

**Editorial:**

**Cinematic Cartographies: Senses of Place in Contemporary Brazilian Cinema**

Recent cross-fertilization between film theory and cultural geography has stimulated new ways of analyzing cinema. In particular, the role of spatiality in film can be analyzed to reveal aesthetic, political, social, and historical meanings of cinematographic image. Here, spatiality can signify any of: geographical diversity, subjectivities connected to space, the effects of spatial practices in the contemporary world, and how cinematic spaces can create impressions and evoke the viewer's sense of self, reality, memory, emotion, movement, power, or dislocation. In this dossier, *Cinematic Cartographies from Brazil*, we turn to Brazil to explore these themes and concepts of space, place, and landscape, examining the ways in which contemporary Brazilian cinema creates, interacts with, and challenges space and thus the ways in which film audiences perceive the world.

One of the ways space is explored in this dossier is in the physical sense, which includes the diffusion of Brazilian culture and landscapes into new geographic spaces. In an insightful investigation, Damaros considers Jorge Amado's reach into the Soviet Union through his literature. The article compares the acceptance and high - albeit contested - regard of Jorge Amado's literature with that of film adaptations of his works, for which there existed far less critical acceptance. In so doing, Damaros offers us a glimpse into the often closed and sheltered spaces in which his films became popularized—be it within youth gangs in the far East of Russia, through unofficial screenings, dubbings and subtitles of the films in the Union's 'closed cities', or as documented in the anonymous and metaphysical space of the internet.

Indeed, in unpacking complex themes that transgress spatial and temporal boundaries—such as racism, classism, urban security, favela stigmatization, Brazil's legacy of slavery and colonization, place and belonging, friendship, hospitality, and social privilege—contemporary Brazilian films move beyond *novelas* and earlier Brazilian films to help diffuse Brazilian culture internationally, as evidenced by the international reception of recent Brazilian films. As rightly presented in his exploratory essay, Amancio contends that Brazilian cinematographers, by successfully transcending these temporal, spatial and formal borders, have assured Brazilian cinema a space on the global map.

Space, in this geographical context, also invokes a sense of identity as well as emotional connection to place. Lisboa Filho and Dalla Pozza analyze a short documentary set on the Argentine-Brazilian border towns of Uruguaiana and Paso de los Libres that explores the unique relationships of identity and community that form there. Analysis of this documentary heeds the interpretations and message of the documentarians behind the film, as the film's creators seek to challenge stereotypical portrayals of frontier life. Here, documentary becomes research form, blurring the lines between reality and representation as a methodological procedure for portraying identities, and just as deserving of critical analysis.

Other films enter into political spaces, transforming film into a space of political contestation. Winterbottom analyzes the wider political and cultural context of the 2016 release of the controversial film *Aquarius*, which coincided with the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff. The film, which is about development pressures on an apartment block in the Brazilian city of Recife, captures a moment of disquiet and unrest in Brazil, providing a critical lens on space, power, and capital. The political views of the film's creators, as well as its critics, rendered the film symbolically powerful in a time of complicated dynamics of democracy and censorship in the country. In a deliberate move by the director, the space between what is not told on screen becomes an incentive for the viewer to create and sustain his or her own conclusions. *Aquarius* is thus a story of both the contested space of an apartment block in Recife, as well as a space from which to contend the wider political context of Brazil today.

The political value of *Aquarius* is revisited in Ferreira's comparison of old and new ways of reflecting Brazil's political regimes. This article compares two films—one about the so-called political "coup" of Brazil's recent political history, and the other about Brazil's military coup of 1964—and the capacities of these films to encourage the viewer to feel and understand Brazil's socio-political structure. According to Ferreira, and despite their divergent temporal contexts, both films challenge viewers to consider the role of the middle class in impeding or bringing about social and political change in Brazil.

Finally, film can engage or invade spaces of human emotion and sentiment, entering the minds and perspectives of film viewers themselves. Brazilian cinema can provoke us to understand and interact with space. For example, Brazil's loved and hated 'Canchadas', or comical musicals, can be seen either as mediums of blind entertainment of the masses and imitations of North American film culture, or as a collective source of catharsis and a space

of interactive dialogue for spectators (Maia, de Azevedo). *Nova Dubai* (Gustavo Vinagre, 2014) and *Branco sai preto fica* become the subjects of a more theoretical analysis of the meaning of engagement in an article by Lima, who argues that cinema can produce new ways of communal life. By emotionally provoking the viewer through assaulting the norm and engaging with images from the viewers' lived realities, films can produce new ways of knowing and sensing the world.

Returning once more to *Aquarius*, this time alongside the critically acclaimed 2015-released *Que Horas Ela Volta*, Teixeira analyzes two films in the ways that they portray the asymmetrical relations of abuse and domination between employers and employees, and racial and class hierarchies in Brazilian social reality. The films discussed in this article center on interruptions or challenges to these hierarchies as well as the internalizations of social place. In the former, this process takes place in the socially contested space of an apartment block that is desired by a powerful construction company and defended by an essentially powerless resident who is emotionally attached to her home there. In the second, the all too familiar contested space of a household kitchen—the space between maid's quarters and homeowners' living-space—becomes a stage for wider, and adamantly structural, power asymmetries.

The other articles in this issue refer to mediums beyond cinema to explore themes of spatiality, as in the works of Holcombe and da Silva, who return to written forms of art in order to consider Brazil's wider contributions. In Holcombe's review of the Brazilian graphic novel, the reader is encouraged to resist the urge to view Brazilian graphic narratives "as a continuation and byproduct of the Latin American Boom" and instead consider its themes as a unique product of both the creative response to censorship, and a lingering and unresolved relationship to the violence and horrors of recent national history. In an alternative light, da Silva presents us with a comparative presentation of literary critics Roberto Schwarz and Silviano Santiago. Placing these two essayists in dialogue allows new readings on the spaces and positions from which Brazilian social reality and ontology is explored in literature.

Although the above examples do not deal specifically with space in the same physical and psychological contexts that were rendered possible through the medium of cinema, they follow suit in contributing new ways to view and critique Brazilian artistic production, and from Brazilian perspectives. Overall, the articles in this dossier demonstrate the

epistemological and ontological impacts of Brazilian cinema in local and international contexts. The analyses portray a diversity of geographical, political, and social considerations of space—transcending international boundaries, and challenging or creating entirely new understandings of our senses of self. They mark a unique contribution to global understandings of socio-political subjectivities connected to space and geographical diversity as these are portrayed through Brazilian cinema.

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