati-poçanga), Reynaldo Puebla (Guaratinga-açu), Luiza Albuquerque, Teresa Convá, Olga da Silva, Maria de Oliveira, Hissa de Urkola, Francisco di Franco, Darci Figueiredo (Ipiru), Cíntia Grillo, Mário Jacques (captain), Macsuara Kadiweu (Cunhambebe), Carol Li (Joacy), Daniel Minduruku, Adelino Neves, Alfredo Penteado (Caruatá), Antônio Peyr (Perot), Daniel Portela (cacique, tribe chief), Jefferson Primo (Paraguá), Valdir Raimundo, Valdir Ramos, Sônia Ribeiro, Lena Sá, Jurandir Siridiwê

Como era gostoso o meu francês (How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman)

Brazil, 1970-72

DIRECTOR: Nelson Pereira dos Santos

PRODUCERS: Luiz Carlos Barreto, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, César Thedim and
K.M. Eckstein

ORIGINAL STORY AND SCRIPT: Nelson Pereira dos Santos

TUPI DIALOGUE: Humberto Mauro

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Luiz Carlos Lacerda de Freitas

PRODUCTION MANAGERS: Irênio Marques Filho and Pedro Aurélio Gentil

ASSISTANT PRODUCER: Carlos A. Diniz

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH: Luiz Carlos Rippermera and Ronaldo Nunes

SOUND DESIGN: Nelson Ribeiro

SOUND ASSISTANT: Geraldo José

SPECIAL EFFECTS: Geraldo José and Antônio César

SET DESIGN: Régis Monteiro

COSTUME DESIGN: Mara Chaves

MAKE-UP: Janira Santiago, José Soares, Ren Boechat, Nilde Goebel, Hélio Fernando
and Ana Correia da Silva

EDITING: Carlos Alberto Camuyrano

CONTINUITY: Raimundo Bandeira de Mello

TITLES: Waldir Surtan

VOICE-OVER: Célio Moreira

MUSIC: Guilherme Magalhães Vaz and Zé Rodrix

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: Produções Cinematográficas L.C. Barreto and Condor
Filmes

DISTRIBUTION: Condor Filmes

COLOUR, 35mm, 83 mins

CAST: Arduino Colassanti (Jean, the Frenchman), Ana Maria Magalhães
(Seboipepe), Eduardo Imbassahy Filho (Cunhambebe), Manfredo Colassanti
(French merchant), Ana Maria Miranda, Gabriel Arcanjo, José Kleber, Gabriel
Araújo, Luiz Carlos Lacerda de Freitas, Janira Santiago, João Amaro Batista,
José Soares, Hélio Fernando, Ital Natur, Maria de Souza Lima, Wilson Manlio,
Ana Batista*Macunaíma*

Brazil, 1969

DIRECTOR: Joaquim Pedro de Andrade

PRODUCERS: K.M. Eckstein and Joaquim Pedro de Andrade

SCRIPT: Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, based on the novel *Macunaíma* by Mário de
Andrade

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Carlos Alberto Prates Correa

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Chris Rodrigues

PHOTOGRAPHY: Guido Consulich and Affonso Beato

CAMERA: Ricardo Stein

GUIDE-SOUND: Juarez Dagoberto da Costa

SOUND EFFECTS: Walter Goulart

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN: Anísio Medeiros

MAKE-UP: Rubens Abreu

EDITING: Eduardo Escorel

VOICE-OVER: Tite de Lemos

MUSIC: Antônio Maria, Carlos Gomes, Geraldo Nunes, Sady Cabral, Macalé, Lamartine Babo, Heitor Villa-Lobos and Orestes Barbosa

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: Filmes do Serro, Grupo Filme, INC-Instituto Nacional de Cinema and Condor Filmes

DISTRIBUTION: Difilm

COLOUR, 35mm, 108 mins

CAST: Grande Otelo (black Macunaíma), Paulo José (white Macunaíma), Dina Sfat (Ci), Milton Gonçalves (Jiguê, Macunaíma's brother), Rodolfo Arena (Manaape, Macunaíma's brother), Jardel Filho (Giant Wenceslau Pietro Pietra), Joana Fomm (Sofará), Maria do Rosário (Iquiri), Maria Lúcia Dahl (Iara), Miriam Muniz (Caapora), Edi Siqueira (Filhinha), Carmen Palhares (Filhona), Rafael Carvalho (Currupira), Carolina Whitaker (princess), Hugo Carvana (swindler), Zezé Macedo (the Thin Woman), Wilza Carla (the Fat Woman), Maria Clara Pellegrino, Maria Letícia, Valdir Onofre, Guaraci Rodrigues, Nazareth Ohana, Tânia Márcia

CHAPTER FOUR

Orfeu

Brazil, 1999

DIRECTOR: Carlos Diegues

PRODUCERS: Renata de Almeida Magalhães and Paula Lavigne

DELEGATE PRODUCER: Flávio R. Tambellini

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Daniel Filho

SCRIPT: Carlos Diegues, in collaboration with Hermano Vianna, Hamilton Vaz Pereira, Paulo Lins and João Emanuel Carneiro, based on the play *Orfeu da Conceição* by Vinicius de Moraes

PHOTOGRAPHY: Affonso Beato

CAMERA: Gustavo Hadba

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Vicente Amorim

EDITING: Sérgio Mekler

ART DIRECTOR: Clóvis Bueno

COSTUME DESIGN: Emília Duncan

SAMBA SCHOOL DIRECTOR: Joãozinho Trinta

MUSIC: Caetano Veloso

SOUND: Mark van der Willigen

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Rio Vermelho Filmes

CO-PRODUCTION: Globo Filmes

DISTRIBUTION: Warner

COLOUR, 35mm, 115 mins

CAST: Toni Garrido (Orfeu), Patrícia França (Eurídice), Murilo Benício (Lucinho), Zezé Motta (Conceição), Milton Gonçalves (Inácio), Isabel Fillardis (Mira), Maria Ceíça (Carmen), Stepan Nercessian (Pacheco), Maurício Gonçalves (Pecê), Lucio Andrey (Piaba), Eliezer Motta (Stalone), Sérgio Loroza (Coice), Silvio Guindane (Máicol), Castinho (Oswaldo), Gustavo Gasparini (Mano), Paula Assunção (Deise), Patrícia Costa (Lurdes), Andréa Marques (Sheila), Cássio Gabus Mendes (Pedro), Ivan de Albuquerque (He-Man), Léa Garcia (Máicol's mother), Maria Ribeiro (Joana), Nelson Sargento, Caetano Veloso, samba school Unidos do Viradouro

Orfeu negro (or *Orfeu do carnaval*; *Black Orpheus*)

Brazil/France/Italy, 1959

DIRECTOR: Marcel Camus

PRODUCER: Sacha Gordiner

SCRIPT: Marcel Camus and Jacques Viot, based on the play *Orfeu da Conceição* by Vinicius de Moraes

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: Robert Mazoyer and Bartolomeu Andrade

DIALOGUE: Vinicius de Moraes and Marcel Camus

PHOTOGRAPHY: Jean Bourgoin

SOUND DESIGN: Amaury Leenhardt

ORIGINAL SET DESIGN: Jacques Viot

SET DESIGN: Loup Bonin

EDITING: Andrée Félix

EDITING ASSISTANT: Geneviève Wilding

MUSIC: Antônio Carlos Jobim, Luís Bonfá, Antônio Maria and Vinicius de Moraes

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: Dispat Film (Paris), Genna Film (Roma) and Tupã Filmes (São Paulo)

DISTRIBUTION: Rank Filmes

COLOUR, 35mm, 100 mins

CAST: Breno Mello (Orfeu), Marpessa Dawn (Eurídice), Lourdes de Oliveira (Mira), Léa Garcia (Serafina), Adhemar Ferreira da Silva (Death), Alexandro Constantino (Hermes), Waldemar de Souza (Chico), Jorge dos Santos (Benedito), Aurino Cassiano (Zeca), Maria Alice, Ana Amélia, Afonso Marinho, Arlete Costa, Dinorah Miranda, Esther Mellinger, Eunice Mendes, Jackson Costa, Maria de Lourdes, Teresa Santos, Zeni Pereira, Agostinho dos Santos, Eliseth Cardoso, samba schools Portela, Mangueira, Acadêmicos do Salgueiro, Império Serrano and Unidos da Capela

CHAPTER FIVE

Cidade de Deus (City of God)

Brazil/France/USA, 2002

DIRECTORS: Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund

PRODUCERS: Andrea Barata Ribeiro and Mauricio de Andrade Ramos

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Elisa Tolomelli

CO-PRODUCERS: Marc Beauchamps, Daniel Filho, Hank Levine, Vincent Maraval,
Donald Ranvaud, Juliette Renaud and Walter SallesSCRIPT: Bráulio Mantovani, based on the novel *Cidade de Deus* by Paulo Lins

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: César Charlone

CAMERA ASSISTANT: Breno Cunha

ORIGINAL SCORE: Ed Côrtes and Antônio Pinto

EDITING: Daniel Rezende

EDITING ASSISTANT: Fred Ricci

ART DIRECTOR: Tulé Peak

COSTUME DESIGN: Bia Salgado and Inês Salgado

MAKE-UP: Anna van Steen

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Claudine Franco

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: Lamartine Ferreira, Malu Miranda and Isabella Teixeira

SOUND DESIGN: Martin Hernandez

SOUND: Guilherme Ayrosa, Carlos Honc, Alessandro Laroca, Paulo Ricardo Nunes,
Alejandro Quevedo and Adam Sawelson

SOUND RECORDING AND EDITING: Rudy Pi, Unsun Song and Roland N. Thai

VISUAL EFFECTS: Renato Batata

PRODUCTION COMPANIES: O2 Filmes and VideoFilmes

CO-PRODUCERS: Globo Filmes, Lumière and Wild Bunch

DISTRIBUTION: Lumière

COLOUR, 35mm, 130 mins

CAST: Alexandre Rodrigues (Buscapé/Rocket), Leandro Firmino da Hora (Zé Pequeno/Li'l Zé), Phellipe Haagensen (Bené/Benny), Douglas Silva (Dadinho/Li'l Dice), Jonathan Haagensen (Cabeleira/Shaggy), Matheus Nachtergaele (Sandro Cenoura/Carrot), Seu Jorge (Mané Galinha/Knockout Ned), Jefechander Suplino (Alicate/Clipper), Alice Braga (Angélica), Emerson Gomes (Barbantinho/Stringy), Edson Oliveira (older Barbantinho), Michel de Souza Gomes (younger Bené), Roberta Rodrigues (Berenice), Luís Otávio (younger Buscapé), Maurício Marques (Cabeção/Melonhead), Gustavo Engracia (newspaper chief editor), Darlan Cunha (Filé-com-fritas/Steak 'n' Fries), Robson Rocha (Gelson), Thiago Martins (Lampião), Leandra Miranda (Lúcia Maracanã), Graziela Moretto (Marina Cintra), Renato de Souza (Marreco), Karina Falcão (Paraíba's wife), Sabrina Rosa (Galinha's girlfriend), Rubens Sabino (Neguinho), Marcos 'Kikito' Junqueira (Otávio), Edson Montenegro (Buscapé's father), Gero Camilo (Paraíba), Felipe Silva (Rafael), Daniel Zettel (Thiago), Charles Paraventi (Tio Sam), Luiz Carlos Ribeiro Seixas (Touro), Paulo 'Jacaré' César (Tuba), Danielle Ornelas (Paraíba's neighbour)

CHAPTER SIX

O invasor (The Trespasser)

Brazil, 2002

DIRECTOR: Beto Brant

PRODUCERS: Renato Ciasca and Bianca Villar

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: Alexandre Borges, Malu Mader, Paulo Miklos, Marco Ricca and Mariana Ximenes

SCRIPT: Beto Brant, Marçal Aquino and Renato Ciasca, based on the novel *O invasor* by Marçal Aquino

MUSIC: Rica Amabis, Daniel Ganjaman, Paulo Miklos, Sabotage and Tejo

PHOTOGRAPHY: Toca Seabra

EDITING: Manga Campion

CASTING: Deborah Carvalho

ART DIRECTOR: Yukio Sato

COSTUME DESIGN: Juliana Prysthon

MAKE-UP: Gabi Moraes

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: Lígia Feliciano and Cláudia Gama

SOUND DESIGN: Roberto Ferraz and Louis Robin

SOUND EDITING: Roberto Ferraz and André Pozzano

AVID OPERATOR: Fred Ricci

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Drama Filmes

COLOUR, 35mm, 97 mins

CAST: Marco Ricca (Ivan), Alexandre Borges (Gilberto), Paulo Miklos (Anísio), Mariana Ximenes (Marina), Malu Mader (Cláudia/Fernanda), Chris Couto (Cecília), George Freire (Estêvão), Tanah Correa (Dr Araújo), Jayme del Cueto (Norberto), Sabotage (Sabotage), Marina Franco (Marina's friend), Daniela Tramujas (Luísa), Thavyne Ferrari (Giba's daughter), Priscila Luz (Lúcia), Marcos Azevedo (nightclub manager), Sílvio Luz (Rangel), Amanda Santos (Alessandra), Ida Sztamfater (Silvana), Tom Curti (Dr Luchesi), Manoel Freitas (Romão), Joel Pimentel (Leo), Andreia Regina (Debi), Piero Sarjentelli (Jaime), Arthur Marsan (Alê), Mario Bortolotto (detective)

INDEX

Numbers in *italics* refer to illustrations.

Abraão, Benjamin, 26, 113

'Aesthetics of Hunger', 66

Alice in the Cities (Alice in den Städten, Wim Wenders, 1974), 37, 38

An Andalusian Dog (Un chien andalou, Luis Buñuel, 1929), 83

Andrade, Joaquim Pedro de, 67

Andrade, Mário de, 66

Andrade, Oswald de, xxi, 61, 63, 64-5, 72, 74

Anthropophagic Movement, 64

anthropophagy, xxi, 62, 65, 66, 67

Antonio das Mortes (O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro, Glauber Rocha, 1969), 38, 48

Aquino, Marçal, 118, 122

'árido movie', 27

Arrigucci Jr, Davi, 125

ARTE, 47

Audiovisual Law (1993), 24

Augusto, Sérgio, 92-3

Babilônia 2000 (Eduardo Coutinho, 2000), 86

backlands-sea utopia, xix, 3-30, 37, 49, 51

Barbosa, Neusa, 117

Barnabé, Arrigo, xviii

Barren Lives (Vidas secas, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1963), 56, 69

Barros, Wilson, xviii, 122

Bastos, Othon, 38

Bazin, André, 109

Behind the Sun (Abril despedaçado, Walter Salles, 2001), xx, 5, 28, 30, 147-8

Believe Me (Crede-mi, Bia Lessa and Dany Roland, 1997), xx, 5, 24, 26, 27, 27, 29, 146-7

Benjamin, Walter, 34

Bentes, Ivana, 42

Berlin Wall, xvii, xviii, 34

Bernardet, Jean-Claude, 42

Bernardi, Sandro, 34-5

Bernstein, Marcos, 18, 37

Bianchi, Sérgio, 130

The Big City (A grande cidade, Carlos Diegues, 1966), 48

Black Experimental Theatre (Teatro Experimental do Negro), 88

Black God, White Devil (Deus e o diabo na terra do sol, Glauber Rocha, 1964), xii, xix, 3, 7, 9, 10-11, 12, 13, 13, 14, 37, 49, 51, 55, 55, 66, 143

Black Orpheus (Orfeu negro/Orfeu do carnaval/Orphée Noir, Marcel Camus, 1959), xxi, 83, 84, 84, 86, 89, 91, 153

The Blood of a Poet (Le sang d'un poète, Jean Cocteau, 1929), 83

Bocage, the Triumph of Love (Bocage - o triunfo do amor, Djalma Limongi Batista, 1998), 5, 29, 33

- Bonassi, Fernando, 52-3
 Bonfá, Luiz, 92
 Botelho, Chico, xviii, 122
 Brant, Beto, 118, 122
 Brazilian Cinema Recovery Award (Prêmio Resgate do Cinema Brasileiro), 24
 Brazilian Film Revival (Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro), 37
The Brazilian Indian and the French Revolution (Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco), 8
 Buarque de Holanda, Sérgio, 7, 8
The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (*Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1920), 123
 Caeté Indians, 69
 Caminha, Pero Vaz de, 7
 Candeias, Ozualdo, 122
 Candido, Antonio, 102
 cannibalism, xxi, 62-80, 76, 77
 Cardoso, Fernando Henrique, xix, 23
 Cariri Indians, 6
 Cariry, Rosenberg, xii, 6-7, 25, 26
Carnaval Atlântida (José Carlos Burle, 1952), 94
 Carneiro, João Emanuel, 37
 Carvalho, Walter, 42
 Casares, Maria, 96
 Castro, Eduardo Viveiros de, 61, 65-6
Central Station (*Central do Brasil*, Walter Salles, 1998), xx, xxii, 24, 33, 37-45, 39, 43, 45, 46, 50, 54, 57, 148-9
 Chauí, Marilena, 40
 Chico Science, 27
Chronically Unfeasible (*Cronicamente inviável*, Sérgio Bianchi, 1999), 33, 113
 Ciasca, Renato, 118
Cinema Marginal (Underground Cinema), 41-2
 Cinema Novo, xix, xx, 5, 25, 27, 29, 34, 38, 41, 42, 44, 46, 112
City of God (*Cidade de Deus*, Paulo Lins), xiii, xxii, 30, 46, 85, 87, 101-6
City of God (*Cidade de Deus*, Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002), xiii, xxii, 30, 46, 86, 101-14, 107, 154
City of Men (TV series), 114
 Clastres, Hélène, 7
 Coelho, Marcelo, 118
 Columbus, Christopher, 8, 15, 78
 Conselheiro, Antônio, 5-6
The Constant Gardener (Fernando Meirelles, 2005), xxii
 Conti, Mario Sergio, 117
 Coppola, Francis Ford, 20
Corisco and Dadá (*Corisco e Dadá*, Rosemberg Cariry, 1996), xx, 5, 6, 24, 24, 25, 25-6, 113, 146
 Costa, Haroldo, 88
 Coutinho, Eduardo, 46, 85-6
 Crary, Jonathan, 123
 Cunha, Euclides da, 6
Dark Water (Walter Salles, 2004), xxii
 Del Rey, Geraldo, 11
 Diegues, Carlos, xiii, 91, 92, 93, 95, 111
The Discovery of Brazil (*O descobrimento do Brasil*, Humberto Mauro, 1937), 4, 69
 Duboc, Débora, 52
 Edschmidt, Kasimir, 126
 Eisenstein, Sergei, 108, 109
 Eldorado, xii, xix, xxi, 7, 13, 15, 18, 21, 22, 37, 53
 Embrafilme, xvii, 18, 24
 Evelyn, Carlos, 75
The Evil Things in Our Minds (play), 53
Favela dos meus amores (Humberto Mauro, 1935), 92
Favela Five Times (*Cinco vezes favela*, 1962), 85

- favelas* (shanty towns), xxi-xxii, 29-30, 46, 84-7, 93, 95, 101, 106, 111-12
- Favreau, Jean-Pierre, 18
- Ferreira, Hilário Jovino, 94
- Film Revival, 3
- Fonseca, Rubem, 122
- Ford, John, 37
- Foreign Land* (*Terra estrangeira*, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1995), xx, 4-5, 18, 20-3, 21, 22, 23, 37, 145-6
- The 400 Blows* (*Les quatre cents coups*, François Truffaut, 1959), xx, 5, 9-10, 10, 11, 145
- Fraga, Guti, 106
- França, Patrícia, 86
- Franco, Afonso Arinos de Melo, xix, 8, 13, 62
- Fred Zero Quatro, 27
- Friendly Fire* (*Ação entre amigos*, Beto Brant, 1998), 5, 122
- Fukuyama, Francis, xvii
- Gabriel o Pensador, 94
- Ganga Zumba* (Carlos Diegues, 1964), 85
- Garcia, Lea, 88
- Garrido, Toni, 85
- Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* (*Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*, Jean-Luc Godard, 1990), xvii, 34, 35-6, 36
- Germany, Year Zero* (*Germania anno zero*, Roberto Rossellini, 1947), xvii, 34, 35
- The Given Word* (*O pagador de promessas*, Anselmo Duarte, 1962), 48
- Godard, Jean-Luc, xvii, 34, 35-6
- The Golden Age* (*L'âge d'or*, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1930), 83
- Gonçalves, Milton, 85
- Grande Otelo, 86, 94
- Guarani Indians, 7
- Guerra, Ruy, 36
- The Guns* (*Os fuzis*, Ruy Guerra, 1963), 38
- Hail Mary* (*Je vous salue, Marie*, Jean-Luc Godard, 1982), 54
- Hammett* (Wim Wenders, 1978-92), 20
- Hans Staden* (Luiz Alberto Pereira, 1999), xxi, 5, 61, 62, 74-80, 76, 77, 150
- Herzog, Werner, 34
- High Art* (*A grande arte*, Walter Salles, 1991), 37
- History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil* (Jean de Léry), 71
- The Holy Sinner* (Thomas Mann), 29
- Hou Hsiao-Hsien, xviii
- How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (*Como era gostoso o meu francês*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1970-72), xxi, 61, 68-74, 79, 151
- I Am Cuba* (*Soy Cuba*, Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964), 13, 15, 17
- Institutional Act number 5 (AI-5) (1968), 66, 67
- Island of Flowers* (*Ilha das flores*, Jorge Furtado, 1989), 114
- Jaborandy, Cláudio, 52
- Jameson, Fredric, xvii, 4, 23, 131
- Joãozinho Trinta, 95, 96
- Jobim, Antônio Carlos, 88, 92
- Jobim, Maria Luiza, 97
- Jodelle, Etienne, 70
- Johnson, Randal, 67
- Kiarostami, Abbas, xviii
- Kiefer, Anselm, 122
- The Killers* (*Os matadores*, Beto Brant, 1997), 122
- Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*, Wim Wenders, 1976), 20, 35

- Lampião (Virgulino Ferreira da Silva), 26, 48, 113
- Land in Anguish* (*Terra em transe*, Glauber Rocha, 1967), xii, xix, 3, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20–1, 20, 144
- The Land Without Evil* (Hélène Clastres), 7
- Landscapes of Memory* (*O sertão das memórias*, José Araújo, 1996), 5, 29
- Lang, Fritz, 37
- Latitude Zero* (Toni Venturi, 2000), xx, 33, 37, 52–7, 53, 55, 56, 149–50
- Léaud, Jean-Pierre, 9, 10
- Léry, Jean de, 7, 63, 64, 68, 71, 72, 78
- Lessa, Bia, 29
- Lestringant, Frank, 63
- Limit* (*Limite*, Mário Peixoto, 1929–31), 4
- Lins, Paulo, xiii, xxii, 30, 46, 85, 87, 95, 101, 104, 111
- Lisbon Story* (Wim Wenders, 1994), 20
- Lund, Kátia, 30, 46, 111
- Lutfi, Dib, 72
- Lynch, David, xvii
- Macunaima* (Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, 1969), xxi, 62, 66–8, 151–2
- Makhmalbaf, Mohsen, xviii
- Man in the Box* (*O feito ilha*, Luiz Alberto Pereira, 1994), 79
- ‘mangue-beat’, 27
- ‘Manifeste Cannibale Dada’ (Francis Picabia, 1920), 64
- Mann, Thomas, 29
- Mantovani, Bráulio, 106
- Marais, Jean, 83, 84, 84
- Marcinho VP, 46
- The Margin* (*A margem*, Ozualdo Candeias, 1967), 55
- ‘Marginal Cinema’, 122
- Marins, José Mojica, 122
- maritime utopia, 3–30
- Marouby, Christian, 63
- Mauro, Humberto, 4
- Mello, Fernando Collor de, xii, xvii, 4, 18
- Melo, Zélia Cardoso de, 21
- Memories of Banditry* (*Memória do cangaço*, Paulo Gil Soares, 1965), 113
- Memories of Prison* (*Memórias do cárcere*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1984), 48–9
- Midnight* (*O primeiro dia*, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1999), xx, 5, 30, 33, 37, 46–52, 50, 52, 54, 57, 86, 101, 111, 149
- The Mighty Spirit* (*Santo forte*, Eduardo Coutinho, 1999), 86
- Miklos, Paulo, 118, 121
- Miranda, Marlui, 75
- Montaigne, Michel de, 63–4, 71
- Montenegro, Fernanda, 38
- Moraes, Vinicius de, xxi, 83, 88–91, 92, 95
- More, Thomas, xix, 8–9, 13
- Motorcycle Diaries* (*Diários de motocicleta*, Walter Salles, 2004), xxii
- Motta, Zezé, 85
- Mulvey, Laura, 36, 54
- Munch, Edvard, 127
- ‘My Soul’, video for, 30
- Nascimento, Abdias, 88, 90
- Nazário, Lelo, 75
- Nelson Sargento, 49, 95
- New Brazilian Cinema, 42, 66, 112
- New German Cinema, xx, 34
- News from a Private War* (*Notícias de uma guerra particular*, João Moreira Salles, 1998), 46, 47, 101, 111
- Niemeyer, Oscar, 88
- Nobre, Socorro, 40
- Nós do Morro group, 106
- nostalgia cinema, xvii, 4, 20
- O Rappa, 101
- Orfeu* (Carlos Diegues, 1999), xiii, xxi, 83, 84–7, 85, 91–7, 101, 111, 152–3

- Orfeu da Conceição* (Vinicius de Moraes),
 xxi, 83, 88–91, 96
 Oricchio, Luiz Zanín, 117
 ‘Orphée noir’ (Jean-Paul Sartre), xxi,
 83
Orpheus (*Orphée*, Jean Cocteau, 1949),
 xxi, 83, 84, 96
 Orpheus myth, 87–8
The Oyster and the Wind (*A ostra e o vento*,
 Walter Lima Jr, 1997), 33
 Pavilhão 9, 121
 Peirce, Charles S., 44
 Peixoto, Mário, 4
 Pellegrino, Hélio, 34
 Peña, Richard, 71
 Pereira, Luiz Alberto, 74, 75
Perfumed Ball (*Baile perfumado*, Paulo
 Caldas and Lírio Ferreira, 1997),
 xx, 5, 24, 26–7, 29, 113, 147
 Pessoa, Fernando, 3
 Picabia, Francis, 64
Pigsty (*Porcile*, Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1969),
 67
 Pinto, Antônio, 30, 49
 Prado, Guilherme de Almeida, xviii,
 122
Quilombo (Carlos Diegues, 1984), 85
Quilombo dos Palmares, 85
 Ramos, Fernão, 42
 Ramos, Graciliano, 69
 Real Plan (Plano Real), 23
Rebellion in the Backlands (Euclides da
 Cunha), 5–6, 8
 Reichenbach, Carlos, 122
 Ricardo, Sérgio, 3
Rio, 40 Degrees (*Rio, 40 graus*, Nelson
 Pereira dos Santos, 1956), 93
Rio, Northern Zone (*Rio, Zona Norte*,
 Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1957),
 xxi, 38, 86, 94
 Rocha, Glauber, xii, xiii, xx, 3, 4, 5–6,
 9, 12, 34, 36, 44, 66
 Rodrix, Zé, 72
 Rogério, Walter, xviii
 Roland, Dany, 29
 Rosa, Guimarães, 104, 125
 Rossellini, Roberto, xvii, 34–5
 Roumain, Jacques, 83
 Sabotage (rapper), 118, 121, 128, 130–1,
 131
 Salles, João Moreira, 46
 Salles, Walter, xii, xx, xxii, 4, 18, 20, 21,
 24, 34, 35, 117
 Santoro, Rodrigo, 30
 Santos, Nelson Pereira dos, 36, 68–9,
 72
São Paulo, Symphony and Cacophony
 (*São Paulo, sinfonia e cacofonia*, Jean-
 Claude Bernardet, 1994), 53
 Sartre, Jean-Paul, xxi, 83, 89, 90
 Schwarz, Roberto, 65, 101
 ‘The Scream’ (Edvard Munch), 127,
 129
Sea Land (*Terra do mar*, Eduardo Caron
 and Mirella Martinelli, 1998), 5
 Seabra, Toca, 117
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar, 83
 Sganzerla, Rogério, 122
 Sissako, Abderrahmane, 47
Soy Cuba – the Siberian Mammoth (*Soy
 Cuba – o mamute siberiano*, Vicente
 Ferraz, 2005), 135
 Staden, Hans, 61, 72, 75, 78–9, 80
 Stam, Robert, 75, 90, 91, 113
Starry Sky (*Um céu de estrelas*, Tata
 Amaral, 1997), 53
The State of Things (Wim Wenders,
 1982), 20
 Tarantino, Quentin, xvii
The Testament of Orpheus (*Le testament
 d’Orphée, ou ne me demandez pas
 pourquoi!*, Jean Cocteau, 1959), 83
 Thevet, André, 7, 63, 64, 68, 70, 72

- Thomas, Daniela, 18
 Todorov, Tzvetan, 63-4
 Toledo, Fátima, 106
 Tragtenberg, Lívio, 53
The Trespasser (O invasor, Beto Brant, 2002), xiii, xiv, xxii, 117-31, 120, 121, 125, 126, 129, 131, 155
 Tropicalist movement, 66
 Tsai Ming Liang, 47
Tudo azul (Moacyr Fenelon, 1951), 92
 Tupi Indians, 7
 Tupinambá Indians, 61, 68, 69-70, 74, 75
 Tupiniquim Indians, 68, 74

Utopia (Thomas More), 8-9

 Vasconcelos, Luís Carlos, 48
 Veloso, Caetano, 94, 95
 Ventura, Roberto, 6
 Ventura, Zuenir, 113
 Venturi, Toni, 52

 Vereza, Carlos, 48
 Vespucci, Amerigo, xix, 8, 72, 73
 VideoFilmes, 46
 Villar, Leonardo, 48
 Villegagnon, Admiral, 68, 71, 72
 Vogler, Rüdiger, 35

Week-end (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967), 67
 Wenders, Wim, 20, 35, 37, 38, 44

 Xavier, Ismail, 4, 11, 26-7, 44, 67, 112, 128
Xica (*Xica da Silva*, Carlos Diegues, 1976), 85

 Yang, Edward, xviii

 Zaluar, Alba, 102
 Zero, Tolerância, 121, 128
 Zhang Yimou, xviii
 Zischler, Hans, 35