

ROADS TO THE SELF: UNEARTHING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ROAD MOVIE

by
Elizabeth W. Higgs

A thesis submitted to the World Cultures and Literature Department,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in World Cultures and Literature, Global Cinema

Chair of Committee: Alessandro Carrera

Committee member: Julie Tolliver

Committee member: Maria Theresa Hernandez

University of Houston
May 2022

ABSTRACT

This study explores ten “road movies” made between 1945 and 2005 chosen as exemplary in global cinema. The films originated in the U.S., Italy, Germany, Brazil, Japan, Morocco and France. The project is based on library research and film viewing and uses eclectic methods and theories embracing mainly phenomenological and humanistic approaches. This thesis approaches the film narratives in selected “road movies” as “aesthetic artifacts.” The filmmakers who created these road movies use the “bricolage” available to them and which resonates with their film audiences to assemble their own mythical worlds and invite us into them. The research describes the stages of the journeys of self-discovery and the ways that film techniques reveal the psychological journeys taken by the key characters.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
I. WHAT IS A ROAD MOVIE?	1
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	13
What is a “road movie?”	13
Humanism and phenomenology.....	16
The stages of the journey.....	17
Theoretical Approaches.....	19
The film as aesthetic artifact.....	19
Filmmakers as “bricoleurs,” the “bricolage” of cinema.....	20
The influence of neorealism.....	22
Social chaos, times of transition.....	24
The context for these road movies, how they fit into cinematic history.....	25
Conclusion.....	27
II. ROADS TO THE SELF: ROAD MOVIES FROM 1945 TO 1974.....	29
Introduction.....	29
Self-discovery, cinematic techniques, “bricolage,” films as “aesthetic artifacts”.....	29
“Detour”.....	31
Introduction to the film “Detour”.....	31
“Detour” film narrative.....	33
The “departure” stage.....	34
Chance encounter #1: the “Heimlich/unheimlich” stage.....	35
Chance encounter #2: the “femme fatale”	36
The “border-crossing” stage.....	38
The “return” stage.....	40
Some concluding observations concerning “Detour”.....	41
Some historic realities revealed in “Detour”	42
“The Hitchhiker”	45
Introduction to the film “The Hitchhiker”	45

American <i>film noir</i> and “the American” dream.....	45
Unique features of Lupino’s <i>film noir</i> style displayed in “The Hitchhiker”	47
“The Hitchhiker” film narrative.....	48
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	51
The Chance-encounter.....	53
The “departure” stage.....	55
The “border crossing” stage.....	56
The “return” stage.....	75
Some concluding observations regarding “The Hitchhiker”.....	76
The “bricolage” of “The Hitchhiker”	78
“La Strada”	79
Introduction to the film “La Strada”.....	79
The “departure” stage.....	83
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	83
The clowns, Fellini’s “bricolage”: The strong man, Gelsomina, and The Fool.....	83
Camera techniques in “La Strada”.....	85
Chance encounter: The Fool.....	87
Fellini’s Clowns, the role of The Fool.....	87
Gelsomina’s “leitmotif” and the story of the pebble.....	93
The “border-crossing” stage.....	96
The “return” stage.....	97
Some concluding observations about “La Strada”	98
“Journey to Italy”	101
Introduction to the film “Journey to Italy”.....	101
The departure.....	102
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	103
The “border-crossing” stage.....	105
The “return”	108

Some concluding observations about “Journey to Italy”	110
“Il Sorpasso”	114
Introduction to the film, “Il Sorpasso”	114
The setting.....	115
“Il Sorpasso” film narrative.....	115
The characters: Risi’s “bricolage”	117
The departure.....	117
Recurring theme: Broken machines.....	120
Roberto’s family.....	121
Bruno’s family.....	123
The “return”	124
Some concluding observations about “Il Sorpasso”	124
“Alice in the Cities”	125
Introduction to the film “Alice in the Cities”	125
The departure.....	125
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	126
The Chance-encounter: Alice and her mother.....	127
The “border-crossing:” leaving the U.S.	129
The “return”	130
Some concluding observations about “Alice in the Cities”	132
Conclusion.....	134
III. ROADS TO THE SELF: ROAD MOVIES FROM 1989 TO 2005....	139
Introduction.....	139
“Powwow Highway”	139
Introduction to the film, “Powwow Highway”	139
“Powwow Highway” film narrative.....	141
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i> for Philbert.....	143
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i> for Buddy Redbow.....	148
The “bricolage” of “Powwow Highway,” ancestor figures.....	149
The “departure”	150
Chance encounters.....	153

Border-crossing: Philbert seeks a spiritual vision.....	157
The “bricolage” of “Powwow Highway,” tricksters.....	165
The return.....	167
Buddy’s transformation.....	169
Some concluding observations about “Powwow Highway”	170
“Central Station”.....	177
Introduction to the film, “Central Station”.....	177
“Central Station” film narrative.....	178
The “bricolage” of “Central Station”.....	179
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	182
The departure.....	183
Chance encounters.....	185
Border crossing: Redemption in Bom Jesus.....	188
The historical and political context for “Central Station”.....	193
Film techniques: the colors in the settings.....	195
The return: a new “normal”.....	197
Some concluding observations about “Central Station”.....	199
“Le Grande Voyage”.....	200
Introduction to the film, “Le Grande Voyage”.....	200
Film narrative for “Le Grande Voyage”.....	201
The departure.....	202
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	203
Border crossing.....	203
Chance encounter #1: Mustafa.....	210
Chance encounter #2: the woman at the border.....	213
The return.....	219
Some concluding observations about “Le Grande Voyage”.....	220
“Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles”.....	221
Introduction.....	221
Film narrative for “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles”.....	223

<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	225
The departure.....	227
Border crossing.....	229
A second border crossing.....	231
The return.....	233
Conclusion.....	238
IV. UNEARTHING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ROAD MOVIE: IDENTITY ISSUES, FILM TECHNIQUES, “BRICOLAGE,” STAGES.....	240
Introduction.....	240
“The phenomenology of the soul”.....	240
Pairings: fathers and sons.....	242
Pairings: adults and children.....	243
Husband-wife pairings.....	244
Pairings: two men.....	244
How women are presented.....	245
Identity issues.....	247
Two sets of tools: film techniques, and cultural “bricolage”.....	249
Film techniques”.....	249
Film noir lighting and psychological states in “The Hitchhiker”.....	250
A note about techniques: noir films and the post-war period.....	251
Music and psychological states in “La Strada”.....	252
Camera techniques and psychological states in “Alice in the Cities”.....	252
Camera techniques, color, and psychological states in “Central Station”....	253
Color and psychological states in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles”..	253
“Bricolage”.....	253
The clowns, Fellini’s “bricolage:” The strong man, Gelsomina, and The Fool.....	255
The characters in “Il Sorpasso:” Risi’s “bricolage”.....	257
Sacred sites as “bricolage” in “Powwow Highway”.....	257

Trickster tales as “bricolage” in “Powwow Highway”.....	258
Stages of the journey.....	260
<i>Heimlich/unheimlich</i>	260
The departure stage.....	264
The border-crossing stage.....	268
The return stage.....	273
Conclusions.....	278
REFERENCES.....	281

LIST OF TABLES

3.1 Philbert's and Buddy's Character Contrasts.....	157
3.2 Clashes and Outcomes.....	173

LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Travelers from the future.....	2
1.2 Al stops at a late-night diner in “Detour”.....	3
1.3 “The Hitchhiker” kidnaps his victims.....	4
1.4 The clown and the “strongman” perform in a travelling circus.....	5
1.5 A tour of Pompeii presented within the film, “Journey to Italy”	6
1.6 Two unlikely “road buddies” in “Il Sorpasso”	7
1.7 Writer, Philip Winter, sits “Under the Boardwalk” in “Alice in the Cities”.....	8
1.8 Philbert on the mountaintop in “Powwow Highway”....	9
1.9 The wide-open bright horizons presented in the sertão after we leave Rio’s Central Station	10
1.10 A Moroccan patriarch and his son, Reda, begin their drive from France to Mecca.....	11
1.11 Yunnan province shown in striking shades of turquoise and jade green.....	12
2.1 Vera glares sullenly at Al as they sit stranded in a hotel in “Detour”	38
2.2 Over-exposure, “hot spots” in an image from the Hitchhiker by Ida Lupino.....	48
2.3 The Chance-encounter: Two friends pick up a serial killer in “The Hitchhiker”	53
2.4 The scene in the grocery store: “Go you with God, little one.”	64
2.5 Desert scene: The weaker of the two men might be considered the <i>femme fatale</i>	72
2.6 Gelsomina is by the seaside gathering rushes as her mother is calling her home.....	81
2.7 Zampano (a kind of “beast”) does his strongman act.....	82
2.8 Gelsomina in clown-paint alongside a circus clown.....	84
2.9 Gelsomina learns her song from The Fool.....	92

2.10 Richard Basehart wearing angel wings, playing The Fool.....	95
2.11 Opening scene, “Where are we?” in “Journey to Italy”	103
2.12 Alex and Katherine embrace in the final scene of the film.....	109
2.13 Katherine visits the Temple of Apollo.....	113
2.14 “Il Sorpasso” opening scene, Rome, a vacant city, everything closing for the “ferragosto” vacation.....	116
2.15 The departure in “Il Sorpasso,” overtaking cars, a metaphor for the anticipated economic overtaking of other economies by Italy	118
2.16 Philip and Alice begin to form a bond.....	131
3.1 The “war pony” in “Powwow Highway”	145
3.2 Chance encounter at a diner in “Powwow Highway”	153
3.3 Philbert with a shapeshifter, trancing on the mountain.....	158
3.4 Buddy and Philbert chanting evening prayer.....	161
3.5 Dancing at a powwow in the film.....	162
3.6 Vinicius de Oliveira, a neo-realist film practice: hiring non-professional actors.....	177
3.7 A chance encounter with a truck driver, Dora and Josué “on the road” on the Brazilian frontier.....	186
3.8 Dora and Josué in the Bom Jesus plaza.....	189
3.9 Dora and Josué ride with pilgrims into Brazil’s northeast.....	194
3.10 Dora, the cynical schoolteacher, in her dark and cramped apartment.....	195
3.11 The dark images at the beginning of the film contrast with the open colorful images at the end of the film.....	196
3.12 The housing development in the Amazon frontier town where Josué’s brothers live..	197
3.13 Josué runs freely through the streets of a Brazilian frontier town.....	198
3.14 The Blue Mosque in Istanbul.....	204

3.15 The money exchange in Belgrade, an eloquent conversation without words.....	207
3.16 On a snowy mountain, the father and son stop to eat.....	209
3.17 In Turkey, a chance encounter with Mustafa, who invites Reda to smoke a hookah with him.....	211
3.18 Reda sits atop a hill in the desert. He does not want to continue the journey.....	215
3.19 Moonwalking in the desert sand.....	217
3.20 Getting on the roof to find a cellphone signal in a remote village in China.....	221
3.21 Geographically stunning scene in shades of rose.....	223
3.22 The opening scene, a fishing village, in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” shades of metallic blue and gray, almost giving the appearance of black and white film...	224

CHAPTER I. WHAT IS A ROAD MOVIE?

Introduction

“Cave into the Past”

June 10, 2021

I stare at the bone
Behind the glass,
Paleolithic reindeer
Etched into its surface,
Unfinished.

I smooth my fingers
Across my stone tablet,
The contours
Unclear,
But full of promise.

The chisel strikes.
The burin slides,
Longing
To find new form,
To free the beauty
That lies within.
Unfinished tears,
Unfinished fears,
Hiding in the crevices.

Each day it begins.
Each night
It ends,
Unfinished.
A deeper meaning
Flares,
Unfinished,
Endless delight.
(Personal poem)

==

Part of being human is our creative urge to explore. This thesis is also motivated by that need. It explores films as aesthetic artifacts, and as journeys of self-discovery. These

films are evidence of that human need to discover, to create order out of chaos, to express ourselves and our views of the challenges we face. Our journey remains unfinished, but in this thesis, we will see where others have gone before us by entering the worlds presented in these films.

Because this writer is an anthropologist, approaching films as aesthetic artifacts is second nature to me. If I were to imagine an artifact that might be left behind by a fictive traveler from each film described here for a future traveler to find, I would suggest the following: for “Detour,” a telephone from the 1950s; for “The Hitchhiker,” a black leather jacket; for “La Strada,” a pebble; for “Journey to Italy,” a body cast from Pompeii; for “Il Sorpasso,” a 45 record; for “Alice in the Cities,” a polaroid photo; for “Powwow Highway,” a car door handle (for rolling up the window); for “Central Station,” a handwritten letter placed in an envelope ready to be mailed; for “Le Grande Voyage,” a cellphone lying atop a small pile of white sand; and for “Driving Alone for Thousands of Miles,” a fisherman’s boat whistle which emits a playful sounding high whir.



Figure 1.1 Travelers from the future

Image source: Personal photo made at the Blaffer museum, UH campus

To begin the exploration of these films, imagine yourself as a person living in the future (see travelers above) and you are envisioning what life may have been like for those

depicted in the films. You enter a room with these artifacts, and as you pick up each one, you activate a preview of the films.

This is the movie preview for the first film journey--“Detour.” “You’re not going where you thought you were going, a voice-over says. “Meet Al in the ‘Night Hawks’ diner.”



Figure 1.2 Al stops at a late-night diner in “*Detour*” (1945, Edgar G. Ulmer).

Image source : <https://moreliafilmfest.com/peliculas-que-influenciaron-a-david-lynch/>

Here is a preview for the second film journey— “The Hitchhiker.” You feel as if you’ve been snatched from the freedom you thought you had won. A man with an eye that never closes is glaring at you. “You’re going to take me where I want to go,” a sinister voice says.



Figure 1.3 “The Hitchhiker” kidnaps his victims (1953, Ida Lupino).

Image source:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=ZnBKAU5X&id=D3FC3134DD0B23F2477E8C98C3642655B33F92C4&thid=OIP.ZnBKAU5Xw0lomGr-DGvVugHaDz&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fi0.wp.com%2fwww.themacguffin.it%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2f2020%2f06%2fthe-hitch-hiker-ida-lupino-2.jpg%3fresize%3d1050%252C540%26ssl%3d1&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fh%2fid%2fR.66704a014e57c34968986afe0c6bd5ba%3frik%3dxJI%252fs1UmZMOYjA%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=540&expw=1050&q=The+Hitchhiker+Lupino&simid=608012647429903285&FORM=IRPRST&ck=8F8481924FAB6210EF89E0B06EADC1BE&selectedIndex=4&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

The movie preview for “La Strada,” goes like this. No matter which path you take, you find yourself back where you began, as if you are invisibly tethered. A Chaplin-esque clown enters, blowing a small trumpet, announcing the entry of a strongman and his gravelly voice (Anthony Quinn’s) declares, “Watch me break the chains.”



Figure 1.4 The clown and the “strongman” perform in a travelling circus.

Image source:

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=sWzR0u80&id=1D09D19B895C9EED2C4B5A4D38C1ADF27D4BC168&thid=OIP.sWzR0u80jyvk_ZAtR2N6fQHaFj&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.b16cd1d2ef348f2be4fd902d47637a7d%3frik%3daMFLffKtwThNWg%26riu%3dhttp%253a%252f%252fblogs.warwick.ac.uk%252fimages%252fmichaelwalford%252f2009%252f01%252f01%252fla_strada_7.jpg%253fmaxWidth%253d500%26ehk%3dNrFfEI2vYudImRUckmcEBJOkXOqYgWgf3biylV89YSs%253d%26risl%3d%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=300&expw=400&q=Gelsomina+in+La+Strada&simid=608055038754978048&FORM=IRPRST&ck=67ED5F19AE20EEB72EE20C35F37071A4&selectedIndex=137&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

Here is the preview for the fourth experience— “Journey to Italy.” You are in your car on the ferry to Naples. You see Vesuvius. The ferry captain announces, “Do not exit your car during our crossing. When you smell the sulfur dioxide in the air coming from around Pompeii, you will understand.”



Figure 1.5 A tour of Pompeii presented within the film, “Journey to Italy.”

Image source :

<https://michaelgloversmith.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/voyage.jpg?w=300&h=225>

Here is a preview for the fifth experience— “Il Sorpasso.” You are in a speedy roadster passing everyone by, honking your horn. The young man in the passenger seat exclaims, “I feel like I never lived until the last two days.”



Figure 1.6 Two unlikely “road buddies” in “Il Sorpasso.”

Image source:

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=V39HxUKD&id=95D144DF743C8FE24BB18BD43B404DB7C5750105&thid=OIP.V39HxUKD9KACe_fXMeVXrwHaEK&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fs3.amazonaws.com%2fcriterion-production%2fcarousel-files%2f577f47c54283f4a0027bf7d731e557af.jpeg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.577f47c54283f4a0027bf7d731e557af%3frik%3dBQF1xbdNQDvUiw%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=900&expw=1600&q=Il+Sorpasso+film&simid=608031051367852564&FORM=IRPRST&ck=5690D2BB4FA3337266C1BE34654F8CDF&selectedIndex=8&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

Here is a preview for the sixth experience—“Alice in the Cities.” A man is sitting under the boardwalk, half asleep, listening to the American pop song from the seventies, “Under the Boardwalk” playing through his car radio, the car parked nearby. A young girl walks up, “Please help me; I can’t find my mother.”

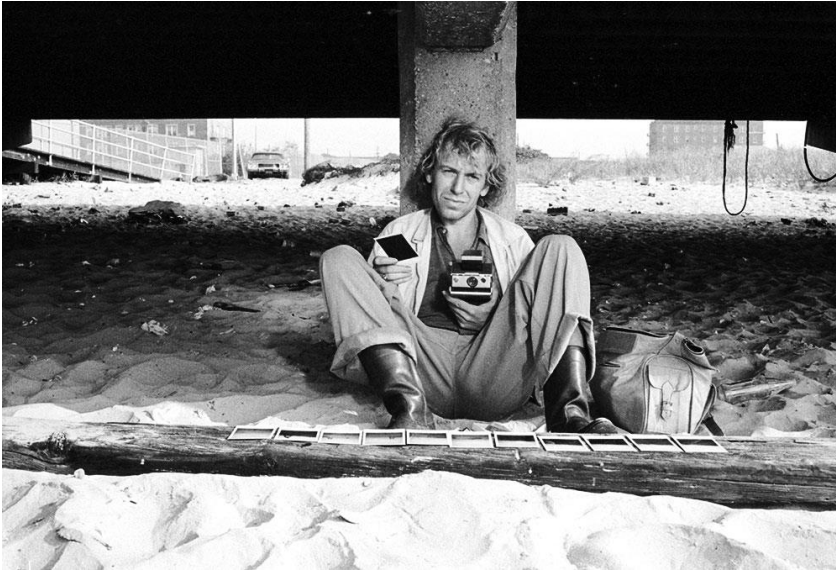


Figure 1.7 Writer, Philip Winter, sits “Under the Boardwalk” in “Alice in the Cities.”

Image source: “Alice in the Cities,” Wim Wenders Stiftung Foundation. Accessed at:

The preview for the film journey, “Powwow Highway” begins with musical lyrics that say, “Can you hear me? Can you see me?” You see a man standing on a high mountain top with a fresh breeze blowing through his long hair. You notice his turquoise cowboy belt buckle. He then says to you, “Wihio, the Creator of the Universe, will play a little trick on the White man.”

Figure 1.8 Philbert on the mountain top in “Powwow Highway.” (See the Hershey candy bar offering and the ribbons.)



Image source :
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/510877151453434504/>

Your next movie preview, for “Central Station,” begins as you see a woman standing at a blue double-sided wooden gate alongside a boy. They stand on a white sandy path looking toward a vast bright horizon with a simple house and small mound-like hills in the distance. You hear her saying to the boy, “If you ever miss me, take a look at our little portrait. I say this because I fear that you’ll forget me as well. I miss my father. I miss everything.”

Figure 1.9 The wide-open spaces and bright horizons presented in the sertão after we leave Rio's Central Station.



Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=p%2b7WGf5t&id=7D0DDA0984C2D163FA3A506F2629C796AA135443&thid=OIP.p-7WGf5tGcBxG5JrNB_11QHaEw&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fwww.mosalingua.com%2ffiles%2f2015%2f01%2ffilms-to-inspire-you-to-travel-central-station.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.a7eed619fe6d19c0711b926b341ff5d5%3frik%3dQ1QTqpbHKSZvUA%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=549&expw=856&q=Central+station+Brazilian+movie&simid=608008068994192072&FORM=IRP_RST&ck=ED41BDD6DE0BA72185846C4E0EBCF92B&selectedIndex=19&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

The preview for the film journey presented in “Le Grande Voyage,” begins as a voice announces: “You’re about to make a 3,000-mile journey from Provence to Mecca. You will

be accompanied by a Moroccan patriarch and his French-born son.” You hear the beginning of a conversation they are having:

Reda: Why didn't you fly to Mecca? It's a lot simpler.

The Father: When the waters of the ocean rise to the heavens, they lose their bitterness to become pure again.

Figure 1.10 A Moroccan patriarch and his son, Reda, begin their drive from Morocco to Mecca.



Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=KNdowSCT&id=8E3471189C493E7FDBB5A7842A859D36CCEA803A&thid=OIP.KNdowSCTV_1FIww7GHILYAHaFj&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.28d768c1209357f945230c3b18794b60%3Frik%3DOoDqzDadhSqEpw%26riu%3Dhttp%253a%252f%252fi.ytimg.com%252fvi%252fGHwyHyIuFhk%252fhqdefault.jpg%26ehk%3DgVTbb5MN3TDuky2YNMh3LyDdgw8g%252fSgYRhAGq9Bh9GY%253d%26risl%3D%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&exph=360&expw=480&q=Le+Grande+Voyage&simid=607989690832662878&form=IRPRST&ck=783668EDAAC2C6962EAA9F92C644D61F&selectedindex=11&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&vt=0&sim=11

The film preview for “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles” begins as a voice over says, “We meet ourselves time and time again in a thousand disguises on the path of life.” (Quote from Carl Jung).

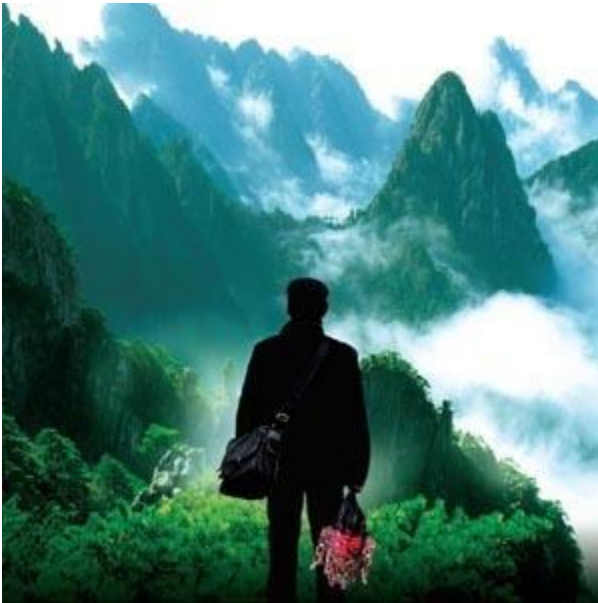


Figure 1.11 Yunnan province shown in striking shades of turquoise and jade green.

Image source :

<http://thingsasian.com/story/film-review-riding-alone-thousands-miles>

This thesis explores “road movies” as stories of self-discovery. The research work summarized in this thesis comprises library research and film viewing. The methods, theories and approaches are eclectic embracing mainly phenomenological and humanistic approaches. The literature review in the current chapter, Chapter 1, defines the “road movie,” outlines the theoretical approaches employed in the current study, and addresses how “road movies” can be used to explore certain aspects of social and cultural history in various regions of the world.

I have chosen ten films, made between 1945 and 2005, for analysis as exemplary global cinematic productions within that genre. I will address the films in chronological order and they are grouped according to the geographic regions in which they were made. Because of significant geographic and time differences, I have divided the analysis into two chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 present an analysis of the films in greater detail, describing the stages of the journeys of self-discovery, and illustrating how certain film techniques are used to reveal the psychological journeys taken by the key characters. The film discussions will also situate each film within the international cultural, political, and social contexts which existed in the decade in which the film was produced.

Chapter 2 will cover “Detour” (1945, Edgar G. Ulmer, U.S.), “The Hitchhiker” (1953, Ida Lupino, U.S.), “La Strada” (1954, Federico Fellini, Italy), “Journey to Italy” (1954, Roberto Rossellini, Italy), “Il “Sorpasso” (1963, Dino Risi, Italy), and “Alice in the Cities” (1974, Wim Wenders, Germany), produced during the years 1945 through 1974. The remaining films will be discussed in Chapter 3: “Powwow Highway” (1989, Jonathan Wacks, U.S./Native American); “Central Station” (1998, Walter Salles, Brazil); “Le Grand Voyage” (2004, Ismael Ferroukhi, Morocco and France); and finally, “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles” (2005, Yimou Zhang, Japan). Chapter 4, the final chapter of the thesis, summarizes the research conclusions.

Literature Review

What is a “road movie?”

“Road movies” developed within global cinematic history during the period in which neorealist films emerged (Wagstaff 2007, 28). French film critics have used metaphors like

“wandering” to describe neorealist films in general. A road movie is “a fluid and open-ended genre which uses the narrative trajectory of road as an extended metaphor of quest and discovery through which to approach fundamental concepts of identity” (Everett, 2004:19; as cited in Pinazza 2014, 3). “The road” has been used in films and novels to represent “an unanchored space . . . a space outside of social order” (Brigham, 2015, 6). Road movies use displacement as a path to self-discovery (Sadlier 2013). It is important to note that, while road narratives may present “a time of reveling in a free-floating state beyond ordinary spatio-temporal bounds,” they often offer commentary on “the cultural and social order” when the travelers return to their places of origin (Brigham, 2015, 6-7). Road movies, at times, may be exploring redefinitions of national identity or diasporic identity and they may address social chaos in times of transition (Pinazza 2014, 3).

Costanzo (2014, 295) has posed the following questions regarding road movies: “What does the trail, the road, or the highway mean for Americans and other people of the world? What defines the road movie as a genre: its characters, stories, look, and themes? Why does the genre appear at particular times in history? Where has the road taken us, and where is it likely to lead?”

There are several essential ingredients in road movies: the vehicle (motor bike or car), the land travelled through, and the road. The road may symbolize freedom and independence, but the detours taken on the roads in the films are always important. The detours occur in the alleys of the *film noir* of the 1940s as well as in the “road race” comedies of the 1970s (Costanzo 2014, 297). In the journeys shown, the stops allow an opportunity to explore the peoples from the region or country being featured and the values and challenges the protagonists confront “on the road” (Costanzo 2014, 297). In road movies, we find a

range of characters from differing social groups. Usually, the two main protagonists are men, but not always (Costanzo 2014, 297).

Ebert said of Kiarostami's "10" (filmed in Tehran, Iran, in 2002): "Two digital cameras, a car and your actors, and off you go." Despite this simplicity, the stories that can be told using "road movies" can be multi-layered and complex. Stories of the road (whether presented in films or in literature) lend themselves easily to explore familiar human experiences, "familiar binaries: home/away; domesticity/mobility; conformity/rebellion; stasis/movement; confinement/liberation" (Brigham, 2015, 8).

Certain camera techniques deployed in "road movies" enhance the story being told, encouraging the audience to carefully focus on the characters' psychological struggles, or various aspects of the experience of being "on the road." The visual style of road movies includes fluid camerawork which captures the travelers in motion. For example, in "Easy Rider," the camerawork reveals "Two figures speeding against the awe-inspiring backdrop of the American southwest" (Costanzo 2014, 298). Sweeping panoramas as well as point-of-view shots capture the experience of being on the road. Mobile camera and jump cuts which disrupt the flow of the action (from French New Wave cinematic influences) may lead the audience to refocus. Mirrors and montages became part of the "grammar" of the road film (Costanzo, 2014). Sometimes, montages show brief shots in quick succession to show us different angles of the journey and sum up its history. A rear-view mirror can shift our perspective to show us the past or the future (Costanzo 2014, 298). The film analysis presented in Chapters 2 and 3 in the current thesis will call attention to some of the ways that these techniques, as part of each of these filmmakers' "tool kits" are used to emphasize key story elements in the characters' journeys of self-discovery.

Humanism and phenomenology

The current work is fueled by a humanist impulse. Part of the human condition is seeking a sense of belonging. As we see the characters in these road movies engage in such a quest, their journey becomes our journey. Kiarostami (as cited in Geoff, 2005, 10) has said: “Cinema is--or ought to be—about analyzing individual human experience and how you can find yourself within that subjectivity.” The road movies in the present study are film stories that are quests for personal meaning. Filmmakers use the gazes of their cameras to take us along with them on these quests for a sense of belonging, personal meaning, and self-discovery.

Fellini used the search, journey, or quest as a metaphor for the search for meaning in life (Bondanella and Pacchioni 2007, 154). The literal journey “is less important to Fellini than the figurative distance the characters travel” (Bondanella and Pacchioni 2007, 154). His “La Strada” concerns “the phenomenology of the soul” (Bondanella and Pacchioni 2007, 154). Fellini has a concern for the concept of grace, one which is non-theological and not dependent on Catholic dogmas (Carrera 2019). This “grace” attaches to “existential moments where characters realize the beauty of human existence” (Bondanella and Pacchioni 2007, 155).

Andre Bazin has linked neorealist narrative to the philosophy of phenomenology which stresses experience. Neorealist films and “road movies” prioritize recreation of the “experience” of their protagonists rather than “furnishing the viewer with material ‘facts’ about their situation (you almost never find out exactly how much anyone is paid in a neorealist narrative, but you always know what it feels like to be poor)” (Wagstaff 2007, 28, 29).

Wagstaff describes Fellini, De Sica, and Rossellini (“Journey to Italy,” 1954), simply as humanists (2007, 62). He argues that these filmmakers are not “political ideologues” “nor are they conspicuous mouthpieces for the political ideologies of others” (Wagstaff 2007, 62). Their “morality” comes from the value they give to individual human potential. They describe their films “in terms of love of one’s neighbor (Rossellini), of overcoming man’s sense of being a ‘monad’ (Fellini), [and] of the struggle against solitude and isolation” (De Sica) (Wagstaff 2007, 62).

The stages of the journey

Road narratives have plots which center on “unsettling processes” such as crossing borders, achieving distance, reinventing identity, and “accessing, negotiation and disrupting spaces” (Brigham, 2015, 8). In short, road movies can focus on individuals transforming and re-inventing themselves and incorporating themselves into new personal identities or even new social identities (Brigham, 2015, 8-9). Road movies present journeys of discovery with recognizable stages. The stages of the journey include the following: home/not home (*Heimlich/unheimlich*), point of departure, destination, border crossing, and the return (Pinazza, 2014, 29). Pinazza uses “Central Station” to illustrate her stages. What precipitates the journey? The first stage, “Home/(Not) Home” (*Heimlich/Unheimlich*) is the place where previous institutions or boundaries have been dismantled (Pinazza 2014, 57). In response to a feeling of *heimlich/unheimlich*, the protagonist needs the journey to regain a sense of belonging, a feeling of being at home (the “return stage”) (Pinazza, 2014, 29).

The absence of the father is a prominent recurring theme in several Brazilian and Argentine films during the period between 1990 and 2010 (Pinazza 2014, 58). As will be noted in Chapter 3, several films from the Americas include such a theme. These are quests

for what was lost or quests for a redefinition. “The sense of home that has a family at its core unravels for the protagonists” (Pinazza 2014, 58). The oppressing force in the films is the private sphere. Encounters are central to the narrative, but the shared journey portrayed in the films is important to understand how belonging is marked by a collective sense of transition (Pinazza 2014, 58).

Sometimes the death of a family member is the event used to compel the protagonist to go on the journey (Pinazza 2014, 44). Consider, for example, “Central Station” (Salles 2004, Latin America). Dora, a retired teacher in Rio’s central station, encounters Josué, a poor nine-year-old boy who has been left homeless at the station when his mother is killed by a bus just outside the station. What links them both is being abandoned by their father. The missing father’s name is Jesus. The search for the father becomes Josué’s salvation and Dora’s redemption (Pinazza 2014, 47). Some scholars interpret this “fatherly abandonment” as a metaphor for Brazil as a “lost” nation which became severely polarized economically and politically during the decades of the political dictatorship from 1964 through 1985.

Costanzo has described road movie narratives as archetypal: “journeys of the hero through paths of self-discovery and self-destruction.” (2014, 298). In post-World War II road movies such as “Detour” and “The Hitchhiker,” the protagonists seek to regain their footing in times of transition, to redefine personal identities, and to re-establish national identities. Not only are personal life crises and transitions heralded in these films, but also crises of regional and national identity. Costanzo emphasizes a quest for national identity announced in the original poster for “Easy Rider:” “A man went looking for America. And couldn’t find it anywhere . . .” (Costanzo 2014, 298). Brigham suggests that “Powwow Highway” reveals

“the fault lines of inclusion and exclusion” for the Native American protagonists/travelers presented in the film (2015, 9).

Theoretical Approaches

The film as aesthetic artifact

This thesis approaches the film narratives in selected “road movies” as “aesthetic artifacts” (Wagstaff 2007). Wagstaff argues that “the film artifact is the product of the assembly of ‘found components’” (2017, 43). “Multiple levels of finding and multiple levels of assembly are all held together by a network of intentions” (Wagstaff 2007, 43). It is this assembling of images and sounds which constitutes the “aesthetic artifact,” the film.

Wagstaff makes the following argument:

The characteristic of films as aesthetic artefacts is that they are the product of a process of assembly guided by intentions. The critic’s objective description needs to account for the putting together of the assembly . . . It is not because a neorealist film is realist that it is in the category of the aesthetic. Once it has been admitted to the category of the aesthetic, we must examine the artefact ‘for itself,’ as a thing in the world, as well as rather than solely, on the basis of how well it carries out the task of ‘representing’ contemporary historic reality, or of ‘expressing’ certain political and ethical aspirations (Wagstaff 2007, 47).

That is, films, like any other cultural or archeological artifact, are not simply important as well-made “aesthetic objects.” They can be used to interpret important events of the day and may be considered testimonies to the cultural life of a community at a given time. In the current project, I explore both the individual psychological aspects presented in the films as well as some of the cultural or social contexts and implications.

Some film theorists have focused on the ways that different filmmaking techniques (e.g., neorealism, *film noir*, French New Wave) contribute to a “realistic feel” in “road

movies.” Wagstaff suggests that more can be learned about moments in regional culture history as well as shared human experiences when films can be treated as aesthetic objects. One may not only study their cinematic qualities, but also how the films represent a specific cultural reality within a specific political and historic context (as cited in Bonsaver, 2008).

Filmmakers as “bricoleurs,” the “bricolage” of cinema

Lévi-Strauss has analyzed various art forms including traditional Native American myths and storytellers (1978, 2017). Lévi-Strauss, to elucidate his approach to understanding mythical storytelling, has compared the work of a teller of myths (his “bricoleur”) to that of an engineer (a practical user of science). Lévi-Strauss explains:

The ‘bricoleur’ is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but unlike the engineer, he does not sub-ordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project (the engineer’s).

The engineer’s tools are limited to the tools and materials available to him at the time and in the place in which his project is being done (2017, 65, 66).

The accomplished storyteller knows not only his or her tools, but also the specific story elements which resonate or are readily recognizable to the audience. A filmmaker has a crew of sound engineers, camera men, screenwriters, lighting technicians, and others who know the skills of their trades, but it is the director who is like Lévi-Strauss’s “bricoleur.”

Wagstaff has described filmmaking as follows:

“A marble statue (as opposed to a piece of hillside) involves the work of chiseling—or removal—by the sculptor. In the case of the film, we could best describe the work of the artist as one of selection and assembly. Let us make an enormous leap and consider the work of the beach-comber whose ‘statues’ are assembled out of ‘objets trouvés’ (‘found objects’), driftwood shaped by the sea, the sun, and the wind. From an aesthetic point of view, we might find ourselves initially characterizing the work of photography as that of the assembly of ‘objets trouvés.’ The photographer, like the beachcomber, finds things in the world around him, things that were already there, and so not created or imagined by him. He assembles them in front of the lens of his

camera. His photograph is a record of his assembly of found objects. We only have to add the element of movement (of the objects and of the camera) to arrive at cinematography, where assembly takes place first at the level of the profilmic (what is to be filmed), and second at the level of the filmed record itself (montage). . . . In the long-standing discussion over the relative merits of ‘mise en scene’ and ‘montage’ in the cinema, the former emphasizes the moment of assembly in front of the lens (Jean Renoir’s films provide excellent examples), while the latter emphasizes the assembly of the shots once photographed (Sergei Eisenstein’s films are frequently indicated as examples” (Wagstaff 2017, 43).

If one treats a film as an artifact, the artifact is not just the creative product of an individual, but also must be considered as something which was produced in response to the needs and desires of a cultural community. In a sense, an artifact encapsulates a moment in the history of a culture or society. The film resonates with an audience in that time because the protagonist is struggling with what many other people are struggling with—chaos, transition, anxieties about rebuilding communities, or re-establishing national or regional identities. The individual, even though fictional, encapsulates a set of values associated with a specific cultural community. It is this community which recognizes the symbols and “signs” employed in the story.

The filmmakers who created road movies such as those analyzed in the present study, having mastered the “scientific” techniques of filmmaking, they must use the “bricolage” (building blocks) at hand to assemble their own mythical worlds and invite us into them. These filmmakers are like those tellers of myths Lévi-Strauss studied, who used recognized elements (building blocks) that were culturally relevant to their audiences at specific time in the political and social history of the moment in which each film was produced. Some of the tasks performed by a filmmaker such as Fellini might be compared to the work of a teller of mythical stories. Fellini’s own description of his work in “La Dolce Vita” seems to evoke a building up of structures—the “bricolage” of film-making: “we have to make a statue, break

it, and recompose the pieces. Or better yet, try a decomposition in the manner of Picasso. The cinema is narrative in the nineteenth-century sense now let's try to do something different" (Ricciardi 2000, 201). Lévi-Strauss addressed storytelling as used by traditional indigenous people. The current work treats "road movie" narratives as modern ways of guiding people in their own self-discovery processes.

The influence of neorealism

Neorealism influenced some of the cinematic techniques used in road movies. These techniques lent them a realistic, almost documentary feel. Natural light is used in neorealist films; a spontaneity and veracity in the scenes is revealed, and a preoccupation with a portrait of the everyday. Neorealist films establish a dialogue between the viewer and the film. This dialogue is established between characters, time, and space (Sanchez 2015, 233). Just as the film characters make choices, we as viewers are also granted the opportunity to make choices. The fictional character of the work is to be such that it leaves open through its realism the idea that the facts portrayed could pertain to the life of any citizen who was living in the time and place portrayed in the film (Sanchez 2015, 235).

Wagstaff (2007) has stressed that Italian neorealism, the style which highly influenced the emergence of road movies as a genre, emerged after World War II as artists, filmmakers, and others were trying to make sense of a world which had been thrown into chaos. These road movies have recurred in many different regions of the world during times in which there are "fits and starts" of getting life going again.

Fellini has said of neorealism, that "neorealism is a way of seeing reality without prejudice, without conventions coming between it and myself—facing it without

preconceptions, looking at it in an honest way—whatever reality is, not just social reality but all that there is within a man” (Bondanella and Pacchioni 2017, 64). For example, consider “*La Strada*.” The general characteristics of neorealist filmmaking can be seen in the film. It features black-and-white grainy filming in actual outdoor locations. The film techniques and materials suggest a “real” documentary. (Costanzo 2014, 310).

“*Journey to Italy*” shows an upper-class English couple touring Italy and it is the first time they have been alone in eight years of marriage. This trip allows them to face the rifts in their relationship. In contrast, Fellini’s “*La Strada*” (1954) focuses on a very different kind of couple and a different kind of road. Their mobile home is makeshift, and they travel through the rural countryside of southern Italy.

In stark contrast to films such as “*Easy Rider*,” European road movies of the 1950s like “*La Strada*” differ from the Hollywood ones in that they are subject to social and psychological analysis rather than being seen as celebrations of freedom in an open land. “*La Strada*” follows Gelsomina (played by Giulietta Masina, Fellini’s, the director’s wife), a gentle and innocent young woman who has been sold by her mother to a travelling strong man called Zampano (played by Anthony Quinn). They travel through rural central Italy in a canvas-covered wagon on two wheels tied to a motorcycle. Their lives are marked by poverty and ignorance and their lives seem aimless. “*La Strada*” was severely criticized by the Marxist supporters of neorealism because it portrays characters who do not have any kind of class-consciousness. They are just vagrants. The story is essentially a fairy tale, a variation of *Beauty and the Beast*. There is something idyllic about “*La Strada*”—its timelessness; it could take place anywhere.

Social chaos, times of transition

Not only are personal life crises and transitions heralded in these films, but crises of regional and national identity. American road movies such as “Easy Rider” present an American cultural ideal of individual freedom—an idealized view of seeking freedom on the open road. Emerging in a period of political chaos and discontent in the U.S., such a film presents a journey to regain an idyllic freedom (Wagstaff 2007).

Films use “self-reflexivity to produce a sense of place and identity that reflects the global context in which they were made” (Pinazza 2014, 5). The stories told in these road movies can also help us understand the impact of historical events in different eras and their impact on global cultures. Road movies seem to arise in times of cultural transition in social chaos as nations and individuals seek to redefine their identities. For example, in the 1940s, “Detour” (1945) addressed a generation as it went to war. Costanzo has described the situation as follows: “During the postwar period, the nation sought to realize the American dream, to settle down amid the peace of secure comforts that our boys had fought for in Europe and the Pacific. But the restlessness of yet another generation erupted into violence . . .” (2014, 302).

Men returned from war with a dark outlook. The heroes of movies like Edgar Ulmer’s “Detour” are “typically anxious men, obsessed and even paranoiac” (Costanzo 2014, 305). As a rule, the leading woman is a *femme fatale*, “sexy and mysterious, not to be trusted” (Costanzo 2014, 305). “Detour” opens with the credits superimposed over the moving image of a deserted highway, the dotted white line falling into the distance mile after mile. Then the screen goes black, and a man emerges from the darkness, shambling along the road, his face without expression” (Costanzo 2014, 305). This opening suggests some of the

distinctive qualities of *film noir* and of the classic road movie—the use of dark lighting to symbolize a “lost” feeling.

One film by Wim Wenders has been included in the present study—“Alice in the Cities” (1973) (discussed in Chapter 2). Costanzo has pointed out the “lack of clear direction and uncertainty about the future” as “familiar problems for young Germans of the time. Wenders himself drifted from medicine to philosophy and art before making film his métier.” As his characters “wander through the bleak landscape of postwar Europe, we feel their weariness and wariness” (Costanzo 2014, 297).

The context for these road movies, how they fit into cinematic history.

Pinazza (2014, 18) argues that movies such as “Central Station” reflect global transformations, as problems of belonging emerge, and complicated models of nation and the self must be reconstructed. In Argentine and Brazilian movies, the encounters are often between individuals from different nationalities or cultural backgrounds (Pinazza 2014, 5).

A sense of social chaos encouraged a rebuilding of a sense of community. “An imagined political community,” for Pinazza, is one in which the members of the nation will not know or meet the other members, but “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Pinazza, 2014, 31). For example, national identity is addressed in “Central Station.” In Latin America, the 1990s changed the “imagined space of the nation” (Pinazza, 2014, 30) (presented in Chapter 3). One can also experience this humanistic sense of communion as one identifies with the protagonists in this set of road movies from around the globe.

Pinazza suggests that the New Cinemas which have emerged in neoliberal Argentina and Brazil since the 1990s “center on characters as individuals” and not individuals as “actors for social mobilization.” She suggests that road movies use displacement as a path to self-discovery. A frequent motif identified in contemporary road movies is the “chance encounter” (Pinazza 2014, 3). “Central Station” (to be discussed in Chapter 3), “The Hitchhiker,” and “Detour” (to be discussed in Chapter 2) rely especially on the unexpected encounter. These encounters reveal key characteristics of the protagonists and propel the plot.

In “Central Station,” the journey starts in the center of the nation and ends in the margins (Pinazza 2014, 48). The search for a father can be interpreted as allegorical—a collective quest for a “lost” nation (Pinazza 2014, 48). In one of the first sequences in the Central Station railway station, we see a series of shots of characters saying where their letters (hand-written by Dora) are to be sent. The addresses and the accents show them to be from the northeast—an area of high illiteracy—and shows the geographic distance they have come to find work in the city (an internal migration within Brazil) (Pinazza 2014, 49).

None of the famous Rio landmarks are shown in the film. Instead of showing these scenic landmarks, “Central Station” highlights the huge social gap between poor rural northeasterners and educated Brazilian middle class urban dwellers--“the internal fragmentation of the nation” (Pinazza 2014, 6). It explores the contrast between the city and the rural areas, and center and periphery within national boundaries (Pinazza 2014, 6-7). A decay of values is revealed as teenagers are shot dead by police for petty theft and children like Josué are left abandoned (Pinazza 2014, 49).

While the social and historical contexts for road movies differ from decade to decade and from continent to continent, certain contextual elements stand out. They appear in

response to global transformations, problems of belonging, and a shared sense of social chaos.

Conclusion

In the current study of “road movies,” the focus will be on films from the U.S., Italy, Germany, Latin America, Japan, and Morocco/France. The films span sixty years, from 1945 to 2005. The significance of the study lies in the exploration of human quests for personal meaning and a sense of belonging. These film journeys will be analyzed in view of the stages of the journey—home (*Heimlich/unheimlich*), point of departure, destination, border crossing, and return (Pinazza 2014). Various theoretical standpoints inform this study including Wagstaff’s concept of the film as an “aesthetic artifact” (Wagstaff 2017) and Lévi-Strauss’s approach to art and storytelling (Lévi-Strauss 1978, 2017). For Lévi-Strauss, the storyteller makes use of “bricolage” or building blocks which are intelligible to a specific cultural community. The storyteller combines these elements to recount a myth about cultural identity. In the case of the road movies analyzed here, the recognizable building blocks are the stages of a journey, a journey of self-discovery for the protagonists and a journey that can also be shared by others as they redefine national and regional identities.

The review of literature presented in this chapter has sought to define the road movies, its stories, and to examine why road movies appear at particular times in history in various regions of the world. Italian neorealism influenced the emergence of “road movies” as a genre. The exigencies of post-war economic crises demanded new cinematic techniques such as the use of natural lighting and long takes, the use of inexpensive equipment and black-and-white film, and the use of non-professional actors. Neorealism contributed a concern for the everyday and those film techniques lend these road films a documentary feel.

Times of social chaos and transition have coincided with the appearance of road movies. Nations, regions, and individuals seek to redefine themselves, their fundamental values, and to re-establish a sense of community during social and economic transitions. New Cinemas in Latin America manifest in films such as “Central Station” and “The Motorcycle Diaries” turned away from using central characters to heighten awareness of social issues and instead centered on the characters in paths to self-discovery.

CHAPTER II. ROADS TO THE SELF: ROAD MOVIES FROM 1945 TO 1974

Introduction

Ten movies from global cinema are included in Chapters 2 and 3: “Detour” (1945, Edgar G. Ulmer, U.S.), “The Hitchhiker” (1953, Ida Lupino, U.S.), “La Strada” (1954, Federico Fellini, Italy), “Journey to Italy” (1954, Roberto Rossellini, Italy); “Il Sorpasso” (1963, Dino Risi, Italy), “Alice in the Cities” (1974, Wim Wenders, Germany), “Powwow Highway” (1989, Jonathan Wacks, Native American), “Central Station” (1998, Walter Salles, Brazil), “Le Grand Voyage” (2004, Ismael Ferroukhi, Morocco and France); and finally, “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles” (2005, Yimou Zhang, Japan).

Because of significant differences in the regions of origin of the films, the breadth of time differences, and important differences in the sociopolitical and historical contexts for these films, the film analysis has been divided into two different chapters. Chapter 2 covers “Detour” (1945, Ulmer, U.S.), “The Hitchhiker” (1953, Lupino, U.S.), “La Strada” (1954, Fellini, Italy), “Journey to Italy” (1954, Rossellini, Italy), “Il Sorpasso” (1963, Risi), and “Alice in the Cities” (1974, Wenders, Germany), produced during the years 1945 through 1974. The remaining films will be covered in detail in Chapter 3.

Self-discovery, cinematic techniques, “bricolage,” films as “aesthetic artifacts”

My analysis of the films will include description of stages in these journeys of self-discovery, encounters along the road, and shared journeys. I will explore the values and challenges confronted by the film protagonists who are “on the road” in their quests for meaning. I will note how and why some of the films under scrutiny may have a documentary

feel, which may show the influence of neorealism. I will discuss how the cinematic techniques employed by each filmmaker/storyteller (what Costanzo has called “the grammar” of the road film (2014, 298) are used to enhance these stories and to reveal specific aspects or elements in these journeys of self-discovery. Finally, I will describe some of the social and political context for these road movies. As Pinazza (2014, 18) has suggested, these movies reflect global transformations, times during which issues of belonging, national and cultural identities must be renegotiated.

Quests for meaning and a sense of belonging are not new in the history of storytelling, as Lévi-Strauss has noted (1979, 2017). The notion of “bricolage” was introduced by Lévi-Strauss to analyze art forms including mythical storytelling among indigenous people in North and South America, but here I apply his ideas to road movie narratives. The analysis presented in this chapter will give attention to the “bricolage” or culturally recognized “building blocks,” themes or elements unique to the decade and world regions in which each of these films were produced.

Wagstaff’s idea of movies as “aesthetic artifacts” might be seen as being built upon Lévi-Strauss’s “bricolage” framework to understand filmmakers. In my analysis of key films in this chapter, I will employ Wagstaff’s treatment of films as “aesthetic artifact” (2007, 43). This approach has led me to describe how multiple levels of meaning and “networks of intentions” are assembled in these road movies to represent a certain historic reality as well as ethical dilemmas faced by the people presented in the films.

Using this theoretical framework, the film analysis focuses on stages in the journeys of self-discovery, and how film techniques enhance the story and reveal some of the psychological dynamics and the challenges faced by film protagonists “on the road.” In the

current chapter, the films, addressed in chronological order (1945 to 1974), include: 1) “Detour,” 2) “The Hitchhiker,” 3) “La Strada,” 4) “Journey to Italy” 5) “Il Sorpasso,” and 6) “Alice in the Cities.”

“Detour”

Introduction to the film “Detour”

If *film noir* could be represented by an artist from another medium, it might be Edward Hopper, painter of the iconic 1942 “Nighthawks.” Just as Hopper used darkness, isolating a few night patrons in an almost generic urban café in that painting, one can almost feel that we are walking into Hopper’s famous setting when we enter the netherworld portrayed in Edgar Ulmer’s “Detour” from 1945.

“Detour” appeared during the infancy stage of American road movies. Other typical American road movies explored expectations associated with the American West—freedom and self-determination (Davis, 2012, 1). This movie shows how the road movie can be used as “a genre to undermine the myth of the road and expose the difficulties of living in exile” (David, 2012, 1). The film, “Detour,” is based on Martin Goldsmith’s 1939 eponymous pulp novel, but the novel tells the story of a Jewish protagonist in exile. Like many exiles, our film hero, Al (who is not presented as a Jewish exile) is “constantly on the run, crossing state lines, searching for refuge in some city, where he will be safe and anonymous. His actions mirror in certain respects the behavioral patterns of exiles . . . scurrying from place to place . . .” (Isenberg, 2013, 176).

A “B” picture produced at a cut-rate studio on Hollywood’s Poverty row, Producers Releasing Corporation (PRC), known for cheap wartime movies, “Detour” eventually achieved a reputation that landed it in the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress.

It has been compared to such *film noir* touchstones as “Double Indemnity” (Doherty, 2019, 56). The film features relatively unknown actors from the American B movie circuit. The lead, Tom Neal, was called “a poor man’s Clark Gable” (Isenberg, 2008, 11). Neal plays a “handsome, sulking” Al Roberts. His fiancée, Sue Harvey, a platinum blonde nightclub singer and aspiring starlet gets very little screen time. The *femme fatale* is Vera, Al’s “acid-tongued nemesis” who comes into the picture midway. Played by an actress aptly named Ann Savage, Vera is not a typical *femme fatale*. She looks and sounds rough, “far less polished, less beautiful, and much, much more aggressive” (Isenberg, 2013, 181). She does not seduce our male protagonist, but she does contribute to his downfall. She is “a sullen, dangerous, yet sympathetic figure” (Isenberg, 2013, 181). The actress said that Ulmer demanded that she have cold cream streaked through her hair to give it a grimy look and “plenty of dirty-brown toner applied to her face” (Isenberg, 2013, 181). She should reflect the look of someone who, as Al said, had “been thrown off the crummiest freight train in the world” (Isenberg, 2013, 183). Ulmer coached her to “spit out her lines . . . Her voice is shrill, harsh, punishing” (Isenberg, 2013, 183).

As the film narrative to follow will show, from the beginning, Al’s and Sue’s hopes will remain unfulfilled. Al Roberts soon asks his audience: “Did you ever want to forget anything? Did you ever want to cut away a piece of your memory or blot it out?” (Davis, 2012, 3). The story is completely from Al Robert’s perspective. He narrates the film explaining to himself and to the audience that he is powerless against his fate. The story begins where it ends—on the open highway. As if in the 1942 painting, *Nighthawks*,” Roberts is “crying into his coffee” as he begins to recount the story of his “Detour” (Isenberg, 2008, 14).

“Detour” film narrative

The opening shot for “Detour” is simply a road receding through a western desert-like landscape that might be anywhere in the American Southwest. The road image fades to darkness. The reverse tracking shot of the desert highway seen from the back window of the moving car combines with dramatic orchestral music by Erdody to set the tenor of the film (Isenberg, 2013, 173). The shot shows nothing but barren highway. Then a single vehicle can be seen broken down on the side of the road. The screen fades to black and opens again on a silhouette of a lone man barely visible against the dark night. The only source of light is the headlights of a passing car. As the figure fills out the frame, walking along like a sleepwalker, we, the audience, can see that his head is tilted slightly, and his hands are buried in his pockets. We glimpse his unshaven face and see that he is deeply distraught. The frame dissolves to a two-shot of the man seated, his face unchanged, beside the driver of a convertible (Isenberg, 2013, 173). We hear his inner dialogue: “Well, here we are.” Then he says, “Thanks, mister, I’ll get off there.” Flickering neon signs read “Smokes,” “News,” “Bar,” “Coffee Shop” and finally, “Reno: The Biggest Little City in the World.”

In the next scene, we see the man in a late-night coffee shop. Another traveler sitting at the counter says, “Ey you;” [Or “Hey you” This spelling accentuates a regional, blue-collar, Brooklyn accent] “where you headed? East? If you’re going north, I can give you a ride.” “West,” Al curtly replies. “Wise guy,” retorts the other man. “Don’t rush me,” our traveler complains to the waiter. When the trucker puts a nickel in the jukebox to play a song. “I Can’t Believe That You Love Me” plays and Al yells, “Turn it off!” “That song stinks!” He is so agitated by the music that he almost gets kicked out of the diner.

In the diner, the lighting is dim. The next camera shot is a close-up of his eyes with low-key lighting, as he says to himself (and we hear his inner dialogue again): “Beating in my head . . . Did you ever want to cut away your memory?” (See Figure 2 above.)

The “departure” stage

Al Roberts begins to reminisce about his days as a jazz piano player at the Break O’ Dawn Club in New York. He received a ten-dollar tip from a patron which has allowed him to consider taking a trip out West. He later dismisses the ten-dollar bill as nothing but “a piece of paper crawling with germs” (Isenberg, 2013, 179).

The next scene shows us a flashback to a jazz band and a blonde singer singing, “I can’t believe that you’re in love with me.” Al recalls, he played until four in the morning at the club. “There was Sue,” he remembers, and what he calls “an ordinary healthy romance. I was a lucky guy.” He recounts, as he narrates the film, a conversation between the two of them. She said she was going to make it to Carnegie Hall. He said to her, “Yeah as a janitor.” He tried to talk her into leaving New York with him, “Let’s blow this trap.” The scene shows a misty night with the couple walking down a city street. “Let’s go home,” he says to her. She called the club a dump. They are talking of marriage. “We’ve never struck out,” he says. But she gently refuses his offer, “Not now. Only after we’re doing good.” She says that she wants to go to Hollywood. Then we see a mist slowly engulfing them and the whole street scene.

In the next scene, back at the late-night desert diner, our protagonist, Al, is still reminiscing about his piano player days. The jukebox is playing a medley, and Al is lost in thought. Rambling, he says, “Ten bucks, a piece of paper crawling with germs.” He has a

new idea. He goes into the phone booth and makes a call to Sue Harvey in LA. We see a row of phone operators. She is working as a “hash slinger,” she tells him. He says that he wants to come out there to see her. The next thing we see is the film screen filled with a map of the U.S. Then we see an image of Al hitchhiking, holding out his thumb for a ride along the highway.

Chance encounter #1: the “Heimlich/unheimlich” stage

Again, we hear his thoughts, “Men slave for, die for money.” We see our protagonist in a bleak desert environment, still hitchhiking. “It’s dangerous,” he tells himself. Here the film scene and the voice-over evoke a feeling of danger which indicates the “unheimlich,” strange or homeless/stranded feeling. What follows is a typical *film noir* voice-over: “If only I had known what I was getting into that day.” Catching a ride in Arizona with a man whom he later learns is a bookie (takes illegal bets), Al says, “I kept my mouth shut until the guy asked for a little box from the glove compartment.” He was going all the way to LA. Al sees three puffy lines, about a quarter inch apart on the man’s right hand. Looking at the scar, the car driver tells Al, “A tussle with a woman.” He shows Al another scar on his forearm. “Duel--cut from a Prussian sword,” he says. Al says to himself, “He’s popping pills from a box, telling about putting a kid’s eye out.” The driver tells Al that he ran away from home 15 or 16 years ago. “Let’s get a bit of something,” the driver suggests. They stop for food. He offers to buy it for the two of them. Al recalls that he himself drove the rest of the night to continue their shared journey and that he was happy thinking of Sue.

We see the rear-view mirror (signaling another flashback). Sue is singing in the New York club. We see silhouettes of horn players reflected on the wall. The theme song is playing again, “I can’t believe that you’re in love with me.” Then we are back with the two

men driving in the rain. Al is trying to wake up Mr. Haskell to put up the top up on the car (which we can now see is a Lincoln convertible), but the stranger won't wake up. Haskell falls out of the car when Al stops and opens the door. Unbelievably, he is dead. Al's first instinct is to run, but he decides instead to drag the body out and hide it in the desert. There is driving rain, dramatic music plays. He covers the body with brush. Perplexed, he decides to take the wallet—with his money and license. He also takes Haskell's clothes—better clothes to match the car, he says to himself. As he is finishing up, a policeman comes up on a motorbike. "Your wheels are in the road," The policeman gives Al only a warning. When he leaves, Al throws his old stuff out. "If they find a dead man in the gully," he tells himself, "It'll be me." He is the new Charles Haskell, Jr.

In the next scene, our protagonist is at a hotel, dreaming of the death. "They'll think I did it," we hear his inner dialogue again. Someone knocks on the door. He's startled, but it is just the maid. His voice-over continues: "No time to lose," "Every minute as Charles Haskell is dangerous. In the city I could be safe." He decides that he needs to know more about the man. He finds that he has 768 dollars. There's also a letter in Haskell's bag—a "chiseler letter" to his "old man," posing as a seller of hymnals to "rook the old man."

Chance encounter #2: the "femme fatale"

In the next scene, Al is near an airport in the middle of the desert. He is getting water for the car. There is a woman there hitchhiking. "Come on, if you want a ride," Al tells her. "She looks pretty glum," he thinks to himself. She is 24 years old. He finds her a natural beauty. "She had a beauty that's almost homely it's so real," says Al when he sees her more closely. "LA is good enough for me," she says. "Call me Vera." Her voice sounds a little hoarse and tired (not sultry). The road signs tell us they are in Needles, then Phoenix.

Again, the voice-over: “She fell asleep after only 20 minutes.” “Who was she?” he is asking himself. “Why is she going to LA?” She confronts him when she awakes. “Where did you leave his body?” she screeches. “This buggy belongs to a guy named Haskell!” She rode with the real Charles Haskell. Vera, it turns out, was the woman Haskell had mentioned. “Fate sticks out a foot to trip you,” Al exclaims in the voice-over. He then must tell Vera the truth. She does not believe him. “Let’s see that roll,” Vera says about the money she knew the bookie, Charles Haskell had. “I thought he had more.” “He was gonna bet 3000 on a horse.” Vera now has the edge on Al. She wants him to “remember who’s boss” so she won’t tell. She accuses Al of murder. Then she says she didn’t like Haskell. She was the one who had scratched him and scarred his arm. Vera and Al/Charles discuss what to do with the car. “Don’t desert the car,” she advises him, “That rates an investigation.” “You need to sell it to a dealer and get new papers.” She wants to team up, sell the car, and get new clothes and a bottle of liquor. She demands 100% of the profits.

Next, we see that they are in Hollywood. This destination was the place Al Roberts, the jazz piano player, dreamed of, but it was decidedly not the partner or the new identity he had hoped for. Vera checks the two of them into the hotel as a couple. “Home sweet home,” Vera declares when they enter their suite. She takes the bedroom. “Keep the window shut,” she orders. “There’s a folding bed behind the door.” “They’re sizing each other up,” the voice-over says. “I’m first in the bathtub,” she says. Al replies, “I figured.” She is reclining on the sofa, smoking. He hears a man playing a sax and he dislikes it. He stands at the window. Vera invites him to have a drink. “Your conscience bothering you?” They argue over the death again. We see a close-up of the empty whisky bottle. She says that she doesn’t like his attitude. She calls him Robert. “Try to make the best of things.” She gives him the

“Don’t buck fate” lecture. He says he’s tired of thinking. She reaches for his hand. Al then says in the voice-over, “At least some people know they’re done for,” but “We don’t know.”

The scene continues, “Where’d you hide the bucks?” Vera demands. “On the table, sucker.” We see an ashtray full of cigarettes, signifying what Al’s voice describes as “two hours of useless chatter.” (See Figure 12, below.) He wants to go early to the used car place. Now we can detect that Vera has a cough. Al mentions a woman with consumption, “One person died on me.” “You don’t like me” she says to him. He answers sarcastically, “I love you.” She puts her hand on his shoulder saying, “I’m going to bed.” He rejects that look. He grabs the phone as soon as she goes into the other room. We can hear her throwing her shoes in the bedroom. Meanwhile, he’s dialing his old girlfriend, Sue. But when she answers, he says to himself, “No, not yet darling; tomorrow maybe.”



Figure 2.1 Vera glares sullenly at Al as they sit stranded in a hotel in “Detour.”

Image source : <https://www.filmlinc.org/nyff2018/films/detour/>

The “border-crossing” stage

“If this was a love story . . .” the voice-over continues. “Vera was just as rotten in the morning as she was the night before.” “It’s noon” Al says to her. “You sound like my

husband” she replies. He tells her that he wants to be in charge at the car dealer’s. “After the deal’s closed,” she says, “she wants a fur.” When they reach the used car dealership, she interrupts, insists on a better price, haggles with the seller, and coughs to prod the deal. The price agreed upon is 1850. They are about to sign papers, but there is no insurance record. She opens the glove box to find the papers. She finds a fancy cigarette case. Suddenly Vera announces, “We’re not selling the car.”

They go for a ham sandwich and coffee at one of those places where a car hop comes out to the car. Vera buys a newspaper. There is a news story about Charles Haskell; his father lies dying. “You look enough like him” she tells Al. “Wait for the sick father to die.” According to the newspaper, there is a 15-million-dollar fortune. We will make a 50/50 split, she tells him. “We’ll wait ‘til we read he’s dead.” They return to the hotel. They’re “killing time with cards;” Al narrates, “It’s a death watch.” She confesses to Al that “she’s on the way out anyway.” “The hangman’s rope would just make it sooner.” Not only are the two of them waiting for the stranger’s death to be discovered, but now Vera reveals to Al that she is fatally ill. If Al refuses to split the money with her, she threatens to call the police to tell the truth about what happened when Al switched identities with the stranger. Al calls her bluff. Picking up the phone, he says, “Hollywood Police Station.”

The voice-over continues the story. It was early in the evening. “The air got blue. Each word from my lips cracked like a whip.” The two of them struggle. “You hurt my arm,” Vera cries out. He pushes her. She then grabs the phone, runs, and locks him out of the bedroom. She lies on the bed. He threatens to break through the door. They have a tug of war with the phone cord; she on one side of the door with the receiver and he on the other side of

the door. He does not know that Vera has wrapped the phone cord loosely around her neck and as he has pulled the cord under the door, he has accidentally strangled her.

The cinematographer Benjamin Kline's camera focuses in and out on the things they had bought scattered about the bedroom making erratic movements to evoke Al's traumatized state (Isenberg, 2013, 31). He is now talking to himself about who might be able to identify him. He is in shock; he focuses on the saxophone music he has put on in the hotel room, which he says is now like a dirge for him. He opens the hotel room door. This brings us back to the present.

The image on the screen shows us a newspaper article that reveals that "Al Roberts" (the stranger with whom Al switched his identity) is listed as dead in New York. Now the "real Al" cannot go to Los Angeles (LA) where people could identify him as Haskell. Also, he cannot contact Sue. Al reviews with himself the confusion of identities. He was in Bakersfield. His wife is now dead, and the police are looking for him—Haskell. Al is trying to forget.

The "return" stage

Al is now completely focused on trying to forget how he got into his current situation. "What would my life have been before that car stopped and picked me up?" In the final scene, this is the voice-over. "But one thing I know; someday a car will pick me up, that I never thumbed." "The police searching for a dead man." "Yes, fate or some mysterious force can put the finger on you or me for no good reason." In the final scene, we the audience witness the future Al imagines; a highway patrol car stops and picks him up. Al has arrived at a new personal and social identity, but not the one he had dreamed about. He is a

permanently displaced resident/non-resident out West. He cannot return to his old identity, and he must remain an imposter.

Some concluding observations concerning “Detour”

“Detour” has several characteristics associated with *film noir*: “a narrative unfolded in flashbacks, the protagonist’s voiceover, and a hero being betrayed by a woman” (Isenberg, 2004, 19). Essentially, these elements can be viewed as the culturally recognized “bricolage” of the period. Three flashbacks depict a sense of frustration and hopelessness in the film. The first flashback sequence shows Al and Sue walking from the nightclub to Sue’s house. Their walk is presented in five short scenes with thick fog covering everything. Only the street signs are visible. The couple stroll uptown from the club’s neighborhood, Greenwich Village. Excess fog is like a commentary on the characters’ entrapment in their lives and their inability to see ahead to realize whether they have a future. In the same flashback sequence, we see Sue in a medium shot singing “I Can’t Believe You’re in Love with Me,” with three musicians seen as shadows against the wall behind her. This has been described as an effort to portray glamor—Al’s imagination of a bright future (Isenberg, 2004, 19). Later the monotonous landscapes and empty roads during the car scenes create a sense of bleak reality. The original pulp novel on which “Detour” is based was semi-autobiographical. The author of the movie script, Martin Goldsmith, had set out in his teens on the eve of the Great Depression, like our movie protagonist, to travel cross-country from New York hitch-hiking (Isenberg, 2008). Filmmaker Ulmer, originally from Vienna, had trained in Europe with Max Reinhardt. Ulmer became known for his “minimalist rough-hewn aesthetic” (Isenberg, 2008, 13). Isenberg (2008, 14) has described the film as a story of loss, a tragic tale with “human wreckage piling up until Al can’t find a way out.”

The theme song, “I Can’t Believe You’re in Love with Me” triggers Al’s flashbacks. When Sue decides to go to Hollywood, it is like jilting him at the altar. Her absence seems to cripple him, destroying his dreams and making him bitter. In the road trip down “a mercilessly bleak desert highway,” (Isenberg, 2008, 14) Al moves about without a clear destination. His journey “places him completely at the mercy of others, subject to chance and the contingencies of modern life; the open road while benign and even liberating in most of American mythology, bears a distinctly gloomy quality here” (Isenberg, 2013, 173).

Some historic realities revealed in “Detour”

Consider that Ulmer’s film may be a description of what it is like for an immigrant to come to America to establish a new life, only to be frustrated. Although the character in “Detour,” Al, is from New York, Ulmer (from Vienna) may be reflecting on his own frustrations of being foreign-born and frustrated in his efforts to establish his new identity in post-war America. Ulmer’s film might be compared with “Alice in the Cities” (to be discussed later in this chapter) in which another European explores the impact of American culture on his own identity. Each film explores with us their feelings as they try to find themselves.

The experience of being in between two identities, as well as “in limbo” between New York and LA (Los Angeles) and unable to return to either, has been compared to the exile experience. Edward Said and Hannah Arendt name two themes about exile identified in this film: exile as a purgatorial experience, an existence in-between; and exile as a condition that destabilizes identity (as cited in Davis, 2012, 1). “Overlaying a road film with *film noir* flashbacks nullifies the forward moving structure of a road movie creating frustrating, hopeless and stagnating sense of betweenness (David, 2012, 2). Al wants to use

his journey west to create a new life for himself and his loved ones but the retrospective narrative “creates a sense of an irretrievable past, a predetermined fate, and an all-enveloping hopelessness (Davis, 2012, 2).

There is a pervading sense of homelessness (*unheimlich*) in many of the characters in the film. They have no families, no children, and no links to a larger, stable community. “Ulmer hands over his characters to a labyrinth of bars, motel rooms and highway rest stops—to anonymous spaces that could be anywhere—or to a nowhere, a world for nothing and nobody. The locales shown in ‘Detour’ are way stations, places of passage” (Isenberg, 2013, 177). Ulmer’s film reenacts what emigres and exiles like he himself face, a “sense of belonging . . . challenged by war and migration” (Isenberg, 2013, 177).

Before his journey cross-country, Al talked with Sue on the phone with optimism and he ends the scene with a smile. But less than two minutes later, his voice-over warns of the dangers of hitchhiking: “If only I had known what I was getting into that day in Arizona” nullifying any hope (Davis, 2012, 3). He has no definite destination, no home to return to (*unheimlich*), and we know he’s going nowhere. He tells his story stalled at a roadside diner in Reno, Nevada, “trapped between two places (Davis, 2012, 3).

The American landscape is empty in “Detour.” There is desert terrain, a series of non-descript gas stations, motels, roadside cafes, all roadside establishments that form a “non-space” that holds no meaning, and is “homogenous and blank” (Davis, 2012, 4). The emptiness is shown in rear projection landscapes from the car. Convertibles like Haskell’s Lincoln become “confining spaces that trap the film’s hero” (Isenberg, 2013, 173).

The protagonists lack stable identities. When Roberts asks Vera about herself, she gives a vague answer. She identifies no home, no destination, and describes a tentative

identity: “L.A. (Los Angeles) is good enough . . . You can call me Vera if you like.” When Al asks Vera where she came from, she says, “Oh, back there.”

Vera’s death is suggested when she takes a nap in the car with Roberts. He observes, “She lay sprawled out with her head resting against the car door like Haskell,” who had just died in the car. Finally, Roberts loses his identity: “I left nothing in the car to give me away as Roberts. If they found a dead man in the gully now. It would be me” (Davis, 2012, 5). According to Davis, “He sacrifices his identity to the road.” Every time he hears Sue’s song, “I Can’t Believe You’re in Love with Me,” it reminds him of what he has lost. He is not Roberts, and he is not Haskell.

In the final scene, Al is walking alone on the dark highway, and he is considering the inevitable—that he will be picked up by the police. “It is absolutely essential,” says one scholar “that at the end of this story, Alex must be in the hands of the police, . . . an artful way of saying that Al Roberts cannot escape the law . . .” (Isenberg, 2013, 185). We have seen an account of “a country plagued by individualism and greed . . . and “you’re right in it and suffering along with the man whose troubles are being told . . .” (Isenberg, 2013, 185).

This first film, “Detour,” focuses on the journey of self-discovery of only one man, who, like an immigrant, attempts to establish a new social identity by relocating. Ultimately, he achieves only a tenuous new identity, and he must accept that tenuous identity, a feeling of vulnerability (with respect to the laws of the land) and reconcile himself to a certain sense of being an imposter. The next film to be analyzed, “The Hitchhiker,” focuses on two men as “road buddies” who take an unexpected detour in their road trip. What will unfold is another search for a stable identity for the characters to feel once again in control of their own destinies.

“The Hitchhiker”

Introduction to the film “The Hitchhiker”

American film noir and “the American dream”

According to Osteen, *film noir* “. . . often paints the pursuit of happiness as a chimera and shows self-creation constrained by forces beyond individuals’ control” (2013, 3). We see in “The Hitchhiker,” the stories of three men who seek to restore their senses of control over their own destinies in very different ways. American *film noir* has been used to challenge some myths about the “American Dream” (Osteen, 2013, 1). According to Osteen, “American dreams” of the 1940s and 1950s were of “upward mobility, equality, home ownership, and the West as a symbol of undying hope, best epitomized by Hollywood...the ideals of personal liberty” (Osteen 2013, 2). But some Hollywood-produced crime films made between 1944 and 1959 challenged those beliefs associated with American individualism—that personal effort would allow one to overcome class, gender, and racial barriers to gain wealth and prestige (Osteen 2013, 2).

“The Hitchhiker” not only tells a story of self-discovery, but, like the other films analyzed in the current thesis chapter, it provides a kind of “time capsule” that gives us an idea of what general members of the viewing public during the time in which it was produced were experiencing. It is “an aesthetic artifact” which, when considered in its cultural context can provide insights into American post-war history and perhaps the everyday struggles of Americans during the 1940s and 1950s.

Ida Lupino may have been the only woman filmmaker during the early decades of *film noir* in the U.S. Lupino wrote the screen play for “The Hitchhiker” with Collier Young

in 1953. The story of this real crime spree had been in newspaper headlines and the studio promoted the film by stressing: “The facts are actual. What is shown on the screen could have happened to YOU!” (Anderson, 2013).

Lupino’s “The Hitchhiker,” produced in the U.S. in 1953, admired as a *film noir* masterpiece, led Louis Antonelli to ask her permission to restore the film, frame by frame, in 1992. Antonelli spent three years on the project collaborating with the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress had passed the National film Preservation Act in 1988 to establish the National Film Preservation Board to add to the National Film Registry films such as Lupino’s. “The Hitchhiker” was judged to be “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant” (Anderson, 2013, 65) and it was added to the registry in 1998 (45 years after its original production).

“The Hitchhiker” film script was adapted from an original screenplay, *The Persuader*, written by Robert Joseph about two army friends who were on a fishing trip and picked up a male hitchhiker during their trip to Mexico. This plot, in turn, was based on the story, *Out of the Past*, written by screen writer Daniel Mainwaring. Mainwaring was blacklisted during the McCarthy years and Howard Hughes in his release of that film refused to give credit to him. Lupino completely re-wrote Mainwaring’s work and at first gave it the title, *The Difference* (Anderson, 2013, 34). She added the important element of the real-life-based story of Billy Young, the hitch-hiking serial killer.

Before making the film, Lupino interviewed the real-life killer/hitchhiker depicted in the film, as well as, Forrest Damron, one of the two hunters who had been held prisoner by Billy Cook. According to Lupino, Forrest Damron said:

He put the .38 in my face and I told Jim you'd better look around; I think we are in grave danger. He ordered Jim to keep both hands on the wheel where he could see them and he told me to place my arms on the dash, He asked for our wallets, taking Jim's first and mine second. He took our money and kept Jim's identification cards and registration for the car. He told us he was going over to old Mexico, dispose of the car and remain there on the money, that from here he was Jim Burke, and if we didn't do as he said, he'd kill us and dump our bodies in the Gulf. (Forrest Damron to Ida Lupino, as cited in Anderson, 2013, 2)

Unique features of Lupino's *film noir* style displayed in "The Hitchhiker"

Lupino has been highly praised for the ways that she employs cinematic techniques to create a sense of realism. Her use of contrast, her informal camera style, her camera angles, and "low key action" (Anderson, 2013). (See Figure 13 below.) Antonelli (as cited in Anderson, 2013) has described the film in admiring tones:

There are subtle tonalities within the visual design of *The Hitchhiker* . . . the delicate, highly complex Cinema-graphic craftsmanship and artistry . . . aspects such as the use of degrees of over-exposure in the daytime, desert scenes to visually heighten the oppressive heat, which is so key to the hair-trigger tension that permeates this film. The night scenes, pools of velvet like densities of black utilized like patchwork of dread shot to shot trapping the characters in their collective fate (as cited in Anderson, 2013, 62).

In "The Hitchhiker," Lupino manipulates contrasts of light and dark areas in her cinematic imagery to create a feeling of "plain reality" (Anderson, 2013). By choosing to film in the desert, Lupino filmed in high contrast. The desert sun in black and white and strong contrast in light was intrinsic to the location in the American Southwest. As the male killer hitchhiker travels with his two male victims (two unlucky fishermen whom he kidnaps), the high contrast contributes to a perception that this is stark struggle between good and evil. Antonelli has described the ways that Lupino enhanced light contrasts to create an increasingly intense atmosphere of violence and drama in this film:

This is a prime example of the subtle use of degrees of over-exposure in the daytime, desert scenes, Notice the ‘hot spots’ of elements in the shot, such as the foreground cliff, Meyer’s leather jacket, the gun barrels, and brows of the performers.

This is very sophisticated and builds in intensity by degrees—reaching its peak WITH the gun, O’Brien’s mental and spiritual collapses when he sees and hears the high-flying plane overhead and pleads with God for his screaming to be heard. In this film there is only one cynical reply for his plea and tears—Meyer’s, ‘Leave him alone, can’t you see he’s prayin.’ Brutal, even for the bleak black, midnight of Noir” (Antonelli, as cited in Anderson, 2013, 23).

“The Hitchhiker” was filmed in the Alhambra Hills near Lone Pine and Big Pine, California. Lone Pine is the site where “High Sierra” was shot (Anderson, 2013, 29). It is very hot, and the extreme heat shows on the perspiring faces of the actors in the film which also contributes to the building sense of tension in the film.

Figure 2.2 Overexposure and “hot spots” in an image from “The Hitchhiker” by Ida Lupino.



Image source :

<https://www.raindance.org/the-25-best-films-directed-by-female-film-directors/>

“The Hitchhiker” film narrative

In the following description of “The Hitchhiker,” I will describe how the “stages” of the journey (home/not home (*Heimlich/unheimlich*), point of departure, destination, border crossing, and the return) are revealed. I will pay close attention to the *film noir* cinematic

techniques which Lupino uses to emphasize the psychological dynamics between the three main characters in the film. I will also give close attention to the common manner of speaking featured in the film because it adds another dimension to the fear-inspiring story. The simple triadic exchanges between Emmet, Gil, and Collins carry the plot forward, holding us in suspense because Emmet never puts down his gun and the friends could die at any moment.

Danger (*unheimlich*) on the open road is dramatically introduced in the opening scenes of “The Hitchhiker.” The film opens with this scene: There is a road in the background, and we see the bottom half of a man standing with his legs apart with his shadow across the center of the screen. These words are superimposed: “This is the true story of a man and a gun and a car. The gun belonged to the man. The car might have been yours—or that young couple across the aisle. What you will see in the next 70 minutes could have happened to you. For the facts are actual.” We begin to hear car horns honk and we hear brass horn music. We see a close-up of a gun held in a man’s hand pointed straight at us.

Against dramatic music, the title of the film comes up in all caps, centered across the screen: THE HITCH-HIKER. We follow the man walking down the side of the highway, still seeing only his torso and legs. Then in a close-up, we see him lift his thumb to hitch a ride. The musical score for “The Hitchhiker” was composed by Leith Steven. The music is “brass-heavy” and “brimming over with trumpets” with counterpart sounds of car horns and “string basses portending doom” (Anderson, 2013).

Before the movie credits finish, we see the following scenes. A Dodge convertible stops to pick the man up. We see a close-up of a 1952 Illinois license plate, a view of a tree-lined street. Then the screen fades to black. We hear a woman scream. We hear a single

gunshot. We see only the man's feet exiting the car. Beside his feet on the ground, we see a pack of cigarettes and a set of car keys. A woman's purse falls out of the car door. It falls open and the man removes something from it. We hear crickets chirping, suggesting this is a remote wooded area. We see only the man's feet as he walks away. By not showing faces, Lupino has used her camera angles to make this murderous danger seem almost ubiquitous and anonymous.

As the next scene begins, a flashlight finds the car license plate (close-up), then the woman's body in the car passenger seat. We see a mid-close-up of a police officer. We can see the top half of his body as he examines the scene. We see only the driver's hands hanging limp on the steering wheel. Next, the image of a newspaper spins across the screen with the headline (top of fold) reading in all caps: **COUPLE FOUND MURDERED**. Beneath that, the headline reads "Robbery Believed Motive in Roadside Slaying." A second newspaper spins out a new headline: **NATION-WIDE SEARCH FOR HITCH-HIKER SLAYER!** Beneath that on the right, we see these words: "F.B.I. and Police Authorities Press Hunt for Emmett Myers." More newspaper headlines follow: "Ex-convict Suspected of Slaying of Honeymoon Couple and Kidnapper of Portland Salesman;" **EX-CONVICT MYERS SUSPECT IN HITCH-HIKER ATROCITIES**. These words appear (Smaller but all caps) **BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THIS MAN!** With a picture of our hitchhiker, Emmett Myers. A second headline beside the picture reads, "Brutal Slayer Sought in Manhunt. F.B.I. Joins With Police in State-Wide Search."

In the scene that follows, we see a car proceeding down the highway, then it stops. A man on the passenger side opens the door and beckons to a hitchhiker to get in. The next camera shot is a long shot. We see the hitchhiker get in and a view of a mountain range in the

distance ahead of the car. The scene fades to black. Then we see two small car lights coming toward us. Dramatic music continues (brass horns). In a long shot, we follow the headlights down a small winding road. Then the camera shot shifts to the view out the front window of the car. We see a close-up of a hand cleaning a gun. We see just his arm and his leather jacket. It's night-time now in a wooded area. We see a limp hand (not an entire body) with a man standing beside it, suggesting a dead body on the ground. The hitchhiker takes money out of the pants pocket of the person who is only vaguely visible lying there. We see only the hitch-hikers' legs and feet as he walks away. He gets into the car, cranks it up, and drives away. Again, Lupino has used her camera angles to enhance our feelings of unexpected danger on the road.

Heimlich/unheimlich

In contrast to this danger on the road, "*heimlich*," the relaxed feeling of being in one's own element and "in control" is introduced in the next scenes with two men who are friends starting a vacation together. The camera has left behind the killer and his victims, and it now shifts to a long shot with the silhouette of mountains and two small headlights of a car as it cuts across the screen diagonally. A close-up shows us the two men inside the car talking. We now hear the first words spoken in the film, "When you get to the next intersection, why don't you turn south?" (Spoken by the man in the passenger seat.) The driver turns to him questioningly, "The Chocolate Mountains are east, or they were the last time we headed that way." The other man, with a cigarette in his hand, replies, "Who needs the mountains? Why don't we go to San Felipe?" Their dialogue continues: "Nothing to do in San Felipe, but fish." "Well, that was the idea, wasn't it?" "Yeah, I guess so." The driver smiles, "We might just pick up a drink in Mexicali. Remember Florabelle at the Alhambra

Club?” “Yeah, she’s probably dead by now. That was a long time ago. Yeah, poor old Florabelle.” “Well, there’s no harm in drinking a toast to her.” “Okay. You know, except for the war, this is the first time, I’ve been away from my wife and kids.” “Do you wanta turn back?” “No, no, we’ve come this far.” (Sighs) “Mexicali’s beginning to sound good.”

In the next scene, we hear Mexican trumpet music, and the passenger is asleep. A neon sign reads: Cabaret MEXICANA: Dancing Cabaret. We see a close-up of the driver, then a sign that reads, “Silver Slipper.” “Bienvenidos a Mexico,” a man comes up to the driver’s side window. A second man outside the car says, “This is the place, senhor, come right in. A beautiful woman is just starting her fan dance.” The driver unsuccessfully tries to wake up his friend in the passenger seat, “Hey Gil.” “Sorry, friend,” (he says to the man outside the car), “no sale.” Then he says to himself, “Oh well, San Felipe, here we come.” At this stage in these two friends’ journey, there is no indication of danger. Two friends appear to simply be celebrating their freedom from their domestic and work lives—a benign *Heimlich*.

The next scene switches to a shot of the legs and feet of our killer. He is dropping spent shell casings on the ground. We can hear the wind blowing. We see the headlights of the car at night approaching him. We see just his thumb and arm outstretched in silhouette at the left side of the road. The car with the two (would-be) fishing friends stops. “Out of gas?” one says to the hitchhiker, “Hop in.” The car is a Plymouth. The next camera shot shows the two friends through the front windshield and the killer’s back as he heads toward the back seat door. He enters the car and the three men drive away. The view is now a close shot of the two men in the front seat. In the back seat, we see the hitch-hiker’s face, partially shadowed. This dialogue follows: “We’re going to San Felipe. You can pick up some gas

there and hitch a ride back. Waitin' there long?" "Yeah." (The hitch-hiker's face is still in shadow.) "Light me a cigarette," the driver requests. As the friend in the passenger seat offers the man in the back seat a cigarette, we see a close-up of a gun as he raises it."

Figure 2.3 The chance-encounter: Two friends pick up a serial killer in "The Hitchhiker."



Image source :

<https://www.popoptiq.com/kingdom-of-darkness-rko-and-film-noir/>

The Chance-encounter

Chance encounters occur in every road movie, but in "The Hitchhiker" one chance encounter becomes crucial to the plot. Suddenly the two friends have totally lost their free and easy feeling of "being on vacation." *Unheimlich* has been suddenly and dramatically introduced. They have picked up a criminal when they thought they were merely offering a ride to a stranger who needed help on the road. "No. Face front," the hitchhiker tells him. We finally see his face fully lit, sweaty. "And keep driving," he orders the driver. "Sure, I'm Emmett Myers. Do what I tell 'ya and don't make no fast moves or a lot of dead heroes back there get nervous." The camera shot shifts to show all three of the men now. "From now on, keep both hands high on that wheel. And you keep one hand on the top of this seat. The other

hand high on that window. Alright, now turn off the next side road we come to.” The camera shifts to a close-up of the driver. Then it switches to a view from behind the hitchhiker with the two men in front of him. We see out the front window of the car. Then the camera shot changes to a view of the three men as if through the front windshield of the car as the hitchhiker says, “Now, pull up.” The camera angle again changes to a view from the back window, then back again to the view from the front windshield. “Open the glove compartment,” the hitchhiker orders. As the man in the passenger seat opens it, he asks, “What’s the box?” We see cigarettes and a box of tissues. “Cartridges, 22s.” “Give ‘em to me.” The man passes them back to the hitchhiker, who then demands, “Close it.” “Now this is how we get out, after this,” (He holds a flashlight up.), “First, give me the keys.” The man hands them to him. “Now we all get out the same side, this one. I get out first, then you.” (He indicates the passenger side of the car.) “Stand away from the car. Then you. Let’s go.” All three men exit the car. “Drop your jackets around your elbow.” The hitchhiker takes the driver’s wallet from his back jeans’ pocket. “Turn around,” he commands. They face him. “We’re gonna open the trunk. Move.”

This scene creates a sense of impending death—a feeling that the hitchhiker might kill these men at any moment. Their lives seem to be in his hands and we the film viewers have already seen evidence that he has killed all his previous “drivers.” The three men then go to the back of the car to stand behind the car trunk. “Pull your jackets up. You!” (The hitchhiker/killer indicates the driver.) The hitchhiker hands the driver the car keys. “Both of you, keep your hands on the lid.” The man opens the car trunk. The camera shows us a close-up of the gun silhouetted. “Throw me the keys.” The camera reveals that they have a hunting rifle in the trunk. “Now get the blankets.”

In the next scenes, the struggle for power between the three men is poignant. The two passengers use different tactics to regain control over their situations, to try to escape, or to try to rid themselves of their overseer and potential killer. The camera close-up of the driver shows him making a move to reach for the gun. “You’d never make it!” Dramatic brass music follows. Next to the rifle in the trunk, we can see canned food for camping. “Get the groceries.” The second man still has his hands on the lid of the trunk. “Whose gun is that?” “Mine,” says the driver. “Do you like to shoot?” “Yeah.” As the camera shows a close-up of the killer in profile, he says, “So do I.” For the first time, we can see that the hitchhiker’s right eye is slightly closed. “So, I’m warning you, don’t try anything smart with me. Move!” Dramatic music and drums follow. The hitchhiker reaches into the trunk and grabs the rifle with his left hand. The flashlight and the pistol are in his right hand.

The “departure” stage

A long camera shot reveals desert, mountains in the background, and the dawn sky. We see the two small car headlights lit up center screen heading straight toward us. There follows a series of close-ups: the killer in the back seat, sweating, and playing with his pistol; the driver looking back quickly over his shoulder; the passenger stock still. We can hear the clicking of the pistol, as the hitchhiker keeps flipping the chamber open and closing it. Then we see another close-up of the killer in the back seat. “I told you my name. What’s yours?” “Mine’s Gilbert Bowen. He’s Roy Collins.” “What do you do for a living?” As we see all three of the men, the killer is now pointing his gun toward Gil. “I’m a draftsman,” Gil says. “He runs a garage.” The hitchhiker replies, “That makes you smarter. Or does it?” The car hits a bump in the road, jolting the riders slightly. “Now don’t make any more fast moves, I told you. The last guy made that mistake.” The camera shows a close-up of the

driver, then the passenger. Both men look tense. Gil briefly covers his face with his hand, grimacing. A medium long shot of the road in bright sunlight shows low desert brush and small trees alongside the road. The car continues winding down a long road with nothing in sight other than the bare rocks and high hills around them.

A close-up shows Emmett Myers' face again. He still holds the gun in his hand, pointing it toward us (and his drivers). "When are ya' due back?" he asks the men. "No particular time," says Gil as he secretly nudges his friend who is now driving. "Yeah, we told our wives to expect us home when we got there." "Your wives, huh, any kids?" The camera alternates between Emmett and the two men in the front seat. "I have," Gil says. There is now a quick close-up of Emmett holding his gun. "Just keep thinking how nice it'll be to see them again." "There's a checkpoint. Slow down." (Here we have a literal reminder of "border-crossing.")

The "border crossing" stage

The camera moves to a shot from behind the three of them through the front windshield. "No talking. If I give you the word, step on it." They pass by the guard. Dramatic brass music plays. We see a view of barren desert and rocks. The car speeds on. These men as well as the viewers are aware that the police and F.B.I. are trying to catch the criminal, to restore order (*Heimlich*), yet that formerly orderly existence remains beyond the reach of the two friends who have unwittingly been captured by a murderer.

The events to follow are a type of "border crossing" in the sense that the two friends now are thrust into a situation in which they must harbor a dangerous criminal. They have crossed over the line between ordinary everyday behavior and illegal and dangerous

behavior. A long shot of the desert show only rocks, sage brush, a 30-mph speed limit sign, the road cutting through the desert, and the mountains in the distance. A close-up shows Emmett eating a sandwich. Now we see days of beard growth visible on his face and that “lazy eye” that never closes. The passenger is also eating. “This car rides pretty good,” the hitchhiker says as he chews his food. The next camera shot shows all three of the men through the front windshield. “When I get where I’m going, I think I’ll sell it.” This line reminds the other two men of the uncertainty of their destinies. “Where are we goin’?” the driver asks. Emmett smiles slightly. “Pull up at the next gas pump. We’ll fill up with gas and get a road map. I got an idea; a pretty good one.” Another long shot of the desert returns with only mountains, sage, and the barren expanse of the landscape. The car drives toward us.

The car stops and we see the two friends through the passenger side window. A young man walks up to service the car, wiping the sweat from his brow. He hands Gil a map. “Aqui esta, senhor. Gracias.” (“Here it is, sir” in Spanish.) “Speak English!” Emmett commands. “I told you, he doesn’t understand English,” Gil says. “And I don’t understand Mexican,” the hitchhiker declares urgently. “Never mind the change. Let’s get outta here.” They drive off quickly. We see the gas attendant from the back. He raises his hands, shrugs, and says, “Louco.”

The next camera shot is through the back window, a medium close-up of the three men. The camera shot pivots to a front view through the front windshield. “Gimme the map,” Emmett demands. Gil passes it back to him. Emmett still holds the gun in his hand. We hear the crinkling of the map. “Take the first side road we come to.” Then there is a medium long view of the car driving through barren desert with a characteristic Southwestern

landscape of rock piles in the background. The only sounds we can hear at this point are the sound of the car wheels on the gravel. We see dust flying behind them.

They turn. “Pull up!” Then we hear the driver set the brake. “Keys!” Emmett demands. “Alright, now get out, like I told you.” They exit the car. We hear the car doors slam. “Here, you’re the smart guy, spread the map out on the hood,” Emmett hands it to Gil. Emmett braces his right foot on the front bumper, pointing the gun at the two men. “Get your hands up on the car. Look for a town called Santa Rosalia.” We see a close-up of the map and Gil traces his finger to that city. “How far is it?” “It’s about 500 miles.” “Is it on the Gulf of California? Say anything there about a ferry across the Gulf?” “Friday,” Gil responds. In this exchange between the two men, it is hard to distinguish whether Emmett can read or not. Is he illiterate or is he just flaunting his power to command the other men to do whatever he wishes? Emmett smiles: we see him in a medium close-up, still pointing the gun toward the two men. “Not bad, we’re loaded with time. We can make that easy.” We the audience can see the desert and mountains behind him. He walks around behind the two men leaning on their car. “After that, I won’t be needing you guys any more.” He shoots the gun to his right, randomly, where we see a rabbit scurrying away—an overt threat and a reminder that the hitchhiker can kill these men like small prey whenever he might choose.

In the next scenes, note how the use of close-ups enhances our perceptions of the psychological and emotional states of the men. As the scene continues, we can sense the power struggle that develops between a murderer and his potential victims. “Well, I guess we won’t be having rabbit for dinner,” Gil says. “I wasn’t trying,” Emmett sneers; a medium close-up camera shot shows him with nothing but bare dirt and rocks behind him. He pauses and smiles, walks quickly over to the car, and grabs an empty tin can by reaching through the

window. “Collins,” he commands, “put the can on that rock over there. Gimme the map.” Gil hands the map over. Emmett gestures with his gun. Next the camera shot shows the top of the car; the camera angle is slightly overhead. We see Gil and Emmett in the foreground filmed from behind. Collins is in the distance. “Not that one! The other one. That’s it.” As soon as Collins places the can on the large rock, Emmett shoots it, very close to where Collins is standing. Collins cringes. We hear a sinister chuckle. “Alright Collins, put the can back on the rock.” The camera goes back to Emmett and Gil standing by the car, a medium close-up, as Emmett points his gun toward Gil. Gil is looking over his shoulder. Emmett yanks the rifle out of the car and tosses it to Gil, who is frowning at him. “Don’t forget this is loaded, too. Let’s see you try. See how good you are.” The camera turns to Collins in the distance again, his hand placing the can on the rock. There is a close-up of Gil, then a close-up of Emmett. “Go ahead.” Gil shoots the gun quickly, easily hitting the can which was set up as a target. A medium close-up shot shows the two men—Emmett and Gil. “Not bad,” Emmett says. The dramatic music sounds.

“Collins, pick up the can,” Emmett shouts to him in the distance. There is then a close-up shot of Emmett as he says, “Take it out to that point there.” There is more suspenseful brass music. “If you don’t, I’ll let Bowen have it. Out at the point, further. Now hold it up. You won’t get hurt. Your buddy’s good with guns.” Then we see a close-up camera shot of Gil. “You’re crazy. I won’t do it.” Then there is a medium close-up of Emmett smiling at him, still pointing the pistol at Gil who is looking back toward him. “That’s the game. Go ahead.” There is a medium close-up camera shot next of Collins as Emmett says to him, “What’s the matter? Are you scared? Hold it closer to you.” The hitchhiker indicates the tin can to be used as a target. Collins holds the can up. “You want me

to try to get it? I might miss this time,” Emmett taunts. Collins draws the can closer. “Shoot,” Emmett tells Gil. Gil takes aim with the rifle. We see the rifle being sighted, a close-up of Gil’s hand and then a pan to his friend in the distance at the end of the gun. The camera closes in on Gil to show that he is perspiring, and he takes a moment to wipe his brow, covering his eyes in the bright sun for a moment. We hear suspenseful music again. There is a quick sound of a gunshot. Emmett is smiling and watching. Then there is a medium close-up of Gil holding the rifle. The camera rotates back and forth from Collins to Gil as Gil aims the rifle. Then there is a close-up of Emmett’s smiling face, followed by a close-up of Collins face, which is filled with fear. “Come on Gil, get going.” The camera shot is then a medium close-up showing Emmett and Gil. Another brief burst of suspenseful music follows.

Gil takes the shot and “pings” the can perfectly. It falls from Collins’ hand. A close-up of Gil shows him lowering his gun as sweat beads on his upper lip. A medium close-up shows Emmett and Gil again. “Nervous? Relax,” says Emmett as he takes the rifle away from Gil. “Alright, Collins, come on in. The fun’s over.” There are next alternating camera shots back and forth from Collins and Gil. “You guys worked up quite a sweat,” Emmett taunts. Collins walks straight back toward us, moving directly into a close-up. Alternating close-ups of Collins and Emmett show them staring back at each other. The scene ends with a long range shot of the car barreling down the desert road coming straight at us, the audience. We can see the three men through the front windshield of the car.

“Collins! Collins!” Emmett commands. Collins responds, “What do ya want?” “Turn on the radio,” Emmett commands. Collins says, “Why bother? All ya get is Mexican news.” “Never mind. Turn it on,” Emmett says. As the car radio is turned on, we hear Emmett say,

“Get something else.” “What?” comes the reply. “One of those news guys from the states. We see a close-up of Gil. The radio continued in Spanish. As the radio news continues, we see a close-up of Emmett as he listens. The radio reporter says, “On the crime front, police from nine western states from the north, Colorado and Utah in the East, have been alerted to stay alert for the Kansas desperado, Emmett Myers. Then we see a close-up of Gil as he listens, and he looks over at his friend. The radio news broadcast continues, “Reports have placed the killer in Portland and Seattle within the last 24 hours. His latest victim, William Johnson . . .” (The camera goes back and forth from a shot of Emmett, then Gil.) “. . . a salesman from Portland, Oregon, who was found late yesterday in Imperial, California.” Collins glances over at his friend, Gil. Then the camera shot is a medium close-up of Emmett in the back seat listening. “The victim’s car, possibly with Williams in it has not been found.” Emmett laughs, “They’re not even close. You guys don’t have to worry.” The next camera shot is a front view of all three men. “Not yet,” says Emmett. “You can start sweating when they put me in this car. If they ever do.” Then the scene fades.

The next scene shows a news broadcaster reading, “At the top of the news tonight, the murderer, Emmett Myers, is still at large. Today the devil thumbed another ride and William Johnson of Portland invited him to hop in and now Johnson is dead. In an all-out effort to apprehend Myers, the police have set out roadblocks at all major highways on the western states.” The next scene presents a night view of headlights showing police setting up the roadblocks. We see a rear view of police stopping vehicles. The radio broadcast voice continues, “And all border stations are being closely watched. Myers is 28, wearing a dark shirt, dark gray trousers, and a black leather jacket.” Next, we see camera shots of police cars moving into place. “His right eye is partially paralyzed. If you are in possession of any

information regarding the whereabouts of this individual, please communicate with your nearest police office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.”

We hear dramatic music and see a rear view of a moving car driving toward the mountains and the dusky sky. We see the three men once again in the car. “Pull up.” “Keys.” “Out.” They exit and we see that they are in a wooded area. “Move,” Emmett says. We see his gun pointed at them. He throws blankets on the ground, saying, “Each of you take one. Get around the car. We’ll camp here tonight.” The next camera shot shows the two friends lying on the ground sleeping, then a close-up of Emmett staring at them. Collins looks at him. “I know what you’re thinking, Collins. You haven’t got a chance,” Emmett continues, “You guys are gonna die, that’s all. It’s just a question of when.” There is another close-up of Emmett. “Santa Rosalia, that’s the end of the line. If the cops find out we’re together, or if you try to cross me up . . .” Emmett threatens. Gil looks around. We see another close-up of Emmett and he laughs. “You know you make pretty good targets from where I sit. Anyway, you couldn’t tell if I was awake or asleep. Got one bum eye. Wont’ stay closed. Pretty good, huh?” In the dark light of the night, we see the two men are wrapped in blankets with their heads next to a small running stream. Emmett is propped up on the other side close to them. Gil raises his head. Emmett has one eye open, his gun on them. The scene fades to black. We hear the dramatic brass music.

There is a long view of a car driving across the screen with huge rock formations in the background and an expanse of shrub brush in the foreground. Then a man in a traditional white cloth shirt and white Mexican cowboy hat walks beside the road, his back to us, as the car approaches. The car pulls up to a small town. The sign reads, “Comidas.” “We’re getting out here and buy some grub. We get out of the car like usual. You guys go in the car ahead of

me. No Mexican. I'm talkin' to you." Emmett gestures toward Gil. "When he tells ya' how much, you pay, Is that clear?" The next camera shot is a view of the car windows from the passenger side showing all three men in the car, Emmett in the back seat. "Now one other thing; I'm gonna have my hand in my pocket. So far, my record in Mexico is clean. I wanta keep it that way. Let's go," Emmett instructs.

The three men head into the store and are greeted, "Buenos dias senhores." Inside we see a little girl with a toy baby buggy. Gil glances down at her and smiles. They are greeted by the clerk/owner of the store, "Provisiones. Tengo frutas e legumes, ropa . . ." The little girl comes over. Gil is watching her carefully. Emmett stands a few paces back. "What did he say about Tiajuana?" Gil responds, "He said prices are about the same as in Tiajuana." There is a medium close-up of Emmett. "Never mind the kid." In the foreground, Gil is smiling down on her. "What do you want?" Gil asks Emmett. "Some beans and stuff. And tomato soup, I like that. Get four cans." Gil tells the store clerk in English that he wants cans of beans, chili, etc. "It's no use," Gil says, "He doesn't understand English." Emmett tells him, "Well you're not talking Mexican. Take the cans off the shelves. Give 'em to Collins." Collins holds the box, and they load up the canned food. "That'll hold us. Pay him." Emmett tosses the bag of money over to Gil. The clerk says the price in Spanish. Collins walks over with the box of cans. The little girl goes up to Emmett and asks in Spanish for an apple, tugging on his jacket sleeve. "Get 'er away from me," Emmett says to the other men. Gil rushes over, picks the little girl up and hugs her. "Put the kid down. Let's get out of here." The clerk thanks them. Gil tells the little girl, "Vaya usted com dios." "What did you say to her?" Emmett demands. Gil responds, "You wouldn't understand." Emmett repeats, "What did you say?" "I said, go you with God, little one." The camera shot is a medium close-up of

the clerk who stares at the exchange between the two men, Gil and Emmett. Gil walks toward us to leave. A man is sitting on the curb rolling a cigarette close to the car. A close-up shows the California license plate. Emmett says, “Get in.” The man on the curb says, “Hey mister. You live in El Centro. Nice place.” The car exits.

Figure 2.4 Scene in the grocery store: “Go you with God, little one.”



Image source :

<https://www.elle.hr/lifestyle/kultura/5-kultnih-filmova-sa-zenskim-potpisom/>

This scene in the grocery story is an important one which suggests the stabilizing influence of family ties. Note in Figure 15 below, the killer who symbolizes in the film, a serious threat to stable life, looms large in the camera frame and the two family men seem small in comparison, at this point. It is Gil’s affirmation of his family ties which essentially saves the two friends. Gil uses his engraved wedding ring to identify himself to the police. This leads them to find the men and capture the killer. Emmett, on the other hand has

rejected family life as useless. In a sense also, Collins attempted to leave behind a dedication to family when he tried to take Gil to the bars and honky tonks across the Mexican border.

The next scene begins with a helicopter view of the car travelling across the empty desert landscape. The dramatic suspenseful brass music plays. We see the three men in the car through the front windshield. Then there is a close-up of Emmett looking behind them out the back windshield. The camera switches to a close-up of one of the two friends driving. The other one is sleeping. The car continues down the road. They turn onto the highway. They make camp and are preparing food. Emmett is leaning against a tree. "Where did you get the watch, Bowen?" "My wife gave it to me." "Throw it over here." Gil refuses. "Didn't you hear me? I told you to throw it over here." Gil then takes it off and tosses it to Emmett. Emmett reads it. "I had a watch like this once when I was 17. Nobody gave it to me. I took it. Knocked off a little jewelry store outside of Tulsa. It was a cinch." "You guys are soft. You know what makes you that way? You're up to your necks in IOUs. You're suckers. You're scared to get out on your own." There follow alternating close-ups of each of the three men to show their facial expressions. "you're soft. Well not me. Nobody ever gave me anything. I don't owe no one. My folks were tough. When I was born, they took one look at this puss of mine and told me to get lost." There is next a medium close-up of Emmett who is still holding the watch which was engraved for Gil with his wife's name on it. "I didn't need 'em, didn't need any of them. I got what I wanted my own way. You get the know-how and a few bucks in your pocket; you can buy anything and anybody. Especially if you've got 'em at the point of a gun. That really scared 'em."

The next camera shot shows the two friends crouching to build the campfire. "You ever been at the other end of a gun?" Collins asks Emmett. "No, and I never will." There is a

medium close-up of Gil. "I'm gonna listen to the news." Emmett backs up toward the car to turn on the radio. The two friends light the fire. "Turn it up. We like to hear what's going on," says Gil. "You just get the grub ready," says Emmett. "Anything interesting, I'll let ya' know." The two friends stare back at him. In a low voice, Gil tells Collins, "We gotta find an excuse to raise the hood of the car and put that radio out of commission. The first time he finds out they know we're together, we're through." "Never mind the radio, I'm gonna get him," says Collins. "You give him one good reason and he'll kill us," says Gil. "Gotta take the chance," says Collins. Gil explains, "As long as he needs us, we'll stay alive. When he gets ready to jump us, we'll jump him, not before. Maybe today, maybe tomorrow." "Alright then," says Collins.

Emmett exits the car and comes toward them with the gun. "They found Johnson's car," Emmett says. He slowly walks toward the two men. "They know I'm in Mexico. And they're looking for you, too. In the Chocolate Mountains. Where are the Chocolate Mountains?" "In Arizona, near home," Gil tells him. "Not in Mexico?" "No." Emmett laughs. "Well, what do you know? That's where you told your wives you were going, huh. Then you came to Mexico. What for? Dames? You boys oughta be ashamed of yourselves. Causing all that trouble, telling lies. You got everybody and his brother looking for you in them mountains."

Next a panoramic camera shot shows them driving in the desert, a new day. Then there is a closer view of the three men inside the car. Here is their exchange: "I told you. Turn the radio on." "I did. It takes time to warm up." Gil's friend, Collins, glances at him. "Try another station." They hit a bump and the car starts honking. The horn won't stop. Emmett shouts, "Stop it! Stop it!" "I can't," Collins (the mechanic) who is driving says, "I

gotta pull off and disconnect it.” They all exit the car. “Raise the hood and keep your hands on it. Don’t pull the radio wire.” As they proceed, a long camera shot shows us a man walking down the road toward them. “Faster! Faster! I thought you were a mechanic.” Emmett has his gun trained on them. “The threads are frozen,” Collins explains. A long camera shot shows a man leading a donkey with a bundle of sticks on its’ back. He turns down the road where the men have stopped. The horn stops and the trunk closes. The man and the donkey walk past. “Watch ‘em,” Emmett says. He hides his gun in his jacket pocket. “Throw the tools in the back.” They all get in the car, start it up and pull out. The next camera shot shows the three men in the car seen through the front windshield. “The radio, remember, make it work.” We see a close-up of a man’s hand tuning the radio. “I can’t,” one of the friends says. “Pull up. Stop,” Emmett commands. “So, you did bust it, Collins.” Emmett suddenly hits Collins in the back of the head with the gun. “It’s not him. It’s the static in the hills, tonight it’ll work,” Gil says. “It better. Take the wheel,” Emmett tells him.

The next camera shot is a close-up of a map. A pen points out Punta Prieta. We can see Santa Rosalia. We hear the radio news report: “On August 7, three Americans stop for provisions at a store owned by Jose Andrade.” Then the camera shows us a man being interviewed in the studio. A Mexican official with an accent says in English, “Andrade gave an accurate description of Myers as being one of them.” He is reading a written report. “Another witness said the three men came out of the store and got into a green sedan bearing the same plate. This confirms our theory that Collins and Bowen are with him.” The camera shows another man present who looks like an FBI agent in a pin stripe suit and tie. The two officials have the tabletop map standing between them. “He seems to be heading South alright. Steering clear of all main highways.” “Exactly. Now to the West and this is more or

less barren, he would have no means of escape. His most likely route would be Santa Rosalia. Then Guaynas.” The pen points crossing the bay between the two cities.

The rapid cuts between reporters, pursuing police officers, and the three men in the car begin to heighten the suspense in the film. The scene changes to a view of the hitchhiker/killer and the other two men eating sitting on the ground. “Get down.” They hide behind rocks and lie flat as a car approaches on the road below them. “I gotta get a closer look at that car. Through there,” Emmett orders. “Get going.” They run to an overlook. The camera long shot shows a black sedan on the road below. Emmett gestures silently for the other two men to go back to the car. The next camera shot shows the three men back in the car. “Get a move on! What are ya trying to do, wreck her? Drive like I tell you.” Then we hear a tire blow out. “Out!” Emmett shouts. “Shut up. Get that spare tire out and go to work.” As the two men work on the tire, another car approaches. “You keep working. Keep your trap shut, no matter what. I’ll be watching.” Emmett slides into the back seat, out of sight. A car stops with a couple in it. Through the car window, the man asks if they need help in Spanish, then English. The two men say nothing. The couple remain in their car and drive on.

The next camera shot is a close-up again of a radio announcer. “The search for Roy Bowen and Gil Collins now believed to have been seen with Emmett Myers, mass killer, is being stepped up by the hour.” A long camera shot shows us a two-story building. An overhead shot shows us a helicopter flying over as we hear the radio announcer say, “Helicopters are working in shifts. Scouring the entire area from El Centro South to the Gulf of California.” A long camera shot shows us a Mexico border sign. We continue to hear the voice of the radio announcer says, “The planes are maintaining close liaison with the ground

locating isolated cars.” A long camera shot shows a police officer talking with two men sitting and playing cards at a card table next to their camper. “The Mexican police have now joined this strange race against death,” the radio report continues. A long panoramic camera shot shows a police car travelling across the desert. Then we see the car with the couple in it stop and they talk to the police. In Spanish, they tell him, “Yes, we saw the car.” They are shown a map and they point out where they saw the two men. There is a discussion in Spanish with the two policemen. They show the man a picture of Emmett Myers. He says he did not see him. “How far away? On this road?” the policemen ask. We hear dramatic music on brass horns as the policeman drives toward the area where they stopped. We see the policeman find the car fluid on the road. The scene fades to black.

In the next scene, we see the car and we hear night crickets (suggesting that they are in a rural area where there is a stand of trees). “Hold it right there. Around,” Emmett says. We see them drive up to a gas pump. It is nighttime and there is no attendant. “Break the lock.” Collins hits at it with a wrench. We hear a dog barking. We see Gil in profile. The two friends struggle but get the chain off so that they can get access to pump the gas. While Collins pumps the gas, a medium close-up shows Gil putting his wedding ring on the pedestal. Suddenly we hear a gunshot and see Emmett shoot the dog.

In the next scene, we see a policeman talking to the man at the gas pump in the morning light. The man at the gas stop is distressed about his dog being killed. This man hands the policeman the ring that he found that Gil had placed on the gas pedestal. The officer reads the inscription inside the ring— “Maudie and Gilbert Bowen.”

The scene shifts to a view of the police chief from Mexico and the FBI officer going over the report. They discuss the couple who saw the two men. The FBI official says to the

police chief, “We’re issuing false statements in the states on the radio about his whereabouts and not connecting the two men with him. We’d appreciate your cooperation in the procedure.” The scene shifts to a night view of the car headlights showing the vehicle in which the hitchhiker and his captives are travelling. This dialogue follows: “This oughta be the main highway. It isn’t. Looks like an abandoned air strip.” “It’s ok for tonight.” We then see the men setting up camp for the night. We see a medium close-up showing the two friends talking quietly, out of earshot of Emmett. “Tonight, I’m gonna chance it,” says Collins. “You’re wrong,” says Gil. “From now on we’re on our own,” (Collins). “No. We gotta stay together,” (Gil). The camera shifts to a view of Emmett approaching, holding the gun on them. The two men lie down on the palettes they have made to sleep on the ground. The next camera shot is an extreme close-up that shows only Emmett’s hand and the gun. Then we see Emmett reclining and we can’t tell if he’s asleep, because one eye is partially open. Collins eyes him carefully and then looks toward the woods. He slips away. There is then another extreme close-up of Emmett’s eyes. The camera shifts to a view of the two men crawling away. Then they run into the night. We see the headlights of the car coming toward them. Collins falls but gets up quickly and they keep going. Emmett slides to a stop in the car. “You guys are really dumb. Thought I was asleep.” Gil must knock Collins out to stop him from trying to fight Emmett. “Your buddy’s all washed up for the night,” Emmett says.

The next scene shows the car the following day moving through the rocky desert area. Gil is driving and Collins is still unconscious. The car stops in the middle of a barren area. The men get out. “Over there. Move!” We can see that they are by an abandoned mine shaft. “You, Collins, throw a rock down that shaft.” When the rock is thrown down, the time lag before the sound of it hitting the bottom suggests its depth. “Nice and deep,” Emmett says.

He circles around behind the two men with the gun. "Go ahead and get it over with!" Collins shouts. "Go and get the canned goods outta the car. We'll have a real good meal," Emmett tells the two men. A long overhead camera shot shows buzzards circling overhead. Melancholy music plays as the men sit down to eat. Collins throws Emmett a pack of cigarettes. "Save them for the next guy you pick up," he says to Emmett. The false radio report plays in the car: "The police have abandoned the idea that Gilbert Bowen and Roy Collins are connected. They have been missing on a fishing trip since last Sunday night. They believe that Myers is travelling alone and has abandoned his intention of seeking his escape by way of Santa Rosalia." Emmett laughs. "What do ya know? This kind of changes my play. Looks like we're going fishing after all," he tells the two men. "We're not going any place," declares Collins. "Stand up!" Emmett commands. Collins points to the car which is leaking fluid below. "There's a great big hole in that crank case," Collins tells Emmett. "Just what that sore ankle of yours needs, a nice long hike," Emmett replies. "Now get that fishing gear out of the back. Move!"

In the next scene, we see them walking across the desert. Collins almost falls. "Stay with it," says Gil. "He'll never let you out of here alive." "Cut the gab," says Emmett. He is now holding the rifle on them, keeping them in the site. They walk, carrying the fishing gear. We hear a helicopter approaching overhead. "Get down!" Emmett cries. A long camera shot shows a view of empty desert. The camera shifts back to the two friends. Gil is trying to help Collins get up off the ground. "Maybe we'll have to leave you here," Emmett says. "Come on, Roy, try," says Gil. A close-up shot shows the white packed and cracked earth on which they are walking. Collins is lying on the ground. A plane flies overhead. "Here we are! Can't you see us? Oh please," the man pleads to the sky. Collins falls down, crying. "Leave

him alone,” Emmett laughs, continuing, “Can’t you see he’s prayin’?” In this desert scene (see Figure 2.5 below), the weaker of the two men, Collins, might be considered the *femme fatale*, the one who complicates the plot and who is ineffectual in his efforts to overwhelm the serial killer. Ultimately, he comes to symbolize a type of failed masculinity.

Figure 2.5 Desert scene: The weaker of the two men might be considered the *femme fatale*.



Image source :

<https://entertainment-factor.blogspot.com/2019/09/ida-lupino-filmmaker-collection-bluray.html>

In the scenes which follow, the camera cuts in rapid succession. Shifting long shots quicken the pace and show us that they are on the move in their car, but the law is in pursuit and is catching up with them. These shots suggest that justice and order are returning soon. The scene shifts to show the Mexican police car stopping where the three men had abandoned the car. The officer looks at the mine shaft. A long view shows a police car

speeding along. Then the camera shifts back to the three men now walking through tall grass. “Get under the bridge, quick,” Emmett shouts. We see the wooden bridge. A car is coming across it. The three men are under the bridge trestles, wading in shallow water. We hear the vehicle pass overhead on the bridge—an army jeep. “Relax,” Emmett says. They all sit down on rocks, drink water from the creek, and rinse their faces. “You know Collins, you’re just about my size. Put you in a dark shirt and black pants and leather jacket, you’d look just like Emmett Myers. And nobody in Santa Rosalia ever saw him. Let’s change,” Emmett says. He points the rifle at him. “Get up on the bank and take your clothes off.” Gil helps him stand.

The scene shifts. We now see the men sitting in the dark. “Come on. Get up,” Emmett speaks. He is now wearing Collins’ clothes. A long camera shot shows a police car driving across the desert. We hear suspenseful music. Then we see the police car stopping and we see the police officer from behind. There is a small group of people walking toward his car. We see a church and a village, the three men walking, and mountains in the background. Another long camera shot shows a small city visible in the distance. It is probably Santa Rosalia. “Collins! There’s cops down there. In those clothes, they might shoot ya’,” Emmett says. “That would solve all your problems, wouldn’t it?” Collins says. “Not if they found out they made a mistake, it wouldn’t,” Emmett says. “We’ll hit some little joint on the outskirts. I might even buy you boys a beer. Get moving.” Collins limps along.

They enter a bar. “Buenas tardes,” the bartender says. “Give us three beers.” Emmett holds the rifle casually under his arm. He is wearing Collins’ clothes and cap. This dialogue follows: “He doesn’t speak English. Tres cervezas,” (Gil). “When I want ya’ to talk Mexican, I’ll tell ya’,” (Emmett to Gil). “Sit down Collins. Rest your sore foot.” “You can talk it now”

(Emmett to Gil). "Ask him about the ferry to Guaynas. I'll be watching his face. If he starts looking frightened, I start shootin'." Gil then talks to the bartender. "Friday and Tuesday at 9 o'clock," Gil tells Emmett. "Ask him where we catch it," (Emmett). "You're outta luck. The ferry burned up. It's being repaired in Guaynas," (Gil). "You're lying." "Does anyone speak English?" (Emmett) "He says he has a cousin, Jose, who speaks English," (Gil). We see Jose sitting at a table with his head down, as if he is dosing, maybe drunk. "What can I do for you? Do you wanta go fishing? No ferry, no more for the next two months maybe. It's burned up. Fishing is pretty good here," (Jose). "Do you know someone who has a boat?" (Emmett) "Sure, sure, my friend, Jaime, he has one. Motor runs good," (Jose). "How do we get to this Jaime?" (Emmett) "He's not finished until six. I can fix it for you in the morning," (Jose). "I wanta go now," (Emmett). Jose shakes his head, no. "At six, then," (Emmett). "My friend doesn't like going at night," (Jose). Emmett starts to lay out money on the table. "For me. You pay my friend, too. He'll be here at 8:30. The name on the boat is Estrelia. A thousand thanks. Go wait by the water until it gets dark."

The three men walk back out in the desert. Emmett tosses the rifle away. They are walking by the Oceanside. Collins is limping as he holds onto Gil's shoulder. Emmet climbs up the rocks. "Better go fishing while you got a chance. That's what you came down here for. You guys are really fools. If you weren't, one of ya woulda got away," Emmet says. "But you kept thinking about each other so you're missing your chances. You got tired. You slowed down. Now it's pretty late." Emmet sits above them on the rocks as he points his pistol at them. "Yeah, tomorrow I'll be in Guaynas. Too bad you're not making the whole trip with me." Emmet laughs as he says this. "That'd be kinda silly, wouldn't it?" "You stink, Myers," Collins shouts at him. "You smell just like your clothes. Sure, you'll make it

to Guaymas, but they'll catch up with ya and put ya out of your misery," Collins says. The next camera shot is a close-up of Emmet's face, looking glum and staring. "You haven't got a thing, except that gun. You better hang onto it, because without it, you're nothing. You're finished," Collins continues. "Shut up!" Emmet wipes the sweat from his nose with the back of his gun hand.

The "return" stage

Back at the shop where the three men last stopped, a man sees a wanted poster with Myers' picture on it. He calls the police. The next camera shot shows us that it is nighttime. The three men walk through a back street in a town. "Alright, Collins, now you get to take a walk by yourself down the alley and to the dock. If you try to tip anybody off, I'll let Bowen have it. You wouldn't want that to happen, would ya? Get going." Collins walks slowly forward toward us in the dark in the next camera shot. It is hard to see the men's faces. We hear a board on the dock creak. In this camera shot, we are seeing Collins from behind. "Go ahead, Collins, all the way out. Keep under the lights," Emmet commands. We see Collins walk out onto the dock. He is facing the camera directly and we see the dock he is walking on. In the distance, we see Emmet and Gil following him. They are very dark silhouettes.

In the scene which follows, one of the film protagonists shouts that he is not the killer, Emmet Myers. This climactic scene and those words accentuate a major theme within the personal psychodrama laid bare in this film narrative—a masculine rejection of violence (and conversely the family identity which saves the men). In the camera shot which begins the scene, in an extreme close-up, we see only the barrel of a gun. Then we hear gun shots. Collins falls face down to the deck purposely, shouting, "I'm not Myers! I'm not Myers!" As Myers turns to look around, Gil knocks the gun from his hand. The two men fight, and the

gun is knocked into the water. Emmet runs. “Alto! Alto!” the police shout (Stop!) in Spanish. Then in English, we hear, “Put your hands up. Walk this way.” Two policemen now have their guns turned on Emmet Myers and he is facing them. “Do as he tell you, Myers, you’re all through,” says Collins. Myers looks up at the two officers just above him on the ramp; he is breathing hard. He raises his hands to surrender. Collins comes up behind him. A policeman puts handcuffs on Myers. He raises his hands up, almost whimpering; he is shaking. Then he raises his hands as if to hit the policeman. The two policemen then push and hold Myers arms down at his sides. At that moment, Collins begins hitting him in the face. A close-up shows us Emmet’s lip is bleeding. “That’s enough,” says one policeman. Emmet spits at the man. The next camera shot shows that three police officers are all holding onto Myers, and he is in handcuffs. They walk away with Myers.

One officer stays behind with the two friends, Collins and Bowen. “I’m sorry. We have to have a full report, you understand,” the commanding officer says. “Gracias.” The two friends talk to each other. “It’s alright now, Roy,” says Gil. The music plays. The two men walk away in the night on the dock. The camera fades to black.

Some concluding observations regarding “The Hitchhiker”

Ida Lupino creates a story in “The Hitchhiker” based on a real-life crime spree by a serial killer William Edward Cook, Jr. Osteen suggests that “*noir* directors, by maintaining a neutral, even clinical, stance toward their characters’ pathologies, treat the stories as if they were ‘someone else’s nightmare’” (Osteen 2013, 19). In the film, two friends, Collins and Bowen are going on a fishing trip together and they are kidnapped by “The Hitchhiker.” The two men began their car trip as a leisurely “get away” from mundane domestic life—two men going on a fishing trip. Their roles suddenly shift from being two independent “drivers”

celebrating their personal freedom to being passengers in a murderer's crime spree. The chilling predicament in which the two men in "The Hitchhiker" find themselves has been described as "sudden, ill-chanced and impersonal—a typical *Noir* reflection of the lack of security and stability in everyday living..." (Anderson, 2013: 23). All these facets of the film played upon a public feeling of uncertainty.

Noir films portray "characters whose defeat or death seems fated..." (Osteen 2013, 2). Osteen goes on to say that *films noir* "with their bizarre circumstances, disorienting settings, and obsession with darkness are like bad dreams" (Osteen 2013, 19). *Films noir* seem to reflect a certain cynicism and the use of desperate means to recapture an American dream. In "The Hitchhiker," we see three men struggling to regain their own personal sense of freedom and "power over their own destinies" using very different strategies. There was no true *femme fatale* in Ida Lupino's film noir. According to Anderson, "Ida was able to reduce the male to the same sort of dangerous, irrational force that women represented in the most male directed examples of Hollywood Film Noir" (Anderson 2013, 23). The three male protagonists' struggles might be described as psychological searches for rationality, or effective "male" strategies in the face of uncertain social and economic times.

The personality (and performance) of the character, Myers, is demonstrated well in the camp scene in which he demands to see Gil Bowan's watch. He is leaning against a tree as Bowen and Collins are building a fire. Examining the watch, Talman says, "I had a watch when I was 17. Nobody gave it to me. I just took it, knocked off a broken-down jewelry store in jerk town outside of Tulsa. It was a cinch." He goes on to say, "My folks were tough. When I was born, they took one look at this eye, they told me to get lost I didn't need them—any of them. I did it my way!" His right eye is permanently open, never allowing the two

men he has kidnapped to know if he is asleep or just faking it. Talman had to appear to have a paralyzed right eye. A rubber piece was placed over his right eyelid with liquid adhesive, painful to the actor, but this resulted in giving him the look of the eye never shutting (Anderson, 2013, 39, 40).

The” bricolage” of “The Hitchhiker”

For “The Hitchhiker,” what stands out for me is how familiar the men in the story are to me. Their manner of speaking is characteristic of television stories of that decade, a speech style of the blue-collar “everyman” kind of men. William Talmadge, the actor who plays the killer, feels like someone an American who grew up in this time such as myself know, as I saw him in the popular “Perry Mason” series regularly. His voice is so well-known to me. Even though he played a prosecuting attorney in “Perry Mason,” his confrontational voice delivery is distinctive in “The Hitchhiker” as he explains his own (Emmet’s) personal past” “You’re weak ... (as if he is addressing these innocent men as criminals and not himself, the criminal killer) I take what I want.” It is this very familiarity of the characters and the “everyman” quality of the speech and aspects of the two men who were kidnapped by the serial killer, which make the film so chilling. As the voiceover says in the movie introduction, “This could happen to you.” Lupino’s setting—the American southwestern desert—often where Westerns were filmed—is not presented as the free, wild west where cowboy heroes triumph. We are drawn into the moral drama of the film story. The two friends must make decisions about how they can confront their circumstances. And this is a snapshot of the times. The war is over; you thought things would be okay, but they are not. The choices are—run, direct violent confrontation, or a criminal response. And the answer is none of these. Keep your wits about you; wait for your chance. Remember your family (the

child scene in the grocery story, the wedding band Gil leaves as a clue for the police). In the end, the police do their job, apprehending the killer (not killing him) which is a worse punishment for Emmet, the kidnapper. Now he is going to be help hostage, trapped, in jail.

These first two early “road movies” produced and filmed in the U.S. had different kinds of protagonists. “Detour” had one man trying to establish a new social identity in the U.S. “The Hitchhiker” had two men trying to re-establish their own senses of masculine control over their destinies. The next two films to be discussed were made in the 1950s by two renowned directors from Italy, Fellini and Rossellini. The first of these two films I will discuss, “La Strada,” features an unusual couple travelling together but following different paths of self-discovery.

“La Strada”

Introduction to the film “La Strada”

Bondanella and Gieri have observed that novels in Italian literature such as Carlo Levi’s *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, as well as films such as Fellini’s “La Strada” dealt with social reality “in a mythical fashion” (1987, 4). These authors argue that Italian filmmakers and their contemporaries in Italian literature during this period were trying to achieve “the creation of a new artistic language that would enable them to deal poetically with important social and political issues” (Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 5-6). Film creations such as “La Strada” sought to deal with “universal human problems, contemporary stories and believable characters from everyday life” (Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 6).

Moving beyond the confines of Italian neorealist cinema, filmmakers such as Rossellini and Fellini were “creating a new reality in their art” (Bondanella and Gieri, 1987,

6). Andre Bazin suggests that in “La Strada,” “nothing is ever revealed to us from the interior of the characters. The point of view of Fellini is the exact contrary of a psychological neo-realism which aims at analysis and ultimately at a description of feelings” (Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 202). Bazin describes the world presented in the film as a “quasi-Shakespearean world” in which Gelsomina and The Fool carry with them an aura of the marvelous, which baffles and annoys Zampano, but this element of wonder is neither supernatural, nor gratuitous, nor even ‘poetic,’ it appears simply as a possible quality of nature” (Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 202).

Road movies may share stages—*unheimlich/Heimlich*, departure, border-crossing, and return—but each director puts his own stamp on the narrative, defining the journey in a unique way. Fellini uses culturally significant figures (a type of culturally recognized *bricolage*) to tell his story—stock characters (Auguste and White clowns) from Greek and Roman comedy. As the analysis below reveals, Zampano, Gelsomina, and The Fool can be viewed as personifications of these stock clown characters. In “La Strada,” Fellini shares with us his concern with transformation. “La Strada” begins and ends by the sea, always a sign of transformation for Fellini. “The sea is life-giving or killing, deep and inexhaustible, familiar and unknowable, always changing and always the same” (Holland, 1954). Mulvey reminds us that, in road movies such as “La Strada,” the journey “has a metaphorical level, the space of transformative experience. From the earliest forms of storytelling, the road along which the hero travels reflect his progress on metaphysical levels. Away from the safety of home and everyday life, he (and sometimes she) struggles with monsters, literal or figurative in search of self-knowledge” (2000, 20).



Figure 2.6 Gelsomina is by the seaside gathering rushes as her mother is calling her home.

Image source: “Movies that make you think,” Blogspot. Accessed at: <http://moviessansfrontiers.blogspot.com/2013/09/151-italian-maestro-federico-fellinis.html>

The setting for “La Strada” was the countryside and villages which Fellini had experienced as a boy—the Apennine Mountains between Tuscany and Romagna. Fellini, reflecting on the film’s inception, has described his recollection of his early discussions with Tullio Pinelli (his screenwriter) about the film. Pinelli told Fellini that he, too, as he rode in the “Tuscan countryside, had “imagined stories of vagabond characters along dusty roads and ancient little villages, a picaresque tale of gypsies and acrobats” (as cited and translated in Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 183). Pinelli’s description fed Fellini’s imagination as he was creating the characters of Gelsomina and Zampano, “the story of their wanderings, their encounters, their lives” (as cited and translated in Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 183).

In “La Strada,” we follow Zampano, a travelling circus “strongman” performer, and his wife, Gelsomina. The role of Gelsomina is played by Giulietta Masina, Fellini’s, the director’s wife, and the role of Zampano is played by veteran actor, Anthony Quinn. In “La Strada” “the surroundings of the film’s characters are directly from a textbook definition of

Italian neorealism—stark landscapes, poverty-stricken peasant families, real locations in the small towns in provincial Italy” yet “no film could be farther from realist aims than ‘La Strada’” (Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 10). It has been called a fable, a kind of Beauty and the Beast story.

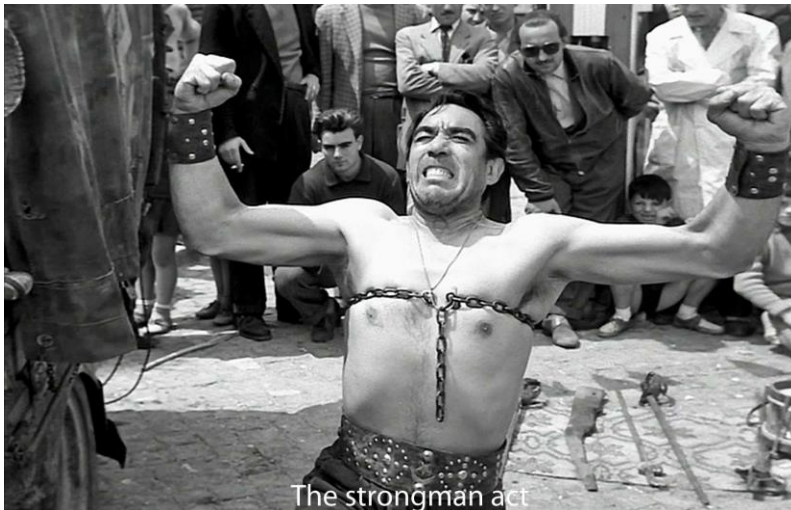


Figure 2.7 Zampano (a kind of “beast”) does his strongman act.

Image source: “Movies that make you think,” Blogspot. Accessed at: <http://moviessansfrontiers.blogspot.com/2013/09/151-italian-maestro-federico-fellini.html>

In “La Strada” (1954, Federico Fellini), music plays an important role. The film opens with the grand classical music written for the film by Nino Rota playing behind the credits. As the grand music plays, we see Gelsomina by the seaside gathering rushes and we hear her mother calling her home. There are three primary musical themes (“leitmotifs”) introduced during the titles, themes that recur throughout the film. One musical theme appears in the first sequence after Gelsomina meets Zampano (Young, 1956, 437). Zampano has come to buy this young woman’s services as a replacement for her sister.

The “departure” stage

Zampano says that he will pay 10,000 lire to buy her. He needs an assistant to accompany him as a travelling circus performer. Here is the way we are introduced to Zampano. He tells Gelsomina, “You’ll travel, sing and dance.” Zampano is travelling using a motorbike attached to a circus tent. Zampano’s vehicle in this road movie, the motorbike and wagon, establish their way of life as transient. It is flimsy and fragile, often on the edge of breaking down, leaving them homeless. It is part of Zampano’s way of life as a street performer (Holland, 1954).

Heimlich/unheimlich

While it appears that Zampano has chosen homelessness (*unheimlich*), Gelsomina did not. It was imposed upon her. Gelsomina is melancholy as she leaves her home. She bows on her knees facing toward the sea, overwhelmed by her sense of *unheimlich*. It is as if she is leaving all she knows behind. She becomes a passenger on the road of life (Young, 1956). Gelsomina’s destination is later expressed in the film when she tells Zampano, “You are my home.” But even that “Heimlich,” her chosen definition of home, becomes denied to her when Zampano leaves her later sick and sleeping in the mountains as he moves on.

The clowns, Fellini’s ‘bricolage:’ The strong man, Gelsomina, and The Fool

In the first scene in the film in which we see Zampano perform his strong man act, he is shown in a medium camera shot, standing, and wrapping the chain around his chest. He tells the audience, “I’ll have to inflate my lungs like an inner tube.” The camera pans around him a full 360 degrees as he walks around in the performance circle facing the audience. He continues, “A vein might burst, and I might spit up some blood. One time in Milan a man

who weighed some 200 and 60 pounds lost his eyesight doing this feat . . . If there are some squeamish people in the audience, they'd better not look since there might be some blood.” The pan ends in a medium shot of Zampano kneeling, getting ready to break the chain. He begins to inflate his chest.

The strong man represents two things—a break from poverty, but also the way that Zampano uses brute force to create fear in Gelsomina and make her do what he wants (Young, 1956). He teaches her how to play drum and trumpet music to announce him for his performances. He even uses a switch to train her as if she is a performing animal. The drum has been described as symbolic of music, beauty, and freedom in life. To play one's song is to know freedom. Zampano gives Gelsomina a drum but demands that she play it his way (Young, 1956).



Figure 2.8 Gelsomina in clown-paint alongside a circus clown

Image source : <http://www.heimhoftheater.de/veranstaltungen/filmpalast-la-strada/>

Gelsomina appears with a clown-painted face several times during the film. First, she appears as a clown as she plays the drum to announce Zampano's strong man act, and she passes the hat afterward to collect donations as they travel from Milan and Rome. Gelsomina appears again as a clown dancing at a wedding outdoors.

Camera techniques in "La Strada"

In the film narrative which follows, special note will be made of the uses of close-ups, medium close-ups, and long shots. The camera shot decisions Fellini makes establish the three main characters, Zampano, Gelsomina, and The Fool as somewhat unidimensional (fitting for a fable). There are few close-ups or even medium close-ups, so we are not invited into the inner thoughts of these characters the way Rossellini draws us in to the inner thoughts of the character portrayed by Ingrid Berman (to be discussed later with the film, "Journey to Italy"). Instead, in "La Strada," the emotional, psychological pulse of the film is delivered by the music and sound. The melancholy Gelsomina becomes associated with a musical leitmotif. The gravelly sound and tone of Anthony Quinn's voice reveals his character's anger, his desperation, and a cynicism about the life he is living. He is a strong man who takes what he wants, a thief even at a convent. He buys a wife, but in the end, he is ineffectual, an impotent "strong man," crying and scratching the sand, prostrate on the seaside.

"La Strada" is a story of melancholy clowns. Gelsomina and The Fool embrace their fates. The Fool tells Gelsomina he will die. And Gelsomina's fate is to be a lone wanderer, although she tried to find her purpose, to be a wife. So, the camera captures her at a distance.

As the story progresses, after the wedding scene, Gelsomina's "leitmotif" plays. We do not often explicitly see Gelsomina's point of view in the film, but in this scene, we do. A medium camera shot at first shows Gelsomina's back. She is looking out the stable window (where she and Zampano are to sleep that night) to see what is happening in the farmyard. She turns around and looks inside toward Zampano who is out of frame. A long shot then shows Zampano wearing his new hat, sitting on the straw as he tries on clothes the widow has given him. Gelsomina then is shown in a medium shot; she looks distressed. The camera pans slightly showing her as she moves to the left holding a piece of bread. She sits down. A long shot shows Zampano stand up. A medium shot shows Gelsomina sitting on the straw, eyes downcast. She is recalling her melancholy melody which she heard under the eaves of the building when it was raining. She hums the tune, absorbed by the music. She says to Zampano as she rises to her feet. "Do you remember it, how beautiful it was, Zampano?" She stands, hums the tune again and exits right. A medium shot shows Zampano in profile, standing on one leg as he puts on his new trousers. Gelsomina enters the frame from the left foreground. She is humming her tune again as she says, "that day, under the rain, from that window?" Humming, she walks toward the right background to reach a long shot and she turns toward Zampano. He has his back to the camera and stands now in the left foreground. "Why don't you teach me to lay the trumpet, Zampano? She walks toward him. Zampano walks toward the background and makes a half-turn toward her, "Well how do I look? Huh?" He adjusts his hat and exclaims, "Women!" Gelsomina stares at him in silence, then bursts into tears as she walks away.

Gelsomina, as played by Masina, like Charlie Chaplin playing his tramp in his films gives us "a worm's-eye view of the world" (Swados1956, 41). The Italy she shows us is not

that offered to the tourist, but the Italy enjoyed by the poor. The carnivals and religious processions emphasized by Rota's musical scores are exciting and awesome to us when we see them at times through the eyes of Gelsomina (Swados, 1956, 42). Her face registers, in pantomime, almost childlike reactions to music, insects, circus performances, or religious processions. This way of performing engages us emotionally:

It is not necessary that you be a woman (only that you be human) to recognize instantly her reactions to Zampano, Who has bought her from her mother and takes possession of her even before it grows dark: shame and anger, and pride and tenderness too? Or that you be a musician (it is enough that you were once a child) to feel with her joy and wonderment as she receives the trumpet . . . Or that you have known what it means to be an extra mouth to feed in a starving family (only that you have known hunger) to taste with her the drippings that she mops up so eagerly from the first big dinner the strong man buys her (Swados, 1956, 41).

Chance encounter: The Fool

The introduction of The Fool into the film narrative is important because for the story to proceed, we need him as a foil for the strongman. In European clown tradition, the White Clown, is an imposter who sees himself as greater than he is (the "boastful soldier") and the Auguste is the ironic disruptor. The Fool will continually taunt Zampano (the strong man) because he is a disrupter whose purpose is to taunt and outwit the bombastic strong man. This ritual struggle creates irony. This is the circus tradition that Fellini follows.

Fellini's Clowns, the role of The Fool

Fellini enjoys using clowns to call attention to absurdity and disorder in modern life. "The clown," he says, "was always the caricature of a well-established, ordered peaceful society" (as cited in Free, 1973, 214). Free, in his analysis of clowns and their artistic history, observes that clowns create parodies of human conduct, and the word "clown" signifies in English a peasant or rustic. The clown in old English theater played roles like

those in the Harlequin of Venetian farces and the Napolitan Pulcinello. He is a rascal, a fool, but has a witty companion. The comic figure since the Middle Ages has been a member of the common class who creates a grotesque art. The clown has three principal traits—his mask and costume (which render him grotesque), his comic actions, and his rebellion. The red, white, and black face paint and an exaggerated costume mark his “aesthetic distance from reality” (Free, 1973, 218). The clown can destroy our usual concept of reality, creating a world with a gap between cause and effect (Free, 1973, 218). Fellini spoke of clowns as “the ambassadors of my profession. In my childhood they were the premiere image of disrespect” (as cited in Free, 1973, 219). Fellini especially liked to discuss a “White Clown-Auguste” game. He says, “The white clown is the symbol of authority. He is your mother, or your teacher, or the nun who was always right . . . the ‘Augusto’ is yourself, doing all the things you’d like to do: making faces, shouting, rolling on the ground, throwing water at people” (as cited in Free, 1973, 219). Fellini made a documentary for Italian television called “The Clowns” as well as a film and in these productions, he chose to emphasize the dying of a certain kind of circus and the dying of two traditional clown archetypes which defied death—the elegant white clown Pierrot and the tramp Auguste. In his own personal reflections on his life-long fascination with clowns, Fellini recounts his experiences as a young boy who loved circus performances. It was very cathartic for him to see them defy death. For Fellini, “the clowns of yesterday by their outrageous acts could for a few moments grip the feelings of death and dispel them.” (Jaffe, 1971, 54),

The clown and the Auguste are a “contrasting pair” (Free, 1973, 220):

The clown becomes the norm against which August is a comic contrast. A happy Auguste would be balanced by a sad Clown, a bungling Auguste by superior efficiency. But since both are clowns, i.e., masked and performing clownish actions,

both are distortions of the norm of natural human conduct which the audience brings to the performance. A double vision is at work: Clown vs. August, both against reality.

This is how *The Fool* enters into the film story. The Fool is played by well-known American actor, Richard Basehart. Gelsomina has temporarily left Zampano. A long shot shows Gelsomina walking into the frame from the right along a deserted rural road. She stops, turns around, heads toward the roadside, and sits by a grassy ridge. We hear a processional theme. A medium shot shows Gelsomina seated playing with an insect on her hand. She groans as she hears the approaching music. She turns to the left, then right, as the processional music shifts. A long shot shows three musicians marching single file from right to left along the ridge toward Gelsomina who is seated in the center of the frame. She rises as they march by. A medium shot shows Gelsomina's left profile from high angle as she walks down the road. She looks with amazement toward the musicians out of frame. Then she dances clownishly along following them. A long shot shows a religious procession coming down a narrow road outside a small town. We hear more solemn religious processional music. A medium shot shows a crucifix carried into the center of town. A long shot at high angle shows children dressed in white, two nuns, choir boys, priests, and spectators. A medium close-up shows Gelsomina genuflecting in the middle of a crowd looking up. She scrambles around as the crowd pushes her around. A medium shot shows us the Madonna and Child being carried in the procession. A medium camera shot shows that lanterns are being carried toward a cathedral in the background and the façade is decorated with many small lights. The procession enters the cathedral. Then a long shot shows the altar inside the cathedral. The camera shot lifts toward the dome, then there is a dissolve.

An elevated long shot shows the plaza outside the cathedral at night, full of spectators. The camera tilts upward to show a high wire suspended across the plaza and a tightwire walker balanced on it. He holds his balancing pole, and he is wearing pair of angel's wings. The crowd applauds as he walks across the wire. A medium close-up shows this acrobat's partner, a woman speaking to the crowd through a loudspeaker mounted on a black car. She announces, "And now, The Fool will climb up to perform the most dangerous of his feats. He will eat a plate of spaghetti suspended in space . . . forty meters above the ground. We beg you to observe complete silence." She points one of the car headlights up toward the acrobat and the camera follows the beam of light upward. A medium close-up from a high angle shows Gelsomina in the crowd, looking up. The partner continues, "Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you, The Fool in his stunt that is unique in all the world!" Long shots switch between The Fool as seen from the crowd's point of view and a view of the crowd from The Fool's point of view. We see The Fool pretending to sit down at a table in his chair on the wire. A medium close-up from a high angle shows Gelsomina amazed by the act. A long shot shows suddenly the table and the chair falling to the ground. Another long shot shows The Fool breaking his fall with the balancing pole. And another medium close-up from high angle shows Gelsomina's frightened look. Then the crowd, including Gelsomina, applauds. Suddenly the lights are put out and the building façade is dark. A medium close-up shows that Gelsomina is staring at the crowd, and we can see The Fool's face visible directly behind her. He walks past her to the car giving her only a brief glance. He exits the frame from the left. The camera reframes Gelsomina in a medium close-up. Another medium close-up shows The Fool at the steering wheel of the car as the partner collects donations from the spectators. He sees Gelsomina as he rolls up the car window. A medium close-up shows her

staring at The Fool in admiration. Then we see The Fool almost break into laughter as he starts the engine. Soon after, Zampano comes to the plaza and orders Gelsomina to get back into the motorcycle caravan. She protests. But they head back toward the circus caravan to get work. Once they join this circus group, The Fool continues to tease Zampano from the audience. At night outside Zampano's van, Gelsomina and he discuss the antics of The Fool. Gelsomina asks, "But why does he have it in for you, that guy?" Zampano responds, "How do I know? . . . I didn't do anything to him . . . It's him who does nothing but tease me. But there'll come a day when he'll pay for everything." Gelsomina asks again, "But who is he?" Zampano says, "He's the bastard son of a gypsy, that's who he is!" Gelsomina asks, "Have you known him for a long time?" "Even too long!" Zampano responds. Here in this scene, we continue to see the dynamic between the "strong man" type of clown and The Fool whose role is to taunt him.

The next day when Zampano has gone back into town, The Fool teaches Gelsomina a new routine to help him perform for the circus. He gives her a trombone to blow, and he plays a small violin for the performance. As The Fool begins to play, we hear that he is playing Gelsomina's theme, saying, "Now, get ready, Ladies and gentlemen, I am now going to play a very, very sad tune for you." He stops playing turns around and Gelsomina blows a loud note on the trombone. As they practice marching around the circus ring playing their instruments, a long shot shows Zampano returning. He angrily jerks the trombone away from Gelsomina. "She works only with me!" Zampano shouts. As he says this, The Fool plays two short notes on his violin, twirls around and stares at Zampano.

Figure 2.9 Gelsomina learns her song from The Fool



Image source : <https://www.birdunyafilm.co/la-strada/>

An argument between the circus manager and Zampano follows. It is over who Gelsomina can perform with. The Fool picks up a bucket of water and throws it on Zampano. Zampano throws his hat at The Fool as the Fool races around a caravan. The camera pans quickly left and right showing The Fool running away. Zampano ends up chasing The Fool and he is so angry that he pulls out a knife and chases him into a bar. The whole incident ends with Zampano being arrested. The circus managers are angered over this episode and decide to move on to avoid any trouble with legal authorities. They invite Gelsomina to come with them, but she decides to stay and wait for Zampano to return. As she waits inside the van, The Fool comes to coax her out and talk with her.

A medium camera shot shows The Fool and Gelsomina sitting on the bleachers. The Fool looks at her with a smile and she makes a face. The Fool says, “What a funny face you have, but are you sure you’re a woman? You look like an artichoke.” Gelsomina frowns and walks away. The camera pans left to follow her, leaving The Fool out of frame. She tells him

she doesn't know if she will stay with Zampano. A medium close-up shows The Fool lying on the bench smoking a cigarette. "What an animal." He speaks. "I really don't have anything against him, its only that when I look at him, I feel like teasing him." The two of them talk a long while and eventually they get to the well-known story of the pebble.

Gelsomina's 'leitmotif' and the story of the pebble

Gelsomina tells him she's of no use to anyone. "The Fool" replies, "If you don't stay with him, who will? Everything has a purpose." The Fool gives her a pebble and tells her a parable about a pebble. "You may not believe it, but everything in this world has a purpose, even this pebble. If this pebble has no purpose, then everything is pointless." The Fool gives her the pebble and a purpose in life.

The musical theme or "leitmotif" that becomes associated with Gelsomina allows the building of layers in the story. It is a melancholy element that recurs in the story. The music of Nino Rota has been described as "practically another major character" in "La Strada" (Booth 2011, 708). The theme in Rota's score is played on a tiny violin and a trumpet, first associated with The Fool, then it becomes Gelsomina's song. Then "the mournful, minor-toned theme migrates to an unidentified washerwoman, whose singing of the tune attracts Zampano's attention" and it finally replays in the final scene of the film as Zampano curls up on the sand in distress over the role he played in destroying the innocent Gelsomina (Booth 2011, 708).

The musical leitmotif evokes emotions but also allows us as the audience to engage with psychological aspects of the characters, Gelsomina and Zampano. Bazin has reflected

on some psychological aspects of the characters presented in “La Strada.” He claims they have “a rough and primitive psychology” and a soul:

“La Strada” is nothing but the experience that they have of this fact, and its revelation to our eyes. Gelsomina learns from the Fool that she belongs in the world. She, the idiot, ugly and useless, learns one day from the vaudevillian that she is something besides an outcast; or rather, she learns that she is irreplaceable, and that she has a destiny, which is—to be indispensable to Zampano. The most overwhelming discovery in the film is surely Gelsomina’s prostration after the assassination of the Fool by Zampano. From then on, she is haunted by her agony which dwells on that instant in which he, who had virtually given her being, suddenly ceased to exist. Little groans ... escape from her lips; “The Fool is sick; the Fool is sick.” The stupid and stubborn brute who is Zampano could not have discovered the need he had of Gelsomina through his conscience . . . Terrified by the suffering of the poor girl, at the end of his patience and afraid, he abandons her. But just as the death of the fool had made life insupportable for Gelsomina, the abandonment and even the death of Gelsomina will little by little reduce this mass of muscles to its spiritual evidence, and Zampano will end by being crushed by Gelsomina’s absence. Not through remorse, or even by love, but through the overwhelming and incomprehensible sorrow which can be the only sensation of his soul, deprived of Gelsomina (Bazin, in Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 202, 203).

Fellini, in an interview in 1980 about the genesis of *La Strada* 25 years after the film appeared (as cited and translated in Bondanella and Gieri, 1987m 182), said that he recalled a confused feeling of melancholy and guilt that “insistently suggested the journey of two creatures who remain together because of fate, without even knowing why.” He said that he had also been thinking of a film for Giulietta and that she seemed “particularly capable of expressing spontaneously the amazements of a clown . . . Giulietta is really an actress-clown ... Gelsomina appeared to me in the guise of a clown, and immediately beside her, as a contrast, there appeared a massive and dark shadow, Zampano. And, naturally, the road, the circus with its colorful rags, its menacing and heart-breaking music, its cruel fairy-tale atmosphere.”

Figure 2.10 Richard Basehart, wearing angel wings, playing The Fool.



Image source : <https://247tempo.com/100-saddest-movies-of-all-time/6/>

The Fool walks a tightrope, plays stringed instruments, and even wears glittering angel wings in his performance—all symbols of connections between heaven and earth. In contrast, Zampano breaks and separates things—the chains, her ties with her family (Holland, 1954). Zampano is “a spiritually abandoned savage who trudges in a circle, making a show of breaking his chains” (Holland, 1954).

The Fool drives Gelsomina to the police station so Zampano will find her when he gets out. Gelsomina looks at the pebble when Zampano comes out. We see them on the road again. Gelsomina runs to the seaside, crying, “Which way is my home? Now I feel like my home is with you.” He replies to her, “You’re an animal. You don’t think.”

Gelsomina’s leitmotif returns when the couple head toward Magliano and stop to spend the night in the barn of a convent. The nun feeds them. Gelsomina plays her trumpet song for the nun. This leitmotif is one of the main themes written by Nino Rota for “La Strada.” It is a wistful tune that appears first as a melody played by The Fool on a kit violin

for Gelsomina (Holland, 1954). When the nun at the convent hears her song on the trumpet, she declares it beautiful, in a way consecrating it (Holland, 1954). The nun tells Gelsomina, “We travel too; we change convents every two years.” “You are following your husband and I mine,” meaning Jesus.

The “border-crossing” stage

That night, Gelsomina talks with Zampano in the barn. “Why do you keep me? Would you be sorry if I died?” She tells him about purpose. When he goes to sleep, she starts to play her theme song on the trumpet. We hear the storm outside. We see silver hearts on the wall in the convent. The nun asks her to stay. Gelsomina weeps as she leaves the convent. Zampano has stolen the silver (a type of “border crossing”).

Zampano and Gelsomina come to a stop at a crossroads. We see The Fool’s car has broken down and he is repairing the tire. Zampano hits him and he bangs his head. The Fool lies dying. His watch is broken. His time is up. Zampano drags off his body and pushes the car into a ravine to make it look like a wreck. Now a serious crime has been committed and Gelsomina has been put into the position of being complicit in a murder (a “border-crossing”).

The next scene presents a barren countryside. Zampano is performing in a village. Gelsomina is disoriented. She repeats, “The Fool is hurt.” We see snow and mountains, an indication that they are in central Italy. Zampano gets snow for water to boil. Gelsomina wanders away. She won’t eat and she won’t stop crying. She won’t let him into the tent. Zampano decides to allow her ten days of mourning. He makes soup. There is a big fair in town, and he wants to go there. Gelsomina is still repeating, “The Fool is hurt.” Zampano

wants to take her home. She replies, “If I don’t stay with you, who will?” “You’re sick up here,” he tells her (indicating the head). She lies down in the cold outside. “You killed him.” “It’s nice outside in the sun,” she says. Zampano stays with her. Their fire burns out. He gets blankets and leaves her a few things; then he takes off. We faintly hear her theme song. He leaves her sleeping.

The “return” stage

The return phase in the film begins when we see the circus entering a small town by the seaside. As he walks along with the other performers, Zampano hears someone singing Gelsomina’s song. He asks the children playing near him, “Where did you learn that song?” The children tell them about a girl who they say was in this town four or five years ago. They heard her play the song on her trumpet. She (apparently Gelsomina) was a vagabond, they say; she’s dead now. The children say that she never spoke, and her father found her on the beach after she died from a fever. Afterwards, we see Zampano again performing his strong man act, but he seems distracted and tired. He drinks heavily that evening. He becomes quarrelsome and gets thrown out of the bar. “I don’t need anybody!” he cries out.

Fellini himself has described the closing scene of the film (As cited in Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 175):

Exterior. The beach. Night. Zampano staggers across the dark and deserted beach, heading toward the sea. He enters the water with his shoes and pants on, stopping when the water reaches almost up to his calves. He leans over, takes several handfuls of water, and throws them on his face and head two or three times, wheezing and panting like an ox. Dripping in this manner, he goes slowly back up the beach. He lets himself collapse upon the sand. He continues to pant and slowly dries off his face with his sleeve and the hem of his jacket. And he remains motionless in this fashion, with his gaze staring out into empty space. Around him there reigns a profound silence. The sound of the backwash of the waves fills the night. Zampano’s heavy breathing subsides little by little. A kind of ponderous calm replaces the excitement of

his drunkenness. He looks slowly around. He sees nothing but the darkness, and in the darkness the white crests of the waves on the breakers. Now, Zampano is almost no longer breathing. Desperate, he is becoming aware of the confusing terror which has mysteriously disturbed him during the entire day. He slowly raises his gaze up toward the sky. There is no moon. The sky glimmers with stars. Zampano stares up for a long while with the terrified fear of a brute who for the first time views the firmament. Once again, he turns his gaze toward the sea. A sob arises in his breast and causes him to shake all over. Zampano weeps.

In this final scene, as Zampano falls face down, we hear Gelsomina's theme song. There is a dramatic crescendo. Young describes this scene in the following way: "he burrows into the seaside sand with the tide coming in and a boding sky. He is bereft of illusion. He has rejected the Clown and destroyed The Fool in himself" (Young, 1956, 444). What is Zampano feeling in the last shot when he is prostrate by the sea? He may be feeling remorse, seeing a vision of his life as solitary and unloved (Holland, 1954). Or that may be the beginning of his redemption. Fellini always (almost always) leaves the door open to the possibility of a redemption.

Some concluding observations about "La Strada"

Fellini presents the road in this film as a metaphor for something dark. Burke (as cited in Booth, 2011, 704) has suggested that "[I]ts capacity to separate eventually exceeds its ability to unite, and in failing to lead people to fulfillment, the road becomes an avenue to violence, death, abandonment, and alienation." Fellini maintains several characteristics of classical neorealism in the film including shooting away from the studio, use of nonprofessionals in a few roles, avoiding artificial light, and featuring a story with characters living in poverty. However, he seems to move beyond some of the neorealist conventions and the documentary feel mandated by "cinematic realism" in "La Strada." He does not

firmly ground the story and the characters in place and time. The appeal of the story presented in “La Strada” instead relies on the empathy evoked as we feel that we are learning something fundamental about the human condition (Booth 2011, 710). “There is an effort to show a world without love, characters full of selfishness, people exploiting one another, and in the midst of it all, there is always—and especially in the films with Giulietta (who plays Gelsomina in this film)—a little creature who wants to give love and who lives for love” (Bondanella as cited in Booth, 2011, 713). Bondanella suggests that Fellini “came to understand that the cinema offered a personal and individual means of self-expression capable of communicating any kind of artistic message, provided that it was honestly felt” (as cited in Booth, 2011, 706). “[H]onesty of sentiment and directness of emotional appeal” are heightened in “La Strada” (Booth, 2011, 706).

The film functions like a three-act play with a prologue. The prologue is the purchase of Gelsomina. Act 1 features a cruel Zampano and a kind Gelsomina travelling the countryside with circuses. Act 2 focuses on their encounter with The Fool. The Fool befriends Gelsomina and eases her emotional pain but harasses Zampano. Zampano’s relationship with The Fool leads to violence and the death of The Fool and Zampano abandons Gelsomina. Act 3 takes place a few years after Gelsomina has died. As Zampano discovers what happened to her, this “strong man” comes to some understanding of the consequences of his behavior. (Booth, 2011, 707). Booth and Bondanella argue that the film “suggests the privileging of emotion over intellect.” “Feeling, even more than thinking, defines us in our common humanity” (Booth, 2011, 708). Fellini’s choice of circus performers as his key protagonists in “La Strada” allows him to represent life as performance (Booth, 2011, 708). Further, religious ritual is presented as spectacle, as a public

performance rather than a spiritual guide. In “La Strada,” we see several street processions and festivals. One religious procession introduces us to The Fool performing on a high wire outside a cathedral. The camera view of his balancing beam and his tightrope form a distinct cross and he seems almost a “holy fool” wearing a pair of sparkly angel wings and suspended in the air between earth and sky (Booth, 2011, 713). We come away from his depictions of Catholic rituals as public performances and perhaps even a kind of tourist event rather than feeling any spiritual significance in them.

Fellini’s fascination with happy and sad clowns appears in the film. There are several sequences in the film that allow Fellini to use a series of images to tell his story virtually without any dialogue. Masina, as Gelsomina, is presented as a clown-ish mime performing much like a Charlie Chaplin. Fellini has emphasized his admiration for Masina’s performing abilities as well as his fascination with clowns, saying, “the clownish artistry of an actor, in my opinion, is his most precious quality, the sign of an aristocratic calling to dramatic art” (As cited and translated in Bondanella and Gieri, 1987, 182).

The seashore plays another key role. In the film’s opening, Gelsomina is walking along the seashore. She is happily gathering brushwood along with a group of children. This introduction of this character suggests a childlike innocence. She is happy when they return to another seashore and in the final act of the film, Zampano is once again at the seashore when he hears her theme song which reminds him of her. Structurally, the ocean is the starting point for the film, and it is the place for the climactic final ending. “The journey of Zampano begins and ends at the ocean; it is part of the natural cycle of life” (Booth, 2011, 709).

Fellini's camera gazes unflinchingly on a variety of characters in "La Strada." Whether focusing on innocents like Gelsomina, brutish and selfish characters like Zampano, or on others such as The Fool who taunt others for no reason, the gaze is the same. All these characters perform to get money from strangers, exploiting any angle to survive economically. The Fool and Zampano appear to be self-indulgent. Zampano engages in several sexual trysts on the road and The Fool in no way tries to reign in his insults of Zampano (whom he repeatedly calls a stupid beast) or Gelsomina (whom he compares to an artichoke), yet he offers a humane, forgiving view of them.

In the next film, "Journey to Italy" (1954, Rossellini), we will see how another renowned director from Italy, uses a "road movie" to tell a different story of self-discovery in his unique way. "La Strada" has presented a story about a couple from rural Italy of very humble social origins. In contrast, "Journey to Italy" tells a story of self-discovery about an upper-class couple. It is fitting to turn next to "Journey to Italy" because it was produced by Roberto Rossellini, a film director for whom Fellini had worked in his early film career and who influenced Fellini's work.

"Journey to Italy"

Introduction to the film "Journey to Italy"

According to Bondanella and Gieri (1987, 7), Fellini claimed that Rossellini taught him a "moral attitude" about filmmaking—"a way of seeing the world and its problems honestly and without prejudice, but ... remaining open to the poetic potential of even the most banal daily events". According to Bondanella and Gieri, Rossellini (1987, 8) in "Journey to Italy" (1953), "moved toward a cinema that explored dimensions of the human

condition unrelated to strictly social or political problems--... human loneliness, alienation, and the search for meaningful emotional relationships.

Rossellini's "Journey to Italy" features his own wife, Ingrid Bergman, as a somewhat stuffy upper-class British wife, Katherine Joyce, who is in an unhappy relationship. Her husband, Alex, is played by another accomplished actor, George Sanders. The car they drive is significant. "Journey to Italy" is about life seen through the window of a car—a 1951 Bentley coupe, "a quintessentially and assertively British car for the characters they are" (Kellum, 2014, 710). They are a stereotypical Northern European couple who are visiting southern Italy. Their car reveals their wealth as does Katherine's leopard fur coat. "Sitting inside the car shows them as wealthy foreigners and they protect themselves from the culture and landscape around them" (Torriglia, 1997). It has been observed that, at this stage in his career, Rossellini was concerned with "the laying aside of conventions that trap us: crises of faith, problems of intimacy and personal relationships, and the devastating effects on individuals of the institutions and conventions surrounding us that entrap rather than protect and nurture" (Gottlieb, At Oxford Bibliographies.com).

The "departure" stage

"Journey to Italy" opens with the Neapolitan song, "O paese d'o sole" ("The Land of the Sun") playing while the credits pass on a classic grey background. The lyrics are: "This is the land of the sun/this is the land of the sea/this is the land where all words/either sweet or bitter/are words of love." This opening music, a sweet, melancholic Neapolitan song with guitar, presents "a stereotypical notion of a picturesque South" (Torriglia, 1997). But for the first thirty seconds of the film, we see only what can be seen from a moving car, a moving paved road, small billboards, and a train moving in the opposite direction (Vettore 2013, 59).



Figure 2.11 Opening scene, “Where are we?” “Journey to Italy.”

Image source:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=Ouh7sOIL&id=3DDFDE83AF89B37B7E59BB0F5D3A128AF37F0BFB&thid=OIP.Ouh7sOIL1m1y2igK-EYKRgHaEK&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fimage.tmdb.org%2ft%2fp%2foriginal%2fAk2nqz3vIPuBOWFQZK2GCGshWMK.jpg&exph=828&expw=1472&q=journey+to+italy&simid=608051650243792848&ck=1BBC7B6286DD32AAD0392C132DCD39A7&selectedIndex=4&FORM=IRPRST&ajaxhist=0>

Heimlich/unheimlich

The protagonists appear. Alex is waking up and Katherine is driving. There are no smiles or moments of recognition or intimacy. Their first exchange is: “Where are we?” “I have no idea.” We observe no signs of affection, just mundane conversation. There has been no moment of departure, just a couple already there in Italy somewhere on the road (Vettore 2013, 59). In this opening sequence, we are already in the middle of a story. There is a sense of displacement in the first lines— “Where are we?” “I have no idea.” The exchange can be easily interpreted as a commentary on their marriage and their relationship. One of them says, “Now that we’re away from home, it’s like we’re strangers”—a statement of “unheimlich,” estrangement.

When they are sitting in the car during their opening dialogue, there is no shot/reverse shot. Rossellini refuses to use the shot/reverse shot to reveal the emotional distance between Katherine and Alex. Avoiding this kind of shot conveys their lack of communication. This syntax of classical Hollywood movies implies that when people talk to each other, one character looks at the other when the other is talking. This film syntax establishes an interaction between the characters. With the Joyces, Rossellini almost never uses it. He films the two of them together while they are talking to each other and not separately. When in the car, he juxtaposes them without positioning their gazes along those ‘imaginary diagonal lines that give the impression of their dialectical interaction’ (Torriglia, 1997).

The departure stage, characteristic of road movies, has already taken place. The couple is on the way to Naples where an uncle has left them a villa to be sold. In the plot summary to follow, we observe “border crossing,” as they behave as if they are not a couple. She tours Herculaneum, the Acropolis, the Cave of Sybil at Cumae, and the Temple of Apollo, while he goes on to Capri to socialize with expats. We see “the return” stage in the final scenes of the film when the couple leaves the car in a crowded religious procession.

When the couple arrives in Naples, we see place markers—a view of Vesuvius and of Pompeii, the isle of Capri, and the Sorrento peninsula. The couple expresses how out of place they feel (again, *unheimlich*)—their discomfort with the garlic and oil in their food, the excessive heat, the thirst for wine. “Everyone is asleep in the middle of the day,” her husband says with disdain. It offends his European work ethic. “I’m sick of this country. Its laziness. Work and duty mean nothing,” Alex tells Katherine. At a dinner party later in Capri, Alex’s host explains to him the “dolce far niente,” “how sweet it is to do nothing.”

The “border-crossing” stage

In the following scenes, the couple actively contemplate dissolving their marriage, a type of “border-crossing” for them. We have observed the couples’ feelings of “unheimlich” as they abandoned the comfort zone of home and their everyday habits for their trip to Naples. Rossellini then lets the couple drift slowly apart. He pays great attention to their inner lives. In voice-overs, especially with Bergman, we hear their thoughts and feelings. Katherine visits the Acropolis, the Caves of Sybil, and the Temple of Apollo. “Museums bore me,” her husband declares. Meanwhile in Capri, Alex seems to flirt with the idea of an affair and then of a tryst with a prostitute, but he is deterred by the women’s circumstances.

After they witness an argument of a jealous couple out the second-floor dining room window, the camera does not enter their living space. Instead, it remains outside the window and the rest of the scene is shot through the glass. We see a “distance between Alex, Katherine, and life as it passes them by” (Vettore 2013, 61). “They are severed from Naples and the flux of life. The window also is a metaphor for the distance between the viewers and the film” (Vettore 2013, 61). Rossellini’s camera shots reinforce this distance. In this scene, as the couple are on the terrace, they are filmed together, side by side, with no alternation of shot/reverse shot. When one of the two starts to talk, the camera remains on him or her. Later it switches to the other and not necessarily when the other is looking at the other person who is talking. When Katherine is talking, we see Alexander, and when Alexander is talking, we see Katherine. This technique underlines the characters’ isolation (Torriglia, 1997). Eventually, they decide, “Let’s stay away from each other.” All of this takes place on the veranda with Vesuvius in the background.

When Katherine arrives at the Temple of Apollo, she looks out into the distance at Capri, the island where her husband has gone without her. She is upset, but we don't get a close-up shot of her face or an explanation of her mood (Vettore 2013, 60). At the temple, Rossellini's camera emphasizes the sensuality of the ancient classic sculptures—the Venus, ten feet tall, and the Farnese Bull, a 2nd century BC sculpture. Her guide emphasizes their antiquity. On the one hand, it is as if she feels “rebuked and chastened by the ancient permanence of everything around her” (The Guardian). But on the other hand, the sensuality of these sculptures offends her. “You feel those men like men today,” she says to her husband later— “a complete lack of modesty.”

Laura Mulvey (as cited in Vettore 2013, 54) suggests that this is a film about death. At the Temple of Apollo and in the sequence in the Archaeological Museum in Naples, “the camera explores the ancient immobile statues in detail, moving around and around each work” (Mulvey, as cited in Vettore 2013, 55). She suggests that this hints at “the polarity between life and death” (Mulvey, as cited in Vettore 2013, 55). Mulvey suggests that “the story of the skeletons adopted at the Fontanelle indicates Rossellini is interested in the continued presence of the dead among the living” (Mulvey, 2000, 20). As Katherine tours the ruins, the musical score changes “suggesting wonder and enigma.” We no longer hear sweet Neapolitan songs or the diegetic hum of the car. When she visits the National Archaeological Museum, the background music features string instruments in which a flute solo stands out. The flute is a symbol of Dionysian culture. The flute was sacred to Pan, the Greek god of woods and pastures. It evokes the presence of ancient gods, then we are reminded of the classical heritage of Naples and the Dionysian forces associated with the emperors, Nero and Tiberius (Torriglia, 1997).

It is as if the depth of time presented in the classical sculptures, the ruins, and the temple, and the fertility on display with the excessive presence of women with baby carriages walking about in the streets of Naples has heightened Katherine's sense of the emptiness of her marriage (Torriglia, 1997). Here is an exemplary exchange: "Ever since we've realized how little we've meant to each other. ..." "It's your fault." "It didn't take me long. There is always criticism in your eyes."

In an especially compelling scene, a guide shows Katherine the bubbles in the hot mud near Vesuvius in the volcanic Phlegraean Fields where the boiling lava is near the surface and there is smoky, sulfuric air above them. He shows her with a torch how the smoke from it rises in the smoke from a nearby pit, as if it magically travelled beneath the earth's surface. He demonstrates again with a cigarette how the smoke can spread from one small puddle to another. These are the pocket Vesuvius sulfur springs.

A woman invites her to visit the catacombs where she sees the skeletons of people who died 300 to 400 years ago still being cared for by their families. Even the abandoned dead are looked after with flowers and prayers. At the conclusion of this scene, we hear the horn of a boat returning from Capri. We see two ferry boats passing each other from opposite directions. It is as if the boats are the Joyces passing each other. Her husband is on one of them. He has not phoned her to say he is returning. He had departed leaving only a note to say he was gone to Capri.

As Katherine waits for her husband at the window, Rossellini sets up four different moments. Katherine is framed sitting at the window looking toward the sea, waiting. Second, there is a shot of the open sea where the two ferries are passing at a distance, going opposite ways, but parallel to each other. Third, there is a medium close-up of Alex, sitting on the

ferry, looking out toward the sea. Fourth, the shot goes back to Katherine sitting at the window. The lack of communication between the couple is embodied in this cinematic syntax (Torriglia, 1997).

When her husband returns, Katherine hears him re-enter the house. She clears away her Solitaire game, and turns her light off, at first ignoring him. He is shown in his room in his dressing gown. In an awkward exchange, she calls to him from an adjacent room. He tells her he returned at five on the boat and has been in Naples all evening. He is smoking. He asks her for a favor, says he hasn't been sleeping well. She turns her light down.

The return

There is a dramatic turning point in the couple's relationship when the Joyces are invited to visit the Pompeii excavation by their host, and they decide to go together to see it. During the 1950s when this film was made, the spectacular death casts there were just being revealed. Katherine and Alex watch together as one body case is opened. It reveals two people at the moment of death, a man, and a woman, locked in an embrace, just as they were when Vesuvius erupted in 79 CE. Katherine is overwhelmed by the sight. As they talk, we can see the painting of the mythological lovers, the nude Mars and Venus, sitting shoulder to shoulder gazing into each other's eyes with Cupid shading them with his parasol. The couple in the body cast and the painting share a relationship which we know Katherine and Alex lack (Kellum, 2014, 797).

Alex helps her walk through the ruins to head home to the villa. He empathizes, "I understand how you feel." "I've seen many strange things today I didn't tell you about," she responds. "I'm sorry I answered you in such a stupid way when I came back this morning.

Don't you want to look around a little?" Alex says. They talk more about their plans to divorce. "Life is so short. That's why one should make the most of it." As the couple drive toward home, Alex says, "Look, I've been thinking. You stay here and I'll go back to London. Is the divorce going to be painful for you?" She leans on Alex, asking, suddenly, "Are you sure we're doing the right thing?" There is a close up of the Madonna, as Alex says, "How can they believe in that? Like children." "I despise you," Katherine says. At this point, however, a religious procession crowds the streets around them. In the street, someone shouts out that a miracle has taken place and the crowd rushes to see it, sweeping Katherine away with the flow. She cries out for help and Alex runs to help her. She grabs him and hugs him. "I don't want to lose you!" Alex stares at her and asks, "What's wrong with us?" Katherine replies, "Perhaps we hurt each other too much. Tell me that you love me." "Alright," he says, "I love you." They have been forced to exit the protective shell of the car that has detached them from life around them. They had to exit the car to feel life again and to reaffirm their intentions to remain a couple (Young, 1956, 437).



Figure 2.12 Alex and Katherine embrace in the final scene of the film.

Image source:

"The Criterion Collection, Roberto Rossellini 'Journey to Italy.'"

<https://www.criterion.com/films/28081-journey-to-italy0>

As they embrace, the camera pans away and, instead of focusing on the couple, it focuses closely on members of the marching band as the crowd flows in front of them. This is part of a general tendency in Rossellini's film work in this film, always maintaining a distance, "reframing to insist that this is a 'real' environment." "[T]he camera abandons the main characters to focus on the people around them" (Vettore, 2013). The religious procession is an important scene which may have been brought about by chance (Vettore 2013, 56). Rossellini is using a crane to film from above the crowd. We see the shadow of the crane in the last sequence for as long as 4 or 5 seconds. This vantage point "denies viewers 'a solid reference point from which to draw conclusions'" (Vettore 2-13, 56). This enables us to be detached spectators.

The camera turns away from the couple and the crane shot is carried forward by the people streaming along the street; the camera seems to find its own ending in this flow of movement. The film moves from a concentration on the stars roles to move in another direction, wandering off "in search of another kind of cinema" (Mulvey, 2000, 20). The camera pans to the right, holds on an unknown person, and freezes and fades out. These are non-diegetic images, not shot from Alex and Katherine's point of view.

Some concluding observations about "Journey to Italy"

Mulvey (2000, 20) suggests that "Alex and Katherine's fictional journey, is also, perhaps primarily, designed to take the film into a specific place, a real geography and geology that underpin the story like a map. We see Naples and Pompei. Fiction leads to reality, in this Rossellini movie, rather than realism." The journey has a metaphorical level, "a space of transformative experience" (Mulvey, 2010, 20). The road the protagonist travels

reflects his or her progress. “Away from the safety of home and everyday life, he or she struggles in a search for self-knowledge (Mulvey, 2000, 20).

Rossellini also seemed to be motivated to make a film about Naples, to highlight the history and geography of his chosen location. Ingrid Bergman explained in an interview in 1974:

In “Journey to Italy” it was to show Pompeii. He adored Pompeii. He knew everything about it. He was only looking for a story into which he could put Pompeii and the museums and Naples, and all that Naples stands for which he was always fascinated with because the people of Naples are different from the people in Rome or Milano. He wanted to show all those grottoes with the relics and the bones and the museums and the laziness of all the statues. Hercules is always leaning on something instead of fighting something (as cited in Mulvey, 2000, 21).

Rossellini places panning shots that show the Bay of Naples throughout the film. The scene on the balcony at Uncle Homer’s house features an explicit mapping of the whole area as their host shows Alex and Katherine the entire Bay (Mulvey, 2000). The camera follows his description:

There’s the Vesuvius. Ever since the eruption of 1944 there has been a period of calm, but the temperature is beginning to rise a little though. That point there, behind the hill, that first hill, is Pompeii. Then Castellammare, Torre Annunziata. Resina’s over there, and Naples. There’s Ischia, the Isle of Capri and that large strip down there is the Sorrento peninsula (Mulvey, 2000, 20).

Two kinds of image are important for Rossellini’s cinema—the material and the supernatural. Vesuvius allowed him to feature both types of imagery. A variety of cults and superstitions surrounded Vesuvius, and semi-pagan beliefs, semi-Catholic beliefs, and ritual processions with statues of saints appealed to Rossellini (Mulvey, 2000, 20). At the end of the film, the statue of the Madonna allowed him to focus on “the human mind’s imaginative powers, its propensity to need and enjoy belief in the supernatural and the magic powers of cinema” (Mulvey, 2000, 20).

Alex and Katherine experience divergent journeys in “Journey to Italy.” Alex goes to Capri to explore his sensual side. Katherine is shown as almost a caricature of an English lady tourist (Mulvey, 2000, 20). Katherine makes three journeys, three sightseeing tours. The order of her trips has been described as a series of “archaeological strata” (Mulvey, 2000, 20). She sees the classical Greek and Roman statues of the museum, then goes back in time to the ancient Cumaean cave of Sybil, then to the geological formations around Vesuvius. At the *Museo Archaeologico*, Rossellini filmed only the statues. He used a crane because of the great size of the statues, but it also gave that film sequence a distinctive style. Although Ingrid Bergman looks at the statues with wonder, she does not provide the viewing position or point of view; the camera is freed from her movements and achieves an autonomy which is accentuated by the music of Renzo Rossellini. The director reveals his fascination with these objects. He begins with small panning movements across and around the statues. When Katherine reaches the Farnese Hercules, the camera sweeps higher. The music lends an “eerie, otherworld quality” to the scene. Mulvey observes:

It is as though Rossellini imagined bringing life to these blocks of stone and that his camera could provide the magic means of doing so. Some of the statues are poised in mid-gesture—the discus thrower with his eyes looking straight into and challenging the camera, the drunken poet caught at the moment he falls backward into a stupor....The aesthetic of classical Greek sculpture . . . aspired to create the illusion that life had been frozen—an illusion that was ultimately transformed into reality by photography (Mulvey, 2000, 20).



Figure 24. Katherine visits the Temple of Apollo.

Image source:

“The Criterion Collection, Roberto Rossellini ‘Journey to Italy.’”

<https://www.criterion.com/films/28081-journey-to-italy0>

Katherine’s visit to Cumae contrasts sharply with the museum sequence. This sequence is organized around Katherine’s emotional responses. As the guide demonstrates the echo that resounds through the huge cave, “Rossellini holds the shot of Katherine and the guide walking, with light and shadow falling across their path and the echoes reverberating around them, until they reach the chamber of Christian remains” (Mulvey, 2000, 20). The music changes the feeling as the lines of Katherine’s former lovers’ poem begin to run through her head. The lines of his poetry she repeats are “Temple of the Spirit. No longer bodies/But pure aesthetic images.” But the guide disrupts her reverie by pointing out two marks in the wall where he says the Saracens chained their prisoners: “This is how they would have tied a beautiful woman like you.”

In Katherine's third journey to the Phlegraean Fields, the "little Vesuvius" continues live volcanic activity in the Sulphur pits. This sequence is visually organized in two contrasting ways. Katherine delights in the natural phenomena she sees; she photographs the smoking pits. But then the camera becomes independent. "As the volume of smoke increases, the camera follows as it drifts away until it fills the screen" (Mulvey, 2000, 20). This lends the phenomenon an appearance of mystery (Mulvey, 2000, 20).

The previous two films have presented journeys of self-discovery featuring couples, both produced in Italy during the 1950s. The next film, "Il Sorpasso," presents the journey of an "odd couple," two men who are like an "Oscar and Felix," polar opposites.

"Il Sorpasso"

Introduction to the film, "Il Sorpasso"

"Il sorpasso" means overtaking. It refers to passing another car on the road. Frenetic and aimless driving by the brash character, Bruno drives the film. But the pairing of Bruno with a serious-minded Roberto presents an opportunity to show the emerging "lifestyle" of the new Italy against the "Backdrop of an old way of life" associated especially with Roberto's family. (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 234).

"Il Sorpasso" has been called "the archetypal European road movie of the Sixties" (Porton, 2014, 70). A fine example of Italian comedy, the film features a recurring pair: "a self-effacing introvert" being transformed by his encounter is a "self-obsessed extrovert." Bruno has been described as a quintessential "Italian male braggadocio" (Porton, 2014, 70). It is a commentary on the postwar "boom" years in Italy, and it has been called a "tragicomic

parable.” It analyzes a “newly affluent society discovering the joys and foibles of consumerism” (Porton, 2014, 70).

The setting

Soon after Bruno meets him to use the phone in Roberto’s apartment, he convinces him to take a break from his law study session and join him for a “giro,” a spin, in the car. They can’t find an open bar, so their “giro” becomes a drive to the countryside. As the film continues, their movements come to encompass kilometers and by film’s end, we are on the Riviera. This setting presents “all of Italy” wearing bathing suits and dancing the twist on the beach (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 235). Cohan and Hark (1997, 235) suggest that “throughout the ride, the film presents us with the images and sounds of a mobile consumerist Italy.”

“Il Sorpasso” film narrative

Opening scene: We are riding over the shoulder of our driver. The music is fast and upbeat. We feel an urgency as the driver skids through the streets of the mostly empty city of Rome. Bruno is speeding through Rome, trying to find a phone when everything is closing for “ferragosto.” He is circling plazas quickly and he makes a U-turn in an empty street pulling up to a public phone. The opening scene ends with a storefront grate closing at the moment Bruno tries to reach the phone. The opening credits are still rolling. He screeches his tires as he drives away. He makes a sudden stop in his convertible and climbs out to get a drink of water at a streetside water fountain. Bruno is “out of sync” with the new rhythms of the city (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 234). The city and all of Italy, it appears, is forced to close so that everyone can conform to the new model of a leisure society (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 234).



Figure 2.14 “Il Sorpasso” opening scene, Rome a vacant city, everything is closing for the “ferragosto” vacation.

Image source:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=lyOOqMt5&id=439340833CB27474E627545F48D05B23550AEBDF&thid=OIP.lyOOqMt5DVo6VVP6uyrCawHaEr&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fwww.romaierioggi.it%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2f2017%2f08%2fIl-Sorpasso-1962-scene-1024x647.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.97238ea8cb790d5a3a5553fabb2ac26b%3frik%3d3%252bsKVSNb0EhfVA%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&expw=647&expw=1024&q=Il+Sorpasso&simid=608021245949008268&FORM=IRPRST&ck=A016E3EF487695647A88389FF02DE66&selectedIndex=24&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

A young man peers out his apartment window from the second floor looking at this erratic driver. Roberto lives alone in a dreary, modern apartment on Rome’s periphery. The driver calls up to him, asking the onlooker above to make a phone call for him. Timidly the watcher invites the other man up to make his all. The young man talks to himself, questioning what he has done. Bruno is the brash driver and Roberto is the shy one. We have been introduced to our two protagonists for this road movie.

The characters: Risi's bricolage

It is important that the role of Roberto is played by a foreigner, say Cohan and Hark (1997, 235). However, Bruno, the actor and the role is Italian. He represents a Roman “type,” “a typical southern Italian figure,” someone who lives by improvisation, getting through situations with “bravado, seductiveness, and ‘smarts’” (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 235). Cohan and Hark argue that Bruno is presented as “the prototype of the new Italian,” whose adaptability allows consumerism “to remold the Italian character so easily” (1997, 235). On the other hand, Roberto represents the old type of Italian. He is studying for his exams and seems not to be seized by the urge to vacation with everyone else. He represents the older values of “renunciation, savings, and investment” (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 235).

Bruno grabs things on Roberto's desk to look them over quickly as he enters the apartment. He has announced that he is on holiday. The young man goes back to studying law while Bruno is singing to himself in the washroom as he washes his hands and exits. Meanwhile, Roberto, the shy one goes to the window again to watch what is going on across the street. We see that the city is deserted. As Bruno goes into the bathroom to wash up, off-screen, we hear him break a vase (perhaps symbolic of the way that he is about to break Roberto's repression, say Cohan and Har, 1997, 234)).

The departure

Bruno goes to leave the apartment, but he immediately returns and invites Roberto with him to go for a holiday bar break with him. The car is shown in a long shot zipping through the streets of Rome again. Then shown front on coming toward us. We see a sign on the front window of the car which says Camera Deputati. The two travelers now make plans to go to a restaurant. They get to it, and it is closed. A woman comes out and curses at

Bruno, turning him away. A long shot of the central plaza follows. Then his car races toward us, honking its horn. A close-up of the two of them through the front windshield next.



Figure 2.15 The departure in “Il Sorpasso,” overtaking cars, a metaphor for the anticipated economic overtaking of other economies by Italy.

Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=DPQdA4JN&id=1A7C806896F334BC379EAB295E41CB96AD61A792&thid=OIP.DPQdA4JNaaiRqVkzUagVkwHaEK&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.0cf41d03824d69a891a9593351a81593%3Frik%3DkqdhZbLQV4pqw%26riu%3Dhttp%253a%252f%252fwww.dvdbeaver.com%252ffilm4%252fblu-ray+reviews+61%252ffil+sorpasso+blu-ray+%252flarge%252flarge+il+sorpasso+subs+blu-ray.jpg%26ehk%3D4Dhqs8jDZHDPBa2hVkXYwumwdWf3Neqwa9FheQN%252fvlc%253d%26risl%3D%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&exph=1080&expw=1920&q=Il+Sorpasso&form=IRPRST&ck=C191A9A1B299A13129D703BB964008AB&selectedIndex=1&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&vt=0&sim=11&pivotparams=insightsToken%3Dccid_Z%252B2dBEa2*c_p_6252D6B3D48B46DE36F5514B089EB1EF*mid_C5E741351750FE7F76A817EA5D41779636F9EB2A*simid_608026795045514750*thid_OIP.Z-2dBEa262JP71CeFRQvLwHaEK&iss=VSI&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

The young lawyer is glancing at the car speedometer on the dashboard. He mentions the Etruscan tombs. “Giddyup,” says Bruno, honking the car horn. He is putting 45s in to play them in the car, and we hear the pop music. We’re behind the two of them, a close-up follows as Bruno flirts and shouts to two women passing by them, others on holiday. They pull over at an open-air eating place. but decide to continue.

As they continue to drive down the road, a priest suddenly stands in front of the car to get them to stop and help his group change a flat tire. Stop and help, he says, he needs a jack. These are German speaking priests. Bruno refuses to help.

The car circles into a place where the women stopped. He gets a cigarette out of the two women's car and looks for papers in their car to see the driver's name. They see the women walking around a cemetery. They are looking at a headstone. The two men are following them from a distance walking around scenic cemetery. They leave and hit the road again. As they drive down the road, we get a view of the vehicle in front of them. A medium close-up shows a man eating a sandwich and sitting in the back of a truck as if he is in a room with furniture. (I think the man was not dressed for outdoors.)

Bruno continues to pass every car he encounters on the road, honking his horn continuously. A close-up behind the two men shows them as they talk. "Where are you taking me? It's like we're in England," the law student says. We're always on the left (referring to Bruno's continuous use of the passing lane). They come upon a bad car wreck. The police officer wants to give Bruno a ticket for reckless driving. Again, we see them running down the road making dangerous passes between two large trucks. As they pass a man on a bicycle, Bruno comments that "Cycling offends his aesthetic." They encounter vacationers, Americans with a large family. As they chatter, Bruno jokes with the law student, Roberto, saying that he should study space law. They stop for gas and enter a diner. Bruno is pounding on a cigarette machine. Roberto begins to question himself, "What if I'm doing everything wrong?" (We hear his inner thoughts). Inside the diner, and with those he encounters, Bruno keeps borrowing money. He has already gotten some from Roberto through manipulation such as, after ordering drinks or pumping gas, telling Roberto that he

will have to cover it. We're listening to a pop song in Italian about the twist. When Roberto goes into the public washroom stall, he gets stuck. When trying to extricate him, the three men pull the door knob off. Eventually, he gets out.

Recurring theme: Broken machines

The washroom scene allows us to consider one of the visual motifs presented in the film—broken machines (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 234). There is a broken cigarette vending machine, then the door handle of the washroom breaks off. The rest stop appears to be cheaply constructed. And ultimately, the car itself is wrecked. Cohan and Hark (1997, 234) argue that this imagery suggests an Italy that is not permanent; that is disposable. Even the film's soundtrack, they say presents incessant "disposable" pop tunes (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 234). The most prominent pop tune, Domenico Modugno's "Dimmi quando," has lyrics which repeat "when, when, when" in response to the indirect question "Tell me when you'll want me," which could be a consumer's anthem (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 234).

The film continues in the next scene with a view of the two men, now front and center, and back on the road. They see a man trying to catch a ride on the road. Bruno teases him making him think he might get a ride, then starts to pull away. But Roberto says they should pick him up. Workers of the world, or something like that, says Bruno. He gets into the car sitting in between the two of them. Bruno calls him Grandpa. He has a cigar butt in his mouth. He accepts a small cigar. Go faster. The law student asks to stop. He's nauseous, perhaps from the cigar. Bruno skids up to a port-side stop and parks illegally. He switches out the parking ticket with another car, so he won't get a ticket for parking illegally. They are at an oceanside restaurant. Bruno is in the kitchen tasting the sauces. They talk about a

woman, maybe the lawyer is interested in. He stares at a waitress or other vacationer over his shoulder.

There is more relaxing music playing as the two “road buddies” drive down the road through the countryside. The lawyer is talking about his family. He tells about having a crush on his Aunt Lidia. Bruno honks the car horn as they enter the estate of the lawyer’s family. It is a country estate. Occhofino, a “country queen” greets them. The lawyer’s aunt and uncle also come out to greet them.

There are two set-pieces that show family visits, one to Roberto’s aunt and uncle’s countryside villa, and one to visit Bruno’s ex-wife and daughter.

Roberto’s family

The aunt and uncle in their old villa are “solidly bourgeois” (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 236). “The portrait painted is strictly ‘Italian gothic’ (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 236). They have an eccentric, gay butler, an unmarried daughter who is staying at home until she becomes an old maid and there is “the local peasant who resembles the ‘Maciste’ of the Italian cinema of the 1910s and 1920s” (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 236).

Roberto strolls through the house and he sees his Aunt Lidia. Interesting music in the background as he really looks out over the scene below the window, and he is reminiscing. We hear all the family laughing as Bruno tells stories. The family gathers again. Bruno is putting make up on Lidia and escorting her down to the gathering. There is talk of the Fascist party, and the overseer’s son. Your aunt was sleeping with the overseer, says Bruno to the lawyer. The lawyer is thinking to himself about his future.

“Another minute in that morgue and I’d explode,” Bruno says, as they are leaving. Even so, as a guest, Bruno has charmed the family enough to make Roberto jealous. Bruno tells Roberto that there is a resemblance between his cousin and the peasant, sure proof, he says that Robert’s aunt had sex with someone other than her bourgeois husband (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 236). Bruno has arranged to have the grandfather clock given to him by the lawyer’s family. Bruno’s plan is to sell the clock and put it into circulation again (not leave it as part of a family inheritance). Bruno makes part of his living by recycling antiques that are associated with this dying social class (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 236). Aunt Lidia is looking at them out the window as they leave. They’re more somber now and the music is slower as they drive away.

They find a party in the country; people are doing the twist, playing accordions, and other instruments outside. “It’s easy to become friends with a stranger,” says the lawyer. Bruno says, “My age alone as a stray dog, I never had a real friend.” Then, Bruno insists on passing another car and the drivers are yelling at each other.

The next scene is at the seaside, a night club. Bruno ditches Roberto there. Roberto goes to the train station. He has to wait for an early morning train to go back to Rome. He watches Valeria, a case of mistaken identity. The woman is waiting for her boyfriend. He sits with the girl. A close-up shot. The car skids up. Her brother. They had plans. She is leaving him sitting on the bench.

Back at the bar, there is energetic live dance music—again the twist. Bruno is dancing very close with a blond woman. She seems to be there with a businessman husband. Bruno gets into a physical fight with the two men he passed on the road. The table left with the businessman and his wife.

Bruno's family

The two “road buddies” reunite and they stop in to see Bruno’s wife. His wife feels sorry for him. He makes a try with his wife, but she refuses. He gets cigarettes from her. He leaves his wife’s house. Bruno and Roberto set up beach chairs to sleep on. “What do you enjoy in life?” Bruno asks. Roberto responds, “Sometimes I feel I’m uptight. I never leap.”

Later they become surrounded by beach goers. The “flippers, goggles, and spear gun song” plays again as Roberto walks on the rocks by the beach. We see a card game going on down in the rocky area on the beach. More dancers, a poodle and Roberto walks along. Roberto flirts with a girl. Your friend is over there, upside down. Walking on his hands on the sand. Then we see an upside-down shot of a girl taking Bruno’s picture. Cleopatra walks by. I’m your daughter. She takes off her wig. Lilli, with her fiancé, is there. Lend me 50,000 lire, Bruno asks. Clowning on the boat. Woman washing her poodle. He’s ogling her. Sign my cast. Gina Lollobrigida signed it. Earlier, there was a mention of Sofia Loren.

Bruno jumps off the boat. They have been water skiing. The lawyer is in slacks and shorts still on the beach, not beach attire. There is a close-up of girls dancing in swimwear at the beach. The music is in English. Roberto is on the phone. Roberto is on the phone, Valeria Misi, he tries to call her. Close-ups of people there. Roberto leaves a message. Now a ping pong game is going on with Lilli, the son-in-law, Bruno, and Bibi. Lilli, his daughter, is shown in a close-up. She is really into the game. Roberto cheers Bruno on. He wins. The bet was 50,000 lire. Then Bruno pays back the 10,000 lire he had borrowed from Roberto.

The “return”

In the following scenes, we see an abrupt return to reality. Bruno is doing a happy dance in the shower. The next shot shows them really speeding. “Let’s fly,” says Roberto. His attitude about the driving has changed dramatically. He’s letting loose. “Best two days of my life with you,” Roberto says. Now Roberto is yelling. They race to pass another car. They are cliffside. The speedometer is shown; they are threading between cars. A reckless move. The horn is sounding. They’re racing. A truck comes straight toward them. The car goes off the road. Bruno is ejected from the car, but not Roberto. He is dead. Bruno declares, I didn’t even know his last name. The car is upside down on the rocks beside the water. Dramatic music. 1962, Sudden end.

Some concluding observations about “Il Sorpasso”

“Il Sorpasso” has been seen as a commentary on the new consumerism that began to take hold in Italy during the Sixties (Cohan and Hark, 1997). The film presents the story of two “road buddies” who represent opposing “types”—one young man who is repressed and who represents the old Italian dying bourgeoisie, and an older man who represents the new adaptive type. The two take us on a wild ride through Italy, starting in Rome and ending up on the Riviera during “ferragosto.” The film begins as a somewhat frenetic comedic adventure, but an air of melancholy enters, especially when we meet their families. And the film ends with the sudden death of one of the men.

The next film comes from a different era of road movies, the 1970s (In the U.S., post-war “Easy Rider”). “Alice in the Cities” begins as an individual journey, but soon becomes a different type of joint venture.

“Alice in the Cities”

Introduction to the film “Alice in the Cities”

In the film, “Alice in the Cities,” Wim Wenders discovered the genre of the road movie. It became part of his Road Movie Trilogy; “Wrong Move” and “Kings of the Road” followed. The film, “Alice in the Cities,” tells the story of West German writer, Philip Winter, a man not at home with himself. He seems to be unable to connect with any people or places until he meets nine-year-old Alice, who helps him overcome this alienation.

The departure

He is travelling along the eastern coast of the U.S. We see only gas stations and non-descript sites as he continues to take Polaroid snapshots with no people in the pictures. He stops in at the Skyway Hotel. The ad on TV advertises Silver Springs, Florida. He continues a monotonous drive on unrecognizable roads. Leal observes that “the camera in ‘Alice in the Cities’ makes a mockery of (European faith in) the American dream by recording from Philip’s point-of-view a series of dilapidated streetscapes, run-down diners, motels and gas stations” (Leal, 2011, 182-183). The typical presence of street names, highways and the “paraphernalia of the road”—gas stations, motels, billboards—express mobility and “lack of permanence” (Leal, 2011, 186). We know nothing of his destination until we see the easily recognizable skyline of New York City.

“Alice in the Cities” opens with ocean waves, a view of a dock, and we hear a guitar strumming. A man sits under a dock singing an American classic to himself, “Under the Boardwalk.” He lines up a series of Polaroid photos in front of himself. There are no people in the pictures, just a view of an empty beach. He is alone in this landscape.

Heimlich/unheimlich

Philip drives to another spot and takes another photo of a non-descript Texaco station and a car wash. A water tower identifies the town, Surf City. He drives to another viewpoint on the beach; we hear his camera ejecting another instamatic photo. He puts his pictures in a cigar box. We hear non-diegetic Rock and Roll music. As he drives, we see the view from the front window of his car. He even takes a picture of his car. A young black man on a bike asks, “What you taking pictures for?” “It just never shows what you saw,” our protagonist laments.

Our writer drives up the east coast, finally arriving in New York City. He pulls into an auto sales place and sells his car for 300 dollars. He takes a picture of his car, then passes the key to the owner. We are given another place marker; we hear the Shea stadium organ and see the ballpark. He buys a *Der Spiegel* magazine, reads it in the subway car, learning there is an airline strike. He walks into a small publishing service office. We learn that he has been commissioned to write about the American landscape. “How’s your story coming?” his publisher asks. He offers only his cigar box full of photos. “You weren’t supposed to take pictures. You were supposed to write.” Our protagonist replies, enigmatically, “When you drive around America, it changes you.” Lead notes that in this road movie, “America—its people, its culture, its history, its geography-- . . . is significant only for the role it has played in the construction of postwar German/Austrian identities and to the extent that interaction with it acts as a catalyst for self-exploration” (Leal, 2011, 182).

The chance-encounter: Alice and her mother

Philip decides to fly home to Munich in the hope that there he can write his story. Upon arrival at the airport, he discovers there will be no flights to Germany for two days, due to the strike. The closest accessible location is Amsterdam, and the next available flight is the following afternoon. At the ticket counter, he meets Alice, and her mother, Lisa, who need help with translation. This is another typical feature of a road movie—a chance encounter. They all must wait overnight for their flight, and they decide to help each other.

We have seen Philip trying to phone someone from a public booth. When he arrives at the door of her New York City apartment, we learn that this ex-girlfriend has not been answering his calls. The books displayed on her coffee table provide an insight into some of the concerns motivating Wenders in this film project. Wenders had shared interests with writer Peter Handke. “Alice in the Cities” clearly reflects his collaborative relationship with Handke, and it shares key themes from Handke’s Short Letter, Long Farewell (Leal, 2011, 164). Both Handke and Wenders were concerned with “the construction of selfhood and the role of writing and image in that process” (Leal, 2011, 164). In “Alice in the Cities” and in Short Letter, Long Farewell, the two also explored the influence of American popular culture on European identity (Leal, 2011, 164). In the former girlfriend’s apartment, the film cuts to a shot, from the two of them having a discussion to the coffee table displaying Karin Struck’s Class Love, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Tender is the Night, and Peter Handke’s A Sorrow Beyond Dreams (Leal, 2011, 165). This scene suggests that the film may have an autobiographical impulse. Philip’s journey parallels Wenders’ own three-week, cross-country trip in the U.S. (Leal, 2011, 169).

The books represent in miniature a dilemma Philip faces. Leal suggests that he is “caught between two cultures whose contradictory impulses he finds difficult to reconcile within himself” (Leal, 2011, 167). The German-language novels signal his cultural roots, but they are juxtaposed with images and books associated with American culture (Leal, 2011, 167). A picture of Disney’s *Dumbo* lies beside the more high-brow *Tender is the Night*. On top of Handke’s book is an iconic image of American modernity, a photo of the Empire State Building.

Philip (played by actor Rudiger Vogler) serves as an “alter ego” figure for the director. The former lover is played by Wenders’ own soon-to-be-ex-wife Edda Kochl (Leal, 2011, 165). Philip tells his ex-girlfriend, “I got completely lost; I have become estranged from myself” (the “unheimlich”). It was a horrible journey.” She replies, “You don’t have to travel through America,” she replies. “You lost your feeling for yourself . . . a long time ago.” The ex-girlfriend diagnoses his dilemma as his excessive self-concern which has led to self-alienation and has estranged him from others:

You always need proof, proof that you really exist. Your stories and your experiences, you treat them as if they were raw eggs, as if you were the only one to experience anything. And that’s why you’re always taking those photos. You treat your experiences, you treat them like raw eggs, that’s why you take photos so that you’ve got something in your hand. Another piece of evidence that you were the one who saw something. That’s why you’ve come here, so that somebody will listen to you, you and your stories which you really only tell yourself. But it’s not enough, not in the long run, my dear [Shots 201-11] (Leal, 2011, 166).

She throws him out: “You can’t stay here.” “I don’t know how to live either. No one has shown me.”

Philip rejoins Alice and her mother at the hotel for breakfast. Alice calls him to the window at the hotel and asks him to blow out the lights of the skyscraper next to them,

referring to a bit of trickery he has shown her. They all plan to meet at the Empire State building at one in the afternoon that day. When they are looking through the viewer atop the building, we see through it what he sees, then what Alice sees. He focuses on the mundane concrete structures of the city, but she follows a bird flying across the sky. We begin to see how Alice's experiences of the city differ from his.

The" border-crossing:" leaving the U.S.

The mother fails to make it to the meeting. She has gone back to her boyfriend. She asks him to take Alice to Amsterdam (in a note) and promises to meet them there. When their PanAm flight takes off, Alice takes his Polaroid camera. "It's so empty," she says of the picture. They play a game of "Hang Man" together on the plane. Alice objects to his attempt to use the word "dream" in the game. "Only real things," she says. She sleeps on a pillow on his lap. They check into a hotel near the Amsterdam airport to wait for her mother. In Amsterdam, Alice offers to show him around. She wants to take his picture "so at least you'll know what you look like." It is Alice who insists that they finally eat a "real meal."

Alice becomes Philip's guide, revitalizing his ways of perceiving the world during their mini odyssey through Germany searching for her grandmother with only a photo of her house to guide them. We find this to be the case with children featured in Wenders' later films; children such as Alice have "a more immediate relationship to (her) environment than the damaged adults who surround her" (Leal 2011, 177). She demands food when hungry, expresses difficult emotions such as anger and hurt, and she favors the concrete over the concrete as when she objects to Philips' use of the word "dream" in the game of hangman [shot 340] (Leal, 2011, 178).

After her mother fails to appear at the airport for several days, Alice is so disappointed that she locks herself in the airport bathroom and cries. Philip gains entrance by telling a stranger that he is her father. Talking through the bathroom stall door, Alice says they might go to her grandmother's house. To find out where that may be, he begins to list off all the German cities. He gets all the way to "W"—Wuppertal. She hesitatingly says she can find her house there.

As the two of them travel toward Wuppertal in a rental car, they are holding hands. They are developing a relationship. After they check into a hotel, Alice begins to cry and asks for a bedtime story. Philip makes up a story for her and she falls asleep. He closes the window with a smile. As he cares for her, he begins to regain some sense of himself. As they head into a café the next day, we are treated to a rare close-up of Alice's face and his. Inside the café, we see the jukebox. They are having ice cream sundaes. On the jukebox, we hear "On the Road Again." A little boy sits next to the jukebox with his ice cream cone, tapping his foot and enjoying the music. The influence of American culture on European identity is indicated again here with the appearance of American popular music. The young boy listening to the jukebox playing Canned Heat's "On the Road Again" [shot 536], can be understood "to stand in for Wenders himself as a child experiencing the life-saving properties of American music" (Leal, 2011, 170).

The" return"

Philip discovers that Alice's grandmother does not live in Wuppertal and is perplexed. Now he goes into the bathroom to talk to himself in the mirror, "Why?!" He decides to take Alice to the police station so that they can help her. Upon their arrival at the police station, we hear Philip talking with the police, off camera, at first. Alice waits by the

coke machine. He leaves her there. As he walks out into the street alone, he sees a Chuck Berry poster. Here we see that American music continues to play a role in this movie. Philip attends a Chuck Berry concert in Wuppertal. “Help Me Information” is the song. He looks happy. Alice has helped him get a haircut—a sign that he is taking care of himself. As he is arriving back at the hotel, Alice gets in the car with him, saying, “Now I know where my grandmother lives.” He laughs as she tells him, “You can’t imagine what they gave me to eat.” Alice has remembered her mother’s maiden name—Kruger. Her mother used to live in Wuppertal, and they took the train to her grandmother’s place in the Ruhr region. Alice reveals now that she has a picture of her grandmother’s house; they can use it to identify it. Philip used to live in the Ruhr region as a boy, so they begin to explore the streets showing the photo. This allows him also to reconnect with some of his childhood memories (Leal, 2011, 179).



Figure.2.16 Philip and Alice begin to form a bond.

Image source:

<https://film-grab.com/category/robby-muller/>

As Alice and Philip pass through the landscape of the Ruhr district, “Philip has come home to a more stable sense of self because learning to see the world again has enabled him to relocate himself as a subject in the narrative of his life” (Leal, 2011, 179). This “return” stage has been one of a return to a place that was once his home and a return to his sense of self.

Alice finally recognizes a house which matches the photo, but the Italian woman now living there does not know her grandmother. They go swimming together and mug in a photo booth. Alice points out to him that he has not been taking photos since they arrived in Amsterdam (an indication that he is living his life instead of vainly trying to capture it in empty-looking photos).

Since he is running out of money, he tells her they must head to his parents’ house. Now they are driving, and she is snuggled up next to him in the car. When they stop at a news kiosk, he sees a news article about nine-year-old Alice Van Dam missing. The police have found Alice’s grandmother and her mother. When they take the ferry, a plain clothes policeman spots her. He wants to take her to town and send her to Munich. Alice has a 100-dollar bill hidden away for train tickets for herself and Philip to head there together. We see them on the train. “I’ll finish writing that story,” he tells her. In this, the final scene, both open the train window. We see them in a long aerial helicopter shot, their hair blowing as they put their heads out the window. They mirror each other.

Some concluding observations about “Alice in the Cities”

“Alice in the Cities” has depicted a writer whose “journey of self-discovery” helps him revive his creative writing skills “in the service of identity formation” (Leal, 2011, 167).

The opening sequences revealed him to be suffering from alienation which had caused writer's block. In the first part of the film, he was unable to finish his article as he travelled across the U.S. Alone, Philip failed to re-establish his "sense of self in response to the reality of American culture" (Leal, 2011, 167). Handke's Short Letter, Long Farewell and Wenders' "Alice in the Cities" represent their protagonist coming to terms with American culture.

A self-alienated protagonist is placed within American landscape and culture as he attempts to deal with a crisis of selfhood rooted in a troubled identity as a German-speaking European. According to Leal (2011, 169), travelling across the U.S. East coast became "an attempt to use the familiar strangeness of this not-so-foreign culture to realign an identity out of kilter." The Polaroid photographs of American landscapes show the protagonist exploring "the relationship between reality and its reproduction" as Philip lines up the pictures he has taken from the car on the windshield and looks back and forth between them and the countryside. Philip compared his snapshots on an empty beach with the reality before him with disappointment: "They never show what you've seen" [Shot 29]. His experiences of America are bleak reflecting his sense of alienation. His drive is filmed with a series of rapid cuts, reflecting his own experience of self. Philip blames the monotonous American landscape for his inability to produce his manuscript (Leal, 2011, 176).

In the second half of the film, the journey through Germany is filmed differently compared to the American road trip counterpart. It features long takes and the languorous music of the German band "Can." More attention is paid to the faces of Philip and Alice as well as to the landscape, expressing a more sensory relationship between the self and the world (Leal, 2011 178). This implies that it is important to individual identity development to

establish “a relationship to one’s environment and to the people who inhabit it” (Leal 2011, 179).

Philip has had to make his photographic images become personally meaningful, to relate the Polaroids in his cigar box with his own life. Leal (2011, 191) notes:

Filtered through the lens provided by his growing emotional bond with Alice, the film’s images of the Ruhr landscape do in fact come to represent more than themselves. For him, they are a return to childhood, and thus a coming home to a more stable sense of self . . . in this process of making images, . . . Philip does in fact harness them to a narrative, finding a way at the end of the film . . . to construct his life as a story.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented six films chosen to represent the “road movie” genre in global cinema between 1945 and 1974. For each film, I have described the stages of these journeys of self-discovery and chance encounters on the road. I have discussed how the cinematic techniques used by the filmmakers, the film “grammar” enhances the stories and reveals some of the psychological elements. I have identified some of the “bricolage” the filmmakers draw upon to create their mythical worlds and invite us into them. Finally, the analysis has situated the films and their stories in their historical and social contexts.

“Detour” is a *film noir* and was made during the infancy stage of American road movies. It questions the American myth of the road as freedom and reveals what it feels like to live in exile, as an immigrant during this time. The film protagonist, Al, remains ill-at-ease and experiences the new life he sought on the road as the life of an imposter. Al has two key chance-encounters—the first with a man offering him a ride, who turns out to be an illegal bookie, and who suddenly accidentally dies. When Al hides the man’s death, and

takes that man's identity to save himself, he becomes an imposter and this condition becomes a more permanent identity marker for him.

Al's second chance-encounter is with a "femme fatale" named Vera. In a freak accident with a phone cord under the door in a hotel room, Al accidentally strangles her. He becomes associated with two incriminating deaths, and he feels that, in the end, the law will catch up with him. Some historic realities revealed in "Detour" relate to the experiences of immigrants in the U.S during the period in which the film appeared. They could not assimilate. Although Al is from New York, filmmaker Ulmer, from Vienna, may have been reflecting on his own frustrations about being foreign-born and having difficulty establishing a new identity in post-war America. The film presents a man "in limbo" between New York and LA, unable to return to either, essentially, being in exile.

"The Hitchhiker" is, like "Detour," a *film noir*. It presents the stories of three men who seek to restore their sense of control over their lives in very different ways. Ida Lupino may have been the only *woman film noir* filmmaker in the U.S. "The Hitchhiker" is a story of two army friends who went on a fishing trip, picked up a male hitchhiker on their trip to Mexico, and found themselves in the hands of a serial killer. The film is based on the real-life story of Billy Young, a hitch-hiking serial killer. Lupino's film techniques created a sense of realism in the film, using contrast, over-exposure in daytime desert scenes shot in the American southwest, an informal camera style, and "low key action." The common manner of speaking featured in "The Hitchhiker" added another dimension to the fear-spurring story. This could happen to you. The journeys of self-discovery represented in the film concern a struggle for power between the three men. What is the most effect way to overcome their vulnerabilities? Emmett, the kidnapper, chooses violence. Take what you want. Gil, the

family man, chooses to keep his wits about him, to patiently wait for an opportunity to turn the tables. In contrast, Gil's friend, Collins, plays a role like a male "femme fatal." He is portrayed as weak and ineffective. He falls and sprains his ankle trying to run away. When he tries to sabotage their car by putting a hole in the crankcase, he only leaves them stranded and they must walk through stifling desert heat. Both films, "Detour" and "The Hitchhiker," portray characters whose death seems fated. Al, in "Detour" is sure that his ultimate destiny is jail. The three men in "The Hitchhiker" seek effective "male" strategies to face uncertain and unpredictable times.

In "La Strada," filmmaker Fellini moves beyond the confines of Italian neorealism. The film does not use psychological neorealism to analyze social reality. Instead, we experience the feelings of the character. Fellini uses the bricolage of the august and White clowns from Greek and Roman comedy to construct a Beauty and the Beast fable about a strongman, Zampano, a mime-like character, Gelsomina, and The Fool. Gelsomina seeks to discover her purpose. The Fool tries to encourage her with the story of the pebble. Thinking for a while that her purpose was to be Zampano's wife, she loses her way when Zampano kills The Fool. When Zampano hears Gelsomina's song being sung by a child, he learns of her death. In the final scene of "La Strada," as Zampano weeps uncontrollably, digging into the sand at the edge of the sea, he may be demonstrating remorse for killing The Fool and abandoning Gelsomina. The film becomes a story of transformation and redemption.

In "Journey to Italy," Rossellini uses the "road movie" to tell a different kind of story of self-discovery. The two protagonists in this story represent a different kind of married couple (compared to the poor, rural, itinerant married couple, Gelsomina and Zampano). Alex and Katherine Joyce are an upper-class couple travelling to Naples to claim a piece of

property, a villa inherited from an uncle. The couple is actively contemplating dissolving their marriage. Upon seeing Pompeii, Katherine's feelings overwhelm her. Prior to this scene, the couple seem quite alienated from their own feelings and from each other. But in this scene, Alex begins to empathize with Katherine. Suddenly, as they are trying to return from the ruins of Pompeii to their villa, they are engulfed by a crowd in a religious procession, and they are forced to exit their car which has been trapped by the press of people. For the first time, they exit their "protective bubble," in this case, their car, and are out among the people. They seem to be able to feel life again.

"Il Sorpasso," another Italian film, features an odd couple—two men who represent opposites, the brash Bruno, and the serious-minded Roberto. "Il Sorpasso" offers a commentary on the postwar "boom" years in Italy and a "tragicomic parable" about consumerism. When Roberto and Bruno visit their families as their spontaneous "giro" extends into a road trip, we learn that Roberto's family is "solidly bourgeois," the old Italy. Bruno is divorced and his daughter is seeking to marry a rich older "father figure." Bruno's family represents the new, adaptable middle-class in Italy. The film's tragic ending jolts the viewer but may be seen as symbolizing the death of the old Italian bourgeoisie.

The last film presented in this chapter was "Alice in the Cities." The journey of self-discovery of West German writer, Philip Winter, is guided by a child, Alice, whom he met by chance in New York City. Philip cannot write and is just taking Polaroid photos on his road trip. Philip and Alice fly to Amsterdam together when Alice's mother leaves her at the airport in his care. As he begins to form a bond of friendship with the young girl, Alice, Philip begins to return to his sense of self. "I'll finish writing that story," he tells Alice as they take their final train ride together.

Chapter 3, which follows, will present another set of road movies from different world regions and from a more recent period. This next set of road movies includes “Powwow Highway,” (1989, Native American, produced in the U.S.), “Central Station” (1998, produced in Brazil), “Le Grand Voyage” (2004, produced in France, Morocco, and the Middle East), and “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles” (2005, produced in Japan).

CHAPTER III.

ROADS TO THE SELF: ROAD MOVIES FROM 1989 to 2005

Introduction

This chapter explores four more film journeys: “Powwow Highway,” “Central Station,” “Le Grande Voyage,” and “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles.” These “road movies” were made between 1989 and 2005. The chapter describes the stages of these journeys of self-discovery, reveals some of the ways the film techniques enable us to see the psychological “inner” lives of the travelers, and it situates each film in its international cultural and political context.

“Powwow Highway”

Introduction to the film, “Powwow Highway”

“Powwow Highway” draws upon a 1979 novel by David Seals. Seals, an American Indian Movement (AIM) activist, WHO described in the novel a journey taken by two Native American men--Buddy Red Bird, an AIM activist, and Vietnam War hero and Philbert Bono, a “slovenly obese” guy. Their road trip begins on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Lame Deer, Montana and ends in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The cast of the movie features Indigenous actors including Cayuga star, Gary Farmer as Philbert, Apache/Cheyenne actor, Joanelle Nadine Romero as Bonnie (Schweninger, 2013).

The “road trip” to Santa Fe is to get Buddy’s sister, Bonnie, out of jail (a real event described in Seals’ book). They stop at Bear Butte, “the Mount Sinai” of Cheyenne legends, take part in a powwow in Pine Ridge, stop at Fort Robinson, Nebraska where a tragedy

occurred in 1877. They visit friends in a Denver suburb. All of these events from the book also take place in the movie” (Heil, 2009, 26).

Buddy won football accolades, was awarded a Purple Heart for his military service in Vietnam and became a famous AIM activist and leader. These aspects are shown in both the movie and the book. Seals includes Cheyenne myth and history in the book including stories of Wihio the Trickster and 19th century Native American massacres. Some of this cultural “bricolage” is used in the film (Heil 2009, 26).

Filmmaker, Wacks, presents Philbert as a spiritual seeker. Buddy is a respected tribal member, unlike Philbert, who seems to be mainly “a nobody” at first. Buddy is not, however,” (Heil, 2009, 26). presented as a superhero. He has flaws: he has a hair-trigger temper, jumps to conclusions, behaves violently at times, and is “indifferent to his tribe’s culture and spirituality” (Heil, 2009, 30).

In filmmaking history, the shift to location shooting began with Italian neorealists. Jump cuts and freeze frames were innovations brought in by the French New Wave (Heil 2009, 23). Hollywood films, such as *Powwow Highway*, rely on another element, from naturalist theater, they co-opted a way of introducing themes through casual conversation. Characters establish their names, relationships, and problems in conversation (Heil, 2009, 23). Naturalist theater, with these elements, some say were co-opted by Hollywood. These films engage the viewer’s emotions, but not the intellect (Heil, 2009, 23).

Hollywood films create a “fictional universe in which you can lose yourself” (Heil, 2009, 24). Viewers, identifying with the fictional characters, are drawn into the film, and after the questions about their conflicting values are presented and resolved, they experience

closure. Often emotions engage, but not the intellect. In films such as *Powwow Highway*, new meanings and strategies are employed to foreground stories of ethnic minorities. The film incorporates unconventional content—Cheyenne history—making this history more accessible (Heil 2009, 25), and it engages both the intellect and emotion of the audience.

In this film, the two “road buddies” travel over a thousand miles and come to appreciate each other in the end, even though they orient themselves quite differently regarding Native American traditions and spiritual beliefs. The film notably refutes stereotypes, but it also offers a reversal of Hollywood Western roles for Native Americans. In typical Hollywood Westerns, a non-native cowboy or soldier defeats the Native Americans to establish order or rescue a kidnapped white woman (as for example in John Ford’s “*The Searchers*” (Schweninger, 2013). Instead, in “*Powwow Highway*,” Philbert wants to take the trip to Santa Fe to rescue Bonnie, and he also wants to continue his journey to gather medicine to become a spiritual warrior.

“Powwow Highway” film narrative

Opening shot: Drumbeat—A solitary Indian warrior, his face painted, holding aloft a spear, rides a pony. A medium close-up, just in yellow and oranges, the picture, a panoramic view of the hills and the landscape, the warrior is wearing traditional gear. The movie title appears: *Powwow Highway*. This opening shows a vision of a beautiful past, and then the next begins to show a brutal present, a reservation drenched in poverty.

Traditional Native American flute music starts, then a panning shot of the reservation dwellings, simple block houses with golden scrub brush growth and dirt, desert-like in the foreground. The flute music and traditional drumbeats continue. A white pickup truck drives diagonally across the screen with dust in its path. We see two children playing. The caption

reads: Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Lame Deer, Montana. A panning camera shot extends, as if we are looking out as we travel along a road beside the reservation. We can see some old cars sitting in the dry fields and a long log cabin-like structure. The rolling hills visible in the background. Mostly scrub brush in the foreground dominating the screen. We see and hear chanting music. The music keeps reminding us of the past, while the imagery testifies to present-day reality. Medium long shots show children and cars sitting around. Children are playing in a field. We see some cars parked and a few passing by. There is a close-up of several stray dogs and a torn-up bench.

Then there is a medium close-up of two children. The children are walking straight toward us on an unpaved road. A car's taillights are visible behind them as it drives away. The two young schoolchildren are playing as they walk, afternoon light, skipping, drum music and traditional chanting continues. The shot shifts to a medium long shot of the outside of a bar at dusk. We see three men outside it and a car arriving.

The shot shifts to the inside of the bar. Men are drinking beer and playing pool. A man shouts out a war whoop. The next shot shifts to the interior of the bar. Some men are shown again playing pool. Next there is a close-up shot of two men sitting at the bar, smoking cigarettes. One wears a red bandana around his head, one a baseball cap. There follows a close-up of a middle-aged woman smoking and another man, each individual leaning against a rustic wooden post running floor to ceiling.

The next shot, a medium close-up, shows one of our main characters, taking a shot at the pool table. His beer is in a plastic cup on the edge of the pool table and close by, another two men are watching him. Buddy Redbow is talking about "the man in the White House" and a pipeline, as he clears the table (a good pool player). As he leaves the bar, we are

introduced to our next main character who is entering the bar, Philbert. He is a very large man, tall and heavy build, a little overweight. He is wearing his hair long down his back, a ponytail (a very traditional Native American way to wear the hair) and he has a baseball cap on. The two men pass closely through the bar door, each going in opposite directions. They greet each other as friends, quickly, in passing. The Director's name appears across the screen: Jonathan Wacks.

Heimlich/unheimlich for Philbert

There is a close-up of the heavy man as he sits down at the bar and removes his cap. Philbert grabs some pretzels from a container sitting on the bar and he chugs a beer, with a smile. The bartender greets him. He watches a car commercial on the TV sitting up on the mantel close in front of him. We can see Christmas lights around the mantel (inside the bar). On a TV screen, we see an Anglo man wearing an imitation Indian headdress, sitting on the hood of a car he is selling. He is imitating Indian speech: "Come on down off the 'rez' and pick out your pony today." We see a close-up of Philbert watching the ad and he seems to be thinking. This scene introduces the concept of a departure because Philbert is thinking about buying a car which signifies that he knows he needs to leave the reservation to serve a purpose we don't know about yet. His feeling that it is time to seek his spiritual identity may be interpreted as his uneasiness with his current identity, that is, a feeling of *unheimlich*.

Then there is a rapid cut to a daylight shot of Philbert walking (a medium long shot) he is walking toward a rundown/dilapidated unkempt-looking building standing in a weeded field with car shells and car parts sitting around the building. We hear Philbert playing harmonica (diegetic music), as we watch him from behind. A stray dog walks past him in the grassy field as he approaches.

The next shot is a medium close-up as Philbert enters the building. A man sits at the desk with his feet propped up on the desk, he appears to be looking at a centerfold in a Playboy magazine. Our vantage point is behind the back of that man, and we are looking over his shoulder toward the door where Philbert enters. Over the door we can see several license plates attached to the wall. The proprietor's feet are propped up on the old metal desk and our eyes are drawn to his bright red socks which stand out from his black shoes and khaki clothing. Philbert tells this man, "I wanta buy one of your fine ponies." The man replies, "Take a look around." The camera shifts back and forth between the two men as they converse. Philbert goes to the window to look out at the cars sitting in the field. An extreme close-up of Philbert's face is framed in the windowpane. We hear distant music as he smiles. Then we see a golden field with a spotted horse running gracefully straight toward us. A medium close-up of the horse shows us a herd following this horse. It runs free through the prairie. The following small group of horses are roan red. They gallop freely behind the red and white spotted horse. Back to a close-up shot of Philbert smiling and his face is framed by a slightly dirt-clouded windowpane. Then a close-up of just the horse hooves as the horses run. A return to Philbert's face at the window and his smile.

The next shot shows some rusted out cars in the field. "That old brown one's a nice one." Philbert says to the man at the desk. "That one?", the seller smirks. We see him in a close-up with a bird cage over his right shoulder and a yellow hard hat beside him. "How much?" Philbert asks. "How much ya got?" the seller responds. There is a close-up of Philbert frowning. Then he reaches into his pockets and begins to lay items on the desktop. ... a small bag of marijuana rolled up in a clear plastic sandwich bag, a flask of whiskey and a dollar bill. The man takes the bag of marijuana and tosses Philbert a set of car keys. "Start

it up.” He tells him. Philbert puts the dollar bill and the flask (maybe a ¼ pint of whiskey back into the pockets of his jacket and head to the door. He looks back at the man happily as he exits the building.

In the next medium long shot, Philbert runs up to the car and squeals in delight. He tosses an old tire off the car hood. We see metal hoop hanging from the side mirror on the passenger side. The roof of the car is peeling, and the paint is all rusty.

Figure 3.1 The “war pony” in “Powwow Highway,” Philbert’s first step to make his journey.



Image source :

<http://mikesirota.com/native-american-film-gems-powwow-highway/>

Philbert opens the car door and jumps in behind the wheel. He tries to crank the car up. It is very slow to start. He persists. There is an extreme close-up showing his foot pumping the gas pedal. The car sputters and starts. Then Philbert laughs loudly, slaps the steering wheel in delight, and yells “Wahoo!” A shot of him through the front windshield shows him as he reaches out the driver’s side window and wipes off the front window shield with his hand. Then a close-up of the car dash shows a small white religious statue of Mary there. Philbert grabs it and takes it off the dash. Then we see him drive forward in the car (our viewpoint is from outside the driver’s side of the car). There is non-diegetic harmonic

music. The tail pipe backfires, as he proceeds to drive the car out of the field of cars. One car he passes has the front windshield broken and two of the four front headlights missing.

There is a quick cut to a meeting inside a room, a shot of the entire room. The man, standing by two maps says, "This vote will truly be one of the most important." He has a pointer in his hands and stands in front of two pull down maps mounted on the wall. "Our mining company has provided more jobs. Our company could provide economic autonomy for the entire community. How when you vote next Thursday . . ." He ends his speech by saying, "Merry Christmas." The man who appears to be presiding over the meeting, the tribal chief, then asks if any of the members of the council have any questions. These members who are mature men are sitting two by two at small desks lined up in the room. There is one mature woman in the room, and she seems to be the only woman on the council.

The tribal chief then asks if any of the men on the council have any questions. Hands go up. Native American men in cowboy hats and suits. Buddy Redbow stands at the side of the room wearing a T-shirt nervously, looking down. A close-up of Buddy Red Bow. He replies, "Yeah, how much did you pay for that suit?" The other men in the room laugh quietly. The speaker shifts nervously, looking down. There is a close-up of Buddy Red Bow as he continues speaking, "Cruising into town in your Chrysler LeBaron talking about what's good for the tribe." "You're out of line, Mr. Redbow," the man says. The two men engaged in this exchange appear to be the same age, younger than the members of the tribal council assembled in the room. "Well, I guess I just don't understand, Mr. Youngblood," Red bow responds. "How come unemployment's gone up, not down since your mining company has been here." The speaker points his finger as Redbow paces around the edge of the room past some portraits. The speaker says, "Our contracts are a matter of public record." Redbow

says, ‘Oh yeah, I’ve read your contracts . . . every damn contract since the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1832 (date?). “And it’s always the same deal, you get what YOU want, and we get the shaft.” The speaker spreads his hands and says, “We’re all working for the same goal here.” The camera shifts back and forth between the two men in this exchange. “We’re on your side, that’s why I’m here.” He gestures with sort of prayer hands pointed in front of him. He places his right hand bent at the elbow at his side with his hand resting on his waist at his side. He puts his left hand in his pants pocket. Redbow continues . . . “95% unemployment...This ain’t the American dream we’re living here. This here’s the Third World.” There is a close-up of Redbow. Then a shift to a medium close-up showing just the top half of the other man’s body as he shifts nervously and flips his tie.

Next comes a shift in scenery to a completely different part of the country. There is a panoramic long view of a car driving toward us down a highway with a desert city landscape behind it. The “caption” reads: Santa Fe, New Mexico. We hear the swoosh of the car passing. There is a close-up of the car passing, a side view. As the car passes, the front of a police car appears, and we hear, “There she is, let’s go.” Then a medium close-up through the front windshield of the “civilian” car shows us a woman driving the car. We can see her black driving gloves and we see two children in the car with her. A boy, 8 or 10 years old, and a young girl sitting in the back seat in the middle. The boy is playing with a toy plane. “Thanks for buying me the new toy, Mom.”

We see the police car through her back window with the red flashers on. The woman says, “I can’t believe this.” There’s a cop car behind us.” We hear the police car siren engage. Both children’s heads snap around. The girl says, “What should we do, Mom?” The shot shifts to show the police car pulled over at the side of the road, the desert valley and

mountain landscape visible in the distance. Both police officers are exiting the car. We can see one man's hand holding to the end of his long police baton as the two men walk up to the passenger window of the woman's yellow car together. The second officer has both hands holding to the front of his belt. "Let me see your driver's license, Ma'am." A close-up of the woman's face, as she looks over her shoulder at the officer and she rolls down her car window. "What's the problem? I was only doing thirty-five." A close-up of the two men bending toward her in profile. "Your automobile registration, please." "Yes." "Are you aware that there are no plates on this vehicle?" "I've got plates." "Step out of the vehicle please." She shakes her head, "What did I do?" A close-up shows the one officer opening her trunk as her young son looks on, standing beside the car in the back. He moves her spare tire. She asks, "What are you doing?" We see a taped package wrapped in black plastic (like the material of trash bags), about the size of a small suitcase, which was beneath the tire. She stands with her daughter beside her. We can see the officer smiling and pulling out the package. "You're supposed to have a warrant," she says. A close-up shows him cutting into the package. "What's that, Mom? We can see marijuana falling out. "What is it, Mom, domestic or imported?" She replies, "You must have put that there." "No Ma'am. We found it there."

Heimlich/unheimlich for Buddy Redbow

The following scene introduces a step toward the "departure" for Redbow. When he learns of his sister's arrest, he experiences the *unheimlich* that will propel him to make his journey with Philbert. A quick cut to the back of Redbow's head. He is sitting at his desk. He picks up the desk phone, "Redbow." "Who's this?" "Bonnie?" "Wait a second, I can't hear you." He paces across the room. A medium close-up shows his face, looking

alarmed/worried. “Busted for what?” “Oh hell.” “Hey, wait a minute. I got no bail money.” He asks, “What kids?” “Bonnie, I got no way to get down there. I couldn’t get you out even if I wanted to. Well, what the hell do you expect?! It’s been ten years.”

Then a cut showing Philbert driving down a deserted road in his rusted-out car. The muffler falls off on the road. Philbert throws on the brakes to stop the car, jumps out and picks it up, using a red bandana to protect his right hand from the heat, while he hitches up his pants with his left hand. He jogs back to the car and keeps driving.

The “bricolage” of “Powwow Highway,” ancestor figures

In the next shot, he exits his parked car and Philbert walks into a simple house. Inside the house, the camera pans to a woman sitting in the corner of a dark room with a yarn throw across her lap. “Harriet,” Philbert greets her. “Turn on the lights,” she says as soon as Philbert enters. “I can’t see shit!” the older woman declares. A close-up of Philbert, as he sits facing her and he smiles as he asks, “In the old days, how long did it take a warrior to find his medicine?” During this exchange, the older woman remained mostly very somber. She smiles at him once or twice, but it is almost derisive. A close-up of her. “What did you do, find a toy/token in a Cracker Jack box?” her voice sounds sarcastic. This presentation of her evokes Grandmother Spider, a mythical ancestor among Native Americans, an old woman who is feared by the Cheyenne, yet revered, as one of the creators. This evocation of an ancestor deities is part of the “bricolage” of Powwow Highway.” “I had a sign,” Philbert says. “The time has come for me to make medicine.” The older woman then turns her head and laughs loudly. Philbert goes on, “I already have a pony.” She responds, “I am sick of being asked for good old Indian wisdom, so get the hell outta here.” Then she returns to her original pose, sitting in the corner, not moving, and with a somber face. Philbert frowns

slightly, hesitates, then stands and walks to the door. She looks at him as he is about to leave. She beckons with her hand for him to come back.” Come.” The camera moves slowly toward her for a closer shot of her face. Aunt Harriet says, “Hey Fat Philbert, here’s a quote from an old one. He once told my great uncle, Benny Looks Twice, (a close-up shows Philbert’s face, full of hopeful anticipation), “Keep your pony out of my garden.” He repeats it and she laughs loudly. He smiles.

The “Keep your pony out of my garden” exchange suggests that Wack’s film combines the man’s search for identity with sarcasm and humor (Schweninger, 2013). But there is more here. This film is important in providing a vehicle for Indigenous self-representation, “talking back to Hollywood, resisting images such as that of the vanishing Indian (Schweninger, 2013). Aunt Harriet refers to Dull Knife which reveals a historical awareness. It anticipates several references to “Cheyenne Autumn,” John Ford’s 1964 historical fiction film about Dull Knife and Little Wolf running from the U.S. Cavalry, trying to reach their homeland (Schweninger, 2013).

The departure

A quick shift shows Buddy Redbow standing in the tribal chief’s office. The chief is looking worried with his hand pressed to his brow. Redbow is leaning against the back of a chair at the side of the chief’s desk, his back to the chief, as he listens. We can see a large traditional robe of animal skin mounted on the wall behind Redbow. They are in the middle of their conversation. “Hell, I think we did pretty good at \$22.50,” the chief says. “Do you know what that means?” “Yeah,” Redbow responds. “You got something on your mind?” “What the hell is wrong with you?” The chief sees that the younger man is distracted. Redbow is experiencing “unheimlich.” He has got to figure out how to leave the reservation

to rescue his sister. A close-up of Buddy Redbow shows him hanging his head down as he is listening to the chief. Buddy asks, “Hey. Got some money?” The chief reaches into his top desk drawer for it. Then, “Just bring back the right bulls, hey,” the chief says.

A quick shift shows Philbert’s car driving by. Two children are playing in the street. They throw snowballs at Philbert’s passing car as he honks the horn and passes them. We can hear the children laughing. We can see patches of snow on the mountain landscape behind the car. Buddy Redbow, a medium close-up, spies Philbert’s passing car out the window of the room where he is meeting with the chief. “Come over here and sign this receipt,” the chief says. As Buddy exits, we see the sign above the door, Northern Cheyenne Tribal Office, a sign outside. A medium long shot shows Buddy walking briskly across the parking lot. He shouts out, “Hey Philbert!” “Hey, what’s up?” he greets Philbert at the window of the car. He knocks on the window on the driver’s side. “Roll down the window.” We see snowflakes begin to fall. Buddy grabs the window to help it roll down and it comes completely off. “Oh,” he puts it under his left arm and places his right hand atop the peeling car roof to talk to Philbert through the open window. “Whose car is this?” Buddy asks. “I made a trade, as in the days of men who possessed nothing.” Philbert says. He turns his face toward his friend, Buddy, with a big smile. Buddy responds, “Uh, huh.” “But whose car is this?” Medium close-ups go back and forth between the two men, the movie grammar of a conversation. “It’s your car, yeah? Good.” A close-up shows snowflakes on his hair. “It’s Protector, the War Pony,” Philbert explains. Light snow is blowing by. Buddy hands the car window to Philbert through the window opening. Then we see him from the back as he walks around the side of the car to get in. We see Philbert placing the window back into the opening. Our view is now through the front windshield as Buddy opens the passenger door

and gets in. "Hey Philbert, we gotta go to Santa Fe." The two men face each other. "Santa Fe, New Mexico?" Philbert asks. "You and me." "Uh huh, you and me. That's right," Buddy says. "There's a powwow in Dennis," Philbert says. As Buddy Redbow lights his joint, he says, "Yeah, well, who gives a shit about that? Bonnie, she got busted down there, the pigs pulled her over. Found a package of Columbian under the spare." "You got heat in this thing?" Buddy asks. Philbert asks, "You got gas money?" "Fucking two grand," Buddy tells him. "Cash!" Philbert exclaims. "It's from the tribal council to buy bulls." "What about the bulls?" Philbert asks. "I'll think of something." Buddy responds. "I'm the agricultural purchasing agent, goddam." So, what do you say? Can I count on you?" Buddy says to Philbert. Philbert answers, first in Cheyenne, then in English, smiling, "We are Cheyenne." Buddy then says, "It's my sister, goddammit, I'm not gonna let ... a-hole bastards lock her up."

The way that the phrase, "We are Cheyenne" is used in "Powwow Highway" can also be compared to how it occurs in Ford's "Cheyenne Autumn. We will hear Philbert make the statement three times in the film. Each time, the filmmaker shoots the exchanges in which the statement occurs straight on with medium close-ups, a camera angle and distance that makes the viewer focus on the characters and what they are saying. Philbert says "We are Cheyenne" with great emphasis, suggesting his confidence and seriousness. It is meant to guarantee the success of what they aim to do, in this case, rescue Bonnie (Schweninger, 2013). When Buddy asks Philbert if he will go to Santa Fe, Philbert replies first in Cheyenne, "Natah Omeseheses." And then in English, "We are Cheyenne."

We hear non-diegetic music and see small herds of migrating gazelles, mines up in the badlands, a soaring bald eagle, all panoramic shots as the two men begin their drive.

There is an unusual reflection of the sky in a body of water they pass. Their car is shown crossing barren red earth plains. Then a direct shot of them shows their car approaching us.

Figure 3.2 Chance encounter at a diner in “Powwow Highway”



Image source :

<https://westernsallitaliana.blogspot.com/2012/12/powwow-highway.html>

Chance encounters

As the two friends travel, from time to time, they encounter other Native Americans travelling, too. They make a food stop. Philbert orders a hamburger, fries, two chocolate milks and a cherry pie. The diner server says, “Is he going into hibernation or something?” (a reference to Philbert’s large size--he is tall and bulky, as well as to the amount of food he just ordered. Buddy orders a BLT and coffee. Another Native American friend appears at the counter beside them, talking, “Heading into Billings (Montana) for a little pussy.” “That your shitbox outside?”

Chance encounters in “Powwow Highway” reveal an “aboriginal network” (Brigham, 2015, 172). Native Americans are not contained by the reservation. Here at the diner and later at Fort Robinson, they encounter other Native Americans. Philbert and Buddy have friends in many places, a “network of individuals whose personal identities are distinct—

traditionalists, progressives, AIM warrior, condo-urban Indians—*and* who simultaneously share a communal identity” (Brigham, 2015, 172).

As the film continues, the two friends face us as they are sitting at the diner counter eating. “Philbert, I’m really worried about you.” Buddy tells him. “About what?” Philbert says. Buddy continues, “I’m concerned with your appearance. You wanta be a warrior, you gotta dress right. That’s an essential part of the ritual.” Philbert says something muffled because his mouth is full of food. Buddy says, “Is that Cheyenne?” Philbert repeats, “I got no bread for buckskin.” “Oh yeah, well, maybe we can work something out,” Buddy says, “What about your pony? It looks like shit, drives like shit, sounds like shit. We don’t have no music in the thing. A pony like that, what can you say? It/we ain’t prepared for battle, that’s for sure. Don’t even have a goddam AM radio,” Buddy says. Philbert’s mouth turns down in a big sad way. “Here’s your pie,” the server comes over.

The next camera shot changes to an early evening view of a small city street. The moon is up in the background. We can see some small multi-story buildings on each side of the street and an overhead view of three lanes of cars making their way down the street, headlights on. A red neon sign with a bucking bronco and an Indian wearing chaps is in the foreground. A large Christmas tree is also standing decorated along the street. In the next shot, as we hear Christmas music, we see a small shop front. Buddy Redbow has entered the front door and his back is to us. The old car sits parked in front of the store. In the next shot, a salesman in a jacket and tie, a woman clerk at the counter, we see their faces and Buddy Redbow and Philbert in profile, a medium close-up shot. Buddy Redbow says, “Car radio.” “Right this way,” the salesman says. A shot of Buddy and Philbert next, and we hear the salesman say, “Panasonic with everything. “Nah, what else you got?” Philbert says. Buddy

starts testing the models on displayed on the wall, turning the volume knobs. The salesman returns with a small pink box radio. "Maybe this one, it plays cassettes, a mono (not a stereo-sound)." A close-up of Buddy shows him glaring at the salesman. Then he reaches up to the top shelf and grabs a box. "We'll take one of these." We'll take a couple of these turbo speakers and one of these CBs while we're at it." Buddy says. The salesman says, "It is our most expensive stuff," and he smiles as he holds the three boxes as well as the small pink radio in front of himself. "It's top of the line," A close-up shows the salesman. Then he continues, "You don't understand. No get 'em special deal on this one, chief," (mocking Indian speech). The salesman laughs. The camera shots have gone back and forth in rapid succession, the usual camera grammar of a fast conversation. Buddy glares back at the salesman and Philbert stands beside him as he says firmly, "Install 'em." Then Buddy walks out. Philbert hands the salesman the keys and says, "The car's out front."

The next shot is the two friends walking out of a different store. Philbert is wearing a new white cowboy hat, a new denim jacket, new blue plaid flannel shirt and jeans. He is carrying two red shopping bags. A peppermint striped pole, a Christmas tree in front of the shop and Christmas lights outlining front window displays remind us of the holiday season. Philbert smiles and whoops. Buddy smiles as they walk diagonally toward us down the wet sidewalk. "I tell ya, looks good!" Buddy tells Philbert. A medium close-up of just Buddy shows a satisfied look on his face. As he prepares to open the car door and get in, Buddy yells, "Check that out!" as he inspects the radio installation in the car dash. They select a cassette tape. "Start er up Phil," "Okie dokie." A close-up of Philbert. The stereo is not coming on as Buddy turns the knobs. We see the two friends through the front windshield. "Goddam this country. What's the deal?! Six hundred forty-nine damn dollars and it's a

piece of shit! Look at this, the thing breaks off the minute you touch it.” Buddy jumps out of the car and runs into the stereo store. “You think you’re gonna get away with this, you asshole?!” We see the salesman reaching for an alarm button under the counter as Buddy enters the store. We see Buddy from the back and a woman bystander standing on the sidewalk is in front of the shop. We see her from the back. (She may be, like us, looking on). The door closes and we hear Buddy say, “I want my goddam money back!” A close-up shot switches to Philbert watching. Then he gets out the owner’s manual and begins to read it while Buddy Redbow is inside the shop arguing with the salesman and the cashier. Philbert gets the stereo working. The music that is playing on the radio is “I’m in the mood to tear it up!” The camera shot shifts away from Philbert who is sitting in the car, and we see the salesman pulling out a shotgun and he starts shooting at Buddy Redbow who is throwing things around in the shop, having a tantrum. Philbert gets Buddy into the car by letting him jump into the backseat using the car window.

In the scene described above, we see a set of opposing traits in Buddy and Philbert. Redbow is quick to anger and to turn to violence while Philbert takes a patient, calm, and rational approach. There is an array of important contrasts in character manifest in Buddy and Philbert. Heil has summarized them as shown in Table 3.1. These contrasts will continue to manifest themselves as the film progresses.

Table 3.1 Philbert's and Buddy's Character Contrasts

<u>Buddy Red Bow</u>	<u>Philbert Bono</u>
Leader	Ostracized loner
Lean, athletic, quick	Slovenly and slow
Tormentor as a child	Victim as a child
Lives in present	Rooted in the past
Politicized	Spiritual
Cynical	Naïve
Instinctual	Contemplative
Combustible	Self-contained
Prosaic	Imaginative
<u>Embraces violence</u>	<u>Rejects violence as "bad medicine"</u>
(Heil, 2009, 30)	

Border-crossing: Philbert seeks a spiritual vision

The next scene shows nighttime, a long shot of the car going down a two-lane road through the western desert. Philbert has the CB radio on, and we hear a conversation in Cheyenne. The driver on the other end asks Philbert, "Got a warrior name?" Philbert answers, "Whirlwind Dreamer." The other speaker's ham radio name is, "Light Cloud," he says, "running an 18-wheeler." Like the prophet," Philbert responds. "No one cares about history," says Light Cloud. "I do," Philbert says. Cheyenne. The other driver is headed to a place name (stated in Cheyenne). "The most powerful spot in South Dakota." Philbert asks how to get there. "Go straight ahead into the sunrise." Next, we see that it is still nighttime. There are two interstate highway signs, our point of view is out the front of Philbert's car. One says "I-90 East" and it points toward Rapid City. Buddy is still asleep in the passenger seat. Then a morning shot shows us that Philbert is at the mountain. He gets out of the car and walks alone up the dirt path. We see the remains of a sweat lodge, no skins, just branches. Philbert enters it to sit on the ground, closes his eyes and meditates. We see through Philbert's "mind's eye" a soaring eagle, a Native American in a traditional loin cloth with a small feather headdress, his body covered with yellow paint approaches Philbert

holding an arrow in his hand. He comes up to him and touches the tip of his nose. When Philbert opens his eyes, he sees a coyote touching him. The coyote jumps back, a little bit startled and then walks away. This is a referent to a shapeshifter to traditional Native Americans or others familiar with Native North American tribal lore who might be viewing this film. Wihio is a trickster coyote (Brigham, 2015, 166). The appearance of this shapeshifter/trickster is part of the “bricolage” of “Powwow Highway.”

Figure 3.3 Philbert with a shapeshifter, trancing on the mountain



Image source :

<https://www.handmadefilms.film/library/powwow-highway/>

Philbert climbs further toward the top of the mountain. We can see a panoramic view of an extensive area. He takes a Hershey bar out of his pocket, unwraps it a little and starts to take a bite. Then he notices small colorful flags tied to the low branches of scrub trees around him, like offerings. (See the Figure 8 above in the Chapter introduction, “Philbert on the mountain top in “Powwow Highway.”) He closes the chocolate bar wrapper without taking a bit. As he sits, he places it carefully up on a small pile of rocks, bows his head as if in prayer

or reverence. We hear some non-diegetic music. A circular panoramic shot shows the surrounding desert. The lyrics of the song say, “Can you hear me? Can you see me?”

The scene shifts back to where the car is parked. Buddy has awakened. Another driver has parked nearby. “Hey, you’re pissing on your tire,” the other man says to Buddy. “What tribe?” buddy asks him. “Sioux,” the man responds. “Where are you headed?” Buddy asks, “A Christmas Powwow in Pine Ridge,” the stranger says. “Where are we?” Buddy asks. “These are the Black Hills. Sweet Butte.” Philbert comes rolling down the hill. When he gets up on his feet, Buddy, who is angry because they are not where he thought they were going, grabs Philbert by his shirt front and pulls him up to his face. Philbert says to him firmly, “Nobody grabs me no more! This is the most sacred place in America, maybe the world.” This assertion signifies that Philbert has “crossed his border” to a new spiritual self. He is no longer the man whom Aunt Harriet scoffed at, nor the child bullied by Buddy.

The scene shifts. We see Cheyenne cattle handlers corralling and marking cattle, “Don’t worry,” says one of the Cheyenne handlers, sitting on the wood fence, “You’ll see Buddy.” “You quit worrying about Redbow,” the chief responds. They are loading up bulls.

The scene shifts to a police station office. “Calm down Sammy. Putting his sister behind bars was part of the plan. The Bureau feels you underestimate Redbow. We had to get him off the ‘rez.’” Next, we see Mt. Rushmore in the background as the two friends, Philbert and Buddy, drive. We see a flashback of the school yard and a close-up of Buddy Redbow to show us that these are his thoughts. He says, “Philbert, when we were kids, what do you remember?” “You were playing army games and football. But I remember Bonnie” (Buddy’s sister). We see a flashback of Bonnie giving Philbert as a young boy, a banana as he sat crying on the ground. The other boys appear to have pushed him down and are calling

him, "Dough boy." Philbert and Bonnie smile at each other as she walks away with other young girls. Then the film brings us back to the present day. Bonnie is visiting her kids in a visiting room at the jail. "They got us in the slammer too." Her son says. Bonnie slips him a scrap of paper with a phone number on it. "Take this, call Rabbit, tell her my bail is \$2000. Call her." The guard interrupts but has not seen the exchange and makes her leave her children and go back to the cell.

Next, we see the car with Philbert and Buddy in it, face on. It stops. Philbert gets out, wades into the creek water toward the setting sun, he is chanting. "You dumb shit," says Buddy. Buddy goes in to stand beside him. The two look at each other. Philbert continues to chant. Buddy hesitates, but then begins to slowly chant with him. It is obvious that he does not know the words but is following along with Philbert to sing with him. A medium long camera shot shows them standing knee high in the water. When they wade out of the creek, Philbert takes off his boots to empty out the water. "My first token, a rock falls out of his boot. Buddy stands shivering (it was obviously very cold mountain run-off water) with a small blanket wrapped around his shoulders. "I'm freezing my balls off!" "My friend Lives nearby here."

Figure 3.4 Buddy and Philbert chanting evening prayer



Image source :

<http://www.fast-torrent.ru/film/doroga-na-pauvau.html>

We see the sunset and the dark sky, a long shot, nondiegetic instrumental music seems to herald that their journey continues. Then we see a man with a small hole in his window, holding a shot gun up to the hole. Buddy calls to him as they get out of the car. There are handshakes. “You weren’t at Wounded Knee with us or Oglala?” the man says to Philbert. They must go in to change out of wet clothes. “I can’t wait to get out of here. Pine Ridge. We can’t take it anymore. There’s a shooting a week. It’s like Belfast,” the man says to Buddy. “We’re moving to Denver. We can give you a ride, Philbert says, “After the Powwow.

The scene shifts to dancing, blue boots, Native American Powwow regalia, and drums. The event seems to be taking place at a school gymnasium. Philbert points to Buddy’s necklace. “It’s my Purple Heart.” (Buddy has a shell necklace in which he has added the Vietnam war medal.)

Figure 3.5 Dancing at a powwow in the film (See Buddy's Purple Heart medal.)



Image source:

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=n6g3lkpH&id=9092F065D5BC420AC64FBC11C6CCEC5233BD2423&thid=OIP.n6g3lkpHA5tr20uF_uloUQHafj&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2f64.media.tumblr.com%2f7975d895dbac7e26a5694725267627%2ftumblr_ohpzyxCir31vqr73ao1_1280.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.9fa837964a47039b6bdb4b85fee96851%3frik%3dIyS9M1LszMYRvA%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exp=900&expw=1200&q=Powwow+Highway+Philbert+Morning&simid=608044202473969174&FORM=IRPRST&ck=BC4FA753D8365D9691DD38AAA1F93883&selectedIndex=68&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

Several men at the powwow taunt Buddy. “Merry Christmas. I hear you’re leaving.”

Buddy responds, “Good to see you. On March 1, 1973, I tried to kick you in the balls.”

Someone from up in the bleachers throws a knife above the two arguing men to break up the upcoming fight. The knife sticks into the padded wall very close to them. The two men stop, and Buddy looks up into the bleachers’ seats toward the man who threw the knife. His friend tells him that the man has PTSD. “321 months in a tiger’s cage.” They are talking about the Vietnam war. As Buddy goes up to sit next to the man. We see him wearing Army Veteran

fatigues. He stutters when he talks to Buddy. (This role is played by a well-known Indian actor who has appeared in mainstream Hollywood movies, Graham Green.). Buddy tells him, “I gotta get outta here.” “No, Dance.” He is shaking as he tells buddy this. Buddy says, “They think a few lousy beads is culture or something.” “No,” the other man says, “You got mean.” Buddy gets up and walks down the bleachers. He starts dancing with everyone and begins to smile and they are all chanting as they dance. Philbert is beating the drums with other men.

The next scene shows Bonnie’s two children sneaking through the children’s holding area where there is a room full of children watching TV. They climb out the window. They go up to a woman on the sidewalk. She is dressed in a contemporary but traditional Native American long skirt and blouse and has a blanket spread on the sidewalk selling some things. “Can I have some of your popcorn?” Sky (the son) asks. “What tribe are you?” she asks Sky, but he does not know. “Our mother’s in jail. Can we please have our money now?” They go to a payphone. “Rabbit, what tribe are me and Jane?” Sky asks.

The next shot is a view of the car driving in the snow. We see a sign that says Fort Robinson nearby. Philbert gets out and walk away. By including a film sequence featuring Fort Robinson, filmmaker Wacks, responds to “Cheyenne Autumn” specifically, when Philbert stops at the historical marker. The Fort Robinson plaque commemorates the escape of Dull Knife’s band of Cheyenne. The historic plaque reads, “Fort Robinson, the Cheyenne Outbreak 1848.” “On September 8, 1878, some 300 Northern Cheyenne under the leadership of Dull Knife began a trek from Oklahoma to their homeland in the North. One hundred forty-nine survived and were imprisoned at Fort Robinson.

In this scene, there are cuts back and forth between the people in the historic past, a vision, and Philbert's face which is full of sadness (Schweninger, 2013). As Philbert reads the historic marker, we see his vision of the people marching in the snow, those who survived the defeat, a hazy flashback. And, in the film, it is snowing as he wipes the snow from the marker. There is an extreme close-up of his face, a close-up lasting almost four seconds, allowing us to enter his thoughts. We see his vision. The film cuts to a shot of the people tired and worn, moving toward the camera. We hear only a slow, nondiegetic drumbeat, interrupted by a horse's whinny. The scene is shown in bluish light, evoking the bitter cold of the snowstorm and a sacred otherworld (Schweninger, 2013). Philbert is crying. At this point, Philbert reaches into the snow, picking up an ice-covered pebble which he perceives as a token. "A token from the Old Ones," he declares.

The Fort Robinson sequence in "Powwow Highway" indicates the importance of history and tradition in the film and in Philbert's quest. It signals that the film takes his quest seriously and it also makes a point about survival (Schweninger, 2013). We hear non-diegetic music again, popular radio music, "If you're out there, can you see me?... Lay a flower in the snow." We see the historic plaque behind the two men who are standing in the snow.

Back on the highway after the Fort Robinson sequence, Philbert, Buddy, and the two others riding with them, the couple they picked up in Pine Ridge to give them a ride to a new place to live, stop at a convenience store. Again, we see Cheyenne humor, as Philbert's enormous appetite is emphasized again. "Can I have ...hot dogs, four ginger ales, four coffees, lots of sugar." This is all food just for him, not the others in the car. A William S. Hart Western is playing on the television. Philbert grabs the foil attached to the small black

and white TV antenna. Suddenly the channel changes as he is holding it. As he watches for only a few seconds, he sees Hart's character tying a rope to a jail window and pulling it out. When Philbert lets go of the antenna, the TV goes back to another channel with an unclear picture. But he has formed an idea about how to rescue Bonnie. Schweninger (2013)

suggests that such a television reference shows that Cheyenne in the late 1980s are integrated into the wider society, but it also shows another way that Wack's film challenges Hollywood stereotypes of American Indians. Philbert, on his identity quest, fuses modern elements with elements from the past. We see this in his vision at Fort Robinson (Schweninger, 2013). And we saw this fusion earlier when Philbert was inspired by a car ad on television which ironically stereotyped the American Indians appealing to them to buy a used car. But Philbert translates this idea into the idea of acquiring a war pony to begin a quest to gather medicine. Philbert seeks knowledge of the past and of his ancestors, yet he accepts change. He allows Buddy to buy him new clothes. He reads the tape player manual. He takes what he wants from television ads and Westerns, what he can use from Hollywood, and leaves the rest (Schweninger, 2013).

The next scene in which Philbert recounts the trickster story of the plums repeats a story almost verbatim from Seal's novel. It is an important indication of Philbert's character and his development. He tells this story after the midpoint of the journey, as if it is a centerpiece, after the Fort Robinson sequence (Schweninger, 2013).

The "bricolage" of Powwow Highway," tricksters

As he returns to the car, Philbert tells them a traditional story. Wihio the Trickster, sometimes a man, sometimes an animal, goes to the creek:

One day he saw some plums floating on the creek. Now, Wihio loves to eat. So, he reached for those plums, but they disappeared, and he fell into the creek. He crawled

out, all soaking wet. Saw them plums again shimmering in the water. He kept diving, and they kept disappearing. Three days later his wife found him still splashing around. “Woman,” cried Wihio “during the day juicy plums float in this magical spot, but at night they go away.” His wife screamed at him: “Stupid dog of a dog. The plums are still on the tree.” You worthless fool of a husband, chasing shadows when the truth hangs over your head.

Buddy retorts, “Tell everybody fairy stories, stories of our ancestors. Well, it’s too bad, those stories didn’t tell us how to keep our ‘rez’ from turning into sewers. The White Man wants our oil, our uranium...” Philbert is crying. When we see a Cheyenne man cry on screen, again, Philbert is defying the stereotype of the stoic warrior (Schweninger, 2013). He insists that the stories are more than fairy tales; they are “the stories of our ancestors; how the old ones dealt with problems; often the problems never change; nor the people.” “Wihio, the creator of the universe. We’ll play a little trick on the White Man.” The ironic suggestion here is that it is Buddy who is deceived by a reflection rather than the reality. He is the one chasing mirages (Schweninger, 2013).

Buddy is arguing with his friend in the car, who is moving away from Pine Ridge. “I got a kid on the way. You wanta fight every day. You go live on Pine Ridge.” The couple stop in to stay with friends. The house where they are staying looks kind of suburban. Buddy does not want to stay the night when the other friends invite them. “I cooked an enormous dinner,” the woman says. Philbert then walks straight toward the house.

The next scene shows the two men sleeping in a guest bedroom. Philbert gets up and goes to awaken Buddy. Philbert is naked and we see him from the back. “Jesus, Philbert, get some clothes on,” Buddy says as he sleepily opens his eyes. Outside, Buddy Redbow and the other former A.I.M. activists are talking. We hear Native American music (non-diegetic) as they say good-bye. “Good luck, Man.” Buddy gets in.

The return

As we see the car driving down the road again. We hear Credence Clearwater Revival Music (well-known to Americans of my generation), “Who’ll Stop the Rain?” An 18-wheeler passes the two. We see long distance panoramic views of the desert and the badlands. They are weaving back and forth to the music, playing on the two-lane road, as they proceed. Buddy says to Philbert, “You-re All blissed out.” Philbert says, “We are Cheyenne. All the shit of the world can’t change that.” Buddy is lecturing him, “All you eat are carcinogens,” he says, as he takes another hit on his joint. Suddenly he cries out in fear because there is a tarantula in the car. Buddy wants to squash it. He has a pistol in his hand, is checking the chambers. “The trickster takes many forms.

This is the second time Philbert has used the phrase, “We are Cheyenne.” After Buddy has been thrown from the car and his gun has been broken when he tried to use it to kill a spider, he questions whether they can succeed in rescuing Bonnie. Philbert says, “We are Cheyenne,” implying that acknowledging and accepting their heritage will guide them (Schweninger, 2013). We must keep our medicine good.” Philbert says. He throws on the brakes as Buddy is trying to stomp the spider. He pulls the car off the road so abruptly that Buddy falls out, his gun falls to the ground and breaks. He has a tantrum. Philbert points. “Buddy, there’s Santa Fe. Sorry my pony threw ya, buddy.”

Rabbit arrives at the jail. I got cash to bail out Bonnie. The woman at the counter takes her money but will not let her out. She says the paperwork is not done. Everyone is at a Christmas party. “I paid the bail, but they won’t let you out.” So, what’s the story?” We hear Buddy yelling and they are all holding him back. Phil stands at the door and says hello to Bonnie. Rabbit, Philbert, and Buddy walk out of the jail reception area. Philbert says he

must “go take a pee.” He walks downstairs as Buddy and Rabbit walk out the front of the building. “I’m Rabbit, the one who stuck by her while you were out saving the world.” Philbert appears to be lost. He finds a cash drawer open downstairs and puts some bundles of cash in his pickets. I just saw how you peckerheads handled things. Bonnie said none of you cared about her.” Rabbit says. “Bonnie was always a shy kid,” Philbert says, “Let’s go get a drink. “Stop worrying, trust the powers.”

New scene. “What the hell’s Youngblood doing here.” Rabbit. “The two kids are at the El Dorado.” She tells Philbert. “You been spending too much time in the sweat lodge Redbow.” Youngblood pulls a gun on him. Buddy punches him.

Cut to a different scene, Philbert has the two kids in the car. He is talking with Sky, the young boy. For the third time, Philbert uses the phrase, “We are Cheyenne.” As they drive through the streets of Santa Fe, he is reassuring Jane and Sky, Bonnie’s children. Philbert has now uses the statement at three crucial moments in the rescue. In this way, the film weaves together Philbert’s quest to gather medicine, acquire tokens, and discover what it means to be Cheyenne with the film plot devoted to the rescue (Schweninger, 2013). He continues talking about “Medicine, four tokens that come to you in a special way.” The awakening of the clear Blue Earth....” “Who is Uncle Buddy?” the boy asks. “My best friend” Philbert says.

Cut to another shot, Philbert has the two children in the car, he sneaks up behind the jail in the car. “You pony is an old nag,” Sky jokes. “We must prepare for battle.” You know what to do,” Philbert says. “Go ...the captive woman.”

Watching, Buddy Redbow is there at the jail. Two men are plotting something to get him. The chief is at the desk at the jail now. “I’m here to see Bonnie Redbow.” Sky climbs

up to Bonnie's window at the back of the jail. "I just want to speak to her," the chief says. Bring her to the visitor's room. Then we see Philbert tying up a rope to the window and he says he is going to pull the bars down. The rope is attached to the bars of the window and the car's back bumper. The chief sees this and hears Philbert out the window. Anyone six feet tall and about 300 pounds?" "No, must be Navajo," he replies. The car's tires are spinning. The window pulls out. Bonnie jumps out and the car peels out with her in the back seat with her daughter. The police officers at the jail come running out and get into their car. Philbert says to Bonnie, "We can go now. We're gonna take you home."

Buddy's transformation

The next scene shows Buddy RedBow's transformation when he attacks a pursuing police car after the jailbreak. Buddy grabs the car window which detaches from the car. He stands alone outside on the streets of Santa Fe, sending the others in the car to go on without him. He waits for the police who are chasing them. Buddy shape-shifts into a traditional Native American warrior. Then we see another vision of him. The film cuts to a shot of him instantaneously wearing full buckskin and feathers. He is a warrior in full war paint (yellow). Buddy leaps into the air, and as he throws the window at the police car, it transforms into a tomahawk that he throws slicing through the air. It breaks out the front window of the first car chasing them, causing the patrol car to crash. According to Schweninger (2013), this portrayal suggests that Buddy has learned something from Philbert about the importance of Native tradition.

As they recover and continue down the road. "Wait, those fuckers got my 2,000 bucks," says Rabbit. "I got money," Philbert says. 4,000. Philbert got it in the vault in the jail. He explains, some for bulls, some for food."

Inside with the police. “Alright boys, cowboy up. We got work to do. I sure hope it dies referring to the car) before they cross into pueblo land.” Put it in low. The chief is in pursuit in a truck. He opens a gate to let all the bulls out to block the road and the police cannot get past them. Suddenly inside Philbert’s car. No brakes. They are on a steep mountain. Buddy Redbow has Rabbit, and the children jump out. Sky tries to hold onto Philbert, but Buddy grabs him to pull him away. The car rolls off the road and bursts into flame. The young children, buddy and Rabbit look on. Buddy begins to cry. “He was almost a warrior.” The police see the fire. “You can forget that back up. It’s all over.” The others sit on the hillside in the night air. Then Philbert appears over the ridge walking toward them. “My pony threw men; now he’s dead.” He holds up a car door handle. My third token. Bonnie hugs him. “Let’s get outta here.” Philbert hands Buddy his necklace which had been hanging from the rearview mirror of the car. The two men hug. A popular radio song plays, “Sweet Fire of Love”. We see the fire in the background. The final credits begin to roll. They walk to the chief’s truck.

Some concluding observations about “Powwow Highway”

Powwow Highway features a flawed character (Buddy) with a “pure” character (Philbert). It describes a journey in the second act in which the pure character has an impact on the values of the flawed character. It builds to a third-act climax featuring the flawed character demonstrating his new values and self-sacrifice. Heil (2009, 32) argues that a commercial movie can be built around the three-act episodic structure of a picaresque novel. “Easy Rider (1969) did it and so does “Powwow Highway” (Heil, 2009, 32). The opening, “the set-up,” launches this kind of narrative, typically 30 minutes long, introducing the main characters and a “catalyst” or “inciting incident” (Heil, 2009, 32). The first act typically ends

with a turning point. In the second, longer, act, the protagonists confront added barriers or complications. The A-plot, the main journey and objective, is pre-empted in the second act by a “relational-centered B-plot” (Heil, 2009, 32).

“Powwow Highway” opens with two juxtapositions. The first juxtaposition is visual—a nineteenth century Cheyenne warrior rides his horse, then this image is displaced by tracking shots showing the squalor of the Lane Deer Northern Cheyenne Reservation. At first, viewers may assume that this imagery is showing the fall of the Cheyenne from their noble past, but we learn that there is more to it. The second juxtaposition presented in the film opening is centered on the two main characters. Buddy is “the star of his tribe” (Heil, 2009, 32). He is handsome, strong, and charismatic. The crowd is impressed by his domination of the bar pool table. In the scene, before each pool shot, while aiming at a ball, Buddy names a tribal enemy (a coal mine, a pipeline) that is polluting their territory. He drives the enemy out by knocking the ball into the pocket. He is a politicized hero. As he leaves the bar, he passes a big, clumsy man, Philbert Bono, who is just entering the bar and he barely acknowledges him. But the camera stays with Philbert, following him into the bar, where he sits alone. No one even looks at him. “He scrapes the bottom of the Cheyenne social ladder” (Heil, 2009, 33).

Philbert reveals himself as a “bricoleur.” He uses the materials available to him to achieve his goals— “beat-up cars, TV westerns and stereotypical images” (Brigham, 2015, 173). When Philbert, moved by a television ad, goes to visit a used car dealer on the reservation, instead of seeing an abandoned field full of disintegrating wrecks, we see his vision of galloping horses. This scene repeats the visual juxtaposition of “noble warrior and crumbling ‘rez’ (Heil, 2009, 33). While Philbert dreams, Buddy declares in a tribal council

meeting in which a lobbyist is trying to persuade the tribe to sell more mining rights, “It’s always the same deal, ain’t it? You get what you want, and we get the shaft . . . This ain’t the American dream we’re living; this here is the Third World.”

The catalyst to the narrative is when the police arrest Bonnie. The turning point takes place when Buddy flags down Philbert and gets him to drive to Santa Fe. At 30 minutes in, it is time for the first act to end, and the Radio Shack scene lays the foundation for the second act. The salesman shows his disrespect for the two men.

Salesman: Maybe this is what you’re after? (Chuckling, he lifts a small pink portable radio from the children’s display. Buddy, angry, yanks a box from the front display.)

Buddy: This one. With speakers.

Salesman: (Stunned.) That’s our top of the line. You no getum special deal, chief.

Buddy is furious and buys more gear, impulsively. Back in the car, buddy again loses control. He is impatient and does not read the radio manual. He tries to use guesswork to make the sound work. When it does not, he jumps to the conclusion that he has been ripped off. He re-enters the shop and gets into a physical confrontation with the salesman. He must run out to escape the man who has pulled a gun on him. Meanwhile, Philbert has studied the manual and he makes the sound work. But the scene is a crowd-pleasure because of the scuffle. The music blares on the radio, “I’m in the mood to tear it up.” This scene accomplishes something important; it shows our hero’s flaws. And it suggests that the hero’s “sidekick” might really be the hero, setting the stage for act two (Heil, 2009, 34).

The second act probes Cheyenne culture (Heil, 2009, 34). The relational B-plot (or subplot) takes precedence over the objective-oriented A-plot in the second act. The plot carries the action, but the subplot carries the theme. Some say that the subplot is what the story is “really about;” ask writers why they wrote the script, and they will talk about the

subplot (Heil, 2009, 35). “Powwow Highway” supports this idea. The A-plot objective, to free Bonnie, gives way to the story of a conflict of values between the two protagonists once they are sharing the same car. Heil (2009, 35) argues that the viewer comes to realize that despite Buddy’s strength, passion, intelligence, and drive, Philbert has more. At every stage of the journey, when the two clash over what to do next, Philbert wins. Table 3.2 summarizes some examples of these clashes and outcomes (Heil, 2009, 35).

Table 3.2 Clashes and Outcomes

Location	Philbert’s Plan	Buddy’s Plan	Outcome
Bear Butte, SD	Detour to holy mt.	Drive straight thru	Philbert climbs out
White River, SD	Enter river and sing	Keep driving	Buddy joining Philbert & sings
Pine Ridge, SD	Attend powwow	Bypass powwow	They attend the powwow
Pine Ridge, SD	Participate in dance	Remain in bleachers	Buddy dances
Fort Robinson, NE	Visit historic site	Remain in car	Buddy joins Philbert
Aurora, CO	Rest and refuel	Push on	They stay

The final turning point between Act 2 and Act 3 takes place in a scene involving a spider, seen as a personification of the trickster, Wihio. Just outside of Santa Fe, Buddy finds a tarantula in the globe compartment. He takes out his gun and intends to kill it, but before he can, Philbert swerves the car off the road, which throws Buddy onto the shoulder and saves the spider. Buddy’s handgun falls to the ground and breaks.

The following brief exchange is an important one.

Buddy: (Angry) You dump me on the road to save a fuckin’ insect?
 Philbert: We must keep our medicine good.

Philbert says this with conviction. Buddy never confronts Philbert again. The B-plot is resolved. Philbert has won each conflict. Philbert’s viewpoint prevails. He gets the last say in each argument. His viewpoint stays with us longer, moving us closer to his point of view. Here is another typical conflict:

Buddy: Look, Phil, I don't mean to tromp on your show, but white America ain't gonna hold off much longer. They're hungry, man. They want our coal, oil, and uranium and they're gonna take it. Wherever it is.

Philbert: No, they won't.

(A pause, for effect.)

Philbert: Wihio the Trickster won't let them, for Wihio is also the Creator of the Universe. He will play a little trick on the Whiteman; you wait and see.

By ending the scene on Philbert's line, it carries more weight, and we begin to anticipate a payoff in the upcoming third act.

Buddy lacks compassion. The second act reveals his cruel streak. After Philbert detours into South Dakota while Buddy has been sleeping in the passenger seat, when he awakens, Buddy turns on him and grabs him by the jacket. Philbert responds by lifting him "straight off the ground," saying, "Nobody grabs me no more" (Heil, 2009, 37). This statement triggers a flashback for Buddy. He remembers that he bullied Philbert when they were children. When he asks Philbert what he remembers about their childhood, we learn that Philbert remembers this differently. Instead of recalling Buddy's cruelty, he remembers Bonnie's kindness. She comforted him and shared her lunch with him. This second flashback (Philbert's) serves several objectives for the film narrative: it helps us understand why Philbert would drive across the country to help a friend; it lays the groundwork for Philbert to fulfill the role of a husband/father figure void for Bonnie's two children; and it stresses that Buddy needs to learn Bonnie's compassion. It is the first time Buddy demonstrates guilt. Throughout the second act, Buddy learns to be more humane. At the Pine Ridge powwow, for example, he makes a statement devaluing tribal tradition: "I hate these goddamn things. Look at them—traipsing around a basketball court. They act like a few lousy beads and some smelly feathers are a big deal, a culture." But when a fellow Vietnam veteran (played by a well-known Native American character actor, Graham Greene, a cameo, tells him he has

gotten mean, Buddy must reassess. He looks hard at the man, hesitates, then abruptly gets up and walks off the bleachers. He goes down on the gymnasium floor, standing beside the Oglala, Arapaho, Blackfeet, and Cheyenne dancers, and slowly and stiffly, Buddy begins to dance.

The final part of Buddy's transformation occurs when he meets Bonnie's friend, Rabbit. Things get heated when they first meet. She argues that personal issues are just as important as political ones. "You think you're such a hot shit . . . Bonnie told me nobody ever gave a damn about her when she was a kid. This strikes a chord with Buddy. By the time the climax in the story comes, Buddy has transformed. He has opened himself up to tradition and spirituality. The scene in which Buddy challenges an oncoming police car reveals his transformation (literally and figuratively). He shows that he is willing to sacrifice himself so his friends and relatives can escape. Further, he channels the past. He stands alone on the road, facing the oncoming patrol car. The scene shows him pivoting, breathing hard in the cold air. The cruiser's headlights shine on him as his arms swing up toward the night sky. He runs toward the car, hands high above his head and in this moment, he becomes "Crazy Horse," in war paint, screaming a war whoop. He lets his tomahawk fly (Protector's windowpane). It smashes the squad car windshield, and the cruiser flips over on the asphalt. He has transformed into a traditional Cheyenne warrior.

In the "Hollywood type" movie ending, all questions have been resolved. In the film, we see that it is Philbert, not Buddy, who rescues Bonnie. Philbert recovers the money that Buddy "misappropriated." Philbert retrieves the children and enables everyone to escape the Santa Fe police. This cues us to recognize that Philbert's quest results in effective action. Philbert, a spiritual warrior, not Buddy, the former AIM activist, and a violent warrior, does

the work for contemporary Cheyenne. He is the new warrior. When he carries the final token as he climbs the hill after the burning Buick at the end of the film, Sky relays the message. He runs to him and shouts, “The third token” (to make you a warrior). Philbert becomes the rescuer, the teacher of the children. He helps them become Cheyenne and ensures a future. This achievement privileges an Indigenous point of view overall for the film, moving it beyond a Hollywood movie (Schweninger, 2013).

Heil (2009, 39) argues that there has been emotional and intellectual engagement with the two protagonists, and viewers think about it after it ends. The character and plot issues are resolved, so the mind reviews the narrative through the second act-B-plot. But everything has not been resolved for mainstream viewers. What has not been resolved? Incomplete knowledge of the places, people and history referenced in the narrative, where is Bear Butte? What do the objects tied to trees at the top of the butte mean? Who is Wihio and why is he “like Jesus to the Cheyenne?” What was the Pine Ridge conflict about? What exactly happened at Fort Robinson? In short, it instills in the audience a curiosity about the people, culture, and history of the Cheyenne and can motivate post-screen research.

“Powwow Highway” presents the journeys of self-discovery for two very different “road buddies” who are Native Americans. Both of these protagonists, as cultural minorities within a nation that does not value their heritage, achieve new levels of respect for their own autonomy within that nation. The next film, “Central Station,” presents a pair of travelers from contrasting social backgrounds—Dora, a cynical middle-class schoolteacher from urban Brazil, and a young boy from Brazil’s poor region in the northeast. In facing the challenges of their journey together, they learn new respect for each other, and in doing so, the film suggests the promise of a new path for a more united Brazil.

“Central Station”

Introduction to the film, “Central Station”

Central Station (Portuguese: “Central do Brasil”) is a 1998 Brazilian–French drama film directed by Walter Salles and starring Fernanda Montenegro and Vinícius de Oliveira. The title refers to where the film begins, the most famous and important train station in Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro (No author, 2019, “Jotted Lines”). The film was nominated for two Academy Awards in 1998, one for Best Actress and one for Best Foreign Language Film. The schoolteacher is played by an accomplished Brazilian actor, Fernanda Montenegro. Salles has described Montenegro as Brazil’s Giulietta Masina (Proyect, n.d.).

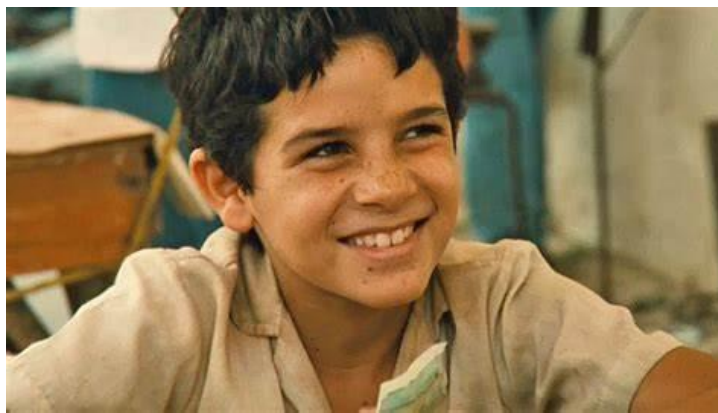


Figure 3.6 Vinicius de Oliveira, a neo-realist film practice: Hiring non-professional actors.

Young actor de Oliveira was a shoeshine boy.

Image source :

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=kOQe08FW&id=771E7BB18E831A5477B1A6043BC0F2F7230ADE28&thid=OIP.kOQe08FWglIgukSmohYRAwHaEK&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2ffr.web.img2.acsta.net%2fvideothumbnails%2f18%2f06%2f11%2f15%2f33%2f2109635.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.90e41ed3c156825220ba44a6a2161103%3frik%3dKN4KI%252ffywDsEpg%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=540&expw=960&q=Central+station+Brazilian+movie&simid=608037957672450440&FORM=IRPRST&ck=D0F46E8FBA45A437BF2CC725F7510C8A&selectedIndex=5&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

The film features a neo-realist practice, using an amateur actor, Vinicius de Oliveira. Young actor de Oliveira was a shoeshine boy who beat out more than 1,500 other children who auditioned or were interviewed for the role of Josué. Made with grants from the Sundance Institute, NHK, and the French Ministry of Culture, this film was shown at 1998 film festivals (Sundance, Berlin) (No author, 2019, “Jotted Lines”).

“Central Station” starts in the city of Rio de Janeiro and goes to a small city in Pernambuco, located in the northeast of Brazil. A woman and her “foster” son travel together. Based around the search for a father by a child who has never met him, “Central do Brasil” tells a simple story, yet one that is full of nuances, and compassion (No author, 2019, “Jotted Lines”). The film relates two main quests: one by a boy, Josué, searching in the heart of Brazil for a father he longs for; and the other by a cold-hearted, emotionally deprived woman, Dora, (unconsciously) searching for her capacity for compassion (No author, 2019, “Jotted Lines”).

“Central station” film narrative

The movie opens with real people at Rio’s Central Station dictating true letters. A woman, then an older man, giving emotional letters. The third one is the one to Jesus, from his son Josué. He wants to meet him. Jesus de Paiva, in Bom Jesus do Norte, Pernambuco (a northeastern state along the coast about two-day trip by bus from Rio. We see the mother and son walk away after dictating the letter. The fourth letter starts out with a man talking explicitly about sex, then a younger woman gives an address as simply the third house after the bakery in a small city somewhere. Then others say the names of states they are from and want to send letters to—Ceara, Pernambuco, Minas Gerais.

The “bricolage” of Central Station

“Central Station” includes a plot device common in popular film in Brazil at least since the 1940s, the “carnavalesque ‘troca’ or exchange which permits characters from vastly different social backgrounds to assume each other’s position in the world for a limited period. This is much like the suspension of the rules of society which take place during carnival (Dennison and Shaw, 19). The motif of the “troca” (exchange) appears in the story line when two different social/cultural types are brought together. In Walter Salles’ “Central do Brasil” (Central Station), the south of the country is brought into “uncomfortable” contact with the North, as Dora, a schoolteacher, takes young Josué on a bus trip to the very poor Northeast to find his father. Dora caters to customers, primarily from the Northeast of Brazil, who pass through the station who cannot read or write. She has become cynical, and we learn that she takes many of the letters home with her and never mails them. Dora will meet Josué, a nine-year-old boy who has never met his father, when his mother sends a letter to his father through Dora.

The film opening shows the “two Brazils.” At the train station, the young and old illiterate customers at Dora’s stall represent immigrants from the impoverished North-East of Brazil. When she destroys their letters at random, she stands for the literate urban white elite who exert material and symbolic power over the rest of Brazil through literacy and education (No author, 2019, “Jotted Lines”).

As the film continues, Dora pays the vendor stall manager and leaves for the day. She has been transcribing these letters. The credits start to roll. A big crowd at the station is shown in a medium long shot from higher up. The credits continue to roll. Young people

jump through the windows on the commuter train before the door open. Dora doesn't get a seat and must stand. The credits are still rolling.

Dora enters her apartment, opens the window. Noisy streets below. She calls out the window for her neighbor to come up. Irene lives on the floor below her. Dora is singing as Irene comes in. She begins opening letters. She has transcribed letters for illiterate working people who come to her table, but ironically, Dora does not have these relationships. She speaks bitterly of humanity, going through the letters with her friend, Irene (Proyect, n.d.). Her friend (played by well-known Brazilian actress, well known in Brazil) who at first objects to what she is doing. She makes fun of one man's letter. They tear up the letter. They read the letter to Jesus. The father's a drunk, insists Dora. Dora wants to tear it up. Irene does not. Ok, I'll put it in the drawer, she says. It's a purgatory for letters, Irene says. She reads another and tears it up.

Then we see feet entering Central Station again the next day. We see the mother and son walking straight toward us. A man is paying Dora a dollar to post a letter for him. The mother and son return, want to write another letter, and replace the old one. She says in the letter I'm on vacation next month and can come. Moiseis and Isaias, the other songs are with the father. Josué is still playing with a wooden top on Dora's desk. His mother asks for help to write a better letter Ana is the woman's name. She lays down a handkerchief to get out a photo to put in the letter. "How do you know she'll post the letter?" Josué asks her. They had already found that Dora was still in possession of the last letter from the day before. The mother and son join hands at the stop light as they leave the station. Josué drops the toy top and when he goes back to the curb for it, the bus hits Ana. A close-up of Dora and the

manager shows their faces as they see the wreck has happened. Dora picks up the handkerchief. Josué is crying, someone hugs him. Fade to black.

In the next scene, Josué is sitting on a bench waiting. A medium close-up facing us shows people are passing by between him and us. He goes back to Dora's desk. "I want to write a letter!" He dictates. "Come to Rio, my mom is hurt." "Do you have money?" Dora asks. "Show me. Who do you know in Rio?" Only his mom. He is crying. She says, "Only if you have money, get out of here." The camera pans to another woman shown in the station. She looks poor and alone. Josué is glaring at her as Dora gets on the commuter train. He follows and runs beside the window.

Then we see it getting dark. He sits beside the track alone. He is standing before a Madonna and child head bowed. The guards are clearing out the station. Rio skyline. We see Josué sleeping on a sidewalk. Dora is shown from the back. She's eating. She looks over at Josué still sleeping. She tries to wake him and offers him a sandwich. He refuses.

The audience sees some of the harsh realities of present-day Brazil when another homeless boy tries to steal food in the station. A boy snags a bag of chips. People begin to yell, "Pega ladrao!" (Get the thief!). The guard run him down on the tracks. Two men stand over him with guns and shoot him dead as he is lying down. Then one guard returns the chips to a vender.

A man comes up to Josué sitting on the floor. Dora watches. Interrupts. "Mr. Pedrao, I know him." "I have an offer for you," he pulls her aside. She goes out and sits by Josué on the bench. Introduces herself. He says his whole name. "Wanta come home with me?" "I'm waiting for my mother." "She's not coming back." He objects. "She died," Dora says. She

gives him a slip of paper. Says he can follow her home if he wants. She looks back as she walks toward her train.

In the next scene, she walks into her apartment and Josué follows. “Where’s your husband?” “None.” “Any children?” “None.” The boy asks to use her bathroom. Irene enters, and wants to go there. A guest is here, she learns. This is Josué. Then we see Irene and Josué seated at the table with food. My Mom was a lousy cook too, he says. Your work? Teacher like Dora. Who takes care of you? We do. Who takes care of your mom? Me. My Dad was a carpenter. What do you want to be? A truck driver.

Josué sits watching tv. He looks out the window at the night, watching the electric train. He sees a Madonna and child on the wall. Then a school photo. Then he spies the letter drawer, slightly open, looks in and finds his letter and photo. You sneaky rat (“moleque” is the word used for street boys), Dora says. Give it to me. I’ll take it. It’s very far. I promise I’ll mail it. He sits and asks her to promise. She takes his hand and says she will do it.

She wakes, has been sleeping in her chair. Josué is asleep on the couch. Next, they’re on a commuter train. “You’re going to a great place,” she tells him. They arrive, meet Mr. Pedrao. His secretary opens the door. We treat our children as one big family, wants to see his tongue (see if he’s healthy, it seems). Dora wants the details. He is sent to play. Pedrao gives Dora \$1000. He makes it seem like someone is paying \$2000 total for the adoption.

Heimlich/unheimlich

Dora is back in her apartment. Blessed Virgin! Irene sees the new tv. Where is he? Juvenile Institution, Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul. Irene begins to figure out about the tv. Where did you get the money? Foreign family adoptions, explains Dora. Don’t you read?

They're really selling kids for organs. He's too old to be adopted. Irene says. Dora looks worried. Fade to black. Dora is restless, worried, tossing and turning in bed. She has become dissatisfied with her handling of the situation with Josué. This is her moment of *unheimlich* that leads her to make a decision.

The departure

In the following scenes, we see what leads to the departure. It begins with Dora rescuing Josué. The next morning, she grabs the money, the letter, she's suddenly knocking on the door where she left Josué. The secretary looks rough, answers the door. She shows her pictures of the children she must adopt. The secretary goes back in to talk to Pedrao, leaving the door ajar. Dora goes in, searching for Josué. We hear the other two whispering. She gets Josué out of bed. Liar, go away, you're worthless. She drags him out and they are chased. They call her names and threaten to kill her. Breathless, she catches a taxi. They make it away. I've changed my mind, declares Dora.

She calls Irene and Pedrao is already there at her place. She gives a signal over the phone talking to let Dora know that the man is there. She's at the bus station using a pay phone. I always knew you were a good soldier, says Irene. Dora tells her to lock up her apartment and be careful. Lend me \$200; send it to Bom Jesus do Norte. She buys two bus tickets. Josué does not want to go with her. He wants to go alone. Give me my mother's letter. He walks away to get on the bus. She watches him. She catches the bus and goes to sit with him. The bus is travelling toward us at night, the travel music theme is playing.

Dora is sleeping. The next morning, dawn, they're at a bus station. He looks at a shirt, wants a good shirt to meet his dad. They both get new white shirts. How far to my dad's? he

asks. He wants Dora to teach him what kilometers are. Dora gets out a full bottle of liquor. We see the bus travelling through the countryside. Do you think that man is a father? Josué points at someone. This one. Looks like my father, “Palhaco,” she calls the man (that means clown, but the subtitles say, Prick). When Josué says he prefers taxis, she says take a bus, not a taxi, a definite destination. Then speaks metaphorically about his father leaving her mother, for another woman, a deceitful taxi and calls her mother a dream taxi, and we can tell she’s drunk. She talks about a letter from her father.

We see the bus from the rear, hear violin music. She’s falling asleep late at night on the bus. The boy takes her liquor. He drinks it and gets drunk. We see many cars on the road. Everyone is laughing on the bus at him. Dora awakens. She rushes to the back of the bus yelling at him. She slaps him and drags him back to the seat. I wanted to help you.

We hear birds chirping. It is morning sun at a bus stop. A ten-minute stop is announced. Josué is asleep. Dora leaves him seated. Takes his letter out, puts money in his wallet in his backpack. She lies to the bus driver, says he’s her ne nephew and s asks the driver to take him on to Bom Jesus. She can’t go. She tips him. She buys a Rio ticket for herself, \$60. She sits inside, sees the bus leave, then notices Josué is not on it. He sits at the table alone. She puts her head down. You should have stayed on. You’re better off without me. Why not go without me? I’ll be at the other table when you want to talk. Then she notices he has left the backpack on the bus. We see the horizon. She squats down on a side street, desolate. And in despair. We see a ripped goat. I know this is a metaphor Northeasterners use for themselves as poor survivors. Then she’s asleep at the table. She seeks a refund for her Rio ticket, but she has missed that bus. So, no refund. They are sitting at the diner counter, with no food A truck driver offers her a ride. His bus flap says, Strength

is in everything, but only God has the power. Where do you live? And your wife? Josué's questions. I'm married to the road, no family. So, you're like her.

Chance encounters

This chance encounter with the truck driver enables us to learn more about the two protagonists. The truck driver is an Evangelical Christian. The truck stops at a restaurant. He's unloading his cargo. Josué helps him. Dora enters the restaurant. Josué wanders around the store. Steals some food and puts it in his pants. The Evangelical truck driver is talking about conversions to the owner. Josué shows Dora the food. Put it in my bag. I'll take it back. Do you want to go to jail? Then we see her stealing sausage and putting it in her purse. The driver covers for her when the owner asks to see what's in her bag, not knowing she has stolen things. She's my friend, he says. Don't do that again, she tries to tell Josué she bought the stuff she has. He knows she stole it. He says his mother would not do these things. You should steal mortadella, she explains. The driver sees them eating. He says the shopkeeper is just a suspicious man. The front window on the truck has a painted message at the top: With God I follow my destiny. She tells him Josué wants to be a truck driver. Could you let him sit behind the wheel? Josué wants to drive a bigger truck than this. We see the countryside and a winding road.

Figure 3.7 A chance-encounter with a truck driver, Dora and Josué “on the road” on the Brazilian frontier.



Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=9Iai8xGc&id=DBB2D11DCF6C784F3EA0981677ED296E1E5D423F&thid=OIP.9Iai8xGcj0yx6FqCM021IQHaDj&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2foffscreen.com%2fimages%2farticles%2f_resized%2f9_6_station2_bg.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.f486a2f3119c8f4cb1e85a82334db521%3frik%3dP0JdHm4p7XcWmA%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=481&expw=1000&q=Central+station+Brazilian+movie&simid=608049674337918660&FORM=IRPRST&ck=509F47D0A96DE9A5E203826E38D58E16&selectedIndex=23&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0T

It's night. They have stopped in the sertão. They have a butane lamp lit sitting on the ground outside. Dora is wrapped in a blanket. She and the driver are talking. We don't have to lost contact, she says. Josué is calling to her. He's cold sitting in the truck. Then its morning. The driver is washing his face in water among the rocks nearby. We see others alongside the road with horse drawn small wagons. Josué and the truck driver talk in the restroom. Josué is trying to brag about his experiences with women. They go inside the restaurant to eat. The driver buys beverages and lunches for all three of them. Dora orders a beer. Josué tells him that she was a teacher. She tells him she was a letter writer. Go play the football table game. She sends him away. She pours a beer for the two of them. He tells her, he's an evangelical. They drink a glass of beer. She says she was glad they missed the bus,

touches his hands. She's propositioning him. A close-up of their faces. I'll be right back, she says. She leaves to go freshen up in the restroom. She borrows a lipstick from a stranger. Josué had told her earlier she was ugly and didn't use makeup. She goes out and discovers the driver bolted. A close-up of her through the window shows she is sobbing. Then we see the two of them in a long shot sitting at a place set up for offerings beside the road. He got scared, Josué says. You look prettier with make-up, he tells Dora.

A truck load of pilgrims going to Bom Jesus stops. This is the city where Josué's father is supposed to be living. the city where the boy's father is supposed to be living, Juazeiro do Norte, or Bom Jesus do Norte, in the state of Ceara. That city is best known in Brazil as a place where people make pilgrimages every November to honor a charismatic priest and mystic named Padre Cicero (1844-1934). The driver asks 10 bucks to let them get on. She gives him her watch. The people on board are singing a hymn. Virgin Mary in the candlelight oh guide me on the journey. We see a small town. A man offers dried meat to them to eat. Josué accepts, but not Dora. A long panoramic view of the area is shown. Josué is atop a hill, colorful red clay, and rich ochre colors around. Dora is seated also. "Come with me," Dora says. "We can see very far." They descend to an offering place, ribbons, and candles around a taller post. Put your mother's handkerchief here, Dora tells him.

Next view is a lot of people arriving on foot in the town. It is Bom Jesus do Norte. My father's house is here. He doesn't want his father to see him dirty. She combs his hair. He is not who you think he is. He says he will ask to let her stay with them. She asks where the house is, showing a letter to a vendor. We see the house. As Josué runs up, he sees another boy there. They follow each other with their eyes as Josué passes by, sizing each other up through the fence. Clothes are hanging outside in the wind to dry. She claps her hands at the

door and asks for Jesus. He's not home yet. But they invite them in. His wife is there and two other children and an older woman. Why do you want to see my husband? I can only tell him. Josué is looking out the window. We see the windy vastness of the sertão.

The man returns. A close-up of Josué's face shows that he is worried. I've come from Rio, a private matter, says Dora. Maria, the mother, the man asks, please excuse us. Dora says, his mother died. He has no one. We are not related. Why are you here? We're friends, she says. Is he a good boy? Josué swallows hard, fearing her answer. She says, yes, he is. This letter is for you. He looks at the envelop. It's not for me. That Jesus lived here before. Here is his new address in the new settlements. He won it in the land lottery. Then drank everything away. Josué walks away.

Irene is receiving a phone call from Dora. Did you send the money? Bom Jesus da Lapa? She has sent it to the wrong place. Then long shot shows a huge crowd with candles. What did I do to deserve this? No money, no food, nothing left. Hungry. You're a curse! Josué runs away.

Border crossing: Redemption in Bom Jesus

When Josué and Dora arrive in the city, there are thousands of people gathered there for this pilgrimage and there are lots of festivities in the streets. They find the address that Josué's mother had written on the letter and when they arrive there, they learn that his father won a house in a lottery to go to new settlements far away in the Brazilian frontier. But they have no more money.

In the procession sequence, as she physically plunges into the crowd, Dora also immerses herself into the popular faith in a moment of profound spiritual and cultural

communion with the locals. It's night. She loses him in the crowd. They are chanting together. Dora walks into the Casa dos Milagros. She is out of breath, and it is hot inside. She's overwhelmed. Burning candles and offerings are crammed in there. She is overheated and disoriented. Fireworks begin to go off outside. Things spin inside. She faints. Then the final fireworks go off. Josué finds her when things get quieter. Fade to black.



Figure 3.8 Josué and Dora in the Bom Jesus plaza.

Image source :

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=IODsrG6e&id=B86FB4770ECDDDD934752D5891457254B53210F4B&thid=OIP.IODsrG6eA8XBI0u4eIeeLAHaHa&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fi.pining.com%2foriginals%2fc8%2f5c%2f21%2fc85c2120512396f2d20701aba1df42dc.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.20e0ecac6e9e03c5c1234bb878879e2c%3frik%3dSw8hU0slVxSJ1Q%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=620&expw=620&q=Central+station+Brazilian+movie&simid=608050198332070422&FORM=IRPRST&ck=F3A6A3844CA9EAE522B2A36D535D1782&selectedIndex=3&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

This is Dora's border-crossing. The experience Dora has during the procession has been interpreted as a catharsis for her, evidence of her moral redemption (No author, 2019, "Jotted Lines"). Having completed her spiritual journey, Dora awakens in the main square of Bom Jesus. The sun is now up. She's lying on the ground with her head in his lap. He's looking at her, rubbing her head. She pats his leg. (See Figure 3.8.)

Then we see stalls and a street preacher. They play a game, tossing stones into a tin can together. There is a boy playing guitar and singing folk songs for money. Gypsies in colorful dresses come up to them, want to tell their fortunes. We have no money. Josué walks over to see a photo stall. A photo with a Saint, Padre Cicero, can be taken there. People are asking if they can send him a message. Wait, he says. She's a writer. For only one dollar, you can send a letter home or to the saint, he tells them. Josué becomes the hawker. Dora is seated to write. We hear a letter. I walked all the way, a woman says, I kept my promise, another woman says. Thank you, Jesus, a woman starts her letter. A man in a cowboy hat says he is the happiest man in the world. We hear happy letters being dictated, about prayers being answered (in contrast to what the letters were about at the Rio train station. Soon they have a big roll of cash. They get a photo made with Padre Cicero. They have money for food. Dora is happy. He wants to buy her a dress. They have room to rest in. He takes out the letters and prepares to throw them away. She says, "No, don't do that. I'll take care of them later." He washes up. They go to bed. She kisses his head. A bus leaves in the morning. They are becoming friends.

They wait for the bus. She sees the post office and walks across the road to mail them. Josué watches, amazed. The bus arrives. He calls out to her. The travel music plays again. They're on the bus with chickens. The bus pulls into the settlement. They are looking

for F street. Moiseis is working on a roof. The houses are very uniform. “Tudo equal.”

(Perhaps an illusion to how things are here in this location, equality friendliness, in contrast to Rio.) Do you think you can remember your father’s face? Dora says it’s hard for her to remember. She left at age 16. She ran into him in the street years later. He didn’t recognize her. He said, how could I forget a lovely girl like you. Flirtatious. She ran away from him. You will forget me too, she tells Josué. She arrives at the door to the house and claps to be allowed in (this is a custom instead of knocking on the door). Mr. Jesus, she calls. He doesn’t live here anymore. Vanished into the wilderness and no one knows where he is. A boy overhead this conversation and he gets on his bicycle. She he’ll never come back. I’ll wait for him. He won’t return, Dora says. Why don’t you come with me? I would like that very much. They shake hands on it. They walk away down the street like cowboys slowly riding into the sunset and we imagine this could be the ending.

I can’t leave him alone here. He’s a good boy. Dora is on the phone with her friend, Irene. I don’t know what to do. I’ve made mistakes. She tells Irene to sell things, even the television. When we get settled, I’ll call you. She goes to buy two tickets to Bom Jesus. Nothing available until in the morning. She asks about other possible destinations. The man at the ticket window says, “This is the end of the world.” Nothing leaves until in the morning. Isaias sees them. Are you looking for my father, Jesus? I’m a friend Dora says. Josué is hiding behind her. Nice to meet you. He invites her to his home. People don’t often come to visit my dad. Come. Josué introduces himself as Geraldo. Isais begins to teach him tongue twisters as they walk down the street to his house. His brother, Moiseis, lives with him. Josué looks at a picture on the wall. He sees his mother in it with their dad and recognizes. It. They show him their woodworking shop. Moiseis is a carpenter. He makes a top; for Josué, just

like the one he had at the Rio train station. He shows him how to work the lathe. They play soccer in front of the house in the street. Dora, Josué, and the brothers are joking with each other.

They are seated in the living room. Give it to her. Let her read it to us, one brother says. We can trust her. Isaias goes to get the letter. He shows her a letter from six months ago. Nine years ago, Ana went to Rio, he says, she was pregnant. He started drinking after that. One day he left suddenly. The two brothers saved money and set up this house. It's a letter to Ana, not us, so one brother is hesitant about opening it. She ends up reading it. Ana, my misfortune, hard to find a letter writer. I know now you went back looking for a house for us. I am coming to Rio, wait for me. I'll return. Ana, I may work in the mines, but I will return. We'll be together, Moiseis, Isaias, Josué she adds at the end. I'd give all I must see you again. Forgive me. He'll be back, one brother says. The other says, No. Josué says he will.

We see the stars in the sky. Did my father really say me? She said yes. Josué says, he knows he didn't. They are invited back in, to sleep in the guest room for the night. When dawn comes, Dora is up. She puts on the new dress. She lights candles on the mantle, looks in the mirror, puts on her lipstick. She smiles. Quietly, she looks in on the three brothers sleeping with Jouet I the middle. She looks at the one letter, props it up and puts the second letter up on the mantle, too, under the picture of the parents. It looks almost like an altar. It is still dark outside. Dora walks toward the sunrise, down the street. Josué awakens. He runs down the street The travel music starts. She is getting on the bus. The bus pulls out. I haven't sent a letter to anyone in a long time. Your father will return. I remember riding with my father on the train. When you're a truck driver, remember I was the first one to put you

behind the wheel. If you miss me, look at the picture we made. I long for my father. I long for everything. She is crying, but happy. We see the long shot of the countryside, the sertão. Josué is crying. Close-ups show each one of them. She has the photo go look at and he does too of Padre Cicero. Both are shown looking at them at the same time. Josué smiles. She is crying and smiling. The end credits roll. We hear people talking. Bassoon music, a traditional song at the end, a “choro.”

The historical and political context for “Central Station”

As Dora and Josué traverse the country, “Central do Brasil” presents the theme of the journey as a metaphor for a personal and political metamorphosis and as a national allegory. We can consider the film as a story about the recuperation of self-identity as well as of Brazil’s national identity. There is a striking similarity in Portuguese between the words “pai” (father) and “país” (country), the search for the boy’s father becomes a search for Brazil’s roots.

The odyssey Dora and Josué embark on is a quest for their personal identities. Their quest is emblematic of the quest for the nation of Brazil, which is suffering a profound identity crisis at the turn of the twenty-first century, trying to redefine its future, and to find its origins. Salles suggests that “Central Station” is an allegory about Brazilian identity, how the nation is surviving despite its financial difficulties (Falicov, n.d.).



Figure 3.9 Dora and Josué ride with pilgrims into Brazil's northeast.

Image source:

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=n7638IVF&id=86B97531E1169BB50F14797FB4E7F26CEE305F9A&thid=OIP.n7638IVFohP6g9d_hSwaVgHaE8&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fveja.abril.com.br%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2f2019%2f10%2fcentral-do-brasil.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.9fbeb7f08545a213fa83d77f852c1a56%3frik%3dml8w7mzy57R%252feQ%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&expw=750&expw=1125&q=fernanda+montenegro+in+central+station&simid=607998310830379091&FORM=IRPRST&ck=EBB35C160BAC7D04AA9BE56F4B7C6A74&selectedIndex=124&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

Walter Salles, the filmmaker for “Central Station,” states that the starting point of “Central do Brasil” was the culture of ‘cynicism and indifference’ of the last 30 years of Brazilian political and social history (political dictatorship in Brazil). The film foregrounds the possibility of redemption for the country and, therefore, the possibility of a different future for a more compassionate and humane Brazil: Dora, the cynical, old Brazil; and Josué, the new Brazil, innocence, granting yourself another destiny (No author, 2019, “Jotted Lines”).



Figure 3.10 Dora, the cynical schoolteacher, in her dark and cramped apartment

Image source :

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=ibcJf0sf&id=D5F1C78D4B809210D7025A2EF6CB622501B5FF12&thid=OIP.ibcJf0sfEJ66fXVqmV0GQwHaDJ&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fwww.yts.vc%2fassets%2fimages%2fmovies%2fcentral-station-1998-2bfd91%2flarge-screenshot3.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.89b7097f4b1f109eba7d756a995d0643%3frik%3dEv%252b1ASViy%252fYuWg%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=544&expw=1280&q=Central+station+Brazilian+movie&simid=608020648954052731&FORM=IRPRST&ck=FAF8014A6F1ED505FE45534B49E64FE7&selectedIndex=14&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

Film techniques: the colors in the settings

The colors which become increasingly visible on the journey stand for Dora's clearer view of the world, while the blue skies of the open road, contrasting the dreary shades of the station hallway, stand for the hope that the journey brings. Salles explained that he used color contrasts to emphasize the transition between the world Dora and Josué are leaving behind and the new one they are entering. Salles emphasized dark drab colors for the city at the beginning of the movie and then to show the rural of the sertão, the other side of modern and industrial Brazil, he uses bright colors (No author, 2019, "Jotted Lines").

Figure 3.11 The dark images at the beginning of the film contrast with the open colorful images at the end of the film



Image source:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=8p3VBVpm&id=5520401EACB4A4C4690421966C1E97DC5E6AF653&thid=OIP.8p3VBVpmt18SwNQL2Cl4AgHaDJ&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fi.imgur.com%2fUqiRpPW.png&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.f29dd5055a66b75f12c0d40bd8297802%3frik%3dU%252fZqXtyXHmyWlQ%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exp=816&expw=1920&q=Walter+Salles+Central+Station&simid=608039765853164933&FORM=IRPRST&ck=280F27E2DBF72FC0C5FB8364D77086AB&selectedIndex=29&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

The colors emphasized in the filming in the beginning of the film suggest some of the psychological features Salles says he was aiming to convey (See Figure 3.11 above). What are they departing from? The dark images at the beginning of the film (the interior of Dora's apartment) contrast with the open colorful images at the end of the film. Using film techniques that emphasize other hues, Salles explained that he was conveying positive change, a move into a brighter new "world" (a feeling of promise) (see Figure 3.12 below). We see openness and blue skies beyond in the sertão (No author, 2019, "Jotted Lines"). (See Figure 9 presented in the movie preview at the beginning of this chapter.) This progression presented in the film is part of the "border-crossing" stage.

Figure 3.12 The housing development in the Amazon frontier town where Josué's brothers live



Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=2torkzSr&id=99D540A266D19EB25A53A87B069BEA09A6B6F0BE&thid=OIP.2torkzSr-jXYvVglU1udlQHaEE&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fcps-static.rovicorp.com%2f2%2fOpen%2fSony_Pictures_Television_369%2fProgram%2f1468387%2f_derived_jpg_q90_584x800_m0%2fCentral_do_Brasil_Still3.jpg&cdnu rl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.dada2b9334abfa35d8bd5825535b9d95%3frik%3dvvC2pgnqmwZ7qA%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=321&expw=584&q=Central+station+Brazilian+movie&simid=608053376605255683&FORM=IRPRST&ck=3DD51F5A4411678258B6065859A50792&selectedIndex=79&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

The return: a new “normal”

Our two protagonists reach the housing development on the frontier where Josué's brothers live. We see bright and open skies (See Figure 3.12). We see a friendliness, and a sense connectedness, replace the sense of alienation presented in Rio at the film's beginning (No author, 2019, “Jotted Lines”).

At first, they were disappointed when they arrived there. Josué's father had disappeared. After Dora and Josué stay overnight in the house with his brothers, Dora steals

away while they are all asleep, leaving behind the original letter which Ana wrote to Josué's father from the Central Station which she never mailed. She is happy as she heads for "who knows where?" And we see Josué reunited with his brothers and can easily imagine a promising future for them.

Figure 3.13 Josué runs freely through the streets of a Brazilian frontier town.



Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=CRc6h7Rl&id=A8D17A44B0DB0EC05EC097D18A51F752CBEFDA49&thid=OIP.CRc6h7RlK9lySk3yqStJhgHaDJ&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fm.media-amazon.com%2Fimages%2FM%2FMV5BMDI3NzVhYWMtYTc2ZC00YWVjLTlmMjktYWM3ZDIjNzA2ZGJlXkEyXkFqcGdeQXVyNTU1OTUzNDg%40.V1_FMjpg_UX1280.jpg&cdnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.09173a87b4652bd9724a4df2a92b4986%3Frik%3DSdrvy1L3UYrRlw%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&expf=544&expw=1280&q=fernanda+montenegro+in+central+station&simid=608012458455219654&form=IRPRST&ck=CB81B157372F47C41640647F098E037D&selectedindex=69&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&vt=0&sim=11

In the final scene of the movie, we see Dora on the bus writing a letter to Josué. "If you ever miss me, look at our little portrait. I say this because I fear that you'll forget me as well. I miss my father. I miss everything."

Some concluding observations about “Central Station”

In “Terra Estrangeira” (1995), Salles teamed with Arthur Cohn who had worked with Vittorio de Sica. According to Falicov (n.d.), “Central Station” continues the neo-realist tradition of depicting poor people in a way that shows their dignity despite their daily tribulations. The boy, Josué, leads Dora to become more humane. At film’s end, the boy is reunited with his family in the interior and the woman returns home to the city less cynical than she was at the outset of the film. Film director, Walter Salles, reveals the humanistic impulse of his film in his words as follows:

...I think the question of the search is very important in the film. We're talking about the woman who searches for her lost feelings and a boy who searches for his father. Since the Greeks, I think we've always been concerned with the idea of getting back to the place where we come from--to try to understand who we are. This is the boy's plight, but what the two of them discover is not only the family at the end of the film, but the importance of companionship, friendship and understanding.

"In a way, these values are not really appreciated in today's very competitive society, where efficiency is everything. These questions of solidarity or friendship or everything that's important in the film are not rated in the Stock Exchange. This might also be one of the clues to why people respond to the film in such an emotional way. It talks about things that are not perceived as important but are extremely important for our survival (Proyect, n.d.)

“Central Station” has taken us on a journey across Brazil that reunites a boy with his family, and which restores a woman’s connection with her humanity. While “Central Station” points to a hoped-for reunion of “two Brazils,” “Le Grande Voyage” suggests hopes for a less divided cultural identity for culturally displaced Muslims from the diaspora, such as the son presented in that film.

“Le Grande Voyage”

Introduction to the film,” Le Grande Voyage”

Produced by Moroccan-born Ismael Ferroukhi, “Le Grande Voyage” echoes other road movies in that it evokes the road as “a space of self-discovery” (Gott and Schilt, 2013, 786). It tells the story of a 3000-mile journey by car from Provence to Mecca, passing through Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgarian, Turkey, Syria, and Jordan. These geographic locales are highlighted by the filmmaker using long shots of open spaces, majestic desert landscapes in between Amman and Mecca, the summit of a Balkan Mountain in Bulgaria, and the open road leading to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. We hear many languages in the film—Italian, Turkish, Serbian, Bulgarian, Middle Eastern and Moroccan Arabic. The “road buddies” are a Muslim father who was born in Morocco (described as a “nameless taciturn elderly patriarch”) and his French-born son, Reda. The father and son use different languages throughout the movie, and they go on the road out of necessity, not by choice. The older father bullies his youngest son into driving him.

As we shall see in the film description that follows, the two passengers are in the same car, but the distance between them is many times “an unbridgeable gap” (Rosello 2011, 270). Filmmaker Ferroukhi said that he wanted to maintain a distance between father and son (Toler, 2007, 34). One of the ways that this distance between father and son is continuously emphasized by the filmmaker is through their uses of different languages. They understand each other, but the father does not speak French to his son; he speaks in Arabic and his son speaks to him only in French. Ferroukhi explains that the father speaks in Arabic intentionally because “he feels that his son has kept his distance and that he has lost his connection with the family. He tries to reconnect his son with their Moroccan Arabic heritage

by speaking to him in Arabic (Toler, 2007, 34). We learn that Reda has grown up in France and his friends from school speak French. He has difficulty speaking Arabic. According to Ferroukhi, part of this voyage for Reda is this rediscovery of this part of his heritage (Toler, 2007, 35).

Ferroukhi describes the film as “slightly autobiographical” (Toler, 2007, 37). In “Le Grande Voyage,” the communication problem between the Moroccan immigrant and his son born in France reflects an issue many immigrants deal with. The movie was inspired by the story of Ferroukhi’s father who made the long pilgrimage to Mecca when the film maker was fourteen.

His parents had lived in Morocco for more than 25 years at the time of the making of this film. Ferroukhi was born in Morocco but has lived in France since he was three (Toler, 2007, 37). He says that he is, like Reda, rediscovering his Moroccan cultural heritage.

Film narrative for “Le Grande Voyage”

The film opens with majestic classical music. We see a man riding a bike into a park, then two men in a scrap car yard, looking for car doors. The two men appear to be planning a trip and they are scavenging to fix up the car that will be used on the trip. The French Peugeot they are working on needs a car door and a rear-view window. The patch-up job on the car becomes readily apparent when they put an orange door on the small blue station wagon. This patch-up job on the car may symbolize Reda’s hybrid cultural identity, French Morocco patched over his Arabic heritage.

In the next scene, we see four people seated at the supper table. There is a father-son talk going on and the father is counting his prayer beads. He does not know how to drive, and he needs his youngest son to take him to Mecca for a religious pilgrimage. They need

four days to get ready for the trip. The young son is very reluctant to make the trip because he is due to take important entrance exams for college. It is his last change to pass his finals. In the end, the father will not take no for an answer, and we see the young man with a map spread on his bed, crying. His cellphone rings. His girlfriend is calling.

The departure

His older brother loans him a camera and the car. He explains that the gear box is “tricky” but “it can drive around the world.” His brother embraces him warmly as they say their good-byes. Young boys run after the car as they leave. They are soon stuck in a traffic jam. The young man is already checking his phone as we see a close-up profile of the father through the window. Soon his father criticizes his driving, “Why are you driving fast?” “Those who hurry are already dead” says the dad who does not drive.

Night falls and we can tell that the young man is hurrying as he comes up close behind a truck. The father dips some snuff and is soon falling asleep in the passenger seat. We hear a clock ticking perhaps to signal that the young man is overly concerned about time, but the father is not. Soon they are stopped at the border, and we see the young man looking for passports in the glove box. His father shows him that he has them in his breast pocket in plastic. The guard is speaking Italian which tells us that this is their first border crossing. At the crossing point, the father asks the son to park the car because he sees that it is time to pray. Reda objects, “C’est une douane ici . . . Tu vois bien que ce n’est pas un endroit pour prier.” (We’re going through customs. Surely you can see that this is no place to pray.) The father imposes his will by responding in Arabic: “Do you believe in God?” While his father is out of the car for his evening prayers, the son makes a hasty call on his cellphone, telling someone to let the school know that he will be absent.

Heimlich/unheimlich

As the father prays, the cinematic frame physically separates them. In this scene as well as many others that follow, camera shots emphasize their separation (unheimlich/discomfort with one another). The father and son are “systematically split by their individual positions in front of the camera” (Rosello, 2011, 261). In the small car or in a small, shared hotel room, the camera isolates them. For example, Rosello observes, “When the father reads the Qur’an in the passengers’ seat, the camera looks over his shoulder, framing him, then cuts over so that another shot focuses on Reda, who is seen driving, as if he were alone” (Rosello, 2011, 261).

Border crossing

We see the road interstate sign to Milan. This is the first literal “border-crossing” and Ferroukhi’s “La Grande Voyage” seems compulsively preoccupied with “border crossing.” The religious father and his agnostic son argue over praying at the customs booth on the Franco-Italian border. Later we observe Reda’s (the son’s) problems when entering Turkey because of his French passport. We witness “the emotion in the characters’ eyes as they drive under the massive arch at the gate of Islam’s holiest city” (Schilt, 2010, 789).

An hour away from Milan, a dramatic scene occurs. Reda wants to drive on to Milan to stop for the night there, but his father insists that they park the car in a rest area to sleep. When they cannot agree, he pulls the hand brake in the middle of the expressway causing the car to spin out of control. The father would risk even a car accident rather than lose control and allow his son to derail the pilgrimage (Rosello 2011, 264). As the son sleeps, the father puts his mobile phone into the trash.

Figure 3.14 The Blue Mosque in Istanbul



Image source :

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=496f8509&id=753F64C5920570E631F4988DBE071FEC26C0B2F3&thid=OIP.496f8509UwqActoaa0ArEwHaFj&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fi.ytimg.com%2fvi%2fmDIu4mjXKTg%2fhqdefault.jpg&cdnurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.e3de9ff393bd530a8072da1a6b402b13%3frik%3d87LAJuwfB76NmA%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exp=360&expw=480&q=Le+Grande+Voyage&simid=608022706244571931&FORM=IRPRST&ck=E81646D09C8E986FCAC871D57F4EAE3B&selectedIndex=107&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

After they spend the night in the car, the son asks, “Why can’t I see Milan?” They are eating at a picnic table at a rest stop. He asks about Venice; can we just make an hour stop. Reda wants to see European cities he has heard about, but his father rejects any notion of tourism. This becomes especially evident when they, along with a stranger they have encountered, Mustafa, visit the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. Reda also wants to follow fast expressways on the map he checks for directions. His father does not. Eventually Reda loses

the only pictures he has of the trip, those taken at the Blue Mosque, when his father trades Reda's camera for a lamb to slaughter and eat.

We see the car from the back going through a rural place, a back road. This road is not on the map. The son keeps referring to his map, and he objects to the fact that the father cannot even read one. At this point, they are on their way to Belgrade, and we see a view of the two of them from the front window of the car. We see a long view of an empty horizon. They come to a crossroads. The son appears frustrated and asks, "Which way? Right or left?" The father looks up at the sky and declares "we'll spend the night here." The son takes pictures of the early night sky. In the twilight, we hear food being cooked and see the father's profile. The son asks about his phone and learns the bad news. They light lanterns and spread their food on the ground. Yawning with fatigue, the son avoids looking his father in the eye. They use a rustic old tea pot to heat water. Each man pours hot water to wash his hands and help the other do so. We see a profile of his father sitting in the dark alone. We hear his son slamming the car door and getting into the car for the night. The next morning, they continue the drive, sitting in silence until the father says, "You are here, but your mind is elsewhere." The son replies, "We still don't know where we're going." "That's why you weren't listening," the father says. The camera is behind them, and we see them looking ahead. The conversation and the camera angles emphasize their separation.

The son asks for directions to Belgrade in French. Near the next border, an old woman stops them by standing in front of them on the rural road and she gets into the car demanding a ride merely by gesturing with her hand. We see her in the rear-view window as they travel through a desolate brown landscape down a winding road. When they reach the checkpoint seventy miles from Belgrade, they are stopped and asked to show their passports,

and the woman vanishes. After they cross through, suddenly she is standing in front of the car. He brakes hard, yelling an obscenity, “Fucking. . .” Reda tries to get her out of the car, but the father intervenes. “Delichi,” she says as she motions with her hand (the town where she wants to go). This represents their first unexpected encounter with a stranger. The scene introduces a theme in the movie about the ways that women interrupt their journey.

Gott and Schilt (2013, 791) argue that women in the film are presented by the filmmaker as if they are “unwelcome female intrusions,” as obstacles to the completion of their journey. First, Reda keeps his French girlfriend a secret from his father. His father throws away the son’s cellphone in a public trashcan in Italy so that Reda and Lisa cannot communicate. This event triggers one of several long periods of silent tension between this father and son. Then, they meet a second intruder, this black-clothed elderly woman, at the Serbo-Croatian border who insists that they drive her somewhere. The son tells his father that he is afraid of this mysterious woman, and he arranges to leave her behind. The two men will argue again when they enter Arab territory and, even though they are running out of money, the father gives alms to a beggar woman. Reda, who does not know about this third pillar of Islam, tries to take the money back and his father slaps him. Later, when they stay overnight in Amman, the capital of Jordan, the father interrupts a drunken sexual encounter between Reda and a belly dancer he has picked up in a bar.

They arrive at a hotel, the Hotel Balkan, a neon sign reads. We see the father praying on his rug at foot of the bed. The son comes in after his shower in his undershorts and plops on the bed. While his father is in the bathroom preparing for his shower, Reda grabs the red bedside phone to try to call his girlfriend, but he is interrupted by his father when he is trying to make the call. Soon after they leave the next day, we see a port and a bustling city. They

arrive in Belgrade. The filmmaker films the father and son in front of an international office where travelers exchange currency. The camera zooms in on an official panel listing official exchange rates. A man approaches Reda's father and begins a conversation without words. The two men are silent using only their hands to communicate, haggling to make their currency exchange. The camera films the scene from above, like a surveillance camera, but the position allows us to see the eloquence of their silent conversation.

Figure 3.15 The money exchange in Belgrade, an eloquent conversation without words.



Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=a75EV3zA&id=623360614F0ACB8DDE18ACE48003750199575C06&thid=OIP.a75EV3zAAOOUC12ZGc0ZMgFLC8&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.6bbe44577cc000e3940b5d9919cd1932%3frik%3dBlxXmQF1A4DkrA%26riu%3dhttp%253a%252f%252ffr.web.img3.acsta.net%252fr_1280_720%252fmedias%252fnmedia%252f18%252f35%252f42%252f19%252f18860372.jpg%26ehk%3d%252buFqAcX7DqMDzIAf0KxCOJKpMTwDqpdJpcMqf%252fYgFgA%253d%26risl%3d%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exph=282&expw=495&q=Le+Gran+de+Voyage&simid=608053733088719046&FORM=IRPRST&ck=68DABFC7914EA010FD58A287F2D909DB&selectedIndex=69&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0

The stranger puts his hand on the father's arm and leads him away from the teller and the two men create their own space. They stand very close to each other and pay close attention to each other (in contrast to the way that we have seen Reda and his father interact so poorly in the car) (Rosello, 2011, 269).

The father and son return to the car. The son asks for the road to Sofia, in English, then French. The man whom he addresses leans in the window and talks quickly pointing over the mountains. The son does not understand anything the man says. We see the snowy landscape and mountain as they drive through. It is very snowy atop the mountain, and they stop at a rest area. They are wrapped tightly in blankets. Reda says, "I want to ask you, why you didn't fly to Mecca?" The father responds with a proverb, "When the waters of the ocean rise to the heavens, they lose their bitterness to become pure again." The son replies with confusion, "What?" His father goes on, "The oceans waters evaporate as they rise to the clouds." "And as they evaporate, they become fresh." The two men, wrapped in blankets, are seated side by side. They have a butane gas cylinder, and they are heating water in the rustic metal teapot beside them. Their clothing suggests their differences, a traditional father, and a modern son. The father has a simple white blanket swathed around him and is wearing a black fur hat. The son wears a colorful orange and green blanket covering his head.

Figure 3.16 On a snowy mountain, the father and son stop to eat.



Image source :

[https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=sWLFvqzo&id=B2DE055A006EBDA93F24DFDF8DB7E0BACA177EA1&thid=OIP.sWLFvqzoH0Od-
yo0PJrU3AAAAA&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2F3.bp.blogspot.com%2F-
lm5FFli83QA%2FTWSHngSSe8I%2FAAAAAAAAAAME%2FNr7BWjSQWKY%2Fs1600
%2F1gv02.jpg&cdnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.b162c5beace81f4
39dfb2a343c9ad4dc%3Frik%3DoX4Xyrrgt43f3w%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&exph=2
11&expw=357&q=Le+Grande+Voyage&simid=607989291396257568&form=IRPRST&ck
=A830F4D58593C27B94943BD85AD75B57&selectedindex=61&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&
vt=0&sim=11](https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=sWLFvqzo&id=B2DE055A006EBDA93F24DFDF8DB7E0BACA177EA1&thid=OIP.sWLFvqzoH0Od-
yo0PJrU3AAAAA&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2F3.bp.blogspot.com%2F-
lm5FFli83QA%2FTWSHngSSe8I%2FAAAAAAAAAAME%2FNr7BWjSQWKY%2Fs1600
%2F1gv02.jpg&cdnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.b162c5beace81f4
39dfb2a343c9ad4dc%3Frik%3DoX4Xyrrgt43f3w%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&exph=2
11&expw=357&q=Le+Grande+Voyage&simid=607989291396257568&form=IRPRST&ck
=A830F4D58593C27B94943BD85AD75B57&selectedindex=61&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&
vt=0&sim=11)

The father continues to explain the significance of the slow methodical pilgrimage, “That’s why it’s better to go on your pilgrimage on foot than on horseback, and better on horseback, then by car; and better by car than by boat; and better by boat than by plane.” “My father set out on a mule.” “He was courageous.” I waited a long time for him to return, the father explained, “I climbed a hill. I looked at the horizon to see him return. I would stay up there until night fell.”

We then see a view of clouds over the hilltop with the sun behind them and we hear the wind. At first, we cannot see the old man's face, but we hear him reading aloud. Then we see him in the car riding, reading the Koran. The winding mountain road is in view in front of them. There is snow alongside the road. Then the screen goes to black, and we hear coughing. Then in a very small spot in the center of the dark screen we see the two of them through the front of the car windshield. The son exclaims, "Not sleeping? It's below zero!" We can hear the wintery wind. Reda wakes with the car window covered in snow. When he rolls down the window, he discovers they are completely snowed in, and the car is covered with a deep blanket of snow. It is hard to awaken his father. The car will not start and the son panics. He knocks out a hole in the snow at the window. We hear birds singing outside. Then there is a dramatic cut to a scene with his father in a hospital bed with an IV. The son bursts into the hospital room. We hear the monitor softly beeping "Can you hear me Papa? It's Reda." The father smiles. "Where is the car?" Reda explains, "It's parked near Sofia. We came by taxi." The father says, "Go back to the car. I left my prayer book in the glove compartment." The son must go on the bus to get back to the car.

Chance encounter #1: Mustafa

In the next scene, we hear a chant and see rainy streets. They are back in the car heading to a checkpoint and we see the mosque at Sofia. There is a problem at the nearby checkpoint because Reda's car papers are in French. He does not understand the guard. His father is resting, and the son exits the car. "Please, what's happening?" He does not understand Saudi Arabic. The guard takes the passport and says that his father can go on, but not him. He must stay in the car.

Chance encounters enable us to learn more about our protagonists. In this case, as the scenes unfold below, we learn that Reda is too trusting of strangers and does not have the life experience of his father. They encounter a stranger who helps them by translating and sorting things out with the guard. Their translator, whose name we learn is Mustafa, enters the car with them. “Welcome to Turkey,” he says. “Go straight ahead.” They drive through a congested mosaic alley way. Mustafa says he is honored to meet pilgrims like them. Mustafa speaks French and invites them both to his home. He tells Reda that it cost him a lot of money to get them in. He invites them in for tea, but the father stays in the car. Reda smokes a hookah with Mustafa. They are served tea and bread by the man’s wife. The father grows impatient and honks the horn. Mustafa has asked if he could come along.

Figure 3.17 In Turkey, a chance encounter with Mustafa, who invites Reda to smoke a hookah with him.



Image source :

https://www.notrecinema.com/images/filmsi/le-grand-voyage_622071_23854.jpg

We see a long shot of the road with them coming toward us. Mustafa mentions Istanbul. We hear the call for prayer and see several mosque towers and a wide view of the city. Then we see the Blue Mosque. The camera shows us a panoramic view of the city and we hear sea gulls and the call to prayer. Mustafa, acting as Reda's tour guide, explains that this mosque is second only to the one in Mecca and has six minarets. The father is irritated and sits alone while Reda makes photos and admires the stained-glass windows. Mustafa describes the city as the city of 10,000 mosques. His father does not want to stay the night.

They make a small open fire on the ground with coffee. The son continues talking with the "hitchhiker" Mustafa in French. It is very dark, but he is not sleepy he says. The father reads to go to bed. Reda's father eventually tells him that he does not trust the man or his story. "Don't believe anything he says." We see the sun rise over the horizon. Then there is a big crowd of people walking and we can hear a siren and honking cars in the distance. Mustafa invites Reda to go to a café for tea, coffee, or beer. Reda laughs nervously, "Beer?" Mustafa tells a story about a Sufi and a different attitude toward abstinence from alcohol. In the Sufi story, the effect of alcohol "depends on the greatness of your soul." "Pour a glass of wine into a basin of water and the water will change colors. But pour this same glass of wine into the sea, the sea's color remains unchanged." "Drink your beer," Mustafa tells Reda. Reda's lack of experience as well as his lack of spiritual teaching make him vulnerable to being taken advantage of by Mustafa.

After going out to the bars, they come in drunk, holding onto each other. The father is sleeping. But the next morning, the father awakens Reda. "He stole our money." He tells his son, "You know how to read and write, but you know nothing about life." The son is breathing hard, and he is obviously hung over. The father had hidden the money in a pair of

socks. They find Mustafa outside and they go to the police station to report the theft, but Mustafa claims that he is innocent.

The father and son must continue their journey. As they move along in the car, we can see nothing but desert behind and around them and they are almost out of gas. Reda, clearly exasperated, asks, “What will they do?” We see a close-up of the spinning tire wheel and then we see the two men riding silently in the car. We see a desolate view. We can only hear non-diegetic music as we see them driving. The car is driving toward us. As they pull up to the gas station, the father reveals he has a money belt. It was for the trip back, he says. They are now ninety miles from Damascus. They eat outside in the shade, and we see them peeling boiled eggs to eat, meager fare. This is one of several scenes in which silence plays an important role.

It is time to discuss the role of silence in the film. Filmmaker, Ferroukhi says that silence serves an important purpose in this film: “Above all, I am interested in silence, which is the most universal language. Working with silence was the most delicate aspect of the film, both in writing and for the actors” (as cited in Toler, 2007, 35). During the trip, the young man and his father speak very little to each other. There are stretches of the film in which there is no dialogue. Ferroukhi says: “Yes (there is) only silence followed by silence. But I speak with silence. I can sometimes say even more that way than I can with words” (as cited in Toler, 2007, 35).

Chance encounter #2: the woman at the border

The next scene begins with an aerial view of the winding road with desert all around. The car is only a speck. The men are not speaking but we hear birds chirping. We can hear non-diegetic classical music. There is a long shot of the car driving across the desert. Reda

must stop because the car engine is hot. We can hear children and animals in the distance.

They are at a water spot. At a water spicket, the son gets water in the jug. His father takes the tea pot to fill it. A woman in a black burkah comes up to beg from each of them. She says her husband is dead.

This chance encounter allows us as viewers to learn more about the father's and the son's characters. Reda does not share his father's faith, we already knew that, but he also lacks compassion. The father gives her money and Reda who is worried about their lack of funds tries to take the money back. He gets slapped. He is so angry that he wants to go on alone. He has a fit of temper and kicks the water over. He walks away on foot. We see him as a speck climbing a sandy hill. The intense disagreement following the chance encounter with the woman on the road allows us to see Reda's childish temper. And ultimately, following this argument, we also learn that the father is not quite so rigid when he offers to let Reda go home.

The father sits in the car alone in the car. Reda's father then picks up a photo of the girlfriend and examines it while his son sits atop the hill. We watch the sun set. Then the old man comes up the hill. "I've been thinking," he tells Reda, "We'll sell the car in Damascus. You can take a plane home. I can manage; I don't need you. You're free."

Figure 3.18 Reda sits atop a hill in the desert. He does not want to continue the journey.



Image source :

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=a3d9keZC&id=B52BC141090268D7E78D825260E15B60254E5E23&thid=OIP.a3d9keZCM1Hu_d41_qgnq_wHaCx&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.filmingo.ch%2Fimages%2Ffilms%2F748-2000x750.jpg&cdnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.6b777d91e6423351eefdde35fea827ab%3Frik%3DI15OJWBb4WBSgg%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&exph=750&expw=2000&q=Le+Grande+Voyage&simid=608043846071759984&form=IRPRST&ck=854A375F3EC54F2F92E4317C0770372E&selectedindex=8&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&vt=0&sim=11

The classical music resumes. Then we see them through the front windshield, driving along in silence. Reda complains, “We have been living on egg sandwiches and bread alone. I need meat.” “Bring the camera,” his father says. They stop near people camping in the desert. Then they are in the car with a sheep in the back seat bleating. The father has traded the camera for a sheep. The son cannot stand the bleating. We see the father sharpening knife. When they get out to slaughter it, the son cannot hold the sheep still and it runs away. He loses it.

We see them through the windshield. Sheep are crossing the road. We see the road stretch before them, and we see a long diagonal shot of the car. They are now coming into

town, and we can see taxis and buses. They get a hotel room, and they go into a diner for tea. There is the call to prayer and the father goes to pray. Reda goes back to the car, goes through clothing pockets and looks under the seats. He finds a sock full of cash. Happy, he puts it back.

When the father returns to hotel room, Reda is napping. “So, the French Consulate gave you the money back without questions, the money Mustafa took.” The father does not understand. Reda shouts at him, “Can you see we’re not on the same wavelength?!” He storms out and slams the door. His father sits on the bed.

In the next scene, the son is in a loud club with a beer. He dances with a belly dancer and singer. There is a cut to the father in the quiet darkness of the hotel room. Then the camera switches back to the son dancing with the woman. As the camera shot returns to the father in the dark quiet hotel room, we can hear Reda and the woman talking outside. “You’re gorgeous,” he says in a drunken exchange. The father interrupts this potential sexual liaison.

The next morning, the father walks off with the suitcase. The son is apologizing and driving alongside him in the car. Then we see them on the road again in long distance shots. There are storm clouds overhead. The son wakes on the sand. There is a full moon in the clouds. Reda has a dream. He dreams that he is sinking into the desert sand while his father walks away as a shepherd. When he awakened, Reda seems to be frightened, lost, and sees his father kneeling on a dune praying. Later, when he is waiting for his father in Mecca, Reda sees the same scene he dreams here, and he realizes it is a sign. Feeling unsettled later in Mecca, he goes to look for his father at the mosque and discovers that his father has died. For Ferroukhi, the dream is symbolic. He says, “When the father walks away, it is as if the son

has lost his roots . . . He loses his roots, yet he needs those attachments to be truly free” (as cited in Toler, 2007, 36).

Figure 3.19 Moonwalking in the desert sand



Image source :

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=mXvAGDFo&id=400E03FBDA9CDE38AB880BA285A251A0FC720A3B&thid=OIP.mXvAGDFoGrF-oVKYkVBROQHaEK&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.997bc01831681ab17ea1529891505139%3frik%3dOwpy%252fKBRooWiCw%26riu%3dhttp%253a%252f%252fwww.dvdbeaver.com%252ffilm2%252fDVDReviews28%252fa%2ble%2bgrand%2bvoyage%252fgrandvoyagecap2.jpg%26ehk%3dVwM4XxQschkrVSjc47N1HznCadRi1tUJLm6w1XUbMls%253d%26risl%3d%26pid%3dImgRaw%26r%3d0&exp=450&expw=800&q=Le+Grande+Voyage&simid=608005839912056586&FORM=IRPRST&ck=7A21510E356DCCAD9CD80287FFEABFCB&selectedIndex=62&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

As the journey continues before they reach Mecca, they must stop. We see them in silhouette from behind as if we are in the back seat. A car backs up to them and a man runs to them to ask if they need help. “Follow me,” he says. They join a caravan of pilgrims. They are now #3 in a caravan of six. We learn the different origins of the men on their pilgrimages in these vehicles--Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, and Cairo. When they stop, food is served.

Reda only understands Moroccan Arabic so cannot follow the conversations. His father tells of their long journey—through France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Turkey, and now in Saudi Arabia. They have travelled 3000 miles. His father can now pray with a group of about thirty men. While they pray together, the son, in his T-shirt, jeans and sneakers, walks alone on a dune, dragging his feet in the sand. (See Figure 3.19 above.) The camera does a close-up on his sneakers. It almost looks like he is moonwalking like Michael Jackson. As the shot pulls back, we can see that he has written the word, Lisa, his girlfriend's name in the sand with his feet. He has had to leave her behind on this trip, but he symbolically brings her there with him in this scene.

In the next scene, we see a close-up of Reda through the window. He passes all the cars in the caravan. They put up a tent. The water can is empty under the seat, so the father washes his hands and face with sand. Reda then asks why they are going to Mecca and the father explains the basics of his religion. He says it is part of the heritage of Abraham and that he feels blessed, "I couldn't have done it without you." "I've learned a lot," he says. "So have I" Reda replies. We see a close-up of the father's face and then of the son's. They are finally at peace. We see the city in the distance, a busy highway, and everyone arriving. There are too many people looking for space to park their cars. They are planning an eight day stay. The men they met earlier greet them and tell them "We saved a spot for you."

We hear a call to prayers from a man standing atop a van. The son stays alone sleeping in the car. When he wakes, he looks at his girlfriend's picture and frowns. Reda watches his father dress in clean white garments. Low tables with food are placed in front of each man in a circle seated on the ground. One by one, they rise to walk forward and chant. His father tells him "See you tonight."

The return

Reda sits alone in the car to eat, and we see the red sun setting. Men are marching back. Reda stands on top of the car to watch for his father's return. We see a view of the $\frac{3}{4}$ moon at night; the son is sitting alone in the dark. He sees a flock of sheep passing and a man who looks like his father as a shepherd. Then we see a quarter moon or eclipse. It is like a dream. The birds are chirping, and the sun rises. We see a view of the Mecca skyline with a minaret over the mountains. Reda is on a bus with men chanting. There are lots of buses, lots of people. There is a view of hundreds of pilgrims on each side of the three lanes of cars in the center road. The son is walking in the opposite direction from the crowd of pilgrims, looking for his father. There are many pilgrims in the plaza and on the street. We see an aerial view of the crowd and we hear the call to prayer. We see the huge mosque and the sacred black square in the center of the plaza. The son is very anxious, looking for his father and finally the crowd is so tight, he cannot get through. He is carried out by officers to the police station. He is confused, asking "What is this?" when he sees covered bodies. A priest rises to greet him and leads him to see a body; the first one he does not recognize; the second and third, no, but the fourth, yes. He clinches his fists. It is him. He kneels and lies next to him curled up in grief. We see the dark corridor and a circle of men chant in mourning. There is a candle on the table and Reda is washing the body for burial. When the ritual concludes, the son takes his suitcase from the car and heads out. As he walks away, we hear a song in Arabic. Reda gives money to a woman in the street and gets into a taxi. As he looks out the window and rolls down the window to feel the breeze, the credits roll.

The music at the end of the film is significant. The music features deeply emotional extradiegetic vocals performed by esteemed Moroccan singer, Amina Aldoui. She chants a

solemn ballad, “ode d’ibn Arabi,” which pays poetic tribute to a Twelfth century Spanish born Arab philosopher. Ibn Arabi was a great Sufi master and an influential Islamic writer (Gott and Schilt 2013, 793). The song is “layered on the final frame of the film” as the image shows Reda staring up into the heavens mourning the death of his father (Gott and Schilt, 2013, 794). The music suggests the respect that Reda may have achieved with his Arabic Muslim heritage.

Some concluding observations about “Le Grande Voyage”

Although they travel together, the two men’s journeys are very different. “The film emphasizes what separates the two protagonists” (Rosello, 2011, 260). Religion separates them. The father wants to make a religious pilgrimage to Mecca. The son has no desire to go, shows no interest in religion, and wonders why his father does not just take a plane to Mecca.

Rosello describes the silences between the two during the film as follows: “The camera keeps them both in the frame, sitting right next to each other, emphasizing the violent lack of eye contact” (Rosello, 2011, 265). At one point, Reda says to his father that they are on different “wavelengths.” Their choices to use different languages underscores their differences. But when they enter the gate to the city of Mecca, the bridge may represent a bridge the father and son have been able to build together on the journey (Gott and Schilt, 2013, 794). The son began the journey with a kind of split cultural identity, valuing French European culture over his Arabic heritage. By film’s end he acquired a greater respect for his father’s spirituality as well as the Arabic part of his cultural identity.

Both “Le Grande Voyage” and the film that will be presented next, “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” feature an estranged father and son. But the two films present the

journeys very differently. In “Le Grande Voyage,” the two men travel together. But in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” the father and son do not travel together. In fact, we never see the son in that film. Instead, the father makes an extensive journey from Japan to rural China following a path his son had made. Yet the two, while remaining physically apart, achieve a connection.

“Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles”

Introduction

In “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” Zhang returns to a neorealist style. He features rural Chinese settings and numerous nonprofessional performers such as those shown below in the village feast. The lead role is played by veteran Japanese actor Ken Takakura who has been described as Japan’s Clint Eastwood (Sklar 2006).



Figure 3.20 Getting on the roof to find a cellphone signal in a remote village in China.

Image source :

http://www.reverseshot.org/reviews/entry/1583/riding_alone

In the first few minutes of the film, most of the main motifs have been established—two fathers having difficulty connecting with their sons, the difference between Japan and China (this latter theme represented visually in color terms) (Sklar 2006). For the character, communication across language barriers is a constant problem. The communication problem is often represented by the mobile phone that Takada uses to call for translations and shown as he climbs to find a phone signal (Sklar 2006). (See Figure 3.20 above.)

Heiter (2008) has observed that “*Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*” is a film with many conceptual and visual themes: “of transgression and redemption, of separation and reunion, of limitation and freedom, of art and reality, of communication and barriers, of pride and shame, of self and other, and ultimately the humanity that unites us all.” Chen (2017) similarly observes that “*Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*” is a secular reenacting of the Lord Guan myth (presented in the Chinese folk opera with the same name as the film), featuring themes of repentance, sacrifice, redemption, and guardianship. Takata travels to Stone Village in Yunnan’s mountains reenacting Lord Guan’s heroic act to aid a friend, using this means to rebuild his own father-son relationship (Chen 2017).

Zhang Yimou uses color masterfully, in shades of turquoise, jade green, and rose. After the protagonist leaves Tokyo, Yunnan Province provides a geographically inspiring backdrop for this journey. (See Figure 3.21 below.) Images of Tokyo are characterized by colors of gray, mirroring the father-son estrangement. The contrasting warm human relationships found in Stone Village are emphasized in the richer, warmer colors shown in the scenes shot in Yunnan province (Chen 2017).



Figure 3.21 Geographically stunning scene in shades of rose.

Image source :

<http://www.filmsufi.com/2014/01/riding-alone-for-thousands-of-miles.html>

Film narrative for “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles”

The film opens with a traditional song that sounds like a lament (a wailing style of singing). Initially the song is a Capella; then a drumbeat starts, followed by chords on a stringed instrument. This is a song from the Chinese opera which gives the film its name. We see a man sitting seaside on the rocks. Sea birds are circling near him. We hear their cries. The sea is in the background, and sun rays show through dark clouds. The entire scene is shot in hues of gray and blue. We see a man reading a letter. (See Figure 3.22.). The setting is in the cold north of Japan. A voice-over says, “For some strange reason, my son and I had been estranged for years. There is a profound chasm between us which hurts me deeply. I want us to be close again.” The man is wearing a baseball cap and dark blue jacket. Everything is shades of blue. His voice continues, “When I was thinking about how to

improve my relationship with him, Kenichi got sick and was hospitalized. His wife, Rie, informed me about it.”



Figure 3.22 The opening scene, a fishing village, in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” shades of metallic blue and gray, almost giving the appearance of a black and white film.

Image source :

<https://www.scaruffi.com/director/zhang/index.html>

The camera cuts to a view of a high-speed bullet train moving straight across the screen right to left. The voice-over continues, “She has suggested to me that it would be an opportunity for Kenichi and me to speak to each other and to improve our relationship.” Another close-up shows the father is riding on the train, and he appears pensive. A panoramic shot shows the snowy foreground and snowy mountain chain in the distance. The voice-over continues, “This might be the only chance I have to talk with him face-to-face.” Then face on we see the train entering the station. “Hence, I have come to Tokyo.” We do not see his face now; we hear him talking all this while. The camera close-up shows a woman’s face looking straight at us expectantly. We can detect that she has been waiting for

the train and sees it approaching. Then a quick cut shows her standing on the platform with her back to us as the train pulls up to stop near her.

Next, she is in the car driving. We can see part of her face in the rearview mirror, as she says, ‘You must be surprised by the changes in Tokyo over the past years. It’s been at least ten years.’ A close-up of the father from the side. He is wearing a flat blue tweed cap and a dark blue jacket. He is not talking, and we will see that this is characteristic of him; he is taciturn. The camera cuts to a view of a busy city street, four lanes each direction and we see a train overpass (where they came from). Their car comes toward us. Then, there is a close-up of the young woman in the car saying, “Kenichi has been unwell for a while. He’s suffering from stomach pain.” The camera cuts back to a close-up of the father from the wide. He is in the back seat. He is listening, as she continues, “It often disturbs him at night. He hasn’t been diagnosed yet.” The camera cuts to a view of the two of them, now walking toward us down an austere looking, blue-lit hospital corridor. “Excuse me. Give me a moment,” she says to the father. The camera moves a little closer as we see the two of them stop and they are face-to-face. She says, “I’ll tell Kenichi you’re here. He doesn’t know that you’ve come.” The father bows slightly as does he. She walks through a door on our left. Then a medium close-up shows the father looking down. The camera cuts to the interior of the hospital room. The woman’s back is to us. She still has on her coat and gloves.

Heimlich/unheimlich

In the scenes which follow, we begin to sense the feelings of estrangement becoming intolerable for the father and the son, the feelings that will propel the father to make his journey. We can see another man seated on his hospital bed to our left, with a tray table in front of him, a small tv. And on the table a cup. He is wearing pajamas. But Rei goes behind

a curtain to a hidden area behind a white room screen to talk with Kenichi. The camera cuts to the father, waiting outside, a medium close-up shows him looking down, waiting, anxious. We hear the woman say, “Your father is here to see you. Why don’t you let him in? He’s come a long way to see you.” “Why should I see him?” Their voices sound far away. We cannot see them having this conversation. Instead, we see the father, standing in the corridor listening, a medium close-up. He takes a deep breath, looks very concerned, as the conversation between Rei and Kenichi continues, “Who asked him to come? Was it you? I never said I wanted to see him.” “Please don’t talk like that.” These emotions represent the “heimlich/unheimlich.”

Long silences are characteristic of Takata as these scenes show. “Enough, I don’t want to see him,” the son says. The father walks down the corridor, his back to us. We see him in the parking lot. The daughter-in-law chases after him. “Father, It’s because he’s sick, a bad mood. Forgive him. Let me talk to him again.” Takata only looks down. The daughter-in-law unzips her bag and gives him a DVD his son, Kenichi, made in China, part of a TV special. “Please have a look at his work.” Takata opens it and looks at it. “Make sure you watch it.” Another view of the rocky seashore, birds circling. Heavy snow. He is standing in front of his house. Someone off camera shouts to him, “It’s ready. Do you know how to use a VCR?” “Yes,” The man prepares to leave. Takata looks at the monitor, loads up the DVD. We see a gas burner and pot of water on in the background.

Takata is watching footage of a folk opera. The caption shows that it originates from Yunnan Province. The masked performer is singing the song that the film opened with. “Mr. Kenichi, faculty of Folk Arts,” the announcer says. “He is here to see the performance. The singer says that he has a cold today and cannot perform the requested song.” The singer tells

him, “Come back and I’ll perform ‘Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles’ next year. It is a folk opera about Lord Guan.” Kenichi says, “Oh, I see, the Lord Guan from ‘The Romance of the three Kingdoms.’” “He actually knows who he is,” the announcer says. “It’s the greatest of all the masked operas and I can do it best,” the performer says. “Few people can perform this opera except him” the announcer says. “Can’t you sing a little now?” Kenichi implores. “No. Next time then. I’ll come back to Yunnan and hear next year.” Takata sits before his kettle pot on the indoor butane fire, thinking, as he watches the video.

Then we see the snow, the boats lined up in the harbor of the little fishing village. Inside, the phone rings. “Father,” the daughter-in-law has been calling. “Have you been fishing?” Close-ups alternate as Rei speaks. We hear snatches of the conversation, “Cancer of the liver. Terminal.” She says. She hasn’t told Kenichi yet. “He thinks he will be discharged soon,” she tells his father as she cries. Takata just listens, and he does not speak. We hear sad music. “In my heart, I always believed that our family could enjoy a meal together,” the daughter-in-law says. There is another close-up of Takata. He does not speak.

The departure

A long shot shows Takata by the crashing waves at the seashore. “I am going to China. I’m not good at dealing with people,” the voice-over continues, “I feel compelled to go. To do something for my dying son.” In the next shot, Takata is walking among a crowd. A woman holds a sign for him at the airport. “Do you want to rest and then go to Lijiang City?” she asks him. A view of Lijiang City with the mountain in the background appears. He’s on the phone in a colorful cobblestone street setting. Takata is telling Rei where he is. “Father please come back.” “No,” he says. “The travel agency has arranged everything. Don’t worry.”

We see a white van driving down the road. Li Village is identified in the subtitle in Chinese and in English. Then we see him walking with his two translators and travel guides—one man and one woman. “Oh, you’re Kenichi’s father. He’s my friend” one of them tells him. We see him filming some traditional dancers in the street. He asks, “Li Jiamin?” The travel guide says, “No, it can be someone else.” We see the opera rehearsal behind them as Takata watches the two travel guides talk. This is their conversation, “Once the mask is on, no one can tell the difference. A native couldn’t tell, so how could a Japanese person? He is making this film for his song, No one else will do.” The two of them are debating what to do. Li Jiamin is in prison for three years, the male guide tells the female guide. Takata is just watching the whole conversation. This is a medium close-up. He can’t understand the language.

He’s on the road again. He offers Jasmine an envelope of money. “Please help me,” he insists. “Filming in a prison is beyond my abilities,” she says. “I have another assignment.” “Please ask your boss if I can employ another translator,” Takata says. They stop at a scenic overlook. Takata gets out while the guide/translator talks with her boss. A panning shot of the canyon is shown. “The boss can’t help. Please forget this idea,” Jasmine (the guide) tells Takata. He does not say anything at first. Then he says, “Please turn around.” “He wants to go back,” Jasmine tells the other guide.

The two guides sit on a red stage and discuss the situation. Takata observes in a voice-over: “I can’t understand what they are saying, but I can’t do it without their help. For the first time. I feel helpless.” (More *unheimlich*) “Jasmine can’t help you, but I can,” Lingo tells him. “No problem,” he says in English. There are no costumes or props at the prison. He’s getting them. “Lingo doesn’t know much,” Jasmine tells Takata. “Write down my

instructions . . . Office of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Justice. They must approve. If Lingo can't translate, call me and I'll translate over the phone." She leaves the car. He has to sign a paper to change interpreters.

In the next scene, Lingo and Takata are in an office surrounded by red and yellow banners. They are Thank-you banners, Chinese calligraphy. Takata asks Lingo to write down the banners. The bureaucrat comes in and sits at his desk. He has a record of Kenichi's visit. He greets Takata shaking hands. The bureaucrat asks Lingo to translate. Lingo says he will write down everything the man says and then translate later. His request has no precedent, we learn from the official. A foreigner filming inside a prison... The desk phone rings. The official wants to leave. He tells the translator, "Please tell him this is too difficult. Others can do the performance." "You are a foreigner. The law is hard," Lingo explains. Takata gets on the phone, trying to call the other interpreter. He gets only her voice mail. He hangs up. "Government, law," Lingo repeats, as he looks thorough his dictionary. Takata tries again and gets Jasmine. He asks for translation. She gets on the line with Lingo who says the meeting was a disaster. "Tell him it's over, she says. "Lingo will book him on the next flight." Lingo says. "Please return to Japan. My Japanese is not good. I'm sorry." Takata thanks him. He stands thinking. They walk through the streets. Then go into a banner shop. Takata next sets up a videotaping tripod and makes a recording, sitting in front of the camera in his hotel room. In the next shot, we see Lingo sitting and waiting for the official. Then he delivers the tape to him.

Border crossing

In the scene which follows, the first border crossing may be when the official is moved, identifying emotionally with this foreigner because of his situation with his son.

“Jasmine has translated the text of what Mr. Takata says,” Lingo tells the official. We see the video Takata made. He starts, pausing a long time, clearing his throat. He says, “A long time ago, because of a mistake, I hurt my son deeply. He has never forgiven me. Recently my son was diagnosed with cancer”. We hear quiet sad music. Takata continues, “He has a deep passion for Chinese folk operas.” The camera cuts to the set of officials intent on watching him. “I don’t know at this point what else I can do for my son. Maybe filming is the only thing I can do for him. Please help me.” He holds the banner in front of himself. Then lifts another. Simultaneously Lingo lifts the banners he has brought to present to the official. Please. Takata hides his face behind the banner. We see only his hands holding it. He is crying behind the banner. The way that Takata is holding the banner with only his hands in sight gives the appearance of a gesture of shame. The director is moved.

A long shot of him down the cobblestone street, shows Takata waiting for the official’s decision. Then a close-up shows his face. Next, we see the bureaucrat on the phone. He is asking someone, “Can you help me with this?” Then we see Lingo and Takata at the prison gate. Lingo is holding a staff, the prop for the folk opera. Two prison officers greet them. We see prisoners marching by, like soldiers, saying, “Reform our way. Redeem us. One, two, three, four.”

The camera cuts to show Takata talking with the warden. The warden explains that he is hesitant because he says other filmmakers had made them look bad. Takata with his interpreter says that he only wants to film one prisoner. “Just film him singing. Nothing else.” “Sounds like an excellent way to promote Chinese culture,” the warden says. Then a cut shows that they are in a room with a spinning colorful disco ball in the ceiling. “How’s the microphone?” the warden says as he checks it. They get out their costumes and filming

equipment in the empty room. Then six men line up--the band, in prison uniforms. "These guys are popular," the warden says. Takata thanks him. Li Jiamin, the folk opera performer, presents himself. Then the camera cuts to the marching prisoners again repeating, "Repent of our sins. Redeem ourselves," as they march. The band starts playing—tambourine, traditional fiddle, flute, guitar, horn drum, trumpet--announcing the beginning of the opera performance. Li Jiamin is dressed now but cannot perform. The band starts over and again he can't perform. "Please, sing for him," Lingo implores. He removes Jiamin's mask and he is crying. "I can't perform with shackles on," he says. He squats down, crying hard. "I miss my son." A close up shows Takata. A voice-over says "I envy him. Without caring what others think, he can cry. If only I had his courage, my relationship with my son wouldn't be so difficult." "Jiamin can't perform. Come back later," Lingo says. Takata calls Jasmine. He says, "I don't know what's going on." Lingo tells her what is happening, and she explains it to Takata.

A second border crossing

In the next scenes, Takata decides to go to Stone Village. This is his second "border crossing." It is an emotional border crossing, and it also will lead to another physical border crossing because it requires that he go to Yunnan Province which is a great distance into China. He is changing his destination and he is trying to connect with another father in this quest. Lingo says to Jasmine on the phone that Jiamin was not like this when he was in the village. She explains to Takata over the phone more about what is going on. Next, we see him back in his hotel room. He calls Jasmine again. He says, "Well after giving it a lot of thought, I've decided to go get Li Jiamin's son. She tries to discourage him from going, saying, "The place is very far away. Isn't making the film, the important thing?" "Now they're equally important," Takata tells her. "I'm going to Stone Village."

Lingo comes to his door at the hotel and brings back the envelope of money. He puts it on the table and leaves. Takata calls Jasmine to ask what she said to Lingo. “Why did he return the money? Will he still help me?” he asks her. She explains, “Lingo and I feel sad about Kenichi’s illness. Forgive me. Lingo doesn’t feel right taking your money when your son is so sick. He will still help you.” She says. Then Takata replies, “I’m happy Kenichi has friends like you,” Surprisingly she then tells Takata, “Actually we didn’t know him. He didn’t have many friends. And he would stare at the mountains for hours. He seemed lonely.” “Please tell me more,” Takata says. She doesn’t know more. A close-up shows him as he sits, thinking, camera in hand, as the scene ends. The scene shifts and we see real hairpin turns in the mountains as they head into Yunnan. Men are chiseling stone by the road, an extensive road project. People in colorful dress are shown riding by in a wagon pulled by a tractor.

In the next scene, Takata is seated near a table where Lingo is talking with the village chief. A few other men and one woman sit with the chief. “Please translate while I explain,” the chief says. He continues, “Yang Yang is Li’s son born out of wedlock. We accept this. Li Jiamin has not raised his son for several years. We accept that.” In a voice-over, Takata observes to himself: “There is a loud discussion, a long time. I feel like a stranger. You can feel very isolated, but I understand why Kenichi visited here.” He begins to look for a phone signal, walking around the room. One woman leads the way outside and up several flights of stairs. They go up on the roof to try to get a phone signal. They are on top of one roof, and we see many rooftops. “My son’s phone would work up here,” she explains. He calls Jasmine to translate. Then he hands the phone to the chief. The chief makes his two points again: “Li’s sudden interest is hard to believe,” the chief tells her. “But I never said no. Lingo can’t translate,” the chief says. “Now we are relieved. We consent now to let the boy leave.”

In the next scene, a big table is shown, extending down the long street down the middle of the village. A banquet is served, and it looks like everyone in the village is there. A woman comes in holding Yang Yang's hand. He sits down to eat. Takata takes his picture. "Get him (the boy) some new clothes," the chief says. "Ask him if he wants to see his father," Takata tells Lingo. "No problem," Lingo says.

The return

In the scenes which follow, we see a change in Takata's son. First, he expresses his desire for Takata to return to see him in the hospital. Takata's phone rings. He asks permission to step away to take the call. Rie tells him she has told Kenichi about his trip. This is a kind of return for the son. He is moved by his father's gesture. Rei goes on to describe her husband's reaction, "He didn't say a word the whole night, but he looked different. I could see a change in his eyes. He never dreamed you would do such a thing. This opera wasn't that important to him. Please come back," his daughter-in-law tells him. "Takata pauses. "I am listening." "Please come home," she says. "Kenichi said your trip to China is the most wonderful thing you've ever done for him. Those were his exact words." The camera shows a close-up of Takata, as he says Thank you. A voice-over says, "I'm not sure if he said those words. If so, it's the first compliment in many years. Seeing this large banquet, I am deeply touched by their generosity." Takata begins to regain the feeling that fathers and sons can connect—this is the beginning of his "return." The banquet", the voice-over says, "makes me want to believe Kenichi's words."

There is a long shot of them leaving the village. Takata is beginning his return to the prison with the boy. They are riding in a cart driven behind a tractor which breaks down on the road on a hill. He takes a picture of Yang Yang. There is an overhead view of extensive

red clay hills, then a panoramic view of the area. Suddenly Takata notices that Yang Yang is gone. He sees the boy running away. He goes after him calling his name. We see the limestone formations in the canyon, and we can see the boy walking down the winding footpath around the formations. The boy is already far away. Takata calls back to Lingo. Then he goes after the boy down the path. Takata calls to Lingo again. He tries his phone and it does not work. Now Lingo and the driver are calling for Takata. He finds Yang Yang, sitting down on the path. “What’s the matter?” Takata says. No answer. “Do you know your way home?” He tries to mime his question because they don’t know each other’s languages. “Why are you running away?” Yang Yang continues walking down the path. Takata is asking, “Is this the right direction?”

We see all the villagers coming with torches. It is getting dark. “It seems like hours,” the voice-over says. “All I can do is follow Yang Yang around. Like I chase my son. I don’t know which direction to go.” Then Takata tells Yang Yang, “We’ve been here before. We are lost, very lost.” Takata looks around. “Let’s wait for someone to find us. Find a place to rest.” We hear a lone bird call. They crouch in a small place hidden among rocks. Yang Yang runs away to squat behind a rock to have a bowel movement. He tells Takata to go away. He’s staying; he hands the boy toilet paper. Takata takes a picture. He’s laughing and he holds his nose. He makes Yang Yang laugh.

Takata’s return here is to more emotional connection. He bonds with Yang Yang while they are lost. The camera cuts back to the villagers with their police searching to find the two. Lingo teaches them to say Takata’s name. They keep calling out his name as they look for him. “The moon is bright in the sky. I’m sure they’ll find us We have to get their attention,” Takata says to Yang Yang. He uses the camera flash and yells. Then gets out his

boat whistle and blows it. The sound that the whistle makes is whimsical. It delights the boy. The boy looks at the whistle, then grabs it and blows it. “Well done, Yang Yang. You keep it, Blow it again. Well done,” Takata says, as he flashes his camera. All of this is to get the attention of the villagers. Then a long shot shows them and pans to show the mountains.

The camera cuts to a phone ringing. Jasmine wakes up. Then a car is shown coming down the road. Next, we see the boy asleep, laying his head on Takata’s lap. Takata puts his coat over the boy. Comforting music plays. A voice-over says: “Sitting here all night, waiting to be found. I don’t remember if I ever held Kenichi in my arms like this. Yang Yang doesn’t even know what his father looks like. I wonder what kind of father I am to Kenichi.”

The next scene shows a nurse saying that his blood pressure is normal. She takes the boy’s hand and checks his heartbeat. “Jasmine, can I call the chief, please?” Takata says. Then a cut. He greets the chief. “I am sorry for causing trouble. Why did Yang Yang run away?” He asks the chief. “Would you ask Yang Yang? Maybe he doesn’t want to see his father.” Now we see that Takata can reflect on his behavior and begin to empathize with his own son. The chief replies, “We made the decision” (for the boy). A cut shows Yang Yang pressing his face against the window in the rescue van. “Do you want to meet your father,” the chief repeats the question several times. “No” Yang Yang says. “Don’t be naughty. Why not? I’m telling you,” the chief scolds him. The boy cries. “He’s not my dad,” the boy says. “I will not go,” he insists. Takata takes the chief aside to talk. The boy gets back in the van. “Chief and everyone, I’m sorry,” Takata says. “I have decided not to take Yang Yang to the prison. He might not be ready to meet his father yet.” Here is more empathy; he takes the son’s side. “I think we should try to understand his wishes.” The chief accepts Takata’s

decision. “Who will raise Yang Yang?” Takata asks him. The chief answers, “The village will keep taking care of him until his father is released.”

Next, we see Yang Yang in the center of a shot which shows a small group of people watching the van leave. Takata gets out of the travel van. He stands before Yang Yang, then kneels, takes his hands, and slowly embraces him. The boy hugs him. They embrace for a long while. Sweet flute music plays. Then Takata grabs his nose making the stinky face and they both laugh. The boy keeps blowing the boat whistle as Takata rides away. He runs after the car. Takata waves goodbye. Violin and flute music continues. The boy pants, looking happy. The van heads down the road.

Inside the van, Jasmine asks Takata, “What do you want to do now?” Another part of the return, a return to the prison follows. He wants to go back to the prison and see if the man will perform. “You may have to wait a few days,” Jasmine tells him. His phone rings while he is riding in the car. We see his daughter-in-law in dark mourning dress, kneeling on the steps to his shrine. She tells him Kenichi has passed away. We hear sad music. Takata doesn’t speak, just listens. “Yesterday during the day he was in high spirits. He talked about you and wanted to write you a letter.” She tells him that she wrote down the letter for her husband. “Please read it to me,” Takata requests. The letter reads, “What should I say to my father? I deeply regret not seeing you. It torments me. When mother died, you moved away to a remote fishing village. I’m beginning to understand. I wanted to distance myself from that too. When you came, I couldn’t stand the distance,” his son explains. “The operas mirror my life. I tried to fool myself. My true feeling eluded me. I tried not to acknowledge them. The opera is the way people mask their feelings. I eagerly wait for you.” In a new scene, we

see a dramatic silhouette of Takata from behind standing in front of the bright yellow mountains. Then a close-up shows him crying.

The next scene shows the prison performance room. Jasmine, Lingo, and Takata talk to the warden. Li Jiamin apologizes. Takata says to the warden, "Thank you for arranging this. I am not here to film the opera. May I talk with Li Jiang?" The warden replies, "Of course." Takata tells the performer, "I've been to Stone Village." Li Jian looks surprised. Takata continues, "I've met Yang Yang." "You met Yang Yang?" Li Jian responds. Takata says, "He is a good boy. He really is." Lin Jian looks down, crying. Then Takata turns to the warden and says, "Warden, I've taken some shots and want to show him his son and the village." "Please, show us," the warden says. The whole room of prisoners sit as Takata hooks up the digital photos to show them on the monitor. We see Lin Jian sobbing. Every man is watching as he shows the digital photos he took. The camera cuts to show Takata watching the other father. Non-diegetic music plays. The roomful of men are also watching with tears in their eyes, lips trembling. "That's all I have," Takata says, after the pictures are shown. Everyone sits speechless as he packs up his camera and bows. "Li, Mr. Takata came a long way. Your son is really delightful," the warden says. Lin Jian says he will perform. "I didn't come to film it," Takata reminds him. The warden says, "I've chosen some good performers to perform with him. We invite you to watch, even if you don't film it." The mask is placed on Li Jian. He steps off the stage, comes toward Takata and bows to him. "Thank you. You are a very kind man. So is your son. Please film it and show Kenichi." Takata does not tell him his son is dead. Instead, he says, he will film. "Kenichi would be very pleased," he says. The small six-man band begins playing the introduction to the opera. Five men enter singing and dancing, no costumes. They are in prison wear. Li Jian has the only costume, and

he performs on the stage. We hear the song that was on as the film opened, the opera “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles.” As he sits in the audience, we see Takata filming with a hand-held camera. Then as the dance continues, we hear non-diegetic music and watch the opera in slow motion. Takata sits thinking. The camera cuts to a close-up of Takata. Then a view shows him from behind, standing facing the sea with the sun rays showing in a dark sky, birds circling, calling, like the shot the film began with. Melancholy Chinese string music plays as the credits roll.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented four films representing the “road movie” genre in global cinema from 1989 to 2005. In “Powwow Highway,” a flawed character, Buddy, was united with a “pure” character, Philbert. Buddy’s journey of self-discovery led him to realize a new respect for Native American spirituality and the value of self-sacrifice. The film also probes Cheyenne culture. Philbert, who has been pursuing a spiritual objective, becomes a rescuer and a teacher. This achievement privileges an indigenous point of view overall for this film. It has been suggested that “Powwow Highway” might instill in the audience a curiosity about the people, culture, and history of native Americans and that it may motivate post-screen research. In “Central Station,” one character, Dora achieves a kind of moral redemption. This journey, made by two people from very different social backgrounds, has been interpreted as a metaphor for a personal metamorphosis as well as a national allegory for a hoped-for more united national identity for Brazil. In “Le Grande Voyage,” an estranged father and son travel from Morocco to Mecca. The father and son are divided by religion. The son, who has grown up in Morocco, at first seems to value the French European part of his cultural identity over his Arabic heritage. By film’s end, he has achieved a newfound respect for his father’s

spirituality and for his own Arabic heritage. In “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” we are presented again with an estranged father and son. The father travels to a remote village in China where he bonds with a boy there whose father has abandoned him. The father begins the journey alienated from his own ability to bond with others. By seeking to film a performance of the Chinese folk opera from which this film takes its name, the father, Takata, seeks to finish a project his son, Kenichi, began, but has been unable to finish due to illness. This project serves as an emotionally healing experience for both father and son.

Chapter 4 to follow, the last chapter in this thesis, will highlight the various kinds of identity issues explored in each of the ten films that have been analyzed. As part of these identity issues, the pairings of travel companions will be discussed and how women are presented in several of the films. There are two sets of tools (film techniques and an array of cultural “bricolage”) the filmmakers use to reveal the psychological states of the protagonists and to tell their stories. In this chapter, I will summarize some of the ways that these identity issues are presented in each film. And finally, I will recap how the stages of the journey appear in the films and what they reveal.

CHAPTER IV.

UNEARTHING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ROAD MOVIE: IDENTITY ISSUES, FILM TECHNIQUES, “BRICOLAGE,” STAGES

Introduction

The road movies reviewed in this thesis have taken us from the busy Rio train station to the wide-open spaces of the Brazilian sertão, into the volcanic sulfurous mists of Vesuvius near Pompeii, through the badlands of the Dakotas, into limestone canyons in Yunnan province, and through the deserts of northern Africa. As the gazes of the filmmakers’ cameras took us along on quests for a sense of belonging, we saw many travelers “lose their bitterness to become pure again” (words of the Moroccan patriarch, “Le Grande Voyage”). The inner landscapes we encountered were no less engaging than the geographic vistas.

The “road movie” has been used as a metaphor of discovery to address identity issues for individuals, for nations, and for diasporic groups. The current chapter will highlight the various kinds of identity issues explored in each of the ten films that have been analyzed. As part of these identity issues, the pairings of travel companions will be discussed and how women are presented in several of the films. There are two sets of tools (film techniques and an array of cultural “bricolage”) the filmmakers use to reveal the psychological states of the protagonists and to tell their stories. In this chapter, I will summarize some of the ways that these identity issues are presented in each film. And finally, I will recap how the stages of the journey appear in the films and what they reveal.

“The phenomenology of the soul”

Mulvey reminds us that, in road movies such as “La Strada,” the journey “has a metaphorical level, the space of transformative experience (2000, 20). From the earliest

forms of storytelling, the road along which the hero travels reflect his progress on metaphysical levels. Away from the safety of home and everyday life, he (and sometimes she) struggles with monsters, literal or figurative in search of self-knowledge” (2000, 20). As we accompany the travelers on their journeys, the road movie can lead us to experience a “phenomenology of the soul” (Bondanella and Pacchioni (2007, 155), the beautiful sadness of human existence.

In “La Strada,” Gelsomina’s beautiful sadness is revealed. We explicitly see Gelsomina’s point of view in the following scene. As the story progresses, after the wedding scene, Gelsomina’s “leitmotif” plays. A medium camera shot shows Gelsomina looking out the window of a stable (where she and Zampano are to sleep that night) to gaze at the night sky. She looks distressed. She holds a piece of bread (her meager meal). She sits down. A medium shot shows Gelsomina sitting on the straw, eyes downcast as she recalls her melancholy melody. She hums the tune, absorbed by the music. She says to Zampano as she rises to her feet. “Do you remember it, how beautiful it was, Zampano?” She stands, hums the tune again and exits right. A medium shot shows Zampano in profile, standing on one leg as he puts on the new trousers the nuns gave him. Gelsomina returns, humming her tune again as she says, “that day, under the rain, from that window?” Humming, she walks toward the right background to reach a long shot and she turns toward Zampano. He has his back to the camera. She walks toward him. Zampano makes a half-turn toward her, “Well how do I look? Huh?” He adjusts his hat and exclaims, “Women!” Gelsomina stares at him in silence, then bursts into tears as she walks away. We have seen Gelsomina singing her sad memories, while Zampano remains absorbed only in himself.

Identity issues are at the foreground in all of the films analyzed. But before the nature of these identity issues can be summarized, it is necessary to discuss the types of pairs found in the journeys presented in the films.

Pairings: fathers and sons

Father relationship themes are important in “Central Station,” “Le Grande Voyage,” and “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles.” Belton (2022m 369) has argued that American cinema offers “Oedipus with a happy ending--the return of the father.” As a father and son make a pilgrimage together in “Le Grande Voyage,” the journey helps them repair their relationship. In contrast, in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” the father makes the journey without his son. It is a restoration of the father in himself that Takata experiences. And from a distance his son forgave him. Both Takata and his son learn to take off the hero mask and show their tears, just as Li Jian did in the Chinese opera.

In “Central Station,” Josué searches for a father he longs for, but has never met. The father does not return, but Josué insists that someday he will. Dora shares his longing for a father. We learn that her father abandoned her when she was young, too, and this may have been the beginning of her cynical stance toward humanity. Dora had hidden away a part of herself, like those letters to be mailed in her desk drawer. In the end Dora writes a letter to Josué in which she reassures him of his father’s return. This becomes a statement of hope for both of them. Belton (2022, 369) suggests that in some films the symbolic father is the nation. Filmmaker Salles has also suggested that Dora and Josué’s quest to find his father represents on another level an attempt to re-establish Brail’s national identity. This statement of hope, that the father will return, then becomes a statement of hope for Brazil.

Pairings: adults and children

“Alice in the Cities,” “Central Station,” and to some extent, “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles” pair children and adults for the journeys. In “Alice in the Cities,” the child, Alice leads Philip to literally return to his childhood home in the Ruhr district. As they bond, Philip overcomes his alienation and returns to a more stable sense of self. In “Alice in the Cities,” the child seems to say to the adult, “Come out and see the world through my eyes.”

In “Powwow Highway,” Philbert displays some childlike qualities. Like Gelsomina, he often has a look of innocent enchantment on his face. His face appears said, but full of wonder. He displays the ability to be “in the moment.” Philbert’s childlike faith in the ancestors such as Wihio enables him to free Buddy’s sister. It also guides Buddy to regain compassion and a greater respect for Native American spirituality. Like Alice, he seems to invite us and his travel companion to come see things through his eyes.

In “Central Station,” Dora travels with her “foster” son, Josué. He guides her to rescue her capacity for compassion and love. “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles” presents Takata who seeks out Yang Yang in Yunnan Province. He originally plans to take the boy to visit his father in prison. When Takata and the child become lost in the limestone canyons near Stone Village, the two of them bond. Their bonding scene features the playful use of a boat whistle. As Takata learns to empathize with the boy, he regains his faith in human love. He says that he wants to believe that his son has forgiven him.

Husband-wife pairings

Husband-wife travelling pairs and relationships are featured in “La Strada” and in “Journey to Italy.” In the pairing in “la Strada”, the wife, Gelsomina opens the way for Zampano to begin to realize that he is not just “a beast,” but a human who needs others. In “Journey to Italy,” Rossellini uses this husband-wife pairing to reveal how conventionality can trap couples in an unfeeling relationship. When the couple are thrust into a setting which is challenging for them, Naples and southern Italy, they are finally able to overcome their detachment from lie and rekindle their relationship.

Pairings: two men

Two men travelling together allow different kinds of conflicts to be explored and resolved in several of the films. In “The Hitchhiker,” conflicting strategies for reasserting power over one’s destiny play out for the two men. The two friends, Gil and Collins, match wits with their kidnapper, the killer Emmett Myers. This film is a postwar film and features a character who is a veteran. We see his shooting skills in one scene. Such men had used violence. But in the end in the film, the two men learned that they were not Emmett Myers. One of the men shouts out, “I am not Emmett Myers!” in the final scene. They had to reassert their reliance on rationality over violence and embrace a family identity. Gil overtly displays this sense of family twice in the film. Once when he leaves his wedding ring engraved with his name and his wife’s name as a clue to help the police. And again, in a scene in a grocery store when he scoops a young girl up in his arms to protect her from Myers.

In “Il Sorpasso,” two men whose identities might represent the “old” and the “new” Italy and the destinies of the nouveau riche and “old money” families in the new economy play out. The lawyer had to die in the end. He represents the end of Italy’s old bourgeoisie. The brash one, Bruno, discovers that the ride will end. He had been living as if there was no tomorrow, thoughtless of the effect of his actions on others. Perhaps the film is a morality tale, a warning.

In “Powwow Highway,” two men with different orientations toward Native American spirituality and political activism pursue their journeys. Each of them redefines his masculinity somewhat as they are influenced by each other. Buddy learns from Philbert how to allow himself more vulnerability as he embraces some spiritual practices, chanting prayers and dancing at the powwow. Philbert learns from Buddy to stand up for himself and not allow himself to be bullied. He gains respect for himself and receives it from others.

How women are presented

While men predominate as road buddies, female characters appear to perform some interesting functions. Belton (2022, 185) discusses the roles of women characters in American fiction and film during the post-war years. If every human psyche consists of masculine and feminine elements, repressing the feminine was required especially for soldiers so that they could become ruthless, unemotional, “killing machines” (Belton, 2022, 185). To overcome that which is considered weak and feminine in films of that period, the protagonist had to kill the “femme fatale” (Belton, 2022, 185). In “Detour,” Al is supposed to give the *femme fatale* over to the police, but Vera is strong-arming him. He ends up in a tug of war with a phone just after he was on the phone trying to call the police. He accidentally kills her.

Laura Mulvey, following Freud, the image of women on the screen functioned to recall castration anxiety for the male spectator (as cited in Belton, 2022, 220). Classical Hollywood cinema tried to alleviate this anxiety through a process of disavowal in which the female's castrated status was denied. Mulvey explains that female sexuality was routinely devalued by the male protagonists who felt threatened by it (page 220). In "Detour" Vera is presented as harshly attractive, virile, with a certain raw power, in short, dangerous. She had to be killed.

In "Powwow Highway," not a post-war movie, women appear very differently. First, we must consider that the Cheyenne are a matrilineal society. Mature women tribal elders appear in the film, as members of the tribal council, for example. More significantly in an early scene in "Powwow Highway," Philbert goes to consult with a "grandmother spider" character, Aunt Harriet. Here is the way that scene unfolds. As Philbert enters a simple house, the camera pans to her sitting in the corner of a dark room. "Turn on the lights," she shouts immediately as Philbert enters, "I can't see shit!" A close-up shows Philbert facing her smiling as he asks, "In the old days, how long did it take a warrior to find his medicine?" A close-up shows her derisive looks as she says, "What did you do, find a toy/token in a Cracker Jack box?" She laughs harshly. Grandmother Spider, a mythical ancestor, is feared, yet revered by the Cheyenne. Philbert tells her that "The time has come for me to make medicine." She responds, 'I am sick of being asked for good old Indian wisdom, so get the hell outta here.' She goes on to tell him that she has advice from her great uncle, Dull Knife (whose name comes up as a great leader in his later visit to a sacred site near Fort Robinson. The message seems to be sarcastic, "Keep your pony out of my garden." So, her appearance here is ambiguous. It shows the respect men such as Philbert

have for women such as Aunt Harriet. He seeks her blessing for his spiritual pilgrimage, but she is not a kind motherly figure.

In “Le Grande Voyage,” once again the journey is for two men. Women, such as the girlfriend and the mysterious women at the border seeking a ride, appear in that film as obstacles. Early in the film, we see that the son is very reluctant to make the trip to Mecca because he wants to return to college in France and he has a French girlfriend. His father insists and as we see him spreading out the map to plan, crying, his cellphone rings. It is the girlfriend. Eventually as they reach Milan, the father puts the mobile phone into the trash while his son sleeps. The girlfriend will not be interrupting their trip further.

Later the two have a chance encounter with a woman at the border near Damascus. They must stop in the desert at a water spot. When they are getting water, a woman in a black burkah comes up to beg from them. She says her husband is dead. Reda does not share his father’s faith, and he refuses to give her money. The father gives her money as his faith requires, but Reda tries to take the money back. The father slaps him. Reda becomes so angry that he wants to leave. He has a fit of temper and walks away. The intense disagreement following this chance encounter with the woman allows us to see Reda’s childish temper and we learn that the father is not quite so rigid. He offers to let Reda go home. “I don’t need you, You’re free.” In this scene, we see the woman who was a beggar became an obstacle potentially preventing the father and son to continue their journey.

Identity issues

Issues concerning “hybrid” cultural identities are a part of the story in “Detour,” “Alice in the Cities,” and “Le Grande Voyage.” This is the way that “Detour” addresses identity issues. In Hollywood, the destination Al Roberts dreamed of when he was a jazz

piano player in New York City, he finds himself with neither the new identity nor the romantic partner for whom he had hoped. Al reflects on the confusion of identities he is confronting. The voice-over reminds us: “Yes, fate or some mysterious force can put the finger on you or me for no good reason.” He is a permanently displaced resident/non-resident in a new place. He cannot return to his old identity, and he views himself as an imposter. He has sacrificed his identity to the road.

In “Alice in the Cities,” we find a writer trying to revive his writing skills “in the service of identity formation” (Leal 2011, 167). “Alice in the Cities” explores the influence of American popular culture on European identity. This influence sometimes appears in jukebox music. For example, toward the end of the film, we see a young boy listening to the jukebox as it plays Canned Heat’s “On the Road Again.” Philip, our writer (viewed as a representation of the filmmaker, himself), has regained a sense of well being. Leal (2011, 170) says that the boy can be viewed as a “stand in for Wenders (the filmmaker) himself as a child experiencing the life-saving properties of American music.”

“Powwow Highway” addresses some cultural identity issues that are unique to Native Americans. Their pre-European past must be reconciled with modern-day life on the reservation. Philbert seeks knowledge of the past and of his ancestors, yet he accepts change. Early in the film, Philbert sees a car ad on TV stereotyping American Indians, but he translates this notion into the idea of acquiring a “war pony” for his spiritual journey. Again, we see in his vision at Fort Robinson how Philbert brings elements from the past into the present in his identity quest (Schweninger, 2013).

We can consider the film as a story about the recuperation of self-identity as well as of Brazil’s national identity. As Dora and Josué embark on a quest for their personal

identities, their journey is emblematic of the quest for the nation of Brazil. Filmmaker, Salles has said that he considers his country to be suffering a profound identity crisis, trying to redefine its future after decades of dictatorship. He suggests that “Central Station” is an allegory about Brazilian identity, how the nation is surviving despite its financial difficulties (Falicov, n.d.). Dora represents the urban Brazilian middle class with no empathy for the poor rural residents of Brazil’s northeast, represented in this film by the boy, Josué, and his family. In the film, Josué seeks to unite with his father and family. As Dora accompanies him, she begins to recover her own wholeness as a compassionate and feeling human being.

Issues concerning “hybrid” cultural identities appear once again in “Le Grande Voyage.” While “Central Station” points to a hoped-for reunion of “two Brazils,” “Le Grande Voyage” suggests hopes for a less divided cultural identity for culturally displaced Muslims from the diaspora, such as the son presented in that film. In this film, Reda, the son, seemed to value French European culture over his Arabic heritage. By film’s end he acquired a greater respect for his father’s spirituality, and he finds a way to negotiate both aspects of his cultural identity.

Two sets of tools: film techniques and “bricolage”

The filmmakers have two sets of tools that allow them to tell these stories—a set of film techniques and culturally recognized “bricolage.”

Film techniques

Certain film techniques encourage the audience to carefully focus on the characters’ psychological struggles, or various aspects of the experience of being “on the road. For

example, Lupino uses dark lighting to symbolize a “lost” feeling in “Detour” and Salles uses dark lighting to suggest being trapped emotionally in “Central Station.” Zhang uses an emphasis on monochromatic grays and dark blues or drab colors to suggest a stifling conventionality and isolation in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles.” And the bleak landscapes shown in “Alice in the Cities” at the beginning of the film suggest the character’s world-weariness.

Film noir lighting and psychological states in “The Hitchhiker”

Lupino’s *film noir* cinematic techniques stress the psychological dynamics between the three main characters in the film. Their struggles are psychological searches for rationality, or effective “male” strategies in the face of danger and uncertainty. Lupino’s use of close-ups enhances our perceptions of the psychological and emotional states of the men. We can sense the power struggle that develops between a murderer and his potential victims. A stark confrontation between good and evil are suggested in high contrast dark scenes. The two men are tested by the killer in the following scene. Collins places a tin can on a large rock for a shooting contest with a rifle. Emmett shoots the can, very close to where Collins is standing. Collins cringes and we hear a sinister chuckle. The camera shot returns to Emmett and Gil standing by the car, a medium close-up, as Emmett points his gun toward Gil. Emmett yanks the rifle out of the car and tosses it to Gil, who is frowning at him. “Let’s see you try. See how good you are.” The harsh desert sun is enhanced by the *film noir* techniques in this scene which presents a trial. Emmett’s definition of “good” is being good with a gun. And his aim is to instill fear in both men.

A note about techniques: noir films and the post-war period

In the U.S., the post-war period when “Detour” and “The Hitchhiker” appear was characterized by an economic boom, yet the peace following World War II was so fresh, and the wide-open opportunities so fresh, that there remained a certain general shock and uncertainty (would it last?), and disorientation in the face of these great changes.

Two films analyzed in this thesis are films noir— “Detour” and “The Hitchhiker.” *Film noir* has been called a “mode of film practice whose identity resides chiefly in its ability to make audiences uneasy” (Belton, 2022, 207). Film noir is “an affective phenomenon, an uncomfortable experience for spectators” (Belton, 2022, 215). Negative forces brought it into existence in post-war 1940s and 1950s America. The postwar era began with a “mistaken belief that the relatively simple world of prewar America for which returning servicemen had fought and for which they nostalgically longed could be magically restored” (Belton, 2022, 215). There followed a general realization that this was a delusion. And the “world weary cynicism of film noir” spoke to the general sense of frustration and experience of disempowerment” (Belton, 2022, 215). A social estrangement and psychological confusion settled into the American psyche after the war (Belton, 2022, 211). Audiences identified with troubled heroes “who had become cut off from their own pasts and whose identity crises mirrored those of the nation as a whole” (Belton, 2022, 211). Films noir present existential issues. We have seen this particularly in “Detour.” “The futility of individual action . . . alienation, loneliness, and isolation . . . which results in individual despair . . . and paranoia” are presented through film noir techniques (Belton, 2022, 210). The techniques include linear narratives being replaced by “disjunction, fragmentation, and disorientation in the

flashback structure of the films” (Belton, 2022, 211). Further film noir low lighting “reduces actors to shadowy elements” (Belton, 2022, 212).

In both “The Hitchhiker” and in “Detour,” values are on trial. There had been a suspension of morality during war for soldiers (Belton, 2022, 181). “The battlefield is a world in which the laws, beliefs, and morality of a civilization are suspended” (Belton, 2022, 181). After the war, the normal world of family, wives, and children return but the veteran finds it difficult to reenter the world. Gil, in “The Hitchhiker” is a veteran. The anticipated safety of postwar times falls apart when the hitchhiker-killer appears. This feeling is enhanced as newspaper headlines in the film opening announce that there is a dangerous killer-kidnapper on the road. “It could happen to you! This film is based on a true story.”

Music and psychological states in “La Strada”

Sometimes filmmakers use close-up shots to show us the psychological frames of mind of the film characters, and at other times music is used to reveal these states of mind. In “La Strada,” the emotional, psychological pulse of the film is delivered by the music and sound. The melancholy Gelsomina becomes associated with a musical leitmotif that recurs in the film and ultimately leads to Zampano’s anger, desperation, and agony as the film ends.

Camera techniques and psychological states in “Alice in the Cities”

In the second half of “Alice in the Cities,” after Philip leaves the U.S., Wenders pays more attention to the faces of Philip and Alice as well as to the landscape. This treatment expresses a more sensory relationship between the self and the world (Leal, 2011 178). This

implies that it is important to individual identity development to establish “a relationship to one’s environment and to the people who inhabit it” (Leal 2011, 179).

Camera techniques, color, and psychological states in “Central Station”

The drab, dark images at the beginning of the film (the interior of Dora’s apartment) contrast with the open colorful images at the end of the film. Using film techniques that emphasize bright, open skies, Salles explained that he was conveying positive change, a move into a brighter new “world” (a feeling of promise).

Color and psychological states in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles”

In this film, Zhang Yimou uses color to suggest the father’s changing psychological states. Images of Tokyo are characterized by colors of gray, mirroring the father-son estrangement. As the father leaves Tokyo, Yunnan Province provides a richly colored, geographically inspiring backdrop for his journey. Zhang’s filming techniques show the richer, warmer colors in the scenes shot in Yunnan Province (Chen 2017).

“Bricolage”

Levi-Strauss stressed that the storyteller combines specific culturally recognized elements, “bricolage” to recount a myth about cultural identity. The filmmakers who created these road movies use the “bricolage” available to them and which resonates with their film audiences to assemble their own mythical worlds and invite us into them.

“Detour” has several characteristics associated with *film noir*: “a narrative unfolded in flashbacks, the protagonist’s voiceover, and a hero being betrayed by a woman” (Isenberg,

2004, 19). These elements can be viewed as the culturally recognized “bricolage” of the period. Three flashbacks depict a sense of frustration and hopelessness in the film. The first flashback sequence shows Al and Sue walking from the nightclub to Sue’s house. Their walk is presented in five short scenes with thick fog covering everything. Only the street signs are visible. The couple stroll uptown from the club’s neighborhood, Greenwich Village. Excess fog is like a commentary on the characters’ entrapment in their lives and their inability to see ahead to realize whether they have a future. In the same flashback sequence, we see Sue in a medium shot singing “I Can’t Believe You’re in Love with Me,” with three musicians seen as shadows against the wall behind her. Isenberg describes this scene as an effort to portray glamor—Al’s imagination of a bright future (Isenberg, 2004, 19). Later the monotonous landscapes and empty roads during the car scenes create a sense of bleak reality

The original pulp novel on which “Detour” is based was semi-autobiographical. The author of the movie script, Martin Goldsmith, had set out in his teens on the eve of the Great Depression, like our movie protagonist, to travel cross-country from New York hitch-hiking (Isenberg, 2008). Filmmaker Ulmer, originally from Vienna, had trained in Europe with Max Reinhardt. Ulmer became known for his “minimalist rough-hewn aesthetic” (Isenberg, 2008, 13). Isenberg (2008, 14) has described the film as a story of loss, a tragic tale with “human wreckage piling up until Al can’t find a way out.”

There are several types of “bricolage” in “The Hitchhiker.” For “The Hitchhiker,” what stands out for me is how familiar the men in the story are to me. Their manner of speaking is characteristic of television stories of that decade, a speech style of the blue-collar “everyman” kind of men. William Talmadge, the actor who plays the killer, feels like someone an American who grew up in this time such as myself know, as I saw him in the

popular “Perry Mason” series regularly. His voice is so well-known to me. Even though he played a prosecuting attorney in “Perry Mason,” his confrontational voice delivery is distinctive in “The Hitchhiker” as he explains his own (Emmet’s) personal past” “You’re weak ... (as if he is addressing these innocent men as criminals and not himself, the criminal killer) I take what I want.” It is this very familiarity of the characters and the “everyman” quality of the speech and aspects of the two men who were kidnapped by the serial killer, which make the film so chilling. As the voiceover says in the movie introduction, “This could happen to you.” Lupino’s setting—the American southwestern desert—often where American Westerns have been filmed—is not presented as the free, wild west where cowboy heroes triumph. Lupino draws us into the moral drama of the film story. The two friends must make decisions about how they can confront their circumstances. And this is a snapshot of the times. The war is over; you thought things would be okay, but they are not. The choices are—run, direct violent confrontation, or a criminal response. And the answer is none of these. Keep your wits about you; wait for your chance. Remember your family (the child scene in the grocery story, the wedding band Gil leaves as a clue for the police). In the end, the police do their job, apprehending the killer (not killing him) which is a worse punishment for Emmet, the kidnapper. Now he is going to be held hostage, trapped, in jail.

The clowns, Fellini’s ‘bricolage:’ The strong man, Gelsomina, and The Fool

Fellini uses culturally significant figures (a type of culturally recognized *bricolage*) to tell his story—stock characters (auguste and White clowns) from Greek and Roman comedy. As the analysis below reveals, Zampano, Gelsomina, and The Fool can be viewed as personifications of these stock clown characters. Fellini uses the bricolage of the august and

White clowns from Greek and Roman comedy to construct a Beauty and the Beast fable about a strongman, Zampano, a mime-like character, Gelsomina, and The Fool.

In the first scene in the film in which we see Zampano perform his strong man act, Fellini shows him in a medium camera shot. Standing, and wrapping the chain around his chest, he tells the audience, “I’ll have to inflate my lungs like an inner tube.” The camera pans around him a full 360 degrees as he walks around in the performance circle facing the audience. He continues, “A vein might burst, and I might spit up some blood. One time in Milan a man who weighed some 200 and 60 pounds lost his eyesight doing this feat . . . If there are some squeamish people in the audience, they’d better not look since there might be some blood.” The pan ends in a medium shot of Zampano kneeling, getting ready to break the chain. He begins to inflate his chest.

The strong man represents two things—a break from poverty, but also the way that Zampano uses brute force to create fear in Gelsomina and make her do what he wants (Young, 1956). He teaches her how to play drum and trumpet music to announce him for his performances. He even uses a switch to train her as if she is a performing animal. Young (1956) has described the drum as symbolic of music, beauty, and freedom in life. To play one’s song is to know freedom. Zampano gives Gelsomina a drum but demands that she play it his way, thus denying her autonomy (Young, 1956).

Gelsomina appears with a clown-painted face several times during the film. First, she appears as a clown as she plays the drum to announce Zampano’s strong man act, and she passes the hat afterward to collect donations as they travel from Milan and Rome. Gelsomina appears again as a clown dancing at a wedding outdoors.

The characters in “Il Sorpasso:” Risi’s “bricolage”

It is important that a foreigner plays the role of Roberto, say Cohan and Hark (1997, 235). However, Bruno, the actor and the role is Italian. He represents a Roman “type,” “a typical southern Italian figure,” someone who lives by improvisation, getting through situations with “bravado, seductiveness, and ‘smarts’” (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 235). Cohan and Hark argue that Bruno is presented as “the prototype of the new Italian,” whose adaptability allows consumerism “to remold the Italian character so easily” (1997, 235). On the other hand, Roberto represents the old type of Italian. He is studying for his exams and seems not to be seized by the urge to vacation with everyone else. He represents the older values of “renunciation, savings, and investment” (Cohan and Hark, 1997, 235).

Sacred sites as “bricolage” in “Powwow Highway”

Seals includes Cheyenne myth and history in the book including stories of Wihio the Trickster and 19th century Native American massacres. Some of this cultural “bricolage” is used in the film--sacred sites, Cheyenne folk tales, and mythical folk heroes.

The next scene shows nighttime, a long shot of the car going down a two-lane road through the western desert. Philbert has the CB radio on, and we hear a conversation in Cheyenne. The driver on the other end asks Philbert, “Got a warrior name?” Philbert answers, “Whirlwind Dreamer.” The other speaker’s ham radio name is, “Light Cloud,” he says, “running an 18-wheeler.” Like the prophet,” Philbert responds. “No one cares about history,” says Light Cloud. “I do,” Philbert says. Cheyenne. The other driver is headed to a place name (stated in Cheyenne). “The most powerful spot in South Dakota.” Philbert asks how to get there. “Go straight ahead into the sunrise.” Next, we see that it is still nighttime. There are two interstate highway signs, our point of view is out the front of Philbert’s car.

One says “I-90 East” and it points toward Rapid City. Buddy is still asleep in the passenger seat. Then a morning shot shows us that Philbert is at the mountain. He gets out of the car and walks alone up the dirt path. We see the remains of a sweat lodge, no skins, just branches. Philbert enters it to sit on the ground, closes his eyes and meditates. We see through Philbert’s “mind’s eye” a soaring eagle, a Native American in a traditional loin cloth with a small feather headdress, his body covered with yellow paint approaches Philbert holding an arrow in his hand. He comes up to him and touches the tip of his nose. When Philbert opens his eyes, he sees a coyote touching him. The coyote jumps back, a little bit startled and then walks away. This is a referent to a shapeshifter to traditional Native Americans or others familiar with Native North American tribal lore who might be viewing this film. Wihio is a trickster coyote (Brigham, 2015, 166).

Philbert climbs further toward the top of the mountain. We can see a panoramic view of an extensive area. He takes a Hershey bar out of his pocket, unwraps it a little and starts to take a bite. Then he notices small colorful flags tied to the low branches of scrub trees around him, like offerings. (See the Figure 8 above in the Chapter introduction, “Philbert on the mountain top in “Powwow Highway.”) He closes the chocolate bar wrapper without taking a bit. As he sits, he places it carefully up on a small pile of rocks, bows his head as if in prayer or reverence. We hear some non-diegetic music. A circular panoramic shot shows the surrounding desert. The lyrics of the song say, “Can you hear me? Can you see me?”

Trickster tales as “bricolage” in “Powwow Highway”

The next scene in which Philbert recounts the trickster story of the plums repeats a story almost verbatim from Seal’s novel. It is an important indication of Philbert’s character

and his development. He tells this story after the midpoint of the journey, as if it is a centerpiece, after the Fort Robinson sequence (Schweninger, 2013).

As he returns to the car, Philbert tells them a traditional story. Wihio the Trickster, sometimes a man, sometimes an animal, goes to the creek:

One day he saw some plums floating on the creek. Now, Wihio loves to eat. So, he reached for those plums, but they disappeared, and he fell into the creek. He crawled out, all soaking wet. Saw them plums again shimmering in the water. He kept diving, and they kept disappearing. Three days later his wife found him still splashing around. “Woman,” cried Wihio “during the day juicy plums float in this magical spot, but at night they go away.” His wife screamed at him: “Stupid dog of a dog. The plums are still on the tree.” You worthless fool of a husband, chasing shadows when the truth hangs over your head.

The “bricolage” of “Central Station” involves a plot device common in popular film in Brazil at least since the 1940s, the “carnavalesque ‘troca’ or exchange which permits characters from vastly different social backgrounds to assume each other’s position in the world for a limited period. This is much like the suspension of the rules of society which take place during carnival (Dennison and Shaw, 19). The motif of the “troca” (exchange) appears in the story line when two different social/cultural types are brought together. In this film, Dora, from Brazil’s educated, urban middle class enters the world of Josué, an illiterate boy from Brazil’s poor northeast. In Walter Salles’ “Central do Brasil” (Central Station), the south of the country is brought into “uncomfortable” contact with the North, as Dora, a schoolteacher, takes young Josué on a bus trip to the very poor Northeast to find his father. Dora caters to customers, primarily from the Northeast of Brazil, who pass through the station who cannot read or write. She has become cynical, and we learn that she takes many of the letters home with her and never mails them. Josué will guide Dora to find her humanity again.

Stages of the journey

The shared stages of the journeys shown in these road movies emphasize challenges the protagonists confront. The first stage is the experience of *Heimlich/unheimlich* which propels the protagonist to make the journey. An examination of *Heimlich/unheimlich* reveals what becomes unsettling for each film protagonist, indicating which institutions or roles have been destabilized.

Heimlich/unheimlich

In “Detour,” we hear Al’s thoughts, “Men slave for, die for money.” We see our protagonist in a bleak desert environment, still hitchhiking. “It’s dangerous,” he tells himself. Here the film scene and the voice-over evoke a feeling of danger which indicates the “unheimlich,” strange or homeless/stranded feeling. What follows is a typical *film noir* voice-over: “If only I had known what I was getting into that day.” There is a pervading sense of homelessness (*unheimlich*) in many of the characters in the film. They have no families, no children, no links to a stable community. Al rides through “a labyrinth of bars, motel rooms and highway rest stops— anonymous spaces that could be anywhere—or to a nowhere, a world for nothing and nobody” (Isenberg, 2013, 177). Isenberg suggests that the film reenacts what emigres and exiles like filmmaker, Ulmer, himself face, a “sense of belonging . . . challenged by war and migration” (2013, 177).

Danger (*unheimlich*) on the open road is dramatically introduced in the opening scenes of “The Hitchhiker.” The film opens with this scene: There is a road in the background, and we see the bottom half of a man standing with his legs apart with his shadow across the center of the screen. These words are superimposed: “This is the true

story of a man, a gun, and a car. The gun belonged to the man. The car might have been yours.”

In contrast to this danger on the road, “*heimlich*,” the relaxed feeling of being in one’s own element and “in control” is introduced in the next scenes with the two men who are friends starting a vacation together. The camera has left behind the killer and his victims, and it now shifts to a long shot with the silhouette of mountains and two small headlights of a car as it cuts across the screen diagonally. A close-up shows us the two men inside the car talking. It is when the hitchhiker takes control of their car that the men lose control over their lives, and which causes the loss of the *Heimlich*.

Heimlich/unheimlich in “La Strada” is manifest differently for our two protagonists. Zampano has chosen homelessness, in a sense rejecting “*Heimlich*,” but Gelsomina does not choose it. It is thrust upon her. Zampano buys her as his wife, paying her family to give her to him. As she leaves her home, she bows on her knees, facing the sea, overwhelmed by her sense of *unheimlich*.

In “Journey to Italy,” as the protagonists first appear, Alex is waking up and Katherine is driving. There is a sense of displacement (*unheimlich*) in their conversation—“Where are we?” “I have no idea.” The exchange might be seen as a commentary on their marriage and their relationship. There are no signs of affection, smiles, or sense of intimacy conveyed in this scene. One of them says, “Now that we’re away from home, it’s like we’re strangers.” This is a statement of “*unheimlich*,” estrangement.

When the couple arrives in Naples, they express how out of place they feel (again, *unheimlich*)—their discomfort with the garlic and oil in their food and the excessive heat.

This discomfort only increases as they spend days engaging in separate touristic activities, avoiding one another and do not mingle with others around them.

In “Alice in the Cities,” the way that the writer/central protagonist uses photos in the film shows how he experiences *unheimlich*. Philip drives to another spot and takes another photo of a non-descript Texaco station and a car wash. He even takes a picture of his car. A young Black man on a bike asks, “What you taking pictures for?” “It just never shows what you saw,” our protagonist laments. Such a statement suggests how estranged he feels, as if he is just another object like those in his photos. And there are no people in his early photos.

According to Leal (2011, 169), travelling across the U.S. East coast became “an attempt to use the familiar strangeness of this not-so-foreign culture to realign an identity out of kilter.” The Polaroid photographs of American landscapes show the protagonist exploring “the relationship between reality and its reproduction” as Philip lines up the pictures he has taken. Later, Philip tells his ex-girlfriend, “I got completely lost; I have become estranged from myself” (the “*unheimlich*”). It was a horrible journey.” She replies, “You lost your feeling for yourself . . . a long time ago.”

In the film, “Powwow Highway,” the two protagonists experience two different kinds of *unheimlich*, at separate points in the plot narrative. While Buddy is standing in the tribal chief’s office, the chief is looking worried, his hand pressed to his brow. Redbow is leaning against the back of a chair at the side of the chief’s desk, his back to the chief, as he listens. They are in the middle of their conversation when suddenly the chief remarks, “You got something on your mind?” “What the hell is wrong with you?” He sees that Buddy is distracted, lost in thought. Redbow is experiencing “*unheimlich*.” He knows he must figure out how to leave the reservation to rescue his sister. A close-up of Buddy Redbow shows

him hanging his head down as he is listening to the chief. “Just bring back the right bulls, hey,” the chief says. Philbert expresses his need to make a spiritual journey in a scene in which he visits crotchety old Aunt Harriet (a “grandmother spider” figure). He is no longer comfortable with his old identity on the reservation and decides to pursue becoming “Whirlwind Dreamer.”

In “Le Grande Voyage,” the sense of *unheimlich* for the father-son pair resides in their alienation from one another. The following scene illustrates this estrangement. As the father prays, the cinematic frame physically separates them. Camera shots emphasize their separation (*unheimlich*) and discomfort with one another. In the small car or in a small, shared hotel room, the camera isolates them. The father and son are “systematically split by their individual positions in front of the camera” (Rosello, 2011, 261). In another scene, “When the father reads the Qur’an in the passengers’ seat, the camera looks over his shoulder, framing him, then cuts over so that another shot focuses on Reda, who is seen driving, as if he were alone” (Rosello, 2011, 261).

In “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” as in “Le Grande Voyage, the sense of *unheimlich* resides in the alienation between a father and son. The following early scene reveals the sense of discomfort the father feels. He takes a deep breath and looks very concerned, as he listens to a conversation that is taking place off-screen between his daughter-in-law, Rei, and his son, Kenichi. “Who asked him to come? Was it you? I never said I wanted to see him.” “Please don’t talk like that.” These emotions are the “*unheimlich*.” Despite his own grave illness, his son has refused to see his father.

The “departure” stage

The “departure stages” in the films suggest what the protagonists must separate from to begin their journeys of self-discovery. First, let’s recap how the departure appears in “Detour.” Al Roberts, a jazz piano player at the Break O’ Dawn Club in New York, receives a ten-dollar tip from a patron which makes him consider taking a trip out West. He later dismisses the ten-dollar bill as nothing but “a piece of paper crawling with germs” (Isenberg, 2013, 179). He must depart from his own sense that he is in an economic “no-win” situation.

The next scene in “Detour” shows us a flashback to a jazz band and a blonde singer singing, “I can’t believe that you’re in love with me.” “There was Sue,” he remembers, and what he calls “an ordinary healthy romance. I was a lucky guy.” He recounts, as he narrates the film, a conversation between the two of them. She said she was going to make it to Carnegie Hall. He said to her, “Yeah as a janitor.” He tried to talk her into leaving New York with him, “Let’s blow this trap.” He must leave behind his dead-end nighttime music job and his ordinary relationship with his girlfriend to seek a new life elsewhere.

In “The Hitchhiker,” the departure shows the two friends departing from their usual daily life to take a vacation in the Chocolate Mountains. A long camera shot reveals desert, mountains in the background, and the dawn sky. Their vacation is interrupted when they pick up a hitchhiker. A series of close-ups show us the killer in the back seat, sweating, and playing with his pistol. Gil the driver, looks back quickly over his shoulder; Collins is riding as the passenger, stock still. We can hear the clicking of the pistol, as the hitchhiker keeps flipping the chamber open and closing it. The men’s work identities are emphasized in the following exchange: “I told you my name. What’s yours?” “Mine’s Gilbert Bowen. He’s Roy Collins.” “What do you do for a living?” As we see all three of the men, the killer is now

pointing his gun toward Gil. “I’m a draftsman,” Gil says. “He runs a garage.” The hitchhiker replies, “That makes you smarter. Or does it?” The car hits a bump in the road, jolting the riders slightly. This jolt reminds them of what they have departed from—their work identities and family roles. They are now captives. The hitchhiker then says, “Now don’t make any more fast moves, I told you. The last guy made that mistake.”

The departure begins in “*La Strada*” when Zampano buys Gelsomina from her family to be his assistant as a travelling circus performer. He tells Gelsomina, “You’ll travel, sing and dance.” Zampano is travelling using a motorbike attached to a tarpaulin trailer. This vehicle establishes their way of life as transient. It is often on the edge of breaking down, leaving them homeless. It is part of Zampano’s way of life as a street performer (Holland, 1954). He has chosen this departure, to continue his life on the road. Gelsomina has not chosen to leave her home behind. She is forced to do so.

The departure in “*Journey to Italy*” begins when the couple have left their familiar territory and are heading to southern Italy. The film opens with the song, “*O paesed’o sole*” (“*The Land of the Sun*”) which plays while the credits roll. This opening music, a sweet, melancholic Neapolitan song with guitar, presents “a stereotypical notion of a picturesque South” (Torriglia, 1997). But the couple’s first exchange inside the car is: “Where are we?” “I have no idea.” There has been no moment of departure, just a couple already there in Italy somewhere on the road (Vettore 2013, 59). They have left behind their staid married life.

In the departure scene for “*Il Sorpasso*,” Bruno “departs” from his role as a roving loner and our law student finally ventures out of his apartment, leaving behind a studious life. Previously we have seen that the student spends time gazing out his window watching other people’s lives. As Bruno is about to leave the apartment, he turns on a whim and invites

Roberto to go for a holiday bar break with him. Their car departs, zipping through the streets of Rome again, passing every car in sight. A camera shot shows the car racing toward us, its horn blaring incessantly to pass more cars. A close-up shows the two new “road buddies” through the front windshield. Metaphorically, these two men represent Italy’s departure. “Il Sorpasso” is a phrase for overtaking cars, but it is also a metaphor for the anticipated economic overtaking of other economies by Italy. And, eventually, one of the two different middle classes in Italy (represented by these two men) must depart.

In the departure shown in “Alice in the Cities,” Philip has left what is known and familiar to him in Germany to take on a writing assignment in the U.S. He is travelling along the eastern coast of the U.S. We see only gas stations and non-descript sites as he continues a monotonous drive on unrecognizable roads. Leal indicates that the typical presence of street names, highways and the “paraphernalia of the road”—gas stations, motels, billboards—express “lack of permanence” (2011, 186). We know nothing of his destination until we see the easily recognizable skyline of New York City.

There are two different departures in the film, “Powwow Highway”—one for Philbert, and one for Buddy. The following scene describes Philbert’s departure. On the TV screen, we see a car salesman wearing an imitation Indian headdress. “Come on down off the ‘rez’ and pick out your pony today.” We see a close-up of Philbert watching the ad. He appears to be thinking. This scene introduces the concept of a departure because it suggests that he sees an opportunity to buy a car, signifying that he knows that he needs to leave the reservation to serve a purpose we do not know about yet.

The following scene introduces the reason for Buddy’s departure from the Lane Dee Reservation. Buddy is sitting at his desk. He picks up the desk phone and answers,

“Redbow.” “Who’s this?” “Bonnie?” “Wait a second, I can’t hear you.” He paces across the room. A medium close-up shows his face, looking alarmed/worried. “Busted for what?” “Oh hell.” “What kids?” “Bonnie, I got no way to get down there. I couldn’t get you out even if I wanted to. Well, what the hell do you expect?! It’s been ten years.” This exchange reveals that he might leave behind a long-term separation from his sister as well as leave the reservation, temporarily.

Here is the way that the departure occurs in “Central Station.” Deaths occur in several of the films. In “Central Station,” Josué’s mother dies, which propels the journey for him. The journey that Dora and Josué make begins after he has been left homeless at the Rio train station. Dora tries to sell him to a false adoption agency, but reconsiders when she becomes convinced that he is in danger. He must depart to find a family. She must depart to leave behind her cynicism.

The departure begins in “Le Grande Voyage” when the father insists that his youngest son drive him to Mecca for a religious pilgrimage. They argue at the dinner table, but the father will not take no for an answer, and we see the young man with a map spread on his bed, crying. His cellphone rings. His girlfriend is calling.

His older brother loans him a camera and the car for the trip, claiming that the car is “tricky” but “it can drive around the world.” Soon we see his brother embracing him warmly as they say their good-byes. Soon his father criticizes his driving, “Why are you driving fast?” “Those who hurry are already dead” says the dad who does not drive. The son departs, leaving behind his college life, his French girlfriend, and his physically distant relationship with his father. The father departs to seek spiritual purity, but he also leaves behind his

complete separation from his son. They are forced to travel together because the father cannot drive a car. He learns to rely on his son.

Here is the way in which the departure occurs in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles.” The film begins in Takata’s fishing village. The boat harbor in the village is shown in overhead shots several times. We learn that Takata sought safe harbor there after the loss of his wife. He is hiding his emotions, harboring his sadness there. Takata departs from the fishing village to visit his son when he learns that he is extremely ill. After his daughter-in-law convinces Takata to watch a video of a documentary his son was filming in rural China; he is moved, and he vows to complete his son’s work. He leaves behind his life in an isolated fishing village in Japan. Then he leaves behind his detachment from his son. The following scene shows how the departure to China is presented in the film.

A long shot shows Takata by the crashing waves at the seashore. “I am going to China. I’m not good at dealing with people,” the voice-over continues, “I feel compelled to go. To do something for my dying son.” In the next shot, Takata is walking among a crowd. A woman holds a sign for him at the airport. “Do you want to rest and then go to Lijiang City?” she asks him. A view of Lijiang City with the mountain in the background appears. He’s on the phone in a colorful cobblestone street setting. Takata is telling Rei where he is. “Father please come back.” “No,” he says. “The travel agency has arranged everything. Don’t worry.”

The border crossing stage

The next stage in road movies concerns “border crossing.” Road narratives have plots which center on “unsettling processes” such as crossing borders, achieving distance, reinventing identity, and “accessing, negotiation and disrupting spaces” (Brigham, 2015, 8).

Border crossings allow road movies to focus on individuals who cross over into new territories which leads to them transforming and re-inventing themselves and incorporating themselves into new personal identities or even new social identities (Brigham, 2015, 8-9).

In “Detour,” border crossing is associated with deaths. In “Detour,” two deaths occur, which create dilemmas for the protagonist. Both deaths represent symbolic border crossings for Al. One border crossing for Al comes when he accidentally kills the “femme fatale” who has threatened to expose him. As the two of them wait for the stranger’s death to be discovered, Vera threatens to call the police to tell the truth about what happened. The argument between the two of them escalates. The voice-over continues the story. “It was early in the evening. The air got blue. Each word from my lips cracked like a whip.” The two of them struggle. He pushes her. She then grabs the phone, runs, and locks him out of the bedroom. He threatens to break through the door. They have a tug of war with the phone cord; she on one side of the door with the receiver in her hand, and he on the other side of the door. He does not know that Vera has wrapped the phone cord loosely around her neck and as he pulls the cord under the door, he accidentally strangles her. His border crossing has been to become linked to another death.

In “The Hitchhiker,” border crossing is manifest literally and metaphorically. In one scene in the film, the three men see a police roadblock. The hitchhiker says, “There’s a checkpoint. Slow down.” (Here we have a literal reminder of “border-crossing.”) The camera moves to a shot from behind the three of them through the front windshield. “No talking. If I give you the word, step on it.” They pass by the guard. Dramatic brass music plays. These men as well as the viewers are aware, at this point, that the police and F.B.I. are trying to catch the criminal. This event is a type of “border crossing” in the sense that the two

friends now are thrust into a situation in which they must harbor a dangerous criminal. They have crossed the line between ordinary, innocent, everyday behavior into illegal and dangerous behavior.

The Mexican border itself proves to disrupt the control the hitchhiker has over the two men. This disruptive border crossing is revealed in the following scene. As a long camera shot shows us a Mexico border sign, we hear the voice of the radio announcer, "The planes are maintaining close liaison with the ground locating isolated cars." A long panoramic camera shot shows a police car travelling across the desert. Then we see the car with the couple in it stop and they talk to the police. In Spanish, they tell him, "Yes, we saw the car." They are shown a map and they point out where they saw the two men. "How far away? On this road?" the policemen ask. We hear dramatic music on brass horns as the policeman drives toward the area where they stopped. This border crossing will prove to be the hitchhiker's undoing.

Zampano crosses two moral borders in "La Strada." When a storm threatens, Zampano and Gelsomina stop at a convent to seek shelter in the barn. We have seen silver hearts on the wall in the convent. The next morning, Zampano shows Gelsomina that he has stolen the silver pieces. The nun asks her to stay. Gelsomina weeps as she leaves the convent. Zampano has committed theft from even a convent and from people who helped them (a type of "border crossing").

The second moral border crossing is more severe. Zampano and Gelsomina come to a stop at a crossroads where they can see The Fool's car has broken down and he is repairing the tire. When they approach him, the two men get into a fight. In the struggle, Zampano bangs The Fool's head against the car causing his death. Zampano drags his body off the

road and pushes the car into a ravine to make it look like a wreck. Now a serious crime has been committed and Gelsomina has been placed in the position of being complicit in a murder. In choosing to stay with him, she experiences serious mental disturbance. This is her border-crossing.

In “Journey to Italy,” we observe “border crossing” when the couple begin to behave as if they are not a couple. She tours Herculaneum, the Acropolis, the Cave of Sybil at Cumae, and the Temple of Apollo. “Museums bore me,” her husband declares. He goes to Capri to socialize with expats. The couple begins to actively contemplate dissolving their marriage, another “border-crossing” for them. In Capri, Alex seems to flirt with the idea of an affair and then of a tryst with a prostitute, another potential border crossing for him, cheating on his wife.

The barrier/border that opens between the couple is shown dramatically in the following scene. After they witness an argument of a jealous couple out the second-floor dining room window, the camera does not enter their living space. Instead, it remains outside the window and the rest of the scene is shot through the glass. We see a “distance between Alex, Katherine, and life as it passes them by” (Vettore 2013, 61). Rossellini’s camera shots reinforce this distance. As the couple sit on the terrace, they are filmed together, side by side, with no alternation of shot/reverse shot. When one of the two starts to talk, the camera remains on him or her. Later it switches to the other and not necessarily when the other is looking at the other person who is talking. When Katherine is talking, we see Alexander, and when Alexander is talking, we see Katherine. This technique underlines the characters’ isolation (Torrighia, 1997). Eventually, they decide, “Let’s stay away from each other.” They

have crossed a border into a different kind of relationship, at this point, embracing not being a couple.

In “Alice in the Cities” the border crossing stage coincides with literal borders. Crossing the U.S. border, Philip moves from travelling alone to travelling with someone else. Crossing this border eventually leads him to overcome his separation from others, to recover his ability to form relationships, and to connect with the physical world. To put people in his photos. Alice becomes Philip’s guide, revitalizing his ways of perceiving the world during their mini odyssey through Germany searching for her grandmother with only a photo of her house to guide them.

In “Powwow Highway,” Philbert crosses a border into greater autonomy when he drives to Sweet Butte, a sacred mountain in South Dakota. Buddy had previously chosen their sole destination to be Santa Fe to rescue his sister. During the night, Philbert has identified himself in a CB radio conversation as “Whirlwind Dreamer.” The other speaker’s ham radio name is, “Light Cloud,” he says, “running an 18-wheeler.” Like the prophet,” Philbert responds. “No one cares about history,” says Light Cloud. “I do,” Philbert says. Philbert has chosen a spiritual destination, “The most powerful spot in South Dakota.” The truck driver tells him, “Go straight ahead into the sunrise,” a description that suggests a spiritual destination. At the end of the mountaintop scene, after Philbert receives his vision in the sweat lodge, we see a shift in his behavior toward Buddy. A psychological “border crossing.” Buddy, angry with the delay in their trip to rescue his sister, becomes physically aggressive with Philbert. Philbert says to Buddy firmly, “Nobody grabs me no more! This is the most sacred place in America, maybe the world.” This assertion signifies that Philbert has “crossed his border” to a new spiritual self.

There are many literal border crossings in “Le Grande Voyage,” and they signify a major border that will be crossed by the son, a spiritual one. The religious father and his agnostic son argue over praying at the customs booth on the Franco-Italian border. Later we observe Reda’s (the son’s) problems when entering Turkey because of his French passport. In another kind of border crossing, we witness “the emotion in the characters’ eyes as they drive under the massive arch at the gate of Islam’s holiest city” (Schilt, 2010, 789).

Here is the way that “border crossing” happens in “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles.” Takata journeys into the heart of China and the relationship he develops with a fatherless boy and the villagers who take care of the boy help him to recapture a sense of family he thought he had lost. Takata decides to go to Stone Village. It is an emotional border crossing, and it also will lead to another physical border crossing because it requires that he go to Yunnan Province which is a great distance into China. He is changing his destination and he is trying to connect with another father in this quest. Lingo says to Jasmine on the phone that Jiamin was not like this when he was in the village. She explains to Takata over the phone more about what is going on. Next, we see him back in his hotel room. He calls Jasmine again. He says, “Well after giving it a lot of thought, I’ve decided to go get Li Jiamin’s son. She tries to discourage him from going, saying, “The place is very far away. Isn’t making the film, the important thing?” “Now they’re equally important,” Takata tells her. “I’m going to Stone Village.”

The return stage

Brigham has suggested that road trips offer “a time of reveling in a free-floating state beyond ordinary spatio-temporal bounds” (2015, 6-7). When the travelers return to their places of origin, road movies often offer commentary on “the cultural and social order”

(Brigham, 2015, 6-7). Here are examples from each of the films showing the nature of these returns.

For Al in “Detour,” his “return stage” is the realization that he cannot return to his old identity. Toward the film’s end, as Al focuses on trying to forget how he got into his current situation, the voice-over says, “What would my life have been before that car stopped and picked me up? . . . one thing I know; someday a car will pick me up, that I never thumbed.” “The police searching for a dead man.” “Yes, fate or some mysterious force can put the finger on you or me for no good reason.” Al has arrived at a new personal and social identity, but not the one he had dreamed about. He is a permanently displaced resident/non-resident out West. He cannot return to his old identity, and he must remain an imposter, between two identities, “in limbo” between New York and LA, unable to return to either, an exile. We witness the future Al imagines; a highway patrol car stops and picks him up. They have discovered that he is an imposter. Al returns to the sense of hopelessness he was experiencing that precipitated his journey.

In “The Hitchhiker,” the return stage begins when a man sees a wanted poster with Myers’ picture on it. He has seen them in the bar where they stopped to ask about a boat to take them across the strait from Baja California to Mexico. The man calls the police. This suggests that a return to law and order will be restored. Violence will be rejected as a strategy to deal with masculine crises, vulnerability, and loss of control in the face of general social uncertainties. This rejection is demonstrated dramatically when Collins shouts out to the police that he is not Emmett Myers (the killer). This climactic scene and those words accentuate a major theme within the personal psychodrama laid bare in this film narrative—a masculine rejection of violence (and conversely the family identity which saves the men).

In “La Strada,” the return phase in the film begins when we see the circus entering a small town by the seaside. As he walks along with the other performers, Zampano hears Gelsomina’s song. He asks the children, “Where did you learn that song?” The children say that they heard her play the song on her trumpet. The children say that she never spoke, and her father found her dead on the beach. Afterwards, we see Zampano again performing his strong man act, but he seems distracted and tired. He gets drunk that night, becomes quarrelsome, and he is thrown out of the bar. “I don’t need anybody!” he cries out. Zampano’s “return” may be his redeeming revelation that he does need somebody.

In “Journey to Italy,” for Alex and Katherine, the “return” to connecting emotionally with life again begins as they leave the ruins of Pompeii. Katherine is overwhelmed by the sight of the plaster cast of a couple who died in each other’s arms at Pompeii. Alex helps her walk through the ruins to head home to the villa. He empathizes, “I understand how you feel.” “I’ve seen many strange things today I didn’t tell you about,” she responds. As they begin the drive home, she suddenly asks Alex, “Are you sure we’re doing the right thing?” A religious procession crowds the streets around them. Their car cannot get through the mass of people, and they must exit the car. Katherine cries out for help and Alex runs to help her. She grabs him and hugs him. “I don’t want to lose you!” Alex stares at her and asks, “What’s wrong with us?” Katherine replies, “Perhaps we hurt each other too much. Tell me that you love me.” “Alright,” he says, “I love you.” The press of the crowd in the plaza has forced them to exit the protective shell of the car that has detached them from life around them. Their return is to be able to feel life again and to reaffirm their commitment to each other (Young, 1956, 437).

In “Il Sorpasso,” in the “return” stage we see an abrupt return to reality. Bruno is doing a happy dance in the shower. The next shot shows them really speeding. “Let’s fly,” says Roberto. His attitude about the driving has changed dramatically. He’s letting loose. “Best two days of my life with you,” Roberto says. Now Roberto is yelling. They race to pass another car. They are cliffside. The speedometer is shown; they are threading between cars. A reckless move. The horn is sounding. They’re racing. A truck comes straight toward them. The car goes off the road. Bruno is ejected from the car, but not Roberto. He is dead. Bruno declares, I didn’t even know his last name. The car is upside down on the rocks beside the water.

In “Alice in the Cities,” we see the writer’s return to emotional connection in the following scene. Philip attends a Chuck Berry concert in Wuppertal. He looks happy. Alice has helped him get a haircut—a sign that he is taking care of himself. As he is arriving back at the hotel, Alice gets in the car with him. He laughs as she tells him, “You can’t imagine what they gave me to eat.” It is a reminder of how directly she engages with life.

Alice’s revelation of a picture of her grandmother’s house leads them to look for the house in the Ruhr region where he lived as a boy. This allows him to reconnect with some of his childhood memories (Leal, 2011, 179). As Alice and Philip pass through the landscape of the Ruhr district, “Philip has come home to a more stable sense of self because learning to see the world again has enabled him to relocate himself as a subject in the narrative of his life” (Leal, 2011, 179). This “return” stage has been one of a return to a place that was once his home and a return to his sense of self.

The “return stage” begins in “Powwow Highway” when Philbert and Buddy reach Santa Fe and can extract Bonnie from the jail. During the getaway scene, both protagonists

are transformed. Buddy transforms on-screen into a 19th century Native American warrior, potentially signaling his reconnection with the value of honoring the past. Philbert transforms into a spiritual warrior, completing his quest with the third token from the “Old Ones” (the car door handle).

The return stage in “Central Station” presents a return to a new normal. When our two protagonists reach the housing development on the frontier where Josué’s brothers live, we see bright and open skies. We see a friendliness replace the sense of alienation presented in Rio at the film’s beginning. Leaving Josué with his brothers, Dora is happy as she heads for “who knows where?” We can easily imagine a promising future for them. The boy has returned to be with his family and Dora has returned to a sense of emotional wholeness.

In “Le Grande Voyage,” the father returns to Mecca for his pilgrimage, and he experiences a state of purity before he dies. Reda experiences a different kind of return. The son kneels and lies next to his father curled up in grief. As a circle of men chant in mourning and the ritual concludes, as the son walks away, we hear a song in Arabic. Reda gives money to a woman in the street and gets into a taxi. Giving to the poor represents a change in him, a return to a respect for his father’s faith. As he looks out the window and rolls down the window to feel the breeze, the credits roll. He appears to have returned to a sense of well-being.

The music at the end of the film is significant. The music features a solemn ballad, “ode d’ibn Arabi,” which pays poetic tribute to a Twelfth century Spanish born Arab philosopher, Ibn Arabi (Gott and Schilt 2013, 793). As the song plays, Reda looks up into the heavens mourning the death of his father (Gott and Schilt, 2013, 794). The music suggests that Reda may have returned to a better sense of harmony with his Arabic Muslim heritage.

In “Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles,” the following scenes reveal the beginning of an emotional return for the father and son presented in the film. In the scenes which follow, we see a change first in Takata’s son. First, he expresses his desire for Takata to return to see him in the hospital. Takata’s phone rings. He asks permission to step away to take the call. Rie tells him she has told Kenichi about his trip. This is a kind of return for the son. He is moved by his father’s gesture. Rei goes on to describe her husband’s reaction, “He didn’t say a word the whole night, but he looked different. I could see a change in his eyes. He never dreamed you would do such a thing. This opera wasn’t that important to him. Please come back,” his daughter-in-law tells him. Takata pauses. “I am listening.” “Please come home,” she says. “Kenichi said your trip to China is the most wonderful thing you’ve ever done for him. Those were his exact words.” The camera shows a close-up of Takata, as he says Thank you. A voice-over says, “I’m not sure if he said those words. If so, it’s the first compliment in many years. Seeing this large banquet, I am deeply touched by their generosity.” Takata begins to regain the feeling that fathers and sons can connect—this is the beginning of his “return.” The banquet”, the voice-over says, “makes me want to believe Kenichi’s words.”

As the film ends, Takata has returned to his fishing village. He stands facing the ocean (mirroring the film’s opening scene). In the beginning, he felt only isolation and estrangement from his son. By film’s end, he has been able to bond with a boy in China as part of his pilgrimage to honor his son’s filmmaking.

Conclusions

These films have an enduring appeal as they present humanistic issues of seeking compassion, a sense of belonging and the quest for wholeness. The road movies addressed

identity issues such as “hybrid” cultural identities—the cultural displacement of immigrants in the U.S. during the postwar years, the reconciliation of pre-European Native American traditions with present-day reservation life, some issues faced by culturally displaced Muslims,

These filmmakers employed various film techniques to reveal the psychological state of the protagonists as they made these journeys. Film noir techniques guided uneasy audiences to identify with troubled heroes as they deal with existential issues. Music was sometime used to reveal the characters’ states of mind. Color was used to emphasize brighter new visions of the world, feelings of promise, or conversely drab visions of a social world in which the characters felt trapped.

Filmmakers used culturally recognized “bricolage” to tell these stories such as presenting “everyman” kinds of travelers, or by modelling the characters after a set of stock clown characters (the august and White clowns). In other cases, the “bricolage” included sacred Native American sites and tricksters, or carnivalesque exchanges of places between two characters of very different social backgrounds.

The shared stages of the journeys shown in these road movies elucidate the challenges confronted by the travelers. The *Heimlich/unheimlich* stage indicates what makes the protagonists feel strange, out of place, and generally not at home in their lives. It is this feeling which motivates them to embark on their trips. The *unheimlich* may be induced by a sudden realization of “lack of control” as in “The Hitchhiker” two men on vacation pick up a stranger who takes them captive. In “La Strada,” Gelsomina is taken from her home by a man who buys her to be his wife. *Unheimlich* for other travelers was expressed by a desire to

make a spiritual journey or a sudden feeling of being lost as to how to repair a father-son relationship.

The departure stages reveal what the protagonists must separate from to begin their journeys of self-discovery. Sometimes, the protagonists simply feel trapped in their current living situations, and they believe that they need to travel to a new place to start over. At other times, the departure is not seen as permanent. A couple makes a trip to take possession of property. A writer takes on a writing assignment that requires that he leave Europe and go to the U.S. Two men decide to go on a holiday break, to leave the city of Rome to go to the beach. A man decides to travel into rural China to find a boy and take him to visit his father in prison.

Border crossings can be considered unsettling, disruptive processes which require negotiation to enter new personal territories. In some cases, we saw that the borders crossed in the film stories were moral borders—an accidental killing, a temporary alliance with a criminal. These kinds of moral border-crossings would eventually require some form of redemption to make things right again. A border-crossing could be a positive disruption such as a decision to help another father and son connect with each other which leads the protagonist to believe that his own son might forgive him.

The return stage occurs in road films after they have spent time in another space which was beyond their ordinary places. When the protagonists return to their places of origin, road movies allow commentary on the previous social order. In one case, we see a return to “law and order.” The police apprehend the killer, and the travelers can return to their families. The return may be a reconnection between a husband and wife who previously had not realized that their marriage had been so empty. The return may be to a sense of

spiritual and emotional wholeness, a sense of harmony with a mixed cultural heritage, or a feeling of hope in the face of national uncertainties.

REFERENCES

(No author) 2019. "Jotted Lines: a collection of essays. Central do Brasil / Central Station (Movie) – Summary and Analysis" Accessed at:
<https://jottedlines.com/central-do-brasil-central-station-movie-summary-and-analysis/2/>

Anderson, Mary Ann. 2013. *The Making of the Hitch-Hiker Illustrated*. BearManor Media: Albany, GA.

Belton, John. 2022. *American Cinema/American Culture*. McGraw Hill: New York.

Bondanella, Peter. "La Dolce Vita: The Art Film Spectacular" pp. 65-92. IN Bondanella, Peter. *The Films of Federico Fellini*. Cambridge University Press. 2002.

Bondanella, Peter, and Manuela Gieri, eds. 1987. *La Strada*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press.

Bondanella, Peter, and Federico Pacchioni. 2017. *A History of Italian Cinema*. New York, London, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic.

Bonsaver, Guido. "Recent Work on Neorealism." *Italian Studies* 63 (2) 309-314, 2008.

Booth, Philip. 2011. "Fellini's 'La Strada' as Transitional Film: The Road from Classical Neorealism to Poetic Realism," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 44 (4): 704-716.

Brady, Martin, and Joanne Leal. 2011. "Accompanied by Text: From *Short Letter, Long Farewell* to *Alice in the Cities*." IN Brady, Martin, and Joanne Leal, eds. *Wim Wenders and Peter Handke: Collaboration, Adaption, Recomposition*. EBSCO Publishing: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) - printed on 9/9/2020.

Brandellero, Sara. 2013. *The Brazilian Road Movie: Journeys of (Self) Discovery*. University of Wales Press.

Brigham, Ann. 2015. *American Road Narratives*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press.

Carrera, Alessandro. 2019. *Fellini's Eternal Rome: Paganism and Christianity in the Films of Federico Fellini*. Bloomsbury: London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney.

Chen, Luying. 2017. "Media, Redemption, and Myth Superscription in Zhang Yimou's *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*." *Frontiers off Literary Studies in China* 11 (3): 510.

Cohan, Steven, and Ina Rae Hark, eds. 1997. *The Road Movie Book*, Taylor & Francis Group. Accessed at *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uh/detail.action?docID=166132>.

Costanzo, William V., 2014. *World Cinema through Global Genres*. Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, England.

Costanzo, William V., 2014. "Chapter 4: The Road Movie," pp. 295-334, IN Costanzo, William V., *World Cinema through Global Genres*. Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, England.

Costanzo, William V., 2014. "Close-Up La Strada." Pp. 374-378, IN Costanzo, William V., 2013. *World Cinema through Global Genres*. Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, England.

Costanzo, William V. 2014. "Close-Up The Motorcycle Diaries." Pp. 386-391, IN Costanzo, William V., 2014. *World Cinema through Global Genres*. Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, England.

Cunningham, Sean. 2006. "Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles." Museum of the moving image: reverse shot. Accessed at:

http://www.reverseshot.org/reviews/entry/1583/riding_alone

Davis, Jessica. 2012. "Empty Spaces and Backward Glances: Edgar Ulmer's 'Detour' and the Exilic Experience." *Kino: The Western Undergraduate Journal of Film Studies*.

Doherty, Thomas. 2019. "Detour." *Cineaste* 44 (3) : 56–58. <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.myunion.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=136434637&site=eds-live&scope=site>

Falicov, Tamara L. n.d. "Central Do Brasil-Film Plot and Review," Accessed at: <http://www.filmreference.com/Films-Ca-Chr/Central-do-Brasil.html#ixzz7KFIZqJ3A>

Free, William J. 1973. "Fellini's 'I Clowns' and the Grotesque." *Journal of Modern Literature* 3 (2):214-27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831032>.

Geoff, Andrew. 2005. *Abbas Kiarostami's "10."* London: BFI Publishing.

Gott, Michael, and Schilt, Thibaut, eds. *Open Roads, Closed Borders: The Contemporary French-language Road Movie*. Bristol: Intellect Books Ltd, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Gottlieb, Sidney. "Roberto Rossellini," accessed at: Oxford Biographies.com.

Heil, D. (2009). Conventionalism as a virtue: A study of powwow highway. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 33(2), 23–44. Accessed at: <https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.33.2.u510u66069152257>

Heiter, Celeste. 2008. "Film Review: Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles." *Things Asian* Accessed at:

<http://thingsasian.com/story/film-review-riding-alone-thousands-miles>

Holland, Norman. N. "Federico Fellini, La Strada/The Road (1954)." A Sharper Focus: Essays on Film by Norman Holland. Accessed at: <https://www.asharperfocust.com/LaStrada.html>

Isenberg, Noah. "Perennial Detour: The Cinema of Edgar G. Ulmer and the Experience of Exile." *Cinema Journal* 43(2), 2004: 3-25.

Isenberg, Noah William. 2013. *Edgar G. Ulmer: A Filmmaker at the Margins*. Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism. Berkeley: University of California Press. <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.myunion.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=649408&site=eds-live&scope=site>

Jaffe, Ira S. 1971. Review of "The Clowns by Federico Fellini," *Film Quarterly*, 25 (1): 53-55.

Johnson, Brian D. "Powwow Highway." *Maclean's*, vol. 102, no. 17, 24 Apr. 1989, pp. 62+. *Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints*, Accessed at: link.gale.com/apps/doc/A7560165/OVIC?u=txshracd2588&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=b7ca4272.

Kellum, Barbara. 2014. "The Archeology of a Relationship: Journeying to Italy with Roberto Rossellini." *Massachusetts Review* 55 (4): 706–11. Accessed at: <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.myunion.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=100203862&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Langen, T., & Shanley, K. (1991). Culture Isn't Buckskin Shoes: A Conversation Around Powwow Highway. *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 3(3), 23–29.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1978. *Myth and Meaning*. Schocken.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The Science of the Concrete," pp. 65-71, (Taken from Lévi-Strauss, Cl. 1960. "La Structure et la forme, reflexions sur un ouvrage de Bladimir Popp," *Cahiers de L'Institut de Science economique applique (Recherches et dialogues philosophiques et economiques*, 7), 99, Paris : I.S.E.A.) IN Bakka, Gretchen, and Marina Peterson, *Anthropology of the Arts : A Reader*, 2017. Bloomsbury: London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney.

Mulvey, Laura. "Satellites of love." *Sight and Sound*, [s. l.], n. 12, p. 20, 2000. Accessed at <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.myunion.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.72053857&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Noson, Kate. 2017. "Blind Sexualities: Blindness and the Gaze in the Films of Dino Risi." *Italianist* 37 (2): 192–211. doi:10.1080/02614340.2017.1332723.

Osteen, Mark. 2013. *Nightmare Alley: Film Noir and the American Dream*. The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore

Pinazza, Natalia, and Louis Bayman. 2014. *Journeys in Argentine and Brazilian Cinema: Road Films in a Global Era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Porton, Richard. 2014. "Il Sorpasso." *Cineaste* 39 (3): 70. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=voh&AN=96517131&site=ehost-live>.

Proyekt, L. n.d. "Central Station," Accessed at: http://www.columbia.edu/~lnp3/mydocs/culture/central_station.htm

Ricciardi, Alessia. "The Spleen of Rome: Modernism in Fellini's *La dolce vita*." *Modernism/modernity* 7, no. 2 (2000): 201-219.

Rosello, Mireille. 2011. "Ismaël Ferroukhi's Babelized Road Movie." *Thamyris/Intersecting: Place, Sex & Race* 23 (1): 257-75. <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.myunion.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=101648213&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Sadler, Darlene J. 2013. "Leaving Home in Three Films by Walter Salles." Pp. 145-161, In Brandellero, Sara, ed. *The Brazilian Road Movie: Journeys of (self) Discovery*. University of Wales Press.

Sanchez, Renata Latuf de Oliveira. 2015. "A Cenografia e o Espaço-Tempo no Neorealismo como Indicador da Sociedade Italiana no Post-Guerra: Uma breve análise a partir de Roma, Cidade Aberta e Ladros de Bicicleta (Scenery and Space-time Relation in Neorealism as an Indicator of Post-war Italian Society: An analysis of Rome, Citta Aperta and Ladri di Biciclette)." *Revista Electronica do Centro Interdisciplinar de Estudos Sobre a Cidade*, 7 (10): 228-261.

Seelye, J. (1964). The Easy Life (Il Sorpasso. The Overtaking ["Passing"]) Dino Risi. *Film Quarterly*, 17(4), 41-44. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1210654>

Swados, H. (1956). La Strada: Realism and the Comedy of Poverty. *Yale French Studies*, 17(17), 38-43. Accessed at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2929116>

Schweninger, Lee. *Imagic Moments: Indigenous North American Film*, University of Georgia Press, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central, Accessed at: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uh/detail.action?docID=1222484>.

Sklar, Robert. 2006. "Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles" *Cineaste* 31 (4): 66-68.

Toler, Michael. 2007. "An interview with Filmmaker Ismael Ferroukhi." *World Literature Today* 2007 (Jan-Feb): 34-37.

Toman, M., & Gerster, C. (1991). Powwow Highway in an Ethnic Film and Literature Course. *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 3(3), 29-38.

Torriglia, Anna Maria. "The discovery of the South as an alien place and Rossellini's precocious critique of the West in *Viaggio in Italia*." *Annali d'Italianistica* 15 (1997). *Gale Literature Resource Center* (accessed June 27, 2020). Accessed at: https://link-gale-com.proxy.myunion.edu/apps/doc/A182336843/LitRC?u=vol_m761j&sid=LitRC&xid=01762cb4

Vettore, E. “*Voyage in Italy*.” Roberto Rossellini’s Non–Dualistic View of the World and Cinema” *Italian Studies in Northern Africa* Vol. 26 No. 2 (2013).

Wagstaff, C. 2007. *Italian Neorealist Cinema: An Aesthetic Approach*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Young, Collier, and Ida Lupino. 2013. “Why We Made The Hitch-Hiker” IN Anderson, Mary Ann, *The Making of the Hitch-Hiker Illustrated*. BearManor Media: Albany, Georgia.

Young, Vernon (Autumn 1956). “La Strada: Cinematic Intersection.” *Hudson Review* 9 (3): 437-444.