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GEOGRAPHIES OF LOVE(LESSNESS), SPACE AND AFFECTIVITY IN *VIAJO PORQUE PRECISO, VOLTO PORQUE TE AMO* (I TRAVEL BECAUSE I NEED TO, I COME BACK BECAUSE I LOVE YOU) (KARIM AÏNOUZ AND MARCELO GOMES, 2009) AND *TURISTAS* (TOURISTS) (ALICIA SCHERSON, 2009)

*This article looks at how the idea of open space, articulated within a theoretical matrix that privileges affect, might be used to think through the inscription of subjects in the contemporary world. The audio-visual construction of space in the films *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* (2009), by Karim Ainouz and Marcelo Gomes, and *Turistas* (2009), by Alicia Scherson, resonates with Giuliana Bruno's (2002) idea of a cinema informed 'by a cartographic practice of the intimate that sets out a haptic route', a 'mobile geography' that blurs the limits between external space and affectivity. In these films, the co-existence of inner and outer mappings on the same surface, as pure filmic materialities, visual and sound potentials, problematises the hermetic nature of the private, making inner space porous, open to flows and contaminations. I will give an account of this new mobile and affective geography by analysing the trajectories of the protagonists of these films – a geologist and a female biologist – along with the relations they establish with the flora, fauna and physical and human environment they traverse. The central claim of this article is that through a visual, sonic and tactile inventory of nature, these films introduce a haptic dimension which is both aesthetic matrix and a way of thinking affects and subjectivity in the contemporary world.*

Keywords: Latin American cinema; affect studies; Brazil and Southern Cone; haptic aesthetics; geographical imaginaries

Road movies, travelogues, travel journals or chronicles: the literary and cinematic genres that involve displacement take their protagonists away from their everyday worlds. As the characters travel along a road, or get lost or diverted on the way,

the journey opens up a space different from the everyday one, and thus allows a certain ‘opening’ of experience to come into play. This relation between travel and transformation, almost definitional of the various genres of geographical literature, seems to have become weaker in contemporary cinema even though stories of displacement, drift and wandering are still being filmed.¹ As various critics have noted, in a number of recent Latin American films characters travel without seeking or achieving any kind of change. In contemporary cinema, the protagonists leave the city and move into open spaces that in their less intense and more erratic relations with the natural environment present landscapes that no longer function as representations of collective dilemmas, but as surfaces that in themselves are emptied of content.²

Insignificant movements, intransitive journeys, landscapes as mute surfaces. The diagnosis of the spatial dynamics of contemporary cinema seems to be pessimistic; however, a number of films produced in the early years of the new millennium use open spaces to articulate aesthetic and political dilemmas in a new way.³ In a thought-provoking essay in which he compares the rural landscapes of recent cinema with those of the films of the sixties, Jens Andermann claims that in contemporary cinema, landscape has ‘exhausted’ its capacity to provide allegorical meanings. At the same time, he says, there is a self-conscious use of the landscape form, which, in revealing the historical conditions of this crisis, paradoxically restores its epistemological capacity or force. Thus, the films function as ‘cognitive maps’ – mapping both images and their conditions of existence (2014, 52). If landscape continues to offer aesthetic and cognitive registers to reflect on the crisis of the experience of space and place in the present, says Andermann, certain expressions of contemporary cinema at the same time suggest the critical potential of affects in this enterprise.⁴ In particular, in this article I’m interested in looking at the ways in which *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* (2009), by Karim Aïnouz and Marcelo Gomes, and *Turistas* (2009), by Alicia Scherson, turn to the physical and human landscapes of the Brazilian north-east and Chilean Patagonia respectively to articulate a new link between space and affectivity in which the ‘plasticity of scale’ and the unfolding of a haptic sphere sketch out what we might call an intimate or private geography.

Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo (2009), by the Brazilian film-makers Karim Aïnouz and Marcelo Gomes, is a hybrid of road-movie and melancholic travelogue in which we meet a geologist, José Renato, whom we hear but never see. His work-related journey through the north-eastern Brazilian *sertão* also involves a drift through the pain of lost love: the mapping of space intersects with the voice of the protagonist addressing his wife and metaphorically saying goodbye to her, since later on in the film we discover that she left him before the journey had even begun. *Turistas* (2009), by the Chilean film-maker Alicia Scherson, tells the story of Carla, a 37-year-old biochemist who has an argument with her husband on the way to their vacation resort and is abandoned by the roadside. On her travels, she gets to know a young man from Santiago, who is passing himself off as a Norwegian tourist, and together they travel through a national park in south-central Chile. Despite the films’ differences of genre, tone and aesthetic, their respective journeys across territory bring the characters into contact with strangers, undergoing a moment of introspection and a questioning of affectivity that is connected to an inti-

mate experience of space. The gaze from nature and the relationship between the characters are framed by the Maule region of Chile and the Brazilian *sertão*, respectively, and present a contemporary way of 'being in the world' characterised by both a density of love and a contingent fluidity in which human relationships and the links and discords between individual and their environment unfold.

In *Viajo porque preciso volto porque te amo* and *Turistas* the lead characters move through open spaces that the cinema of previous years had emblematically associated with national identities, or modernising and/or revolutionary discourses. But now new, mobile images mark off the spaces of these meanings to address others more closely linked to the sphere of the private or intimate. These films present a certain audiovisual construction of space out of subjective experience, which resonates with Giuliana Bruno's work and her conception of cinema as a form of sensory mapping particular to the affective dimension. In her *Atlas of Emotion* (2002), Bruno rescues a cinema informed 'by a cartographic practice of space that sets out a haptic route', a 'mobile geography' in which landscapes, transits and inscriptions cause inner and outer mappings to co-exist on the same surface, as filmic materialities that problematise the hermetic nature of privacy, transforming the outside/inside into a porous space of flows and contaminations.⁵

If we examine what Bruno calls 'existential trajectories' in the films under discussion, we find that the protagonists' movements across territory only partially involve an inner voyage of discovery. Whilst Carla and José's bodies move physically through the environment, their subjectivities seem at first to be 'stuck'. There are no great changes in the narrative development, but in the absence of *grands récits* the work on 'plasticity of scale' and the haptic dimension, on the image and movement, allows us to discover cartographies that are sensitive to affective modulations. The flora, fauna and physical environment that the protagonists are investigating are set up with extreme close-ups, sound and haptic images. Even given the fact that within modern geography 'scale' varies with how the subject's relations to its surroundings and the other are understood,⁶ this visual, sonic and tactile inventory of nature might be considered as a way of thinking affect. At the same time insistence on the haptic nature of movement and the visual register hints at an epistemology that is not separated from feeling.

"Love will tear us apart". Commodified nature and the intimate in *Turistas*

Chilean director Alicia Scherson's second feature works fundamentally on the scale and haptic aspects of configurations of intimate geography. As the title suggests, *Turistas* (2009) follows the comings and goings of characters who are on holiday and are using their journeys to try and find a way of escaping domestic routine and re-igniting an enthusiasm that has been lost in everyday life. In the character of Miguel this is also tied up with his desire to reinvent himself. The 21-year-old young man from Santiago introduces himself to Carla, the protagonist, as a Norwegian backpacker called Ulrik. In the course of the film, Miguel's urge to play at being a foreigner with everybody he meets brings him close to being a post-modern tourist, a consumer who, according to Zygmunt Bauman (1997), behaves like

a collector of experience, someone who relates to the world aesthetically, ‘as if it were something to nourish sensibility, a matrix of possible experiences traced out by a mobile map’ (14).⁷ Within this paradigmatic ‘liquid modernity’ where characters travel in order to reinvent themselves, Carla, a 37-year-old mature woman, undergoes a crisis at the limit of this capacity for movement. As they drive along with a new water-bike in tow on their way to holiday in a cabin with all the mod cons that the urban *bourgeois* could desire, Carla confesses to her husband that she has just had an abortion. She says that she doesn’t feel ready to be a mother: her low-key confession contrasts with her husband’s explosion of grief and tears, and he leaves her at one of the rest stops on the road.

After a failed attempt to get back to Santiago, Carla meets up with Miguel-Ulrik and spends some time with him at a camp site in the Siete Tazas national park. The shift into open space is not a return to pure nature. This is no desolate wilderness but a national park whose dimensions, composition and function are part and parcel of its purpose: leisure consumption. A space that submits to the logic of the commodity, it is also a hybrid space traversed by mass culture. We can discern this when we see the Susanas, two cousins who run the campsite shop: dressed as Goths they are discussing the meaning of a Joy Division song. It is also a space through which a road that will connect the park with the city is being cut. Here the noise of an excavator invades the soundscape and Carla seems as curious about it as she is about the sound of the woodpeckers knocking on a tree trunk. But nature being invaded in this way does not become a dystopian universe, however. The *mise en scène* plays with this artificiality, as is suggested by the colour contrast between the greens and browns of the forest and the violet and yellow of Carla’s coat and Ulrik’s dyed hair, the harmony between various extradiegetic electronic sounds and the naturally minimalist music of various insects, or the post-production intervention that subverts the logic of nature and reverses the flow of the waterfalls.

In *The Tourist Gaze* (2002) John Urry argues for the fundamentally visual nature of the tourist experience, claiming that changing tourist practices are tied up with transformations in the gaze and the expectations that previous versions of the gaze have generated. Compulsive mobility is in a certain sense connected to the power of widely distributed forms of the tourist gaze and the different forms of sociability associated with those discourses. Thus there is the tourist’s ‘romantic’ attitude that emphasises solitude, privacy and a personal relationship with the object of the gaze. But there is also a ‘collective’ gaze based on a relationship with the other people who give a particular atmosphere or sense of carnival to a place: other people indicate that *this* is the place to be and one should not be elsewhere (45–6). The film *Turistas* reproduces and plays with these forms and instances of the tourist gaze through the character of Carla. Her (dis)effect(ion) is counterposed to a ‘popular energy’ based on a ‘collective gaze’, as we see in the scenes where she takes part in group events but adopts a certain distance. Her awkwardness, for example, prevents her from getting fully involved with a bonfire celebration or being part of a group photograph. Carla is both inside and outside the rituals of holiday consumption, and contemplates with some astonishment the visual continuity between nature and its artificial representation. At one point, she observes Ulrik playing

paddle ball with one of the Susanas and the composition of the long shot of this sector of the park replicates that of the close-up of a model that represents the Siete Tazas and its natural inhabitants – the tourists – that Carla had stopped to look at in a previous scene in the park rangers' office. The impassive way in which Carla contemplates the reversal of scale and the submission of park nature to the artifice of its representation contributes to the humour of the film.

Thus open space is composed of mediated and artificial landscapes, a setting in which Carla seems to look for order for her emotions. In various scenes the characters discuss intimate matters. Carla and Ulrik have exchanges about the idea of maturity, 'being ready to live life', being 'emotionally and mentally developed' and the contradiction between love as risk and adventure and the predictability of domesticated affect. The Susanas, those dark cousins who run the campsite shop, also discuss intimacy while smoking a cigarette in the bathroom doorway, and argue about the meaning of the chorus of the Joy Division song 'Love will tear us apart'. But open space is not only a 'setting' for arguments about intimacy. Even before the characters arrive at the park there is evidence of the subject's tenuous and changing relationship with this environment. *Turistas* opens with an image of the sky and the grass, the very nature that hems in the sides of the road Carla and her husband are driving along, en route to their vacation. This image is out of focus: we see colours and primary forms, an imperfect image that invites us to perceive haptically and whose outlines we catch sight of in the subsequent counter-shot in the windscreen that separates us from the inside of the car where Carla is lost in contemplation of the outside. The superimposition of the landscape on the protagonist's face suggests that the separation between inside and outside will slowly become porous. Although mediated and instrumentalised for commodity consumption the landscape also follows another logic: this is landscape, as Jens Andermann has suggested, that is both a visual frame which can be consumed and a 'mobile' assemblage of humans and non-humans, an interstitial notion that assembles what can be perceived with the effects that perception produces in the materiality that includes it (2011, 288). Thus observers and observed nature become inseparable parts of a 'performative apparatus' in transformation. This non-dichotomous perspective, which includes both materiality and representation, makes the consideration of space more complex and can be extended to an understanding of the connections that the characters maintain with the landscape, including affective ones.

Inside the park, the characters connect to nature in different ways. In one scene, one of the Susanas looks at the trees from the bathroom block of the campsite, and in the background on the wall a landscaped mirror receives the reflection of the green mass of the forest, causing landscape and the subject looking at to coincide in the same shot. Susana asks Carla: 'Do you think that one day there won't be any trees?' And Carla, in the neutral and slightly doubtful tone that is habitual to her, says 'I don't think so', and Susana agrees, 'Me neither. There are too many of them'. In these and other scenes, the characters look at the trees from below and this use of low-angle shots suggests a distance that leads Carolina Urrutia to maintain that in *Turistas* 'landscape seems to be the bearer of a lofty perspective on the world, a witness that there is nothing happening there' (24).

Nevertheless, the scale and position of subjects in the film change in relation to their surroundings. The work on movement and the haptic aspect of image suggests that the landscape is less a hierarchy that testifies to an eventless humanity and more like an ‘assemblage’, at once cause and consequence of the smallest affective drifts of those who observe or inhabit it.

In the following scene, Orlando, the park ranger, who guides Carla through the forest, tells her: ‘When I first got here, I saw all this green mass. I was desperate. Now I know them all’, and then the film offers a sort of inventory: we are shown the different trees and in voice-over Orlando names them, an exercise in cataloguing that instrumentalises and controls the natural environment. But this sequence includes extreme close-ups of the trees, and the camera runs over their textures and includes images like Carla’s hand touching a leaf, in which the surfaces of nature and the characters contact each other, a ‘feeling through touch’ which is also shown in relation to the fauna. In the ranger’s office there is a laminated image of the chicken spider and we see another specimen caught in a jar. Later in the film another, live, spider appears when the characters meet up in the hot springs and the camera follows it as it crawls over Carla’s hand and Ulrik’s shoulder. So if nature is revealed with a magnifying glass it is not just in an urge to dominate and dissect it. Scale is not merely a methodological tool or a given fact, rather its ‘plasticity’ presupposes the actors’ changing relation in space and gives rise to a haptic aspect where surfaces come into contact.

Touching and being touched, the haptic dimension, evokes what Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2004) calls the ‘desire for presence’, contemporary humanity’s will to re-establish a more sensual and corporeal contact with environment, objects and images. But the tactile here is not reduced to what belongs to or impacts upon the skin: the film also explores the haptic dimensions of movement. Proprioception, which includes the workings of the inner ear and the kinaesthetic sense, informs the organism of the position of the muscles and allows it to sense the relative position of the parts of its body, regulating direction and range of movements, controlling balance and coordination and punctuating our relationship with space (Paterson 2007, 103–127). Carla’s slightly zombie-like walk belongs to the haptic dimension of someone trying to navigate a precarious affective equilibrium, someone who is literally losing her balance and falling: in another scene, she stumbles and falls on to a small chicken. Carla walks in a clumsy fashion – the park ranger describes it as ‘walking on eggshells’. She displays the lack of direction and balance of the characters in the song Orlando quotes from (he is a former folk singer who has become a ranger): ‘they look both ways at the same time’. Carla walks with her head looking down, looks at things from the side and catches glimpses of the world: a half gaze and a form of relation between body and surroundings that unites perception and sensation in her movements.

The film traces a haptic route between desire for presence and precarious balance, which it lightly pursues with subdued humour. Without object or direction the images that follow Carla’s trajectory leave us in an open-ended *dénouement*, at the station for the trains to Santiago: this leave-taking implies a return to the everyday but does not annul Carla’s journey, where, she says, she feels, even feels better.

**‘Ter saudade até que é bom’ [It’s even good to feel melancholy].
Precariousness and affective drifts across the *sertão***

The movement into open space in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* has a particular tone. Karim Ainouz and Marcelo Gomes’s film does not share *Turistas*’s sad and subdued humour. What it does do is explore all the dimensions of melancholy and makes us feel the affective intensity of an abandoned lover.⁸ But the Brazilian film resembles the Chilean one in its play with the relationship between character, landscape and the bodies of others, the inhabitants of the Brazilian north-eastern *sertão*. The protagonist of *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*, like Carla in *Turistas*, comes from the city, in this case Fortaleza. So we have someone who is alien to the territory he traverses, whilst, as in *Turistas*, the space he comes to is far from pure. Rather it is presented as hybrid and ambivalent, bearing the marks of external intervention. Abandoned by progress it is at the same time a small cell inscribed in the network of connections and flows of the globalized market. Peripheral to development but central to the Brazilian imaginary, the semi-desert landscape of the *sertão* is populated by families of peasants who live in isolation. There is no electricity, but there are animals that amble across the road, prostitutes, parishioners and consumers who arrive at an open air fair where locally produced handicrafts are on sale along with plastic flowers, televisions and electrical goods made in Taiwan.

In a thought-provoking analysis of the films by Karim Ainouz and Marcelo Gomes, who both come from north eastern Brazil, Jens Andermann (2014) notes that they work self-consciously on the figure of the landscape. The non-naturalist treatment of sound and image weakens the links between real events and their representations, and introduces a distance which calls attention to the relationship between location and the archive of images which precedes it. In other words, Ainouz and Gomes show how cinema has already turned space into stable places (56). Recognising that the *sertão* is a cinematic space does not eliminate the affective charge with which the directors capture and produce a personal archive of images of this space, on which, in turn, they have impressed successive and different affective modulations. The recordings of the places they have visited, the stops they made at roadside bars and motels, the religious pilgrimages, festivals, monuments and rivers they have seen, all become part of a project developed in tandem with the Instituto Itaú Cultural Foundation, which in 1999 awarded the directors a grant to investigate travelling fairs and ‘the contrasts of the modern world’. What began as research turned into a journey without a clear end. That same journey then became a film of about an hour in length, in which the directors assembled selected images which attracted them ‘from a sensual point of view’. These photographs and images in Super 8, 16 mm and mini-DV [mini-digital video camera] were taken on a journey through the states of Pernambuco, Paraíba, Ceará, Alagoas, and Sergipe, which lasted for some 40 days and had no fixed direction. They were first organised into an affecting and poetic documentary, *Sertão de acrílico azul piscina* [*Sertão* in Swimming Pool Blue Acrylic] (2004), a road movie that mixes the record of a tourist trip with a more chancy peregrination. But this filmic material also forms a ‘personal image archive’ which Karim Ainouz and

Marcelo Gomes returned to at various times over the span of a decade and used to elaborate different film and artistic projects.⁹

A large number of these Super 8, DV images and photographs recorded for the documentary *Sertão de acrílico azul piscina* (2004), added to footage filmed subsequently, form the visual track of *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*, in which José Renato, whom we never see but whose voice guides the journey, crosses the *sertão* in order to draw up a geological map of the zone, preparatory to the construction of a canal. *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* is a hybrid of travel diary and work notebook, and using multiple formats it slowly shows us the topography of the region, while at the same time the narrator/protagonist expresses his subjective apprehension of the landscape and informs us about his personal life. This dramatises and gives a further affective charge to the images that the original documentary possessed (Depetris Chauvin 2014a, 190). The film opens with the camera inside a car, and off to the side are the road and the monotonous landscapes of the semi-arid North East. We do not see the protagonist – the person who throughout the film sees what we see – but at the beginning we hear a romantic *brega* song on the radio, about lovers breaking up, and in the next scene a voice over lists off a series of tools and equipment, which we will later find out are what the geologist uses in his work. Together with the images, the voice interweaves geographical facts with appreciative remarks about the landscape and its impact on the narrator's sensibility. The first time we look at a fixed landscape is also from inside the car. A fuzzy image through the window lets us see the road and the desolate, semi-arid scenery: the voice half-heartedly describes the tedium of the journey and his desire to go back. As we cannot see a body on screen, the landscape is formed as an assemblage by the interaction of affect-charged voice and blurred images, which invite us to half-look, glimpse rather than gaze with attention.

In another sequence, a series of close-ups of the ground and the measuring instruments the geologist uses for his mapping work are intercut with medium and long shots of the surroundings. Although what is staged here is in part an instrumental relationship to the territory that aims to reduce the latter to numerical variables, the way the sequence is set up never lets us forget the 'sense of touch'. We are not shown the product – abstract measurements or the finished map – but rather the bodily process and the field work that precedes it. The medium and long shots contextualise the measuring process and play out a Cartesian exercise in measurement that is contaminated from the start by a melancholic gaze at the surroundings. As part of this hybrid of field work and travelogue, before he investigates the first geological faults, José Renato gives us a 'filmed portrait' of Seu Nino and Dona Perpetua, a couple who have lived in the same house for half a century and will be the first to be expropriated for the canal to be built. At one point, José Renato's affect-charged voice tells us that Seu Nino had stepped out of shot to turn off the radio but that he (José) had asked him to come back because he did not want to film the couple apart from each other. In this anthropological mapping, then, others are figured as a landscape assemblage, a surface in dialogical relation to their own inner drama. As we will discover later in the film, the desire to return home and the anguish that José Renato feels on the journey have deeper roots: his wife has left him and he no longer has a home to go back to.

So as we learn the geological facts and Renato expresses his own geographical subjectivity, we gradually acquire the details of his personal life. The notebook of his field work and the travel narrative slowly transform into a geographical compass inseparable from his spiritual development. As Jean-Claude Bernardet suggests (2009), the film's protagonist travels in order to construct his own geography. The geological map sketches out a haptic route in which prospecting and geological and spiritual introspection become confused. 'Artificial dewdrops on petals of plastic flowers. I can't work any longer. I abandoned the rocks and their tectonics. I keep looking just for flowers and people', the narrator/protagonist says at one point. A slow understanding of his marital crisis takes shape through his relationship to the environment. The detailed close-ups of the tectonic faults that he is studying as a geologist are followed by close-ups of the flowers that his wife Joana, a botanist, loved to collect: images of flowers emerging from the semi-desert, almost dream-like images of the crown of a strange tree with red flowers, plastic flowers, fabric flowers; a register attentive to movement, an inventory of blurred images that invites us to perceive tactily rather than visually. Nearly all the shots of the film have the formal qualities associated with 'haptic visuality' by Laura Marks: grainy and unclear images, an imaginary that evokes sensual memory (water, nature), close to the body camera positions, panning across surfaces, changes of focus, under- or overexposure, use of out-of-date film, use of Super 8, posters, prints and artisanal calligraphy, scratching on emulsion, densely textured images, alternating between film, video and photography (163). In this sense, Ainouz and Gomes's films have a truly sensual potential because they operate in a haptic dimension much closer to the tactile than to traditional optic visuality.¹⁰ Their blurred images invite us to perceive the surface and materiality itself much more closely, so that the eye explores grain and texture, the tiny events that emerge on the surface of the shot: a more intimate gaze that reduces distance and confuses observer and observed surface.¹¹

In his reading of the same images in the documentary *Sertão de acrílico azul piscina* (2004) and in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*, Jean-Claude Bernardet suggests that the different senses and affects brought together in the same shot by changes in montage and sound track are connected to the sort of malleability of the image he terms 'porous'. But the intense affective charge of these images is also tied up with their 'precariousness'. As they are 'less complete', the images invite the viewer to look at them as material presences rather than representational fragments in a narrative sequence. They are images that sketch their objects rather than represent them: they make us look from close to, follow a surface whose texture we experience in intimate form. They do not summon a dissecting gaze, one that looks attentively, but one that glimpses, looks at things from the side and fuses perception and sensation. According to Reis Filho, the whole visual universe of *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* points towards its own limit. Each shot indicates something that cannot be seen completely, not only because the image is out of focus or the objects are outside the field of vision (something that makes us look for intimations of events that are taking place outside the shot) but because this limit suggests something that has not been realised, like a promise of something that is yet to come (Reis Filho 2012, 82).¹²

At the end of this haptic road of lost love, José Renato arrives at the mouth of the river that is to be canalized. The images of the abandoned city establish an absolute void. This melancholy affect persists as José Renato and we the spectators, vicariously, through the camera eye, ascend a viewing tower from which in a 360-degree pan we see a panorama of the city that is to be flooded. Here the protagonist says that he wants to throw himself back into life, and the final images show us cliff divers in action. Renato is not in Acapulco but, as he himself puts it, 'it's as though I were there'. The haptic road of his affective cartography has an open exit, as in the ending of the song 'Dreams' by the singer Peninha which we have heard part of in the film's opening scene, and which says 'It's even good to feel melancholy. It's better than being empty. I have hope, a dream in my hands. Tomorrow is another day. Surely I'm going to be happier'.

Haptic roads

New forms of movement in contemporary cinema delineate intimate spaces with displacements that privilege the affective point of view and turn territory into 'practiced places'.¹⁵ With their exploration of changes of scale and the haptic dimension *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* and *Turistas* offer a new form of understanding of geographical imaginaries and their connection to affectivity. Presenting mobile landscapes that no longer correspond to some allegorical intention, but rather function as a dynamic assemblage of environments and the bodies of those who inhabit or look at them, the films situate inner and outer cartographies on the same surface. A (woman) biologist and a geologist investigate the flora, fauna and physical environment that surround them, but the inclusion of a first-person narrative, especially in *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*, invites us to take up the character's point of view. Nevertheless, these images are, in Bernardet's terms, 'porous': that is to say, 'open' and open to multiple meanings and not easily or reductively sutured to a particular narrative. Just like their scale, the itineraries in these films are 'plastic': changes of point of view on the landscapes do not always allow us to vicariously take up the gaze of the protagonists. The shots of the physical environment play with the tension between the protagonists' discourses and gazes and those of the camera, at the same time as their haptic visuality encourages a sensory link with the spectator herself.

The plasticity and porosity of the images problematise the [supposed] hermetic quality of forms of privacy or intimacy. Psychogeographies, eco-cartographies, hybrid visualities and points of view are deployed to 'tell' certain landscapes that are also impure, mediated and bear the traces of external interventions. Nevertheless, these landscapes do not behave like entities absolutely divorced from the characters. In this sense, as Jens Andermann has argued, landscape here refers back to representation in its double meaning: 'on the one hand it refers to the made image, to the landscape-vision (...) that turns the visual frame into an aesthetically pleasurable *totality* (...) On the other hand, in its performative sense, representation refers to the relation of body and environment and so to a notion of *space* understood either in terms of a ritual or ceremony (like the *acting out* of a pre-established script

(...) or as a mobile and dynamic assembly of unpredictable interactions between human and non-human agents' (280).

The films by Karim Aïnouz, Marcelo Gomes and Alicia Scherson play with the pre-established scripts of leisure consumption and geological investigation, and at the same time present other displacements. They present unpredictable journeys that are, in various senses, haptic and that articulate an epistemology based on feeling. Haptic visuality entails 'making oneself vulnerable to the image, reversing the relation of mastery that characterizes optical viewing' (Marks 2000, 185), establishing a link between gaze and touch that brings observers closer to the observed. In reducing the distance between observer and observed surface, confusing them indeed, the films establish channels of communication between aesthetics, affect and knowledge: a haptic culture that corresponds to the desire to re-establish a more sensory and corporeal contact with images, objects and the environment; a way of relating to images and others that is also a new way of being in the world. So the mobile geographies of contemporary cinema hint at an aesthetic, a sensibility and an epistemology.

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Notes

1. Ismail Xavier notes the recurrence in contemporary Brazilian films of displacements and 'non-places' that question the idea of space as a coherent totality (2003, 49). Gonzalo Aguilar (2006) suggests that we can see nomadism and sedentarism as two complementary signs of New Argentine Cinema: the first would be 'a contemporary state of permanent movements, translations, non-belonging and the dissolution of any form of permanence' (43). He also discusses the link between mobility and deterritorialisation as a characteristic feature of contemporary culture. However, despite the general nature of this nomadism, the very variety of displacements that Latin American cinema deals with makes it necessary, as Aguilar suggests in relation to Argentine cinema, 'to define what sort of displacements we are looking at and what symbolic and material dimensions are in play' (43).
2. Earlier Ismail Xavier had analysed territorial displacements as one of the *tropoi Cinema Novo* used to give an interpretation of the nation, associating the *sertão* with historical meanings and social allegories (1997, 236). In the 1990s, cinema also registered movements to the *sertão* but critics hold that contemporary films, despite certain thematics shared with the narratives of *Cinema Novo*, are marked by a depoliticised stance, since the representation of space is not transposed into a search for Brazilian identity (Oricchio 2003; Bentes 2003). In her discussion of a number of Chilean films, Carolina Urrutia (2013) suggests that a new hierarchy is set up between subject and space. In Chilean fiction films after 2005, landscape unfolds autonomously of the subject who inhabits it and constitutes a geography where 'exactly at the point where the subject is silent there emerges a surface of

discourse that possesses a powerful gaze of its own, the possibility of a narrative in itself' (20). The Argentine scholar Andrea Molfetta (2011) analyses a corpus of recent Argentine, Mexican and Peruvian films where the characters' encounters with nature do not set out or resolve questions of collective identity but rather display personal doubts that remain unresolved. For her, contemporary men and women travel 'intransitively' (53).

3. Going beyond the observation that current cinema lacks the links between space and politics articulated in earlier cinema, some academics from the English-speaking world have tried to analyse these new types of displacement in a way that gives cinema back its potential for thinking the conditions of the political in the present. Among these attempts, Joanna Page's (2009) contribution is most interesting because she pays attention to the complexity of the concepts of space and place in the era of globalization. She shows how certain Argentine films in which the characters travel to 'rural space' take over the discourses of transnationality with the aim of reasserting contemporary forms of national identity. Taking as his point of departure the extensive study of the territorial and spatial logics of the literature and visual culture of Argentina and Brazil, Jens Andermann's most recent book (2012) dedicates a chapter— 'Margins of Realism: Exploring the Contemporary Landscape'— to the examination of the ways landscape is produced in films that are centred on non-urban spatialities, particularly the work of Lisandro Alonso, Pablo Trapero, Lucrecia Martel and Mariano Donoso. Taking their distance from forms of perception based in action, and offering new modes of perception, these films work with different forms and regimes of visibility and visibility that give back to cinema the potential to trace new 'cognitive maps'.
4. In the book I am currently writing on 'Geographical Imaginaries and Affectivity in Contemporary Cinema in Argentina, Chile and Brazil', I analyse different films that privilege displacements into 'open space' in order to configure new 'affective geographies': *La forma exacta de las islas* (Daniel Casabé y Edgardo Dieleke, 2012), *Radiografía del desierto* (Mariano Donoso, 2013), *Balnearios* (2002) and *Historias extraordinarias* (2008) by Mairano Llinás, *Liverpool* (2008) and *Jauja* (2013) by Lisandro Alonso, *Rabia* (2008), by Albertina Carri, *Las aguas del olvido* and *Toponimia* by Jonathan Perel, *El rostro* (2014) and *La orilla que se abisma* (2008) by Gustavo Fontán, *Ex-Isto* (2005), *Accidente* (2006) and *Andarilho* (2007) by Cão Guimarães, *Cinema, Aspirinas e Urubus* (2005), by Marcelo Gomes, *Árido* movie (2006) by Lirio Ferreira, *O Céu de Suely* (2006) by Karim Aïnouz, *Sertão de acrílico azul piscina* (2004) and *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* (2009) by Marcelo Gomes and Karim Aïnouz, *Mutum* (2007) by Sandra Kogut, *Serras da Desordem* (2006) by Andrea Tonnacci, *Cofralandes* (2002–2004), *Las soledades* and *La recta provincia* (2007) by Raúl Ruiz, *El cielo, la tierra y la lluvia* (2008), *Tres semanas después* (2010) and *Verano* (2011) by José Luis Torres Leiva, *Huacho* (2009) and *Sentados frente al fuego* (2012) by Alejandro Fernández Almendros, *Turistas* (2009) by Alicia Scherson, *Tierra en movimiento* (2014) by Tiziana Panizza, *De jueves a domingo* (2010) and *La isla* (2014) by Dominga Sotomayor, *La mamá de mi abuela le contó a mi abuela* (2004) by Ignacio Agüero, *Nostalgia de la luz* (2010) and *El botón de nácar* (2015) by Patricio Guzmán and *Los durmientes* (2014) by Enrique Ramírez are some of the audio-visual works I look at in this study of displacement, spatial practices and affectivity.
5. It is not just in cinema that there has been a renewed interest in the spheres of privacy/intimacy and affectivity. In the field of human geography itself there is

increasing interest in the thorough exploration of the *spatiality of emotion and affect*. In this vein, Joyce Davidson, Louis Bondi and Mick Smith (2005) propose an ‘emotional geography’ that understands emotions in terms of their socio-spatial mediations rather than as merely subjective mental states. On the other hand, in ‘Emotions and Affect in Recent Human Geography’ Steve Pile (2010) suggests that whilst studies such as those of Davidson and Bondi refer alternately to ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’ there are differences between these two notions in that emotional geography puts the stress on emotions that can be expressed, whilst affective geographies insist on those affects that remain outside (textual, linguistic or visual) representation.

6. In new geography studies, scale is not simply a fact or methodological tool. Scale is in itself ‘plastic’ because its deformations are linked to certain dynamics. It is not a milieu in which events develop: rather the development of certain events changes scale. Thus rather than a ‘magnifying glass that lets us see phenomena’, scale is to be understood as a tool with which to understand relations, negotiations and tensions between actors and space. It is plastic because it is a network of dynamic relationships that expand and contract through the interactions of objects and persons (Jazairy and Vaughn 2011, 2). If scale serves to understand the changing relations between the subject and its environment, it is perhaps also a place of play and the unfolding of dynamic relations with others. That is, we have to think scale from an affective as well as a geo-epistemological dimension, as one of the ways in which subjects establish relations of similarity, distance and proximity with others.
7. In ‘Tourists and Vagabonds’ Zygmunt Bauman says that tourists begin their journeys ‘by choice’, because their place of origin is insufficiently attractive or offers too few surprises. This exit from routine and the search for adventure, however, is made easier by the comfortable feeling of knowing that they can always go home (1997, 116–117). So displacement here is not an instance of nomadic wandering, in the same way that human relationships in a society of liquid modernity move away from the danger of love understood as ‘a creative impulse ... full of risks’ (2008, 21).
8. This intensity is linked to the idea of wounded masculinity. The protagonist is a man whose wife has left him, who is suffering from *dor de cotovelo* or ‘heartache’, a motif and affective modulation that is typical of *brega*, the romantic music which dominates the sound track. The decision to include this type of music on the sound track is not only linked to the need to have an ‘accurate sound’ (the local radios in the spaces where the protagonist moves around in fact play this type of music) but also helps redirect – albeit only in a certain way and even then only partially – the open and indefinite affectivity of the images that make up the visual track towards Renato’s individual emotions, as he goes through the suffering caused by the break-up with his partner.
9. In 2001 they had simultaneous projections of the material playing as an installation in the exhibition *O Cinema dos Pequenos Gestos (Des) Narrativos*, [The Cinema of Small (De)Narrative Gestures] and in 2004 they showed the medium length documentary *Sertão de acrílico azul piscina* at the Itaú Foundation. Finally in 2009 they went back to the images they had taken in 1999, put them together with a dramatic structure and with an actor’s voice-over to create the fiction feature *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*. For an analysis of the uses of the personal

archive and the cross-over between documentary and fiction in the work of Karim Ainouz and Marcelo Gomes, see Vieira and Dídimo (2013)

10. Laura Marks takes the notion of 'haptic visuality' from Alöis Riegel, an art historian who specialised in textiles and who tried to give an account of the way a carpet was perceived. This was through a form of vision that 'touched' the person who was looking at it rather than through a mode of optical vision (162). This distinction between haptic and optical crops up numerous times in the course of the 20th century, especially in *A Thousand Plateaus* where Deleuze and Guattari define 'smooth spaces' as those navigated by means of a haptic perception of the immediate environment, by contrast with 'striated spaces' that correspond to a more distant optical vision. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Marks plays with this fluidity between optical and haptic visualities in different media. Riegel also inspires Deleuze in his studies on art: when he analyses Francis Bacon's work, he suggests that painting is not simply a historical representation or meaning, but a language addressing the body, a language with the power to generate determinate sensations: 'real sight discovers in itself a function of touch which is proper to it, that belongs only to it, and is different from its optical function. One could say then that a painter paints with his eyes but only in as much as he touches with his eyes' (2005, 158). Then in his studies on cinema Deleuze touches briefly on the haptic dimension. The Deleuzian 'affect-image' calls forth a visceral response from the spectator and takes us away from the dominant mode of the 'movement-image' because it prevents catharsis in action and opens us up to an experience of time. Marks herself recognises her connection to Deleuze's typology of images: 'Haptic images are actually a subset of what Deleuze (1994) referred to as optical images: those images that are so 'thin' and unclichééd that the viewer must bring his or her resources of memory and imagination to complete them. The haptic images force the viewer to contemplate the image itself instead of being pulled into narrative. Thus it has a place in Deleuze's time-image cinema. Optical visuality, by contrast, assumes that all resources the viewer requires are available in the image' (163).
11. How can cinema appeal to the senses that it cannot technically represent, such as smell and touch? How do haptic images destabilise the dividing line between the spectator-subject and the characters on the screen? Basing herself on Deleuze, Laura Marks extends his idea by articulating it with another set of concerns. Firstly, from a formal point of view, Marks tries to describe haptic images, setting out how this haptic visuality is seen, but also what produces these images in the spectators. According to Marks, in optical visuality the eye perceives objects from a distance that is enough to isolate them as forms in space. By contrast with this separation between the seeing body and the object, haptic visuality is a more close-up way of seeing, since it tends to move across the surface of the objects before sinking into an illusionary depth, and seeks not so much to distinguish forms as discern textures. In this sense, haptic vision is more based on touch and is closer to a corporeal form of perception, as if the eyes themselves were 'organs of touch' (162). While still concerned with the 'surface of the image' Laura Marks nevertheless differs from Deleuze when she posits the existence of a phenomenological subject, which derives in large part from Vivian Sobchack's work (*The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992). If Marks thinks films are produced for a spectator to feel and to be part of an act of perception, for Deleuze the array of

movement-images that make up cinema addresses no one in particular: they are an appearance where nothing exists, ‘not even an eye’ (Deleuze 1992, 59). For Marks, in haptic visuality, the spectator’s gaze is not involved symbolically in identifying or dominating the image on the screen, but in creating a tactile space of intersubjectivity between spectator and screen. So, the critical discourse of ‘haptic visuality’ moves away from virtual or abstract and decontextualised spaces, to come closer to the physical, to embodied experience. Moving from Deleuze’s ‘visceral gaze’ to a focus that seeks to understand the ‘senses of perception’ in terms of a sensual and tactile proximity, Marks celebrates the power of images to destabilise film’s ‘system of suture’.

12. Reis Filho analyses a number of films that involve haptic visuality, including *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo*, and stresses the sense of futurity that can be glimpsed in this type of image. None the less, in my reading of *Sertão de acrílico azul piscina*, I also think that Karim Aïnouz and Marcelo Gomes’s cinema transcends ‘becoming’ and makes it possible to touch the past. The tiny gestures of this travel documentary poetically re-map a space by the affective appropriation of inherited figures of the landscape, real traces and echoes of an archive of images and sounds of the desert. As if dealing with remains and residues, the allegorical meanings of the landscape are the object of an exercise of an affective gaze made possible by the predominantly haptic visuality of the documentary. In this sense, we are not just dealing with sensations transmitted in the course of an idle journey. In the physical displacement and the affective reading there is a sort of historical trajectory that plays with sounds and images of the *sertão* that belong to the cinema and literature of previous decades. Like an echo of this affective matrix, this new writing of the desert stages the absence of the ‘people’ and the drift towards a poetics of the everyday existence of ordinary human beings (Depetris Chauvin 2014a, 188–189).
13. Iris Sadek (2010) deals with the relations between spatial practices of mobility and the world of affects in fiction film and finds that in films like *O Céu de Suely* or *Eu Tu Eles*, the point of view and itineraries of the protagonists turn the *sertão* into a ‘practiced place’ with a private or intimate meaning. Alessandra Brandão (2012) has also looked at various films of ‘dislocation’ in which the affective gaze is preferentially centred on the paths that women take. In my study of *La forma exacta de las islas* I suggest a notion of ‘practices of the landscape form’ (in the cinematic, anthropological and geographical sense of the term) that can ‘spatialise’ the work of mourning (Depetris Chauvin 2014c); in films by Raúl Ruiz Patricio Guzmán the ‘spatialisation of memory’ is associated with ‘spatial practices’ that articulate new ‘affective cartographies’ (Depetris Chauvin 2015a, 2015b). A perspective based on affective geographies allows for alternative readings of a similarly diverse corpus of films. For example, in a more playful sense, some narratives of displacement appeal to affectivity and humour to offer impossible geographies (Depetris Chauvin 2014b and Carla Lois and Depetris Chauvin 2015) or reinvent spaces that have already been traversed, and these privilege work on the haptic spaces of the image and movement (Depetris Chauvin 2014a). We should also note that Laura Podalsky (2011) and Cynthia Tompkins (2013) have explored the affective dimension in their books on recent Latin American cinema, the former from a theoretical framework that uses ideas of the emotions, whilst the latter is based more on Deleuzian theory.

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