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European 'Films of Voyage' : Nation,
Boundaries and Identity

Maria Luís de Ascensão Rovisco
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The University of York
Department of Sociology

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the investigation of how the tradition of European ‘films of voyage’ articulates themes of national identity in relation to questions of boundaries and cultural diversity in the European context. This work begins with an examination of literature on the nation and nationalism vis-à-vis questions of cultural diversity. This is achieved by exploring both the ‘modernist’ and ‘post-modernist’ trends which provide useful concepts and guidance for investigating national identity as a form of collective affiliation. It is argued that national identity has to be understood in terms of the relatively stable cultural boundaries that distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’. This research goes on to explore the distinctive features of the European ‘film of voyage’ which developed within the post-war period. In this context, two sub-narratives are identified and examined: ‘aimless journeys’ and ‘journeys-quests’. The specific films examined are fourteen ‘films of voyage’ produced in several national contexts encompassing almost fifty years. Three case studies are conducted for a closer analysis of a group of six films relating to three specific national contexts (i.e. the German, the Portuguese, and the Greek vis-à-vis the Balkan space). This aims to relate a detailed analysis of textually described elements to their historical and cultural contexts.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the material submitted in this work is wholly a result of my own research. None of the presented material has been published in any other form.

Aos meus pais,

António Luís e Maria Odete

INTRODUCTION

Films are cultural products that relate to specific socio-cultural contexts. In both style and 'content', European film is a significant cultural artefact for the historical and cultural analysis of European societies and peoples. Narrative fiction, both cinematic and literary, creates and expresses meaning about the many different ways in which we make sense of ourselves as having a particular individual or collective identity. Thus European films are not simply depicting or *reflecting* national societies or a European 'reality'. Rather, narrative fiction plays a crucial role in reproducing the cultural terms in which we construct our identities and is, therefore, a vital element in any investigation of collective identity in contemporary societies.

Within literature, the voyage has been widely used as a narrative ingredient, a motif, or a recurrent image since ancient times. As such, it can be found in the myths and the legendary texts from ancient Greece and Rome, as well as in utopias, the picaresque novel and the so-called *Bildungsroman* literary genre. There is also a long and well-established literary tradition of travel literature that includes those texts directly promoted by the voyages of discovery, commercial relations and scientific inquiry. The voyage is often structured as a physical or inward experience of self-discovery and a journey of social learning in contact with otherness. However, while these literary traditions have been examined, scant attention has been paid to the voyage, as a theme and a structuring device, in narrative film. Many films that today find a significant place within 'memory of cinema' (such as *La Strada*, *L'avventura* and *Pierrot le Fou*) clearly deploy a journey as a structuring narrative device.

It is the purpose of this work to investigate how themes of national identity are articulated within the tradition of European 'films of voyage'. My aim in this regard is to inquire *how* this cinematic tradition is dealing with national identity vis-à-vis questions of boundaries and cultural diversity. In the first instance, this will involve reflecting upon the contributions of contemporary social theory to our understanding of how increasing cultural diversity is challenging or not the idea of the homogenous nation under the premises of the nation-state. This question is particularly important when we consider the processes of globalisation of culture, increasing mass migration and the proliferation of new and varied identity claims. Secondly, I will examine the narrative and sub-narratives of the European 'film of voyage' which developed in the

post-war period. In this context, I will explore the distinctive narrative and stylistic features of this cinematic tradition. Here, also, I will look at characters not as subjects merely constructed by the text but from the standpoint of the philosophical notion of personhood; a character is, then, seen as a person whose subjective experience of the world affects and changes his or her own sense of self. Having established a broad understanding of the tradition, I shall then present a group of case studies of a corpus of six 'films of voyage' relating to three specific national contexts: the German, the Portuguese and the Greek vis-à-vis the Balkan space. These investigations focus upon the ways in which specific textual properties of the films reflect upon the sociological and historical contingencies of particular national configurations. Hence, this research seeks to emphasise how these 'texts' are specifically dealing with cultural, political and geographic boundaries in the context of the complexity and diversity of particular national cultures.

This approach aims to bring together some of the analytical tools of the film studies field with a sociological perspective. Textually described elements (e.g. mise-en-scène, characters, camera work, narrative structure, sound) are examined in conjunction with extra-textual historical and sociological information. This is founded on the belief that if we are to understand the relation between specific 'texts' and socio-historical contexts it is necessary to use a perspective that cuts across the fields of the humanities and the social sciences. This work aims to blend in a novel manner perspectives and fields of knowledge as distinct as narratology, symbolic geography and social theory. At the same time, it seeks to avoid a purely text-driven analysis of the kind so prominent in literary criticism.

In chapter 1, I will explore the literature on theories of the nation and nationalism that constitutes the cornerstone of modernist approaches to the emergence of nations. This analysis of the 'modernist trend' will be derived from a consideration of the works of Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, Jürgen Habermas and Anthony D. Smith. I will draw upon the so-called 'theories of nation-building' to argue that nations are cultural and political constructs of modernity. Such a theoretical orientation, which is commonly identified with the works of Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson, contrasts with the stance of Anthony D. Smith who emphasises the role of pre-modern cultural elements in the formation of modern nations.

In chapter 2, I will explore the question of the nation vis-à-vis cultural difference in contemporary societies as this has been framed by post-modernist approaches. I will draw upon Hommi Bhabha, Edward Said and Stuart Hall who, in critically opposing the modernist trend, argue that national cultures are hybrid and heterogeneous and do not conform to territorial limits of the nation-state. I will show that at the core of the 'post-modernist trend' is a call for a politically committed social theory that is able to resist hegemonic Western culture.

In chapter 3, I will investigate the limits and possibilities of both the 'modernist' and 'post-modernist' trends for the study of national identity as a form of collective affiliation. I will explore the limitations of post-modernism with regard to the question of *where* the cultural boundaries of the nation lie. I go on to provide a theoretical and analytical framework to enable comparative research on national identities. I shall then propose the view that, at least for analytical purposes, national identity ought to be comprehended as a matter of the study of the cultural boundaries differentiating 'us' and 'them'. In recasting some aspects of the theoretical positions of both Benedict Anderson and Anthony D. Smith, I shall conclude by explaining the elective affinity between people's sense of national belonging and the symbols, images and narratives of the nation with which we become acquainted in everyday life.

In chapter 4, I will introduce the general narrative and thematic patterns of the European 'film of voyage' that will be expanded in chapters 7 and 8, and I will provide an overview of the analytical considerations informing my approach to the film analysis.

In chapter 5, I will examine the main narrative and thematic patterns as well as aspects of character typifications, in the American road-movie. This analysis will be linked to the exploration of the ambivalences of the genre which, on the one hand, is an instrument of social critique of American society and, on the other hand, celebrates the egalitarian ethos of American democracy.

In chapters 6 and 7, I will explore the two sub-narrative patterns of the European 'film of voyage': aimless journeys and journey-quests. I shall examine in each of the sub-narratives the basic narrative, beginnings, episodic structure, and key events vis-

à-vis narrative closure. I shall also consider the figure of the voyager in relation to questions of personal identity and his or her relationship with the surrounding space.

In chapter 8, I will provide the analytical framework that will enable the examination of themes of national identity in relation to questions of boundary-crossing and definition within the case studies. This will be structured around two clusters of themes: “Identity, Memory and Place” and “Boundaries and Cultural Diversity”.

In chapters 9, 10 and 11, I shall present three case studies based upon an in-depth analysis of six European ‘films of voyage’ relating to specific national contexts. I will draw upon the two clusters of themes presented in chapter 8 so as to relate stylistic and narrative aspects of the films to the relevant sociological and historical information of particular national contexts. In chapter 9, I shall analyse *Kings of the Road* and *Alice in the Cities* vis-à-vis the historical and cultural circumstances prevailing in post-war Germany. In chapter 10, I shall analyse *The Suspended Step of the Stork* and *Ulysses’ Gaze* vis-à-vis the historical and cultural circumstances of Greece (and the Balkan space). In chapter 11, I shall analyse *Five Days, Five Nights* and *Journey to the Beginning of the World* vis-à-vis the historical and cultural circumstances of Portugal.

In the Appendices A to F, I will present in several summarising tables substantive information on the textual properties derived from the analysis of the six films being considered in the case studies.

PART I : NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

In this part, my aim is to discuss why so many individuals and groups continue to identify themselves with the cultural construction of the nation in a context where social theory increasingly draws attention to cultural diversity and the fragmentation of the social within and beyond the state level. Thus the question to ask is whether it still makes sense to comprehend national identity as a form of collective identity in the face of the process of globalisation of culture and growing cultural difference. What is also at stake here is the state apparatus' ability to accommodate and deal with cultural diversity in view of the growing mass flows of migrants and refugees (Stolke, 1995; Bhabha, 1999). Post-modernist literature has emphasised that we have been witnessing an explosion of particularistic identities on a worldwide scale. It appears that the multiplication of social groups and the emergence of new social movements (ecological movements, ethnic minority movements, nationalist separatist movements, etc.) with particular identity claims are challenging the nation-state. Arguably, for post-modernists, all spheres of social life are facing the overwhelming effects of the globalisation of culture in a context where identities emerge, multiply and disappear within particular and limited spatial and temporal horizons. However, we have also to recognize that national identity remains a ubiquitous and inescapable form of collective identity in contemporary societies (see Poole, 1999). In fact, almost every single individual can imagine his or her existence in connection with a specific national identity. Hence it is important to comprehend the intersubjective ways in which individuals perceive their sense of belonging to the nation. When considering the multiplication and increasing public visibility of social groups claiming specific identities, can national identity remain firm and unchallenged? In societies increasingly exposed to the effects of globalisation, could we agree that collective identification with the nation endures as inescapable or hardly negotiable? Is it for the nation-state to secure the permanence of such an inexorable loyalty?

CHAPTER 1 : THE 'MODERNIST TREND'

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore theories of the emergence of the nation and nationalism so as to investigate the constitution of national identity as a form of collective belonging in contemporary societies.

In the early 1980s Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) and Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) radically influenced thought on the emergence of the modern nation-state and theories of nationalism. These two works paved the way for a prolific stream of social theory that opened the debate on the question of national identity from a more sociologically oriented framework. Latterly, Hobsbawm's influential *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990) on the history of the state system of modern capitalism and the emergence of the nation, and Habermas' thesis of 'constitutional patriotism' developed in several essays (e.g. *National Identity and Citizenship* (1994) and *La Inclusión Del Otro - Estudios de Teoría Política* (1999 [1996]) [*The Inclusion of Otherness - Studies in Political Theory*]), complemented this already solid body of theoretical work. Finally, there is the work of Anthony D. Smith, who is perhaps the most prolific thinker on nationalism in the English-Speaking world (Poole, 1999). He offers a processual approach to the emergence of the nation and nationalism that is rare in contemporary social theory. In reflecting upon the pre-modern ethnic and cultural constituents of modern nations he offers a unique explanation of the constitution of national identity as a collective cultural phenomenon. For the purpose of outlining the core issues of his extensive work on such topics, I shall mainly draw upon the group of essays recently compiled in *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (1999) and also in *National Identity* (1991).

I suggest that the approaches of Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawm, Habermas and Smith can be designated the 'modernist trend'¹. Their perspectives converge in their focus on the substantive historic conditions under which conceptions of the nation could emerge and develop in the last two centuries. Broadly, the nation is perceived either as a cultural artefact or as an enduring historical phenomenon determined, or at least associated with, the cultural, social, political and economic changes occurring with

the coming of the modern age. Such major shifts are associated with the widespread phenomena of bureaucracy, secularisation, industrialisation and the rise of vernacular languages and mass communication. It is noteworthy, however, that Smith's approach sharply contrasts with the theories of nation and nationalism advanced by his modernist counterparts (i.e. Anderson, Gellner and Hobsbawm) when it comes to account for the role and importance of pre-modern cultural elements in the constitution of modern nations. This chapter also aims to explore and emphasise the terms of such divergence within the 'modernist trend'.

My aim here is thus to clarify and highlight the core arguments of the literature being considered, rather than seeking an exhaustive summary account of the major theories of the nation and nationalism.

1.2 Ernest Gellner - A Political Shelter for the Nation

Gellner's theory of the emergence of modern nations, along with Anderson's and Hobsbawm's perspectives, has for long been associated with the so-called school of 'nation-building'. In *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) he argues that the notions of 'nationalism', 'nation' and 'state' are conceptually linked. His central argument is that modern nations are a consequence of the industrialization process that occurred with the advent of modernity. In reflecting upon the rise of an industrial social organization, Gellner's focus is on the conditions determining the transition from agrarian societies, where local popular cultures were clearly bounded and spatially isolated under the aegis of literate elites, to a universal standardised and literate culture promoted and sustained by the modern state apparatus. In his own words, "the social organization of agrarian society, however, is not at all favourable to the nationalist principle, to the convergence of political and cultural units, and to the homogeneity and school-transmitted nature of culture within each political unit" (Gellner, 1983: 39).

A major implication of this process is that cultural homogeneity and the congruence between the political and cultural dimensions of the nation are the crucial features for the accomplishment of the nationalist principle in industrialized societies. Moreover, generalized communication and social mobility appear as clearly defined characteristics in the new industrialized societies. The literate and homogenous strata of industrial societies possess an extraordinary social and occupational mobility that prevents culture from becoming the monopoly of a restricted cultural group. With the

establishment of the modern state, effective communication within modern societies is maintained by an extensive standardized and literate culture, and not by a popular local and illiterate culture (Gellner, 1983: 35-38).

The role of the state in assuring the cultural and political unity of the nation is a core aspect of Gellner's thesis. "The state, inevitably, is charged with the maintenance and supervision of an enormous social infrastructure (...). The educational system becomes a very crucial part of it, and the maintenance of cultural/linguistic medium now becomes the central role of education. The citizens can only breathe conceptually and operate within that medium, which is co-extensive with the territory of the state and its educational and cultural apparatus, and which needs to be protected, sustained and cherished" (Gellner, 1983: 63-64).

In addition, Gellner insists that the success of the principle of nationalism, i.e. the principle of homogeneous cultural units as the foundations of political life (Gellner, 1983: 125) is not a consequence of nationalist ideologies which he sees as suffering from pervasive false consciousness. Instead, the consolidation of modern nations depends solely on the specific conditions of modernity. Only in such circumstances can a homogeneous culture, under the political shelter of the state, become easily accepted and recognizable among the nation's members, regardless of what is conveyed by a nationalist ideology (Gellner, 1983: 124-125). Furthermore, Gellner overtly criticizes the "false theories" of nationalism which he considers indefensible. He draws special attention to the fallacies of romantic nationalism and its claims concerning the nation as 'naturally' rooted in kinship ties, in the territory and in a culture anchored in immemorial myths, tales and traditions. He goes on to argue that the most mistaken assumption of nationalist thinkers is "(...) that the 'nations' are there, in the very nature of things, only waiting to be 'awakened' (a favourite nationalist expression and image) from their regrettable slumber, by the nationalist 'awakener'" (Gellner, 1983: 48). While these nationalist writers and intellectuals use symbols and cultural elements already available to forge the idea of naturalness and antiquity of nations, Gellner suggests that nations are historical inventions, often arbitrary, which only became possible in modernity.

At first glance, it might appear that Gellner's thesis does not draw particular attention to the question of national identity as a form of collective identity. Certainly, this is not explicitly formulated in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983). That is not to say, however, that the author is deliberately dismissing the question of collective attachment to the nation. When we consider Gellner's model of the nation, it can be

seen that the issue of collective identification with the nation is being addressed in the argument that it is a literate and highly centralized culture, widely available to everyone, that constitutes the primary cultural referent for individuals in modern industrial societies. In Gellner's words, "a situation arises in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify" (Gellner, 1983: 55). This does not imply the exclusion of other forms of collective identity. Even so, national identity appears to constitute the major form of collective attachment within the social organization of industrial societies. As argued by Breuilly (1985: 67), while nationalism develops in relation to new patterns of social movement, state organization and intellectual and cultural innovation, it is also true that the development of a standardized culture clearly promotes and makes plausible notions of national identity.

In recent years, Gellner's theorization of the emergence of the nation has attracted wide criticism. Its most contested aspect appears to be the way in which Gellner fails to address the question of cultural and ethnic diversity within the nation-state. As argued by Schlesinger (1987: 244), in Gellner's approach "an important perspective which is left out is that which concerns itself with a view of culture as a site of contestation". Gellner's proposed model of the nation is clearly intolerant towards ethnic minority identity claims whilst dismissing effective social and economic inequality. This is because the idea of the congruence between culture and state politics requires a type of social integration which conflicts with societies that feature a wide cultural differentiation. The underlying assumption is that in the mass centralized societies of the industrial era, all ethnic minorities, and minority cultural groups in general, have to be suppressed or assimilated by dominant homogeneous cultures. According to Gellner's formulation of the nation, this is achieved by means of a process of social integration that seeks to suppress the differences underlying the economic and political asymmetries obstructing social mobility.

In addition, Gellner's thesis also stresses the role of the mass media in the maintenance of the cultural unity of the nation. Gellner emphasises, in particular, the importance of the mass communication apparatus in reinforcing the uniformity of all national cultures. He strongly disagrees with those perspectives arguing that the mass media facilitate the spread of nationalist ideas. Against such a stance, he suggests that it is not the content of the 'mass media' but the medium itself, i.e. its possibilities as an apparatus of mass broadcasting, which consolidates "national character"².

In short, in arguing for the congruence between the political and cultural dimensions of the nation in mass-centralized literate societies, Gellner's thesis clearly supports the idea of the nation as an invention of the modern era.

1.3 Eric Hobsbawm - Inventing the Nation and the Rise of the Modern State

Hobsbawm's approach in *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990) closely follows Gellner's theory of the origins of the modern nation and nationalism. Both authors agree that only in the specific social, cultural, economic and political conditions of modernity was the emergence of the nation possible. Hobsbawm borrows from Gellner the notion of 'nationalism' (not to be confused with nationalist ideology) and subscribes to the idea of the congruence of the political and cultural realms of the nation. His core argument is that it is not possible to recognize the existence of the nation in the absence of the political and territorial unit of the nation-state. He then goes on to emphasise the elements of 'artefact' and 'invention' underlying the formation of modern nations in a similar fashion to Gellner (Hobsbawm, 1990: 13-14).

Essentially, both authors accord that nations and nationalism are a product of modernity. However, Hobsbawm is more interested in the historical conditions than in a more explicit theorization of the nation. His line of argument differs substantially from Gellner's preferred perspective on modernization which is "(...) constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analysed from below, that is in the terms and assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist" (Hobsbawm, 1990: 10).

From a historical standpoint, Hobsbawm is primarily interested in comprehending the way in which the 'national idea', as conveyed by nationalist state and non-state movements, came to mobilize mass populations by penetrating people's minds and allowing these to have a 'national consciousness'. For this reason, he focuses his investigation on a specific period in the history of national movements, beginning in the late nineteenth century, which corresponds to the time when state-defined political nationalist programmes reached the popular strata (Hobsbawm, 1990: 42-43). Such an approach centres on a historical overview of the crucial social and political conditions that enabled mass mobilization towards the 'national cause' and thus made this an

achievable goal for the recently formed national state governments. Unsurprisingly, nationalist movements and ideologies flourished in the very same context that gave rise to the emergence of national states.

Hobsbawm is basically concerned with the understanding of the historical circumstances that allowed national identification among people. However, he overtly admits the obvious difficulties in apprehending and assessing ordinary people's attachment to the 'nation'. The so-called 'pre-national' constituents are then seen as crucial to investigate those existing feelings of collective belonging which could potentially operate on the macro-political scale of the modern state. Language, ethnicity, religion and the consciousness of belonging or having belonged to a lasting political entity, were the most relevant criteria of collective identification in pre-modern communities. In this period, individuals were accustomed to identify themselves with human collectives that significantly differed in scale, nature and extent from the modern nation-state. Nonetheless, Hobsbawm goes on to argue that such 'protonational' criteria, when mobilized by the political unity of the nation-state, could easily play an important role in establishing a national affiliation among the nation's members (see Hobsbawm, 1990: 46 - 79). After assessing the role of such collective feelings in the constitution of national consciousness, Hobsbawm concludes that these have, in fact, facilitated the task of nationalism when used by the state apparatus. It is noteworthy, however, that for Hobsbawm such powerful feelings of collective affiliation are not able by themselves to create either nations or states.

In short, in Hobsbawm's view, we cannot think of the invention of nations beyond the confines of those political and territorial entities embedded in a state apparatus. Accordingly, the author draws attention not only to the social conditions (e.g. the resistance of traditional strata threatened with the advent of modernity, the emergence of new middle classes in urban areas, and mass migration) but also to the political conditions (e.g. the establishment of a legal and administrative state apparatus and the spread of democracy to many countries) associated with the arrival of modernity. Moreover, these were the specific historical conditions that gave rise to those linguistic and ethnic nationalist movements which laid down the ground for the criteria of language and ethnicity to be mobilized by the recently created national state apparatus for the manufacturing of modern nations. During the second half of the nineteenth century, these nationalist movements flourished mainly as a consequence of a response from the new educated middle strata (e.g. journalists, teachers, state bureaucrats) to the changes introduced with modernity so as to protect

their own class interests. In fact, the so-called Herderian equation of nation and language and the imposition of a print-language, often the result of 'forgery', as an official state language, could only succeed through the political manoeuvres carried out by the ruling governments and political elites of the modern state organization.

For Hobsbawm, the ideological social engineering undertaken by governments and associated political elites, stirred an effective mass mobilization within states in search of political legitimacy. Mass identification with the nation was mostly a consequence of ideological exercises of fabrication under the aegis of the state political and government elites. Thus 'inventing traditions' so as to build a reliable common past for the nation became a central aspect for the constitution of national affiliation. In addition, the state's enterprise of mass production of symbols and ideas of nationhood and many nationalist movements was facilitated by those 'nationalist feelings' already available amongst the population. Interestingly, Hobsbawm in being concerned with understanding the phenomena of nation-building 'from below', also seeks to make a connection between those feelings of collective identification people experience in everyday life (e.g. the linguistic and ethnic nationalisms initiated by the middle classes) and state undertakings in manipulating such feelings for the purpose of 'inventing' nations. For Hobsbawm, "while governments were plainly engaged in conscious and deliberate ideological engineering, it would be a mistake to see these exercises as pure manipulation from above ... To the extent that [nationalist] sentiments were not created but only borrowed and fostered by governments, those who did so became a kind of sorcerer's apprentice" (Hobsbawm, 1990: 92).

For Hobsbawm the period from 1918 until the end of World War II is the apogee of state nationalism. In the aftermath of World War I, social and political conditions encouraged the expansion of mass communications, which came to be exploited for political propaganda and both private and state interests. In his final chapter, he goes on to argue that the decline of nationalism is a catalyst for historical transformation, and foresees the constitution of an international order of nation-states towards the end of the twentieth century. This federalist prospective view recognizes a greater prominence of supranational policy-making. Hence, both nations and nationalist movements are in a process of losing most of the strength and 'character' they have shown during the first half of the twentieth century. This is mainly because the ideology of the nation is indifferent to the economic, social and technological developments of the newly established 'world economy'. Nevertheless, such a perspective does not prevent Hobsbawm from viewing the nation as a crucial referent

for the definition of national identity: “it is not impossible that nationalism will decline with the decline of the nation-state, without which being English or Irish or Jewish, or a combination of all these, is only one way in which people describe their identity among the many others which they use for this purpose, as occasion demands” (Hobsbawm, 1990: 182)³.

For Hobsbawm national identity will prevail as a form of collective identity only when the generality of the body of citizens is fully mobilized to adhere to the idea of the nation. Nonetheless, he has very little to say about the way in which national identity is effectively emerging as a form of collective belonging in the period of emergence of the nation-state. In fact, Hobsbawm’s line of argument in *Nations and Nationalism after 1780* is primarily devoted to the exploration of the historical conditions that made nation-building possible under the auspices of both the political and literate elites and the newly established state governments. Furthermore, and contrary to his initially stated purpose, Hobsbawm ends up embarking on an analysis of the emergence of the nation “from above” and not “from below”. He appears, however, to be aware of such limitation when stressing how difficult it is to apprehend the feelings and social belonging of the ‘common people’ within the newly established nation-states that were requiring and stirring people’s loyalties⁴. It is also noteworthy that he succeeds in stressing a very important dimension of national identity, i.e. its variability both in space and time, whilst making a call for further research on this topic: “ (...) we cannot assume that for most people national identification - when it exists - excludes or is always or ever superior to, the remainder of the set of identifications which constitute the social being. In fact, it is always combined with identifications of another kind, even when it is felt to be superior to them. (...) National identification and what it is believed to imply, can change and shift in time, even in the course of quite short periods. In my judgment this is the area of national studies in which thinking and research are most urgently needed today” (Hobsbawm, 1990: 11).

In short, Hobsbawm’s *Nations and Nationalism after 1780* offers a remarkable historical account of the conditions of emergence of the phenomena of the nation, the rise of the nation-state and nationalist movements in modern times. Another major contribution is the way in which he shows how highly relevant cultural criteria, such as ethnicity and language, played a crucial role in the cultural construction of the nation and the constitution of national affiliations.

1.4 Benedict Anderson - The Nation as an 'Imagined Community'

Like Gellner and Hobsbawm, Anderson links the genesis of nations and nationalism to the historic conditions of modernity. In *Imagined Communities* (1983 [1991]) he goes on to assess the social, cultural and political shifts which enabled increasing numbers of people to relate themselves to that imagined political community, which became the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time - the nation (Anderson, 1991: 3).

Unlike many theorisations, Anderson's approach emphasises the cultural dimension of the nation. What made possible for people to begin to imagine nations is perhaps the central question of *Imagined Communities* (1983), and governments and other political elites only were able successfully to invent modern nations when the conditions to enable such imaginings were already created in the cultural sphere. For Anderson, with the decline of sacred languages (such as Latin) and of the dynastic kingdoms, fundamental changes associated with the rise of print-capitalism were generating new ways of comprehending the world. Furthermore, the dissolution of cosmological understandings of the world allowed individuals to imagine communities, and to relate themselves to others, in many different ways.

In seventeenth century Europe, the growth of two new forms of imagining the world, i.e. the novel and the newspaper, ensured that the technical means for representing "imagined communities" were already available. With the advent of print-capitalism (e.g. the rise of books and newspapers as mass produced commodities) it became possible to achieve simultaneity across geographical distance. Anderson illustrates this point in reflecting upon the expansion of the modern newspaper that encouraged a sense of simultaneity across space. The mass-produced newspaper links unrelated events and stimulates a daily consumption by countless individuals dispersed or isolated in a wide space. Indeed, reading the newspaper creates a mass ceremony that congregates individuals in the almost simultaneous consumption (or imagining) of daily-related events (Anderson, 1991: 33-35).

Anderson's central argument is that "(...) the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation" (Anderson, 1991: 46). Newly established print-languages became fixed and normalized with the possibilities of print-capitalism. In the context of

modernity, print-languages became 'languages of power' widely accessible to increasing groups of people whilst creating the conditions for the strengthening of that image of ancestry underlying the subjective idea of the nation (Anderson, 1991: 37-45).

Anderson's approach differs considerably from Gellner's and Hobsbawm's theories in that it is not as markedly causal and deterministic. This is because he effectively highlights the *accidental* character of the conditions which made it possible for individuals to imagine the national community: "it remains only to emphasize that in their origins, the fixing of print-languages and the differentiation of status between them were *largely unselfconscious* processes resulting from the explosive interaction between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity" (Anderson, 1991: 45). Moreover, Anderson's goes on to explore the historical conditions that gave rise to the process of regularisation of genuinely 'national print-languages' that he sees as closely connected to the revolution occurring in the fields of philology and lexicography. In the mid-nineteenth-century, this revolution was extremely influential in the formation of linguistic nationalisms. Drawing upon Herder and other nationalist thinkers, these linguistic nationalist ideologies were mainly interested in mobilizing the language as a distinctive criterion to define the nation.

Like Hobsbawm, Anderson relates the expansion of linguistic nationalism to the material interests of literate middle strata, mostly constituted by state functionaries, intellectuals and professionals. The increase of mass literacy, associated with the expansion of mass communication and industry, had a tremendous impact within these middle strata, which were the main mentors and consumers of the philological and lexicographic revolution. In the nineteenth century, several linguistic nationalist movements grew from this social stratum to actively promote the model of the 'independent national state'. With the spread of democracy, there was a rise in the plurality of newly created independent states in the international field. For those 'populist' linguistic nationalisms, which were using the criterion of language to legitimate 'new states', the reception of the 'national idea' among the popular strata was crucial (see Anderson, 1991: 67-82).

In addition, through the expansion of literacy into the working classes, wider groups of people using the same spoken and written language started to become aware of and to comply with nationalist ideas. At the same time, other literary forms, such as the newspaper and the novel, became available to 'imagine' the nation. However, and as stressed by Ullock (1996: 432), for Anderson the achievements of the nationalist

appeal among the popular strata lie mostly in the emotional impact of the French and the American Revolutions on the popular imagination, and not so much in the ideological manoeuvres undertaken by nationalist movements. In the conditions of print-capitalism, the experience of both the American and French Revolution generated a host of new realities - nation-states, popular sovereignty, democracy, national flags, etc. - that almost immediately penetrated the popular imaginary. However, the model of the nation that by then became available for circulation with the emergence of the first modern states would have not been available without the social and cultural changes underlying the rise of literacy and the philological revolution. The 'modular' quality of the nation has to be linked to the events and ideas related to the French Revolution that, once it has occurred, entered the accumulating memory of print (Anderson, 1991: 80). Not surprisingly, when the model of the nation-state was available for 'pirating' for the private purposes of state governments or political movements it soon started holding great mass appeal.

However, Anderson's thesis of the expansion, adaptation and circulation of 'models' of the nation in modernity fails to explain why and how the cultural artefact of the nation ends up assigning such a strong emotional appeal amongst people. In other words, how is it made possible for so many people to strongly attach themselves to such imagined communities or inventions? His conceptualisation of the nation as an imagined community does not help the comprehension of national identity as a form of collective identification: why it is that, independently of the manner in which the model of the nation is either transformed or adapted, we are able to recognize everywhere a strong feeling of collective belonging to 'nation-ness'?

Poole (1999: 12) explores the limitations of Anderson's thesis in arguing that although the nation as an imagined object provides a place for the creativity involved in conceiving the nation, it does not help us to understand why it is that one finds himself or herself emotionally attached to an object that we have ourselves created. Anderson appears to acknowledge such a limitation when he reassures us that he has "(...) tried to delineate the processes by which the nation came to be imagined (...). Such an analysis has necessarily been concerned primarily with social change and different forms of consciousness. But it is doubtful whether either social change or transformed consciousnesses, in themselves, do much to explain the *attachment* that peoples feel for the inventions of their imaginations - or, to revive the question raised at the beginning of this text - why people are ready to die for these inventions" (Anderson, 1991: 141). Hence Anderson appears to be trying to explore national

identity as a form of collective belonging in suggesting that the cultural artefacts of nationalism (e.g. the national hymn, songs, novels, poetry) demonstrate, in fact, the many different forms and styles of people's 'love' for the nation. Furthermore, he claims that ceremonies and other official events for celebrating the nation, such as, for instance, the national anthems sung on a national holiday, stimulate the 'experience of simultaneity' across space and the spirit of communion amongst the nation's members (Anderson, 1991: 141-147). Notably, then, it appears that Anderson's explanation for the appeal of the nation amongst those who think of themselves as members relies on the achievements of what Bilig (1995) calls 'hot nationalism'.

In short, although, in *Imagined Communities*, Anderson is able to explain why certain communication patterns and structures are able to confer a national appearance on particular 'imagined communities', the reasons for the emotional appeal these may exert on individuals remain unclear. In fact, as suggested in Breuilly's critique of Anderson's thesis, the cultural changes that enabled individuals to start thinking of themselves as belonging to a nation, tell us more about how nationalist consciousness develops at an elite level than about how either popular support or effective political activity can develop (Breuilly, 1985: 75).

In the end, we have to acknowledge that Anderson's theory offers a remarkable conceptual framework to think about collective identification with the nation in highlighting the creative and imaginary dimension of national identity. This is because the array of possibilities to imagine the nation is *a priori* unlimited regardless of the mass appeal nationalist ideologies or movements or the state's enterprise of mass production of symbols of nationhood. That is to say that individuals will continue to imagine, and reinvent the nation, in infinite forms and styles. The importance of Anderson's thesis for studies of national identity and other forms of collective identity is today unanimously acknowledged. According to Delanty (1999: 373), "(...) the imaginary component of national identity is something that is now taken for granted - since Anderson (1983) - in theories of nationalism, though views certainly do differ on whether this to be seen as a fabrication (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) - or an integral and authentic expression of collective identity (Smith, 1995)".

1.5 Jürgen Habermas - National Identity and the Condition of Citizenship

The perspective developed by Habermas in *National Identity and Citizenship* (1994) and in *La Inclusión del Otro - Estudios de Teoría Política* (1999 [1996]) [The Inclusion of Otherness - Studies in Political Theory], constitutes an important and innovative approach to the comprehension of national identity in contemporary societies⁵.

In contrast with recent post-modernist perspectives, Habermas argues against a diminution of the scope of influence of the nation-state as a political unit in the international arena. In view of the increasing cultural pluralism in modern societies, he suggests that national identity is guaranteed at the level of democratic policies and institutions. Unlike Gellner or Anderson, Habermas's thought has not usually been associated with the so-called 'nation-building' theories. However, his thesis on the origins and consolidation of modern nations clearly fits their main line of argument. For Habermas (1994; 1999 [1996]) the modern nation, or the national state, is a consequence of the social, cultural and political changes of modernity that enabled the fusion of 'nation' and 'state'.

Habermas argues that the term 'nation' mirrors the history of the emergence of the modern nation-state. Its origins go back to the era of the Roman Empire and he claims that the concept has been subjected to different interpretations through time. Nations were comprehended initially as communities of people of the same descent, who were geographically integrated in the form of settlements and shared a common language, customs and traditions, but who were not yet politically integrated in the form of state organization. With the advent of modernity, and in the light of the principles of the French Revolution, the emerging democratic states were able to politically make use of a notion of nation as a guarantee for state sovereignty. As observed by Habermas, "the meaning of the term "nation" thus changed from designating a pre-political entity to something that was supposed to play a constitutive role in defining the political identity of the citizen within a democratic polity" (Habermas, 1994: 22-23). However, he clearly emphasises that an exclusively modern political entity such as the nation-state clearly breaks all pre-modern political ties. This is why he claims that the newly created nation-state lays its foundations in old political formations whilst eliminating the pre-modern legacy associated with to these political entities (Habermas, 1999 [1996]: 82).

Unsurprisingly, for Habermas the coupling of state and nation culminated in the establishment of the nation-state. Within the conditions of modernity, the notion of 'nation' could then be used politically by the state apparatus for legitimatising the condition of citizenship as a new form of social integration. Accordingly, the nation could now be imagined in many different ways by cohorts of intellectuals, the literate bourgeois classes, historians and romantic nationalist thinkers (Habermas, 1994: 23). They embarked on the task of 'inventing nations' by means of a reflexive appropriation of cultural traditions prompting the idea of the nation as a community rooted in common descent ties, a vernacular language or a shared culture. The many different ways in which different cultural producers were forging and disseminating the idea of the nation (i.e. nationalism) through the channels of modern mass communication soon reached almost every single individual. It is noteworthy that Habermas equates 'nationalism' with a specific modern phenomenon of cultural integration and not as pure nationalist ideology; he further suggests that nationalism is by definition susceptible to misuse by political elites (Habermas, 1994: 22). The subsequent emergence of a form of collective identity (i.e. national consciousness) such as national identity had a catalytic effect in the implementation of citizenship. In fact, "only the belonging to the 'nation' establishes a bond of solidarity with people that until that moment remained as strangers to each other" (Habermas, 1999 [1996]: 88; my translation).

Moreover, the emergence of a 'national consciousness' laid the ground for the transformation of the state into the 'nation of citizens'. However, it is also the case that citizenship was never conceptually tied to national identity⁶ (Habermas, 1994: 23). The coming of modernity brought a complex set of shifts, from economic development to improvement in transportation networks and the growth of mass communication, which undermined the traditional centralising political power of the monarch. Consequently, the newly established nation-states were forced to find new forms of legitimisation for the new patterns of political decision-making. These required the conversion of the whole national population into citizens fully identified with the state. In Habermas's words, "in order to attain such a political mobilization an idea was necessary which was strong enough to create convictions and appeal to people's hearts and souls in a more energetic manner than that achieved with the notions of popular sovereignty and human rights (...). Only a national consciousness attached to the perception of birth, language or a common history, only the

consciousness of belonging to the same people, converts the people into citizens of the very same political community” (Habermas, 1999 [1996]: 89; my translation).

What Habermas is proposing, then, is a civic conception of the nation whilst arguing that the democratic process is the only one able to assure the social integration of increasingly differentiated societies, especially in the face of the challenges of multiculturalism and globalisation. In contemporary democratic societies, the conception of ‘organic’ nation - or of ‘ethnic nation’ - which propelled social integration within states in search of political legitimacy in early modernity, loses its meaning and efficacy. This is because nationalism is not a necessary presupposition of the democratic process, although it played a role as a catalyst in the emergence of the nation-state. National identity becomes therefore a more abstract form of integration tied to democratic procedures and institutions. This perspective opposes those ethno-nationalist views suggesting that the cultural bonds of the nation, understood as a historical community of ethnic descent, guarantee an effective social integration within the nation-state.

In opposition to ethno-nationalism, Habermas advances his conception of ‘constitutional patriotism’, which has attracted the attention of numerous scholars (see, for instance, Delanty, 1999). This approach argues that the unity of culture and polity relies on the foundations of the prevailing constitution and, therefore, on the democratic processes. This then becomes the only reliable way to avoid cultural disintegration within societies ever more differentiated. Habermas argues, “the problem of ‘born’ minorities may arise in all pluralist societies, though it tends to increase in multicultural societies. Nonetheless, when these are organized as democratic legal states, it is always possible to find different paths for the precarious goal of a ‘sensible inclusion of differences’” (Habermas, 1999 [1996]: 125; my translation). A ‘constitutional patriotism’, able to guarantee the social integration of the citizens, has its limitations when it comes to account for those ethnic minority groups that are not endowed with the rights and duties of citizenship. For Habermas, “the level of common political culture must be disconnected from the level of sub-cultures and their pre-politically affiliated identities” (Habermas, 1999 [1996]: 95; my translation). Such a stance overlaps to some degree with Gellner's views on the cultural uniformity of the nation under the political shelter of the state. In addition, Habermas’ approach to national identity also presents considerable similarities to Hobsbawm's perspective on the consolidation of national consciousness in modernity. They both agree that a generalized collective identification with the nation only

became possible when, by the end of the nineteenth-century, the latter attained great mass appeal, embedding almost every single citizen (see Habermas, 1999 [1996]: 109). On the other hand, Habermas' account clearly diverges from both Anderson's and Smith's perspectives in that these look at the nation primarily as an ethnic or cultural community. Whereas Anderson attributes a crucial importance to the imaginary features of the nation without excluding, however, the role of the state as a 'model' to imagine nations, Smith's perspective, as I shall discuss, seems to converge with ethno-nationalism.

In short, Habermas conceptualises national identity as a form of social integration for the citizens of the nation. This perspective relinquishes any emotional or cultural attachment to the body of the nation understood as a community of ethnic descent. As suggested by Delanty (1999: 366), Habermas "offers a conception of a kind of national identity which is confined to an identification with the principles of the constitution as opposed to territory, history, or the state". Furthermore, 'constitutional patriotism' also aims to resolve the question of cultural difference through the alternative of the democratic path. However, it does not resolve the question of a sensible integration of 'difference' when we consider that ethnic minority individuals do not have the same opportunities of access to employment, education and health services as the majority of the state's nationals (see Bertossi, 2001).

1.6 Anthony Smith - National Identity and the Memories of the Nation

Anthony Smith's approach to the constitution of the modern nation and to the question of national identity constitutes an alternative line of argument to the so-called school of 'nation-building', which includes the likes of Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson. His main point is that the emergence of the nation is a result of a process with clearly pre-modern antecedents. Although agreeing that the majority of nations and nationalisms effectively emerged in the modern era (Smith, 1999: 11), his main critique of 'modernist' authors is directed to the fact that nations and nationalism were not exclusively originated in the conditions of modernity. Hence we have to consider the possible cultural and ethnic pre-modern constituents of the nation. In reflecting upon what he calls the 'modernist' approaches, Smith emphasises "(...) their systematic failure to accord any weight to the pre-existing cultures and ethnic ties of the nations that emerged in the modern epoch, thereby precluding any understanding of the popular roots and widespread appeal of nationalism" (Smith, 1999: 8-9). Smith therefore does not see the emergence of the nation as inevitably and irremediably connected to the appearance of the modern state. In addition, Smith also expresses his disbelief in the idea of the nation as built through fabrication and invention by elites and governments. It is, he argues, doubtful that the image of antiquity and 'naturalness' of the nation, which proved essential to hold extensive mass popularity, has been mainly sustained by political and governmental elites involved in the ideological appropriation and manipulation of nationalist thought (see Smith, 1999: chap.1).

Smith's approach draws upon what he calls historical ethno-symbolism. For Smith, as for ethno-symbolists, nationalism, both as an ideology and a movement, only succeeded in inventing nations in modernity because it is able to selectively work pre-existing cultural elements; "its is from these elements of myth, memory, symbol and tradition that modern national identities are reconstituted in each generation, as the nation becomes more inclusive and as its members cope with new challenges" (Smith, 1999: 9). Not surprisingly, Smith defines the nation "(...) as a named cultural unit of population with a separate homeland, shared ancestry myths and memories, a public culture, common economy, and common legal rights and duties for all members" (Smith, 1999: 104; see also Smith, 1991: chap. 1). On the other hand, for Smith, nationalism, as an ideological movement, does not originate or produce

nations, although it shapes and influences reversible processes of nation-formation. This is because the latter rely on the ethnic and cultural characteristics and collective consciousness of a population sharing a common ancestry. Hence, this collective identity may or may not reach the wider strata of the designated population⁷. Moreover, nationalist movements are typically modern and flourished only in the nineteenth century and later and, however strong they are, they are not able to create nations by themselves (Smith, 1999: 114-119).

Overall, there are two main features separating Smith's theory of the nation from the 'nation-building' perspectives of Gellner, Hobsbawm, Anderson and Habermas.

Firstly, Smith emphasises the ethnic dimension of the nation while conceiving the formation of modern nations as anchored in an 'ethnic core' with shared ancestry myths and memories, and associated with a homeland or historical territory. Ethnic communities provide important cultural resources for the nation-formation process. This view does not imply that nations are founded at the expense of ethnic and cultural diversity. Even though Smith has often been accused of subscribing to deep and primordial attachments (see Brubaker, 1996; see also Poole, 1999: 69), in fact, he argues that "though most latter-day nations are, in fact, polytechnic, or rather most nation-states are polytechnic, many have been formed in the first place around a dominant *ethnie*, which annexed or attracted other *ethnies* or ethnic fragments into the state to which it gave a name and a cultural charter" (Smith, 1991: 39).

Secondly, for Smith, the nation and collective national identification are to be defined in cultural terms since the existence of a state apparatus is not a necessary condition for nation-formation. He clearly contests the views of authors such as Gellner or Habermas, while maintaining that nation-formation and the rise of modern states are distinct processes that are not *a priori* inherently related. This is because the nation is, above all, a social and cultural community independent of the state that can even persist without the latter. For Smith, 'state' and 'nation' are conceptually distinct entities. However, that is not to say that these realities are completely unrelated. There is an obvious overlap between the two concepts, since both state and nation presuppose a common territory and common legal rights and duties; "the idea of the nation defines and legitimates politics in cultural terms because the nation is a political community only insofar as it embodies a common culture and a common social will" (Smith, 1999: 232). Indeed, although the state is not a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of modern nations, it is also true that modern state politics is essential for the consolidation of most nations. As Smith himself allows,

“(...) the state has become a ‘national’ state. Though often ethnically heterogeneous, it has sought to become unitary by adopting the ideological postulates of nationalism as its legitimation and attempting to mould, homogenize and create ‘the nation’ out of the various ethnic communities and ethnic categories that had been incorporated, usually accidentally, by and into the domains of the state” (Smith, 1999: 257). Unlike Hobsbawm who predicts the end of nationalism towards the end of the twentieth century, Smith seeks to demonstrate that both nationalism and nations are lively ‘forces’ in contemporary societies (see Smith, 1999: chap. 10).

Arguably, Smith subordinates the political dimension of the modern nation to the criterion of culture. This does not mean that to attain collective identification with the nation we can simply dismiss the state polity. For Smith, there are obviously limits for the process of reinterpretation of the nation since the narratives available to tell the ‘history of the nation’ cannot preclude the principal of political solidarity. Rather than turning into an obsolete reality in face of the globalisation process, the nation-state remains deeply committed to the promotion of an homogenous national culture, mainly through the control of the mass media and the education system.

Smith is also particularly interested in the question of whether national identity is a crucial criterion for collective affiliation in contemporary societies. He aims to explain both the inescapability and ubiquity of national identity in the contemporary world (see Smith, 1991: chap. 7). He then goes on to ask “why is that so many people remain so deeply attached to their ethnic communities and nations at the close of the second millennium? Why do the myths, memories, and symbols of the nation command such widespread loyalty and devotion? And why are so many people still prepared to make considerable sacrifices, even of life and limb, for their nations and cultures?” (Smith, 1999: 3). He further suggests “national identity (...) remains a most important, if contested, criterion and ideal of political solidarity” (Smith, 1999: 260).

Finally, in order to illustrate and apprehend the complexity and the dynamics of the nation, Smith embarks on a critique of nationalist ideology and movements in rejecting perspectives that emphasise the immanent or cumulative nature of the nation. He suggests that such views visibly dismiss the work of reconstruction and reinterpretation of the nation carried on by so many cultural producers. In fact, nationalist thinking on the nation does not account for, in general, internal conflicts of interests or to the impact of external forces and influences. In short, we are dealing here with a processual perspective that emphasises the historical continuity between

pre-modern social formations and the modern nation as the result of the continuous and selective work of reinterpretation and rediscovery of the nation, upheld by historians, archaeologists, artists, intellectuals and nationalist thinkers (see Smith, 1999: chap. 6).

Notably, Smith also opposes the recent post-modernist approaches to ‘nation-building’: “for the post-modernists, the nation has become a cultural artefact of modernity, a system of collective imaginings and symbolic representations, which resembles a pastiche of many hues and forms, a composite patchwork of all cultural elements included in its boundaries” (Smith, 1999: 168). This stance, which turns the nation into a discourse to be interpreted and a “text” to be deconstructed, dismisses the symbols, images and representations assigned to those novels, plays, songs, poems, newspapers, etc., which people make use of so as to make sense of their collective belonging to the nation: “it is in these symbolic and artistic creations that we may discern the lineaments of the nation” (Smith, 1999: 167-168). When trying to make sense of the ways in which people perceive themselves as belonging to a national community, Smith draws particular attention to the public resonance of those symbols and images people use to make sense of their collective life on a daily basis (see Smith, 1991: chap. 7). That is, those stories and symbols we use to tell the ‘history of the nation’ can only be made meaningful if related to the lived experience of the national community.

In conclusion, Smith’s approach sustains a comprehensive conception of national identity as a primary criterion of social solidarity and individual affiliation (Smith, 1999: 256-261). Without necessarily compromising the role of the nation-state in the construction of a homogenous culture, this perspective recognizes, on the one hand, that national identity is neither fixed nor static, and on the other hand, that national identity is an abstract, complex and multidimensional concept linked to many other forms of collective identification (such as those rooted in ethnicity, gender, region or religion) and to several analytic dimensions of the nation (ethnic, territorial, legal, economic and political). Unlike Gellner or Anderson, Smith’s thesis of the origins of the nations is less concerned to associate nation-building and collective identification to forgery and invention.

¹ This designation is usually associated with the views of Gellner, Anderson and Hobsbawm, rather than Smith’s perspective on the pre-modern cultural components of the nation. However, it is also the case that Smith recognises that the majority of modern nations arose in the modern epoch (see Smith, 1999: 11).

² See Schlesinger (1987) who stresses that Gellner's thesis along with Anderson's theory of the modern nation offers a point of contact with media theory. This is because the limits of the nation are inescapably implicit in the very categorizations used by media of communication.

³ This is perhaps one of the most ambiguous and weak points in Hobsbawm's approach. It is not absolutely necessary that states are particularly active in executing policies likely to promote and to assure emotional and effective mass attachment to the 'national cause'. As Billig (1995) recently noted, nationalism reinforces our sentiments of belonging to the national community by means of discourses, official state ceremonies, etc. which are constantly flagged by the media with routine symbols and habits of language.

⁴ This was especially the case, in the period before the political mass mobilization occurred during the first half of the twentieth century.

⁵ It is noteworthy that Habermas' work on this matter is not usually related to his broader theory of modernity.

⁶ For Habermas (1994: 23-24), citizenship evolved from Rousseau's notion of self-determination.

⁷ The important issue here is that when political and governmental elites invent a broad national mythology in order to increase state legitimacy, many segments of the population are alienated or indifferently left aside (see Smith, 1999: 33).

CHAPTER 2 : THE 'POST- MODERNIST TREND'

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall reflect upon the construction of the nation vis-à-vis cultural difference so as to frame the question of national identity from a post-modernist standpoint. I draw upon the theories advanced by Homi K. Bhabha (1990, 1994, 1996), Stuart Hall (1991, 1992, 1996) and Edward Said (1993), who find their place amongst the most prominent thinkers on the questions of national cultures being disrupted by cultural difference and the 'politics of identity'. They are at the forefront of the critique of the nation as a culturally and politically integrated unity. I thus seek to clarify how post-modernist claims about hybrid national cultures have been linked to the so-called 'politics of identity' in the context of the rise of post-colonialist studies. In this context it should be noted that national identity itself is rarely at the centre of these debates. The focus of post-modernist perspectives is rather on deconstruction of the idea of homogenous national cultures.

2.2 Globalisation and the 'Decentring' of the Nation-state

Although it is difficult to decide whether globalisation is an inherently modern phenomenon (Robertson, 1990; Giddens, 1990) or a phenomenon associated with the alleged post-modern condition dominated by global flows (Appadurai, 1990; Luke, 1995; Pieterse, 1995), we have to ask ourselves what is the role of the modern unit of the nation-state in a world crisscrossed by a 'global culture'. The underlying assumption here is whether the sociocultural processes and forms of life emerging in association with the global are, in fact, starting to replace the nation-state as the decisive framework for social life (see Featherstone and Lash, 1995: 1).

Broadly, globalisation theory claims, on the one hand, the return to 'community' by articulating the 'local' and the 'global' and, on the other hand, while reconfiguring the social and cultural spheres, the increasing difficulty of maintaining the nation-state as the historical reality underlying a more or less elaborated concept of society (Arnason, 1990: 224). For Featherstone and Lash (1995: 2), "a central implication of

the concept of globalisation is that we must now embark on the project of understanding social life without the comforting term ‘society’”.

Globalisation stresses the singular articulation between the scale of the local - local and regional identities and loyalties, and the forms of popular culture - and the scale of the global - trans-national flows promoting the circulation of people, goods, images and information. This ‘glocalization’, or global localization (Robertson, 1995), appears to conciliate the forces of cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization with the local and global dynamics, which is encouraging the combination and recombination of a diversity of cultural forms, local and popular discourses with cosmopolitan lifestyles and other spatially dislocated social practices. For those arguing for the post-modern character of globalisation, the expansion of a global culture, a culture of ‘*pastiche*’ (Featherstone, 1993) or global ‘*mélange*’ (Pieterse, 1995), seems to lead either to a social and cultural fragmentation or to a revalorisation of community and identities. For instance, for Bauman (1995), post-modernism “opened the path from the nation-state to community”. In this view, community has been replacing the state as a centre for configuring and attaching identities through the invention of tradition. It is implied in this assertion that this “return” to community means not only the end of the symbolic hierarchies of modernity but also a refusal of the systematic universalist logic which confined national identity to the political limits of the nation-state. On the other hand, for Robertson (1990: 25-26) national societies are an important reference point for analysing an understanding of global-human circumstance and an important aspect of the globalisation process.

Clearly, the nation-state is being affected by trans-national homogenizing flows leading to the development of renewed strategies of cultural differentiation. Simultaneously, it competes with a multiplicity of ‘actors’ (regions, international organizations, multinational companies, national federations, etc.) in the international arena, while growing flows of mass migration increase cultural pluralism at the nation-state level (Appadurai, 1990). Luke (1995) takes further the claim of the ‘decentring’ of the nation-state in suggesting that the study of so-called national societies appears worthless, as he sees the nation-state as being replaced by a ‘neo-world order’ in our post-modern world of global flows. Others emphasise the erosion of national borders (Burgin, 1995) and the deconstruction of symbolic hierarchies that undermine those ‘national histories’ sustaining the belief in a common past (Featherstone, 1993).

In short, what has become visible today is the decline of a sociological tradition centred in class, social structure and the idea of society assimilated to the conception of the nation-state. Social theory is now aiming at reconfiguring the social and cultural spheres in relation to processes such as the 'aestheticization' (e.g. Featherstone, 1993) and 'informationalization' of social life (e.g. Luke, 1995). The leaning of social theory towards globalisation has also been linked to an interest in aspects of social and cultural fragmentation. The latter became a starting point for post-colonialist theory. Emerging in the beginning of the 1990s, and drawing upon the heritage of cultural studies, post-colonialism embodies a critique of resistance to the repression of 'cultural difference' in contemporary societies. As such it has constituted a major influence in the fields of anthropology and sociology.

We are dealing with a culturalist and emancipatory approach that is breaking with a sociological tradition of modernity and its focus on the binomial 'society/nation'. It goes on to radically deconstruct the idea of the nation as a culturally and politically homogenous formation. This critique is in obvious opposition to the 'modernist trend' approaches I explored in the previous chapter. As summarised by Pieterse (1995: 63) "the career of sociology has been coterminous with the career of nation-state formation and nationalism, and from this followed the constitution of the object of sociology as society and the equation of society with the nation. Culminating in structural functionalism and modernization theory, this career in the context of globalization is in for retooling. A global sociology is taking shape, around notions such as social networks (rather than "societies"), border zones, boundary crossing and global society".

2.3 Post-colonial Studies and the 'Politics of Identity'

Post-colonialist theory seeks to deconstruct the essentialist categories (discourses, concepts, symbols, etc.) underlying those homogenous narratives of the nation. Its critique is aimed at those fixed and stable conceptions of national identity naturalized around totalising notions of the 'people' and of the 'national territory'. The underlying claim is that the 'explosion of particularisms' and the 'proliferation of identities' inside the domain of the nation-state are today challenging the idea of the homogenous nation. Issues related to growing mass migration trends and the blooming of social movements and groups with diverse identity claims appear to have laid the ground for this radically new way of interpreting the nation.

It is against that background that social theory has latterly engaged in thinking the so-called unstable and negotiable character of identities. The debate on the 'politics of identity' and the question of cultural difference in increasingly hybrid societies became then a central concern for post-colonial theorists. Moreover, post-colonialist theory in being informed by post-modernist thinking also embarked on the defence of a new conception of the social, at the expense of a notion of 'society' as assimilated to the idea of the modern nation. In reflecting upon the role of the nation-state in negotiating the borders that separate 'us' (i.e. the included) from 'them' (i.e. the excluded), post-colonial thinkers developed the so-called 'politics of identity'. This is, in fact, still determined to a great degree at the level of the state apparatus, which succeeds in maintaining itself as a matrix for the nation and playing a significant role in affiliating people to the latter¹. In drawing upon both post-modernism and post-structuralism, post-colonialism theory embarked on a critical analysis, invariably carried on by deconstruction, of the hegemonic discursive strategies conveyed by the state apparatus in order to build and promote uniform national cultures. These approaches show a particular concern with the question of cultural difference and the problem of new identity claims vis-à-vis the discursive practices of Western cultural imperialism. The defence of ethnic and culturally diverse national cultures reveals to a great degree the inability of the nation-state unit in dealing with the question of cultural difference. Unsurprisingly, the focus is placed on the discursive practices supporting minority identity claims whilst the nation starts to be reconfigured as a "text" continuously open to new readings by a multiplicity of social actors (writers, artists, ethnic minorities, exiles, Third World-born intellectuals, etc.) who, from the margins, rewrite the "narratives of the nation".

Finally, another crucial feature of post-colonialist theory is the make-up of the nation both spatially and temporally. The chronological (history) and spatial (territory) dimensions of the nation do not conform either to the idea of the 'people of the nation' as ancestral people sharing a common history and genealogy, or to a representation of the nation as a politically bounded territory. This new design of both the national time and space is now linked to the idea of ambivalent, mobile and negotiable frontiers, where the past is always informed by the present and *vice-versa*. Issues related to mobility, journey, migrations and exile appear as central in the study of cultural processes and identity formation in debates about changing and negotiable cultural boundaries.

2.4 Homi Bhabha - The Ambivalent Borders of the Nation

Homi Bhabha's post-colonial thinking in being associated with the theory and the methods of post-structuralism, deconstructionism and semiotics, questions the grounds on which social theory is being subsumed to those hegemonic spheres that uphold geopolitical divisions, and particularly the dominant role of the 'West' as a power block.

Bhabha's approach presents itself as an anti-modern post-colonialism (Bhabha, 1994: 6) without removing the subject from the historical and social conditions in which identities are constituted. Moreover, he seeks to overcome the classical division between politics and social theory in arguing that it is not possible to keep an epistemological distance between the intellectual and theorist or the activist (Bhabha, 1994: 30). He argues for a politically committed social theory able to negotiate, or translate, cultural difference so as to resist and oppose dominant culture. Hence Bhabha's core argument is that social theory should lay down the basis for the act of translation of difference. In so far as the latter emerges as an act of interrogation, it also questions the ways in which discourses deployed by social movements and minority groups hold particular identity claims. Such discourses are likely to give voice and 'empower' those ethnic and cultural minorities struggling for the recognition of their own specific identities and often deep facing economic and social disadvantages.

For Bhabha, social theory is able to perform a radical reformulation of conceptions of 'culture' and 'identity'. He argues for a dismissal of those historicist discourses underlying the idea of uniform state-bounded national cultures, while proposing

'cultural diversity' as the privileged object of a politically committed theory. In reflecting upon identity formation in contemporary societies, Bhabha stresses anti-essentialism and points out the relational characteristics of identities that appear always as unstable and negotiable. Clearly, this is an attempt to overcome the idea of the 'unified subject', which goes back to Locke's formulation of personal identity². The central point here is that "(...) the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy (...). The demand of identification - that is, to be *for* an Other - entails the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of otherness" (Bhabha, 1994: 45). He further argues that "(...) we are no longer confronted with an ontological problem of being but with the discursive strategy of the moment of interrogation, a moment in which the demand for identification becomes, primarily, a response to other questions of signification and desire, culture and politics (Bhabha, 1994: 49-50). Perhaps not surprisingly, Bhabha prefers the notion of 'identification' (which implies the idea of an ongoing process) to that of 'identity' to refer the constitution of identities.

Bhabhas' concern with the question of culture focuses primarily on the comprehension of discursive forms, of the texts which allow us to think the limits, or the margins, of identity claims that may or may not succeed in opposing dominant culture discursive practices. In order to do so Bhabha makes use of the concept of hybridity that he considers central to understand how cultural difference disrupts uniform conceptions of the nation based upon the totalising discourse of hegemonic Western culture: "(...) I have developed the concept of hybridity to describe the construction of cultural authority within the conditions of political antagonism or inequity" (Bhabha, 1996: 58).

The process of hybridisation that he sees as currently cutting across national cultures enables a critique of modernist approaches which argue for a congruence between the political and cultural dimensions of the nation (e.g. Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). For Bhabha, the nation transforms into a space open to the 'location' of several cultures (i.e. 'in-between cultures') where the meanings of political and cultural authority confront themselves with minority cultural and ethnic identity configurations. This is why the well-delimited boundaries of the nation become blurred: "the 'locality' of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as "other" in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new "people" in relation to the body politic (...)"

(Bhabha, 1990: 4). In order to justify the idea of a hybrid national culture, Bhabha makes use of the notion of 'partial culture', which he defines as a hybrid space for the affirmation of the difference between distinct cultures while claiming the impossibility of culture's containedness and the boundary between (Bhabha, 1996: 54).

The radical and deconstructive critique of nation we can find in Bhabha's post-colonial thinking opposes the view of the nation as defined in relation to the political limits of the state territory. However, we cannot dismiss the fact that national identity as a form of collective identity is also defined in relation to a national culture that is constituted both at the level of civil society (workings of intellectuals, writers, poets, artists, etc.) and the level of the state apparatus. We have therefore to consider how conceptions of national identity are embedded in those discursive practices that construct those symbols, representations and narratives (e.g. 'the people', 'high culture'). Clearly, Bhabha intends to offer a critique of the so-called 'nation-building' theorists. In his own words, "the representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. (...) Increasingly, 'national' cultures are being produced from the perspective of disenfranchised minorities. (...) The Western metropole must confront its postcolonial story, told by its influx of postwar migrants and refugees, as an indigenous or native narrative *internal to its national identity*" (Bhabha, 1994: 2, 5-6). This is the reason why Bhabha is defending a social theory that aims to apprehend those metaphors of 'imagined communities' expressed by the narratives which give 'voice' to the identities of immigrants, the foreigner or the refugee, instead of homogenizing cultural difference by shaping the 'horizontal' image of society inherent in the tradition of modernity; indeed, "counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalising boundaries - both actual and conceptual - disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which "imagined communities" are given essentialist identities" (Bhabha, 1994: 149).

The critique of the spatial and temporal limits of modern nations, leads to the questioning of the binary divisions past/present and tradition/modernity. In refusing the historicism and holist conceptions of the nation, Bhabha further suggests that the temporality of the nation has to be apprehended at the level of the local, particular, and minority discourses. These in operating in the present reinvent recurrent images of the past while keeping open the readings of the future. For Bhabha, it is the construction of the nation from the standpoint of the present that effectively "(...)

makes possible for us to confront that difficult borderline, the interstitial experience between what we take to be the image of the past and what is in fact involved in the passing of time and the passage of meaning" (Bhabha, 1996: 59).

Finally, one of the most novel aspects of Bhabha's approach is his thesis of the double narrative movement of the nation. He argues that the double strategy of the 'pedagogical' and the 'performative' are crucial when it comes to understand the dynamics and complexity of the process of cultural production of the nation. There is a continuous tension between the narrative movement of the pedagogical and the narrative strategies of the performative. The latter contest the traditional authority of those essentialist categories (e.g. 'people' and 'homeland') whose pedagogical value relies on the narrative of historical continuity of the nation. Subsequently, the repetitious and recursive strategy of the performative disturbs the accumulative discursive strategy of the pedagogical which constructs the nation as a totality via the education system, the production of myths, stories and other collective tales and other nationhood symbols likely to be conveyed by the mass media (Bhabha, 1994: 145-146). The distinct and heterogeneous stories of the several ethnic and cultural minority groups that inhabit the national space emerge as the work of 'performative subjects' who are continuously writing and re-writing the nation. This is mostly accomplished through the contestation of the authority of the pedagogical that seeks to deprive minority subjects of their role as 'subjects of action' whilst transforming them into objects of knowledge (see Bhabha, 1994: chap. 8).

In conclusion, Bhabha aims to comprehend the nation as a "form of textual and social affiliation" (Bhabha, 1994: 140) and the dynamics of collective identification by focusing on those 'alternative stories of the excluded' which oppose the great narratives of capitalism and the western nation-state. Moreover, Bhabha's claim that in our post-colonial condition we need to look at hybrid national cultures allows two important conclusions: firstly, a refusal of the idea of stable and unchallenged cultural boundaries for the nation; secondly, the nation as a 'text' is inscribed in a temporality and a spatiality that are always framed from the standpoint of the present.

2.5 Edward Said - 'Intertwined Stories' and Western Cultural Imperialism

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said's approach to the questions of culture and identity in post-colonial societies comes close to Bhabha's thesis in as much as it

concerns questions of culture and identity in the context of a post-colonial world. However, he is not specifically interested in dealing with the question of national identity as a form of social affiliation. Said's focus is rather on the narrative practices that disrupt the hegemonic cultural constructions of the nation of Western imperialism.

Said is particularly interested in narrative forms, especially literary fiction that he considers to be at the centre of the history of Western cultural imperialism. This is because the power to narrate the history of a 'people' or of a 'nation' is also the power of excluding or blocking the narratives of oppressed and unprivileged interlocutors. Subsequently, the struggle and the resistance of dominated cultures finds meaningful expression at the level of the literature of colonized "people". For Said, narrative practices have to be considered as a method for the affirmation of the identity of dominated peoples and nations (Said, 1993: xiii).

Said focuses on the analysis of literature as a cultural form so as to explore the relation of Western imperialism vis-à-vis culture as a 'core issue' for the social sciences: "what I want to examine is how the processes of imperialism occurred beyond the level of economic laws and political decisions, and - by predisposition, by the authority of recognizable cultural formations, by continuing consolidation within education, literature, and the visual and musical arts - were manifested at another very significant level, that of the national culture, which we have tended to sanitize as a realm of unchanging intellectual monuments, free from worldly affiliations" (Said, 1993: 12).

Narratives of the modern nation are among those cultural forms that uphold the history of domination and exclusion of Western imperialism. In differentiating between 'us' and 'them', homogenous narratives of the nation often involve a certain degree of xenophobia while essentializing those conceptions of 'people' and 'territory'.

This is why Said argues that in our postcolonial societies identities do not generally conform to the hegemonic order that characterized modern nations and the empire. He then goes on to suggest a more relational conception of identity in arguing that "we begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of *identity* that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism" (Said, 1993: xxviii).

Similarly to Bhabha, Said seeks to promote a kind of alliance between social theory and politics while suggesting that the former should be able to comprehend both the cultural strategies of resistance and opposition in the framework of Western imperialism. His core argument is that we have to come to terms with the nation as a hybrid culture which is a result of 'intertwined stories' that through history, culture and geography link the metropolis to its colonies. Said further suggests that this way of defining and representing culture has been continuously ignored by many Western intellectuals and scholars. In addition, what many Western intellectuals, theorists and writers dismiss is the fact that the cultural sphere and the political sphere are not only connected but ultimately the same (Said, 1993: 66-67).

Said proposes a new methodology for the study of cultures and identities so as to comprehend different nations on a comparative basis. If we want to tell the 'history of nation' and comprehend national identities, we have to make use of a type of historiography that is contrapuntal and nomadic rather than one which is linear and subsuming and turns national identity into a homogenous and unitary thing (Said, 1993: xxix). For Said only the former perspective is "fully sensitive to the reality of historical experience. Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (Said, 1993: xxix). He further suggests that this is particularly the case in societies (such as the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Canada and France) that despite their extraordinary cultural diversity - since they attract considerable groups of immigrants - remain coherent nations.

The defence of a non-linear historiography so as to account for the hybridity and cultural diversity of the national culture echoes Bhabha's performative acts for writing the nation. For Said, this is the only method that is able to consider comparative studies as a basis to integrate and interpret a whole set of experiences, which may appear *a priori* as discrepant, and will succeed in getting a grip on hybrid national cultures. That is why he argues, for instance, that "a comparative or, better, a contrapuntal perspective is required in order to see a connection between coronation rituals in England and the Indian durbars of the late nineteenth century" (Said, 1993: 36).

In short, in the twentieth century, national cultures emerge as a field of contradictory and entangled experiences irremediably linked to specific cultural and historical circumstances. Moreover, Said accepts that the idea of antiquity and 'naturalness' of the nation that laid down the basis for those nationalist-inspired 'organic' conceptions

was central to the consolidation of national identities. However, he also argues that the conception of ancestral nation with its repertoire of symbols, icons, rituals and myths, conveniently invented so as to sustain the belief in a common past, conceals the tensions and anxieties embedded in the “pure” or “purified” images of a privileged and genealogical past, a past that excludes unwanted elements, vestiges, narratives (Said, 1993: 15 - 20). That is the reason why in Said’s view we cannot ignore those networks of ‘intertwined histories’ of nations, or nation-states, which do not confine themselves exclusively to the geographical and political limits of particular nation-states.

It is important, however, to stress that whereas Said strongly criticizes modernist theories of the nation in that they essentialize the ‘people’ and ‘territory’, he also accepts that when we look at cultural identities we are dealing, in fact, with contrapuntal ensembles. That is to say that no identity can ever exist by itself without an array of opposites or negatives: Greeks always required barbarians, and Europeans Africans, Orientals, etc. Said goes on to suggest, in a somewhat ambiguous remark, that identities should not be perceived as essentializations, although part of their enduring appeal is that they seem and are considered to be like essentializations (Said, 1993: 60). It might be argued that Said’s approach to identity does not seem able to distinguish between the task of the social scientist who is interested in comprehending identity as a relational process, and the ways in which human collectives make sense of their collective identities by means of essentialist symbols and narratives.

As for the construction of the temporality of the nation, Said’s perspective once again converges with Bhabha’s approach. For Said, the comprehension of ‘intertwined stories’ of so many different peoples and geographic territories depends on the continuous articulation between past and present. He ascribes, however, considerably more importance to interpretations of the past, although always from the standpoint of the present. That is because he sees the global configuration of our world as already inscribed in the coincidences and convergences of history, geography and culture; “appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps” (Said, 1993: 1).

In conclusion, even within the most contradictory and diverse historical and cultural experiences, the constitution of national identity as a form of social belonging

depends on the demarcation between “us” and “others”, i.e. other nations, nation-states, peoples, and so on, which function as opposites. The important point in Said’s argument is the need to assume a theoretical standpoint that will be able to raise the question of national identity as the complex and disturbing question of ‘our’ relationship with ‘others’. For Said, the theorist, the intellectual or the writer, are involved, as are many other individuals and politically active groups, in the production of unequal relations of power underlying the very existence of cultural difference at the national level. Social theory vis-à-vis the political actor play a major part in the makeup of the ‘nation’ (nation-ness) as an ‘open’ and revisable question. The cultural construction of nation at the level of the literature of oppressed and unprivileged interlocutors allows, in the end, the negotiation not only of the ‘identity of the nation’ but also the emancipation of the subject from hegemonic culture.

2.6 Stuart Hall - National Identity and the ‘Translation of Difference’

Stuart Hall as a prominent scholar in the field of cultural studies has recently been framing the questions of identity and culture in considering the contributions of postcolonial studies. Adopting a poststructuralist standpoint, Hall’s core argument on the study and comprehension of national identity and national cultures suggests the we need to perceive the nation as something more than a cultural artefact confined to a political entity (i.e. the national state) and supported by cultural institutions such as language and the education system. For Hall, “a national culture is a *discourse* - a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and conceptions of ourselves” (Hall, 1992: 292-293).

In the article “The Question of Cultural Identity” (1992), Hall develops his critique of modernist conceptions of the nation. He considers that the latter fail to apprehend the complexity and dynamics of national cultures in societies increasingly exposed to the overwhelming effects of globalization, and to the proliferation of new forms of collective identity. The question he raises in reflecting upon contemporary societies is “what representational strategies are deployed to construct our commonsense views of national belonging or identity?” (Hall, 1992: 293). The great collective social identities which we thought of as large-scale, all-encompassing, homogenous - those social identities of class, of race, of nation, of gender, and of the West - have not disappeared, although they cannot any longer be thought of in the same homogeneous

form (Hall, 1991: 44-45). Thus we have to be able to interpret their differences and internal contradictions, their fragmentations and segmentations, just as we are able to consider the homogenous and unified qualities they may also reveal. In short, we need to look at collective identities as not already-produced stabilities and totalities.

According to Hall, modern conceptions of the nation and of collective national identification paved the way for the 'narrative of the nation' to be told and retold in national stories, literature, the media and popular culture. These provide a repertoire of symbols and representations that ascribe meaning to the nation (Hall, 1992: 291). However, the latter as a homogenous cultural construct lacks an interpretation of the reasons why national identity has been constantly defined at the expense of ethnic, cultural and regional differences. This is why images and narratives asserting the glorious and timelessness national past often help to conceal a struggle to expel 'others' who threaten the identity of a dominant group (Hall, 1992: 293-295).

It is this portrait of the modern nation developed by the modernist tradition of nation-building that Hall seeks to deconstruct. That is, the image of the modern nation as embedded in solid state apparatus attached to an idea of national identity that appears as fixed and 'naturalized' around invented traditions. The main point here is to demonstrate why national identity was never as homogenous and unified as its representations may lead us to infer (Hall, 1992: 299). Hall looks at the nation as a structure of cultural power and a discursive system that, under the aegis of a state apparatus, has continuously eroded and dismissed differences that split *ethnies*, classes and ethnic and cultural minorities.

Like Bhabha and Said, Hall also attempts to explain why national identities as a form of collective affiliation neither conform to the political confines of the nation-state, nor are inscribed in genealogical ethnic ties. He argues the romantic idea of the identification between 'people' and 'nation' lays the very foundations on the concept of ethnicity. He goes on to argue that such an idea sought to reunite in the same human collective clearly distinct cultural groups, as attached to endogenous cultural features (language, costumes, traditions, and so on) that presumably function as symbolic markers for a unified national identity. Such a 'foundational' conception of ethnicity conceals the fact that in the Western world nations are not composed of only one people, one culture or ethnicity - modern nations are, in fact, cultural hybrids (Hall, 1992: 297).

In reflecting upon the makeup of the nation in our post-colonial world, Hall then examines phenomena as complex as cultural globalisation, identity-formation and

Western hegemonic culture. He goes on to argue that the process of globalisation disturbs those national identities unified in the discursive practices of dominant culture. He particularly endorses those views stressing the so-called 'space-time compression' (Harvey, 1989; Giddens, 1990) and the increasing cultural pluralism within many Western nation-states. However, Hall's perspective notably diverges from those views suggesting that the globalisation process is weakening or undermining national collective affiliation (Hall, 1992: 302). What has become questionable today is whether the alleged homogenising tendencies of globalisation (e.g. Appadurai, 1990) are effectively threatening national identities and the 'unity' of national cultures. Hall argues that it seems unlikely that globalisation will simply undermine national identities. Instead, globalisation is developing new 'global' and 'local' identifications (Hall, 1992: 304). More importantly, Hall's perspective suggests that the rise of dislocated and unstable identities leads to the destabilization of national identities defined as fixed and exclusive, rather than to their weakening.

In our post-colonial condition, Hall sees globalisation as intrinsically linked to the emergence of changeable and positional identities. Such identities then affect 'stable' national identities, while continuing to reproduce the conditions of cultural and economic inequality and to support Western cultural hegemony. As noted by Hall, "globalisation retains some aspects of Western global domination, but cultural identities everywhere are being relativized by the impact of time-space compression" (Hall, 1992: 306). Moreover, he goes on to argue that in Western nation-states, especially those that ruled colonial empires, we witness the formation of ethnic-minority 'enclaves' as a consequence of mass migration. Within these nation-states, dominant culture deploys the strategies of exclusion of difference that homogenize the difference between diverse cultural groups, while concealing their ethnic and culturally distinctive features³.

Hence when arguing for the decentralization of those Western dominant discourses that seek to universalise difference, Hall follows the path trodden by Bhabha and Said. He suggests that social theorists should be committed to an attitude of political resistance by means of a politics of criticism, which is also a new 'politics of representation': "once you abandon essential categories, there is no place to go apart from the politics of criticism and to enter the politics of criticism in black culture is to grow up, to leave the age of critical innocence" (Hall, 1988: 30).

Hall's aim is to demonstrate how minority discourse is attempting to oppose dominant culture by launching the basis for new identity politics that contests all essentialist

conceptions of identity. It is then by means of the 'performative' discourses of marginalized minority cultures, to use Bhabha's terminology, that it will be possible to deconstruct that concept of ethnicity rooted in naturalized and totalising conceptions of origins, territory and traditions. For example, a representation of ethnicity that links nation and 'race' within the hegemonic discourse dismisses the works of a whole new generation of 'ethnic' artists, writers, intellectuals and filmmakers who, from the margins, are reconstructing 'their' ethnic identity in light of the experience of Diaspora (see Hall, 1988).

With regards to the comprehension of the temporality of the nation Hall's approach once again comes close to the perspectives of Bhabha or Said. He argues for the need to reinterpret, from the standpoint of the present, those past historical experiences involved in the process of construction and reconstruction of national and other collective identities; "there can, therefore, be no simple 'return' or 'recovery' of the ancestral past which is not re-experienced through the categories of the present: no base for creative enunciation in a simple reproduction of traditional forms which are not transformed by the technologies and the identities of the present" (Hall, 1988: 30). The past is, in fact, constantly reinvented, rediscovered and narrated both in the discourses of a diversity of cultural producers (artists, intellectuals, writers, etc.) and in the life stories and oral narratives that people tell in order to make sense of their own collective belonging (Hall, 1991: 58). Thus one of the underlying assumptions here is that identities in being constructed within discourse are never completed and are always in part a narrative. Echoing Said's account of 'intertwined stories', Hall goes on to suggest that "we need to situate the debates about identity within all those historically specific developments and practices which have disturbed the relatively 'settled' character of many populations and cultures, above all in relation to the processes of globalization (...) and the processes of forced and 'free' migration which have become a global phenomenon of the so-called post-colonial world" (Hall, 1996: 4).

In conclusion, while considering the effects of globalisation in the so-called post-colonial societies, Hall offers an approach that looks at the constitution of national identity as a process oscillating between the discourse of 'Tradition' - which unifies the national culture - and the discourse of the 'Translation of difference' - which is the place for the enunciation of cultural difference.

¹ See Stolke (1995) and Shapiro (1999) on how national immigration policies play a decisive role in defining and redefining the borders splitting 'us' and 'them'.

² See Locke (1975 [1694]) for an account of his approach to personal identity.

³ In order to explore issues of ethnic cultural difference within national cultures, Hall has investigated the concept of 'black'. He has endeavoured to demonstrate how this category has been politically and culturally constructed in dominant culture discourse (see Hall, 1988).

CHAPTER 3 : MAPPING THE NATION: 'US' AND 'THEM'

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I reflect upon the limits and possibilities of the discussed theoretical trends with the aim of providing a theoretical and analytical framework to allow comparative research on the study of national identity vis-à-vis questions of cultural diversity. I start by exploring the limitations of the 'post-modernist' trend in terms of accounting for a sense of affiliation to the nation. I go on to propose an analytical framework to look at national identity as relying on highly salient boundary markers between 'us' and 'them'. Finally, I explore the possibilities of the 'modernist trend' so as to suggest the existence of an elective affinity¹ between forms of narration of the nation and a sense of national belonging.

I argue that it is as important to consider the ways in which national culture is constructed in our increasingly highly differentiated societies, as it is to consider the ways in which it appears meaningful for those individuals and groups who see themselves as affiliated to the 'nation'. Thus the underlying question here is why so many distinct people and groups continue to identify themselves with the 'nation' in a context of increasing cultural diversity both within and beyond the state level. I seek to provide an analytical framework that is able to conceptualise the inter-subjective ways in which people relate to national cultures. For this is an aspect of national identity that has been neglected by both the modernist and post-modernist theoretical approaches.

In order to do so, I draw upon the two analytical dimensions of the nation identified by Poole (1999). When we consider the nation we are looking at two clearly distinct dimensions of the same process. On the one hand, the process of transformation and contestation of the national culture. Here the nation is produced and reproduced as a cultural artefact. On the other hand, the nation also exists in the process in which individuals become aware of themselves as having a national identity (Poole, 1999 14). It could then be argued that the process of cultural production of the nation provides the symbolic and cultural resources people need in order to make sense of 'their' national identity. These resources are those provided, for instance, by literature, music, language and history. In short, national identity, as a form of

collective identity, has to be comprehended in the many different ways in which individuals and groups relate themselves to those cultural artefacts (i.e. symbols, images and narratives of nationhood) that give meaning to the idea of nation.

3.2 The Limits of Post-modernism

I want to argue here that the ‘post-modernist trend that I have discussed in chapter two by drawing upon the works of Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Stuart Hall fails in dealing with the reasons why people make sense of themselves as members of those communities they imagine as nations.

Here, we are looking at perspectives centred on the deconstruction of fixed and totalising conceptions of the nation in response to the need of perceiving the latter as a hybrid and plural construction. Society, or rather, the ‘social’, is comprehended as a ‘text’ open to successive and revisable readings. Moreover, the use of deconstructionism as a methodology lays the ground for a critical analysis of the discursive strategies underlying the cultural construction of the nation. Thus it is hardly surprising that views informed by post-modernism are not addressing the question of the appeal the nation exerts on so many different individuals and groups. Within the post-modernist trend there is no room to ask whether diverse groups with specific identity claims located within (e.g. ethnic minorities) and beyond (e.g. refugee communities vis-à-vis notions of ‘lost’ homelands) the state level may well maintain an emotional attachment to a nation.

Moreover, we are dealing with a kind of theorisation that focuses on the changing character of national cultures whilst arguing that the limits that separate these are ambivalent and continuously redefined. Consequently, it is not possible to identify where precisely the limits of the nation run in the complex process of establishing the difference between who is ‘included’ and who is ‘excluded’. Indeed, questioning the limits of particular national cultures has been one of the cornerstones of those perspectives drawing upon the so-called ‘politics of identity’; for what is at issue is the ways in which the state apparatus strategically promotes those discourses that essentialize both ‘us’ and ‘them’ (e.g. the foreigner, the immigrant, the refugee, the exile). That is also to say that, post-modernist approaches informed by post-structuralism usually confine their scope to a framework of analysis that simply considers one of the dimensions of the process through which, according to Poole (1999), the nation can be comprehended, i.e. the process of construction and

contestation of the nation. The underlying idea here is that national identity can never be definitely established since its ascribed meanings are constructed within discourse, and never outside discourse. The production and reproduction of the nation appears as a site of contestation and change, where the discursive practices of many different groups and cultural interlocutors participate in the writing and re-writing of narratives able to resist the discourse of the hegemonic nation culture.

This coupling of post-modernism with post-colonialist approaches succeeded in stressing the pluralist and changing character of national cultures and in defending a politically committed social theory. However, such views on the cultural and political construction of the nation fall into the fallacy of 'excessive relativism' in precluding the possibility of accounting for the limits of distinct national cultures. This does not mean that asking *how* national cultures are delimited is not important. In fact, when authors such as Bhabha (1994) or Said (1993) argue that the borders of national cultures are ambiguous and ambivalent, and always facing change, they are trying to formulate the problem of defining the boundaries of the nation. What they adamantly refuse is the modernist idea of the congruence between the political and cultural dimensions of the nation. In short, the post-modernist trend ends up affirming the epistemological impossibility of deciding or fixing any stable limit or border (cultural, economic, geographic or political) to the nation.

Perhaps not surprisingly, theorists like Bhabha, Hall or Said all argue that no one has the epistemological privilege to somehow identify, judge or evaluate how it is that a given national culture distinguishes itself from others. Hence the 'post-modernist trend' does not attempt to secure an 'epistemological distance' between the activities of the theorist and those of the social actor, or even of the 'social activist'. This is why the theorist, like many other cultural producers, is himself or herself actively committed, either in the margins or in the centre, to the process of construction of the national culture. In the end, no national culture can be defined *a priori* as absolutely autonomous, exclusive, self-contained or stable.

Finally, the greatest limitation of the 'post-modernist trend' lies in its radical constructivism: i.e., while embarking on the deconstruction of that idea of nation that lays the basis for homogenous conceptions of the 'people' and of the 'territory', it says very little about 'how' and 'why' such conceptions of the nation become plausible and desirable for individuals that think of themselves as having a specific national identity (see Benhabib, 1998). Post-modernists, therefore, whilst arguing that every choice is possible, that all identity-claims are legitimate and transitory and that

it is not possible to fix in discourse the meaning of collective or individual identities, do not create room for explaining the emotional attachment of individuals to a cultural construction such as the nation.

The works of Bhabha, Hall and Said, among other theorists influenced by post-colonialist thinking, have been mainly concerned with those discursive practices to which different essentialist 'versions' of national identity are attached. Thus their major strength is that they succeed in drawing attention to those dominant narratives of the nation that often fail to acknowledge the existence of ethnic and cultural minorities who do not find themselves conveniently represented within those hegemonic narratives.

In short, while the 'post-modernist trend' attempts to give voice to every possible discourse of resistance to uniform narratives and representations of the nation, it is also precluding the possibility of discerning the cultural boundaries of national identity so as to avoid the fallacies of essentialism that fixes and homogenises identities.

3.3 Defining the Boundaries between 'Us' and 'Them'

I argue that, at least for analytical purposes, it has to be possible to discriminate the identity markers, or the distinctive features, of national identity so as to differentiate 'us' from 'them'. In other words, it has to be possible to assess the cultural criteria individuals rely on so as to make sense of 'their' national identity as distinct from others. I primarily draw upon the works of Barth (1969), Billig (1995) and Neumann (1999) so as to propose an analytical framework for the study and comprehension of national identity on an empirical and comparative basis. I seek to provide a useful path of analysis for the understanding of the inter-subjective ways in which people come to make sense of their sense of national identity.

In *Uses of the Other* (1999) Neumann focuses on the self/other nexus in order to approach the complex and difficult question of collective identity formation in relation to a changing European context. In reflecting upon the uses and the limitations of post-structuralism, he sharply criticizes approaches, like those of Mouffe (1994) and Laclau (1994), that, whilst proclaiming the 'death of the subject' and the power of ideology in disguising the social and discursive practices within which identities are constructed as nomad and hybrid, do not raise the question of individual subjectivity. Neumann opposes those approaches to collective identity in

which the individual disappears as a subject endowed with some degree of intentionality: “Poststructuralists, therefore, do not have an inter-subjective take on the process of identification” (Neumann, 1999: 208). In fact, whatever impels people to identify themselves with a group that they perceive as distinct from other groups is a question neither Laclau nor Mouffe are willing to address. This is the case for all those perspectives thinking the ‘social’ as a ‘text’ and for those who make the Other disappear as a subject to be conceptualised as a lack or, to use Derrida's terminology, as a ‘constitutive exterior’ in discourse.

In order to overcome the limits of post-structuralism, Neumann, a post-structuralist himself, suggests an approach to the comprehension of collective identity formation based on the study of the boundary markers between ‘us’ and ‘them’. While maintaining the idea of individual subjectivity, he theorises the process of collective identity by looking at the essentialist narratives that human collectives use so as to distinguish themselves from other groups. These stories that essentialize the ‘we’ may appear as competing in their struggle to succeed with dominant narratives of the nation. Whereas some stories reinforce existing dominant narratives of the nation, others provide opposing or alternative stories. Drawing on Ringman² (1996), Neumann argues that we have to investigate “(...) not only the stories of those who hold state power, but also other and competing stories of self that exist as a constitutive element of a certain collective” (Neumann, 1999: 224). Such an approach brings forward an important epistemological question, which appears as particularly controversial within poststructuralist approaches. Following Neumann, “if one wants to work on the inside of the concepts that hold a human collective together, and that is indeed what poststructuralists want to do, then one should bracket the question of the ontological status of the representations that hold that human collective together” (Neumann, 1999: 213). The important point here is that, for poststructuralists (including Neumann), what is important it is not whether the concepts or categories underlying a particular collective identity are relevant or desired by those assuming a specific identity as ‘theirs’, but rather to show the contingency and unstable character of the identity in question.

I shall then suggest that in respect of collective identity formation, there is a tension between the ontological level, i.e. the ways in which individuals perceive their existence while members of the group, and the epistemological level, i.e. the degree in which the social theorist is able to comprehend social belonging, an issue barely conceivable within the limits of poststructuralist debates. In addition, the constitution

of collective identities can be theorised at two different levels: one being that of the essentialist perspective which relates to the viewpoint of the 'participant in social life' or 'social actor'; and the other that of a constructivist perspective, which relates to the view point of the 'observer in social life' or the 'theorist' (see Benhabib, 1998; see also, Delanty, 1999). While the 'social theorist' seeks to understand how identities are constituted and articulated vis-à-vis changes in the social, political, cultural or economic contexts, the 'social actor' perceives his or her identity as a member of a specific group as fundamental and, therefore, essential and non-negotiable.

If we consider the two key positions it becomes easier to comprehend the way in everyday life people find themselves immersed within a culture they perceive as being 'their' culture and thus essential and fixed. For Billig (1995) the reason why people do not ever forget their sense of national belonging is what he has called "banal nationalism". He stresses in particular the many different ways in which a banal nationalism is constantly flagged in daily life by means of symbols, images and discourses of nationhood conveyed by mass media and through habits of language. Furthermore, people become emotionally attached to the nation through those images and symbols of nationhood by repetition and ritualization in 'official' celebrations of the nation (e.g. public holidays), which Billig names as 'hot nationalism'. Such ceremonies play a very important role in the legitimisation of those conventional symbols, such as the national flag or the national hymn. Stories that are told about 'our' people and about 'our' culture also mirror the changes in dominant culture. This is why Billig (1995: 24) argues that "national identities are forms of social life, rather than internal psychological states; as such, they are ideological creations, caught up in the historical processes of nationhood". Similarly, Poole (1999) stresses that one of the strengths of national identity relies on the variety of the cultural resources underlying conceptions of our national community. Such an identity provides us with a territory and history that is 'ours', and the resources to understand the richness of a culture heritage that despite being permanently transformed and contested people recognize as 'theirs'. Of course, the resources of national cultures are more easily available for those who live within it, and who closely relate to it in everyday life.

If we accept that the national culture provides the members of a national community with the cultural resources people need to become aware that they have a national identity, then we need to look at the 'identity markers', i.e. the cultural boundaries of national identity that lay the ground for the constitution of such a form of collective identity. This stance conflicts with a widespread assumption, especially among

poststructuralists, that collective identities are ongoing processes between ‘us’ and ‘them’, which are never completely finished or established.

If we want to embark on comparative studies to national identity, it thus becomes crucial to understand which sort of boundaries mark the ‘difference’ between a particular national identity and other collective identities. Drawing upon Barth (1969, 1994), I suggest that in order to comprehend collective identity formation, and specifically national identity, we have to focus on the study of the formation and reproduction of “distinctive boundaries” of a collective identity. Coming from an ethnographic tradition Barth’s work on ethnic identity formation, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969), centres on the comprehension of the creation and maintenance of cultural boundaries between contrasting ethnic groups. Hence focus is placed on the study of where the boundaries lie and are ultimately maintained, rather than assessing ‘objective’ cultural features that presumably define an ethnic identity.

What emerges as particularly useful for the purposes of this discussion is Barth’s argument on how the ‘identity markers’ (e.g. language, religion, customs) prevail even when individuals attached to such boundaries in the course of their life trajectories change their ethnic identity, i.e. change their sense of belonging to the very same ethnic group. Barth argues that these identity markers or ‘neatly contrasting diacritica’ (Barth, 1994: 16) emerge as highly enduring regardless of the changes occurring at the level of collective identification along personal life stories; “this means focusing on the boundary and the processes of recruitment, not on the cultural stuff that the boundary encloses” (Barth, 1994: 12). That is also to say that the processes of boundary maintenance between groups with distinguishing cultural features operate independently of the cataloguing of the history or cultural characteristics of the ethnic group. Nonetheless, the cultural boundaries demarcating a specific ethnic group, although largely enduring, are not primordial or essential but have also to be seen as contingent under particular historical, economic and political circumstances.

Barth’s theory of the constitution of cultural difference between different ethnic groups provides a highly useful theoretical framework for the study and comprehension of collective identities in general (see Neumann, 1999: 4). Barth provides us with an excellent starting point for understanding national identity as a question of how ‘we’ are distinct from ‘them’, rather than relating to a hegemonic and unilateral vision of otherness. Of course, in Barth’s view, this process of differentiating between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is, above all, a problem of the construction of

similarity for a given ethnic group. This means that in respect of national identity those highly salient and symbolic boundary markers, such as the flag, language, religion, and a conception of 'homeland' on which people rely so as to make sense of 'their' national identity as clearly distinct from other national identities remain relatively unchallenged despite the internal cultural diversity arising from social interaction and cultural change.

When I speak of cultural boundaries that allow people to differentiate between 'us' and 'them', I am not suggesting the cataloguing of national identity from a set of features supposedly intrinsic, or essential, to a certain group. An approach to the study of national identity envisaging a comparative dimension cannot dismiss the historical and sociological contingency of national identities; it then has to consider that national identities also change according to social, economic, cultural and political circumstances. For analytical purposes, it could be suggested that the relatively enduring and highly relevant 'identity markers' through which individuals become aware of their own national identity correspond to the 'form' of a given identity³. In fact, independently of the flow of social and cultural exchange at the level of the 'content' of national identity, i.e. the process through which the nation is narrated and represented, people will always need to attach themselves to specific cultural boundaries (e.g. language, religion) that they can easily identify and recognize as such. Following Neumann (1999), this does not preclude, for instance, the 'content' of such distinctive markers from being disputed and constantly reformulated through different essentialist narratives that seek to ascribe meaning to national and other collective identities. Those are the narratives that provide us with the 'versions' of national identity that embody the repository of symbolic resources conferring a meaning to nation-ness. These stories are launched into circulation by means of the innovative work of a diversity of cultural producers (ethnic minority artists, writers, historians, intellectuals, social scientists, political activists, etc.).

It seems that the analytical distinction between 'content' and 'form' of national identity only makes sense when one accepts that it is in the relation with a specific national culture that individuals are able to recognize themselves as having a national identity. Thus if we accept 'homeland' as a distinctive marker of a particular national identity, we can say, for instance, that we are, on the one hand, considering the "form", i.e. a conception of 'homeland' as a boundary to define national identity; and on the other hand, we are also looking at the 'content', i.e. the various images, symbols and depictions of "homeland" in circulation and appealing to different

groups within the state. Consequently, we can assess, for instance, how those ethnic minorities who struggle for public recognition of their identity claims, may well deploy an idea of 'homeland' that is likely to oppose a conception of 'homeland' forged within the 'official' discourse of the state apparatus. In a similar vein, and from a diachronic perspective, we can say, for instance, in relation to a specific national culture that the narratives conveying conceptions of 'homeland' during the nineteenth century are different from those that depict the 'homeland' in the twentieth century.

With these examples, I have sought to show how the study of the 'boundary markers' of national identity allow us to comprehend how the similarity, or the singularity, of particular national identities is constituted without neglecting the change and complexity of the national culture. I have also attempted to demonstrate that the boundaries that differentiate between 'us' and 'them' are also a matter of relation with 'familiar and adjacent others' (Barth, 1994: 13); i.e., a matter of relation with other groups having their specific national identities.

If we agree that the selection of the diacritica is less haphazard than Barth's earlier stance in 1969 (Barth, 1994: 16), and if we agree that the state plays a 'specifiable third player' in the construction of boundaries between groups (Barth, 1994: 19-20), we then have to recognize that in a world of mutually recognizable sovereign nation-states the constitution of the difference between 'us' and 'them' has to be seen as a question of the relation between familiar others. This is particularly true at a nation-state level, i.e. when contrasting national identities have as their the main referent the idea of the nation-state. However, the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' also run beneath the state level. It is possible to find within every nation-state clearly distinct individuals and social groups with specific identity claims that are not necessarily consistent with the idea of an all-inclusive national identity. In addition, the state apparatus with its exclusionary rhetoric also plays a part in deciding who is an 'insider' or an 'outsider' (see Stolke, 1995; see also Bhabha, 1999). In fact, as suggested by Schlesinger⁴ (1987: 260), "the social space occupied by the nation-state does not resolve the problem of how national identity is constructed: it merely sets the limit upon its possible elaborations". Moreover, it is also the case that the nation-state remains a most significant referent in respect of the constitution of national identity, and one that cannot simply be ignored at the expense of arguments on the ambiguity or ambivalence of its cultural boundaries. In fact, the state apparatus' cultural and political institutions not only continue to support dominant culture but also play a

very important role in the production and legitimisation of “valid” versions of the ‘national history’. That is the case even though national culture is not rigorously consigned to the territorial and political limits of the nation-state.

3.4 Narratives of the Nation and Collective Belonging - an Elective Affinity

In this section, I explore the possibilities of the ‘modernist trend’ so as to explain the existence of an elective affinity between people’s sense of national belonging and the symbols, images and stories of nationhood. In order to do so, I draw upon the theories of both Anthony Smith and Benedict Anderson who ascribe particular importance to cultural criteria for defining the nation in the process of explaining the emergence of modern nations.

Smith’s model of the nation provides us with a suitable set of analytic categories and a systematic approach for the study of national identity, especially for comparative purposes. He argues that national identity has to be dealt with in terms of definitions that are valid for all eras to allow useful comparisons, regardless of their historical context (Smith, 1999: 116). In looking at the constitution of a possible European identity he suggests “ (...) what is needed (...) is a series of case-studies over time of *changes* in collective perceptions and values, as recorded in literature and the arts, in political traditions and symbolism, in national mythologies and historical memories, and as relayed in educational texts and the mass media. (...) Such studies form a useful point of departure for investigations into the complex relationships between national identities and the processes of European unification in the sphere of culture and values” (Smith, 1999: 227).

On the other hand, Anderson’s thesis on the innovative character of national cultures raises a quite serious question. Even if authors, such as Delanty (1999), argue that the imaginary dimension of national identity is now taken for granted since *Imagined Communities* (1983), it is also true that emphasising the creative dimension of the nation does not resolve the problem of outlining the distinctive markers of national identity. Indeed, arguing that the nation has to be thought of as an ‘imagined community’ or reflecting upon the historical conditions that enabled people to start to see themselves as belonging to national communities, says nothing about the limits within which the nation is represented as such. Moreover, we have also to recognize

that this stance does not help us to understand why it is that some narratives of the nation emerge as more plausible and desirable than others.

Benhabib (1998) seeks to provide an explanation for this latter issue in proposing that there has to be an 'elective affinity' between the stories, symbols and representations that through works of art, literature, painting, music, etc. narrate the nation, and the past history as well as the imagined and projected future of the national community (Benhabib, 1998: 94). It could be said, using Bhabha's terminology, that 'pedagogical' and 'performative' aspects of a narrative have somehow to fit together. What Benhabib attempts to clarify is that when cultural producers of nation-ness selectively make use of cultural resources available to narrate the nation, namely through essentialist narratives of the 'national self', they only mobilize people when those are forged within coherent, overarching and plausible narratives.

Both Smith's and Anderson's thesis help to assess the idea of an existing 'elective affinity' linking the process of narrating the nation to the experience of collective life of national communities. A central aspect of Anderson's thesis on the emergence of the modern nation is the acknowledgement of the emotional appeal the nation exerts over people. Clearly this is particularly implied in his conception of the nation as an imagined community: "(...) regardless of the actual *inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each*, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people (...) as willing to die for such limited imaginings" (Anderson, 1983: 7; my emphasis). The underlying idea here is that Anderson is indeed able to show that beyond the undeniable cultural diversity and inequality crisscrossing every nation there is an image of the union and cohesion of this 'fraternal' community that lays the ground for the idea of the homogenous nation. The latter becomes apparent in the many different forms and styles in which people imagine the nation. That is also to say that the cultural artefacts of the nation, i.e. poetry, literature, music, etc., ensure, ultimately, in many different and innovative manners that those stories told about 'us' refer to a culture that we easily recognize as 'our' own. In short, the narratives of the nation in relating to facts, people and events that individuals learn to recognize as playing a part in the constitution of their sense of national identity enable that inter-subjective 'experience of simultaneity' through which people imagine the nation. It is, in fact, in the daily experience of collective life that we learn to see the complexity and changing character of 'our' culture.

Smith's thesis on the emergence of the nation emerges as particularly important when it comes to address the role of social memory in the constitution of national identity. He refuses the idea of 'cultures deprived of memory', a view espoused by many post-modernist perspectives. In contrast to Anderson and his other modernist counterparts, Smith deals specifically with the question of national identity as a form of collective belonging. Thus if we want to explain why so many people are drawn to the nation as a focus of loyalty, we have to turn to those narratives of the nation that have public resonance⁵ amongst the members of a particular national community. For Smith, it may be possible to forge traditions and images of the nation, but these images and traditions will be retained only if they have some popular resonance. This has to be achieved by means of the process in which such representations of the nation can become harmonious and be made continuous with a recognizable collective past. This is why he goes on to argue that those ceremonies of remembrance, statues to heroes and celebrations of anniversaries, although newly created in their present form, take their meaning and their emotional power from a presumed and felt collective past (see Smith, 1991: chap.7)

In conclusion, in casting the writings of Anderson (1983) and Smith (1991) it could be argued that what makes a particular narrative a valid description of the 'we' is the way in which this is more or less connected to the many different manners in which people imagine and make sense of their national belonging in everyday life. In short, processes of collective identification are deeply anchored in daily experience. Therefore people count on those competing stories that give sense to the idea of a national past as these are constantly disseminated via the mass media. Some stories have a well-known narrative structure that people are able to summarize in conventional forms (Wertsch cited in Billig, 1995: 70). For instance, most people are able to tell the story of the foundational myths of the nation or the adventures of some national heroes. In addition, and as suggested by Mendes (1996: 131) on his work of how regionalism is subjectively and discursively constructed in the case of the Azores islands, "the need of coherence, of consistency in personal narratives, leads to their necessary affiliation in public and official narratives".

Hence, it could be further suggested that there is some kind of connection between the personal narratives⁶ through which people subjectively construct their national identity, which is perceived as essential, and the narratives of the nation launched into circulation, either by the state apparatus or the groups and cultural producers claiming different 'versions' of the national identity.

3.5 Conclusion

In chapters 1 and 2, I have attempted to offer an account of the main threads of argument on the question of national identity, and to clarify to what extent the ‘post-modernist trend’ opposes the views of those authors that, within the theoretical framework of modernity, sought to explain how it became possible to begin thinking a form of collective identity such as national identity. In this chapter, I sought to investigate the limits and possibilities offered by both trends for the study of national identity. In this context, I endeavoured to deploy an analytical framework to enable the comprehension of national identity as a form of collective identity based upon the study of distinctive cultural boundaries that distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’. In differentiating between ‘form’ and ‘content’ of national identity, I sought to offer a set of analytical categories to allow important comparisons between different national identities in specific historical contexts. National identities have, then, to be looked at from a comparative perspective that acknowledges their historical and sociological contingency. I have also suggested that there is an elective affinity between forms of narrating the nation and people’s sense of national belonging.

The theoretical background deployed in part 1 informs the work carried on in part 3 where I examine in three case studies how European ‘films of voyage’ articulate questions of national identity in relation to two different clusters of themes: ‘Boundaries and Cultural Diversity’ and ‘Identity, Memory and Place’. Where the former asks how is that the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is made meaningful vis-à-vis cultural diversity by the act of travelling, the latter looks at the interplay of individual trajectories, i.e. the voyager’s personal and spatial trajectory in relation to the collective destiny and circumstances of those others they encounter inhabiting a particular socio-cultural context. Indeed, as suggested by Smith (1999: 227), a useful point of departure for investigating the relationships between national identities and the processes of European integration in the sphere of culture and values, is a series of case studies of changes in collective perceptions and values as recorded in literature and the arts, and in historical memories and national mythologies, as conveyed in the mass media.

¹ I borrow the notion of ‘elective affinities’ from Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* where this is used to express the relationship between ideas and interests of a social stratum (i.e. the bourgeoisie) and the processes constituting the development of rational capitalism. This analytical concept was originally formulated in Goethe’s novel, *Elective Affinities*, to express the logics of the ‘chemical’ origin of love, especially in respect of how two people are drawn to each other despite being already married to someone else.

² In Ringman,'s view, we make sense of our individual or collective selves with the help of narrative. He stresses that 'what we are' is neither a question of what essences constitute us nor a question of how we conclusively should be defined, but instead a question of how we are seen and a question of which stories are told about us (Ringman, 1996: 452).

³ Neumann, drawing upon Barth, argues that although most diacritica turn on to be matters of language, history, religion, and so on, *ipso facto* anything may be inscribed with meaning as a politically relevant boundary marker (Neumann, 1999: 6).

⁴ Schlesinger (1987: 259) also draws attention for how most research has failed to conceptualise national identity as opposed to the identities of emergent collectives within established national-states.

⁵ Schudson (1989) identifies 'resonance' as one of the dimensions of cultural power. He then argues that the relevance of a cultural object to its audience is a property not only of the object's content and the audiences' interest in this but also of the position of the object in the cultural tradition of the society the audience belongs to.

⁶ These can be apprehended, for instance, through interviews and life stories.

PART II : DEFINING THE EUROPEAN 'FILM OF VOYAGE'

CHAPTER 4 : PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Distinctive Features of the European ‘Film of Voyage’

The European ‘film of voyage’ generally fits the thematic and narrative concerns of modern European cinema that emerged in the aftermath of World War II. European cinema stems to a great degree from those film traditions pursuing a specific stylistics and aesthetics, and usually associated with particular national contexts. These so-called ‘new waves’ (e.g. French *nouvelle-vague* and Italian neo-realism) were associated with state-subsidised cinemas seeking cultural and artistic distinctiveness for their respective national cultures. The very idea of European cinema was being forged amongst intellectuals, film critics and the filmmakers (through ‘content’ and style) who worked together to constitute European cinema as an alternative to Hollywood cinema. European modern cinema (or ‘art film’) was then being celebrated as a form of artistic expression in its underlying denial of economic interests. Hollywood cinema represented its opposite in being associated with the idea of a commercial cinema oriented to a mass-audience. The consolidation of the so-called ‘art cinema’, which flourished in the immediate decades of the post-World War II period, benefited greatly from the proliferation of the so-called art-house cinemas and film societies in several European countries. Those helped to give credit to the ‘seriousness’ and aesthetic respectability of the nationally produced works of filmmakers such as Antonioni, Bergman, Bunuel, Fellini, Godard, and Truffaut amongst others (see Neale, 1981; see also Tudor, 2003). Moreover, European national cinemas relied strongly on the assertion of a ‘national’ cultural identity both domestically and internationally. Thus arguments about national cultural and literary traditions, as well as their consolidation and extension through a national cinema, were also crucial for the strengthening of the European-model of art cinemas (Crofts, 1993: 50-52).

More recently, European filmmaking has faced serious challenges with the increasing integration of the audio-visual sector, the development of digital transmission and the growing number of international co-productions. Meanwhile, the decline of the film society movement and the art-house cinema in the late 1980s, which was also being accompanied by the expansion of the multiplex

phenomenon, transformed the art-film into a rather more complex and encompassing category; multiplex cinemas present themselves as diverse, blurring previously established lines of distinction between different films and their audiences, bringing all together into a consumer oriented world of pluralist entertainment (Tudor, 2003). No doubt national cinemas are today part of a transnational experience (Higson 1989, 2000) that is seen as vital to assure the survival of European films in the international marketplace. However, it is also the case that those films also reflect upon historically specific national cultures (see Rosen, 1984) in their intrinsic diversity and complexity. In the end, and despite EU policies towards the strengthening of a reliable European film industry, the terms of the opposition 'art cinema' vis-à-vis 'American cinema' remain largely unchallenged. Even if the bulk of this debate is of marginal interest for our discussion, we have to recognize that European 'films of voyage' are imbued of that sensibility that encompasses 'art film' in style, motifs addressed and as a vehicle of social critique. Themes such as individual alienation (e.g. Antonioni's *Il Grido*), contemporary urban alienation (e.g. Godard's *A Bout de Souffle*), the impersonality of modern life (e.g. Tati's *PlayTime*), the limits of human communication (e.g. Antonioni's *L'avventura*) and the excesses of consumer society (e.g. Godard's *Weekend*) are all deeply linked to the underlying critique of modern societies that is a characteristic of much European 'art' cinema. It is also noteworthy that many of the filmmakers involved in the so-called 'new waves' were politically committed, seeking a change in existing social conditions. Their works flourished within the scope of European national cinemas in the post-war years at a time when political disenchantment and the prosperity created by the economic boom precipitated a desire for social change¹.

For analytical purposes here I propose to use the following general criteria for distinguishing the European 'film of voyage':

The European film of voyage *includes any film in which the journey, thematically and as narrative device, shapes a tale of self-discovery and social learning in contact with otherness.*

1. A *sense of a route* as perceived by the voyager is a primary constitutive element of narrative journeys. In European 'films of voyage' it is the act of being in transit that forms the journey as a movement through a recognizable geographical and social space towards the discovery of the self and others. In such circumstances, air travel and interplanetary journeys (e.g. science-fiction journeys) have to be dismissed because in such cases one loses visibility of the travelled world, making the situation of the subject on the move almost 'static' (see Aleixo, 1999: 20).
2. The main structuring motif in European films of voyage is a *quest motif*, i.e. the existence of at least an implied drive to be on the move. It assumes the features of an existential or internalised goal that in its most complete formulations constitutes the underlying motive of the journey (e.g. journey-quests). The quest motif might not be fully unveiled or accessible to the viewer but it plays a major role in the shaping of narrative.
3. The journey entails a *process of change and learning by the voyager*. European films of voyage hence deploy a journey inwards into the inner self and, as such, they are dealing with issues of personal identity. It is implied here that the voyager's identity and character traits never emerge as fully established or uncontroversial. The journey holds, after all, a promise of self-discovery and personal growth in contact with otherness.
4. European 'films of voyage' involve a depiction of an *experience of otherness* as enacted by the voyage itself. The physical movement of dislocation in space turns the journey outwards in that this evolves into an encounter with otherness. The voyager is confronted with a landscape he or she ought to contemplate, and cannot avoid contemplating (see Augé, 1995: 87), and often engages in active observation and interaction with others.
5. Finally, the European film of voyage is narratively *open-ended*, which is also a common ingredient in 'art film'. A relative lack of narrative closure appears to indicate that the journey may well continue. It is suggested here that the voyager's potential for change might only fully be realised in the foreseeable future.

As I have suggested in this brief outline, the tradition of European ‘films of voyage’ is consistent with the narrative and stylistic features of modern European cinema or ‘art film’. This is particularly apparent, as I shall demonstrate, in the refusal of a linear narrative structure, in the careful composition of mise-en-scène, and in unconventional camera work as part of a highly self-conscious and reflexive mode of narration. In addition, the construction of complex characters lacking clear-cut traits, the ‘dedramatization’ of the narrative by showing both climaxes and trivial moments, and an unresolved ending are all distinctive characteristics of the so-called European modern cinema (see Bordwell, 1985: 205-233) that are also found in the European ‘film of voyage’. These features are particularly apparent in the contrasts between the European ‘film of voyage’ and its American counterpart, the road-movie. For this reason, I shall consider the road movie more fully in chapter 5, but some preliminary observations are useful here in helping to isolate some of the general features of the ‘film of voyage’.

Where the road-movie presents a linear narrative structure that is characteristic of popular genres, and an action-packed narrative designed to excite the audience, the European ‘film of voyage’ deploys an episodic narrative structure and a slow-paced narrative that aims at exploring the relation between characters and the space travelled. In both cinematic traditions there is a quest motif to provide motivation for the journey. However, and in contrast with its European counterpart, the quest motif in the road-movie is linked to a desire to escape a domestic space that is perceived as abusive or unsatisfactory. Moreover, we can also identify in American road-movies a strong outsider motif that is very weak if not nonexistent in the European case. In the latter, the voyagers are rarely intentionally driven to find an alternative way of life (exceptions include films such as *Five Days, Five Nights* and *Pierrot Le Fou*) or to rebel against society by defying or criminally transgressing social bounds and laws. These differences are also reflected in the relation between the driver and the mechanized vehicle in the road movie. While in the American genre there is a close association between driver and motorized vehicle that stresses the thrills of driving as an experience of freedom through mobility, in the ‘film of voyage’ this connection is unimportant. This is not only because the voyagers often travel on foot but also because being

on the move in a motorized vehicle has quite a different meaning in the European ‘film of voyage’; indeed, the act of ‘hitting the road’ in the European context does not convey the sense of liberation as it does typically in the American case. In European ‘films of voyage’ the act of being in transit is primarily concerned with the dislocation of the voyager from one place to another at a pace that enables the contemplation of the landscape by both the protagonists on the move and the audience. Finally, the typical modes of narrative closure of the two forms are different. While the American road-movie traditionally kills off its rebellious protagonists with death in the closing scenes (e.g. *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Easy Rider*), European ‘films of voyage’ usually feature unresolved endings where we are left with a sense that the journey may well continue.

4.2 Analytical Approach

I employ an approach to analysis that examines film as a cultural product inscribed within a specific socio-historical context. The underlying assumption here is that every film offers a set of representations that relate more or less straightforwardly or indirectly to a ‘society’, or other social context (see Vanoye and Goliot-Lété, 1992: 45-47).

In part two I seek to explore the distinctive narrative and stylistic patterns at work within the tradition of European ‘films of voyage’. To frame this distinctiveness, I start by offering a general account of the characteristic narrative devices and motifs at work within the American road-movie (chapter five). Here, I endeavour to flag the contrast between this American popular genre and the European ‘film of voyage’. I then explore in chapters six and seven the two distinct sub-narratives of the European ‘film of voyage’: *aimless journeys* and *journey-quests*. There is in each pattern a quest motif that shapes a particular kind of cinematic narrative. Summarily, whereas in aimless journeys the voyager is someone lacking a strong motivation to be on the move, in journey-quests it is the existence of a strong internalised goal that provides the underlying motive of the journey. I consider in each of the sub-narrative patterns, the basic narrative, beginnings vis-à-vis journey departures, episodic structure in relation to dimensions of space and time and, finally, the interplay of key events and narrative closure. I then investigate aspects

of character construction in examining the figure of the voyager, the central protagonist, in relation to questions of personal identity and the 'enquiry into the self'.

Methodologically, I draw upon the works of David Bordwell, especially Narration in the Fiction Film (1985) and On the History of Film Style (1997), Monaco's How to Read a Film - Movies, Media, Multimedia (2000), and Seymour Chatman's Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (1978). These emerge as particularly helpful when dealing with aspects of narrative structure. With regards to aspects of character construction I draw upon Murray Smith's Engaging Characters - Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema (1995), which proves particularly useful in relation to complex characters².

The specific films examined are 14 'films of voyage' produced in several European national contexts: namely, the English, the French, the German, the Greek, the Italian, the Portuguese, and the Balkan context. The criteria underlying the selection of this group of films are two: the coverage of a variety of European national contexts to which the films refer, and the choice of films produced in a span of time that encompasses almost fifty years, from *Voyage to Italy* (1953) to *Sicilia!* (1999). My aim here is to accomplish a selection of films that reflects the social and cultural diversity of the different European national contexts. At the same time, the films chosen seek to be representative of the several film traditions and movements that flourished in specific periods in the post-war period. Although the growing trend for European co-production complicates the question of deciding whether a film falls into the scope of a specific national cinema, we can still speak of a film's content as relating to one national film culture or another (see Hill, 1992, 2000). In chapter six I shall be concerned with the sub-narrative pattern of *aimless journeys* and I will examine *Voyage to Italy* (Rossellini, 1953), *La Strada* (Fellini, 1954), *L'avventura* (Antonioni, 1960), *Pierrot Le Fou* (Godard, 1965) *Alice in the Cities* (Wenders, 1974), *Kings of the Road* (Wenders, 1976), *Radio On* (Petit, 1979), *Five Days, Five Nights* (Fonseca e Costa, 1996) and *Sicilia!* (Straub and Huillet, 1999). In chapter seven I shall be dealing with the sub-narrative pattern of *journey-quests* by considering *Landscape in the Mist* (Angelopoulos, 1988), *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (Angelopoulos, 1991), *Ulysses' Gaze* (Angelopoulos, 1995), *Journey to the Beginning of the World* (Oliveira, 1997), *The Crazy Stranger* (Gatlif, 1997).

Whereas some of these films have for long been celebrated as part of the ‘memory of cinema’ for their aesthetic sensibility (e.g. *La Strada*, *L’avventura*, *Pierrot Le Fou*), others remain barely known outside the ‘art house’ and festival cinema circuits (e.g. *Radio On, Sicilia!*).

In part three, I shall present three case studies based upon a much closer analysis of a group of six films relating to specific national contexts (i.e. the German, the Portuguese, and the Greek vis-à-vis the Balkan space). These films are: *Alice in the Cities* (Wenders, 1974), *Kings of the Road* (Wenders, 1976), *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (Angelopoulos, 1991), *Ulysses’ Gaze* (Angelopoulos, 1995), *Five Days, Five Nights* (Fonseca e Costa, 1996), and *Journey to the Beginning of the World* (Oliveira, 1997). Here, I deal specifically with questions of boundary-definition and crossing vis-à-vis national identity and cultural diversity. I also endeavour to relate detailed analysis of the textual features of the films to their extra sociological and historical context. To facilitate this analysis, I use a grid that outlines the set of textual components (i.e. narrative structure, mise-en-scène, characters, editing, shot composition, camera work, sound and themes) to which in-depth and systematic analysis of each film attends. This work proves methodologically crucial for examining stylistic and narrative aspects of the films that otherwise would not be recognizable. In doing so, I seek to avoid the impressionistic text-driven analysis that is commonly found in much literary criticism and film analysis. In addition, I have then devised a notation to refer the reader to the appropriate appendixes where information about the stylistic or narrative issues being discussed can be found.

¹ For example, during the first years of Italian neo-realism the commitment of filmmakers to a descriptive comprehension of the ‘real’ was embedded of a desire to change the world (Quintana, 1997: 43).

² Summarily, Smith (1995) suggests that despite the fact that characters are artifices and, effectively, inert textually defined traits, we can assume that such traits correspond by analogy to those traits we find in persons in the real world.

CHAPTER 5 : THE AMERICAN ROAD-MOVIE

5.1 The Road-Movie Narrative - Tales of Learning and Liberation on the Road

The American road movie can be seen as a close successor of both the Western and the Gangster film. Like the Western, the iconography of the road-movie draws on picturesque scenery of the Old West with its vast and deserted landscapes. For both genres, this visual imagery served as a basis to explore the dilemmas of westward expansion, and more specifically the encroachment of civilisation into the wilderness (Pye, 1986). Yet, the road-movie genre also follows some of the stylistic features of the gangster film, for instance, in respect of its outlaw characters and car chases.

The road-movie as a coherent genre distinct from its precursors, and easily identifiable by its audiences (Tudor, 1986), only fully establishes itself in the late 1960s with the release of the two archetypical road-movies: *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969)¹. It is against the backdrop of the great social upheavals of the late 1960s and in a period of crisis for American national identity, that the road-movie narrative comes to articulate the liberating power of the road with a form of social critique. In previous decades, many films had already deployed narratives where the journey was used as an instrument of social commentary or a structuring device. John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) and *The Searchers* (1956), Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934), Fritz Lang's *You Only Live Once* (1937) and Preston Sturges' *Sullivan's Travels* (1941) are diverse instances. The journey offers here the opportunity of a reintegration of the protagonists into society whilst celebrating community values (see Cohan and Hark 1997). In these films, however, the road was not yet the main structuring device of the story prompting the protagonists away from the constraints from home and into a trope of rebellion against society. We had to wait for films such as *Easy Rider* and *Bonnie and Clyde* to see the road trip turn into a transformational and fatal experience of learning about the self and others. For Eyerman and Lofgren (1995: 60) the genre encompasses those "films where the road and the journey (most often in an automobile, but sometimes with other

means of transport) have a central function, either in the form of a moral discourse, a tale of personal development, or as a reflection of society itself”². What is important to bear in mind with regards to such conception is that in the road-movie genre, the journey works as a main structuring device of a story that propels the protagonists along the road to liberation. This popular genre “by coding individualist rebellion against institutional elemental authority” (Laderman, 2000: 78) ends up unfolding a story of inner self-discovery and social learning for those on the move.

The American road movie presents a linear narrative structure that is characteristic of other popular genres. It recognizably evolves as a succession of events causally linked during a very limited span of time, which is the span of the journey itself. The heroes who ‘hit the road’ in a mechanized vehicle are usually more affected by the circumstances of the road than directly responsible for the succession of events. According to Corrigan (1991: 145), “unlike other genres, such as the detective film where characters initiate events, in the road-movie events act upon characters”. There is a sense that the road characters cannot easily control whatever is happening to them on the road. What sustains narrative development and dramatic progression is the array of unexpected events occurring along the journey. Conventional narrative devices to implement dramatic action include encounters with strangers (e.g. weirdoes, outcasts) opening the prospect of dangerous and exciting possibilities, high-speed car chases in which the heroes never get caught except at the end of the film, and goals of various kinds. Meetings with strangers, for example, are moments to release the dramatic potential of the film and to enable contact and communication with improbable others and rivals (usually agents of the law). As Bartel remarks (cited in Williams, 1982: 10), one has to keep inventing reasons for the characters to stop because one of the great problems with road movies is that being in cars isolates people.

In respect of narrative closure, the genre traditionally punishes the rebellious protagonists with death at the end of the film. There is here an underlying conservative stance that articulates a kind of moral discourse to justify the doomed destiny of the heroes; the road to liberation is ultimately the road to death. In *Easy Rider*, for example, Billy and Wyatt are shockingly shot dead, for no apparent reason, while travelling across the Deep South. Their killing by ‘rednecks’ is equated with the end of freedom and codes the bigotry of American

society as the last aerial shot reveals Wyatt's bike in flames. Similarly, the slow-motion and multiple camera angles unfolding Bonnie's and Clyde's killing at the hands of the police is marked by an aesthetic sensibility suggesting a rather ambiguous narrative closure, which celebrates, on the one hand, the punishment of Bonnie and Clyde and, on the other, the canonization of their deaths (Leong, Sell and Thomas, 1997: 81). In the end, society undermines rebellion because it is not able to tolerate or integrate it. This is also the stance of films revisiting the tragic death of Bonnie and Clyde, and Billy and Wyatt, such as *Thelma & Louise* (1991) or *A Perfect World* (1993). Arguably, then, we are dealing with a genre that precludes any chance of reintegration into society; indeed, there is no way back home for the rebellious heroes. Revisionist variations, such as *Something Wild* (1986), *Rain Man* (1988), *Wild at Heart* (1990), *Natural Born Killers* (1994), have more recently inverted the doomed fate of the heroes in sanctioning their return to 'normality', while celebrating traditional community values, i.e. family values, social mobility, success and so forth. In these films the road trip is neither a journey to nowhere, as in the archetypical *Bonnie and Clyde*, nor a journey of inner self-discovery, as in *Easy Rider*, but a voyage towards a new rootedness. In the classic road-movie, however, the heroes' fatal destiny that tragically puts an end to the rebellious trip also entails a sense of the journey as a *temporary adventure*. Rebellion against conventional social values is actively promoted within the genre but, paradoxically, is never sanctioned as socially acceptable. This is why the genre conventionally kills the heroes as the film reaches its end.

The genre deploys two basic motifs, a *quest motif* and an *outsider motif*, both shaping the road narrative and configuring characters' goals and motives. The *quest motif* is invariably linked to a desire to escape boundedness of the domestic (or familiar) space, which may be presented as either abusive or unsatisfactory. It turns the road trip into a twofold journey of discovery: a journey of self-awareness, and of social discovery about the surrounding world and others. The voyage works here as a metaphor for an impulse towards freedom and self-realisation away from the constraints of home³. This sensibility suggests that the road can be configured as a path for the discovery of the self and the nation, conceived here both as a space and a community. There is also a sense that the heroes find out something about themselves in contact with others and across a

space they subjectively experience as strange. As argued by Corrigan (1991: 147), “unlike Westerns or sci-fi films, the space that is explored in these films is usually familiar land that has somehow become unfamiliar: the road and the country may be known, but something has made it foreign”. By fleeing an unfulfilling or menacing familiar sphere, the heroes find themselves on the road to the ‘unknown’. The space travelled becomes a domain deprived of the certainties and security of traditional homely environments bringing, nonetheless, the prospect of new opportunities. The quest motif does not necessarily involve a clear-cut goal although in most films the road characters do have a loose goal, such as reaching some destination, starting a new life elsewhere, or making money out of crime. In *Easy Rider*, Billy and Wyatt speak of heading to Florida, and in *Vanishing Point* (1971) Kowalski wants to drive a car from Denver to San Francisco in only fifteen hours and *Thelma and Louise* dream of a new life in Mexico. The quest motif suggests, after all, that the abandonment of the security of home also means exposure to a new set of experiences that inevitably bring some sort of self-awareness for the road protagonists. At the same time, the nation appears as peopled by improbable ‘others’ (e.g. outcasts, ethnic minority characters). Most generally, the quest motif plays a crucial role in assuring narrative coherence by establishing a strong sense of a drive-to-a-goal pattern however improbable.

The *outsider motif* is given expression in the ways in which the heroes on the move defy or criminally transgress social bounds and laws. As the story line progresses, events befalling the characters make the outsider motif increasingly prominent by extending their detachment or sense of inadequacy within society. Notably, in many films the heroes are not necessarily willing to transgress society’s legal and social rules or defy institutional authority for the sake of it. They do not start by intentionally rebelling against society. *Thelma and Louise*, for instance, are heading to an idyllic weekend in the mountains before they get in trouble, and, in *Vanishing Point*, Kowalski is delivering a car to Denver when he becomes involved in a high-speed police chase. It can also be the case, and *Easy Rider* is an illustrative example, that the protagonists are defying conventional social rules simply by being different; long hair, eccentric clothing and impressive motorcycles turn two harmless bikers into a perceived threat in the rural and industrial South. A film like *Bonnie and Clyde* represents the opposing stance by suggesting that the heroes are almost from the beginning pursuing a life of crime

for the sake of money and some fun in the hard times of the Depression. The outsider motif is thus flexible enough to be able to accommodate both films involving a recognizable criminal element (e.g. *Badlands*, *Sugarland Express*, *Natural Born Killers*) and those solely encompassing some marginal condition of the road characters (e.g. *Vanishing Point*, *Thelma & Louise*). The latter embraces those stories in which the trip turns into an unusual and, perhaps, unexpected experience of self-discovery for the protagonists that is close to the sensibility of *Easy Rider*. The so-called ‘yuppie road-movies’ (see Hark, 1997), such as *Lost in America* (1985), *Something Wild*, and *Rain Man*, that emerged in the 1980s with their heroes looking for ‘authenticity’ on the road fall into this category.

In films where the outsider motif appears to be less prominent, the quest motif usually involves a more clear-cut goal (e.g. the heroes head to some destination or dream of a new life elsewhere). This is because the rebellious heroes are, to some degree, willing to escape their marginal condition so as to fulfil some desire of social integration. However, when the outsider motif involves a more obvious criminal element, the quest motif is less linked to a specific goal. This is typically the case in road trips to ‘nowhere’ encompassing restlessness such as those of Bonnie and Clyde and their successors in *Kalifornia* (1993) and *Natural Born Killers*. These emerge primarily as journeys of flight and escape at the expense of crime and violence. What is most generally involved here is an ambivalence about community values. While, on the one hand the characters are rebelling against a society that proves unfulfilling or intolerant, on the other hand, they dream of a new start elsewhere within that very same society.

In terms of style, the American road-movie is action-packed and deploys a fast-paced narrative centred on the events affecting the road protagonists. The stylistics of the genre play a very important part in deploying a close association between the driver and the mechanized vehicle. The ‘human-automobile’ fusion (see Corrigan, 1991:145-146) is a major structuring device that also plays a crucial role in stressing the thrills of driving as an experience of freedom through mobility. This is mainly achieved through the genre’s stylistic devices, e.g. fast cutting and frequent camera movement, placing the audience in the driver’s seat through point-of-view, and utilising contemporary rock music with rebellious counter-cultural lyrics. More recently, the visual imagery and stylistic devices at work within the road-movie rely on a mix of cinematic formats (16mm black and

white, super-8, video, etc.) and fast cutting enabling frantic action scenes and unorthodox scenery bringing together a pastiche of iconic references that, whilst pleasurable, might disorient the viewer. This is, for instance, the case in films such as *Natural Born Killers*, *Wild at Heart* or *Lost Highway* (1997).

A further distinctive feature of the genre is an iconography that draws strongly on the visual imagery of the “Old West” as represented in the Western. Settings deploying vast and unpopulated beautiful vistas were crucial for the formation of the myth of the frontier and the West as the ‘land of all opportunities’. To this, road movies add a visual repertoire that also emphasises the economic and technological achievements of America in the twentieth-century, often epitomized by depictions of the bleak industrial landscape of the Deep South. The genre uses this opposition between ‘industrial’ and ‘rural’ landscapes as the expression of a double-faced America. Klinger (1997) suggests that idyllic images of flat farmlands, dusty roads and impressive sunsets typically contrast with a more bleak vision of an America pervaded by plastic motels, road side telephone booths, gas stations, claustrophobic small towns, power lines and refineries. In this way, setting plays a crucial role in depicting the fractures and asymmetries of the diverse American national space and landscape.

Overall, then, the road trip provides surrogate indulgence in the socially alternative excesses and thrills of being on the move (Laderman, 1996: 45). It offers the audience the opportunity of a fantasy escape from the constraints of the domestic/familiar space. The act of being on the move in the road-movie is the ultimate expression of an all-encompassing conception of travel as adventure; “the most general form of adventure is its dropping out of the continuity of life” (Simmel, 1971: 187). By combining the excitement of motion with restlessness, the genre recasts the idea of the journey as a temporary adventure that allows the traveller to feel free from everyday responsibilities for as long as it lasts.

5.2 Character Typifications in the Road Movie

The road is predominantly travelled by a pair in American road-movies: traditionally, a heterosexual outlaw couple (e.g. *Bonnie and Clyde*) or a pair of

male buddies (e.g. *Easy Rider*). By fleeing from home and launching themselves on the road of discovery, the heroes undergo a process of self-discovery entailing some sort of physical and spiritual change. Increasing self-awareness is usually experienced as both a gain and a loss of identity by the main protagonists. In some films, a renewed sense of self involves even some sort of physical or spiritual 'loss' that is also at the root of the characters' wish to keep moving forward. For example, Bonnie and Clyde are seriously hurt when they get shot in a confrontation with the police but are still eager to pursue their criminal trajectory. Similarly, in *Thelma & Louise*, Thelma's frustrated rape leads to a series of other unfortunate events that increasingly transform these two harmless women into outlaws on the run. In *Vanishing Point*, Kowalski is tormented by recurrent and unwanted memories from a seemingly traumatic past that appear to incite his desire to move forward against any obstacle. Journeys of 'spiritual loss' are, however, better typified in films such as *Easy Rider*. Here, the search for an alternative lifestyle is central to the two bikers' peripatetic life on the road where they happily mingle with different sorts of people, from farmers to a hippie community. However, close to the end of the film, the hallucinatory experience at the Mardi Gras carnival creates an unexpected sense of disillusionment that is significantly illustrated by Wyatt's enigmatic observation: "we blew it". Journeys more straightforwardly encompassing a 'spiritual' gain can be found in revisionist cases such as the 1980s 'yuppie road-movies' (e.g. *Rain Man*, *Something Wild*). Here, the journey always ends up bringing some kind of spiritual gratification for the hero on the move, usually a male yuppie with materialistic-oriented ethos whoe has been temporarily driven away from a settled lifestyle to discover the joys and risks of life on the road.

There is in the genre a sense that in getting away from an abusive or unsatisfactory home, the heroes on the move get the chance of being exposed to a set of new experiences that not only enriches their inner self but also changes their subjective experience of the world. This is particularly apparent in the way the road trip lays the basis for a process of social learning by the heroes as they actively engage in encounters with strangers. In fact, "on the road anything can happen, one is vulnerable but also open and, at the journey's end, a new person has been manifested" (Eyerman and Lofgren, 1995: 67).

This 'encounter with otherness' underlying the heroes' personal growth plays a crucial role in increasing their knowledge about the nation conceived as a community. The road trip unfolds the 'authenticity' of the nation in its ethnic and cultural diversity by portraying it as peopled by socially and economically unprivileged minority characters, such as hippies, farmers, Latino and Afro-Americans, homeless people, women and outcasts. These characters with whom the rebellious heroes interact along the way are mainly constructed as stereotypes and never fully outlined as characters embodying aims, struggles and feelings. In this context, the genre's attitude towards gender is significant as much as road movies rarely feature a woman behind the wheel⁴. This is in part an expression of the strength of the 'buddy ethic' in the road-movie (see Williams, 1982: 9). Conventionally, women are portrayed either as a passive accomplice (e.g. Adele in *Kalifornia* or Holly in *Badlands*) a distraction, or simply as burdens or objects of desire, such as the two prostitutes, Mary and Karen, in *Easy Rider*. This may well be linked to certain underlying assumptions of American national identity that equates masculinity with the Wild West, e.g. stoic male heroes, open spaces, nature, continuous wandering, and so forth (see Roberts, 1997). Similar considerations of character stereotyping also apply to race⁵: Afro-Americans and ethnic minority characters are rarely depicted in the driver's seat even if they emerge as likeable figures (e.g. the Mexican-American family in *Easy Rider*). The road to liberation is more available to the white male than to women, who usually go along for the trip, or to ethnic minority characters who appear along the road to authenticate the exoticism and diversity of American society. However, not everyone the protagonists encounter is portrayed sympathetically. If ethnic minority characters stand as an image of the desirable diversity of American society, 'rednecks', such as those who kill Billy and Wyatt in *Easy Rider*, and middle-class characters (e.g. yuppies), offer an image of the intolerance of American society as they epitomize the narrow-mindedness of suburban America. Authority figures such as those represented by lawmen (e.g. Sheriffs) and policemen are usually marked by corruption or intolerance. As suggested by Laderman (2000: 82), "most American road movies portray the police as the ultimate extension of social oppression and conformity that the road rebels are driving away from". These institutional figures are usually portrayed as bellicose or bumbling and are often ridiculed. The highway patrolman that Thelma and

Louise manage to lock in his own trunk after he pathetically pleads for his life is a conventional example. Less typically, in *A Perfect World*, the legendary Texas Ranger played by Eastwood emerges as a more ambiguous and complex figure as his upright moral stand does not make him an easy catch for the likeable and cunning criminal Butch. In the more elaborately plotted road movies, police corruption often provides a thinly veiled justification for the outlaw tendencies of some road heroes (Williams, 1981: 10), and these stereotypes frequently play an important part as elements in a kind of social commentary on the malaises of the nation.

The main characters in the American road-movie usually present stable personality traits and their motives are clearly articulated with their actions. They emerge as predictable characters sustaining a regular set of traits that develop as the journey proceeds to its rather expected outcome. As soon as the road protagonists hit the road and the outsider motif appears, the sense that ‘something has radically changed’ becomes clear to both the characters and the audience. However, it is also the case that the road-movie puts considerable effort into deploying an action-filled narrative and in promoting the excitement of motion that is not compatible with the construction, and reflection upon, of complex characters. It is not then surprising that the protagonists on the move quickly reveal coherent character traits and act accordingly.

5.3 The Road-Movie and the American Sense of Borders

The American road-movie narrative, as in its European counterpart, uses borders to articulate issues of national identity in relation to specific socio-historical contexts. In both cinematic traditions, the journey involves the act of crossing geographic, political or cultural boundaries in relation to questions of collective identity. It could be argued that in the American context the sense of borders has been shaping a particular discourse of national identity that goes back to the myth of the Frontier. Arguably, the images and stories that for so long have been shaping people’s sense of national belonging in America are thus substantially distinct from those playing that role in the European context. Both stylistically and narratively, the genre promotes a conception of America as a ‘boundless

entity' (see Kroes, 2000). This involves an image of America as a vast territory where the 'moving' Frontier encourages the pioneer enterprise that relies on the idea of 'all men created equal' through the conquest of the Wild West. The American frontier can, in fact, be thought of as "the forward line of settlement moving across the land" (Kroes, 2000: 14). As mentioned above, the road-movie genre in propelling its heroes along the road of discovery reveals this national space in its ethnic, geographic and cultural diversity. This is mainly achieved through the depiction of beautiful, vast and deserted landscapes that recall the 'Old West' and the presence along the road of ethnic minority characters, and deprived others, such as farmers and outcasts, with whom the protagonists interact.

Road-movie narratives are concerned with the crossing of borders that are both political, such as those delimitating the federation of states, and cultural as the protagonists also move in the social space of the nation. In this sense, boundary crossing suggests, both literally and metaphorically, the transgression of social and legal bounds as embedded in an almost unnoticeable crossing of internal borders, such as those of the federated states. The 'outer border' has always been conceived as an all-embracing boundary, while internal borders, such as those dividing the different states, become, somehow, invisible, as road-movie journeys appear to embody the movement towards the Frontier. The latter is always symbolically placed in the West even if some journeys actually leap eastwards (e.g. *Easy Rider*). This stance is linked to a conception of American society as a receptacle able to hold greater cultural and social diversity, which has always celebrated forward motion, progress, and upward mobility (Newman, 1991). Not surprisingly, the idea that America "is an open society, where birth, family and class do not significantly circumscribe individual possibilities, has a strong hold in popular imagination" (Weiss, 1969: 3). Regional boundaries, such as those of the federal states, almost disappear, as the heroes travel at high-speed in a mechanized vehicle that is able to surpass any obstacle or border. The genre's stylistics helps to express a sense that all boundaries are readily open for the rebellious characters on the move, especially through the emphasis on fast-paced narrative. As noted by Corrigan (1991: 146), "(...) boundaries and borders disappear (at least temporarily) in a car and with them the sanctions, securities and structures of a family tradition". By associating the hero's restless movement onwards with a

loosening of kinship ties, the genre is also suggesting that the road to freedom cuts through a space where social, geographic or political borderlines are easy to overcome.

The iconography of the genre turns spatially distinct states into parts of a more internally homogenous national space, where differences are not so much between one and another state, but materialised in the opposition between city and countryside, or between industrial and rural settings. What this reflects is that political borders, more than any physical boundary (i.e. geographic divides), have played an important part in the way people learn how to think of themselves as equal and unified across the diverse ethnic, cultural and topographic 'corpus' of the nation. Thus it is impossible to imagine that, in the contemporary American context, regional divisions, such as the federation of states, could constitute a threat to unity of the nation. It is very unlikely, for instance, that nationalist separatist claims, such as those underpinning Quebec separatism, could succeed in America as the expression of "the will to exist" of a group of people united across the ethnic, cultural or the territorial lines of a region. The European space offers an interesting counterpoint because, here, the political body of the nation often clashes over issues of regional autonomy. In contrast, American federalism is concomitant with the view of a national space that is able to hold great ethnic and cultural diversity whilst minimizing potential conflicts (see Kroes, 2000). This is the expression of a pragmatist assessment of social and regional diversity that can be linked to discourses underlying the idea of America as a 'boundless space' and an 'open society'. This is not to say that cultural or political boundaries do not play a part in defining American national identity, i.e. in shaping people's sense of national belonging through images or narratives of 'us'. If one accepts that "territory only acquires its full symbolic value when one know its boundaries" (Van Gennep, 1922, cited in Llobera, 1994: 102), one has also to question in what way territorial boundaries *make a difference* for the members of the political community. Following Van Gennep (1922), it could be argued that in America, the meaning of borders is less linked to a conception of the boundary as divisive line, which might separate self-contained unities (e.g. the federation of states), than to a conception of the national space as a 'vast and open terrain' of invisible borders where the concentration, dispersion and expansion of people follows its own logic⁶. Here, the mobility of people is barely constrained by any political or

even geographic boundary markers. This very idea is emphasised by the myth of the Frontier in that it associates the rugged individualism of the pioneer enterprise with the ability to overcome all kinds of geographic (i.e. natural) borders, and in the road-movie genre this Frontier myth plays a crucial part in equating the image of the 'immense and boundless territory' with a space of opportunity, and in coding spatial mobility with social mobility.

5.4 Road-movies and the Egalitarian Spirit of American Democracy

American road-movies are clearly mobilizing a discourse that emphasises the egalitarian spirit of American democracy. One of the most visible and celebrated expressions of this democratic ethos is the so-called myth of the 'melting pot', which still holds great power in popular imagination in celebrating America as the 'free land' of opportunities for all regardless of race or social origin. It has played a crucial role in shaping people's national belonging and, at least until the first half of the twentieth century, continued to attract new 'applicants' for American citizenship.

The road-movie narrative develops a critique which revolves around the failures of the 'American Dream', a discourse which goes back to the social stirrings of the late 1960s. In this time of ideological and political turmoil there arose new social movements (e.g. the civil rights movement) calling for a profound change in American society as they struggled for the recognition of the rights and identity claims of ethnic and racial minorities. These rising social movements of the late 1960s were, among other things, calling for a 'return to the roots', i.e. to the foundational egalitarian principles of the nation. The founding premises of the 'American Dream', individual freedom and opportunity for all, were by then seen as seriously compromised despite the undeniable economic achievements of American capitalism⁷. Not surprisingly, it was the city, and not the countryside, that was more directly associated with the social malaises of capitalism (racism, social discrimination, intolerance, etc.) as it more manifestly embodied the achievements of capitalist culture.

The archetypal road-movies *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969) are deeply imbued with the reformist spirit of the late 1960s as they are clearly working as an instrument of social critique of the bigotry of American society. In a time of crisis for American identity in face of the growing protests against the Vietnam war, the expansion of the civil rights movements, the rise of the hippy movement, and so forth, the road-movie-genre offered a rebellion/utopian response to the failures of the 'American Dream'.

It does so by portraying the heroes on the move as sympathetic and understanding towards socially and economically underprivileged social groups. *Bonnie and Clyde* often take others along for the trip (e.g. Clyde's brother and wife), whilst always revealing sympathy towards the socially deprived people (e.g. the group of homeless people, or the farmers dispossessed from their houses) with whom they interact, a characteristic that helps to render them 'heroes' of the people. In *Easy Rider*, Billy and Wyatt can be seen waving to cowboys, or interacting with a hippy community, or dining at a farm with a Mexican-American family. In this latter scene, after the meal, Wyatt even expresses his admiration for the farmer's self-reliance in the working of the soil. This pattern has since then been reproduced in many road-movies as the characters on the move always engage in some kind of interaction with marginal others, i.e. outcasts (e.g. the petty thief played by Brad Pitt in *Thelma & Louise*), weirdoes (e.g. the eccentric Lulu in *Something Wild*), and with the average working person (e.g. barmen, petrol station assistants, etc.).

The genre also deploys a sense of nostalgia for the Old West in propelling the road protagonists across what can be conceived as a 'lost America': the America of the settler, of the farmer, the hobo, and the migrant worker, which better epitomizes the idea of America as the land of opportunity for all. That is primarily achieved by means of an idealized Western landscape composed of vast and unpopulated romantic vistas that recall the Old West. Images of flat landscapes and dusty roads at sunset are recurrent in many road-movies. We are dealing here with a celebration of America's wilderness as a crucial feature of American national identity, i.e. the 'Wild West' is being equated with a promise of individual freedom and success for everyone. The genre is imbued with an utopian sensibility that appears to promote the view that only a 'return to the roots' will provide a better course for the future. However, we have also to

consider that this turn to the past also represents a return to the origins of capitalist America as the mythology of the Frontier also stands as a symbol of America's prosperity. Clearly, the expansion of civilization also paved the way for the emergence of the city as a bastion of industrial and economic growth. This idea goes back to Turner's celebrated thesis of the Frontier (1893) as it indicates that the movement westward of American settlement set the ground for American development: the peculiarity of American institutions is the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people, i.e. to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life.

As an instrument of cultural critique, then, the American-road movie is ambivalent: on the one hand, it criticizes the 'excesses' of capitalist America (e.g. racism, intolerance, exacerbated consumption), on the other hand, it is still celebrating and revising the myth of the Frontier, which is at the heart of American national identity as a guarantee of the foundational principles of American democracy, i.e. individual freedom, open opportunity, upward mobility, success. In addition, although the American mission of domesticating the wilderness came to shape popular imaginings of the nation, the meeting between wilderness and civilization was never a pristine encounter. The open territory of the Old West was never a completely empty space but one already occupied by the native Americans inhabitants of the land. The pioneers' mission succeeded, after all, at the expense of the expulsion and extermination of the native populations (see Pye, 1986; see also Kroes, 2000). Nonetheless, from Turner's 'Frontier thesis' to representations of the West in film (especially in the Western), literature, and painting, there has always been an attempt to depict a picturesque western imagery that counterpoints the virtues of the natural and wild landscape with the idea of the territory as a 'free land' open to those who are born 'free and equal'. The road-movie articulates the tensions underlying the encroachment of civilization in wilderness by confronting two distinct images of America. It configures both an 'idealisation of the working of the soil' and an 'exaggeration of the dangers of the city' and, as such, it appears to polarise more than conciliating the contradictory features of a double-faced America. Almost invariably, a romanticized landscape of the Wild West peopled by farmers, hobos and hippies

stands for an idyllic image of America and its underlying optimistic discourse of opportunity, whilst a bleak industrial landscape of small towns and the 'Big City' stand for an image of a numbing capitalist America and its associated malaises and dangers (i.e. racial discrimination, intolerance, violence, etc.). These conflicting views can be traced back to nineteenth-century narrative traditions of American geographical imagination. Here, representations of the Land oscillate between visions of America that go along with the pastoral discourses of the 'Garden of Eden' or the 'Promised Land', and a discourse of the territory as a 'Land of Plenty' and of the Frontier as carving the way for American growth. Whereas the former traditionally celebrates closeness with Nature and admonishes against the dangers of the life in the 'Big City', the latter recasts Puritan visions of 'unredeemed Wilderness' to promote the notion of the need for the civilised white man to domesticate Wilderness (see Jarvis, 1998). Rural and urban geography played then and now a crucial role in the shaping of dystopian and utopian visions of America.

Moreover, we cannot deny that as an instrument of social critique, the genre is also deeply imbued with the humanist optimism of the 1960s, as the road trip also works as metaphor for freedom and social mobility. This optimistic stance is linked to the way in which the road-movie narrative and settings code spatial mobility with social mobility in a 'territory without borders'. While criticizing a dominant social order with a trope of rebellion, the genre is also coding the movement forward of the rebellious protagonists with chance and risk. Rebellion as enacted in the genre suggests, on the one hand, an impulse *out of* society and, on the other hand, an impulse towards a 'new start', a 'new identity', or even towards a 'new community', which is a foundational premise of the nation.

The road, to 'hit the road', has been a persisting theme in American culture that goes back to the nation's frontier ethos. From Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, to Kerouac's *On the Road*, to the imagery of the mythic route 66, the road has always proved a powerful metaphor for social mobility (see Eyerman and Lofgren, 1995), and as such can be linked to the myth of the Frontier. American culture has always associated individual freedom with mobility: if the "American Dream is essentially about success and security", it is also about freedom and mobility - and the road may well mean "the freedom to move on, to make one's own way to risk everything for a new chance" (Eyerman and Lofgren, 1995: 74).

Interestingly, the rebellious protagonists are often transformed into national heroes by the mass media in the road-movie narrative, an expression of that aspect of the American democratic ethos which encourages choice and risk over complacency or resignation. In *Vanishing Point*, blind DJ Super Soul elevates Kowalski to the status of the 'last great American hero', and Bonnie and Clyde, and their successors in *Sugarland Express* (1974) or *Natural Born Killers*, find fame and encouragement in the newspaper headlines and TV broadcasts. Social and spatial mobility are both constitutive and prescriptive features of American society, and the road-movie in articulating social transgression with the crossing of any social, physical or political boundary, enacts the idea of the restless movement forward of the rebellious heroes onto a space that knows no limits neither geographically nor socially.

Moreover, rebellion evolves as an isolated act of revolt against the social order as the heroes on the move are not usually embarking on some kind of organized protest against society, nor do they wish to do so. Hence, the irresistible movement forward of the rebel heroes might also be seen as an expression of the rugged individualism, i.e. the will to succeed of the autonomous individual. It could then be argued that the genre is embracing the federalist and egalitarian spirit of American democracy, which has always placed individual rights above collective interests.

Finally, it is also noteworthy that during Reagan's conservative 1980s, a few road-movies dealt with a dystopian image of America in a significantly different fashion. Here, the road trip mirrors a more hopeless search for America, for the lost 'identity of the nation'. This sensibility can be found in Jim Jarmusch's *Stranger than Paradise* (1983) and *Down By Law* (1986). The drifting heroes, Willie and Eddie, in *Stranger than Paradise*, are not intentionally driven to find an alternative way of life, or rebelling against society, but hopelessly trying to find a place within the constraining bounds of American society. They are enforcing their detachment from conventional social values (e.g. family values, success) amidst an industrial and alienating landscape of motorways, petrol stations, refineries, and of bleak and haunted cities suggesting, basically, that 'everywhere looks the same'. The very same environment of undifferentiated small towns pervades in Aki Kaurismaki's *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (1989), where a Finish rock band travels across America playing their music from

town to town as they head towards Mexico to play at a wedding. Here, an emblematic Western iconography is being mostly replaced by a disenchanted depiction of capitalist America. The underlying assumption is that by refusing to depict a picturesque Western setting, which holds strongly to the classic visual imagery of the genre, it is possible to show a road marked by the absence of exciting events and a nation peopled by those who *do not fit* the American Dream, i.e. white and suburban middle-class America. These films are thus narratively and aesthetically closer to the mood and spirit of the so-called European cinema.

5.5 Conclusion

There is clearly in the road-movie narrative an underlying tension between the way in which the genre reiterates the *status quo* in emphasising the egalitarian spirit of American society and the way in which it is also deploying a critique of the social failures of the 'American Dream'. On the one hand, the genre's optimistic spirit succeeds in emphasising the American democratic ethos by enacting a sense of nostalgia for the Old West. Depictions of a romanticized Western landscape stand as guarantee of freedom and opportunities for all as they revive the memory of America as a country of farmers and artisans. On the other hand, the genre mobilizes that kind of humanist discourse that calls for a deep change of society. Its counter-cultural stance is particularly apparent when it comes to draw attention to issues of social injustice both through the stories it tells and the characters it presents; the rebel protagonists are always depicted as sympathetic and willing to interact with those living at the margins of American society (e.g. outcasts, petty thieves, working-class women). This pattern typically excludes all coercive figures of capitalist exploitation or institutional authority.

Moreover, the genre also fails to unmask those views of American national identity that conceal *de facto* social and economic inequalities. This is because it equates the city with the failures of capitalist America, and the countryside with an idealised image of an America that, in fact, hardly survives amidst a highly industrialised landscape. By visually effacing regional asymmetries across the

national space, the genre unveils instead a fictional image of a nation pervaded by haunted cities and a bucolic countryside.

In general, the American road-movie genre works as an instrument of social critique and social commentary on the malaises of the nation, but it plays with ambivalence and ambiguity when it comes to criticize the foundations of the unifying discourse of American national identity, most notably the myth of the 'melting pot'. If the America the heroes encounter is hardly a 'melting pot' where races amiably mix, it goes without saying that the road of all opportunities across the 'open country' is not necessarily open to everyone. This is strongly suggested by the genre's characteristic the gender and racial bias. In respect of character development, it appears that in abandoning the constraining and bounded domestic space the rebellious heroes travel a terrain where hope, risk and chance meet, enabling a process of inner self-discovery and change that might involve both a loss and a gain of identity. The road to freedom enables, after all, an experience of social learning for the protagonists through a seemingly foreign terrain where their physical bounds and will to be on the run are put to test. Their rebellious route clearly configures a journey *out of* society, which is conceived as an imperfect or inadequate order⁸ (see Roppen and Sommer, 1964: 18).

¹ For an account of the origins of the road-movie genre, see Laderman, 1996, and Ron Eyerman and Orvar Lofgren, 1995.

² See also Williams (1982) who argues that the genre includes almost any film in which a motor vehicle is crucial to the plot. It excludes films which may contain brilliant car chases, such as *Bullit* or *The Blues Brothers*, but includes, on the other hand, movies such as *Badlands* (1973) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) which use vehicles to transport the main characters from scene to scene but are rarely the subject of, or scenario for, dialogue themselves.

³ See Chard (1999), especially chapter 4 (Destabilized Travel). The author puts forward the view of travel as a form of personal adventure that entails dangers, risks and pleasures.

⁴ See Enevold (2000) for a discussion of the road as a primarily male territory in the discourse of travel.

⁵ See Willis (1997) for a discussion of queer and racial 'versions' of the white heterosexual couple and the buddy pair,

⁶ For an account of the lack of coincidence between natural and political borders, see Llobera on the work of Van Gennep in Llobera, 1994.

⁷ In the two decades following World War II, an unprecedented economic prosperity substantially reduced the gap between the rich and the poor. Even so American capitalist culture appears to have served here mostly as a social pacifier by creating an illusion of opportunity for all, i.e. the belief that anyone can succeed. The deep roots of such belief set the ground in the meritocratic ethos of American democracy that by equating failure with sin or personal inadequacy precludes any chance of identifying the objective causes of social injustice or individual failure (see Weiss, 1969; see also Newman, 1991).

⁸ See Roppen and Sommer (1964) for a discussion of the archetypal sensibilities at work in traditional metaphors of travel.

CHAPTER 6 : AIMLESS JOURNEYS

6.1 Narrative Structure

The sub-narrative pattern of aimless journeys is concerned with journeys that are structured as an experience of wandering. That is not to say that this specific pattern of the European 'film of voyage' journey is devoid of any kind of motivation. In fact, there is usually a practical motive for the protagonists to embark on a journey. However, as soon as the characters are set on the move, their inner drive to go on evolves henceforth as a consequence of the act of being in transit. Hence it is not the direction, nor the destination, but the unforeseen possibilities of voyaging that underpin the sub-narrative pattern of aimless journeys. I draw upon a group of nine 'films of voyage' so as to explore this particular narrative form: *Voyage to Italy* (Rossellini, 1953) *La Strada* (Fellini, 1954), *L'avventura* (Antonioni, 1960), *Pierrot Le Fou* (Godard, 1965) *Alice in the Cities* (Wenders, 1974), *Kings of the Road* (Wenders, 1976), *Radio On* (Petit, 1979), *Five Days, Five Nights* (Fonseca e Costa, 1996), and *Sicilia!* (Straub and Huillet, 1999).

Basic Narrative

The voyagers' reasons to be in transit are often a natural consequence of professional displacement. This is visible, for instance, in *Kings of the Road* where Bruno follows a more or less indexed itinerary along the East-West German border as a film projector repairman. When by chance he meets Robert, a child psychiatrist, he ends up giving him a ride in his van after Robert had plunged his car into the River Elbe. This encounter marks the beginning of a friendship as the journey opens up the prospect for both men to rediscover themselves and their own past as they move from town to town, following Bruno's itinerary. In a similar manner, Gelsomina's and Zampano's travels as itinerant entertainers across a depressed Italy in *La Strada* are motivated by professional reasons and a need to make a living. The naive Gelsomina is forced

to leave her indigent family to follow the brutal Zampano and work as his assistant across the backdrop of a rural Italy in the harsh post-war years.

In other films, continuous wandering, the will to keep moving forward, is sustained, at least to begin with, by a rather hopeless search for someone or something, which is consciously experienced as such by the voyagers on the move. This is the case in both *L'avventura* and *Alice in the Cities* where the main protagonists follow an uncertain trajectory in search of a missing person. In *L'avventura*, Sandro and Claudia drift across southern Italy in search of Anna who had vanished when they were yachting with a group of rich friends by the Lipari Islands. After an unsuccessful police search across the island, Sandro and Claudia, respectively Anna's boyfriend and best friend, decide to embark on a quest for Anna. As their emotional involvement grows stronger, Claudia and Sandro are tempted to give up their search but are prevented from doing so because of their ambivalent desires and inner contradictions. In *L'avventura* the impulse to move on is the result of the impossibility of making a choice.

Similarly, Philip and Alice in *Alice in the Cities* wander across Germany in search of Alice's grandmother when, shortly after they met by chance in New York, the girl's mother suddenly fails to reappear to meet them in Amsterdam. Philip's journey back to Germany was by then being motivated by an unresolved personal crisis that was preventing him completing a story about American landscape. When Alice's mother vanishes he sees no other option but to take care of a child he barely knows. In view of Alice's despair, he suggests seeking Alice's closest relative in Germany, her grandmother, but this does not prove an easy task. While they wander from town to town across the highly industrialised Ruhr region their journey becomes increasingly hopeless due to the lack of clues. After several frustrated attempts to locate the grandmother's house, Philip is driven to leave Alice in a police station. Even so, they are once again reunited as the girl manages to escape. Their search appears doomed to fail from the beginning, and the only reliable clue Alice is able to provide is a picture of the grandmother's house, one like so many others in Germany. However, as they move on and get to know each other, their initial uneasy and detached relationship turns to comradeship and the gloomy Philip starts to enjoy himself in the company of Alice, who has very peculiar views about what surrounds her. It could be said that in *Alice in the Cities* it is a hopeless search that, after all, helps the voyagers to have a sense of a route.

In *L'avventura*, however, Claudia's and Sandro's helpless quest for Anna appears to increase their sense of loss and disorientation.

Aimless journeys such as those in *Five Days, Five Nights* and *Pierrot Le Fou* are imbued with a different sensibility because they primarily evolve as journeys of escape. There is no clear direction to pursue or specific destination to achieve when the underlying motive of the journey assumes the shape of a flight from home. In *Five Days, Five Nights*, André, a young and idealistic political prisoner, escapes from prison during the isolationist times of the dictatorship in late 1940s Portugal. For five days and five nights he wanders, across mountains and valleys, around the barely accessible Northeastern region of Trás-os-Montes (*Behind-the-Mountains*) that borders Portugal and Spain. Sometimes alone, sometimes not, he is helped to illegally cross the border by the enigmatic and seemingly untrustworthy Lambaça, a smuggler of notorious reputation. What keeps André on the move amidst the ceaseless danger of being caught by the political police and his mistrust in Lambaça is his overwhelming desire to abandon the country and the certainty that there is no way back home. In a similar manner, in *Pierrot Le Fou*, Ferdinand and Marianne, his children's baby-sitter, escape the boredom of their smug and uninspiring social circles to embark on a life of adventure on a road filled with danger and excitement, very much in the spirit of an American road-movie. In fact, more than looking for a new place they could eventually call home, they appear to take pleasure in the risks and possibilities of the journey more than anything else. "Where are we going?" is a question that both Marianne and Ferdinand often ask in a rather trivial manner. While getting involved with a gun-fighting mob and embarking on a run-away trip they end up settling for while in the French Riviera where Ferdinand aims to fulfil his desire to be a writer.

Despite considerable differences in style, what keeps these voyagers on the move is the certainty that they are going somewhere. Paradoxically, in both *Five Days, Five Nights* and *Pierrot Le Fou*, the act of being in transit works as a guarantee that there is somewhere to go even if they, in fact, head nowhere. André's journey uncovers, nonetheless, a much less pleasurable route to travel than that followed by both Marianne and Ferdinand. He often experiences a sense of disorientation and loss in walking nightlong through mountains and valleys and in contact with several 'underworld' characters. He struggles to decide where to go in face of Lambaça's dubious directions. We learn of such dilemmas through André's voice-

over: “I wonder if this was the way? Would the bus come this way? Or is someone trying to play a trick on me?”. In both films, it is the act of travelling, not the destination, which holds a promise of a better life at the end of the road.

Although different in style, what films such as *Voyage to Italy*, *Radio On* and *Sicilia!* have in common is the same sort of motivation to embark on a journey, i.e. they are all structured as journeys initiated to achieve a practical goal. In *Voyage to Italy*, Alex and Catherine, an English upper-class couple, head by car to Italy to arrange the sale of a house belonging to a recently deceased relative. Likewise, *Radio On* tells the story of Robert, a London DJ, who travels towards Bristol to find out something about the mysterious circumstances surrounding his brother’s death. In *Sicilia!* we follow the journey of an Italian émigré in New York who is returning to his native Sicily after a long absence, apparently to pay a visit to his mother. These journeys are initially bound to a specific purpose, or, at least, to a precise destination. However, it is through encounters with strangers and by travelling in a seemingly foreign terrain that such journeys leap in unexpected directions both in a spiritual and material sense. What is implied here is that the transformative experience of the journey leads the voyagers to drift away from their initial purposes. In *Voyage to Italy*, Catherine’s and Alex’s marriage is soon to be found on the rocks in their ongoing voyage. Their arrival in Naples marks the beginning of an increasing loss of insight on their relationship. Where Catherine is drawn to wander around museums and archaeological sites in the area, her husband, Alex, disoriented with the indolence of the Italian *dolce far niente* lifestyle is prompt to dismiss the business and speaks of going back home as soon as possible.

In *Radio On*, as Robert sets off along the M4 linking London to Bristol, we know that he is heading to Wales to find out something about the strange circumstances of his brother’s death. There is a vague suggestion that it might be connected to a pornography ring based in Bristol, but the story is, in fact, more concerned with Robert’s silent drive through a road marked by unexciting events and the daily radio news. From brief stops in a road-side café, to a meeting with a bitter army deserter to whom he offers a lift, and a brief incursion in a trailer park where an Eddie Cochran fan (an as yet barely known Sting) plays on his guitar the hit “Three Steps to Heaven”, there is a sense that such events contribute little to clarify the journey’s purpose. Robert finally arrives in Bristol and meets his

brother's unsympathetic girlfriend who is not keen on providing any sort of information. He then roams through Bristol's nightlife and after being refused entrance to a nightclub he ends up in a hotel room with two German women to whom he had offered a lift. From now on, Robert's journey diverges radically from its original motivation and he appears drawn to follow and, finally, achieve some sort of meaningful communication with one of the German women. Robert's journey discloses, after all, more about the intangibility of language and cultural differences (in this case, between the German and the English) and the misfortune of a German woman, who is prevented from seeing her daughter by her estranged ex-husband, than about his brother's strange death.

In *Sicilia!* it is clear almost from the beginning that there is a precise destination to which the voyager is heading. However, not much is revealed about the voyager's inner intent to visit his native Sicily after a fifteen-years absence. The journey is structured in highly stylised tableaux where the voyager, who is never named, engages in long discussions about social and philosophical issues concerning people's way of life in Sicily. These include successively an orange picker at a harbour, his fellow train passengers, his mother and, finally, a knife-sharpener. With a typically Brechtian detachment that can be found in other of Huillet's and Straub's films, characters expose their largely unspoken dramas as the voyager travels across Sicily. This is not of course a straightforward roaming itinerary in which the voyager might be drifting away from his initial purposes. In fact, it is difficult to grasp whether he is in any way being diverted from a planned route since so little information is provided about the journey's motivation. The voyager's drive to move on appears to revolve around the possibilities offered by the experience of the voyage, i.e. the pure accidental circumstances of the journey that enable him to develop an interest in the people and space travelled and thus to learn something about his native Sicily.

Beginnings

As I have suggested, these films revolve around chance encounters and their story evolves mostly as a succession of episodes, which are not necessarily causally linked. Hence, and perhaps not surprisingly, the beginning of some of the films

does not coincide with the start of the journey. In some cases, the film starts in the midst of an ongoing journey of at least one of the travelling protagonists. In films such as *Kings of the Road*, *La Strada* and *Five Days, Five Nights* this is unsurprising as travelling is fundamentally a consequence of itinerant lifestyles or a flight. On the other hand, the beginning in these films clearly marks the encounter between fellow journey companions. The opening scenes assign, in fact, considerable importance to the encounter between future journey companions, although it is apparent that one of them is already on the move. As *Kings of the Road* starts we are introduced to Bruno repairing a film projector in one of the many rundown theatres he works for. The following scene carefully depicts the circumstances of his initial contact with Robert. While Bruno is shaving by his van at the Elbe river shore Robert passes by him driving furiously towards the river into which he deliberately plunges his VW car. With a mix of amusement and surprise, Bruno offers Robert a towel so he can dry himself, and a ride in his van. In the same way, *La Strada's* opening scene covers the first encounter between Zampano and Gelsomina when he goes to find her poverty-stricken home. Here, he offers her mother some money in exchange for Gelsomina working as his assistant. In *Five Days, Five Nights* the opening scene shows the encounter between André and Lambaça in Oporto railway station following André's escape from prison. This first scene succeeds in suggesting the sense of distrust and uneasiness that will govern the two men's relationship for almost the whole duration of their journey together. The departure moment is here simply elided and the scene following this first encounter shows the two men already on their way in a train carriage amidst conspicuous silence.

Voyage to Italy, Sicilia! and *Alice in the Cities* are all films in which the opening scene shows the main protagonists already on their way whilst setting the mood of the film. A distinctive feature of these films is that the departure moment is completely elided or made unclear. *Voyage to Italy* opens with a scene of Catherine and Alex driving across Southern Italy after they have abandoned the idea of coming to Italy by plane. Interestingly, as Catherine says she thought this would be a good opportunity to be together, we immediately start to get a sense of the couple's troubled relationship. At the same time, aspects of the contrast between their English familiar context vis-à-vis the Italian foreign terrain they travel soon becomes apparent in Alex's discontentment. As a noisy motorbike

passes by, he comments with slight disdain: “How noisy they are! In this country noisy and boredom go together!”. In *Alice in the Cities* the opening scene shows Philip taking Polaroid pictures at a deserted and windy beach in a seemingly American setting. As he gets into his car and roves along an exotically remote seaboard we start to comprehend that Philip’s aimless journey has already started. In fact, the beginning of the film, although succeeding in introducing us to its main character, diverges little from the immediately following scenes showing Philip’s aimless drive across a visibly depressed American setting. The first few scenes centre on his lonely wanderings across a U.S. landscape and it is not until he decides to return to his native Germany that Alice, whom he met by chance when trying to book his flight, becomes a central protagonist as they initiate their journey together back to Germany. The beginning of *Sicilia!* introduces the main protagonist seated by a small pier while engaging in a discussion with a Sicilian man. They argue about aspects of the sharp cultural difference between Sicily and America and traditional Sicilian food. The young Sicilian orange-picker tells the newly arrived Italian émigré that he cannot be a Sicilian because a Sicilian never eats in the morning. We then learn that our main character is an Italian émigré in the U.S. who is visiting his mother after a fifteen-years absence from his native Sicily. It is also clear that the departure moment had been elided and that this is an ongoing journey since the conversation takes place in Sicilian terrain. The opening scene is also the first of a series of insightful conversations about Sicilian culture.

Within the group of films considered, *L’avventura*, *Pierrot Le Fou* and *Radio On* all involve a recognizable departure moment that it is not coincident with the beginning of the film. When *L’avventura* starts we are immediately introduced to the central characters, Claudia, Anna and Sandro, as they get ready to meet their group of upper-class friends to go sunbathing and yachting. We then see them shortly after the beginning of the film as they head by the car to the south of Italy where by the Lipari islands a set of tragic and unpredictable events is soon to unfold. In *Radio On* the departure moment is delayed and the film revolves around Robert’s banal daily routines such as bathing, driving his car or playing a pinball machine, while we become aware of his erratic behaviour. The opening scene is, however, important in that it is linked to the underlying motivation of the journey that Robert is about to embark on; it shows Robert opening a package

containing some tapes and a note saying “happy birthday, brother”. Not long after this scene, Robert receives a phone call indicating that something has happened to his brother and he then decides to head to Bristol to see if he can help. In *Pierrot Le Fou* the departure moment is also carefully staged and as such helps to elucidate the reasons for the flight. It takes place not at the immediate film beginning but shortly after the opening scene introduces the main protagonists, Marianne and Ferdinand, and the circumstances that led to their sudden and happy flight away from their constraining social circles.

Most generally, it should be noted that a careful depiction of the departure moment is particularly significant in setting a contrast between a familiar domain from which the voyagers leave and the otherness of the spaces travelled, an otherness associated with the unpredictability and unexpected circumstances of being in transit.

Episodic Structure - Time and Space

In the sub-narrative pattern of aimless journeys most films are more concerned with the *temps morts* of the journey itself than with the dramatization of events. The unforeseen possibilities of the journey do not necessarily lead to a road characterized by risk and exciting peripatetic incidents, as is the case in the American road-movie. There are certainly some exceptions (e.g. *Pierrot Le Fou*) but the road travelled is more often marked by uneventful episodes that are barely connected to each other. The banality of life on the road is well expressed in this pattern of the European ‘film of voyage’ where so often so little seems to happen. The *temps morts* of the voyage are made visible in the many scenes showing characters’ silent drives or aimless walks during an occasional stop. That is, for instance, particularly striking in films such as *Radio On* and *Kings of the Road* that are characterized by unusually long takes of lonely walks or drives. Other banal occurrences commonly found in such films include the satisfaction of basic daily needs, such as eating, sleeping and resting, which are, in general, carefully staged. In *Alice in the Cities*, that is apparent, for instance, in Philip’s and Alice’s drifting walks around Amsterdam and their silent meals in cafes and restaurants. Similarly, Catherine’s sightseeing in the Naples area in *Voyage to Italy*, where she

is depicted as a caricature English lady tourist (see Mulvey, 2000), epitomizes the triviality that also encompasses the journey.

Not surprisingly, the narrative pattern of aimless journeys devotes considerable importance to the constraints and inconveniences of being on the move as experienced by the voyagers themselves. These are particularly apparent in scenes of meal times in cafes, restaurants, or waiting times in airports, or even the time spent waiting for a journey companion. In *Alice in the Cities*, for instance, Philip is visibly bored whilst waiting for his flight to Amsterdam whereas Alice struggles to entertain herself wandering around the airport lounge. The discomforts of the journey, such as the tiredness associated with sleepless nights spent in cars or long hours walking, are commonly portrayed in aimless journeys. In *Five Days, Five Nights* André is worn out by the long hours he spends walking fast and at risk of being caught in the woods and mountain ranges he has to cross to reach the border. Alex in *Voyage to Italy* keeps complaining of boredom from the beginning of the film. Bruno and Robert in *Kings of the Road* cannot find the same comforts as home in the van where we see them sleeping.

What is also noteworthy in these films is a sharp contrast with the American-road movie which usually deploys action-packed stories that eventually lead to the downfall of the rebellious heroes. The European 'film of voyage', particularly in the pattern of aimless journeys, does not need to keep inventing reasons to maintain their characters on the road. With regards to both style and narrative progression, the films are usually slow-paced with a rhythm that becomes regular, unchanged and sometimes without a recognizable climax. To a great degree, that is accomplished by minimizing fast editing and privileging the use of slow panorama shots and long takes of landscape. We cannot speak, however, of such stylistic devices as being specific to the European film of voyage as such. They are often also part of a director's own distinctive style in his or her attempts to resist or be critical of classic Hollywood cinema. Thus, *Pierrot le Fou* does not utilise a slow-paced narrative and is, in fact, more indebted to American genres, such as the road-movie and the gangster film, than most of its European counterparts. Godard's predilection for pastiche and editing techniques such as *collage* works well in depicting the main protagonists' hectic lifestyle. In a rather unorthodox manner, *Pierrot Le Fou* is divided into chapters from Ferdinand's journal that he reads at times in a voice-over narration. Its tenuous story line

includes some startling singing and dancing sequences that alternate with gangster style action and some documentary footage about the Vietnam War. Similarly, Antonioni's penchant for episodic and circular plots and complex characters sits well in a story following the wanderings of the emotionally troubled couple of *L'avventura*, but is also found more generally in his cinema.

Narrative devices for building tension such as suspense or retardation effects usually play a limited role in aimless journeys. The very triviality of their events makes aimless journeys emphasise the routines of everyday life. In a film such as *Kings of the Road* there is even a sense that there is no story to tell. Especially in films following the itinerant lives of their protagonists (e.g. *La Strada*, *Kings of the Road*), the slow pace of the film mirrors the rhythm and ordinariness of everyday life that is unconventionally set on the road. We see for example, Bruno, the itinerant projector repairman of *Kings of the Road*, shaving, eating or listening to records in his van, as he would probably do in a conventional home. Similarly, in *La Strada*, Gelsomina and Zampano are shown eating, sleeping or cooking by their moto-trailer. It is, in fact, almost impossible to identify in such films a climax moment, i.e. a decisive turning point in the story line that might lead to a resolution of a certain state of affairs. There are of course films where events are more causally linked and we have a stronger sense of narrative progression such that a climax may eventually build up. In *Voyage to Italy*, for instance, Catherine's and Alex's deteriorating relationship is reaching a recognizable disruption point as they decide to divorce, before the couple is reconciled in the closing scene. In a similar manner, in *Five Days, Five Nights*, a film with a more conventional story line, we see André's and Lambaça's relationship growing strained in mutual antipathy and distrust as they struggle to get to know each other and safely reach the border. In the end, however, aimless journeys usually involve an all-encompassing ambiguity that prevents the viewer from getting a full insight into the characters' inner struggles or goals so as to foresee a suitable ending for the story.

Another important narrative feature in the pattern of aimless journeys is the way in which the voyagers' route bifurcates in divergent directions. Although that might appear as hardly surprising considering the voyager's drifting trajectory, the journey might also branch in different directions to follow the lonely wanderings of one or another protagonist at a given stage in their journey. Arguably, the hazy

contours of this kind of journey mirror the clashes, tensions and individual inner impulses of the voyagers. In *L'avventura*, Claudia's conflicting emotional drive to keep herself away from Sandro leads the troubled couple to follow divergent routes at several stages in their hopeless search for Anna. When *Kings of the Road*'s Robert decides to pay a visit to his estranged father, we see Bruno alternatively seeking entertainment in an amusement park where he meets Pauline. Catherine and Alex of *Voyage to Italy* drift apart almost from their arrival in the country and are led to wander in distinct locations in the Naples region. Unsurprisingly, therefore, crosscutting is a common editing strategy in the pattern of aimless journeys.

Key Events and Narrative Closure

A distinctive feature of the tradition of European 'films of voyage' is, as discussed above, an unresolved ending. In the sub-narrative pattern of aimless journeys narrative closure is particularly ambiguous and endings strikingly inconclusive. This is primarily because the narrative is marked by a remarkable absence of key events and climaxes that might influence a final resolution of the story being told. In most films it appears that the ending occurs almost by chance since there is no clear evidence of dramatic progression. However, in cases involving the death of at least one of the main protagonists (e.g. *La Strada*, *Pierrot Le Fou*) the story's outcome is usually prompted by this tragic event. In addition, since the voyagers lack a clear motivation to be on the move, it is very difficult to assess to what degree they have been affected or changed by the experience of the voyage as the film reaches its ending without necessarily putting an end to the journey. Towards the end of *Kings of the Road* for example, Robert and Bruno pursue their journeys apart after a row at the ruined border station where they spend the night. It is difficult to know whether Robert is definitely going back to his estranged wife or if Bruno is to stick to his professional itinerary. Where Robert's enigmatic farewell note - "Everything must change. So long. R." - says nothing about his actual purposes from then on, Bruno's tearing up of a piece of paper with his indexed itinerary is also inconclusive.

Once again, in films such as *L'avventura* and *Radio On* the ending never resolves the question of what has changed for the voyagers or if they are to maintain their aimless journeys. Such films are imbued with a sensibility that appears to suggest that the voyagers are as lost by the end of the film as they were throughout. After Claudia catches Sandro with a prostitute in the closing scene of *L'avventura*, their already emotionally distraught relationship has nowhere to go until her final elusive gesture succeeds in raising a note of hope for the two unredeemed lovers. When in *Radio On* Robert's car breaks down by the top of a cliff above a bleak and wintry deserted beach he has no other choice but to abandon it and to continue his journey, first on foot and then on a train that he catches apparently by chance in the final shot. The ending appears as ambiguous as the previous scenes following Robert's drifting trajectory and, unsurprisingly, fails to offer enlightenment about his estranged brother's death. Robert's voyage will certainly continue.

In some films (e.g. *Pierrot Le Fou*, *La Strada*), though more exceptionally, the ending assumes somewhat tragic features as death strikes to put an end to the unresolved wandering of one or both main protagonists. Both Pierrot's and Marianne's doomed journey and Gelsomina's tragic death at the brink of madness are a contingent consequence of movement itself or, perhaps, of an unconventional lifestyle that broadens the risks of being on the move. In contrast with the American road-movie where the easily anticipated death of the rebellious heroes usually puts an end to the film and to the flight from home, death can hardly be seen as a solution for the drifting trajectory of the aimless journey. Certainly, Pierrot's decision to blow himself up with dynamite was triggered by the accidental killing in a gunfight of his beloved Marianne. Nonetheless, when a thoughtful and hopeless Pierrot, sitting down at the top of a cliff, unwittingly drops a lit match on the dynamite his death turns out to be more inadvertent than deliberate. Not long after the couple set off across the country, there is an almost premonitory sequence where Marianne asks Pierrot what does he see as he is looking at himself in the car's rear-view mirror and he replies: "the face of a man who's about to throw himself over a precipice at a hundred miles an hour" (as quoted by Whitehead, 1969: 47). Similarly, in *La Strada*, Il Matto's killing during a fight with the rough and brutal Zampano was not premeditated, although it paves the way for the two itinerant artists to break apart and for Gelsomina's

descent into despair and madness. When we learn of Gelsomina's misfortune and death through a woman that Zampano meets by chance, the closing sequence discloses an almost redemptive vision of a despairing Zampano weeping on a deserted beach (see Marcus, 1986). However, whether Zampano's journey with Gelsomina and the revelation of her tragic death has transformed his inner self is a question that is not fully answered.

In some aimless journeys, however, the ending turns out to be significantly more conclusive. There is some suggestion that the journey entails a transformative experience that is to seize the protagonists' drive to wander in the foreseeable future. Narrative closure in such cases alludes to a termination of the aimless pattern but this is never shown as the film ends. Where Catherine's and Alex's warm embrace amidst a howling crowd of religious devotees indicates that salvation is possible for their crumbling marriage in *Voyage to Italy*, so *Alice in the Cities'* Philip and Alice end up heading to Munich where the girl is to meet her mother and grandmother and he, supposedly, to finish his story. In the same spirit, the ending in *Five days, Five Nights* succeeds in shedding light on how André was changed by the experience of the journey. There is a suggestion that the idealist André is finally seeing his country and the notorious smuggler Lambaça with different eyes as he crosses the border. André's enigmatic lines shortly after the crossing in the closing scene suggest his strong belief in a future change of the country's political and social situation: "everything will change whatever happens. It will only depend on man's will, whatever happens".

On the whole, endings in aimless journeys are imbued with a sensibility that brings a glint of hope for the future to come, i.e. the certainty that something will change for the voyagers, even if there is a relative lack of actual narrative closure.

6.2 Voyagers, Observers and Identity

At first glance, the most obvious character trait in aimless journeys is the voyagers' appearance of detachment towards others and from the space travelled. Such disengagement has complex undertones. Sometimes, it emerges, understandably, as a consequence of professional or other sorts of displacement that makes it difficult for the voyagers to engage in meaningful or lasting

relationships (e.g. Bruno in *Kings of the Road*, Gelsomina and Zampano in *La Strada*). In other circumstances, in trying to come to grips with their ambivalent desires, the voyagers basically turn inwards and their interest in others and the surrounding world becomes subordinated to the need to understand their inner selves (e.g. Claudia and Sandro in *L'avventura*, Alex and Catherine in *Voyage to Italy*, Marianne and Pierrot in *Pierrot le Fou*). What is at issue here is what we might call an apparent disconnection from the surrounding world that is fundamentally linked to the voyager's underlying impulse to move on. Overall, however, we are not dealing with entirely alienated individuals who are unable to establish any sort of meaningful contact with others. Aimless journeys are concerned with individuals who are confronted with new spaces and others to whom they cannot avoid relating. That is not to say that they are actively seeking contact with others. It could be argued that the act of wandering does not prevent the voyagers from perceiving themselves as moving throughout a particular space and then feeling that they have learned something from that experience. Thus when trying to make sense of characters, we need to investigate how the voyagers' subjective experience of the world whilst on the move relates to issues of personal identity.

Most voyagers are undergoing some sort of personal crisis that appears to be at the core of their impulse to be on the move. If we think, for example, of *Kings of the Road*'s Robert and Bruno or *Alice in the Cities*'s Philip we become rapidly aware that they suffer from a personal crisis that disturbs their sense of inner self-awareness. Robert has just plunged his VW into the Elbe river in a rather pathetic suicide attempt following the break up of his marriage. As *Alice in the Cities* starts, we are introduced to the character of a German journalist, Philip, who we learn is travelling across the U.S. to write a piece about American landscape but turns out to be suffering from a deep identity crisis that is at the heart of his sleepless nights and lack of inspiration. We see Philip taking countless Polaroid pictures of the locations he passes as he wanders across the U.S. Uninspired and apparently penniless after a row with his publisher in New York, he tries to find some comfort and understanding with a female friend. In a rare confessional dialogue he then tells of how the American landscape had changed him and of his obsession with images and the need to compare his pictures with reality.

Although both Philip and, for instance, *Kings of the Road*'s Robert are seemingly lost in their attempts to resolve their respective identity crises, it is more often the case that in aimless journeys a personal crisis is fundamentally linked to a broader inquiry into the self. The voyagers are driven to question the foundations of their relations, certainties, inner values, feelings, and ethical beliefs across a terrain they experience as foreign and under the unusual circumstances of the voyage.

Aimless journeys turn the self inwards in contact with otherness. Paradoxically, it is also by turning outwards while in transit, i.e. through an experience of outer space, that the voyagers are to get new insight on their sense of themselves. It is often in contact with people and places they do not normally have to deal with in the routines of everyday life that the voyagers are confronted with circumstances and choices that put to a test their psychological and, sometimes, physical bounds. Arguably, the continuous experience of movement offers us a more sophisticated sense of who we are and what others are like. What is of particular interest for this discussion is how the relation between the voyager and the space travelled may trigger or increase a personal crisis already on the making.

If we think again of a film such as *Alice in the Cities*, no doubt Philip's identity crisis is intrinsically connected to his experience of an alienating landscape and a sense that "everywhere looks the same". Likewise, the scenes in which both Robert and Bruno revisit their childhood homes in *Kings of the Road* are occasions for reconsidering the limits of their inner selves and confronting past and present. These are also moments for the characters' overt expression of a mix of anger, angst and resentment as they face the largely unspoken dramas of their of past in such familiar sites. That is visible in the scene of Robert's bitter argument with his estranged father over his mother's mistreatment, and in the scene in which Bruno loses his nonchalant attitude to weep desperately by his now ruined Rhine childhood home. Both characters are, in fact, trying to come to terms with their personal memories of a difficult past. After their brief incursion to the Rhine, there is a moment in which Bruno makes a rare but highly significant remark about his own sense of self: "I suddenly see myself as someone who has lived through a time ... and that time is my story. It's a comforting thought".

In contrast with *Kings of the Road*, the couple of *Voyage to Italy* is not travelling a seemingly familiar space which has been rendered strange in view of the

characters' personal circumstances. In *Voyage to Italy* the encounter with a recognizably foreign space paves the way for both Catherine and Alex to question the foundations of their marriage. As they arrive in Naples, Alex sadly agrees with Catherine when she says "since we departed I'm not sure about anything. I understood we are like two strangers!". However, it is through visions of a Naples full of pregnant women, couples in love and haunted catacombs, and amongst statues of ancient gods imbued with a mystical aura and the ruins of Pompeii, that Catherine starts looking at her childless marriage with different eyes. Her roaming tours around Naples' historical sites and museums seem guided by the spirituality of the lines she often repeats to herself of a deceased poet and former admirer: "Temple of the Spirit. No longer bodies/But pure aesthetic images". To this inclination her husband, Alex, reacts with restrained jealousy and sarcasm amidst a determination to abandon such idle surroundings and get back home in England. Catherine, instead, tries at any cost not to get distracted by her husband's nightlong wanderings in Capri and to persist with her early morning sightseeing. We are never sure what she is actually looking for in her spiritual wanderings. Alex, on the other hand, is confronted with the dramas of broken relationships of several women, first a recently divorced woman he meets at a party and then a prostitute at odds with the death of a close friend, who finds in him a kind listener. The scene of the couple's visit to the Roman city of Pompeii works not only as metaphor for their ruined marriage, but is also illustrative of how the lived and felt experience of place is shaping their sense of the relationship. Shortly after they speak of divorce for the first time, Catherine and Alex are unable to decline an invitation to visit the ruins of Pompeii. It is here that an already highly disturbed and sensitive Catherine finds it impossible to cope with a vision of a fossilized couple embracing each other that is being recovered from the ground and rushes out of the archaeological site. Catherine and Alex are thus led to a new insight on their increasingly estranged relationship through a highly emotional and perceptive experience of the foreignness of place. The transformative power of the voyage to Italy is undeniably linked to the felt strangeness of the places and people encountered. We can also argue that their encounter with the mystical presence of the past in such ancient surroundings turns into an opportunity for the couple to assess the resonance of their own personal past. That is not, nonetheless, a joint venture. Catherine's and Alex's individual routes rarely meet in their wider

voyage to Italy surely because they are both trying to make sense of themselves beyond the scope of the relationship.

In *L'avventura* we witness a more radical enquiry into the self through a journey where characters are unveiled as a compendium of contradictions. When Sandro and Claudia set forth in their search for Anna, we do not doubt that their relationship is growing strained and hence a personal crisis is in the making. As the journey goes on they find themselves trapped within two conflicting drives that they are unable to resolve; on the one hand, an overwhelming impulse to keep going so as to live their passion whilst abandoning their search; on the other hand, an inescapable drive to move forward to find Anna whilst repressing their love. Halfway through the film, a scene that takes place at the top of a church tower in Sicily is strikingly illustrative of the nature of the characters' inner troubles and inconsistencies. Here, the sometimes remote, sometimes affectionate Sandro, comments on the architectural beauty and resilience of the surrounding monuments he attentively observes. An architect himself, he dreams aloud of abandoning his unimaginative though lucrative job to follow his own ideas. Claudia encourages him to do so and says she is sure he can build lovely things but he replies with disbelief on what creativity can accomplish in a time where beautiful things last no more than ten or twenty years. Forgetful of his missing girlfriend, he then asks Claudia to marry him and we see a hopeless Claudia reacting to his abrupt marriage proposal with a confession of her wish to see things clearly and her inability to do so.

As argued by Quintana (1997:52) in *L'avventura*, as in Antonioni's other films, landscape is transformed into a projection of the interior world of the individuals¹. Thus it is that amidst an estranging and austere landscape, initially at the rocky and windy deserted island from where Anna disappeared and then across a Baroque and impersonal Sicily, that the two lovers start losing their grip on their own selves. However, as we forget about Anna's disappearance and as Claudia's and Sandro's relationship becomes the focus of attention, we also start becoming aware that their relation has to be framed against the backdrop of the privileged social circle to which Sandro belongs. Through their group of bourgeois friends, we get a deep insight into a social class at odds with boredom and lack of meaningful relationships. It is noteworthy how at different stages along their

journey Claudia and Sandro stop to visit their friends who appear blithely oblivious of Anna's fate.

In other films, the enquiry into the self is shaped by a sensibility that suggests a more existential concern with personal identity. Here, the characters are experiencing an identity crisis of a different kind. *Pierrot Le Fou* is clearly illustrative of such a sensibility. Almost immediately before Ferdinand and Marianne set off to engage in a life of adventures on the road, Marianne asks him why he looks so depressed and he promptly admits that sometimes he looks in the mirror and starts wondering about himself. When their hectic and apparently dilettante lifestyle on the road comes to a stop as Ferdinand decides to settle in the Midi to become a writer, the always-evasive Marianne soon gets desperately bored. Here, Ferdinand decides to keep a diary where he takes fragmented notes of his thoughts and feelings about Marianne and the meaning of life in general. In their journey going nowhere, there is an all-pervasive sense that they struggle to understand each other and their own selves: "It's true. I am only a huge question mark poised over the Mediterranean horizon", admits Ferdinand when she tells him that he does not know who he is but she does. Although Ferdinand finds it difficult to trust Marianne because of her contradictory remarks and unwillingness to speak about herself, he is, nonetheless, tempted to move on until Marianne's obscure involvement with a group of gunmen proves tragically fatal. The geography of place plays here an important role in framing the couple's existential concerns. It is against the backdrop of a sunny seaside in the romantic Riviera, where most of the story takes place, that the couple's divergences grow sharper. Whilst Ferdinand finds such cosy French surroundings inspiring, Marianne, at the brink of despair, dreams of heading to rather more exotic locations (she suggests China, Tibet or Miami beach) in her ceaseless desire to move on. There is a scene where we see a meditative Ferdinand sitting on a ruined breakwater facing the blue sea, writing in his journal, and Marianne walking at the edge of the beach crying and furiously flinging stones in the sea at the brink of despair as she repeatedly shouts: "What I am to do? ... I don't know what to do!".

In a film like *La Strada* it is very difficult to assess to what extent an enquiry into the self is, in fact, at work along the journey. Gelsomina and Zampano, the main protagonists, are not complex characters. We cannot forget, however, that under the auspices of Italian neo-realism the underlying aspiration was to draw attention

to the social conditions governing the lives of unprivileged and marginal social strata in an impoverished post-war Italy². Within such an ethos, it appears less important to explore characters in their inner complexity than to expose harsh social realities. In a typically neo-realist fashion, *La Strada* sets the story of two itinerant entertainers forced to make a living on kind donations in a bleak and poverty-stricken landscape. It is difficult to have a sense of character development despite the fact that Gelsomina and Zampano play consistent social roles. In fact, they almost emerge as ‘genuine representatives’ of a certain social stratum as the story goes on to tell of how the cruel and exploitative Zampano buys his assistant, the simple-minded, frail and uncomplaining Gelsomina, from her indigent family, and they both set off working across Italy. Their relationship remains strained and stable from the beginning and nothing appears to change until Gelsomina meets “Il Matto”, a witty and affectionate circus clown. Although “Il Matto” offers Gelsomina a new insight on her merciless life by showing her that she has a choice, she, faithful and committed, decides not to abandon Zampano. Despite the film’s lack of concern with the construction of complex characters, it is clear that Gelsomina’s forced journey away from home paves the way for her physical and psychological decline. As remarked by Quintana (1997: 146), the journey undertaken by Gelsomina and Zampano is not a voyage of initiation but one heading nowhere.

However, we never get a grasp on whether these two characters’ sense of self was affected by the experience of the voyage, as they emerge as devoid of personal aims or inner subjective troubles. Against the backdrop of a neo-realist landscape, the story is therefore primarily concerned to relate its deracinated characters to the space in which they exist, i.e. to their everyday life as itinerant entertainers across post-war Italy. It appears that in *La Strada* the topography of the space travelled and encounters with others (e.g. a bitter widow, the kind nuns in a convent) play a more significant role in integrating characters’ subjectivities in a specific social context than in unfolding the main protagonists’ inner dilemmas. We can conclude that the film embraces an existential concern with the self vis-à-vis specific social conditions without ever exploring the depths of self-inquiry of the voyagers.

Again in *Sicilia!* we are faced with the enduring reality of an impoverished Sicily through the successive chance conversations that an Italian émigré maintains with

several strangers along his journey across southern Italy. However, the film is radically distinct from *La Strada* in mood and style. We have little access to the main protagonist's inner subjectivities, and even to his facial expression, in the various chance encounters. In the first scene, for instance, he is shot with his torso permanently turned to the camera during the whole conversation with a Sicilian orange picker. Straub's and Huillet's static camera shots unveil protagonists' inner dilemmas in an obviously mannered, almost theatrical, style. There is, however, an underlying suggestion that the main protagonist wishes to find out something about others and the country in the obvious interest he has in engaging in conversations with strangers. We learn about the existential dramas of such a portfolio of characters in highly stylised dialogues. Also, we get little grasp on the main protagonist's sense of self as he mainly intervenes to ask questions or clarify arguments. The enquiry into the self is, in fact, being pushed into the background whilst emphasis is being placed on Sicily's social and political conditions. Not surprisingly, in the scene of the main protagonist's encounter with his Sicilian mother, we hear about his mother's memories of her long-suffering life, his grandfather's hardships and achievements as both a catholic and socialist, and his father's fragility and penchant for poetry, being set against descriptions of a poverty-stricken Sicily.

The film's iconography does not frame characters' personal dramas against a harsh and naturalistic landscape, as it is the case in *La Strada*. Instead, the film contradicts all realist intentions by using a highly stylised black-and-white cinematography, which is dominated by bleak interiors and settings where we are never aware of life going on around the protagonists³. Visual imagery plays, nonetheless, a significant part in relating characters' personal dramas not to what it is being *shown*, but to what is visually and purposively being *concealed*. What is at work here is a discursive strategy that aims to unfold the lived dramas of characters by centring viewer's attention in 'what is being said'. Despite appearing almost removed from their natural environments, we do not doubt that the characters exist in those specific social and political conditions. That is because they outspokenly tell us about their subjective experience of the world in which they exist, i.e. their thoughts and feelings about life in Sicily (e.g. corruption, lack of hope of the Sicilian people). Long takes of an empty landscape are introduced at times to cover the passage between the several tableaux. Such an

editing strategy also enhances a sense of the different stages of the ongoing journey. That is made particularly visible in the several minutes-long travelling shot of a flat and deserted seaside Sicilian landscape, which is completely devoid of soundtrack. Here, we are excruciatingly being drawn into a pure experience of the movement that is narratively unjustified. On the other hand, we have to be aware that this film, and the work of Straub and Huillet in general, evolves as part of a typically avant-garde cinema that seeks to destabilize the viewer's understanding of the story line (see Murcia, 1998).

If we turn to a film such as *Radio On*, almost nothing is revealed about Robert's inner motives or personal dramas, although there is from the beginning an unequivocal suggestion that the journey is motivated by tragic circumstances, i.e. his brother's mysterious death. The story of Robert's uneventful and silent drives whilst listening to radio is almost drained of dramatic incidents. Thus it is very difficult to assess to what extent Robert is undergoing an enquiry into his inner self. We are never sure whether he is enduring a personal crisis following his brother's tragic death because that is neither verbally expressed, nor emotionally suggested. However, Robert's generally contemplative mood cannot go unnoticed and we are then forced to consider whether his aimless wandering is, in fact, laying the ground for a deep enquiry into the self. It is also clear that Robert is not undergoing an overt identity crisis as is, for example, Philip in *Alice in the Cities*, but we also know that he is not as unconcerned with the personal dramas of others (e.g. the German woman, the army deserter) as his detached manner might suggest. His genuine interest in others (e.g. he is an attentive listener) is visibly apparent, but it is also true that he shows little emotional connection or empathy in his encounters with strangers. Perhaps because of such inconsistencies we are drawn to question what is going on in Robert's mind and what sort of problems he is trying to resolve. There is a suggestion that the desperately bleak landscape that he travels through works as an evocation of his inner mood. Both the space travelled and the troubled characters that Robert encounters are imbued with an all-embracing strangeness. This emerges as somewhat paradoxical when we consider that the space trodden is supposedly a familiar one (i.e. the British national space). The characters Robert encounters along the journey are remarkable in that they resist the ordinariness of those people we may casually encounter in everyday life. That is visible, for instance, in Robert's attempts to

carry on a conversation with a German woman who says to him that she hates men and then refuses to speak to him in English. On another occasion, he fails to engage in a conversation with an awkward teenager by the hot-dog van in Bristol. In *Five Days, Five Nights* it is clear that André is not undergoing an identity crisis but that his physical and psychological bounds are being put to test. But the journey turns, after all, on an opportunity for André to get to know, with the help of Lambaça, and his smuggler friends, an impoverished and remote region of the country inhabited by people who are forced to make a living from the smuggling of goods and individuals. Through a naturalistic approach to landscape, we get a grip on André's sense of loss in such alien surroundings. Long shots of landscape help to create a sense of isolation in foregrounding the monumentality and beauty of the mountain ranges against which the miniscule figure of André is set walking. The close-up and André's voice-over also prove useful to explore his sense of tiredness and disorientation in such a region and amidst the fear of being caught by the political police. Voice-over, in particular, sheds a light on André's inner thoughts and feelings. Toward the end of the journey, for instance, André's voice-over lets us know about his more hopeful mood: "we walked the whole afternoon through the hills, with no rush, as if Lambaça was looking for a solution to an obstacle he could not anticipate. Sometimes while he was stopped for some time, staring at the surrounding landscape and ignoring all dangers he had spoken to me about, he conveyed to me a feeling that we were walking through safe terrain". It is also understood that both André and Lambaça emerge as more straightforward characters, i.e. not as inconsistent and unpredictable as, for instance, the couples of *L'avventura* or *Pierrot Le Fou* and *Radio On's* Robert. In fact, the two men can easily fall into recognizable stereotypes, the pragmatic and mature Lambaça vs. the idealist and immature André. When we think of André's aimless trajectory we are dealing, after all, with a typical voyage of initiation structured as a tale of social learning about the self and others, very much in the fashion of the *Bildungsroman* tradition. The story follows closely, first the clash and, finally, the mutual empathy between the two journey companions. In this way, it offers an opportunity to evaluate the unfolding of the hero's (i.e. André) potential for change. It might be said that an enquiry into the self assumes here the shape of an examination of the self in confrontation with otherness.

A crucial question informing the enquiry into the self in the pattern of aimless journeys is how difficult it is to maintain meaningful relationships and emotional attachment to others. It is against this background that we have to assess to what extent an underlying personal crisis, provoked or enhanced by the voyage itself, relates to a more existential concern with problems of communication between journey companions and between these and others. In its sheer complexity this stance raises the important question of human communication. The relationships and conflicts arising for the voyagers along the journey are of the most varied kind. From marital crises (e.g. *Voyage to Italy*), to generational conflicts (e.g. *Alice in the Cities*, *Kings of the Road*), to exploitative professional relationships (e.g. *La Strada*), and to male comradeship (e.g. *Kings of the Road*, *Five Days*, *Five Nights*), all relationships appear intrinsically disturbed. Although we can easily agree that the act of being in transit lays the ground for a personal crisis to evolve, the question of to what extent a perceived crisis was already latent before being brought to the surface remains basically unanswered. Aimless journeys recast, to some degree, the sensibility of the *Bildungsroman* tradition in that the voyage always entails some tale of inner change and personal development.

While the voyagers are not avoiding contact with others, it is also true that they are often trying to make sense of themselves among the 'us'. In the pattern of aimless journeys, such 'us' does not necessarily refer to a typical familiar space, although this could be drawn along the lines of some conception of society or community. On the contrary, it can embrace either a supposedly familiar space that has been rendered foreign by the act of travelling (e.g. the national space in *Pierrot Le Fou* and *Radio On*) or a recognizable alien terrain where the voyagers on the move are confronted with a strange space and its people (Italy for the English couple of *Voyage to Italy*).

The pattern of aimless journeys deals more with the build up of a relationship between travelling companions than with the dramatization of events. However, that is not achieved at the expense of a cliché dramatization of characters feelings and inner dilemmas. It is often difficult to grasp a character's inner feelings and inner thoughts even when we are fully aware that they are undergoing a recognizable personal crisis. Whatever the acting style adopted or the film tradition informing each film, the suspense and the melodrama are usually drained out from the plot. The underlying troubles and subjectivities governing the

voyagers' relationship with their fellow travel companions or with those they meet by chance are never fully revealed. The voyager does not usually fit into a strict typology of 'good'/'bad' character but is instead depicted with his or her inner contradictions and inconsistencies. Where a voyager may show empathy towards others, he or she may also appear indifferent to others' misfortune or even genuinely unkind. This can be observed, for instance, in the scene of Robert abandoning a bitter army deserter on an empty road in *Radio On*, or when a supposedly jealous Sandro, in *L'avventura*, purposely spoils a drawing of a Sicilian church by a young artist.

Encounters with strangers are, after all, an understandable consequence of the unforeseen possibilities of being on the move. These often emerge as occasions for such strangers to express their inner thoughts and personal dramas. (e.g. the despairing man whose wife had just committed suicide in *Kings of the Road*, the grieving prostitute Alex picks up in Naples in *Voyage to Italy*). Such characters (e.g. Pauline in *Kings of the Road*; the oranges picker in *Sicilia!*, the smuggler's family in *Five Days, Five Nights*; the army deserter in *Radio On*) are also a rich source of information about the concrete spatial and historical ground where the voyage takes place. Sometimes, the simple act of observing strangers may affect the voyager's sense of self. That is clearly illustrated in a scene in *L'avventura* where Claudia gets visibly disturbed when she witnesses in a train carriage a teenagers' courtship along the lines of an argument about the superiority of love vis-à-vis music.

6.3 Conclusion

In the pattern of aimless journeys, there is an underlying suggestion that the voyagers are looking for a 'new way of being at home'. This is apparent in both the voyagers' difficulty in maintaining meaningful relationships with others and their continuous drive to be on the move despite the lack of a strong motivation to do so. Hence it could be argued that we are dealing here with journeys that are structured as an experience of wandering in which the act of being in transit emerges as an alternative to the rootedness of place. Can one feel at home by being on the move? Could we say that being on the move is also a new way of

being at home? The journey as an act of being in transit raises important questions about a notion of home that encompasses a conception of society as a 'community of belonging'. In the pattern of aimless journeys, the voyagers are neither breaking with social and legal bounds (as is the case in the American road-movie genre) or actively rejecting or trying to change the social order. Moreover, despite the characters aimless drive and lack of a deep motivation to be on the move we never get a sense that there is a radical disconnection between individual and society⁴. Errancy and marginality may constitute important themes in the pattern of aimless journeys (e.g. *Pierrot Le Fou*, *La Strada*). However, it could also be argued that these films involve a reflexive stance towards the practical and existential implications of spatial mobility in contemporary societies. Drawing upon Roppen's and Sommer's work on traditional metaphors of the journey, it could be argued that the voyager's trajectory entails an impulse towards some sort of social order conceived as adequate, or promising to do so (Roppen and Sommer, 1964: 18). The underlying idea here is that despite the voyager's aimless drive to be in transit he or she exhibits some emotional attachment to some sort of society. Thus aimless journeys constitute, after all, a journey *into* society rather than a journey *out* of society, as it is the case in the American road-movie genre.

In recasting some of the literary ingredients of the *Bildungsroman* tradition, this specific pattern of the European 'film of voyage' entails a restoration or a gain of identity for the voyager. Aimless journeys offer, indeed, the prospect of self-discovery in shaping the enquiry into the self as part of a process in which the voyager is offered a new insight on his inner self away from the certainties and fixity of place. In some films, in particularly those that do not involve the death of the main protagonists, the regenerative possibilities of the journey become apparent as the film approaches its end: *Alice in the Cities*'s Philip stops having sleepless nights in the course of his journey with Alice; similarly, in *Voyage to Italy*, Catherine and Alex come to terms with their crumbling marriage in the film's closing sequence; for *Five Days, Five Nights*'s André the antipathy and lack of trust in the smuggler Lambaça starts vanishing as the journey offers him the opportunity of learning something about himself and others in a strange terrain. In the end, despite the dangers, risks and lack of a strong motivation to be on the move we are dealing with characters to whom the journey entails more of a gain than a loss of identity⁵. Finally, it is noteworthy that the geography of the

space travelled, which is carefully deployed through camera work and mise-en-scène, plays a significant part in linking the characters' existential crises and concerns to a specifically foreign terrain or a familiar space that is experienced as such.

¹ See Armes (1976) who suggests that Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy* (1953) anticipated already some of the basic patterns and motifs of Antonioni's *L'avventura* (1954). This is particularly apparent in the presentation of the characters' inner conflicts and contradictions through the interaction between character and landscape.

² This was often achieved at the expense of the use of non-professional actors.

³ See Armes (1976) for a discussion of Straub's unorthodox style and work.

⁴ See Goldmann (1985: 17-21) on the theme of errancy (*errance*) in contemporary cinema. She argues that the voyager (i.e. the vagabond) is endowed with lucidity and discernment in the process of reinforcing his or her detachment from the world.

⁵ See Matos (1999: 236) on the pattern of aimless journeys in contemporary travel writing (e.g. Theroux). She argues that the essential paradox of the journey is that it involves both a 'loss' and a 'gain' of identity as the dissolution of an identity can give place to other identities. In addition, different epochs stress and value one element or another, according to a current conception of the subject.

CHAPTER 7 : JOURNEY-QUESTS

7.1 Narrative Structure

The sub-narrative pattern of journey-quests is concerned with voyages that are structured as an experience of discovery of both the self and of the space travelled. There is a clear drive to pursue something (or someone) that is underpinned by the voyager's inner desire to find out something about his or her own identity or personal roots. In contrast with aimless journeys, there is an internalised goal to pursue that provides a strong motivation for the journey.

The quest for a place, a person or an object is motivated by some sort of personal obsession with existential undertones that, in the end, transforms the journey into an experience of self-discovery in contact with otherness. In order to explore the distinctive features of journey quests I draw upon the following films: *Landscape in the Mist* (Angelopoulos, 1988), *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (Angelopoulos, 1991), *Ulysses' Gaze* (Angelopoulos, 1995), *Journey to the Beginning of the World* (Oliveira, 1997), *The Crazy Stranger* (Gatlif, 1997).

Basic Narrative

In journey-quests, the voyager has a clearly defined goal to pursue although he or she is not necessarily following a clear-cut path. Thus the voyagers are exposed to the 'different' and unforeseen experiences that the journey enables.

In *Landscape in the Mist* we follow the journey of Voula, a 14 year-old girl, and her five-year old brother, Alexander, across a bleak and wintry Greek landscape in search of a father they never met and they believe to be working in Germany. The film emerges as a tale of loss and the discovery of love that is imbued with a deep sense of nostalgia for a 'fatherland'. The two children hitchhike in vans and lorries, sneak into trains and mingle with an itinerant theatre troupe amidst a journey marked by hunger, exploitation and deprivation. However, their determination to reach Germany never appears to decline. Voula's and Alexander's moving innocence and fragility is prominent in a journey where

people's blatant unkindness towards them reaches an overwhelming extreme when Voula is raped off-screen. Also, their friendship with Orestes, an itinerant actor, turns out for Voula to be the first expression of unrequited love.

Journey to the Beginning of the World follows the journey of Afonso, a French actor of Portuguese descent, who is coming to the North of Portugal to act in a film. On the way, he wants to visit Lugar do Teso, the village his deceased father was forced to abandon many years before to escape a poverty-stricken life. Manoel, the elderly director (a role played by the late Marcello Mastroianni), and two fellow actors, Judite and Duarte, come along to help him. Manoel recalls the memories of his privileged childhood and youth as they pass by and often stop at places he knew well as child. Manoel recounts the stories of his past in long expository sequences that encourage in Afonso an even stronger desire to visit the village of his ancestors. As they get closer to their intended destination, Afonso tells his journey companions about his father's hardships. Having left his village at the age of 14, he crossed Spain during the Spanish Civil War, got arrested by the Republicans, entered France illegally, worked in a garage until he became his own boss, and died at the age of forty. Afonso still recalls with nostalgia how he used to play the guitar and sing the Fado, the Portuguese folk music. When they reach Lugar do Teso, Afonso visits his father's sister, who is at first reticent unable to accept the identity of a nephew she knew nothing about and she realises cannot even speak her language.

The *Suspended Step of the Stork* involves an investigation of a man's identity. The film tells the story of a Greek TV reporter's quest for a famous Greek politician who had mysteriously disappeared a few years before shortly after he had published an influential book named "Melancholy of the End of the Century". Whilst working on a story in a border-town in Northern Greece, he comes upon a refugee who cultivates potatoes to sell in the market and starts believing that he could be the missing politician. Intrigued with the man's identity, the reporter, Alexandre, decides to investigate what could drive a man to abandon a successful and promising political career for such a modest living. Meanwhile, he is confronted with the plight of refugees in this forgotten place.

Journey-quests such as those unfolding in *Ulysses' Gaze* and *The Crazy Stranger* are slightly different. Here, the voyager's trajectory is even more uncertain since there is not a specific destination to reach. *Ulysses' Gaze* covers the journey of a

Greek-American filmmaker (who is only known as A.) across the Balkans in search of three-missing film reels by the Manakis brothers, two pioneer filmmakers. His personal obsession with that 'lost gaze' leads him to travel across the complex Balkan space, from Florina, in Northern Greece, to war-torn Sarajevo, in Bosnia. Whilst searching for information about the possible whereabouts of the lost film-reels in different Balkan film archives (first, in Monastir and then in Belgrade), he also makes a brief incursion into Constanza, in Romania, where he has a recollection of his childhood in the late 1940s. This diversion is not a result of his personal desire to find the film-reels but of A.'s all-encompassing drive to come to terms with his past and roots in the Balkans. In the end, we are dealing here not with a single story line but with several sub-stories all interwoven with each other by means of a main story line, i.e. A.'s ongoing journey across the Balkans in search of the lost film-reels. The two other sub-stories that are told in a non-linear manner, and are symbolically interrelated, are a story about the real-life figures of the Manakis brothers that is being set against the backdrop of important political and social stirrings of twentieth-century Balkan history, and a story about A.'s past life in the Balkans. Thus, Horton (1997a: 197) argues that "*Ulysses' Gaze* is a triple odyssey: on one level it is a search for the roots of the cinema of the Balkans (...). Second, it is also a voyage through the history of the Balkans leading up to and including the ongoing tragedy of Bosnia. And, finally, it is an individual journey for a man through his life, his loves, his losses". The film's highly self-conscious and unorthodox stylistics constantly blurs the boundary between fiction and reality. It involves playing with intertextuality (e.g. a direct quotation from Homer's *Odyssey*) and the use of clips of old documentary footage (e.g. shots by the Manakis brothers' real-life figures) that alternate with the sequences covering A.'s ongoing journey. In *The Crazy Stranger*, the Balkan space is again at the centre of a story that now covers the journey of a 'westerner' to Romania. Stéphane, a French young man, heads to Romania in search of a Gypsy singer, Nora Luca, whose voice his deceased father cherished before he died. While on his way, Stéphane comes upon an elderly Gypsy, Izidor, with whom he unsuccessfully tries to communicate in French. Nonetheless, language barriers do not prevent him of being welcomed by Izidor's gypsy village. Initially, the gypsy villagers, amidst a mix of mistrust and curiosity, hesitate in welcoming Stéphane who they outspokenly call the "crazy

stranger”. Stéphane decides to stay for a while in the village in the hope of getting some information about the whereabouts of Nora Luca. In a simultaneously comic and moving scene, when Stéphane is prepared to leave the village, the usually expansive Izidor plays such sad music on his violin that he succeeds in persuading Stéphane to stay. As the villagers get to know Stéphane, who is very keen on being part of their community, we get a refreshing insight into the warmth and liveliness of the gypsy way of life. The story goes on to depict gypsy culture and traditions in such a closely bonded community. In the mean time, Stéphane is not giving up his quest and keeps persuading Izidor to take him to Nora Luca, the singer whose enthralling voice is recorded on a tape he carries around, and he decides to go from one gypsy village to another so as to record Romany singing and playing whilst hoping to find Nora Luca. In both *Ulysses' Gaze* and *The Crazy Stranger* there is an implication that the journey can leap into unexpected directions depending on where the quest is leading.

Beginnings

The Crazy Stranger, *Journey to the Beginning of the World* and *The Suspended Step of the Stork* all begin with ongoing journeys and we have to wait some time until the quest motif is fully revealed. This may not be immediately provided or yet fully shaped when the story begins and we are introduced to the travelling protagonists. In *The Crazy Stranger*, the film opens with the lonely and exhausted figure of Stéphane walking across a frozen, flat and deserted Romanian landscape. He comes upon a horse carriage carrying a group of gypsy women and children with whom he tries to speak. We see him slipping on the frozen path and struggling to reach the carriage to ask them if they are musicians. He mentions the Romani word ‘musica’ (music). We begin to get a glimpse of Stéphane’s intentions when, in the following scene, he plays a tape on a small portable recorder hoping that Izidor will recognize the voice of the singer, Nora Luca, whose name he repeats enthusiastically. The quest motif is only fully clarified some time after the beginning of the film, when Stéphane explains to the villagers that he came from Paris to look for a gypsy singer called Nora Luca. The departure moment is suppressed and so is any visual reference to Stéphane’s

native France. Nonetheless, the matters of cultural difference between France and the gypsy community in Romania are at the centre of this story as we become aware that Stéphane's quest for the gypsy singer is paving the way for his integration into this community.

When *Journey to the Beginning of the World* starts we are introduced to the group of main protagonists who are shown already on their way, heading by van to the Northern Portuguese-Spanish border. Although the story is primarily concerned with Afonso's quest for roots and identity, the quest motif is only revealed in the middle of the film as Afonso finally speaks of his intention to visit his ageing aunt in the village of Lugar do Teso. The first half of the film is built around the telling of stories mostly concerned with Manoel's past in the places they pass and stop by. While the elderly film director nostalgically recalls the time and the places of his childhood, Afonso, who appears as an attentive listener and observer of the surrounding space, speaks at times of how he feels imbued with a strong sense of nostalgia for those places his father used to speak about since he embarked on the journey to Portugal. In the opening scene, for example, Afonso tells the group of his enormous desire to see everything he had never seen as if he had lived in places where he has never been. However, it is not until the quest motif is fully disclosed in the scene set at the decaying spa of Vila do Peso that the story line shifts from an emphasis on aspects of Manoel's past to the undertones of Afonso's longing for his roots and the telling of his father's story of forced migration.

The Suspended Step of the Stork does not start with a journey where a latent quest motif is already at work. The film begins with a stunning aerial shot and zooming in of a helicopter flying over a dead body floating in water. The scene is covered by the voice-over of the story's main protagonist, Alexandre, a TV reporter, who tells of how on his way to the border he recalled the 'episode of Piraeus', when a group of refugees who were discovered on a Greek ship had thrown themselves into the sea after being denied asylum by the Greek government. Alexandre's voice-over goes on to say, "I began to think about them and to wonder how does one decide to leave? Why? And to where? And I thought about that ancient verse, '*Don't forget that the time for a voyage has come again. The wind blows your eyes far away*' (an allusion to a line in Dante's *Inferno*) (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 163).

In the following scenes, Alexandre gets a deeper insight into the dramatic situation of the refugees in Greece through conversations with an army officer at the border-town, which is bisected by a river that also offers a political border in Northern Greece. The colonel, who is in charge of border patrolling, tells the reporter how the Greek government enclosed all the illegal immigrants (Kurds, Turks, Albanians, Iranians among others) at first in a quarter, and subsequently in the whole town, where they live secluded whilst waiting for papers to be able to go somewhere. Clearly, the film deals explicitly with the plight of refugees in Greece. However, the reporter's interest in the dramas of the refugees becomes increasingly entangled with his personal drive to resolve a man's identity, when he comes upon an Albanian refugee he believes to be a famous vanished politician. Back in Athens, Alexandre starts an investigation that leads to a search for documentary footage and pictures of the vanished politician at the TV archives. Finally, he decides to visit the man's ex-wife so as to persuade her to go to the border-town and confirm the man's identity. She is reticent at first but then agrees to give him a detailed account of her husband's disappearance. At his Athens flat, Alexandre reads aloud to his girlfriend a few lines from the politician's influential book's conclusion: "And what are the key words we could use in order to make a new collective dream come true" (as quoted in Horton, 1997a: 166). The reporter returns to the border-town now fully embodying the figure of the voyager. This journey is not being motivated by purely professional reasons but primarily by the desire to determine the man's identity and to find out why he chose to live anonymously in a refugee town. The quest for the missing politician has to be seen as a consequence of the contingencies of Alexandre's first journey to the border-town whilst working on a story about refugees.

Once again, *Ulysses' Gaze* and *Landscape in the Mist* do not start with ongoing journeys. Here, however, the revelation of the quest motif is not delayed but starts being elucidated at the beginning of the film, and even before the voyagers set forth. The social context, i.e. the familiar space, from where the voyagers initiate their journeys is carefully staged in both films and the departure moment is narratively indicated. Such a narrative device appears to emphasise the voyagers' determination to engage in a quest that is about to start. In *Ulysses' Gaze*, A., a Greek-American filmmaker, has arrived at his native town in Greece, after a thirty-five year absence in the U.S., for the release of his last film that has

provoked great controversy all over the country. It is here amidst a crowd of religious fanatics attempting to get a ban on the film and through streets patrolled by policemen that A. is warned by an old friend of the dangers of embarking on such a quest. When A. prepares to initiate his journey, his friend asks him whether his fascination with the story of the Manakis brothers is a motive strong enough to justify the journey. To that A. replies by saying “I thought you understood. This is a personal journey”. At this stage there is already a clear indication that nothing will stop A. embarking on a quest that is also a personal enterprise.

The opening of *Landscape in the Mist* is clearly evocative of Voula’s and Alexander’s enduring determination to get to Germany to find their absent father. The film starts with a scene that shows Voula and Alexander furtively trying to get into a train that is about to leave for Germany, as can be heard on a loudspeaker at the railway station. Alexander says to Voula, “I dreamed about him again last night. He seemed bigger than other times” (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 146). An itinerant vendor at the station asks the children what are they doing there every night. They stare at the train departing and we understand they have failed once again to get onto it. The credits start and there follows a scene where Voula and Alexander lie in bed in the darkness of their room waiting, we assume, for the next opportunity to take the train to Germany. Before doing so, there follows a scene where they go to see a strange man, whom Alexander calls “Seagull”, who appears to be enclosed in what seems to be a barbed-wire prison, to tell him of their intentions. The man comments that everyday they are leaving to Germany. When in the following scene they finally manage to get onto the train their inner reasons to get to Germany are fully unveiled as Voula dreams a letter for her absent father.

Episodic Structure - Time and Space

As in the pattern of aimless journeys, journey-quests are built around chance encounters and present an episodic narrative structure. They do not conform to a classic drive-to-a-goal narrative pattern, even if there is a strong sense of a goal to pursue. That is to say the plot does not flow as in a detective story where one clue leads to another until a final resolution of events. Thus, from the perspective of

the viewer, the quest motif often starts losing its centrality in terms of plot development as the voyagers start being drawn into the gaze and comprehension of the space and others they encounter. Of course, this does not mean that the voyagers are progressively abandoning their quest. The quest motif continues to work as a structuring device in a journey oriented to a strongly internalised and willed goal. It is noteworthy, nonetheless, how the quest motif often hardly plays a role in the making of the chain of events. This is because occurrences along the voyage are more easily linked to the unanticipated possibilities of the journey. Furthermore, dramatic progression is often insistently retarded. We become particularly aware of this when the characters engage in the recounting of previous events or in the telling of stories, frequently unrelated to the quest motif itself. In *Journey to the Beginning of the World*, for instance, the characters engage for much of the time in dialogue concerning the recounting of past events that are mostly related to the elderly director's memories. Each stop emerges as an opportunity for the telling of a story in long expository scenes whilst observing, for instance, a particular visual detail (e.g. the statue of Pedro Macau, the Jesuit boarding-school where Manoel studied as a child). In this respect, what emerges as particularly striking in the film is that a visual reconstitution of the past is never enacted to illustrate or validate the 'authenticity' of the stories being told (see Parsi: 2001, 56). A stylistic device such as the flashback is never used to depict past events. Arguably, individual and collective memory blend in a film that is more concerned with what memory can attain, i.e. with the ability to remember past events, than with a realistic depiction of the past.

Similarly, in *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, narrative progression is often delayed by the telling of stories concerning both current and past events. Alexandre, the TV reporter, emerges as an attentive listener to such accounts whilst pursuing his quest. This is visible, for example, in a lengthy scene where Alexandre listens to the vanished politician's ex-wife recalling the time and events surrounding her husband's mysterious disappearance. At several stages along the journey, Alexander engages in conversations, not directly related to his quest, with the colonel in charge of border patroll about the dramas of life in the refugee town. In the end, for the viewer, there is a sense that time flows slowly in films where characters, despite their precise intention to be on the move spend time observing particular visual details or engaging in long dialogue scenes.

Not surprisingly, another distinctive narrative feature in this pattern is the slow pace of most journey quests. This is experienced as such by both the viewer and the voyagers. Indeed, we often get a sense that the flow of movement has stopped. In Angelopoulos's *The Suspended Step of the Stork* and *Landscape in the Mist*, or in *Journey to the Beginning of the World*, the voyagers on the move are often framed contemplating the landscape, and we are therefore drawn to comprehend the symbolic and affective connotations of such images. If one thinks, for example, of *Ulysses's Gaze*, one has to be aware of how the static camera pans and slowly zooms out so as to unfold the visual details of a particular space on which A. is gazing. Moreover, A.'s figure is frequently shown in the foreground and off-centre attentively overlooking the surrounding space. There is clearly an attempt to preserve the continuity of space as the camera often pans and tracks behind walls, columns and doors in the process of unveiling the space in which A. moves. As argued by Bordwell, in Angelopoulos' films, "the commitment to long takes, distant views, sparse frames and temps morts places an enormous weight upon the unfolding shot" (Bordwell, 1997a: 22)¹.

However, not all journey-quests are imbued with such a contemplative ethos. When the voyager is more actively engaged in performing action or being affected by unexpected events that act upon him or her while on the move, the pace of the film appears to accelerate and we get a sense that 'something' is, in fact, propelling the story forward. A film like *The Crazy Stranger* relies on the jerky effect of hand-held camera and fast cutting to depict Stéphane's hectic lifestyle at the lively gypsy community. No doubt Stéphane is more actively engaged here than in sustaining a contemplative stance towards the surrounding space. However, dramatic progression appears to slow down when he gets deeply involved in activities that are little related to the quest. We get a sense that Stéphane's journey almost comes to a stop as he participates in the ordinary tasks of everyday life in the gypsy village, such as helping to repair an old recorder or playing games with children.

In a similar vein, *Landscape in the Mist* is not embracing a pure contemplative tale. Voula and Alexander appear more exposed to the dangers and unanticipated occurrences of the journey in the ruthless world that they experience, rather than involved in the contemplation of their surroundings. The events acting upon Voula and Alexander, despite their tragic nature (e.g. Voula's rape, the killing of a

horse), recur in an episodic manner and we thus do not get a sense of dramatic progression. This erratic succession of scenes and the lack of significant narrative development that might lead the two children to get closer to finding their father helps to convey a sense of the slow the pace of the narrative.

Clearly, journey-quests are particularly concerned with the relation of the voyager to the space in which he or she moves during the journey. Hence, the duration of the story is often remarkably compressed as the narrative spends time showing the characters in moments of stop, contemplating the landscape and observing and interacting with people they encounter. In some films, the array of stops plays an important role in linking, on the one hand, the different episodes, and on the other hand, in providing detailed visual and narrative information about a multi-layered space (e.g. *Ulysses' Gaze*, *Journey to the Beginning of the World*). For the voyager, the stops emerge as an occasion to interact with strangers and an opportunity to learn something about a specific location. In *Ulysses' Gaze*, for instance, each stop is meant to introduce a new Balkan location or a political border to be crossed. Thus the viewer gets a sense that the journey works here as movement forward across a space punctuated by stops that function as a pause to articulate the several phases of the dislocation (see Aleixo, 1998: 22). That is also to say that the voyager's route is well defined and might be seen as assuming the shape of a line of interconnected points. In contrast with aimless journeys, journey-quests rarely bifurcate or fork to follow the distinct trajectory of one or another voyager.

In other films, the journey as a movement of displacement from one place to another is either largely narratively suppressed or appears as compressed into a restricted space (e.g. *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, *The Crazy Stranger*). Here, we lose sense of time as a chronological arrangement of events whilst being drawn to specific visual details of a spatiality that is being unfolded both narratively and stylistically. In addition, we lose sense of the journey as revolving around the array of stops. Thus it is hardly surprising that the voyager may lack a clear sense of a route to tread. The journey assumes the shape of what we may call a radial structure, i.e. the journey is confined to a considerably limited space where the voyager moves in many distinct directions. In *The Suspended Step of the Stork* that is the space of the border-town where Alexandre is determined to resolve the man's identity. In his often-lonely walks around town, he is visibly

compelled to observe and explore different town settings whilst developing an interest in a refugee girl (and the future bride of the wedding scene by the river) whom he also decides to follow. It is primarily 'through the eyes' of the reporter that we get insight into the aspects of daily life in the refugee town. We are basically being drawn to attentively observe aspects of Alexandre's surrounding reality since he barely engages in recognizable action or interaction with others. Besides, very little information is provided regarding his inner thoughts or feelings about the reality that he is being confronted with. The film's visual imagery plays a crucial role in depicting the climate of fear, despair and strict surveillance surrounding life in such a place. Visual details such as the images of watchtowers rising at the highly patrolled border-station, the bleak and often deserted streets of slummy ruined buildings, the popular café where a fight between refugees starts, and the vision of a man hanged at the top of a metallic crane by the railway station, clearly illustrate the dramatic aspects of the life of refugees in such an alien location.

Similarly, in the *Crazy Stranger*, the journey as an act of movement in space appears to be circumscribed within a particular space. It appears to radiate in several directions from a recognizable centre, i.e. the gypsy village. For most of the time, the film covers aspects of everyday life in the village where Stéphane decides to settle during his search for Nora Luca. However, the journey ends up forking into different directions when, with the help of Sabina, he decides to travel around the Romanian countryside so as to record gypsy music and singing. Back again at the gypsy village, while Sabina speaks enthusiastically about multiple dimensions of gypsy culture and traditions, Stéphane is shown bending over a notebook to write about all these things he is learning from her. It also becomes evident that he has started collecting tapes with the songs he records. We suspect Stéphane is hoping to locate Nora Luca by going from place to place to record different gypsy voices. Such a decision appears, in fact, to be intrinsically linked to his desire to locate the singer. In the end, as the journey goes on, Stéphane is also trying to get a deeper insight into the gypsy culture. Notably, his small branch journeys do not take him very far away from the gypsy village that always functions as a returning point and where, in fact, the story is mostly occurring. Once again, we get a sense that there is not much of a route to follow or of a chronological succession of events in this quest.

A prominent narrative feature in journey-quests is then the fact that the viewer sees the narrative as spending time revolving around the voyager's interaction with strangers and the surrounding landscape. It is not implied here that the voyagers are dismissing or being distracted from their quest. On the contrary, they feel that they are being exposed to the unforeseen possibilities of voyaging and to the strangeness of place. It is, after all, the quest motif that keeps the voyagers on the move whilst helping to overcome all difficulties and obstacles. In *Landscape in the Mist*, for example, Voula and Alexander do not give up their quest despite being subjected to all sorts of deprivation and exploitation. In a similar vein, both *Journey to the Beginning of the World's* Afonso and *The Crazy Stranger's* Stéphane pursue their journeys despite the fact that language barriers often constitute an obstacle to a successful outcome for the search.

At first glance, these stories appear to look at the single destiny of individuals set on the move to pursue a specified goal. We can conclude, however, that they are equally, if not primarily, concerned with the relation between the voyager and the space travelled. Some stylistic options employed in the films (e.g. deep focus) play a crucial role in the building up of such relation. In *The Suspended Step of the Stork* or *Landscape in the Mist*, for instance, the characters are often pushed to the very distant background whilst other kinds of action might occur in the foreground and middle grounds of a deep and multi-layered space. As argued by Bordwell (1997b: 265), "Angelopoulos perpetuates the 1970s tendency toward lengthy shots framed at a distance and subordinating the actor to landscape or décor". We are thus forced to centre our attention on the space in which characters exist and move while our understanding of characters' subjectivities is disturbed as we are often denied access to their facial expression. *Journey to the Beginning of the World* favours, for example, an interesting stylistic device that is consistently used to explore the relation of characters with the surrounding space when the protagonists are shot on the move inside the van. Here, the interplay of a character's close-up, framed inside the van, and a moving shot of landscape plays a significant role in linking a character's gaze to the surrounding landscape.

Key Events and Narrative Closure

Unlike aimless journeys, journey-quests are more easily marked by extraordinary or dramatic events that have a strong effect on both the storyline development and the voyager's sense of self. In this sub-narrative pattern it is often possible to identify a turning point in the story where a climax eventually builds up. Such a decisive moment may prompt narrative closure but not necessarily the end of the quest. In *The Crazy Stranger*, for example, the story's climax is achieved in a scene where some local Romanians burn the gypsy village in consequence of a row between Adriani, Izidor's son, and some locals in a café nearby. Adriani gets killed during the fire and Sabina and Stéphane have to break the tragic news to Izidor who is away playing at a wedding party. The warmth and joy that Stéphane encountered in the small community are thus dramatically disrupted by an act of unrestrained violence. The tragic events appear to provoke in Stéphane a radical transformation. The last scene reveals a 'different' Stéphane, in his full gypsy costume, digging a hole by the roadside to bury all the tapes he had collected of gypsy songs. After he finishes, he dances and pours vodka around the grave according to the gypsy tradition. Inside the car, and at a distance, Sabina awakes and observes the scene with a smile.

When the film closes, it is not clear whether Stéphane is abandoning his quest for Nora Luca. Neither is it clear-cut whether he is going with Sabina to start a new life elsewhere after the fire has destroyed the gypsy village. However, the burial of the tapes may well metaphorically end of the quest for Nora Luca. In addition, the ending raises important questions about the quest motif itself. It is clear that the quest for the gypsy singer led Stéphane deep into a culture absolutely alien to him. Thus we may ask whether the quest for Stéphane's father's favourite singer was after all a quest for Stéphane's own roots. This makes sense if we think of the scene where Stéphane tells Sabina of how his search to find Nora Luca is linked to a desire to find out something about his father. He tells her of how his father was always travelling the world and could not stay for long in the same place. He adds that he was very fond of music and that he used to bring back tapes from his voyages. Finally, he ends up confessing that he knew very little about his father who died in Syria, in the nomads' region. Nonetheless, the question of why

Stéphane was persuaded of the significance of encountering Nora Luca remains basically unanswered.

In *Journey to the Beginning of the World* the decisive turning point occurs shortly after the group arrives at their intended destination, i.e. the village of Lugar do Teso. At his elderly aunt's house, Afonso's relatives welcome Afonso and his journey companions whom they invite to their table. However, Maria's refusal to accept her nephew's identity on the basis that he is unable to speak her language builds up a climate of tension. Although Judite and Duarte attempt to persuade Maria otherwise, the elderly lady continues to look suspiciously at Afonso. He is getting visibly disturbed. It is only when Afonso abruptly stands up, lifts one of his sleeves and asks his aunt to hold firmly his arm whilst saying - "It is not language that counts. What counts is the blood!" - that, as in a moment of sudden enlightenment, Maria welcomes Afonso as her nephew. This scene is imbued with a dramatic tension that we cannot find in other scenes of a story where long dialogue and the nostalgic telling of stories about past events dominate the flow of narrative. This incident rapidly triggers the story's outcome. After visits, respectively, to the house where Afonso's father (also called Manoel) lived and the cemetery to pay respects to his ancestors, we get a sense that a new journey is about to begin for the 'renewed' Afonso as the group prepares to leave the village. This is particularly hinted in a highly significant final sequence that takes place in Afonso's dressing room at the film location. While getting ready for the shoot, he gazes at himself in the mirror whilst remarking, "you too Afonso are not the same. You are another".

In *Ulysses' Gaze* it is the tragic and absurd killing by snipers of Ivo Levy, the Jewish curator at the Sarajevo film archives and of his family, that marks a recognizable climax. We are not visually aware of the strikingly shocking events happening onscreen as the incidents occur amidst a landscape covered in deep white fog. We are able, however, to hear the shots, the screams, then the throwing of bodies in water and, finally, a car rushing out of the place. The scene closes with a helpless A. desperately crying by the dead bodies that he finally manages to find through the deep fog. By dismissing a graphic depiction of violence, this scene is charged with an intense dramatic tension. There is here a suggestion that no image is capable of reproducing with fidelity the crude reality of the Bosnian war. The scene does not contradict the film's naturalistic approach to landscape

but is devoid of the carefully staged and graphic visual details of previous scenes. Until this sequence takes place we had been drawn to contemplate with visual rigour the dramas of life in different Balkan locations. The brutal killing of Ivo Levy and of his close relatives is, in fact, the turning point into A.'s descent into despair in view of the horror and absurdity of the Balkan war. Yet, the sequences preceding the death of the Jewish film archive curator brought about the discovery of the missing film reels. The killing had occurred precisely during an outing to celebrate the discovery. Ivo Levy had, in fact, finally managed to restore the film in a last attempt to release the 'first gaze' on life in the Balkans. Narrative closure is, nonetheless, ambiguous in suggesting that A. has not found yet "his first glance lost long ago". In addition, the quest is also concerned with a personal journey into A.'s past life in the Balkans. The closing scene (which follows the scene of the killing) shows a shattered A. weeping at the ruined Sarajevo film theatre in front of a black screen where presumably one of the recently discovered film reels has just finished running. Meanwhile, A.'s voice-over speaks Homer's words of Ulysses to Penelope about his return journey home: "When I return, it will be with another man's clothes, another man's name. My coming will be unexpected. If you look at me unbelieving, and say, You are not he, I will show you signs, and you will believe me (...) And as we climb trembling to our old room, between one embrace and the next, between lover's calls, I will tell you about the journey, all the night long. And in all the nights to come, between one embrace and the next, between lover's calls, the whole human story. The story that never ends" (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 196). There is, then, a suggestion, at least at a symbolic level, that the finding of the lost film reels did not put an end to the quest. No doubt the search for the 'first gaze' provided A. with a strong motive to keep going amidst the dangers of the ongoing Bosnian war. However, there is an important dimension of the quest that has not yet been resolved; the search for the Manakis brothers' film reels containing documentary footage about life in the Balkans also embraces a quest for a sense of home in the Balkans. There is an underlying suggestion that the journey will certainly continue until A. is able to feel again at 'home'.

In the *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, the turning point in the story of the reporter's quest for the missing politician occurs in the scene of the orthodox wedding, which takes place as the film is reaching its end. Indeed, it is after this

scene that the reporter decides to abandon his quest. The scene pictures a wedding unusually being performed by the river that also functions as a political border in Northern Greece. The whole scene is captured in a magnificent tableaux framed in an extreme long shot. At one side of the river, we can see the bride, the refugee girl the reporter felt drawn to, surrounded by her guests and a priest who performs the wedding ceremony according to the orthodox religious tradition. Across the river, there is the groom in the company of his guests repeating at a distance the very same rituals. During the ceremony, the alleged missing politician stands by the bride as a father-like figure. When the ceremony ends and the guests scatter in consequence of a border patrol rifle shot, the groom and the bride, separated by the river that runs between them, gaze at each other in silence and finally raise an arm in greeting; him on foreign soil, her on Greek soil. This scene appears to have a strong effect on Alexandre who finally grasps the desperate and enduring condition of the refugees. This is particularly suggested in the remarkably enigmatic scene following the wedding by the river. Here, Alexandre encounters the bride in her wedding costume dancing with her alleged father and invites her to dance. Whilst dancing she tells him of her pain at having to live apart from her husband: "My husband and I grew up in the same village. We come from the same race. I feel his hand holding me. One night he will cross the river and come to take me". Still dancing to the melancholic sound of an accordion, they tell each other in whispers of their shared pain. When finally Alexandre makes a move to abandon the place, he comments enigmatically to the girl's father of how he could finally understand their condition and leaves. The scene is imbued with a deep sense of sympathy for those who, like the bride, have to live apart from their loved ones. Furthermore, it also invokes the condition of exile and the unspoken fears and pain of those who are forced to abandon their countries. The depiction of the wedding ritual by the river (the bride at one side of the riverbank, the groom on the other) symbolically expresses the ambiguity and artificiality of borders in keeping apart those who belong to the same family, country or home. In the last scene, the colonel informs Alexandre that he has obtained unconfirmed reports about the whereabouts of the man he is looking for. The reporter replies that it does not matter anymore to know the identity of the alleged missing politician. Alexandre's enlightenment about the plight of the refugees has just made the quest for the missing politician meaningless. Yet, the ending does not

offer a conclusive outcome for the story as it opens up more answered questions: what happened to the missing politician? Who was the refugee man whose identity is never resolved? Where did he go by the end of the film and why? So, we may argue, following Horton (1997a: 72), that the reporter's search for the missing Greek politician paved the way for the discovery not just of an individual destiny (that of the missing politician) but that of all refugees in the complex space of the Balkans.

For Voula and Alexander of *Landscape in the Mist*, the marked turning point in their journey of loss and discovery may be seen as occurring halfway through the film at the occasion of the overwhelming scene of Voula's off-screen rape. Although the scene does not precipitate the ending, there is a clear indication that something has dramatically changed for both children, especially for Voula. After the rape, a visibly debilitated Voula dreams another letter to her father where, for the first time, she tells of her thoughts to give up the quest: "Dear father: How far away you are. Alexander says that in his dream you seemed very close. If he stretched out his hand, he would have touched you. We are travelling continually. Everything goes by so fast. Cities, people. But sometimes we get so tired that we forget that you and we don't even know if we're going to find you or not (...). Yesterday I even thought we should give it up. What is the use of carrying on? That we should never get there" (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 151-152). There is little doubt that Voula and Alexander despite reaching the extremes of exploitation and pain will keep pursuing their father. The following scenes are imbued with a compelling mix of joy and sorrow. We become aware of Voula's discovery of her love for Orestes and an unusual experience of the pleasures of freedom when they manage to escape the police at high speed on Orestes's motorbike. However, in contrast with *The Suspended Step of the Stork* or *Ulysses' Gaze*, the ending comes almost by chance. At a railway station like many others, Voula succeeds in persuading an army officer to give her some money to buy a train ticket to the border. They are inside a running train when a loudspeaker informs all passengers heading to Germany that they should get ready to present their passports. Then, by a fenced border-station, guards vigilantly walk backwards and forwards amidst the dark of the night. The dim light visible is that coming from the watchtower. Voula whispers to Alexander that on the other side of the river is Germany. Of course, such a statement contradicts all geographic

evidence since Greece shares no border with Germany. They try to sneak to the other side of the fence and they get into a small rowing boat that we can barely distinguish in the dark. A gunshot is heard. We fear the children have just been killed. However, what follows is a remarkably ambiguous sequence where Voula and Alexander are seen walking amidst a deep and almost impenetrable white fog. Their small figures are barely recognizable. Voula says that they have arrived in Germany. She tells her brother she feels fear. To comfort her, Alexander starts telling Voula the story she used to tell him when he was in bed: “In the beginning it was the dark and then it was the light ...”, he says whilst walking through the mist. The deep fog starts vanishing and a tree glows in the distance as they happily run to embrace it. We may well wonder whether this fictional border they have apparently crossed belongs to the realm of the unreal or dream. On the other hand, we may also ask if the children have, in fact, survived their ordeal or yet if the mysterious tree belongs to the realm of dreams.

In conclusion, journey-quests invariably raise important questions about the ‘reality’ of a specific historical ground that is mostly unfolded ‘through the eyes’ of the voyager. On the whole, this narrative pattern is more concerned with the relation of its characters with a specific space that we are drawn to comprehend in its social, political and geographical dimensions, than with how events act upon the voyager and the resolution of the quest.

7.2 Voyagers, Observers and Identity

As in aimless journeys, there is in the sub-narrative pattern of journey-quests a deep concern with personal identity. Journey-quests deploy a search for identity that ultimately aims to answer important questions about the self and the voyager’s own roots. In contrast with aimless journeys, the concern with personal identity is not particularly linked to an enquiry into the self so as to question the foundations of one’s identity under the contingencies of the journey. Even if the voyagers are undergoing a recognizable personal crisis, or even an identity crisis, journey-quests are not especially concerned with the investigation of its deep undertones or causes. Instead, journey-quests bring forth an exploration of the self that is concerned with a search for a complement to or consolidation of the

voyager's identity. That is to say that the journey is motivated by a desire to fulfil a lack or a gap in the voyager's overall sense of self. Such an identity-seeking project can yet be oriented towards the finding of 'something' that the voyager feels as ineradicably present in his or her inner self but that cannot yet be comprehended. The quest plays a crucial role in this enterprise of self-exploration. But more than supplying a motive for the journey, the quest is also believed to hold an ultimate answer to the voyager's search for identity. Unsurprisingly, we rarely get a sense that the voyager's destiny is beyond his or her control. In contrast with aimless journeys, it is clear that the voyager knows where to go.

The voyager's quest for personal roots and identity, which is also an expression of a drive towards self-realisation and self-awareness, is also intrinsically linked to an impulse towards an enriched knowledge and comprehension of the world. This sensibility is particularly displayed through the voyager's contemplative stance towards the surrounding space, in sought-after contacts with others, and in a naturalistic approach to landscape. We are dealing here with journeys of discovery of oneself in contact with otherness that embrace important literary motifs of the *Bildungsroman* tradition. This is especially the case where the close association between travelling and apprenticeship underlying the romantic ideal of *Bildung* is concerned, i.e. the self-realisation of an individual in his or her wholeness. According to Swales (1978: 32-33), "the Bildungsromane suggest that there is an inalienable need in man to have a story, to know himself as part of that linear flow of experience which cannot be halted at will". Thus "ultimately the meaning of the growth process ... is to be found in the process itself, not in any goal whose attainment it may make possible. The novel is written for the sake of the journey" (Swales, 1978: 33-34). In a similar vein, journey-quests are not simply concerned with the success of a quest that might ultimately bring wisdom or self-awareness for the hero on the move, but significantly with the experience of the journey itself, i.e. with the unforeseen possibilities of the journey. Thus it is hardly surprising that some journey-quests are deploying a 'voyage of initiation'. *Landscape in the Mist* clearly epitomizes this sensibility in covering Voula's and Alexander's symbolic journey of growth from childhood to maturity across a depressed Greece. However, this very same trope can be loosely found in *The Crazy Foreigner* where the journey ultimately brings some wisdom and self-awareness to a young male in a foreign land. An important consequence of the

association between travelling and learning is the way in which the voyager's physical and psychological bounds are being put to test, in part because the voyagers on the move are for a start deprived of the certainties and comforts of home. But more importantly, whereas the voyagers avidly seek contact and interaction with others, they also place a great physical and emotional investment in both relating to and comprehending those others in the specific social context in which they exist. Moreover, there is an important relationship between the inner changes the voyager undergoes and the voyager's sense of a quasi-metaphysical discovery of other people and places. We need therefore to explore this connection so as to comprehend how journey-quests raise issues of personal identity.

In *The Crazy Stranger*, for example, when the film opens we are introduced to the lonely figure of a cold and exhausted Stéphane who is visibly worn out by the journey. When by chance he meets Izidor and gets invited to his house, some villagers take Stéphane as a vagabond because of his dirty clothes and damaged shoes, a result of long hours walking. The veil of suspicion that his arrival at the gypsy village had provoked is soon dissipated and Stéphane is visibly charmed with the generosity of this strongly bonded community. Where Izidor is prompt to sneak into his son's room to borrow some brand new shoes, the women kindly offer him food and water for a bath. This kind welcome marks the beginning of a 'new life' for Stéphane who is deeply drawn to a radically different lifestyle from the one he led in his native France. He also struggles with language barriers and to understand gypsy customs. However, he rarely speaks about himself or his home country, let alone engages in outspoken comparisons between life in the village and life in his native France. As the story goes on, it is clear that Stéphane is immersing himself in the gypsy way of life whilst being driven away from his previous "western" lifestyle. This does not mean that Stéphane is trying to escape a difficult or unhappy past. There is significant evidence of Stéphane's good relations with his mother especially as we see him getting a letter with news from home and containing some money. Thus we might conclude that the journey is not predicated upon an escape from home. What emerges as striking is how Stéphane's attitude towards the gypsy way of life is never that of passive observer. On the contrary, he is engaged in living like a true gypsy and not as a

guest. We see him playing with children and swearing with them in Romany. We see him repairing an old recorder that fills Izidor with happiness at the sound of his father's singing. In another scene, he appears dancing and breaking plates on the floor at the sound of music at a club in Bucharest. Life in the village is, however, marked by incidents that Stéphane finds difficult to understand and to cope with and which emphasise the sharp differences between his 'Western background' and the particularities of gypsy culture. That is the case, for example, in a rather comical scene where Stéphane, trying to be helpful, cleans Izidor's house during his absence and causes great shock and laughter amongst the women and embarrassment in Izidor. Later on, Stéphane is forced to intervene when he realises Izidor is pressuring Sabina to have sex with him. Furthermore, Stéphane is oblivious to the climate of fear and insecurity that his presence still causes amongst some people in the village. There is a scene where the villagers discuss the dangers of having a foreigner living with them. They wonder whether he might be a killer or a child abductor and besides, as someone remarks, he cannot speak either Romanian or the gypsy language. On the other hand, Izidor's enthusiastic and naive remarks about how gypsies are perfectly integrated and well regarded in French society (where, in fact, he has never been), or yet his misguided belief that Stéphane came to Romania to learn their language Romani, work as a reminder of how France may well stand as an 'Other' for the gypsy culture.

Interestingly, Stéphane's ethnographic enterprise of collecting gypsy songs can also be seen as an almost desperate attempt to preserve elements of a culture he feels he has just 'discovered' as a typical Westerner who is interested in describing and comparing the different aspects of an alien culture and land². Characters such as Sabina and Izidor play important roles in that they emerge as genuine representatives of the gypsy culture that Stéphane is encountering. Their rather stereotypical, expansive manner, kindness and penchant for music and dance sharply contrast with Stéphane's initial reserve and uneasiness. However, we never get a sense of character development in either Sabina or Izidor. Their personality traits remain, in fact, stable and unchanged for the course of the story, i.e. they do not seem strongly affected by the events acting upon them. Arguably, Stéphane's ethnographic activity is also an attempt to archive the memory of a culture that has historically been faced with prejudice and displacement, and that

Stéphane wants to save from oblivion. As argued by Nora (1989: 13) in his influential essay “Lieux of Memory”, “modern memory is above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image. What began as writing ends as high fidelity and tape recording”. Notably, Stéphane’s motives to engage in such activity remain remarkably ambiguous. Despite his manifest enthusiasm and perseverance in heading from village to village to record songs and, presumably, to locate Nora Luca, his inner motivation to do so is never verbally expressed. Shortly before he and Sabina embark on several branch journeys to record gypsy songs, Stéphane assures Sabina that Nora Luca has to be somewhere because he can feel her presence in both his body and mind. On the other hand, it is also true that the systematic collection of gypsy tales of loss and love encourages an even deeper transformation in Stéphane’s being. In a scene set at a nightclub in Bucharest where Stéphane goes for an outing in the company of Sabina and Izidor, there is a clear allusion to such a compelling but unspoken inner change. By the end of the night, as Sabina starts singing a very sad gypsy song, we hear Nora Luca’s voice erupting over Sabina’s singing while a visibly disturbed Stéphane weeps. Towards the end of the film, the burning of the gypsy village marks a decisive last step in Stéphane’s separation from his previous life and full entrance in the ‘new’ one. There is in this act an underlying suggestion that Stéphane has truly become one of ‘them’ and that we may well ask ourselves whether he has just fully embodied the nomadic figure his travelling father once was.

Journey to the Beginning of the World’s Afonso faces similar challenges. Like Stéphane, he is confronted with the culture and the landscape of a country he barely knows. Portugal is a country he only got to know, in fact, throughout his deceased father’s accounts. Although it is true that Afonso’s journey to his father’s native village is primarily an attempt to learn something about his origins, we are also aware that the journey is also being motivated by professional reasons. Afonso and his travelling companions are also on their way to the shoot of a film. *Journey to the Beginning of the World* is, nonetheless, imbued of a sensibility suggesting that Afonso’s personal memories are anchored in his father’s memories. Furthermore, it appears that Afonso regards his life trajectory as a continuation of his deceased father’s own story. However, the journey is not simply an expression of Afonso’s impulse to get to know something more about

his father's origins and to meet his ancestors. This is particularly emphasised when halfway through the journey the group is standing by the eerie ruins of the Great Hotel of Peso, once part of a very fashionable spa famous for its waters. Here, Manoel has a recollection of his childhood holidays. Amidst comments about the desolation of the place, Manoel tells his journey companions of how these ruins remind him of a story of a Brazilian poet who gave up his possessions and house to be with the woman he loved and ended up being deceived by her and losing everything. It is then that Afonso confesses to Manoel how he fears that something like that might happen to him when he gets to his father's village: "You know Manoel, all the past belongs to your memory. I like to learn things about it, but you understand this does not refer to my father's past". This is of course an ambiguous remark. There is, however, a clear allusion to Afonso's desire to trace back his personal story to his father's own story and memories. He is hoping to do so by getting to know a country, and in particular the village of Lugar do Teso whose image is already engraved in his memory as a sign of his own past. On the other hand, we do not doubt that Afonso's longing for roots is transforming the voyage into an experience of unfolding and discovery of the space travelled. He is visibly eager in absorbing information about the country from his journey companions and in looking at his surroundings, but interaction with others proves often difficult because of language barriers. We first understand this when the group stops by the statue of Pedro Macau that Manoel associates with the human suffering of those who, like Afonso's father, "are strong as giants". The now badly damaged statue is of a small man kneeling on one knee whilst supporting on his shoulder a visibly heavy tree trunk. While they observe the statue, Duarte asks a woman passing by if someone had changed the position of the statue. After denying it, the woman takes the opportunity to recite some old verses about the statue. Judite then asks the woman to repeat the verses so as to translate them for Afonso. While Afonso fruitlessly tries to speak the verses in Portuguese, the local woman observes the scene amused with his accent and only then realising that Afonso is a foreigner. Even so, Afonso is determined to make sense of such enigmatic verses and insists on repeating them in French with the help of Judite. The verses tell how the man personified in the statue is still waiting for a passer by to relieve him of his torment. This scene is undoubtedly illustrative of how Afonso's difficulties in interaction with strangers

are closely linked to his own condition as a stranger. It is then hardly surprising that Afonso is once again dramatically confronted with his strangeness when the group finally arrives at their destination. Like *The Crazy Foreigner's* Stéphane, Afonso is received with mixture of suspicion and curiosity by his aunt and wider family. Maria and her husband are particularly reticent to consider Afonso as a relative, whereas Christine, Maria's French daughter-in-law, appears more approachable. When the elderly woman suggests that he might be the illegitimate child of one of his brother's alleged lovers, the husband fears Afonso might have come to receive his share in the heritage of land they got from a recently deceased relative. Visibly shocked with such suggestions Afonso repeats in French again and again who he is and why he came, although Maria resists recognizing Afonso as her nephew on the basis that he cannot speak her language. Even when she sees resemblances to her brother in Afonso's face, she is once again immediately struck by the question of why he is not able to speak her language. What emerges as highly significant in this scene is Maria's acceptance of her nephew's identity after his moving appeal to the strength of blood ties. Only then he understands that getting to know his ancestors is not just a question of comprehending their culture but also of being accepted as one of 'them'. Afonso's emotional involvement and willingness to get to know about the customs and traditions of the country is not powerful enough to erase the sharp cultural and social differences between him and his relatives. When Afonso is depicted as a wealthy and famous actor brought up in France, his ancestors live a poverty-stricken life in a remote Portuguese village. The following scenes symbolically unify Afonso's life trajectory with that of his ancestors. In a long expository scene Maria provides her own account of the events surrounding her young brother's departure to France. We have already listened to an account of this very same story in Afonso's version of the facts. His aunt goes on to tell the group of life in such an isolated and underdeveloped village whilst expressing her own views, for instance, on politics and the role of mass-media. It is difficult, however, to grasp in what degree Afonso is being changed by the whole experience of the voyage and the encounter with his relatives. From the beginning to the end of the film, he emerges as a silent witness of a country and a people he wants to comprehend. His silence is striking but there is also an undeniable suggestion that he is leaving the village as a 'different' person. We get a brief but crucial glimpse of his inner

feelings and thoughts in a few important remarks. Towards the end of the film, after having left the village, Duarte asks Afonso how he feels after having encountered the “memories of his childhood”. Afonso’s answer comes with an indication that the recent events have, in fact, succeeded in fulfilling his longing for roots: “it is like being a stranger travelling to his imaginary and finally meeting the reality of places, of those places I heard my father speaking about. I’ve got a feeling of having gone back in time”. In following his father’s footsteps throughout a country whose culture was, in fact, mostly alien to him, Afonso feels he is leaving his father’s village with an enriched knowledge about the country and about his own beginnings that he sees as irremediably tied to his father’s personal story.

Moreover, in *Journey to the Beginning of the World*, Judite and Duarte appear almost as Greek choric figures in that they provide detailed information about the culture and history of the space travelled. Their social roles are clear-cut but they can hardly be conceived as complex characters. This is because although they intervene extensively in the story line, the narrative does not provide wide information about their inner subjectivities. That is also particularly emphasised in their obvious inexpressive and theatrical acting style. Judite and Duarte play an important part in stimulating conversations by asking questions, or making brief remarks about what is being said. Duarte, in particular, assumes his chorus role in both commenting and participating on aspects of the stories being told or in announcing a forthcoming event. For example, when the group starts entering the fortress town of Valença, Duarte announces in a majestic manner, “We are going to enter into the fortress area of the city of Valença ...”. In the end, Duarte’s remarks prove highly relevant in that they offer detailed information about Portuguese history and costumes.

In the *Suspended Step of the Stork* we are dealing with a main protagonist, Alexandre, a Greek TV reporter, who appears as an attentive observer of a space manifestly alien to him. This is not a completely foreign space but a borderland where refugees and illegal immigrants are confined by the Greek government. It is very difficult to get a grip on Alexandre’s character, i.e. to have access to his inner subjectivities because the narrative continuously and consciously withholds information about his thoughts, feelings and even facial expression. It is also noteworthy that Angelopoulos’ conception of character is one that goes behind the

concepts of psychology and the notion of 'strong' character. As argued by Horton, he "presents character *from the outside*, forcing us to search ... to view other possibilities that make up an identity, an individuality, beyond those that have been more readily offered in the past" (Horton, 1997a: 11). But we are closely aligned with Alexandre's persona as the camera persistently tracks his movements and actions across the refugee town. Above all, Alexandre's reflective stance pushes background action to the forefront as we are driven to the contemplation of the space travelled as 'through the eyes' of Alexandre. We are dealing here with an approach to character that refuses to rely on a clichéd and melodramatic depiction of the character's feelings. We become aware of Alexandre's unspoken feelings regarding the crippling condition of the refugees in a literal 'no man's land' throughout a narrative drained of melodrama. In his striking silence, the reporter emerges more as a witness of a 'reality' he feels he has to comprehend than a character with conflicting drives or inner inconsistencies, such as those we can find, for example, in Antonioni's *L'avventura*. At first glance, it is difficult to understand how Alexandre's quest for a missing politician might relate to an identity-seeking enterprise, as is clearly the case in both *The Crazy Stranger* and *Journey to the Beginning of the World*. For a start, all we know is that Alexandre is a TV journalist working on a story about refugees in the border-town when he gets struck with the identity of an alleged Albanian refugee. Thus the quest for the missing politician cannot be dissociated from Alexandre's professional commitment to get a story about the condition of refugees. Clearly, some of the incidents depicted (e.g. the man hanged on a crane, the wedding by the river) are, in fact, being captured by Alexandre's cameraman, i.e. by the intrusive presence of a fictional camera. When Alexandre first arrives in the border-town, he is arguably a passive and detached observer of a reality on which he is supposed to report with clinical journalistic objectivity. However, it is hard to deny that his inner self is being affected by the voyage, as he acquires a deeper insight into the condition of the refugees and he is touched by the love of a refugee girl (and future bride whose wedding is staged by the border-river). While trying to gather information about the identity of the alleged missing politician, he becomes more and more personally and emotionally involved with the dramatic situation of the refugees in this remote part of Greece (see Horton, 1997a: 172). We never get to know if Alexandre got a satisfactory answer to the question of what could have

driven the politician to abandon a successful career for such a modest living in such an alienating place. What we do get to know is that the fate of the refugees in Greece is a problem that Alexandre can no longer report upon with professional detachment. This brings to mind a remarkable statement about the condition of the refugees proffered by the mysterious man whose identity intrigued the reporter: "Being a refugee is an internal condition more than an external one". Towards the end of the film, there is a scene where we first get an insight on how his ability to feel compassion for the condition of the exiles starts conflicting with his professional identity. During an evening out, Alexandre and the colonel walk together across the deserted and darkened streets still holding their drinks. Whilst the colonel reminds the reporter that people are being driven mad in such a place because of the borders, Alexandre shouts from a distance as he heads back to the hotel that "the only thing I know is how to shoot others regardless of their feelings!".

Alexandre's truthful compassion is again remarkably illustrated in the striking tableau of the orthodox wedding by the river where it is suggested that he has finally embraced the pain of the exiles in this 'other Greece'. It is against the background of a story imbued of a new humanism³, that we have therefore access to the reporter's inner transformation. He gets a different insight on his own self as both a Greek and a human being in getting emotionally involved with the cause of the refugees. Like the alleged missing politician whose footsteps Alexandre has been following, we get the sense that he was transformed into a 'different person'. In the end, although Alexandre's journey did not begin as a search for identity, his quest for another man's identity has driven him to explore the depths of his own self and of his own country.

In *Ulysses' Gaze*, we are once again dealing with a voyager who emerges as a silent and attentive observer of the space travelled. As in *The Suspended Step of the Stork* we are driven to see 'through the eyes' of the travelling protagonist. Character composition is once again the result of Angelopoulos' unorthodox approach to character. A.'s persona is not consistently 'realistic' and it is difficult to have a sense of character development. To start with, his name is never provided, although his social role as a Greek-American filmmaker who had just returned to his native country after a long absence is made clear from the beginning. Despite his contemplative stance, we also have at times wide access to

his inner thoughts and feelings. However, it is difficult to make sense of A. as a 'real' persona when he speaks in an obviously mannered style (often as a voice-over) as if reading his lines from a book or playing a part on stage. In other scenes, on the contrary, his acting style is less affected and appears more 'natural'. This is visible, for instance, in the scene where A. is forced to abandon Kali, with whom he has fallen in love, to pursue his quest alone. In this scene, the rare close-up reveals beyond words A.'s emotional involvement and pain in having to leave Kali behind. A realistic portrayal of A. is also displayed in the few scenes in which A.'s speech becomes increasingly mumbled expressing his sense of despair and disorientation. That is especially the case towards the end of the film when he attempts to persuade Ivo Levy, the Jewish curator of the Sarajevo Film archive, to try once again to find the chemical formula to develop the three film reels. On the other hand, A.'s persona often gets blurred with the figure of Yannakis Manakis whom he appears to embody in some scenes. This self-conscious blurring of identities appears to emphasise A.'s determination to follow the footsteps of Yannakis who he knows died without finding his missing reels. In contrast with *The Crazy Foreigner* or the *Suspended Step of the Stork*, in *Ulysses' Gaze* the voyager is from the beginning suffering from an identity crisis, i.e. a condition in which the voyager feels he is losing grip on his identity. This is particularly emphasised in a scene where an emotionally disturbed A. offers Kali, a guide to the Manakia cinema, a detailed account of how his obsession with the lost film reels is linked to a deep personal crisis. He tells her of how some time ago he has lost the ability to see himself and the world: "Three reels, perhaps a whole film undeveloped ... the first film, perhaps, the first glance, a lost glance, a lost innocence. It turned into an obsession as if it were my own work, my own first glance lost long ago". Interestingly, A.'s past and current loves are all played by the Romanian actress Maia Morgenstern: Agnes, the woman he left behind many years ago in his native Greece; Kali, a guide to the Manakia cinema in Monastir; the lonely Bulgarian peasant grieving for her missing husband in a scene in which A. impersonates the figure of Yannakis Manakis; and Naomi, Ivo Levy's daughter, who gets killed at the end of the film. Except for Kali who emerges as a more consistent character, the other women are never fully drawn as characters. They appear to epitomize A.'s 'lost love' as he is driven to move on to pursue his quest alone. Moreover, even if dialogue with each of these women is scarce or

even non-existent, each scene is carefully staged so as to visually unfold A.'s emotional involvement and pain for having to leave each of them behind.

No doubt A. is offered a deeper insight on the troubled social space of the Balkans through the people he encounters and the experience of the journey itself. It appears, however, that the journey also entailed for A. a greater sense of spiritual loss and angst in view of the absurdity and horror of the Balkan war. Unlike *The Crazy Stranger's* Stéphane or *Journey to the Beginning of the World's* Afonso, A. does not get to the end of his journey with a 'positively' enriched identity. Neither revisiting the memories of his childhood in both his native Greece and Romania did not bring the foreseeable fulfilment or comfort. On the contrary, the journey appears to have paved the way for an even larger 'loss of identity' as the film closes with a helpless A. weeping at the destroyed Sarajevo film archive. Arguably, an even larger breach was opened in A.'s already fragile identity while on the move he is confronted by the dramas of life in different Balkan locations. In this case, the search for identity rather than bringing consolidation has brought loss and destabilization (see Chard, 1999: 217).

In *Landscape in the Mist*, although the space travelled is a supposedly familiar one (i.e. the Greek national space) it is clear from the beginning that in their frailty and immaturity Voula or Alexander are travelling a strikingly foreign space. The journey takes them across a bleak, wintry industrial landscape of impersonal railway-stations, highways, deserted small towns and industrial estates. The 'Greece' we come across in the film is one that little resembles the sunny and picturesque Greece of the package tour. It is instead a rural Greece punctuated by small towns and villages (see Horton, 1997a: 11). It is mostly through Voula's imagined voice-over letters to her father as she sleeps that we grasp her deep feelings and thoughts about the whole experience of the journey. In her first letter she concludes by saying that "... we don't want to burden you. We just want to get to know you and then we'll go away again" (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 147). The textures of their quest are caught in these words. Later on, in another dreamed letter, she goes on to comment on her impressions about the surrounding world: "We are travelling, blown like a leaf in the wind. What a strange world. Words and gestures we don't understand. And the night, which scares us, but we are happy and we are moving on" (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 148). It is compelling the way in which Voula speaks on behalf of her brother to

express their shared feelings and thoughts by using the pronoun 'we' instead of the 'I'. Voula's rape brings about a change of tone on her dreamed letters. There is an indication that despite all dangers and fears Voula and Alexander have to face, they are more than ever united in the quest for their father. "We each write to you the same thoughts. And we both fall silent before each other. Looking at the same world, the light and the darkness ... and you" (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 152). The journey is undoubtedly bringing about an alienating world of which Voula and Alexander struggle to make sense. Their personas are consistently realistic. In contrast with other Angelopoulos' films (e.g. *Ulysses' Gaze*), there is not in *Landscape in the Mist* a blurring of identities in which a single character ambiguously plays different roles. In addition, their stance towards the surrounding space is different from that we can find, for example, in both *Ulysses' Gaze* and *The Suspended Step of the Stork*. Neither Voula nor Alexander are profoundly driven to the contemplation of the space they travel. It is the case that they are being confronted with a space and a reality they cannot avoid to observe and in which they find themselves immersed. They experience hunger, exhaustion, cold and exploitation as they walk throughout a world remarkably oblivious of their fate. Except for Orestes' moving friendship, people's brutal indifference only contributes to their increasing estrangement. But despite their growing sense of loss, fear and despair their steady determination to encounter their father keeps them on the move.

In conclusion, journey-quests involve some sort of physical or spiritual 'loss' (e.g. identity crisis), but it is also true that they bring about increasing self-awareness and social learning about the space travelled. We are not dealing here with voyagers who are blindly driven to achieve some highly desired goal, but with individuals who, whilst pursuing their quest, bear a growing curiosity and interest in the surrounding world. One reason why this occurs is the voyager's impulse to throw himself or herself into a culture he or she is eager to comprehend. This does not mean that the voyager is willing to engage in a systematic knowledge of other cultures based on detached observation or passive interaction with others. On the contrary, the voyager is immersing himself or herself in the felt and lived strangeness of the space travelled. That is also remarkably achieved by means of a personal and emotional involvement with others.

Often, and especially in Angelopoulos' films, it is difficult to speak of characters in terms of personality traits (kind, affectionate, remote, etc.). That is mostly because characters are often strikingly silent about their motives, thoughts or feelings. Arguably, in journey-quests it appears less important to explore characters in their inner complexities than to comprehend their relation with the spatiality in which they exist and move around. Moreover, the characters with whom the voyager interacts along the way play an important part in predicating the comprehension of the space travelled for both the viewer and the voyager. This is primarily because they emerge as truthful representatives of a specific social space (e.g. the taxi driver in *Ulysses' Gaze*; the grieving peasant woman in *Journey to the Beginning of the World*; the refugee girl in *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, Izidor in *The Crazy Stranger*). In getting access to their inner feelings and thoughts we also get the chance to grasp the space they inhabit through their subjective experience of the world. Encounters with strangers turn into an opportunity for the voyager to learn about a given space through accounts of these individuals' personal experience or memories. Of course, such characters tend to play minor roles and often we are attached to their subjectivities just the few scenes in which the voyager interacts with them.

Finally, as the films reach their end, it is sometimes difficult to access whether the journey brought forth a gain or a loss of identity. In other words, it may prove hard to identify what are the gains and the losses in terms of increasing self-awareness. As in aimless journeys, to grasp a voyager's subjectivities may emerge as a remarkably difficult task.

7.3 Conclusion

In journey-quests we are dealing with a self-conscious search for roots and identity that also encompasses a search for a sense of home. A distinctive feature of this sub-narrative pattern is how a search for one's roots is often manifested in a search for a father-like figure (e.g. *Landscape in the Mist*, *Journey to the Beginning of the World*, *The Crazy Foreigner*). There is here a suggestion that a search for a 'fatherland' also provides a metaphor for a search for home. Home

here is not related with the certainties and fixities of place but with a rather more existential search for a space where ‘one can feel at home’.

We are dealing here with journeys of discovery of both the self and others through an experience of movement across a space that is self-consciously experienced as strange by the voyager. As in aimless journeys, the space travelled is either a recognizable foreign space (e.g. *Crazy Stranger*, *Journey to the Beginning of the World*, *The Suspended Step of the Stork*) or a supposedly familiar space (e.g. the national space) that is being rediscovered or seen under ‘different eyes’ through the experience of the journey (e.g. *Ulysses’ Gaze*, *Landscape in the Mist*). Journey-quests are, in the end, primarily concerned with the voyager’s subjective experience of space and as such they loosely recast the reporter/foreign correspondent narrative⁴ (see Christie, 2000). In launching the voyager in a trope of discovery across a foreign space, journey-quests offer us the opportunity to get to grips with a certain socio-historical terrain.

Finally, similarly to aimless journeys, this pattern of the European ‘film of voyage’ can be seen as performing a journey *into* society. The films suggest a recognizable impulse towards some sort of spiritual order (see Roppen and Sommer, 1964: 18) that is manifested in the search for a place or an existential condition that is seen as adequately providing a sense of home.

¹ For Bordwell (1997a) Angelopoulos’ stylistics bends towards a few specific goals that are part of a modernist enterprise: dedramatisation a muted emotional expressivity; a subtle direction of the audience’s attention; and a concomitant awareness of the process of the process of film viewing.

² See, for instance, Wolff (1994) and Todorova (1997) on the ‘intellectual discovery’ of the Balkans as being a product of the cataloguing of the other in comparison to the known.

³ See interview conducted by Horton (1992: 30) when Angelopoulos claims for the need of a ‘new humanism’: “Many people write to me (...) and say that my last film, *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, was a film that *had* to be made because it catches so much of the tension today. You see, in dealing with borders, boundaries, the mixing of languages and cultures today, the refugees who are homeless and not wanted, I am trying to seek a new humanism, a new way”.

⁴ This is particularly visible, for example, in *The Suspended Step of the Stork* where we are often aware of the presence of the TV’s crew camera. At several moments, the intrusive presence of the camera is made noticeable when the TV’s crew cameraman is shown onscreen filming the very same space and action we are observing. In this case, the narrative is arguably drawing attention for the ‘constructedness’ of the film in blurring the boundary between fictional and the documentary nature of the story being told.

**PART III : BOUNDARIES, SPACE AND BELONGING IN
EUROPEAN 'FILMS OF VOYAGE'**

CHAPTER 8 : ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores some of the ways in which European ‘films of voyage’ articulate themes of national identity in relation to questions of boundary-crossing and definition. The ‘voyage-film’, both thematically and narratively, shows how ethno-cultural divides challenge both internally (e.g. issues of displacement of immigrant and refugee communities) and externally (e.g. issues of resilient cultural boundaries cutting across imposed national borders) the political boundaries of the nation-state.

It is the case that the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, as conveyed by the media in general, relies on accepted images or stereotypes of the ‘other’ that are often the product of long-established dichotomies whose roots are mainly cultural (e.g. Eastern Europe vs. Western Europe; Protestant vs. Catholic). Several authors (e.g. Todorova, 1997; Wolff, 1994; Bakic-Hayden, 1995; Said, 1978) have stressed that, while political boundaries change widely throughout history, some cultural boundaries remain more or less unchanged, namely through what has been called *imaginative or symbolic geography*. Said’s seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978), is one of the first to suggest “men have always divided the world into regions having either real or imagined distinction of each other” (Said, 1978: 39). He goes on to argue that imaginative geography legitimates a vocabulary, a universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion of Islam and of the Orient (1978: 71). Subsequently, authors such as Todorova (1997) and Wolff (1994) have focused on the cultural construction of Eastern Europe by exploring the tropes and representative figures through which Western intellectuals and travellers developed a crystallized discourse about the ‘East’. Such discourse invariably associates the ‘East’ with the depths of barbarism and backwardness whilst providing the ‘West’ (i.e. ‘Western Europe’) with a self-embellishing image as the locus of rationality and civilization.

It is noteworthy that the coming of the Enlightenment age brought a growing systematic knowledge in Europe about the Orient as well as a widespread interest in the alien and the unusual. The result was the flourishing of a considerable body

of literature by intellectuals, 'emerging' social scientists and travellers with accounts of the 'intellectual discovery' of other lands and peoples (see Said, 1978). Eighteenth-century travellers from Western Europe to Eastern Europe played a major role in the mental mapping and essentialization of 'Eastern Europe'. According to Wolff (1994: 6) this was a time when the Eastern lands were still unusual destinations for most people and thus each traveller carried a mental map to be freely annotated, embellished, refined or refolded along the way. Association and comparison with their Western point of departure was unavoidable in the work of these gifted travellers willing to express through writing their impressions about their journeys. In a similar vein, Pratt (1994) argues that in eighteenth-century travel writing, for instance, there is a tendency towards dehumanisation and distancing from those being characterized that was coded by a civilising mission. Furthermore, Todorova (1997: 19) in her work on the balkanist discourse suggests that this is primarily the work of journalistic and quasi-journalistic literary forms such as the travelogue.

It is against this background that I am interested in investigating how the act of travelling as depicted in European films of voyage raises important questions of both personal and collective identity. I want to demonstrate that European films of voyage in propelling the voyager across a recognizable foreign space are not deploying crystallized images of otherness. These voyagers do not engage in a trope of 'intellectual discovery' based in detached observation or objective cataloguing of the 'other' in comparison to the known. In that context, "comparison is the way in which the traveller calls up a base of familiarity before the spectacle of the new and the strange, which is perceived as such only in relationship to the known" (Leed, 1991: 68). I argue instead that the 'voyage-film' plays an important role in challenging 'traditional' stereotypes and essentializations of the other.

I also seek to investigate the relation between place and identity as this is explored in the film of voyage. Since Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) no one doubts that individuals imagine their nation in many different ways so as to make sense of themselves as having a collective identity. I argue that European films of voyage, both thematically and narratively, suggest a redrawing of the 'mental map' of the national space that is not consistent with homogenous narratives of it.

This mapping clearly overcomes the politically defined limits of the state apparatus.

Part 3 centres on comparative case studies of six European films of voyage: respectively, *Alice in the Cities* (Wenders, Germany, 1974) *Kings of the Road* (Wenders, Germany, 1976), *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (Angelopoulos, Greece, 1991) *Ulysses' Gaze* (Angelopoulos, Greece, 1995), *Five Days, Five Nights* (Fonseca e Costa, Portugal, 1996) and *Journey to the Beginning of the World* (Oliveira, Portugal, 1997). The films relate to three specific national contexts: the Greek vis-à-vis the Balkan region, the German and the Portuguese. In each case I will firstly be concerned with the conceptualisation of notions of boundary so as to explore how those are intrinsically related to notions of space and identity. I shall then go on to examine how European 'films of voyage' through plot, characters and visual imagery offer a critique of the idea of the homogenous nation in articulating questions of boundary-crossing and definition.

Whilst it can easily be argued that people rely on different kinds of boundaries (political, cultural, geographic, etc.) in the process of making sense of their own cultural identity, the notion of 'boundary' remains imprecise. I suggest that we need to consider at least three different conceptualisations of boundary that although semantically related are, in fact, analytically distinct.

Political boundaries have been comprehended as a limit¹ to the space demarcating distinct political communities (Goff, 2000). They bear some kind of relation to a territory and to the physical uses of space, but their main characteristic is that they 'deserve to be well guarded' (Nordman, 1998: 28). Political boundaries are political constructs, i.e. man-made and artificial (Hartshorne, 1938; Baud and Van Schendel, 1997). Historically, they have been associated with fortified zones and are commonly the result of some sort of international agreement. Both in a literal and metaphorical sense, political boundaries are associated with notions of vigilance and surveillance. When we speak of boundaries as being more or less permeable, it is implied that there is some sort of control over the circulation of people, goods and information. This stance also implies that the degree in which this control or vigilance is exerted can change. Political boundaries and border

zones perform, in fact, a dual function; on the one hand, they act as barriers or buffers, and on the other hand, as gateways or bridges (O'Dowd, 2001). Moreover, contemporary nation-state boundaries are linked to a concept of sovereignty and exclusive control over contiguous territory (Anderson, 1996). Yet, political boundaries are not indelible but disputable; often in the aftermath of wars, they have been redrawn or simply erased. Thus it is hardly surprising that they easily cut across cultural boundaries and are often at the root of ethno-cultural cleavages and conflicts. In addition, migrants and local communities settled in conterminous border areas are more prone to be affected by the divisive attributes of a political border.

Geographic boundaries usually lie in geographic formations such as a river, a mountain range or a canyon and can only be made meaningful as a boundary, i.e. as a limit between two distinct spaces that people can recognize as such, when they are endowed with some political usage. As argued by Nordman (1998: 64), no boundary is natural in itself and, in any case, a convention is needed so that a border visible in the landscape could be finally accepted as such. A geographic boundary can lie in a topographic configuration such as a river or a valley, but it needs to be signalled in the landscape with some sort of fortified area (e.g. border station) so that it can easily be identified. Arguably, some geographic formations (e.g. a river) can be transformed into effective political boundaries because they often constitute a 'natural' barrier or obstacle to the mobility of people. It is difficult to erase or move a geographic boundary because they are usually inscribed in the landscape; it is feasible, for instance, to change the course of a river but not to move a mountain range. The concept of 'natural' border is also contested by Van Gennep (1922: 10 cited in Llobera 1994: 102) who argues that there is no causal link or normal coincidence between natural and political borders because "the concentration, dispersion and expansion of peoples follows its own logic, and it is not the geographic one, except in rare and passing circumstances". In fact, neither mountains, nor rivers, nor seas, nor forests pose an insurmountable obstacle for the expansion of people.

Cultural boundaries can be comprehended as 'identity markers' (or *diacritica*) that enable the distinction between contrasting groups (Barth, 1969). In everyday

life people rely on a highly salient and relatively stable set of 'boundary markers', such as language, religion, customs or a conception of 'homeland', in order to make sense of their collective self as distinct from other national and collective identities. The 'content' of such identity markers is reinvented and negotiated within the stories, images and symbols of the 'we' that the media constantly launch into circulation, and coming from various sources such as the state apparatus, cultural producers and institutions working within and beyond the state level. In contrast with political and geographical borders, cultural boundaries are not necessarily attached to a specific territory. They can, however, bear a relation with a conception of homeland or other cultural space of belonging, which is often linked either to an ethnic or civic conception of the nation². Furthermore, cultural boundaries can remain relatively stable and indifferent to the cross-cutting pressures of changing social and historical conditions (e.g. a dispute over a political boundary). Cultural boundaries are, after all, purely symbolic in that they are not concrete or observable in space. The latter is an abstract space in that it cannot be inscribed in the landscape but only imagined.

The epistemological significance of the notion of boundary can be seen as intrinsically linked to our human need to find and impose order on the world, to tell differences, to see patterns, or to make clear distinctions (Strassoldo, 1982: 246). The idea of boundary exists, in fact, in all societies from primitive to modern (Van Gennep, 1922: 10 cited in Llobera, 1994: 102).

The crossing of a boundary either 'natural' or 'artificial' is an act that is symbolically associated with notions of challenge, danger and transgression³. As a literary ingredient, the journey has long been associated with the passage from the domain of the 'familiar' to the realm of the 'foreign'. As early as the fifteenth century, the project of European expansion and maritime discoveries transformed the voyage into a movement of detachment from the realm of the familiar towards the knowledge and comprehension of the newly discovered lands and of the exotic 'other'. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were already created the epistemological conditions to value the voyager as an observer of the exterior world (Matos, 1999: 236). In addition, geographic boundaries came to acquire a wider and more figurative meaning in literature, especially in geographic texts, narrative accounts of journeys (e.g. travel literature) and travel guides. They

played a major role in the description and mental mapping of foreign territories. In her work on the imaginative topography of the Grand Tour, Chard (1999: 11) suggests that travel involves the crossing of both symbolic and geographic boundaries, and such transgression of limits invites various forms of danger or destabilization. The journey holds here a promise of self-discovery and adventure in the contact with otherness. This sensibility can also be found in the European film of voyage. What is involved here is that the 'encounter with otherness' is not a question of going beyond or stepping outside a sharp boundary line drawn along clearly marked cultural, geographic or political divides. The encounter with the foreign is rather a matter of crossing a symbolic boundary that can be associated with geographic points or landmarks inscribed in the landscape (e.g. a mountain, a river, border-town). That is not to say that symbolic boundaries clearly overlap particular geographic or political markers. They cannot be inscribed in space as a fissure, or a disparity, separating two different communities, nation-states or regions. A symbolic boundary covers the 'passage' between the space of the familiar and the space of the foreign, i.e. the space of 'what is not yet known'. This view implies that the 'other' cannot simply be perceived as the one 'on the other side', i.e. the barbarian, the enemy, the primitive, or even one that cannot be known because difference is considered a matter of cultural standards that 'we' cannot comprehend. On the contrary, this view suggests that the foreign can be rendered familiar in the act of travelling. As argued by Porter (1991: 188), "in our excursions into previously unknown lands, we discover much that is strangely familiar; and such troubling encounters may destabilize inherited categories as well as confirm them". We share therefore cultural features with others that we cannot anticipate unless we are eager to comprehend the other. The absoluteness of geographic, political and cultural boundaries is undermined when the journey disturbs the certainties of individual and collective identities, which have long been rooted in the fixities of place and community (Leed, 1991).

8.2 Identity, Memory and Place in European 'Films of Voyage'

It might be argued that the constitution of a difference between self and other occurs as much at the level of personal identity as at the political, societal or institutional level of collective identity. There is therefore a link between collective identity and personal identity in that the former is experienced and expressed by the individual (Kohli, 2000). Thus we cannot separate the question of what we are as individuals from the question of where we belong as members of a political or social community. Although the idea of person has come under attack from both the social and natural sciences in recent times, personal identity can still be seen as both processual (Kohli, 2000) and reflexive (Giddens, 1991). Thus we are not dealing here with a static or crystallized notion of personal identity. As argued by Lodge (2002: 91), "the individual self is not a fixed and stable identity, but is constantly created and modified in consciousness through interaction with others and the world". The European 'film of voyage' can be considered a 'text' where cultural meaning about 'who we are' is both created and accessed. I argue that, as such, it suggests that memory plays a crucial role in the building of a relation between identity and place. This stance draws attention to two crucial questions: first, how memory is an important part of how we make sense of ourselves, namely through storytelling; second, how the connection between identity and place may relate to an idea of 'home' that involves a notion of identifying or legitimating origins and, ultimately, one's personal and collective identity.

If we accept that personal identity encompasses a sense of the continuity of one's life trajectory, it is implied here that 'where I belong to' is a question that becomes entangled with the question of 'where I began'. In fact, "memory claims figure significantly in our self-descriptions because our past history is an important source of our conception of ourselves" (Connerton, 1989: 22). Moreover, our ability to remember our collective past is only partially anchored in the work of those state institutions that invent traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) and are responsible for reconstructing and archiving the memory of a legitimate past (Nora, 1989). Remembering is an activity that also relies on social

memory that embraces, for instance, those stories transmitted by local oral traditions (Connerton, 1989). Such stories might be, nonetheless, significantly shaped by the state's enterprise of mass-production of symbols of nationhood. I have argued in chapter 3, while exploring the possibilities of the 'modernist trend', that it is important to investigate the connection between the personal narratives through which people subjectively make sense of their national or other collective selves and those 'official' and alternative narratives of the nation that are launched into circulation mostly throughout the mass media. The examination of this link is beyond the scope of my present argument. What we cannot ignore, however, is that, in European 'films of voyage', identity as a sense of belonging is strongly linked to the voyager's inner drive to perceive himself or herself as having a story, i.e. a beginning and a continuity. This sensibility is clearly epitomized by *Kings of the Road's* Bruno's maxim, "I am my story". It is implied here that one's overall sense of self appeals to an idea of community that is conceived as a 'space of cultural belonging' (e.g. homeland⁴). Moreover, where one belongs to is a question that cannot be addressed without considering a notion of 'home'. The latter is better comprehended less as a specific territorial configuration usually associated with a small, specific locale (Robertson, 1992: 161), than as a mentally conceived and felt community through which everyone links up the set of experiences accumulated from life in the cultural milieu (or milieus) where one happened to grow up (see Almeida, 1994: 160). Thus home has an important affective dimension that we cannot minimize when assessing the constitution of both personal and collective identities.

I have suggested, in the concluding remarks of chapters 6 and 7, that European films of voyage raise important questions about the notion of home. I have also suggested that in aimless journeys the act of being in transit emerges as an alternative to the rootdeness of place. Thus being on the move emerges as a 'new way of being at home'. I have also suggested that journey-quests turn into an experience of discovery of the self and the space travelled in contact with otherness. Thus the voyage involves an identity-seeking enterprise that is usually linked to a quest for origins. In short, European films of voyage raise important questions about a conception of home that is not necessarily attached to a specific locale or territory (e.g. the nation-state). The underlying assumption here is that in European Films of Voyage 'home' cannot be seen as a clearly bounded place

from where one draws identity. Even if we accept that the self is not bound to some specific location (Paasi, 2001) that is not to deny the existence of a geographically definable space from which people derive identity. Lewis and Wigen (1997), for example, claim that the 'real' regions remain indispensable units of historical and cultural analysis. Thus human diversity is geographically structured and some relevant geographical patterns precede, in fact, the development of discourses about them (Lewis and Wigen, 1997: 102-103). A geographic sense of place is therefore needed for the constitution of one's collective identity (see Turner, 2002). In European films of voyage, the voyager's itinerary is framed against the backdrop of such a complex social and geographic space.

I have argued that travelling involves a self-reflexive activity. We learn about ourselves in contact with others. Thus I want to examine in European films of voyage the interplay of individual trajectories, i.e., the voyager's personal and spatial trajectory, vis-à-vis the 'collective destiny' of those inhabiting the social milieu the voyager 'discovers'.

8.3 Boundaries and Cultural Diversity in European 'Films of Voyage'

While describing the general narrative patterns of the European 'film of voyage', I have argued that such films deploy a tale of self-discovery and social learning about 'us' and 'them', self and other. I have in shown, in the conclusion of chapters 6 and 7, that the journey, both thematically and narratively, involves an 'encounter with otherness' in which the 'foreign' is being rendered 'familiar'. That is because the voyagers are not engaging in detached observation or passive interaction with others (including journey companions) and the space travelled. On the contrary, in European films of voyage the voyagers are being exposed to the felt and lived strangeness of place. By focusing attention on the journey as an act of crossing symbolic boundaries that can be associated with either political or geographic divides, I would like to propose the argument that the European film of voyage offers a critique of universalistic conceptions of the other whilst avoiding the fallacies of cultural relativism. The underlying assumption here is

that the self can come close to the 'other' through his or her subjective experience of movement across a recognizable foreign space, while still maintaining an attachment to the familiar ground of a local or national 'we'. Moreover, the voyager's experience of otherness does not necessarily entail scepticism or reflexive distance from both one's own national or local culture and other cultural contexts and values (see Turner, 2002). That is because the voyager can be deeply emotionally and personally involved with others and a space he or she is eager to understand. Thus the difference between 'us' and 'them', self and other, can be negotiated, even if the symbolic boundaries enabling the distinction between self and other, remain relatively stable and unchallenged. I suggest, nonetheless, that we need to maintain, at least at an abstract level, that the assertion of an identity is always the assertion of a difference providing the self with a means of distinguishing itself from others (Delanty, 1999; Kohli, 2000). In this context, we have also to consider the link between personal identity and collective identity, i.e. the way in which individuals make sense of themselves as belonging to a particular group which is comprehended as distinct from others. Following Kohli (2000: 127) I would argue that a key question here is whether collective identity is always an identity *against* the other⁵, i.e. an identity that serves to create a difference between who is included and who is excluded.

¹ The history of the frontier (*frontière*) goes progressively and irreversibly from the 'empty zone' of separation to the linear boundary (*limite*). The linear frontier was a rarity until modern periods because of the virtual absence of continuous lines of fortification (Nordman, 1998; see also Anderson, 1996).

² Both Gellner (1983) and Smith (1991) distinguish between a civic and 'Western' model of the nation based on the existence of a historical territory and a political and legal community, and an ethnic and 'oriental' conception of the nation which emphasises ancestry.

³ Nordman (1998: 33) identifies two kinds of 'divides' or 'limits' (*bornes*) to indicate the existence of a boundary: natural divides include rivers, a forest, a mountain range or other topographic formations, whilst artificial divides refer, for example, to walls, a fortress, or a trench.

⁴ See Williams and Smith (1983) for a discussion on the concept of 'homeland'.

⁵ It is noteworthy that identity shaped in conflict with otherness has been the cornerstone of the politics of identity (see, for instance, Mouffe, 1994; Laclau, 1994).

CHAPTER 9 : GERMANY

9.1 Historical and Cultural Context

The Idea of a Unique German Nation

The constitution of a unique German nation has been a long-cherished aspiration in both intellectual and academic circles since the nineteenth-century. Thus it is hardly surprising that the so-called ‘German question’ underlying German history and collective memory has for long been based on the assumption that the divided German nation has to be restored in its original wholeness. The building of a German nation under the lead of Prussia became the programme of ‘Imperial Germany’ throughout the late nineteenth-century¹ (Berger, 1997: 21-55).

Historically, Germany has never been easy to define in geo-political terms because of its shifting political boundaries (see Hartshorne, 1938: 187-193). However, there has been a pervasive and coherent idea of a unique German nation as being coincident with the idea of ‘people of the nation’ (*Volk*) that goes back to the philosophical writings of thinkers such as Herder and Fichte. Under the spirit of Romantic thought flourished an ethnic conception of the nation based in the idea of the original ‘Volk’ (people). The underlying idea here is that every nation is unique and original and therefore its roots lie in the specificities of folk culture, language and ethnicity. According to this view, individuals do not choose their nationality by identifying with the nation, but they are born into a nation and thus cannot escape their national identity (see Anderson, 1996: 41). The core argument here is that the ‘original’ nation has to be guarded and defended against others. The notion of ‘Volk’ also meant that the ‘people of the nation’ had a distinctive individuality, a premise that was later on perverted and misappropriated by the Third Reich xenophobic politics. On the whole, a cultural conception of the nation thrived in Germany in a rather different way to what happened in other western European countries. There was, for instance, in the late nineteenth-century, a tendency to contrast the strong German bonds of ethnicity and culture with

shallow French universalism and revolutionary tradition (see Berger, 1997: 26; see also Anderson, 1996: 40-42).

Notably, in the period prior and parallel to the emergence of the New German cinema movement in the early 1960s, German society witnessed a revival of the idea of *Kulturnationen* that led to the questioning of German identity. During this time, German intellectuals rediscovered the importance and value of history so as to provide a sense of identity and stability to the citizens of the modern democracy. Once again the lasting theme of the German's 'unique' experience was at the centre of a debate revolving around the question of whether German identity was to be conceived in political or cultural terms. In the late 1970s, and particularly under the aegis of the Frankfurt school, this became part of an attempt to distance West Germany from a loyalty to the U.S. foreign policy that aimed at emphasising the 'common identity' of the two 'Germanies' (Bark and Gress, 1989: 416-418). Concurrently, the Western democratic values being propagated within West German society drew upon a civic conception of the nation that substantially diverged from the 'ethnic' idea of the nation that thrived in Germany since the late nineteenth-century. During the 1970s and 1980s important trends in German historiography were championing post-nationalism, regionalisation and universal Western values (Berger 1997: 251-258). Overall, in both East Germany and West Germany no simple or widely accepted story about the nation's common past could ever be enacted (see Fulbrook, 1999: 79).

Post-war Historical Amnesia and the Legacies of Fascism

In the aftermath of World War II, Germany underwent what has been described as a political amnesia towards its recent Nazi past. During this period, people's forgetfulness of the Nazi past in West Germany disrupted their sense of continuity with their recent past. People's generalised unwillingness to deal with the legacies of the past was further endorsed by the work ethics of effort and self-sacrifice that laid the ground for the so-called German 'economic miracle' boosted by the Marshall Plan (see Berger, 1997: 87-88; see also, Elsaesser, 1989: 242-243). In addition, the occupation powers that led the Germans' political life after 1945 inhibited conditions for an open political analysis of the conditions and

consequences of National Socialism. After World War II, the Germans were, in effect, passive observers of their own fate whilst assuming a submissive role towards policy-makers (Kaes, 1989: 12-14). As argued by Fulbrook (1990: 213), “from the ruins of a defeated and devastated nation grew a materialistic society witnessing astonishing rates of growth and productivity, and conveniently suppressing the past by focusing on the task of building a prosperous future”. Yet, in the 1970s and 1980s more activist attitudes emerged with the proliferation of citizens initiative groups (e.g. New Regionalism movement) and the formation of the Green Party (see Fulbrook, 1990: 222; see also Geisler, 1985).

The Cold War Climate and the ‘Americanization’ of German Culture

When Churchill’s famous 1945 speech set the bipolar parameters of the Cold War world the conditions for a culturally and politically divided Germany along the lines of the so-called Iron Curtain were already created. West Germany was therefore soon to be transformed into a bastion of capitalism under the umbrella of American democracy, while East Germany became a stronghold of Communism. The East/West German boundary played a highly relevant symbolic role in Cold War geography, laying the ground for the West/East opposition. As argued by Lewis and Wigen (1997: 60), “on the new map, East became synonymous with communism, West with capitalist democracy (...). Even the arbitrary division of Germany had its appeal. The Rhinelands could now be safely claimed for the West, while Brandenburg-Prussia - supposed locus of the dark side of a divided German spirit - was consigned to the East”.

During these post-war years American influence was an essential factor in Germany democratisation. The so-called Adenauer era brought stabilization and rising prosperity that grew along with the adoption of a Western-style modernization and a civic culture. Despite some resistance from the authoritarian structures and networks of German society, American reformers and German conservatives became increasingly linked in a tight partnership in face of the growing and very real threat of Stalinism (Prowe, 2001; see also Fulbrook, 1990). At the same time, the Germans’ close association with America allowed them to

distance themselves from their Nazi past. However, the most complex role Americanization played in the democraticization process during the 1950s was through mass culture. Here the sense of cultural superiority underlying traditional German values and traditions clashed with materialistic and 'brutal' aspects of American mass culture. Indeed, the denunciation of commercial popular art and entertainment as detrimental to taste, and thus as a veritable social threat, had been long a permanent topic of discussion amongst the German intelligentsia (see Prowe, 2001; see also Maase, 2001). Throughout the 1950s, pulp fiction, boogie-woogie, jukeboxes, Hollywood westerns, and popular magazines, though extremely popular amongst the younger generations, were subjected to harsh denunciation through cultural criticism (Maase, 2001: 433). In the 1950s, West German cultural elites showed an overt discomfort and hostility towards American cultural influences (Poiger, 2001: 415). Moreover, the emergence of sub-cultural lifestyles, such as the *Halbstarcken* who embraced American cultural influence, and the expanding success of the rock n' roll scene among the youngest generations, were also perceived as a provocation by elitist advocates of 'serious' culture (*Kultur*). (Maase, 2001: 437-439).

By the 1970s, however, this picture had changed substantially with the growing success of television in a period in which viewers preferred consuming American films and porno films rather than German films. In the early 1970s the voices of cultural critics had already receded; by then more than 80 per cent of West German households owned a television set and radios and record players became a basic commodity instead of icons of American mass culture (Maase, 2001: 443). At the same time, the increasing popularity of TV programmes was followed by the decline of audience numbers in cinema going, the closing of cinemas in many rural areas, and the increasing weakness of the distribution sector. In the end, such deep cultural shifts in German society also meant the irreversible decline of a German film industry (see Elsaesser, 1989: 37-38).

In short, American cultural influence in German society created a space of protest amongst the younger generations, whilst offering, more generally, opportunities for pluralism and tolerance. In addition, it also enabled a redefinition of the cultural order in altering the status of an expanding popular culture vis-à-vis 'high' culture.

The Emergence of the New German Cinema

In 1962 a group of young German filmmakers proclaimed the 'Oberhausen Manifesto' that laid the foundations for a new cinema for Germany under the auspices of European modern art cinema. In departing from the political values and attitudes of their parents the New German Cinema's filmmakers (such as Kluge, Herzog, Wenders and Fassbinder) confronted Germany's Nazi past and raised the questions of memory and mourning. In providing alternative ways of seeing within a self-reflexive narrative and visual style, the filmmakers challenged the existing amnesia and the concomitant repression of the past. Most of their films embarked on a quest for German identity. This generation of young filmmakers set about making a non-commercial, state-subsidized and uncompromising cinema. Through a rejection of history and tradition they sought to provide a 'social consciousness' to the nation (Silberman, 1995: xii). Whilst criticizing the complacency, the conformism and the capitalism of the Adenauer era, they also aimed at producing a 'cinema of resistance' against the escapist and reactionary *Heimat* film with its unbroken tradition from the 1930s to the early 1960s (Kaes, 1996: 616-617)². More generally, the New German Cinema also aimed to offer an alternative to other popular cinematic genres, from the nostalgic war film to the costume epic (e.g. the Sissi series) because these did not offer a critical view of the past or dare to confront the Nazi past (see Kaes, 1989). However, in the early 1960s, American majors were already in control of the domestic German market and were not interested in distributing German films since these would not show a profit or reach a mass audience. The prospect of success for the New German Cinema was then meagre in the domestic market (see Elsaesser, 1989: 37-39), and the reputation of the New German Cinema was mostly achieved internationally in the Film Festival circuits.

9.2 Film Analysis

Identity, Memory and Place in *Kings of the Road*

Kings of the Road deals with the interplay of Bruno and Robert's personal trajectories and the reality of a 'divided Germany' after two decades of U.S. occupation. The film embraces two kinds of journey: a personal journey to the past as both Bruno and Robert revisit their childhood homes; and a spatial journey through a contemporary depressed and divided Germany. At another level, the story of Bruno's and Robert's ongoing journey is entangled with the story of the decay of small town cinemas under the domination of the American majors and against the backdrop of a deserted borderland area by the West/East German border. The film's bleak black-and-white visual imagery, typically of a desolate and flat landscape, depicts a 'no-man's land' that intensifies the overall sense of individual and collective identity 'loss' experienced by both Bruno and Robert (cf. appendix B, B2).

Kings of the Road addresses issues of individual and collective repressed memory. Both Bruno and Robert appear to suffer from an existential angst that is intrinsically linked to traumatic childhood memories. In reflecting upon the more or less overt 'identity crisis' both men undergo, the narrative is thematically concerned with the inner dramas of a generation that, two decades after the end of World War, is still trying to come to terms with a past difficult to remember. The film in its self-reflective mood deals directly with the climate of political and historical amnesia in 1970s Germany (cf. appendix B, B8). The absence of conventional plotting and the aimless nature of both Robert's and Bruno's trajectories helps to emphasise the characters' sense of existential loss. The two men, lonely and aimless, journey across a deserted and flat landscape that contributes to a sense that nothing matters in their roaming trajectory (cf. appendix B, B1). In addition, the obvious problems of communication that both men experience, especially in their relation with women (see Gemunden, 1997), could well be seen as the expression of an angst-driven generation. Despite the enforced closeness of the journey, Bruno and Robert very rarely express their inner thoughts and feelings, and while it is clear that they share some affinities

(e.g. the joy of listening to rock music), it is also true that they often appear remote and uneasy in each other's presence (cf. appendix B, B3). This is apparent, for example, in the scene in which Bruno confesses to Robert that he is angry because he felt compelled to imitate his journey companion's comical pantomime at a film theatre for a children's audience. He tells Robert of how he felt helpless on that occasion. Their relationship emerges as limited, therefore without commitment, and likely to be easily broken without drama (Goldmann, 1985). Bruno's apparently nonchalant attitude towards the surrounding world suggests that he has no desire to question himself or the world around him. However, as the story progresses, both Bruno's and Robert's inner and repressed feelings start to emerge, especially from the moments in which each of them decides to revisit their childhood homes. This is a process that appears to involve both anger and despair whilst finally enabling reconciliation with their personal past. It is noteworthy that in *Kings of the Road* familiar settings, usually associated with the warmth of close kinship and affective ties, turn into sites of overt conflict and angst. While Bruno weeps helplessly by his ruined childhood home on a small Rhine island and in sight of a box whose contents precipitate important childhood memories, Robert has a tense and long conversation with his elderly father over his deceased mother's mistreatment.

Generally, *Kings of the Road* in deploying the visit of both Bruno and Robert to their childhood homes unveils the complexities of the German notion of *Heimat*. On the whole, *Heimat* suggests a notion of place that is intrinsically associated with a sense of warmth, security and roots of a closely bonded community (see Birgel, 1986; see also Geisler, 1985). In a different way, however, the romantic idea and feeling of *Heimat* is also linked to an idea of home that encompasses a longing for something lost or very far away, something that cannot be easily found again (see Birgel, 1986: 5). Home in this sense is therefore conceived as a far away place (possibly imaginary) that is hard to reach.

In the scenes set at both Bruno's and Robert's childhood homes it is very difficult to get a sense that the characters 'feel at home'; on the contrary, the two men feel rather estranged whilst trying to come to terms with unhappy childhood memories. Thus, it could be argued that Robert's and Bruno's respective visits to their childhood homes also configure the impossibility of a return back to *Heimat*. Their drive to reach *Heimat* whilst being continuously displaced expresses the

inner complexity of an ambivalent search for roots and identity that we can find in most of Wenders' films (see Kolker and Beicken, 1993; Elsaesser 1989, 1997). It can thus be argued that his male characters, such as Bruno and Robert, are seekers hoping to root themselves and to be free of roots at the same time (Kolker and Beicken, 1993: 35).

I have argued in considering questions of personal identity that the question of where one belongs becomes entangled with the question of where one began. In *Kings of the Road* the concern with personal identity (i.e. the characters' personal crises) comes close to issues of collective memory (i.e. the repressed memory of the collective past). The underlying sensibility at work in the film suggests that Bruno's and Robert's ability to confront their past in going back to their childhood homes becomes a crucial element in the constitution of their personal and collective identity. Thus, thematically, what is at stake in *Kings of the Road* is an almost desperate questioning of 'what does it mean to be German' in the context of 1970s post-war Germany. The film asks how can a sense of being German be perceived in continuity with Germany's Nazi past?

Individual and collective memory are brought together, then, in a film that addresses one of the privileged themes of the so-called New German Cinema within which Wenders was a leading figure: the obsession with the legacies of the past in Germany's collective memory. Visibly sensitive and fragile male characters such as Bruno and Robert clearly embody the condition of Germany's 'lost souls' against the contemporary settings of a post-war divided Germany. However, *Kings of the Road* never addresses issues directly related to the specific historical context of Nazism. Instead, it draws attention to the legacies of Fascism at the level of human subjectivity, i.e. at the level of the personal stories of its main characters. By making use of a distinctive visual style that links characters to landscape, and through an almost complete absence of plot, the narrative centres on Bruno's and Robert's subjective experiences in the course of their journey. Moreover, *Kings of the Road* is imbued with a romantic sensibility that is very close to the spirit of the *Bildungsroman* tradition (Gemunden, 1991). However, in offering a less optimistic view of Germany and in deploying its 'heroes' as detached and hopeless observers of the surrounding world, *Kings of the Road* questions the foundations of the ideal of *Bildung* as a quest for wholeness (see Frisch, 1979; see also Harcourt, 1981). There is also in the film a romantic pursuit

of inner change and an attempt to resolve internal conflicts that suggests the importance of the nexus of personal identity. Clearly, Bruno's and Robert's journey is not configuring a specific internalised goal or a destination to reach. However, the act of being aimlessly on the move is clearly bonding the two men such that, despite initial uneasiness, they end up revealing their inner selves to each other. The journey is then opening up the prospect for a personal change that evolves through 'loss' and despair, but also through reconciliation with both their past and present circumstances. In revisiting the familiar places of their pasts both Bruno and Robert get the chance to come to terms with their personal memories. At the same time, the possibility of a change in their inner self and life trajectories becomes more of a reality. This is particularly apparent in the scene set at the abandoned U.S. Army station by the West/East Germany border. Here, against the backdrop of desolate buildings, they get involved in a row and end up being impelled to reveal their inner fears and fragilities. Whilst Bruno confronts Robert with his inability to reconcile with his wife whom he misses so much, Robert tries to expose the contradictions of Bruno's lonely lifestyle. The journey has thus offered them the opportunity for increasing self-awareness. When the film ends, there is a hint that in the future there may be change as Robert departs leaving behind the enigmatic note: "everything must change. So long. R."

Identity, Memory and Place in *Alice in the Cities*

Alice in the Cities is particularly concerned with the interplay of the personal and spatial trajectory of its main characters, Alice and Philip, and a search for 'home' across a Germany at odds with American cultural domination. The journey of Alice and Philip from New York to Germany emerges as an opportunity for reflecting upon Germany's cultural and social conditions in a period of rapid economic and social change.

As with many of his New German Cinema counterparts, Wenders' films show a concern with the nuclear family in relation to questions of both individual and collective identity (see Elsaesser, 1989: 239-242). The family as the ambivalent locus of conflict, security and identity is at the centre of the story of *Alice in the Cities*. Philip finds himself in charge of a child he barely knows because her

mother had vanished, presumably to resolve a marital crisis. He then ends up travelling across Germany with nine-year old Alice in search of her grandmother's house having as his only reliable clue a picture of an anonymous house.

The film encompasses two different journeys: the roving journey of Philip across a U.S. landscape of motels, billboards and skyscrapers, and then Philip's journey back with Alice to Germany in search of the girl's grandmother (cf. appendix A, A1). By then their hopeless journey together has turned into a metaphorical quest for home as the locus of the family. While for Alice the journey is a literal quest for home, since her grandmother is the closest relative she has in Germany and her mother has disappeared, for Philip the search for home is of a more existential nature. It assumes the shape of the recovery of the ability to feel again at home in a space that, though familiar (i.e. Germany), had become alien. Like the main characters of *Kings of the Road*, Philip is undergoing some sort of 'identity crisis'. While still in the U.S., he is driven continuously to take Polaroid pictures of the surrounding landscape so as to get some grasp on reality. The increasingly hopeless search for Alice's grandmother offers Philip a chance of coming to terms with both his identity and origins in his native Germany. By the end of the film, when Philip runs out of money he suggests going to his parents' house. He is thus already on his way back 'home' when the police by chance locate them and Alice is reunited with both the mother and the grandmother. As argued by Elsaesser (1997: 246), "in *Alice* the ambivalence of the journey that is both a search and a return is supplied with its implicit and often hidden term, namely, that it is a quest for the many faces and figures of the Mother". And yet in Wenders' films the nuclear family, while always present, is rarely the centre for dramatic action. Indeed, the main characters on the move, usually males, invariably silent and undergoing some sort of identity 'loss', are either in a situation of latent conflict or rupture with the family unit. At a metaphorical level, however, *Alice in the Cities* is arguably suggesting that both Alice and Philip are embarking on a quest for home conceived as a 'safe place' and the locus of the family. This is why it can be argued that exile and displacement represent in the very act of revolt against the family, a return to nurturing functions (Elsaesser, 1989: 232).

More generally, the search for Alice's grandmother mirrors a search for a Germany that is disappearing under the effects of rapid industrialization and

America's cultural domination (cf. appendix A, A8). Alice's and Philip's journey across Germany is mostly set in the highly industrialised and notoriously polluted Ruhr region (cf. appendix A, A2). Not surprisingly, the landscape unveiled as they travel from city to city is one marked by sharp contrasts; a landscape pervaded by flocks of sheep amidst images of gas-releasing factories. Run-down council estate housing and streets of undifferentiated blocks of flats in the cities alternate with old picturesque cottages in the countryside. What Philip and Alice find when looking for her grandmother's house is a vanishing countryside at odds with rapid industrialisation. The desertification of the German countryside is also apparent: the long travelling shots unveil deserted villages and flat landscapes. Curiously, Philip and Alice learn from some locals that old low rent houses are being demolished. Alice regrets the destruction of such old and beautiful houses by enigmatically commenting that "empty places look like graves ... as graves for houses". What is implicit here is a subtle critique of the idealisation of the countryside as celebrated by the nostalgic *Heimat* film. The interplay of two hopeless characters travelling across a fading countryside in the Germany of the 'economic miracle' draws attention to the ambiguous meaning of *Heimat*. A particular concept of the German countryside has been closely associated with the notion of *Heimat*, and both have been at the heart of the idea of a German nation (i.e. German 'imagined community'). Against this background, *Alice in the Cities* is associated with the repoliticization of the notion of *Heimat* during the 1970s. In this period, Germany witnessed the rise of the 'New Regionalism' movement concerned with the threat posed by nuclear power, pollution and a rapid urban development that was destroying the environment. Within the leftist German intelligentsia of the 1970s there emerged a new discourse of *Heimat* in association with this new regionalist resistance against the exploitation of environment (Geisler, 1985). This involved both a critique of the unintended consequences of the 'economic miracle', a rejection of 'Deutschland' and of the political reality of the German state, and also a new meaning for *Heimat* which became linked to the search for one's roots and identity.

Furthermore, and as in *Kings of the Road*, we are here in the presence of a story that is strongly influenced by the *Bildungsroman* tradition in its mingling of issues of personal and collective identity. Once again, we are faced with two unlikely journey companions, Alice and Philip, who, despite hardly knowing each other,

find themselves travelling together from New York to Germany. The unfortunate circumstances that bring Philip and Alice together mark the beginning of a difficult relationship. The differences between the two are sharp: while he emerges as detached and gloomy, Alice is talkative and candid (cf. appendix A, A3). She tells jokes, makes comments about what surrounds her and even tells Philip of her nightmares. She also puzzles Philip with her constant demands for food, ice cream and drinks. However, their relationship appears to grow stronger as they get to know each other. It becomes clear that it is not 'what' Philip sees but 'how' he sees the surrounding world that is at the centre of his identity crisis. Interestingly, despite initial uneasiness and obvious personality and age differences, there is a clear indication that it is through Alice's peculiar remarks that Philip starts being able to see the space travelled from a different perspective; and with their search left behind, they even end up having fun together by swimming and sunbathing in a park. There is a notable sequence, shortly after their arrival in Holland, in which Alice takes a Polaroid picture of Philip and hands it to him so that he can see 'what he looks like'. There is here a hint that only then, with the vision of a Polaroid showing a close-up of his face, could he find his 'lost' self. When their journey together comes to a stop purely by chance, Philip appears reconciled both with his inner self and with a space that though familiar had turned alien. The story turns, ultimately, into a story of personal growth in a *Bildungsroman* fashion as Philip learns to see himself and the world from a different perspective.

As in *Kings of the Road*, we are dealing with a story that revolves around both the subjective dilemmas and anxieties of the voyagers and the social and cultural backdrop against which the story is framed. As Philip and Alice are forced to set forth across Germany it soon becomes clear that their subjective experience of the journey is deeply connected to their experience of the settings and landscape they are forced to observe. Philip and Alice are emblematic of Germany's 'lost' souls at a time when the repressed memory of the Nazi past still disoriented many people. Of course, the historical traumas of a past difficult to remember are never directly addressed in a narrative primarily concerned with its characters' personal circumstances and inner troubles. However, aspects of the social and cultural world that the characters confront along the way are powerfully articulated through distinctive camera work and a visual style that continuously and

persistently links character and landscape (cf. appendix A, A4 and A5). For example, the camera frequently cuts from a close-up of either Alice or Philip framed inside the car, to a travelling shot of the landscape, and vice-versa. This particular stylistic device draws attention to specific visual details of the space travelled as apprehended by Alice and Philip. At the same time, the consistent use of the close-up helps us to come closer to the characters' inner state of mind and feelings whilst alternating with shots of the passing landscape. The recurrent use of the close-up of Alice's or Philip's face occupying almost the entire screen and gazing, sometimes anxiously, sometimes impassively, at their surroundings, powerfully conveys a sense of their inner hopelessness. Such stylistic devices also play an important part in exploring Philip's sense of disdain and apathy towards his surroundings during his lonely wanderings in the U.S.

The bleak black-and-white visual style, minimal dialogue and scarce plotting help to convey a sense of an alienating environment that disturbs the main protagonists' relation to a seemingly familiar space; Alice, despite travelling across familiar surroundings, is unable to give Philip a clear indication of where she lived in Germany. This mutual sense of disconnection from an apparent familiar environment in the context of a search for family mirrors the sense of estrangement felt by many Germans of the period who were unable to come to terms with the memory of their recent collective past in their own familiar environment.

Boundaries and Cultural Diversity in *Kings of the Road*

Kings of the Road reflects upon the symbolic boundaries demarcating German cultural identity after two decades of occupation by the Allied Powers. The film is concerned, on the one hand, with the cultural specificity of the 'we' (i.e. German cultural identity) as being constructed *against* the American 'other' and, on the other hand, with the questioning of the limits of the 'we' (i.e. what does it mean to be German?) in a historical context in which repressed memory prevented people from confronting their own involvement with the Third Reich.

The East-west German border works, both literally and metaphorically, as a reminder of a 'divided nation'. Moreover, the direct narrative reference to the

precise geographical coordinates of the space where the journey is taking place helps to build a sense of a route for Bruno's and Robert's aimless journey. Indeed, immediately after the opening credits we can read in the titles that the film was shot in eleven weeks between Lunenburg and Passau along the East German border.

Up to the early 1950s the West/East German border was relatively easy to cross until the East German government decided to progressively impose more restrictions on the movement of people. By 1961 "the border was strengthened and guarded more than any other political frontier in the democratic world" (Lenz 1983: 250). However, the presence of the border is never visually signalled until very close to the end of the film in the scene in which Bruno and Robert are forced to spend the night at an abandoned U.S. Army border station because they cannot proceed further. Moreover, there is no indication that either of the two travelling companions attempts to defy the impermeability of the border by means, for instance, of an illegal crossing. In effect, the boundary turns into a path along which both Bruno and Robert comprehend their individual and collective selves vis-à-vis the sense of a 'divided nation'. As the journey takes place along the West/East German border, the question of what does it mean to be German cannot be dissociated from a sense of the West/East German division under the intervention of the Allied powers. We are dealing with a notion of a 'split nation' that is both geo-political and cultural: at the geo-political level, it is the literal lack of 'porosity' of the political border that legitimates and enforces the sense of a divided nation; at a cultural level, the sense of a 'divided Germany' in the critical post-war years is measured through the impact of specifically American mass culture on West Germany's society³. This is of particular importance in a time when many people were not prepared to face the legacies of their Nazi past whilst increasingly adopting Western values and civic virtues.

Kings of the Road in reflecting upon the ambivalences of German cultural identity at the historic conjuncture of the 1970s is also bringing up the question of German collective identity as being constituted *against* its 'Other'. We are looking, of course, at two distinct 'others', i.e. East Germany and American culture. There is here a suggestion that in the context of a rising Cold War climate, American culture also functioned as an 'other' for an endangered German nation. Particularly in the discourse of the cultural elites, the 'American other' was seen

less as an 'external' threat than as a growing 'internal' danger. In *Kings of the Road*, this sensibility is strikingly enhanced in the only scene in which the political border is visually depicted: the scene at the abandoned U.S. Army station. The visual presence of the border station and the barbed wire provides a strong sense of the imposed separateness between West and East Germany. Notably, only in this scene do we get a sense of the physical presence of the border, although the opening credits state that the journey takes place along the West/East German border. The shabby and desolate settings of the scarcely illuminated derelict hut play an important role in expressing first the latent tension and then the explosion of violence between Bruno and Robert. The image of the walls covered with English graffiti referring to American culture and locations (e.g. Detroit, Florida, rock-n'-roll) precipitates Robert's famous line "the Americans have colonized our subconscious". Meanwhile, Bruno also takes the opportunity to tell Robert of how he cannot rid his mind of a tune with English lyrics. Of course, these are explicit references to aspects of American cultural domination. But they also suggest how, at the level of individual self-consciousness, Bruno and Robert find it difficult to make sense of their distinctive 'Germanness' in these particular historic conditions.

Kings of the Road also conveys a more direct critique of the 'American other' overtly expressed in fears of cultural domination. Because of Allied policy, the West German government was not able to restrict the 'free market' by limiting the import of foreign films, as was the case in France (see McCormick, 2001: 283-284). The market was therefore 'flooded' with American films for mass audiences. It is against this social and political background that *Kings of the Road* is thematically concerned with the state of decay of the German film industry in the critical post-war years. The film's opening immediately raises the issue. It shows Bruno repairing a film projector whilst listening to an elderly cinema owner complaining about the crisis small cinema-owners face in virtue of unfair competition from the American majors. The old man goes on to tell of the declining numbers of cinema spectators along the years and how many cinemas in villages nearby were forced to close down. In a similar vein, in the final scene, we are once again faced with the same sort of complaints while Bruno proceeds with his repair work. Here, a former cinema owner tells Bruno of her hope of reopening the cinema she was forced to close down. She speaks of her dislike of

films that use sex and violence to exploit people's minds whilst accusing the American majors of unfairly dominating the German distribution sector. In between these two scenes, as Bruno and Robert visit a succession of decaying cinemas, we are given a visual expression of the crumbling state of a declining film industry. Furthermore, in the scene in which Bruno goes to meet Pauline at the cinema where she is working we are given a deeper insight into how the rampant success of commercial television is also linked to the crisis of such small cinemas. After Pauline declines Bruno's invitation to go and see the pornographic film that is being shown, Bruno takes the opportunity to use some bits of an old film-reel to edit a clip with constant repetition of the line "Brutality, Action, Sex - A film TV won't show". The images accompanying this dictum deploy the repeated images of sex, fire and destruction, an allusion to the desperate measures into which the cinema has been forced by competition from American culture and television.

Kings of the Road is, then, reflecting upon fears of 'cultural dependency' that are being channelled against the 'American other'. However, this has also to be understood in the context of the opposition between Hollywood cinema and European 'art cinema'. The question of 'what is specifically German in German cinema' cannot be answered without considering the defensive position of the German film industry vis-à-vis Hollywood (Silberman, 1996: 299). The terms of this dichotomy permeate arguments in defence of the cultural and aesthetic distinctiveness of the 'New German Cinema'. More generally, during the so-called 'miracle years' both the political and cultural elites were forced to accept mass culture and American cultural influence as an important aspect of West Germany's progression toward democracy. This also meant that the tension between an expanding popular culture (highly shaped by American mass culture) and a traditionally protected 'high culture' was never absent in debates about the uniqueness and historical continuity of German national identity. *Kings of the Road*, as with Wenders' other films, reflects the ambivalences of this tension.

Whilst clearly defending a specifically German film language and industry, Wenders' films are also strongly influenced by American popular genres such as the melodrama, the western, and the road-movie (Kolker and Beicken, 1993; see also Davidson, 1999).

Kings of the Road draws on the iconography of the road-movie in deploying a high-speed motorcycle trip and a landscape pervaded by petrol stations and roadside cafes. Yet, the bleak black-and-white cinematography, the desolate flat landscape and the non-linear narrative clearly offer a contrast with its action-packed American road-movie counterpart. It is difficult not to see in *Kings of the Road* a celebration of American culture in the scenes in which Bruno and Robert are enjoying themselves whilst listening to rock music and singing along inside the van. The same sensibility is found in the scene of the motorcycle trip to Bruno's childhood home, which evokes Hopper's *Easy Rider* and the associated ideals of freedom and rebellion that characterized late 1960s American culture. As argued by Kolker and Beicken (1993: 64), Bruno and Robert "are very much like the travellers of the ultimate late-sixties American male-bonding road-movie, *Easy Rider*, a major influence in *Kings of the Road*, and one that helps Wenders link the myths of the American West, the politics of the sixties, and the personal quest for identity and place". But while Wenders' films are deeply influenced by American classical cinema (in particular, by filmmakers such Ford and Ray) and also reflect a fascination with American popular culture, they are also marked by refusal of many of the visual and narrative clichés of classic Hollywood narrative. Ultimately, Wenders' constant and continuing recourse to America reflects the quest of a post-war generation for a different history and novel experiences (Rentschler, 1984: 615). On the one hand, Bruno's and Robert's existential quest can be seen as tied to a sense of a sharp cultural contrast between Germany and the U.S., on the other hand, "American pop culture functions as a surrogate home" (Elsaesser, 1989: 232) for Germany's 'lost souls'. In this way, *Kings of the Road* mirrors the contradictions and uncertainties of a young post-war generation seeking its identity in a context in which the fracture with the legacies of the past also meant a shift toward American values and culture.

Moreover, the choice of a setting in this neglected borderland area, pervaded by deserted small towns and ruined cinemas, is not indifferent to the purpose of questioning the limits of an idealised image of *Heimat*. In portraying the aimless journey of two men living 'on the road' and continuously displaced across a desolate borderland a long way from the main north/south routes⁴, the idea of the nation as a culturally or politically homogenous locus is rendered simplistic. This is far from the conventions of the *Heimat* film with its idyllic images of a 'pure'

German countryside (see Kolken and Beicken, 1993: 64). These settings clearly do not function as a mere background for character interaction or action. Camera work and mise-en-scène play a crucial role in unfolding a visual imagery permeated by a flat and undistinguished landscape that we are forced to contemplate, especially so given the lack of narrative action (cf. appendix B2 and B6). But more importantly, what becomes apparent is that the main protagonists are travelling a neglected borderland area that appears to have remained at the margins of the ‘economic miracle’ (Gemunden, 1991: 17). This space emerges as a typical ‘no man’s land’ and as such it undermines the idealised image of *Heimat*. The film’s black-and-white cinematography conveys a powerful sense of bleakness and decay; flat and unvarying countryside landscapes are depicted in a sharp, almost sterile manner so as to emphasise the sense of desolation of the space travelled. The settings are remarkably deprived of the presence of people, which increases the overall sense of estrangement of both Bruno and Robert. Interiors are not traditional ‘homely’ environments but run-down cinemas faced with declining audiences. Moreover, it is difficult to distinguish between different locations in the succession of ordinary small towns (with strange names such as ‘Powerless’ and ‘Peaceless’) that punctuate Bruno’s and Robert’s itinerary.

In ‘deconstructing’ the picture of a bucolic and ‘unique’ German landscape, *Kings of the Road* is also questioning the legitimacy of the idea of the homogenous nation after two decades of U.S. occupation. In dealing with the domain of individual subjectivity, the film shows how each individual, from Bruno to Robert, from Pauline to the ruined cinema-owners, is personally affected by the major social and cultural transformations Germany is undergoing. Thus it comes as little surprise that this ‘other Germany’ being unfolded in *Kings of the Road* emerges as a space where everyone appears to feel estranged and displaced. We are dealing with a social and cultural terrain that offers little basis for collective affiliation in a context of cultural uncertainty and the eruption of ‘materialistic’ values.

In short, although *Kings of the Road* appears to express a Romantic spirit in reflecting upon the existential traumas of sensitive individuals, its sense of fragmentation undercuts any idea of a culturally homogeneous nation grounded on the criteria of ‘blood’ or ‘soil’. So, while avoiding direct narrative references to the legacies of Fascism, *Kings of the Road* is indeed asking ‘what does it mean to

be German' not so much as a matter of who is 'included' and 'excluded' from the national community, but on what basis can people in West Germany rebuild their sense of 'being German' in the context of a self-inflicted break-up with the past and in a present instilled with American politics and culture.

Boundaries and Cultural Diversity in *Alice in the Cities*

Alice in the Cities is not directly concerned with the impact of American mass culture on German culture and society as in *Kings of the Road*. Instead it explores the ambivalence of the opposition U.S. culture vs. German 'unique' by blurring the symbolic boundaries between 'us' and 'them' such that the 'American other' is represented as embedded in the 'we'. It offers both U.S. and German settings so as to unveil uncomfortable similarities between the two environments; Philip appears as 'lost' in the seemingly familiar surroundings of his native Germany as in a visibly alienating American landscape. Without ever engaging in direct narrative references to American cultural influence in specific German settings, *Alice in the Cities* shows how the symbolic boundary between 'us' and 'them' is dramatically blurred in a time of vast social, cultural and economic changes in Germany. The film goes on the question how, at the level of subjective experience, two unlikely travellers are personally affected by these major shifts as they travel across a visibly changing landscape. Moreover, no political boundary, like the East/West German border in *Kings of the Road*, is being used to emphasise the contrasts or similarities between American and German culture.

Following Rentschler (1984), it could be argued that in *Alice in the Cities* America functions as an imaginary playground for questioning the limits of German culture in both reflecting and intensifying the preoccupations and imported conflicts of its visitors; indeed, "the unfamiliar provides a distance enabling one to grasp the familiar so often overlooked in accustomed surroundings" (Rentschler, 1984: 618). Where the scenes set in the U.S. primarily explore an emblematic American imagery from the point-of-view of the disoriented Philip, the scenes in Germany deal more specifically with the ambivalence of the cross-cultural relations between Germany and America during the U.S. occupation years. In the German terrain, the imbricate presence of the

‘American other’ is presented as both a source of fascination and uncertainty for the post-war younger generation.

There is, however, a more direct critique of American culture that emphasises the ‘low’ and ‘ordinary’ features of American mass culture. This is especially apparent in the scenes set in the U.S. where through Philip’s subjective experience of the surrounding space, we become aware of a dehumanising and estranging American landscape saturated with icons of mass culture. Through high contrast black-and-white cinematography settings are carefully depicted as strange and alienating environments. Philip’s ‘identity crisis’ is closely related to his inability to feel at ease in an undifferentiated landscape pervaded by billboards, neon lights, motorways, claustrophobic motel rooms, petrol stations, colonial style houses, jukeboxes, and soda and coca-cola adverts. Whilst wandering across a windy, deserted and vaguely exotic U.S. East Coast, he outspokenly expresses his dislike of American television and insistent radio advertising. In an act of despair he ends up smashing a TV in a motel room. Later on, in one of his presumably many sleepless nights, Philip writes in his notebook about what he considers the ‘inhumanity’ of television. Commercial TV programmes and advertising more than mirroring Philip’s disdain for American mass culture are, in fact, confronting him with his incapacity to comprehend himself and the world in this apparent foreign terrain. Of course, Philip is a foreigner being literally confronted with an alien space. However, it is less his ‘foreignness’ that is being articulated here than his profound aversion to aspects of mass culture that commercial television embodies. This has to be seen in the context of the threat posed to the long-cherished German dream of cultural superiority by the commercial success of American television series in the 1970s (Kaes, 1989: 31). A sense of ‘unique’ German culture (*Kultur*) had for long served both German nationalists and the cultural elites in justifying the timeless superiority of the nation over others and in providing a sense of community in times of political division (see Berger, 1997: 22). Koepnick (1999) is surely right in suggesting that Wenders’ earlier films (which include *Alice in the Cities*) tended to present Hollywood as responsible for the exhaustion of a specifically German film language and for the decline of visual culture into commodification. However, he misses a more subtle celebration of typically American imagery that is also conveyed in *Alice in the Cities*. This is apparent, for example, in the emblematic icons of a carefully

stylised American scenery that embraces celebrated vistas of the Empire State Building and of Manhattan, or the vision of a petrol station filled with coca-cola adverts evoked in typical road-movie fashion.

However, when Philip and Alice cross the Atlantic and reach Amsterdam a more ambivalent stance towards American culture starts to unfold. We soon get a sense that Philip is unable to 'feel at home' whether in America or Europe; in fact, both Dutch and German landscapes appear as undifferentiated and monotonous as did the U.S. In their brief passage through Holland, although traditional Dutch imagery is prominent (e.g. Philip and Alice take a touristy canal trip in Amsterdam), Philip remains indifferent and detached. Moreover, as they progress through Germany he is forced, as in the U.S., to wander from city to city, from hotel to hotel, and from café to café, each one indistinguishable from the next. The black-and-white cinematography once again plays a crucial part in depicting space and locations; Amsterdam or German settings are indistinguishable from the U.S. But more importantly, Germany itself appears pervaded by icons of American culture. This is strikingly expressed in a scene set in a café in Wuppertal, where we are offered the emblematic vision of a child drinking coke whilst leaning on a jukebox which is playing American rock music. Indeed, American rock music clearly binds Alice and Philip together. He, although rarely posing personal questions asks Alice if she likes music, while Alice is frequently seen listening to her walkman. Despite their initial uneasiness and sharp personality differences, Philip and Alice develop affinities based on their love for coca-cola and rock-music.

It is this encounter with a Germany increasingly saturated by American symbols that offers Philip and Alice some comfort in the ugly and highly industrialised German landscape that resulted from the 'miracle years', and in this respect at least, *Alice in the Cities* deploys a more optimistic picture of 1970s West Germany. Rock-music and coke offered a sense of communion amongst the younger generation in a way that the protected status of a 'unique' German culture did not.

9.3 Conclusion

Both *Kings of the Road* and *Alice in the Cities* are concerned with a changing social, cultural and physical landscape under the impact of U.S. cultural influence on West Germany, and its relation to memory and the reconstitution of the past. Thus the longing for a collective identity is articulated in the interplay of personal stories like those of Bruno and Robert, Alice and Philip. In addition, the search for a collective memory that lies close to both the spirit and aesthetics of Wenders' films is also found in the profound ambivalence of the opposition between American mass culture and German 'high culture' as the heart of the *Kulturnation*. Finally, both *Alice in the Cities* and *Kings of the Road* in reflecting upon what 'does it mean to be German' reveal the impossibility of the notion of being 'purely German' by emphasizing the impact of U.S. foreign and media politics in West Germany (Gemunden, 1991: 24)

¹ During the nineteenth-century, the non-overlapping of territories and political interests with non-German ethnic groups in some of the German states (notably Austria and Prussia) in areas both within and outside of the Confederation became even more problematic with attempts of unification in the era of nationalism (Fulbrook, 1990: 249-252).

² The genre deploys a visual imagery rich in nostalgic and picturesque images of forests, mountains and 'uncorrupted' village communities.

³ Perhaps unsurprisingly, the struggle for the legitimacy of popular culture and for the protection of German 'high culture' acquired a new dynamics in the aftermath of World War II (see Maase, 2001; see also Prowe, 2001).

⁴ In an essay, Wenders explains his choice of locations for the shooting of *Kings of the Road*: "From the distributors I got a large well-map of Germany marking all the places with cinemas, and I drew up a route with over eighty cinemas on it, just along the border with East Germany, between Luneburg and Passau. I chose that route because it's a long way off the main north-south routes in Germany" (Wenders, 2001: 172).

CHAPTER 10 : GREECE

10.1 Historical and Cultural Context

The Rise of the Modern Nation and Ethno-cultural Diversity in the Balkans

Until the mid-nineteenth-century the current states in both central and Eastern Europe were the provinces of multinational empires such as those ruled by the Habsburgs, the Hohenzollerns, the Romanovs and the Ottomans. The emergence of the nation-state in Eastern Europe then demonstrated that we were in the presence of a multiethnic region that could not be accommodated within the frontiers of modern states (see Anderson, 1996: 56-58). According to Mazower (2000: 91), “all states could point to ‘unredeemed’ brethren or historical lands which lay outside the boundaries apportioned them by the Powers: Romanians in Hungarian Transylvania; Serbs in Habsburg Croatia and Ottoman lands; Bulgarians in the lands of the San Stefano state they had been cheated of; Greeks - in thrall to the ‘Great Idea’ of a new Byzantine Empire - redeeming Hellenism across the Ottoman Empire from Crete to the Black Sea”.

One of the immediate consequences of the politics of nation-building in the Balkans region was the redrawing of state’s borders in the area in the aftermath of both World Wars. After World War II, the Soviet Union intervened to impose new frontiers in some Balkan states but, on the whole, most countries maintained important ethnic minority populations inside their borders; this was the case in countries such as Serbia (with an Albanian majority in Kosovo), Romania (with a large Hungarian minority), Bulgaria (with a Muslim/Turkish minority and a small Hungarian minority), Albania (with a Greek minority) and Greece (with a Turkish minority). The newly formed communist regimes in the region kept their ‘minority questions’ under control through harsh repressive policies, sometimes to the extent of denying that a minority effectively existed, such as the Greeks in Albania (see Anderson, 1996: 57-58).

In addition, the works of Wolff (1994) and Todorova (1997) among others show that the Balkan region has been constructed in bloodshed and violence since Enlightenment travellers from Western Europe and intellectuals started to journey to those 'distant lands' of Europe. This view, that later gained wide support from the mass media in many Western countries, ultimately encouraged discourses defining the Balkans as 'backward' and trapped in the depths of barbarianism due to 'ancient hatreds'. Certainly the region has proved historically to be a zone of confrontation, for example, between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Turks, and between Christians and Muslim, for hundreds of years. However, it is also the case that through the writings of many intellectuals and travellers the orient was being invented as the antithesis of the West. The Turks were, for instance, represented as barbarians in contrast with the 'civilized' West (see Delanty, 1995: 86-92). More recently, however, historians such as Mazower (2000) provide a very different picture of the relations between different peoples and faiths in the region. The view of the Balkans as a territory where different ethnic groups and religious faiths have always clashed is far too simplistic. Mazower shows that Christian-Muslim relations were based on generations of interaction, conquest and collaboration that more closely resembled patterns evident in the British takeover of India than in the German invasion of Poland. He contradicts the view that the Ottoman Empire repressed Orthodox Christianity in the Balkan Peninsula. The Turks were not interested in repressing religion, or even in imposing their religious faith, but in charging higher taxes to Christian populations. Thus Ottoman conquest of the Balkans far from crushing Orthodoxy brought it many advantages and freed them largely from the threat of Catholicism (Mazower, 2000: 50-54). The Turks were, after all, more religiously tolerant than their counterparts in Christendom; in fact, as they swept across south Eastern Europe they were frequently welcomed as liberators (Coles, 1968 cited in Delanty, 1995: 87). Furthermore, in daily life clear distinctions between Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholicism were less pronounced. In the countryside, the differences between Muslim and Christians were not hidden, and the two communities lived side by side with little tension and conflict. Accordingly, Mazower's perspective also seeks to prove that Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis about the Bosnian War is not a model for the region's past (see Mazower, 2000: 64-67).

In short, nation-building in the Balkan region ensured that many ethnic minorities were left outside the political boundaries of the newly formed Balkan states. The desire for territorial expansion of the new states in laying claims of ethnicity and culture led to a mounting of ethnic conflicts during the early twentieth-century. Meanwhile, the hardening of political boundaries was clearly associated with an ethnic conception of the nation based in ancestry and a sense of a shared culture. And yet both the civilisation of Eastern Europe and the Arabo-Ottoman civilisation of Asia Minor share similar cultural traces, constituting a complex synthesis of Greek, Slavic, Turkish, Armenian and Arab cultures (see Corm, 1992: 51-52).

Nation-building, Territorial Expansion and the 'Macedonian Question' in Greece

With the establishment of a Greek state in the early 1830s the majority of the Greek population was left in Ottoman lands beyond the new state's political borders. This gave rise to an irredentist ideology known as the 'Great Idea' that encouraged the so-called 'map mania', which aimed to legitimate Greece's desire for territorial expansion. 'Map mania' reflected a wider recognition of the political role of geography in laying claim to the territories encompassing all the Eastern lands inhabited by the Greeks in a reconstituted Byzantine empire¹ (Peckham, 2000).

Greek history was being redesigned to include the ancient, the 'golden age' of the Byzantine Empire and modern Greece (see Roudometof, 2001). At the same time currents of nationalist thought were defining Greek identity primarily in ethno-religious terms. As argued by Peckham (2000), the naturalisation of political boundaries in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century was in part a consequence of increasing links being drawn between biology and territorial identity. This view meant, for instance, that in Greek school geographies Bulgaria was represented no less than Turkey as a 'barbarous nation'. Moreover, Greek Orthodoxy historically played a crucial role in the shaping of Greek identity. The historical conjunction of religious fate and nation-building has served to set apart Greece as a unique and special nation (Fokas, 1999). During the period of nation-

building two different conceptions of Greek identity coexisted (see, for instance, Smith, 1993: 16-20): one stressing continuity with a Byzantine Empire in claiming genealogical descent from Orthodox Byzantine Greeks; the other emphasising genealogical descent with classical Greece and an Athenian golden age. While in the former Greek national identity was being primarily defined in religious and ethnic terms, in the latter Greek identity was seen as deriving from the Enlightenment ideals of rationalism, freedom and democracy that the small Greek intelligentsias traced back to ancient Athens. However, such cultural constructions of the Greek nation conceal the fact that, historically, the inhabitants of the lands that became part of a Greek state have mingled reasonably peacefully for centuries regardless of ethnicity or religion. The discontinuity between classical Greece and the Byzantine Orthodox was exposed in the early nineteenth-century by Jacob Fallmeyer who offered the view that the Greeks are descendents of the Albanians and Slavs from a time in which the Slavs overrun the Balkan peninsula in the Middle Ages (see Roudometof, 2001: 101-107). This span of time that comprehended both the Christianisation of the population and a massive Albanian and Slav immigration into the Greek mainland was dismissed by both the Hellenic and Byzantine traditions of nation-building. It is against Fallmeyer's 'Slavic thesis' that Greek scholarship recognized the need to rewrite Greek history through the idea of unbroken historical continuity between the ancient and the modern Greeks. During the second half of the nineteenth-century, Greek romantic historiography and folklore research played a crucial role in trying to resolve the inconsistencies between the classical and Byzantine origins of the Greek nation. In short, the Byzantine Empire was conceived as the product of the combination of Hellenic culture with the ideas of Eastern Orthodoxy (see Roudometof, 2001: 108-113).

In addition, the imperial ambitions of the Greek state aiming at enlarging its territory so as to recover the 'lost' lands of the Byzantine Empire led, unsurprisingly, to a mounting of ethnic conflicts in the Balkan region. At the core of the social and political stirrings was the so-called 'Macedonian question'. By the beginning of the twentieth-century, Macedonia was at the centre of claims for territorial expansion of the new Balkan states (see Jelavich, 1983; see also Mazower, 2000). Macedonia was an area, originally a kingdom, that had no definite political boundaries and not even a formal existence as an administrative

Ottoman entity. For historical reasons, Greece had strong claims in the disputed lands of Macedonia². These were mostly supported by a belief in a common past that stretched from ancient times to the time of the Byzantine Empire and by the presence of a considerable Greek minority in Macedonia. But Bulgaria and Serbia made similar claims by referring to a pre-Ottoman common past. Regardless of the feelings and wishes of its inter-mixed population³ (which included Greeks, Turks, Albanians and Slavs), the main problem was thus how to divide Macedonia across national lines since the different nationalities did not live in compact districts (see Jelavich, 1983: 90-91).

10.2 Film Analysis

Identity, Memory and Place in *The Suspended Step of the Stork*

In *The Suspended Step of the Stork* we follow the spatial trajectory of a young TV journalist from Athens to a border-town crammed with refugees. He is working on a story about refugees in Greece when he comes across a man that he believes to be a famous missing politician. When the film starts we almost immediately get a hint of the quest that is about to unfold. Whilst the camera zooms in on a refugee's dead body floating in the sea, the journalist recalls in voice-over the 'episode of Piraeus' in which a group of refugees died in the sea after being refused asylum by the Greek government. What is at issue in the film is, then, the interplay of an individual destiny (i.e. the journalist) and a collective destiny (i.e. the plight of the refugees).

There is also in *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (and again in *Ulysses's Gaze*) a concern with individual subjectivity that we cannot find in Angelopoulos earlier films (Jameson 1997); the focus is placed on a single character, in this case, Alexandre who embarks on a quest. Even so the story line is not as much concerned with the particularities of Alexandre's personal trajectory as it is with the dramatic condition of the exiles in Greece (cf. appendix C, C1). We 'discover' aspects of the plight of the refugees in the border-town 'through the eyes' and unspoken subjectivities of Alexandre. He turns into a silent and attentive observer of the space he travels and the people he encounters, especially after he embarks

on his second journey to the border-town. Thus Alexandre's personal and spatial trajectory has always to be seen in the interplay with the space travelled. Such an unorthodox approach to character (see Bordwell, 1997b: 264-265), in pushing the main character to a distant background (i.e. Alexandre is mostly framed in FS or LS in a deep focus), not only minimises dramatic tension by disturbing our understanding of the character, but it also subordinates the actor to landscape or décor (cf. appendix C, C3 and C5). In addition, we should also be aware that the film is deploying two distinct personal journeys: on the one hand, there is the journey of the missing politician to the border-town where he is assumed to be living under the identity of an Albanian refugee; on the other hand, there is Alexander's ongoing journey in the footsteps of the missing man. Thus trying to resolve a man's identity becomes a way of getting a deeper insight into the critical situation of the refugees in the border-town.

Ultimately, the journey turns into a quest into the political and existential overtones of the condition of the refugees. Moreover, Alexandre's journey back to the border-town also marks a decisive change in his personal involvement with the plight of the exiles in Greece. As I sought to demonstrate in chapter 7, Alexandre who begins as a journalist guided by journalistic objectivity is then being emotionally drawn into the dramas of the illegal immigrants⁴ (see also Horton, 1997a: 172).

However, it is not through Alexandre's voice or dialogue that we learn about the details of life in the town. As I have shown earlier, this role is mostly ascribed to a typical choric figure, the colonel who patrols the political border. As a privileged observer of events he explains to Alexandre how so many illegal immigrants and asylum seekers ended up crammed in this northern town on the border with Albania. From the top of a watchtower, the colonel explains that on the other side of the river that bisects the town there is a village people call the 'Waiting Room'. Through his voice-over we then learn about the growing numbers of refugees from several countries who have crossed the border illegally and are confined to the town whilst waiting for a legal solution to be able to go elsewhere. He adds that this 'elsewhere' acquires for them a mythical meaning. Later on, the colonel attempts to elucidate for Alexandre how the experience of life in the border-town is dramatically different from life elsewhere in Greece: "Here, in the end of the country everything gains another dimension. Solitude. Uncertainty ... a feeling of

continuous threat that drives men to madness”. This sensibility is, for instance, powerfully emphasised in the scene where a refugee is found hanged by the neck from a huge metallic loading crane. Whilst the TV crew shoots the scene, the colonel, visibly irritated, tells Alexander that conflicts amongst refugees erupt everywhere. He confesses hopelessly that he cannot understand what is going on since no one says a word: “They crossed the border to find freedom and now they create new borders here! They split this slum making the world even smaller! To make things worst not even a word! It’s the law of silence!”.

If we accept that the narrative is particularly concerned with the existential dimension intrinsic to the condition of the refugees, the underlying question here is what does it mean to be a refugee. What does it mean to be forced to flee a homeland for political or economic reasons and to be refused asylum? What does it mean to live in confinement and having nowhere to go? And what does it mean to live under a fake identity? As the colonel in his chorus role tells us the refugees can declare on their arrival in the border-town a name of their choice. Thus it proves difficult to know who is who. What emerges as particularly striking is how characters embodying refugee figures (e.g. the bride, the alleged missing politician) rarely express in an outspoken manner their own feelings or tell of their painful experiences. There is, however, a scene where these are strikingly conveyed in voice-over by faceless and anonymous refugees, speaking in their own native languages as the camera travels slowly along a train halted at the station. Through the wide open doors we can see groups of refugees in their traditional costumes crammed inside the carriages and standing, motionless and expectant. And the voice-overs go on to say (cf. appendix C, C7); “a Kurd says: because of the threat of chemical weapons we had to abandon our country”; “an Albanian says: my suffering started when I crossed the border. As I knew I left death behind me and that freedom was ahead I run, as I never did before. I didn’t know I could reach that speed”; “An Iranian said: I never dreamt I could wish the death of the moon. However, I remember very well the day I wished the moon not to show itself since the moonlight could betray me and I would be caught up ... it was no doubt the fear of death. Surely the road behind me was synonym of death; the death expecting me if I didn’t manage to cross”. It is suggested here a very important dimension of forced migration. The fact that the condition of exile encompasses an everlasting longing for home (*nostos*), i.e. a nostalgia for an

‘original’ homeland, which is an issue that goes beyond the matter of a suitable integration into a host society⁵. This view implies an oscillation between two contradictory poles; on the one hand, the refugees who were forced to abandon their homes are drawn to maintain an emotional attachment to a homeland, which could be their ‘community of birth’ or the places where they happened to grow up; on the other hand, the exiles in being displaced are also impelled to look for a new home ‘elsewhere’⁶. In this context, *The Suspended Step of the Stork* succeeds in suggesting that in an alienating and ‘in-between’ place such as the border-town no one can, in fact, feel at home. And such a sense of displacement finds expression in an all-encompassing nostalgia⁷ for a ‘place where one can feel again at home’. “How many borders do we need to cross to get home?”, says the alleged missing politician in his ‘new’ identity.

There is also in *The Suspended Step of the Stork* an underlying critique of Greek immigration policy especially with regards to the issue of illegal immigration that was particularly fiercely debated at the time the film was released in 1991⁸. Both narratively and visually, the plight of the refugees is being related to the Greek state’s incapacity to deal with issues of illegal emigration. We are confronted with the inhumane fate of the refugees who are refused legal papers to start a new life. Furthermore, the fact that the missing politician is allegedly assuming the identity of an Albanian immigrant is not indifferent to the purpose of drawing attention to issues of discrimination affecting Albanian immigrants in Greece. As suggested by Lazaridis and Wickens (1995 cited in Lazaridis, 1996: 345), the prejudice and xenophobic treatment that is applied to many illegal Albanian refugees (they are negatively cast as primitive and untrustworthy) is in part related to the fact that the Greek government wants to use the issues of illegal Albanian immigrants in negotiations with Albania about the human rights of ethnic Greeks in Albania. Subsequently, xenophobia towards Albanian immigrants becomes an even more complex issue when we consider that discrimination can hardly be made on grounds of ethnicity or religion. Albanians have, in fact, a genuine claim of Greek ethnicity (Lazaridis, 1996: 345).

The absurdity of this highly impermeable political border between Albania and Greece becomes an even more vivid reality as throughout the film we are made aware that one single step over the border means death. This is forcefully elucidated in the scene in which the colonel lifts his leg like a stork by the blue

line that marks the political border with Albania (a gesture Alexandre repeats in the closing scene) whilst saying to Alexandre: “If I give one more step I’m in the other side and I’ll die”.

Arguably, then, the Greek TV reporter’s quest for the missing politician, allegedly living under the identity of an Albanian asylum seeker, ultimately encompasses a search for what it means ‘to be Greek’ in view of current social and political changes. This is particularly hinted when, shortly before embarking on his journey-quest Alexandre quotes to his girlfriend the concluding lines of the missing politician’s influential book: “And what are the key words we could use in order to make a new collective dream come true?” (as quoted in Horton, 1997a: 166). *The Suspended Step of the Stork* is thus imbued with a sensibility suggesting that we cannot trivialize the vivid dramas of those who, in being forced to flee their homes are bound to live in a ‘no-man’s land’ or, to use Augé’s terminology, in a non-place (Augé, 1995).

Identity, Memory and Place in *Ulysses’ Gaze*

Ulysses’ Gaze follows the journey of a Greek-American filmmaker from Northern Greece across several Balkan countries. Through A.’s voice-over we become aware that he has been away for a long time, presumably many years⁹. From a northern town in his native Greece he embarks on a journey across Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Bosnia. As in *The Suspended Step of the Stork* there is in *Ulysses’ Gaze* the interplay of an individual destiny (the Greek-American filmmaker) with a collective destiny that, in this case, embraces the ‘common destiny’ of different peoples in the Balkans. The quest for the lost film-reels also reflects a search for a new idea of community that is necessarily indifferent to the politically defined boundaries of the nation-state. *Ulysses’ Gaze* is concerned with the collective destiny of people in the complex and ill-defined Balkan space, a region that has been historically constructed in bloodshed and conflict. Once again, we are faced with a film where the narrative is more focused on subjective experience, the personal dramas and existential concerns of people in different Balkan locations. At the same time, there is never an attempt to provide a strategic solution or a ‘political answer’ for

the social and political troubles of the Balkans. Yet, in spite of this stance, *Ulysses' Gaze* is a film rich in historical references and allusions.

As I have argued in chapter 7, *Ulysses' Gaze*'s narrative evolves through the telling of several sub-stories that are symbolically linked whilst playing with different temporalities and spatialities (cf. appendix D, D1). One of the crucial issues being raised is the issue of exile in the Balkan space. The condition of exile is one that appears to touch both A. and all those Balkan subjects he encounters during his journey. These are people that in the course of their lives were displaced either by wars or other political and social stirrings in the region. The narrative unfolds by deploying several stories of exile and displacement. To start with, A. appears to be living the condition of exile throughout his ongoing journey even though he is travelling a seemingly 'familiar' terrain. This is because although he has literally come back 'home', i.e. to the places of his childhood, he finds himself displaced in a terrain that he progressively finds estranging and alien. We are, nonetheless, aware that A. is not an exile in a strict sense but, paradoxically, a successful Greek-American filmmaker settled in the U.S. The underlying idea here is that the condition of exile may well be of an existential order. Arguably, in *Ulysses' Gaze* the voyager (A.) is ultimately concerned with a quest for a sense of home (*nostos*) conceived here as a community of social belonging in the complex Balkan space. A.'s personal path involves a twofold journey that shapes a quest for origins: on the one hand, A.'s spatial trajectory encompasses the end of a journey, i.e. a return journey from the U.S. to A.'s native Greece that has just been completed when the film starts; on the other hand, *Ulysses' Gaze* encompasses a 'new' journey of discovery of the self and of contemporary Balkan reality¹⁰. A sense of this 'new' journey that is about to start is epitomized by an expression borrowed from T.S. Eliot's poem *East Coker*; "In my end is my beginning" says A. shortly before he departs. At the same time it is clear that A.'s personal journey involves a diffuse emotional attachment to different Balkan locations. This sensibility becomes particularly strong when A. diverges from his intended route and goes to Romania where we become aware that he spent some of his childhood years. Here, he has a recollection of his infancy when his family lived in exile during the Greek Civil War. This highly stylised tableau offers us the vision of a family reunion in a festive, homely and warm environment during four New Year eves each one covering the passing of

another year (cf. appendix D, D4). The scene strikingly unfolded in a sequence-shot sets A. with his adult figure in the context of his own childhood in the late 1940s Romania. Meanwhile, we are also made aware that some of A.'s close relatives suffered imprisonment for political reasons and that the family was deprived of their possessions when the Russians invaded Romania at the end of World War II. Thus home cannot here be conceived as a well-bounded place.

The question of exile that permeates *Ulysses' Gaze* is also articulated in images of mass displacement at the time of the Balkan Wars. These are strikingly conveyed in clips of old black-and-white documentary footage alternating with sequences of A.'s ongoing journey (cf. appendix D, D7). This is the case, for instance, in a piece of documentary footage where one of the real-life figures of the Manakis duo tells the story of their adventures and misadventures during the upheavals at the time of the Balkan Wars and World Wars I and II (cf. appendix D, D1 and D4). The theme of exile is also brought up in relation to temporalities other than that of A.'s ongoing journey and, particularly, in reference to important historical events in the Balkan region. This is the case, for example, in a stylised tableau which returns to the times of World War I. Here, A. embodies the figure of Yannakis Manakis being condemned to exile in Plovdiv (Bulgaria) by an army officer at the time when Bulgaria attempted to annex Macedonia with the help of Germany. There is here a clear allusion to the so-called 'Macedonian question' that still haunts Greek collective memory. This particular historical conflict is once again addressed in a scene where Yannakis/A., a native of Macedonia, is being helped by a Bulgarian peasant to escape from exile in Bulgaria through the Evros river. Here, we encounter a lonely woman grieving for her missing husband against the backdrop of an early twentieth-century war-torn landscape of burning houses¹¹.

In a similar vein, A.'s current journey across the Balkan space offers a deeper insight into the contemporary dramas of people inhabiting different Balkan locations against the backdrop of the ongoing Bosnian war (cf. appendix D, D3). Shortly after his departure A. meets at the Greek/Albanian border-station an elderly Greek woman. She had been refused a taxi to cross the border and go to Korce to visit the sister that she has not seen since the Greek Civil War. There is here a clear reference to the bitter Greek/Albanian relations of the twentieth-century¹² over the 'minority question' of the Greek Orthodox minority in Albania.

In the following scene, a Greek taxi-driver takes A. towards the border between Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. As they reach the border and are prevented from going further due to heavy snow, the taxi driver takes the opportunity to confess to A. that he sees the Greeks as ‘a dying people’; “we’ve completed our appointed cycle. Three thousand years among broken stones and statues, and now we are dying” (as quoted by Horton, 1997a: 187). Of course, this allusion to the Greek people as a ‘dying people’ is merely metaphorical. But, on the other hand, we can read in the taxi-driver’s words an underlying suggestion of the idea of the Greeks as a people attached to the ‘ruins’ of a glorious Hellenic past.

When A. gets to Belgrade he goes to meet his long-term friend, Nikos, who works there as a war correspondent. Here, we are faced once again with the ambivalences and controversies of those who find themselves amidst a conflict marked by ‘ethnic cleansing’. At the hotel where the war-correspondents gather in Belgrade the almost absurd topic of conversation is the question of “who arrived first, the Serbians or the Albanians?”.

Finally, in war-torn Sarajevo, A.’s last destination, amidst the horrific sound of bombings and sirens, Ivo Levy, the Jewish curator of the Sarajevo film archive, tells A. of the insanity and absurdity of a war that confines people to silence and fear. Yet, these scenes set in Sarajevo are amongst those expressing a mixed sense of hope and nostalgia. Through the ‘eyes of A.’, who walks across Sarajevo, we experience a sense of loss and despair brought together with images of hope and joy. These include images of a youth orchestra playing outside amidst the deep fog in Sarajevo streets and young people dancing and having fun at the sound of pop music when the fog allows them to hide from the sight of snipers. This interplay of individual and collective memory is epitomized in the quest for the lost film reels by the two pioneer filmmakers. This involves, in the end, an all-encompassing quest for the ‘memory of the origins’ that the ‘memory of the cinema’ helps to preserve; “the contrasts, the conflicts in this area of the world are reflected in their [the Manakis brothers] work” says A. to Kali, the guide at the Manakis cinema in Skopje.

In short, the narrative conveys a sense of how, in one or another way, many people in the Balkans have experienced the condition of exile. Exile itself emerges as a general condition embracing all those who regardless of their ethnic

loyalties and personal circumstances were being displaced by the desire for territorial expansion of the new Balkan states. Through the personal dramas and outspoken feelings and thoughts of the people A. meets along the journey we come close to one of the cornerstones of academic and political debate on the current ethnic conflicts in the Balkans; the idea that ethnic heterogeneity in the Balkan region poses a potential threat to the integrity of the nation. It appears that one of the consequences of constant boundary-drawing in the Balkan region has been the consolidation of 'national minorities' that were being left outside the boundaries of newly constituted nation-states. Concurrently, they were also being excluded from their larger group of social belonging. In addition, intolerance towards ethnic minorities and ethnocentric stereotypes has been largely the work of the education system and school textbooks in many Balkan states. The 'invention of tradition' through the education system and national 'commemorations' (public lectures, national holidays, etc.) legitimated discrimination against ethnic minorities who are seen as alien to the 'nation's soil' (Roudometof, 2001: 210-213). In the end, the question to be raised is whether there is room for the Western European model of the homogenous nation-state in the transient and ill-defined Balkan region (see Roudometof, 1999) where different peoples and religions have mingled for centuries. Nation-building in Eastern Europe was led, after all, by ethnic nationalisms that were clearly distinct from those nationalisms that determined a civic conception of the nation in Western European countries such as Portugal, France and Spain.

Boundaries and Cultural Diversity in *The Suspended Step of the Stork*

The Suspended Step of the Stork is particularly concerned with the impermeability of the Greek/Albanian political border in the Epirus region. Throughout the twentieth-century both countries have endured rivalries over disputed parts of this region.

What is at stake in the film with regard to border-definition and crossing is how the divisive effects of the political boundary are associated with the physical presence of the border station. A landscape pervaded by watchtowers and military

personnel plays a very significant role in depicting a space where people's sense of fear and displacement is intrinsically related to the visual proximity of the political (cf. appendix C, C2). The river that bisects the border-town offers an important geographic marker for the political border. It helps to emphasise the sense of separateness from Albania itself of those refugees who did not manage to cross the border and are still on the other side waiting. As I have argued before, those who live close to the political border are more prone to be affected by its divisive effects. In this case, the political border could not be more suitably connoted with notions of danger and transgression. The physical border appears to limit a territory of despair (Pierron, 1995: 143). This is strikingly illustrated by the film's visual imagery that, whilst commenting on issues of poverty and social exclusion, configures the image of the border-town as a true 'no-man's land'. The constant portrayal of jeeps and military personnel, the visually overemphasised presence of watchtowers, the image of a man hanged on a huge metallic crane surrounded by a group of howling women, the fight initiated at the café, the bleak and often completely deserted streets of the town (either wet or covered in snow), the slummy and ruined exteriors, the depiction of boxcars serving badly as temporary houses, all help to emphasise the climate of uncertainty, the despair and strict surveillance surrounding daily life in the town (cf. appendix C, C8). Moreover, traditional homely and familiar environments (e.g. cosy houses, schools) are rarely, and never clearly, depicted, thus stressing the strangeness of the place. The space of the border-town is often perceived as imprecise and unconfined due to an unorthodox use of lighting that darkens settings and conceals characters. Most scenes take place in public places (e.g. the marketplace, the hotel hall, cafes). Even the orthodox wedding celebrated by the border-river is displaced from its traditional religious setting.

The space of the border-town is depicted, above all, as a space where everyone feels estranged. Even a border patrol officer tells of his sense of displacement and despair in consequence of life in such a place: "I'm a tragic character. I'm paid to watch over the border. My wife is in Athens and my daughter in London for her alleged studies. The gypsies! Who knows where I'm going to be sent tomorrow!". We get no sense of community life in the town. Relations between people are marked by fear and uncertainty, and tensions and quarrels between the refugees go unresolved due to a striking silence that prevents police intervention. Thus we

need to ask whether a group of refugees can ever be described as a community (Kelly, 2003). In this particular context, people appear to be bound to an in-between situation in a visibly alienating space. Thus it seems almost impossible to think of the group of refugees as bonded by close kinship or solidarity ties. Moreover, the overt and latent conflicts amidst the refugees suggest that there are strong differences both amongst the refugees themselves and between them and the locals. When the reporter asks for information about the whereabouts of the man he believes to be the missing politician he is told to look at the refugee's quarter or in the café where 'they' usually go. Alexandre also learns that people in the village relate little to 'them'. There is here a clear indication that the rivalries between refugees are accompanied by discrimination from the locals. We are dealing here with a suggestion that divisions erected between individuals and groups (e.g. family, ethnic group, a group of refugees) are mostly a consequence of boundaries that are both internal (i.e. internalised and psychologically experienced by an individual) and external (i.e. imposed by a highly impermeable political border). The sense of fear and repression reigning amidst the refugees is reinforced by the presence of the border-station and the dangers associated with the crossing of the political border. The absurdity and inhumanity of this border, that clearly emerges as a barrier to the mobility of people, is powerfully enhanced in the way many refugees risk their lives to smuggle a pack of cigarettes or a music cassette. When Alexandre visits the border-town for the first time he is taken by the colonel to the riverbank where they both catch a man receiving across the water, in a tiny raft, a cheap cassette tape recorder that is playing music. The colonel takes the opportunity to warn the man of the risks of smuggling. The 'real' porosity of the border is also illustrated in the way the refugees who manage to cross attempt to maintain contact with those who stayed 'on the other side', i.e. the village known as 'Waiting Room'. This issue is also addressed in the scene set at a traditional Greek café where Alexandre is arranging with the TV crew to shoot the wedding by the river on the following day. The colonel tells Alexandre that "after they [the refugees] cross the border they meet secretly once every year regardless of the danger. Often we find bodies floating on the river". This is a striking example of how people's kinship bonds and loyalties defy the 'deadly' political border. That is, cultural boundaries often continue to be indifferent to the divisive attributes of an 'artificial' political border. On the one hand, then, the

sense of fear and repression associated with the border-station produces increasing divisions amongst the refugees in the border-town; on the other hand, it is also clear that enduring loyalty and kinship ties prove resistant to the separateness imposed by the political border.

In such an alienating place identity clearly emerges as constituted against the figure of the 'threatening Other' (Castles, 2003: 23). That is to say that every individual may be potentially constituted as an 'other' to his or her fellow neighbours. Understandably, this is because people's daily lives are affected by fear, repression and the uncertainty of having nowhere to go. Moreover, the group of immigrants involuntarily confined to the border-town by the Greek government hardly fits the ideal of community as a collective of people united by shared values and culture. Thus identity here is not only potentially shaped in conflict with the other but also in the absence of a clearly demarcated 'us'. From the strict perspective of the group of refugees, the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' may well become blurred. The condition of the stranger has therefore to be seen as the all-embracing condition for all the refugees inhabiting the border-town. Conversely, in official government rhetoric the figure of the refugee or illegal immigrant traditionally emerges as a fiercely distinct other.

Boundaries and Cultural Diversity in *Ulysses' Gaze*

Ulysses' Gaze is strongly concerned with the controversial question of political borders as hardly permeable divides across the ethnic patchwork of the Balkans (cf. appendix D, D8). To start with, every political border A. crosses is narratively signalled. In fact, A. travels (sometimes illegally) along carefully patrolled rivers (cf. appendix D, D2). Rivers, as effective 'natural' divides where a political boundary can easily lie, play an ambivalent role in the film. By travelling along the Danube, A. gets from Constanza to Belgrade, and from here again along the Danube, and then along the Sava and its tributaries, to Sarajevo. In travelling along the Danube, A. is, in fact, travelling *along* the border, i.e. the political divide, and not *across* the border. It is noteworthy that in the cartography of the Balkans the Danube offers a political boundary for countries like Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia. Thus the underlying idea here is that the Danube as a hardly

permeable political border at the time of A.'s ongoing journey is, paradoxically, also offering an alternative route to travel across the Balkans. The reason that A. succeeds in reaching Sarajevo, where he knows the three missing reels are located, is because he takes the advice of getting there illegally by river. The scene of A. travelling in a barge along the Danube is strikingly illustrative of the elusive role and meaning of political borders in the Balkans. The barge travels from Odessa to Germany to deliver a broken giant statue of Lenin to a collector. The landscape unfolded in long, slow travelling shots is one populated by faceless people, including many children, who gather by the riverbank to observe the huge statue of Lenin passing by. Meanwhile, A.'s miniscule figure standing on the bow of the barge is framed in the distant background facing the landscape. Several watchtowers and shabby thatched houses aligned along the river leave no doubt that this is an area of strict surveillance and a border zone. If on the one hand, *Ulysses' Gaze* shows how political borders can work more as a divide, i.e. as a barrier to the mobility of people, than as a gateway in the complex and ill-defined Balkan space; on the other hand, and at a metaphorical level, the film it is also raising the question of the possibility of a trans-Balkan identity by transforming the political divide, the fissure, into a path. As suggested by Baud and Van Schendel (1997: 214-215), if there is one thing that has been central to all modern borders, it has been the efforts of people to use, manipulate, or avoid the resulting border restrictions. Political borders became markers of the actual power that states wield over their own societies and the confrontation between 'state' and 'people' was not uncommon in marginal areas such as borderlands. The film also provides important narrative and visual cues that draw attention to the role of geographic formations such as rivers and mountains in offering suitable barriers to the mobility of people. Images of highly patrolled borders are recurrent and visually emphasised in *Ulysses' Gaze*. At the same time the *de facto* lack of porosity of the political border is also narratively and visually unfolded. This is visible in all the scenes in which A. manages to pursue his quest by overcoming political borders that are meant to constitute an obstacle to the movement of people. That is also suggested in the scene where a group of illegal Albanians emigrants is being brought back by the police to the Greek/Albanian border to be returned to Albania. We learn from the Greek taxi-driver that the passage of illegal Albanian immigrants to Greece in search of products they do not have

access to at home occurs constantly. The following scene unfolds a striking tableau in a slow tracking shot in which A. enters Albania by taxi. Here, we are offered an image of remarkably flat, treeless landscape covered in snow. The scenery revealed is populated by many Albanians who either stare motionless or walk towards the mountain range that borders Greece and Albania and rises majestically in the background. We are offered an image of a geographic formation (i.e. a mountain) that provides an effective 'natural' barrier to the movement of people. However, as we see all these faceless people walking and staring at the mountain crest there is little doubt that many destitute Albanians will once again try to cross it so as to reach Greece.

Finally, the film's visual imagery plays a very significant part in depicting a strange and alienating scenery (cf. appendix D, D2). The landscapes represented, accompanied by the post-romantic and melancholic music of composer Karaindrou, evoke an overall sense of desolation and nostalgia. The cities A. visits all share the same ghostly aura amidst rundown buildings and deserted streets. Although space is represented realistically which helps us to situate scenes and the 'unreal' tableaux in their precise temporality, A. and the people he meets along the journey are never depicted in traditional homely environments. Instead, most scenes of interiors correspond to public settings (e.g. cinemas, hotel lounges, border-stations, train compartments, etc.) of rundown or ruined buildings. Interestingly, the only scene suggesting a warm and familiar setting is in the stylised tableau recollection of A.'s childhood. In the end, it becomes difficult to distinguish between different places despite the precise narrative references that enable us to identify each specific location.

The space depicted is one where everyone appears as displaced; everyone is paradoxically both at home and living the condition of exile. The cultural boundaries through which people subjectively construct their sense of collective belonging do not necessarily coincide with the political divides that are the result of more than two centuries of fabricated traditions of nationhood. In short, there is in *Ulysses' Gaze* an overall suggestion that the cause of conflicts and displacement in the region is fundamentally a consequence of the modern politics of nation-building. Arguably, the environment of threat and fear most people endure in different Balkan locations determines that potentially every individual can be constituted as an other. As in *The Suspended Step of the Stork* it becomes

difficult for those personally affected by the social and political upheavals to distinguish between 'friend' and 'foe', 'us' and 'them'. There is a sensibility suggesting that enforced political borders separate and alienate people whilst undermining the possibility of any sense of community or collective life amidst different Balkan peoples. It is noteworthy that the narrative does not aim to offer an alternative solution for the current ethnic conflicts in the Balkan space. However, there is also an indication of how political borders in separating and displacing people are indifferent to their sense of collective belonging in daily life. Every character in *Ulysses' Gaze* is affected by past or ongoing tensions, conflicts and wars in the Balkans. There is, however, a note of hope for those who attempt to live humanly and restore their lives in spite of the horror and absurdity of wars and conflicts in the region: the Bulgarian peasant, grieving for her missing husband in a World War I setting, is prompt to offer A./Yanakis her vanished husband's clothes whilst helping him to escape from exile; Ivo Levy, the Jewish curator, and his family go for a walk amidst the deep fog in war-torn Sarajevo as a regular family would do in peaceful circumstances; A. is compelled to pursue his quest whilst leaving behind his loves in the hope that the discovery of the 'first gaze' will bring a new understanding of life in the Balkans (cf. appendix D, D3); the elderly Greek woman who has been separated from her sister for more than forty-years is determined to cross the Greek/Albanian border despite being refused a taxi to go to 'the other side'; Nikos, A.'s long-term friend and war-correspondent, is determined to stay in Belgrade to put a stop to the Bosnian war. In view of these people's efforts to defy imposed and rigidified political boundaries, the film raises the crucial question of whether an ideal of citizenship that does not require the political body of the nation can be accomplished in the Balkans.

10.3 Conclusion

In both *The Suspended Step of the Stork* and *Ulysses' Gaze* it makes sense to postulate the possibility of a trans-balkan identity. It can be argued that in 'deconstructing' the Balkan space of crystallized political borders both films succeed in asserting that, after all, there is room for looking at the whole region as

a space where people can live peacefully regardless of perceived ethnic and religious differences. In addition, both films are laying the ground for us to understand how the politics of nation-building in the region evolved through an ethnic conception of the nation that legitimated the discourse of ‘ancient hatreds’ as the source of conflicts in the Balkans. The catastrophic result of such a process was a strengthening of political borders, and consequent wars disputing imposed national borders, at the expense of the displacement of many ‘national minorities’ and increasing numbers of refugees. Moreover, the so-called ‘Balkan duo’ mirrors Angelopoulos predilection for that ‘other Greece’ of rural spaces and historically contested territories; as backdrop for his stories he uses the lands of Epirus (where *The Suspended Step of the Stork*’s border-town is located), Macedonia (A. goes to both Monastir and Skopje in his quest for the film reels) and Thrace (from where A./Yannakis escapes from exile by travelling along the Evros river).

In reflecting upon questions of border-definition both *The Suspended Step of the Stork* and *Ulysses’ Gaze* have also been subjected to controversy and criticism. This is because both films appear to suggest a ‘federalist project’ for the region that endangers the anti-Europeanism trend in some Orthodox circles. Interestingly, when *The Suspended Step of the Stork* was released the Bishop Augustine Kantiotis of Florin proclaimed the film a danger for Orthodoxy and Greece itself¹³. He further denounced Angelopoulos as an agent of the European Union in advocating the abolition of borders (see Fokas, 1999: 12).

¹ Territorial expansion in Greece led finally to the annexation of Western Thrace and Greek Macedonia after the Balkan Wars.

² A critical aspect of the unbroken historical continuity thesis is the Hellenic character of the ancient Macedonian kingdom (see Roudometof, 2001: 113)

³ The political upheavals associated with the ‘Macedonian’ question revealed that ethnicity was as much a consequence as the cause of such turmoil; the inhabitants of Macedonia were more concerned in regaining some stability in their lives than to die for nationalism. However, many unfortunate peasants living in Macedonian lands were forced to emigrate when caught between hard-line revolutionaries and the repressive Ottoman state. Those who stayed were pawns in a political struggle between sides that were using violence to secure loyalties (Mazower, 2000: 93-94).

⁴ In an interview, Angelopoulos confessed how “the humour and playfulness of the TV crew among themselves only serve to make the film more despondent since it is clear that, no matter how tragic the events around them, they just want to have a good time” (Horton, 1992: 31). There is here an underlying critique of the way in which the mass media, especially television, deal with the issues related to the cause of refugees. The cheerful mood of the TV crew sharply contrasts with the serious events they witness and shot in the border-town (e.g. the refugees packed in boxcars, the man hanged in the crane surrounded by howling women, the wedding by the river). Such an attitude expresses a sort of detachment that illustrates how the mass media have trivialized the condition of the exiles.

⁵ For Castles (2003), however, the so-called sociology of ‘exile, displacement and belonging’ places too much stress on the subjective and cultural dimensions of forced migration and tends to neglect its structural dimensions.

⁶ In being unwillingly displaced and often victims of serious breaches of human rights, the refugees are also faced with hostility and xenophobia by the rhetoric of European states that perceive immigrant minorities as a threat to security, employment and the cultural integrity of the nation. This rhetoric finds wide support and has been widely disseminated by the mass media in most Western European countries (Stolke 1995; Bhabha 1999).

⁷ Although some claim in this respect that nostalgia can be seen as a regressive form of identity with possible neo-romantic contours (Morley and Robins, 1994: 105-124), others define nostalgia as an intelligible socio-cultural response to an experience of discontinuity or transition that endangers our yearning for continuity (Davis, 1979 cited in Grainge, 2002: 20). As argued by Turner (1987), nostalgia is a fundamental condition of human estrangement in line with a tradition of discourse about melancholy (Turner, 1987: 150). This conception of nostalgia clearly diverges from the so-called ‘wilful nostalgia’ that is politically motivated and has to be seen as a response to the challenges of cultural globalisation (see Robertson, 1992).

⁸ Greece as other southern European countries (such as Portugal and Italy) was traditionally a country of high emigration. Latterly, with the increasing flows of illegal immigrants and refugees coming mostly from Eastern Europe and the Middle east, the Greek state was confronted in the late 1980s with a legal vacuum; there was no immigration policy able to respond to the new circumstances. In 1991 the government introduced legislation aimed primarily at combating illegal immigration. It stipulated deportation for those without proper documentation and the introduction of special patrol squads to patrol the land and sea borders. However, the policies adopted have to be seen as more reactive than strategic; after all, they do not contemplate a change of the illegal immigrant status by legalisation. Consequently, the majority of non-EU immigrants in Greece are not granted basic civil rights such as participation in education and access to the health and social security systems (Lazaridis, 1996; see also Lazaridis and Poyago-Theotoky, 1999).

⁹ Horton (1997a: 184), who studied the original script of *Ulysses’ Gaze*, draws attention for the fact that the director became a Greek-American figure (and not a purely Greek director) who was born in Greece but has been away for some thirty-five years.

¹⁰ In an interview conducted by Horton (1997b: 6), Angelopoulos suggests that the myth of the melting pot gives a far too simplistic account of what is actually going on in American society: it disavows, for instance, the desire for *nostos* (home) that the most Greeks living in America feel.

¹¹ Bulgaria as one of the defeated states (along with Germany and the Ottoman Empire) was by the end of World War I the country that suffered most human and territorial losses (see Jelavich, 1983: 106-126).

¹² When Albania was made into an independent state (1913) in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars under the intervention of the Great Powers parts of Epirus that were intended to be part of the new Albanian state were still being occupied by Greece (see Jelavich, 1983: 99). Furthermore, during World War II the Greek army had temporarily occupied southern Albania (or northern Epirus) and, officially, Greece maintained a state of war with Albania until 1987 (see Roudometof, 2001: 223-224).

¹³ In *Ulysses’ Gaze* there is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a direct reference to this actual controversy as, by the beginning of the film, there is a scene showing a group of religious devotees protesting against A.’s last film.

CHAPTER 11 : PORTUGAL

11.1 Historical and Cultural Context

The *Estado Novo* Ideology and the Imperialist vision of the Portuguese Nation

Unlike other fascist regimes in Southern and Southeastern Europe, the *Estado Novo* (1933-1974) dictatorship was the longest lasting, and primarily characterized by a lack of extensive mobilization. The ideal of an 'organic' conflict-free and politics-free society proved crucial for the endurance of a regime that lasted over forty years. The *Estado Novo* ideology was orchestrated via political propaganda, especially through the National Propaganda Secretariat (SPN) that coordinated the regime's press, ran the censorship services and organized leisure activities for the working class. The political police repressed clandestine opposition and gained ample powers to determine prison sentences. Unsurprisingly, political militancy was actively discouraged by the repressive state apparatus through propaganda, an education system that kept high illiteracy rates and discouraged secondary education, and a charismatic dictator who always addressed the elites instead of the masses (see Pinto, 1998; see also Rebelo, 1998). Salazar's *Estado Novo* relied more on traditional institutions like the Catholic Church and the provincial elites than on mass organizations. The regime allowed, in fact, most of the population to live normally providing that everyday life routines did not get mixed up with politics (Pinto, 1998: 37-38; see also Lucena, 1984). Research on the ideological definition of the regime¹ has shown that the Portuguese dictatorship significantly lacked the mass mobilization that characterized other right-wing totalitarian regimes, especially Nazism.

The ideology of the *Estado Novo* laid the foundations for a discourse of 'national regeneration' that aimed mainly to restore Portugal's past image of grandeur (see, for instance, Monteiro and Pinto, 1998). This was mostly supported by a school system that celebrated the glory of the nation as grounded in a glorious rural past, national independence, the myth of the empire, the nation's Christian and civilizing mission in the colonies, and a nostalgia for a golden mercantile age in

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. “Under the *Estado Novo*, the movement to ‘reinvent the past’ underwent a qualitative leap. School socialization, cultural propaganda, and a policy of national monument restoration proceeded apace. Any memory of Moorish culture and cultural diversity (already weak in any case, even in the South) was silenced. The north was upheld as the ‘Christian cradle of nationhood’, as was Guimarães, the capital of the medieval kingdom (...). The slogan ‘Everything for the Nation, Nothing Against It’ imposed a hegemonic cultural reality” (Monteiro and Pinto, 1998: 213-214). Prominent in this was an overtly imperialist narrative of Portuguese history that also emphasised the genius and universalism of a Portuguese culture spread worldwide (see Sieber, 2001). This rhetoric proved crucial for Salazar’s obsession with maintaining control over Portugal’s African colonies at a time in which other colonies were already beginning to gain independence from other European imperial powers².

The imperialist narrative of the Portuguese nation, however, is not consistent with the growing economic and cultural gap between Portugal, under the rule of Salazar’s isolationist regime, and those Northern and Central European countries that had already industrialised successively. Social and political resistance to the modernization of agriculture under the *Estado Novo* prevented the emergence of conditions favouring industrialization or rapid urbanization (Rosas, 1998). Portuguese agriculture never decisively supported industrialization as a source of labour, as a market supplier, or a purchaser. Thus Portugal’s failed industrial take-off was mainly a consequence of the perpetuation of old productive and landholding structures (latifundism) strongly supported by the government. Not surprisingly, the rise of the authoritarian *Estado Novo* has been linked to the existence of a weak and fragmented bourgeoisie that was unable to impose its own program of normalization of the economy in a time of economic decline (Rosas, 1986 cited in Rebelo, 1998: 62).

Another factor accounting for Portugal’s lower economic performance and poor industrialisation was a low level of urbanization strongly linked to mass emigration trends (see Martins, 1971). The so-called ‘rural exodus’ impelled many thousands of individuals to emigrate abroad rather than to the cities. Emigration had a stabilizing factor in Portuguese society in that it not only reduced urban migration, but also involved the loss of potential leaders and a structure of social consciousness in which emigration represented the standard

horizon of social expectations oriented to an 'elsewhere' (Martins, 1971: 85). Moreover, Portuguese urban distribution was characterized by the absence of middle-sized cities and a territorial asymmetry that results in the 'dualism' of Portuguese society: "a narrow strip of the western seaboard contains the bulk of 'modern', 'central' or 'Northern Portugal'" (Martins, 1971: 75).

In short, during the dictatorship Portugal confirmed, on the one hand, its status as a peripheral and isolated state in the European context, and on the other hand, the ultra-conservative official narratives of the nation remained firmly grounded in the celebration of a glorious past and indifferent to the widening 'cultural gap' between Portugal and Europe.

The Concern with National Identity and the Idea of the Homogenous Nation

Intellectuals and historians have for long enthusiastically debated the topic of 'national identity' in the Portuguese context. It has been connected, especially since the nineteenth-century, to a concern with the search for the historical roots of Portuguese culture and the nation's destiny. Despite lacking a clear conceptual configuration, the notion of national identity has never been out of fashion amongst the intelligentsia. For Santos (1994: 49-50) it is possible to identify a mythical excess of interpretation about Portuguese society that was mostly forged by the enclosed circles of cultural elites. At the core of such discourse was an attempt to offer an explanation for Portugal's socio-economic decline since the sixteenth-century and the widening cultural gap with those parts of Northern and Central Europe that followed the path of Reformation (Almeida, 1994: 155).

It is possible to identify two distinct and contrasting trends of nationalist thought on the fundamentals and origins of the Portuguese nation (see Almeida, 1994; Monteiro and Pinto, 1998; Santos, 1998). In the forefront, there is a conservative tradition that has for long been concerned with the exploration and preservation of the 'Portuguese national soul' as the origin and essence of the Portuguese nation. This stance is best represented by Teixeira de Pascoaes, a poet with philosophical ambitions and the ideologue of the *Renascença Portuguesa* movement. This intellectual tradition of nationalist thought has sought to celebrate the mythology

of *saudade* (nostalgia) as linked to a discourse of the memory of origins. It has always showed a particular interest in the essence of the 'national character' that was later revived in the writings of Quadros (1992). An alternative view thrived in the late nineteenth-century under the aegis of the *Geração de 70* movement. This offered a very different picture of Portuguese society and culture in reflecting upon the causes and consequences of the social and economic 'decadence'. Amongst other leading figures it included the writers Antero de Quental and Eça de Queirós and the historian Oliveira Martins. They were calling ultimately for cultural reformation and openness to the ideas and values of a 'European culture'. In contrast with the *Renascença Portuguesa* movement, this tradition was highly critical of the Counter-Reformation path followed by Portugal and, moved by a cosmopolitan spirit, accused the Catholic Church of preventing the country from fully participating in the modern world brought about by the Reformation (see Almeida, 1994).

Whilst discourses of Portuguese national identity have in one or another way revolved around the themes of 'regeneration' and 'decadence', the existence of a Portuguese nation whose origins go back to the Middle Ages finds wide support in the work of historians (Mattoso, 1985). Within a certain discourse of nationhood, the conception of a Portuguese homeland bears a strong relation to the idea of a stable and historically definable territory where people share a uniform culture. This stance is supported by specific historic factors such as the attainment of early statehood, the absence of conflicts with neighbouring countries, and the stability of political borders. Official historiography has for long traced back the foundation of a Portuguese state to 1143, the date of the separation of Castilian rule (see, for instance, Mattoso, 1985). Subsequently, it has been argued that the existence of a Portuguese nation predates the impact of print-capitalism and industrialization (Sobral, 2000). It is also noteworthy that, unlike other European countries, Portugal had for many centuries no religious or ethno-linguistic minorities³, nor territorial claims in Europe. In addition, and perhaps not surprisingly, a key issue in discourses of the homogenous national identity has been the relation to the 'Spanish enemy' (Monteiro and Pinto, 1998: 208). There is a discourse of Portuguese national identity that has traditionally been constructed *against* the Spanish other.

Emigration and the Idea of a Transnational Portuguese Nation

Emigration has been a cornerstone of Portuguese modern social history (see Baganha, 1998; Garcia et al., 2000). It was negatively cast during the isolationist times of the dictatorship when the state was ideologically engaged in celebrating the universal character of Portuguese culture and the greatness of the empire. In the decades following the 1974 'Revolution of Carnations', the emigrant was positively recast and the notion of a wider and valued "Portuguese Speaking-World" gained relevance in the discourse of elites and in state rhetoric. A sense of transnational connectedness was fostered through cultural enterprises such as the television channel, RTPi (*Radiotelevisão Portuguesa Internacional*) and state-sponsored cultural events (e.g. folk festivals) aimed at the emigrant communities spread around the globe. For both state and business interests to nurture an effective sense of connectedness across the diaspora was clearly a good investment in terms of promoting continuity in emigrant remittances (Klimt, 2000: 540-542), and so we find the idea of the Portuguese nation as an unbounded entity based on population rather than territory (Feldman-Bianco, 1994 cited in Klimt, 2000: 540).

In recent years, however, there has emerged a discourse of Portuguese national identity that downplays the idea of Portugal as a transnation of widely dispersed emigrant communities. This could be seen primarily as an attempt to counter the image of Portugal as a peripheral country in the EU. A good example of this is the rhetoric and cultural policy underlying the international exhibition EXPO 98 that attracted a massive state investment. Here, the Portuguese diaspora received minimal acknowledgment, the emphasis being placed on Portugal's cultural 'encounters' and 'exchanges' and contributions for scientific development (Sieber, 2001). Within Portugal's current 'European mission' (see Braga da Cruz, 1992), "placing much stress on the realities of transnational communities, emigration, and remittances, would perhaps mark Portugal as a poor, semi-peripheral country" (Sieber, 2001: 576).

In spite of such discourses, a sense of 'felt' connectedness with a Portuguese homeland amidst the far-flung components of the Portuguese diaspora prevails both individually and collectively. Ethnographic studies have shown that a sense of 'being Portuguese' is often achieved through a ritualistic celebration of the

memories of the birth community in local events such as regional folk festivals (see Feldman-Bianco, 1996). In particular contexts, such as that of the Portuguese emigrant community in Hamburg, this could also be seen as part of a strategy to counter their marginal position and foreignness in their host societies (Klimt, 2000).

In the last decade, Portugal, until the 1980s a country of high emigration, saw this pattern reversed by a dramatic change of direction of the migration flows. It became gradually a major recipient of immigrants coming mostly from Brazil, the ex-African colonies and Eastern European countries (see Pires, 1998; Garcia et al. 2000). With the growing immigrant trends from Eastern Europe it is therefore expected that the question of ethno-cultural diversity will be unavoidable in the Portuguese context.

11.2 Film Analysis

Identity, Memory and Place in *Five Days, Five Nights*

In *Five Days, Five Nights*, we follow the aimless trajectory of André, a political escapee, across late 1940s Northern Portugal. The film is adapted from the novella⁴ by the historical leader of the Communist party (Álvaro Cunhal) and deals primarily with the interplay of André's journey of escape and the 'discovery' of a remarkable cultural enclave in a remote borderland in northern Portugal. The story is set at the height of the isolationist times of the *Estado Novo* regime whose ultraconservative, anti-Liberal and Catholic ideology resisted modernization and secularism (cf. appendix E, E1).

As the voyage goes on we become aware that André is not, nonetheless, rejecting the idea of the country as a homeland, i.e. the idea of Portugal as place that contributes to the constitution of collective identity through a territorially based community (see Entrikin 1999). What we find, paradoxically, is a 'journey into society' as, in the process of abandoning the country, André gets a deeper insight on different aspects of life in Portugal. This can also be seen as a true 'journey of initiation'; it is in contact with Lambaça and several other 'underworld' characters that André gains self-awareness and learns about others in a manifestly foreign

space. This aspect is also suggested by the fact that the story is told from André's point-of-view. It unfolds in a first-person narration as a recollection of events situated elsewhere in the past and filtered through André's personal memories. The film starts with the following lines in André's voice-over: "When not yet nineteen-years old I saw myself forced to emigrate. I was given money, someone's address in Oporto, and I was told that there everything would be arranged regarding the crossing of the border to Spain".

André's optimism and political militancy is counterpointed in the stance of Lambaça, his journey companion and a cunning and experienced smuggler with no apparent political convictions (cf. appendix E, E3). This is conveyed by Lambaça's emblematic words later in the film: "I know how it is. When one is young one thinks we can change the world. But nothing changes, whatever happens". Such a position stands as an expression of the political apathy of a disfranchised rural population (Martins, 1971: 83-84).

The story evolves with a suggestion that André's increasing awareness of the need for a change of the existing political system and dominant values is linked to the experience of the journey itself. The underlying assumption here is that the belief in a future change of the existing political and social condition appears to be closely associated with a belief in the possibility of political mobilization of 'the people' (*o povo*). That is epitomized by André's expression in the closing scene, "Everything will change. It only depends on the will of men, whatever happens". Thus an important thematic pattern explored in *Five Days, Five Nights* is the critique of a discourse of fatalism that permeated the nationalist ideology of the dictatorship at the time of André's ongoing journey (cf. appendix E, E8). This is made clear through André's optimistic and idealistic stance, i.e. his inner conviction in the ability of 'the people' to perform a change of the political system and thus improve social and economic conditions. Such a view clearly contrasts with those values of resignation and obedience that dominated the primary school system and political propaganda under the *Estado Novo* authoritarian regime.

In *Five Days, Five Nights*, the fact that the journey is set against the backdrop of one of the most geographically isolated and impoverished regions of the country allows the film to document the way of life of unprivileged local rural communities in a border zone at the time of the dictatorship. In following André's personal and spatial trajectory, we learn about the life of people bonded

by strong ties of solidarity and forced to survive at the cost of smuggling in the barely accessible province of Trás-os-Montes. Through André's voice-over we come close to his inner feelings and thoughts about the experience of the journey. A mix of uneasiness, distance and curiosity marks his interaction with the group of smugglers who are helping him to escape to Spain. His words conveyed in voice-over leave no doubt that he feels like a stranger amongst these 'underworld' characters (cf. appendix E, E7): "I felt profoundly disturbed in recalling how I was espied and gazed on by those glances. I didn't know that universe charged with silence and mumbled speeches". On the other hand, whilst emerging mostly as an attentive and cautious observer, André on no occasion expresses his views on the course of a future political change. We know, nonetheless, that he is a young political prisoner on the run from the political police.

In addition, *Five Days, Five Nights* is a film with credible neo-realist ambitions that are particularly visible in its naturalistic approach to landscape and its emphasis on concrete social problems of the lower classes in a specific social context. It articulates the view that the lack of social and economic opportunities for rural populations is intrinsically related to a repressive and isolationist political regime that prevents the country from modernizing.

In short, *Five Days, Five Nights* is concerned with the themes of the 'decadence' and regeneration of the nation that, as I sought to show, have long permeated thought on the specificity of Portuguese culture (cf. appendix E, E2). It is 'through the eyes' and subjectivities of André that we have access to aspects of life of an active 'culture of frontier' that finds no expression in the idea of the homogenous nation encouraged through the *Estado Novo's* official narratives. Moreover, the film also emphasizes how under Salazar's *Estado Novo* the discourse of the regeneration of the nation was never linked to the promotion of citizenship values able to assure the kind of strong civil society (see Santos, 1994: 63-64) that has been considered a bastion of modernity.

Identity, Memory and Place in *Journey to the Beginning of the World*

I have suggested that *Journey to the Beginning of the World* covers two distinct personal journeys: on the one hand, the journey of Manoel, the elderly director, who is revisiting the places and the memories of his childhood and youth; on the other hand, the journey of Afonso who is eager to learn more about his father's own past and the country where he was born. Their joint spatial trajectories supply us, both visually and narratively, with important historical and social details of the space travelled (cf. appendix F, F1). The film can therefore be divided into two distinct parts: the first, concerning Manoel's individual memory; the second, concerning the collective memory of Portugal, that of the most deprived regions, and of emigration (Parsi, 2001: 56). Whilst the first part of the film is dominated by Manoel's recollections of his childhood in the places they pass through and stop at, the second part is dominated by Maria's accounts of life in the small community of Lugar do Teso. Through Maria's stories we enter the realm of social memory as her recollections stand as a direct testimony of past events occurring in the village (Connerton, 1989).

I have shown that Afonso's journey is primarily the result of a longing for roots and identity that can only be satisfied and legitimated by a visit to the place where his father was born - the village of Lugar do Teso. Thus it is hardly surprising that Afonso sees his own personal story as entangled with the story of his deceased father. *Journey to the Beginning of the World* is dealing, after all, with the interplay of Afonso's quest for roots and the 'discovery' of the reality of rural Portugal and untold tales of emigration and deprivation in a remote village community. Like André in *Five Days, Five Nights*, Afonso is embarking on a 'journey into society' that will enrich the voyager with knowledge about the space travelled and lead to personal growth. What emerges as particularly striking in *Journey to the Beginning of the World* is that the lived experience of place at Lugar do Teso proves in itself insufficient to satisfy Afonso's quest for identity. This is apparent in the scene following his arrival at Lugar do Teso in which his aunt, Maria, refuses to acknowledge his identity on the basis that he cannot speak her language. Here, he is being confronted with his condition as a stranger.

Although he feels connected through ancestry to the place of Lugar do Teso, the fact that his aunt refuses to recognize him as her nephew proves highly disturbing because it prevents him from seeing his origins legitimated. However, Afonso does succeed in persuading his aunt otherwise by appealing to blood ties. Unsurprisingly, and as I have discussed in chapter 7, Maria's acceptance of his identity has a strong impact on Afonso's inner sense of self. He departs the village feeling that he has been made one of 'them'. We are dealing here with a relational concept of place which is not simply conceived as a location in space but instead in relation to an individual subject (Entrikin 1999). In addition, Afonso's encounter with his ancestors also suggests that there is a significant affective dimension in the constitution of collective identity (see Orchard, 2002: 428).

What emerges as crucial in the film is that resilient identity markers such as 'language' and 'blood' play an important role in negotiating the difference between 'us' and 'them'. This issue raises important questions about the role of ascriptive criteria of citizenship (*jus sanguinis* and the *jus soli*) in the building and maintenance of a sense of belonging to a given national community. Afonso is not a Portuguese citizen although he is linked through ancestry to Portuguese nationals. It also emerges that he maintains a strong emotional attachment to the idea of a Portuguese homeland through the memory of his father's accounts of life in the village of Lugar do Teso and the Portuguese folk music (*fado*) that he used to play on his guitar. When the film ends, although it is clear that Afonso has no intention of settling in Portugal and will be going back to France, he departs with the promise of coming back for a visit with his brother whom his aunt Maria is looking forward to meeting. In the end, then, Afonso's emotional attachment to Portugal where he has no effective connection in terms of residence does not presuppose integration within the national community. Thus we may well ask whether the sphere of social belonging that expresses an affective connection to a community may well lie beyond the sphere of citizenship that legitimates membership of the nation-state.

Afonso's personal and spatial trajectory in *Journey to the Beginning of the World* indicates that home is not a clearly bounded place. The film tells the story of Afonso's ongoing journey but also tells a tale of emigration. The latter is mostly conveyed through detailed accounts of Afonso's deceased father's own journey of emigration on two different occasions: first, by Afonso to his journey companions

on their way to Lugar do Teso; and then, once again, at Lugar do Teso, by Maria's recollection of the same events that she also relates to a collective story of emigration. This point brings us back again to Afonso's condition as a stranger in a country to which he feels emotionally connected through his own father's story of successful emigration. Although he is certainly not a typical Portuguese emigrant he feels his personal past is linked to an idea of a Portuguese homeland. A sense of home is not, nonetheless, necessarily attached to a conception of the homeland conceived as a national space of cultural belonging. For Afonso, a sense of home appears to embrace some sort of mixed attachment to his native France and the Portuguese village where his father was born, but not necessarily to Portugal conceived as a national territorially bounded community. Furthermore, Afonso's manifest interest and curiosity about the space he travels does not equal his overwhelming desire to visit Lugar do Teso so as to come close to his 'origins'. This is powerfully illustrated in a scene close to the beginning of the film where Afonso and his journey companions stand by a Minho river shore. Here, Manoel recollects the time he spent at the Jesuit boarding school while they all look attentively across the river. When Duarte remarks that he sees the Minho river as symbolically separating present and past, Afonso takes the opportunity to say that this river means nothing to him since it bears no relation to his father's village. Moreover, Afonso's condition as a stranger is hard to dismiss. It is obvious that he was brought up in a social milieu that bears no relation to that of his Portuguese ancestors.

In considering Afonso's life trajectory, then it could be argued that a sense of strong connectedness to an 'original' Portuguese homeland conceived and imagined as a territorially bounded nation has to be seen as problematic. On the other hand, we have also to consider that emigrant communities spread worldwide can hardly be attached to the idea of a universal Portuguese nation. This is because it is a local spatiality, and not a national spatiality, that mediates the emigrant's emotional attachment to a Portuguese homeland⁵.

Moreover, we cannot dismiss the film's narrative references to the mythic feeling of *saudade* (deep longing) that has been seen as constitutive of Portuguese historical collective memory (see Feldman-Bianco, 1996). When the film starts, Afonso tells his companions how his father used to speak about the feeling of *saudade* and how since he embarked on this journey this feeling has also arisen

within his inner self. *Saudade* is a cultural construction that goes back to the sixteenth-century and has for long been considered the essential ascriptive feature of the so-called Portuguese ‘national character’. The discourse of *saudade* has been particularly linked to the condition of the emigrant. *Saudade* is here connected to memories intrinsically associated to the lived experience of a time and a space preceding the emigration (*saudade da terra*) (Feldman-Bianco, 1996: 115). Thus it is hardly surprising that the ‘myth of the return’ so deeply embedded in Portuguese emigrant culture (Baganha, 1998) is symbolically entertained throughout personal memories anchored in a discourse of *saudade*. When studying national collective self-representations of Portuguese emigrants living in Germany, Klimt (2000: 517) concludes that, in fact, “almost everyone adamantly maintains a commitment to returning ‘home’ and refuses to entertain the possibility of permanent settling in Germany or the taking of German citizenship. Their sense of self is firmly linked to ‘being Portuguese’”. Moreover, this is the case even for first-generation descendents who (like Afonso) have lived their entire lives in Germany and know Portugal only through stories and vacation visits.

The mythic feeling and narrative of *saudade* is also recast in the film through Manoel’s personal experience. This is articulated through Manoel’s nostalgia for the time of his childhood and his outspoken sense of decadence of the present, and is illustrated, for instance, in the scene set at the ruined Hotel do Peso, once a fashionable spa where Manoel use to holiday as a child. Whilst wandering around, a nostalgic Manoel remarks in view of the desolate building, “What do these ruins represent? The future of a past that was once shining!”.

In short, *Journey to the Beginning of the World* suggests that a sense of continuity of one’s life story in relation to particular spatial and temporal local contexts offers a more reliable basis for the constitution of collective identity, than a more ‘abstract’ notion of a fabricated and territorialized national community.

Boundaries and Cultural Diversity in *Five Days, Five Nights*

Five Days, Five Nights is both narratively and symbolically concerned with the question of the impermeability of political borders in the isolationist times of the

dictatorship. The film draws attention to the role of political borders in demarcating the nation's cultural and political limits in a country with sharp social, geographic and economic asymmetries (cf. appendix E, E8).

At first glance, the film appears to be concerned with the almost complete lack of permeability of the Portuguese national borders in a time of severe restriction of the circulation of people and goods across the frontier. This is mostly suggested through a depiction of the way of life of Lambaça and his smuggler friends in the inaccessible enclave of the Trás-os-Montes (*Behind-the-Mountains*) region. At a more figurative level, however, the film brings up important questions about the artificiality of political borders. This is in part activated by powerful visual imagery and the use of specific settings (cf. appendix E, E2). Deep focus cinematography associated with 'continuity' cutting and the moving camera foregrounds a rich visual imagery (cf. appendix E, E4 and E6). Visual depictions of Lambaça and André, either walking or overlooking high slopes and small canyons prove effective in depicting a geographic area that for centuries has offered a boundary zone for Portugal in the northeast. On the other hand, the desert mountain ranges that André traverses alone and disoriented shortly after the beginning of his journey visually indicate an important geographic marker, i.e. the mountain range that separate the so-called rich and fertile 'green' Minho from the Trás-os-Montes province. The rocky crests of inaccessible mountains that bound this latter region leave no doubt that André is crossing an area where the rocky properties of the soil inhibit agriculture. Both elevation and undesirable weather conditions limit productivity along the boundary zone. Such factors also explain the relative isolation and sparseness of population along the frontier (see, for instance, Mattoso et al., 1997).

If the story line closely follows the flight of a young political prisoner across the Trás-os-Montes region until he successfully crosses the border, the visual imagery helps to deploy a national border that is more artificial and composed than its geographic outlines appear to suggest. Certainly, the rocky mountain slopes and dangerous canyons Lambaça and André have to cross offer a 'natural' barrier to the mobility of people and make the Trás-os-Montes area a suitable border zone. There is not, however, any visual indication of a border station, or trench, or any other sort of fortification to signal the border so as to prevent the unauthorized movement of people and goods. This is made particularly visible in the last scene.

When Lambaça decides to inform André that they have already ‘passed’, André reacts with surprise and disbelief. Although he must have suspected already that the voyage was coming to an end, there was no border station or even a signal post (as Lambaça ironically suggests) that could function as a significant marker of the political border. In the end, it is the crossing of a small and quiet stream of water when they were already on Spanish soil that symbolically marks the moment of the ‘passage’ to Spain.

This last scene especially implies that national borders are, above all, a product of ideological manoeuvres that are likely to make use of relevant geographic formations, such as rivers and mountain ranges, to consolidate and legitimate the nation’s political outlines. In fact, distinctive terrain, islands, mountainous areas and peripheries have always helped to emphasise differences and secure the recognition of a national territory (Williams and Smith, 1983). What is also apparent, however, is how the ‘invisibility’ of the political boundary contradicts one of the cornerstones of the so-called modern geopolitical imagination, i.e. the assumption that the world is divided into distinct sovereign states circumscribed by precisely defined geographical boundaries (O’Dowd, 2001: 96). The film also makes settings and narrative work together to subtly unveil the topographic similarity between Portugal and Spain along the border area⁶.

But the film is not simply depicting a typical border zone. It is also unfolding the fine details of a specific ‘culture of frontier’ whilst exposing the asymmetries of a diverse national culture. *Five Days, Five Nights* succeeds in drawing attention to a strong ‘culture of frontier’ fostered by the illegal activity of smuggling. This nocturnal and pedestrian activity represents for those inhabiting the region an important source of economic subsistence, especially in the difficult times of the dictatorship. Settings and landscape are depicted in a naturalistic fashion that works well in suggesting the sense of isolation of people inhabiting this predominantly rural area (cf. appendix E, E2 and E5). Shortly after the beginning of the journey, Lambaça and André get off the train at a small railway station where a lively market is taking place. Whilst they mingle with locals at the busy market so as to hide from the political police, we are shown the details of a world in which people in traditional peasant costumes sell vegetables, chickens and ducks. Such ‘realistic’ visual imagery strikingly unfolds the local economic and cultural practices of a smallholding peasantry way of life (cf. appendix E,

E7). Moreover, the environments of the film are full of houses built in stone with wooden balconies that are known as characteristic of Northern interior regions of the country. In scenes of interiors, visual details such as the absence of electric light, the shabby and scarce furnishings, the overemphasised presence of farming tools and products and a naturalistic use of lighting that darkens settings strikingly suggest the state of destitution and the hardships of life of an isolated rural population. The depiction of the smugglers' house offers important visual details of the activities concerning the illegal transaction of goods. For example, the piece of shiny luxury silk found by the police at the smuggler's house that sharply contrasts with the poor and gloomy house sets. The loose bullets the policeman accidentally finds when interrogating the smugglers about the whereabouts of André suggest the presence of illegal guns. Both narrative and visual imagery play a role in indicating how smuggling works as a 'parallel economy' that becomes the main source of profit for the population living in such a border zone.

We are also shown the strong ties of solidarity and trust governing relations within the 'culture of frontier'. This is particularly apparent in the interaction between Lambaça and his smuggler friends. Dialogue is scarce, and relationships appear to rely on a mutual understanding that goes beyond words. Such strong kinship ties are even more compelling if we consider that the film is set at a time when strict police surveillance was imposed by a repressive state apparatus, as in the scene where the political police subject the family of smugglers to a brutal interrogation. Despite the threats they do not provide information of the whereabouts of André and Lambaça. The risks and joys of a life dedicated to smuggling are also revealed in detail in the scene where the elderly smuggler tells André, with a hint of nostalgia, of his early days as a smuggler. The generosity and kindness of the prostitute Zulmira who refuses to set a payment agreement after offering shelter and food to both André and Lambaça is another example of the altruism governing the relations between people whose values and social practices are those of the 'culture of frontier'⁷.

In addition, we have also to look at the relation of a specific border zone (and of a distinct 'culture of frontier') vis-à-vis the state apparatus. In this sense, what *Five Days, Five Nights* appears to suggest is that geographic and economic isolation⁸ in the Trás-os-Montes region may well have fostered of a locally bounded 'culture of frontier', which benefited from the proximity of the border so as to assure survival

at the harsh times of the *Estado Novo* regime. Arguably, this also means that the locale offers a better ground for collective affiliation than the idea of a national community. This argument holds stronger if we accept that in the Portuguese context we are, in fact, dealing with a highly heterogeneous culture that is difficult to assimilate within the notion of the homogeneous nation. As suggested by Santos (1994: 133), in Portugal the state never succeeded in promoting a strong homogenous culture capable of differentiating a Portuguese national culture from other national cultures. Thus both the local and the transnational in their respective spatial and temporal cultural dimension have been much stronger than the national in defining a Portuguese national culture⁹.

In *Five Days, Five Nights* the realm 'foreign' as subjectively experienced by André has therefore to be seen as a constitutive part of the national 'we', i.e. the national community. In short, the idea of a homogenous national community loses plausibility in view of a country lacking an integrated national culture and at odds with a government that resisted modernisation and secularisation.

Boundaries and Cultural Diversity in *Journey to the Beginning of the World*

Journey to the Beginning of the World raises important questions about discourses of Portuguese national identity in relation to questions of border-definition (cf. appendix F, F8). On the one hand, the film is concerned with the depiction of Portugal as a territory where political boundaries have remained substantially unchanged throughout almost eight centuries of unbroken statehood. Such historical factors have favoured claims about the homogeneity and stability of Portuguese society (see, for instance, Martins, 1971). On the other hand, *Journey to the Beginning of the World* also questions this apparent cultural homogeneity. That is because the journey to Lugar do Teso is also exploring the social and economic asymmetries of a society that emerges, after all, as remarkably heterogeneous.

Most stories told in the film's long and expository dialogue scenes embrace detailed descriptions of historical events and social upheavals of Portuguese official history (cf. appendix F, F1). Issues such as the traditional domineering

influence of the Catholic Church on Portuguese social and cultural life emerge in Manoel's recollections of severe discipline at the Jesuit boarding school where he was educated. The perils of a historical mass migration are raised in Maria's accounts of life in a village where so many young men were forced to emigrate to escape poverty-stricken lives. The asymmetries seen in the dichotomy urban littoral vs. rural interior, and the problematic integration of Portugal in the EU, are all brought up in conversations with Maria at Lugar do Teso.

Certain geographic formations (e.g. a mountain range) and landmarks (e.g. city walls) play, both visually and narratively, an important part in raising issues about the specificity of Portuguese national identity in relation to questions of boundary-definition and crossing. Crossing boundaries, i.e. the physical act of crossing or of being faced with a political boundary inscribed in the landscape, is a process that is both symbolically and affectively linked to the topics of ongoing conversations and to specific visual details of the passing landscape. A good example of this is the conversation about the medieval origins of the fortress city of Valença, a historical border-town in the northwest. The conversation takes place as we are offered images of the group passing through the gates built in the extremely thick city walls. The tracking shot has a powerful effect in symbolically linking the extraordinary depth of the fortress-town to the idea of the historical Portuguese separateness from its neighbouring Spain. There is here a strong reference to an important historical border that is being symbolically emphasised by the physical crossing of a boundary marker (i.e. the border-town city walls). The fortress-town of Valença signals, both literally and symbolically, the distinctiveness of Portugal in relation to the 'Spanish other', an issue which relates to the well-known historic rivalry with neighbouring Spain. Attempts to ensure the political independence and cultural distinctiveness of the Portuguese nation are even today visible, for instance, in events such as the public holiday celebration of the restoration of the independency in 1640 after a period of six decades years under Spanish rule.

Another example of how questions of boundary-crossing are linked to issues about the specificity of Portuguese national territory and identity can be found in the scenes set at Lugar do Teso. Here, the inaccessible mountain range¹⁰ rising in the background acquires a more symbolic meaning as we learn through Afonso's elderly aunt of how so many young men were forced to cross such mountains to find a better life elsewhere. This is also made visible when José, Afonso's uncle,

tells Duarte of his bother-in-law's obsession in crossing the mountains so as to illegally migrate to France. This conversation takes place as the group walks throughout the narrow streets of Lugar do Teso. When José points out the mountains rising in the distant background, we are offered a visually striking image of a monumental mountain range depicted in grey tones and lost in mist. The tales of emigration that follow when the group finally reach the house where Afonso's father was born help to illustrate and 'authenticate', both literally and metaphorically, the relevance of an enduring historical border. Through both Maria and Afonso, we learn about the dangers (e.g. mountain wolves) and hardships (e.g. lack of money and clothes) endured by Afonso's father when he carried out his journey of emigration. Thus the lure to cross the border to find a better life elsewhere emerges as clearly associated with the dangers and hardships involved in the crossing of the mountain.

An important issue being raised in these conversations about emigration are the negative consequences for rural populations faced with a mass departure of young men. This pattern was particularly salient in emigration to central European countries (especially France and Germany) during the second half of the twentieth-century (see Baganha, 1998). The so-called 'desertification of the interior' has been for long associated with problems of mass emigration. More recently, the opposition between an increasingly highly populated littoral (from north to south) and a deserted interior replaced the historical opposition North/South. When in 1987 Portugal joined the EU the asymmetries between different regions of the country soon became less prominent. This was achieved especially through an improvement in the networks of transportation and communication and the expansion of common patterns of consumption (Villaverde Cabral, 1992: 952-953). Although we have to acknowledge the homogenisation of the Portuguese social space in recent years, we still cannot fail to recognize the continuing costs of the 'desertification of the interior' for many rural populations of such insular regions.

In this sense, *Journey to the Beginning of the World* plays an important part in depicting, both visually and narratively, the 'lived' experience of a geographically and culturally isolated small rural community in 'modern' Portugal. It comes as no surprise that Maria speaks of Lugar do Teso as a place forgotten by the world since the village has been for so many years faced with desertification, as well as

geographic and economic isolation. Ultimately, she asks “Who cares about us?”. She wonders aloud who is going to cultivate the land after the elderly people who stayed in the village die, and remarks bitterly that these are stories that nobody tells.

In the realm of the visual imagery, it is also significant that *Journey to the Beginning of the World* refuses to display a picturesque image of the Portuguese countryside (cf. appendix F, F2). The film draws particular attention to economic, social and geographic dimensions of space whilst portraying a rich and diverse landscape. The visual imagery plays, in fact, an important role in unfolding a space that is culturally and geographically extremely heterogeneous and is marked by sharp asymmetries. The group travels along the farthest northern province of Portugal. This area is part of the Minho region known for its green vineyards and fertile soil (see Mattoso et al. 1997). As the journey proceeds, we become aware of differences in the landscape that are powerfully conveyed by the consistent use of the travelling shot which allows us to make sense of the layered landscape of northern Portugal (cf. appendix F, F6). A landscape encompassing green and fertile areas composed mainly of large vineyards and small vegetable plots soon changes to sharply contrasted rough mountain ranges punctuated by rapid brooks of cold water and rocky areas scattered with old Romanesque remains. An imagery at first pervaded by rich vineyards and large houses with the distinctive stone granaries typical of the ‘green Minho’ disappears when the group enters a harsh area of high and irregular slopes. It soon becomes clear that this is a terrain of limited desirability for agriculture due to the rocky properties of the land. As they get close to Lugar do Teso, the growing sense of the remoteness of rural communities is clearly associated with a perceived rough landscape (cf. appendix F, F8). The images of a typical northern village square where a group of elderly locals, gathered around a religious stone pillar, comment that the van’s passengers appear to be tourists suggest the state of isolation of such elderly populations. The same effect is produced by the dogs running and barking at the arrival of strangers (our group of voyagers) at Lugar do Teso. At Maria’s house, a table displaying local food illustrates the warm welcome visitors get in these villages, a traditional custom already anticipated by Duarte’s comments on their way to Lugar do Teso. Moreover, the vision of Maria and her daughter-in-law, Christine, dressed in black mourning costume and with their heads covered with a black kerchief turns out to

be the expression of another local custom. Christine explains that such a costume marks the respect for the absent husband, who has most certainly emigrated abroad. These traditional customs, which only endure within small communities that escaped modernization, are also indicative of the remoteness of Lugar do Teso. Images of the group walking through the extremely narrow streets of Lugar do Teso cluttered with small granite houses exhibiting their typical wooden balconies and the visual and aural images of herds and flocks passing by are powerful in suggesting that this is a typical rural area that did not ‘modernize’. Instead of ‘enchanted villages’ spread across an ‘unspoilt countryside’ we are faced with the dramas of ageing local communities confined to villages that still live on the basis of old communitarian habits. It is also the case that the places and spaces depicted are meant to represent genuine locations (e.g. Lugar do Teso is, in fact, Lugar do Teso).

As I sought to demonstrate, *Journey to the Beginning of the World* demystifies, both visually and narratively, the picturesque image of a rural Portugal. The space travelled is shaped by a landscape marked by sharp contrasts and textures. In Lugar do Teso, characters’ mood is sombre, the landscape depicted is rough, interiors are gloomy and destitute, and a sense of the felt remoteness of those still inhabiting the village is convincingly conveyed in both the conversations taking place and a naturalistic approach to landscape.

In the end, the journey to the ‘beginning of the world’ (i.e. Lugar do Teso) functions as a metaphor for Portugal, a country crisscrossed by sharp social and economic asymmetries whose complexity is often dismissed in both the political and the media agendas. Indeed, Lugar do Teso could well stand as an ‘other’ for modern Portugal. The unwavering ‘reality’ of geographically isolated villages that, like Lugar do Teso, remain at the margins of the new enterprises of valuation of a local rural patrimony, constitute a threat for the advertised image of modern, cosmopolitan and European Portugal¹¹.

11.3 Conclusion

Five Days, Five Nights and *Journey to the Beginning of the World* are dealing with the question of the specificity of a Portuguese national identity whilst

offering a critique of the idea of the homogenous nation. In being thematically concerned with questions of boundary-crossing and definition, both films are mirroring, visually and narratively, the tensions between the regional and national dimensions of space. *Journey to the Beginning of the World* questions homogenous representations of 'us' by raising issues such as sharp regional asymmetries, the perils of a historical mass emigration, and a notion of collective belonging that is linked to an emotional attachment to place rather than to the territorial nation. *Five days, Five Nights* is particularly concerned to explore the social and cultural particularities of a regionally bounded 'culture of frontier' that undermines the idea of an integrated and homogenous national culture in the isolationist times of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship. Both films suggest that a central challenge is how to rethink Portuguese cultural identity in view of its manifest and unredeemable heterogeneity.

¹ See Rebelo (1998), chap. 1, for a discussion on debates on the ideological definition of the dictatorship.

² The myth of Portuguese imperialism has also to be seen in light of Portugal's semi-peripheral position in the international arena, especially in face of the increasing economic dependency on Britain (Santos, 2001; see also Fortuna, 1993). In the nineteenth-century, the economic decline that followed the loss of Brazil as a colony in 1822, foreign interventions during the Napoleonic invasion, and the British Ultimatum of 1890 with the consequent loss of territories in Africa, were concurrent with growing emigration trends and economic and military dependence on Britain. Salazar's 'African vocation' dominated Portuguese foreign policy during the dictatorship and determined a deliberate distancing from European affairs. Whilst intransigently defending the integrity of African colonies, Salazar was keen on reaffirming the alliance with Britain and in reinforcing an Iberian friendship that was facilitated by Franco's victory during the Spanish Civil War (Teixeira, 1998).

³ Moorish and Jewish communities were important during the Middle Ages. However, in the late fifteenth-century, with the expulsion of the Jews and their forced conversion to Christianity (converted Jews became initially known as 'New Christians'), the presence of Jewish communities ceased to be officially recognized (see Monteiro and Pinto, 1998).

⁴ The novella was found in 1974 in the aftermath of the 25th of April Revolution that ended the authoritarian *Estado Novo* regime. *Cinco Dias, Cinco Noites/Five Days, Five Nights* was published later on under the pseudonymous of Manuel Tiago (1994).

⁵ This argument finds support into two key characteristics of Portuguese emigration in the post-war period: firstly, the so-called 'specialization of destinies' that refers to the tendency for individuals of a specific community of birth to head to the very same destination abroad (see Garcia et al., 2000); secondly, the return to the community of birth (e.g. the village) becomes a recurrent pattern when the emigration cycle closes (see Baganha, 1998).

⁶ Historians and geographers currently agree that it is not possible to assert the distinctiveness of the Portuguese territory in relation to neighbouring Spain on the basis of the political border. Most Portuguese borderlands (*raias*) spread across a landscape rather similar in both sides of the political border. Moreover, areas of high elevation signalled by high mountain crests rarely coincide with the political border (see Mattoso et al., 1997: 23-24). It is also noteworthy that the cross-cultural exchange with neighbouring Spain is strongly linked to the existence of cultural enclaves in the border zones (see Bebiano, 2002: 523; see also, Bastos, 1999).

⁷ These social practices could be also seen as an expression of what Santos (1994) considers a strong 'welfare society' that in the Portuguese case replaced a deficient welfare state. For Santos (1994: 64), the 'welfare society' comprehends those networks of relations of face-to-face

recognition and mutual help based in kinship and communitarian ties. The 'welfare society' is organized according to traditional models of social solidarity where small social groups exchange goods and services in a non-commercial basis under logic of reciprocity.

⁸ See Martins (1971: 74) on how during the 1950s and the 1960s 30 per cent of the population lived in localities inaccessible by road and only 15 per cent of gross agricultural product is marketed.

⁹ Only very recently has the Portuguese state been promoting through cultural policy and propaganda a true homogenous national culture (Santos, 1994: 136). This has to be seen as a strategy for strengthening Portugal's position in the European arena.

¹⁰ The mountain range limits the extreme northern point of Portugal in an area of difficult access, severe weather conditions and characterized by the rocky properties of the soil.

¹¹ It is also noteworthy that unable to achieve visibility through marketed 'authenticity', localities such as Lugar do Teso are bound to an unwilling amnesia by local and central government authorities. The idea of preserving a 'dying' rural countryside became recently a central argument in the manoeuvres of a new group of professionals, state entrepreneurs and cultural producers committed to competing dynamics of local development and the promotion of the local (see Peixoto, 2002; see also Fortuna, 1997).

CONCLUSION

In part 1, the examination of the literature of nation and nationalism vis-à-vis questions of cultural diversity provided useful concepts and guidance for investigating how national identity is articulated with questions of boundary-crossing and definition. I sought to explain in chapters 1 and 2 how both the ‘modernist’ and the ‘post-modern’ trends reflect upon the challenges the nation-state is facing in view of increasing cultural diversity, growing mass migration, and the globalisation of culture. I have shown that problems of the conceptualisation of national identity arise primarily from the difficulty in acknowledging that it is possible to identify *where* the cultural boundaries of the nation lie without ‘essentializing’ either the ‘people’ or the ‘territory’. In this sense, I have argued that the ‘post-modernist trend’ prescribes the epistemological impossibility of fixing any limits for the nation conceived as both a community and a cultural construct. I have also suggested that national identity, as a form of collective identity, has to be understood in terms of the intersubjective ways in which people make sense of themselves as having a national identity. Hence we need to consider the relatively stable cultural boundaries that distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and which remain relatively indifferent to changing sociological and historical circumstances. Moreover, these ‘boundary markers’ are not to be seen as essentialist or objective properties of the ‘us’. This is demonstrated in the analytical distinction between ‘form’ and ‘content’ with regard to national identity. It is the case that the ‘content’ of national identity, i.e. the various and changing images, symbols and narratives of nationhood, is subjected to the crosscutting pressures of social and cultural exchanges of changing historical conditions.

In part 2, I dealt with the sub-narrative patterns of the European ‘film of voyage’ (i.e. aimless journeys and journey quests). In the first instance, I sought to demonstrate how European ‘films of voyage’ conform stylistically, thematically and narratively to modern cinema (or ‘art film’) which developed within the post-war period. I then explored a corpus of films, relating to various national contexts and encompassing almost fifty years, so as to examine the two sub-narratives of

the European 'film of voyage': 'aimless journeys' and 'journey-quests'. In the second instance, I have been concerned with those aspects of narrative structure and character construction that are to be seen as constitutive of this cinematic tradition. I began in chapter 5 with a summary account of the narrative and thematic patterns and themes of the American road-movie. Here, I sought to provide a useful contrast between this American popular genre and the European 'film of voyage' since both use the journey as their main narrative structuring device. Chapters 6 and 7 illustrate the way in which specific and recurrent narrative strategies and the constitution of the figure of the voyager are to be seen as distinctive within the cinematic tradition of the European 'film of voyage'. Here I sought to demonstrate how both 'aimless journeys' and 'journey-quests', in reflecting upon a given society to which the voyagers relate, are dealing with notions of 'home': 'aimless journeys' deal with voyages that encompass a search for 'a new way of being at home' and as such they overcome the certainties and the fixity of place; 'journey-quests' deal with voyages that involve a self-conscious quest for origins and identity and as such they entail a search for home configured as a place where 'one can feel at home'. In this context, I also aimed to show that despite the fact that often the journey takes place across a familiar terrain (e.g. the national space), the voyager is self-consciously experiencing the space that he or she travels as foreign.

In part 3, I investigated how various themes of national identity are articulated with questions of boundary-crossing and definition deployed in European 'films of voyage'. In order to do so, I conducted three case studies based upon the German, the Greek vis-à-vis the Balkan and the Portuguese contexts. In the first place, I sought to deploy an analytical framework that allowed me to argue that European 'films of voyage' suggest a redrawing of the 'mental map' of the nation that is inconsistent with the idea of a culturally homogenous national space. In this sense, I have suggested that this cinematic tradition conveys a critique of universalistic conceptions of the 'Other' whilst avoiding the fallacies of cultural relativism. I have also attempted to demonstrate that memory plays a crucial part in the constitution of the link between identity and place. I have then suggested that the constitution of both personal and collective identity as expressed in European 'films of voyage' relates to a notion of 'home' that might involve

identifying or legitimating origins. In the second place, I sought to demonstrate how the corpus of films being considered in the case studies is informed by the historical and sociological contingencies of specific European national societies. These European 'films of voyage' play a crucial role, both narratively and visually, in foregrounding questions such as the tension between the national and regional dimensions of space, and the role of political boundaries in contemporary European societies. It is clear that the German, the Greek and the Portuguese contexts encompass a 'community of belonging' that does not necessarily overlap with a territorial nation-state. European 'films of voyage' in representing the nation its sheer cultural diversity and asymmetry are, ultimately, suggesting that this has to be seen as a 'cultural space of belonging' that is clearly more significant than the realm of the rights and duties of citizenship that legitimate membership of the nation-state. This is apparent when we think of the politically fractured German nation of the 1970s under the dictates of the Great Powers, at a time in which many Germans were still trying to come to terms with the legacies of their Fascist past. This is also apparent when we think of the Greek nation vis-à-vis the ill-defined and transient Balkan region whose political map has changed widely in a space where different ethnic groups and religions have mingled for centuries. This is also apparent when we think of the Portuguese national space where political borders have remained unchanged since the late Middle Ages, and where the model of the uniform nation-state still plays an important role in laying the very foundations of national identity.

Finally, I have suggested that although European 'films of voyage' offer a critique of the idea of the homogenous nation, they do not deny the existence of a geographically definable physical space from which people derive identity. Whilst it might be argued that a conception of homeland lacks a specific territorial configuration, it is also the case that national identity as a form of collective belonging is tied to an emotional commitment to a place (see Turner, 2002). This view opposes those post-modernist perspectives claiming that globalisation has led to a 'deterritorialization' of identity and therefore that there is no need for people to belong to a specific place.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : Film Analysis of *Alice in the Cities*

STYLISTICS FEATURES	
<p>A1: Narrative structure</p>	<p>Plot synopsis: Philip is a German journalist who is sent to the U.S to write a story about the American landscape. He wanders around the U.S. taking Polaroid pictures. After a row with his editor in New York, Philip decides to go back to Germany to finish his story and resolve his 'writer's block'. At a travel agency, he meets a German woman, Lisa, and her nine year-old daughter, Alice, who also want to go back to Germany as soon as possible. The woman, who is in a marital crisis, vanishes after they book their flights together, and Philip finds himself in charge of child he barely knows. Alice and Philip fly to Amsterdam and from there they initiate an almost hopeless search for Alice's grandmother's house across Germany, as her mother fails to return from New York as promised. The uneasy relationship between Philip and Alice turns to comradeship, and the gloomy Philip begins to enjoy himself in the company of Alice, who has very peculiar views about what surrounds her. They both get in a train to Munich to meet Lisa and Alice's grandmother when the police manage to locate Alice's mother. Philip tells Alice he is going to finish his story.</p> <p>Main sequences: 1- Philip wanders around the U.S taking Polaroid pictures of the surrounding landscape (scenes 1 to 5); 2 - Unable to finish his story, Philip decides to go back to Germany and by chance meets Alice and Lisa (scenes 6 to 12); 3 - Lisa vanishes and Philip is forced to travel with Alice to Amsterdam where they wait for Lisa to come back (scenes 13 to 18); 4 - When Lisa fails to return from New York, Philip and Alice head to Wuppertal to search for Alice's grandmother's house (scenes 19 to 24); 5 - After escaping from the police station, Alice finds Philip and they travel across the Ruhr region in search of the house (scenes 25 to 31); 6 - Philip runs out of money and decides to go with Alice to his parents. They meet by chance a policeman who informs Philip they found Alice's mother. Philip and Alice head to Munich to meet Lisa and the grandmother (scenes 32 and 33).</p> <p>General narrative structure: The film follows a standard chronological narrative as events are presented in a clear temporal order. The story can be divided into two recognizable main narrative units; Philip's travels around the U.S in order to write a story about the American landscape, and Philip and Alice's travels across Germany to find Alice's grandmother. It is clear that as the story progresses and Philip</p>

abandons the U.S he becomes much less concerned with the writing of his story. He stops taking notes and having sleepless nights, though he keeps, once in a while, taking Polaroid pictures of the German landscape as he did in the U.S. During the second part of the film, Philip's and Alice's main goal is to find Alice's grandmother's house and to leave the girl with relatives.

Even if there is a strong sense of a clear goal to pursue in Alice's and Philip's journeys, they seem to get further away from achieving their goal. Philip is suffering from a 'writer's block' and identity crisis that impede him of completing his story; and the search for Alice's grandmother turns completely hopeless when, almost by chance, they find the house but discover Alice's grandmother does not live there anymore. The story is told episodically as the linking of the main events proceeds through chance encounters. It is by chance that Philip meets Alice and finds himself forced to take care of her while looking for her grandmother across Germany; it is also almost by chance that they find Alice's grandmother's house, a house like many others; and, finally, it is by accident that a policeman finds Alice and Philip to inform them both Alice's mother and grandmother have been found.

The narrative deals more with Philip and Alice's wanderings, i.e. their silent and almost aimless drives, first in Amsterdam and then across the Ruhr, their stops and *temps morts* in hotel rooms and cafes, or in the building of their relationship, than on the dramatization of the events. This is primarily because neither suspense or retardation effects appear to play a role within this story; a climax eventually builds up when Alice seems to recognize her grandmother's house but she soon finds out that she is wrong, and the journey turns completely hopeless. Philip and Alice end up having fun together; they go swimming and sunbathing in a park, as they have no more clues where about to search. The ending occurs unexpectedly, and also by chance, when Philip had already been forced to abandon their search for lack of money; he and Alice were heading to his parents.

The narrative, especially in association with editing and camera movement, centres mostly on 'what' characters see, rather than the actions they perform. Settings and narrative are closely intertwined in this story. Space is relevant in that it does not exist merely to frame a character's actions; the space becomes plot-significant because the manner in which characters experience the spaces where they move; i.e. their feelings and thoughts about such spaces, is a crucial narrative element: Philip and Alice emerge as attentive observers of the spaces they are forced to look at.

	<p>Sub-narrative pattern of aimless journey: the journey appears aimless since there is not a clear-cut goal or a strong motivation shaping their journeys. During the first part of the story, Philip has to write a story about American landscape as this is part of his job; during the second part of the film, he finds himself in charge of Alice and as her mother fails to return from New York he is forced to look for her grandmother. The course of their journeys is, in the end, shaped by chance.</p> <p>The aimless character of these journeys is also emphasised by the hopeless nature of their practical goals. Philip's travels across the U.S to write his story, and his and Alice's journey in search of her grandmother's house across the Rhine are mostly marked by hopelessness, tension, despair, and, in Philip's case, also by an identity crisis. This all-encompassing sense of hopelessness becomes more salient as the story unfolds characters' feelings of uneasiness (especially Philip's) in spaces they perceive as strange, or foreign. It is clear that both Alice and Philip find it difficult to feel 'at home' in the U.S., Holland or even Germany. They are rarely portrayed interacting with others and appear as detached from the surrounding environment. Only when Philip is forced to abandon the search for Alice's grandmother and their journey turns completely aimless, their relationship finally becomes closely bonded. They start to feel at ease with each other and in the contact with others. Their relationship starts growing particularly in the scene in which they go swimming and sunbathing and when they meet a woman with whom they spend a night. The ending resolves the problem of finding Alice's grandmother and also suggests that Philip will be able to finish his story. Narrative closure remains, nonetheless, ambiguous since there is no indication that their journey together has actually finished. The last scene shows Philip and Alice, in a train carriage, heading to Munich to meet Lisa and the grandmother, whilst an aerial shot unveils the specificities and diversity of the Rhine landscape with the train running at the distance. Alice's reencounter with her mother is never shown, nor does the viewer gets to know if Philip managed to write his story. Curiously, Munich was the city where Philip intended to head to write his story, as he told his editor in New York.</p>
<p>A2 : Mise-en-scène</p>	<p>Lighting: natural lighting is employed 'realistically'. Inside hotel rooms, sidelighting and lighting from below (often from a TV switched on) play a role in depicting a claustrophobic and impersonal atmosphere.</p> <p>Setting: the film is shot in location. Settings and space in general do not function as a mere background for characters' actions (e.g. characters' inner state of mind is closely related</p>

to their inability to feel at ease in the environments where they move). The narrative also plays a role in connecting settings and plot, by showing the characters speaking about how they feel about specific spaces (e.g. Philip confesses to Lisa and his lady friend his feelings of uneasiness in the American space).

Camera work and *mise-en-scène* play an important role in emphasising how characters (especially Philip and Alice) relate with the space they travel.

The main characters are never depicted in conventional homely environments, i.e. home or work context, although Philip and Alice end up anxiously searching for Alice's grandmother's house. The spaces in which they exist are mostly 'non-places' (see Augé 1995), e.g. hotel rooms, motels and airport lounges, trains, planes, cars, etc., which are depicted as bleak and undifferentiated either in Amsterdam, Germany or America.

The first half of the film is set in the U.S. Here, settings are visibly depicted as 'unfamiliar environments' and as part of an alienating space, which is at the root of characters' existential crisis. Philip and Lisa visibly feel uneasy and distressed in the U.S, a space where they feel like strangers. U.S. settings emerge as part of an undifferentiated landscape pervaded by billboards, neon lights, motorways claustrophobic motels, petrol stations, colonial style houses, jukeboxes, and coca-cola and soda adverts. New York vistas of the Empire State Building and of Manhattan, which are part of the celebrated imagery of the city in photography, film and advertising, are visually emphasised. The exoticism of Florida with its beaches and Palm trees is suggested in the first scenes. Some settings recall the American road-movie imagery, e.g. when Philip is seen taking a picture of a highly emblematic setting - a petrol station with its coke adverts and rundown look. Many props (billboards, neon lights, radio a TV antennas) are identifiable as icons of American culture.

The second half of the film is dominated by German settings after a brief passage by Amsterdam. When Philip and Alice arrive in Amsterdam, the space the camera unveils is part of the traditional imagery of Amsterdam; it shows Alice and Philip in a tourist boat trip in a canal. When travelling by bus, long takes of landscape reveal a few typical vistas of the Dutch countryside (e.g. a windmill on the background of a flat countryside landscape). In the scenes shot in Holland, these picturesque vistas also serve to frame the latent conflict between Alice and Philip, as Alice insists in showing Amsterdam to Philip, whilst Philip appears completely detached, even annoyed, with the surrounding environment.

	<p>German settings refer mostly to the highly industrialised and notoriously polluted Ruhr region. Not surprisingly, the landscape unveiled as Philip and Alice travel from city to city is one marked by sharp contrasts; this is pervaded by flocks of sheep amidst images of gas-releasing factories set in the background. Run-down council estate houses and streets of undifferentiated blocks of flats in the cities alternate with old picturesque cottages in the countryside. What Philip and Alice find when looking for her grandmother's old house is a countryside at odds with rapid industrialisation. They learn from some locals that old low rent houses are being demolished. The desertification of the German countryside is also clear in long travelling shots unfolding apparently deserted villages and flat landscapes. Alice regrets the destruction of such old and beautiful houses: "Empty places look like graves ... as graves for houses". In city settings, on the contrary, amidst streets of terraced houses one can find groups of children playing and cycling. Philip also observes an Asian couple in traditional costumes passing by.</p> <p>Both Dutch and German settings emerge, in the end, as unfamiliar environments. Philip shows no desire to stay in Amsterdam, and besides he cannot even speak the language. We can see Alice translating a conversation between Philip and a barber while he was having a haircut. German settings mirror somehow both his and Alice's sense of disorientation and hopelessness as they fail to locate Alice's grandmother. As in the U.S, they are forced to wander from city to city, from hotel to hotel, and from café to café.</p> <p>Germany itself appears pervaded by icons of American culture. This is particularly visible in a scene shot at a café in Wuppertal, where a child is sat by a jukebox singing along while drinking a coke; the camera cuts off several times from Philip and Alice's conversation to show such an emblematic image of American culture. Alice is also seen drinking a coke at the police station and Philip, regardless of his despise for American culture, is also shown drinking a coke and enjoying a Chuck Berry concert in Germany after leaving Alice in a police station.</p> <p>When travelling across Germany, the visual imagery itself does not allow distinctions to be made between different locations, though it is clear that the characters are travelling through a highly industrialised region.</p>
A3: Characters	<p>Character development is central in this story as this revolves around the building of the relationship between a journalist, suffering from an identity crisis, and a nine-year old girl, he is forced to look after when her mother disappears. During the first half of the film, the narrative aligns the</p>

viewer with Philip by following his movements across the U.S. Camera movement and point-of-view work together to unfold the space Philip travels as 'through his eyes'. The viewer has access to Philip's thoughts, feelings and facial expression (especially through the many CU the camera deploys). The viewer learns through his short confessional dialogues (e.g. the conversation with his editor; the conversation with his lady friend) of how American landscape has changed him, and how out of New York "everywhere looks the same". He complains about the horrible radio whose DJ keeps interrupting the music and about a cruel TV that distorts reality and "transforms everything into advertising with smug disdain". He also speaks of his obsession with images, and the need to compare his pictures with reality. He confesses to his female friend that he has stopped knowing himself.

Philip's name and social background are not immediately provided; the viewer only gets to know these after by the occasion of the row with the paper's editor and the meeting with Lisa and Alice (scenes 6 and 7).

During the first half of the film, the narrative attaches the viewer to three other characters: Lisa, her nine-year old daughter, Alice, and Philip's female friend. The two women's social roles are never fully clarified but the narrative provides some information about their inner state of mind; it is clear that both of them are German living in America and suffering from some sort of personal crisis. Neither Lisa nor Philip's lady friend reappear as characters when the story follows Philip and Alice's travels across Germany.

Lisa, who is suffering a marital crisis, finds it difficult to listen to Philip and she often ignores his questions or comments. She shows, nonetheless, a great need to speak about her personal problems and be listened to. When they first meet at a travel agency, Lisa and Philip's affinities arise from the fact they both share the same nationality (and language) and are eager to go back to Germany as soon as possible. Lisa appears desperate to get to Germany and asks Philip help to book a flight to Amsterdam, as she does not have a good command of the English language. She vanishes in a last attempt to resolve her marital crisis.

When Philip finds himself in charge of Alice, the narrative starts withholding information about his thoughts and feelings. On the other hand, the narrative starts aligning the spectator with Alice and she turns into a more central protagonist. The landscape and the space travelled is now filtered 'through the eyes' of both Alice and Philip. It is through Alice's peculiar remarks that both Philip and the

viewer are able to see the spaces they travel from a different perspective (e.g. when Philip takes a picture of the clouds from the plane's window Alice comments: "it's a beautiful picture, it's completely empty"; she also takes a picture of him so that he can see "how he looks like"). Alice is not suffering from an identity crisis and seems more at ease with American culture in her love for hotdogs, TV and American music. It starts getting clear that is not 'what' Philip sees but 'how' he sees the world that is at the centre of his identity crisis.

The unfortunate circumstances that bring Philip and Alice together mark the beginning of a difficult relationship.

At the beginning, this is marked by a great uneasiness since they barely know each other and Alice is visibly upset with her mother's disappearance. In an attempt to comfort Alice he suggests looking for her grandmother. The differences between Alice and Philip are sharp: Philip emerges as detached, gloomy and reserved character, though he reveals kindness towards Alice and he is determined to take care of her. Alice is talkative; she tells jokes, she makes comments about what surrounds her (e.g. she considers Amsterdam much more beautiful than New York; in another scene, she also speaks of how the Ruhr river is polluted), and even tells Philip of her nightmares. She also asks Philip personal questions he keeps ignoring. Philip remains silent for most of the time, but often gets puzzled and annoyed in face of Alice's constant demands for food, ice creams and drinks. Alice's openness and practical reasoning contrasts with Philip's aloofness.

Their relationship appears to grow stronger after their journey turns completely hopeless, as they have no more clues on how to find Alice's grandmother. Philip and Alice then start having some fun; they make funny faces while taking passport pictures; they exercise in an occasional stop; and enjoy themselves swimming and sunbathing in a park. At the park, Alice even questions Philip if they look like father and daughter and shows some jealousy when he spends the night with the woman they both met at the park.

By the end of the journey, Philip appears reconciled with himself and with a space that though familiar had turned alien. He had been travelling his native Germany as an unwilling witness of a space he is forced to contemplate. The story told turns, in the end, into a story of personal growth as Philip learns 'to see' himself and the world 'through different eyes'. Philip never stopped taking pictures, which could be seen part of an attempt to resolve his obsession with images and the reality they depict, but, as his voyage together with Alice evolves, it is clear he stops taking notes and having

	<p>sleepless nights. Philip's process of change and reconciliation with himself is closely related with the manner in which he sees the world.</p>
<p>A4: Editing</p>	<p>Zoom is rarely used, except for the last scene that closes with an aerial shot of the Rhine landscape. This is an extraordinary long zooming out of the landscape that unfolds the topography of the Rhine region and enables the viewer to apprehend the topography of the region in its details and diversity.</p> <p>Close-ups in alternation with long shots of the landscape are widely employed. A close-up of Philip observing the landscape often cuts with a LS of the space he is looking at. This might be followed by a detail shot of a Polaroid picture of that very same space.</p> <p>When Philip wanders across the U.S he is framed mostly in MS or MCU inside the car. As from Philip's point-of-view, the camera tracks forward to reveal the surrounding environment and cuts at times to a FS of the car running towards the camera that is tracking backwards on the road, or to a panning shot revealing the car passing on the distant background. This editing devices place the spectator in the driver's seat while unveiling the space travelled. Sometimes the camera is placed as in the back seat and allows the viewer to see Philip's hand on the wheel. Cutting off from a CU of Philip's profile to a long travelling or tracking shot of what he is seeing through the windows is also a common device (ex: Philip in the tube in New York). In the second part of the film, when Philip and Alice travel across Germany in search of her grandmother's house, the camera often cuts off from a CU of either Alice or Philip framed inside the Renault 4, to a tracking or travelling shot of landscape, and vice-versa. The interplay between a CU of either Alice or Philip (or both), looking the passing landscape, and a tracking or travelling shot has the effect of linking character's gaze to the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Another common editing strategy is the camera as placed in the back seat revealing Philip and Alice's heads from behind; this is usually associated to a tracking shot and the use of deep-focus as the camera unfolds the space travelled as a matter of 'what' the characters see through the front window. The spectator is placed in the back seat as if to go along for the trip.</p> <p>The passage from one scene to another is almost invariably indicated by a fade-out. The introduction of a black frame to mark the end of a scene is not related to the array of stops, as the fade-out to black is also consistently used to link a scene</p>

	<p>of movement to another scene of movement (e.g. scenes inside the car). Fade-outs help to organize the sequence of scenes in distinctive narrative units, but not necessarily to build a sense of a route.</p> <p>The editing devices employed in the film carefully explore the relation between the characters and the space travelled in a slow-paced narrative. There is also a careful <i>decoupage</i> of scenes that is used to explore the peculiar relation between the characters and the surrounding environment. The alternation between a CU of a character with long take of the landscape, or the use of the detail shot to reveal a particular prop (e.g. a billboard in a motorway, a Polaroid picture, the images of a TV, etc.) indicates that the camera carefully chooses 'what to reveal', rather than simply focusing in the unfolding of the array of events. This seems to be the expression of an editing strategy that is made intentionally visible and aims to dissect a scene in its important constitutive elements.</p>
<p>A5: Shot composition</p>	<p>Tone: sharp black and white cinematography when colour was available.</p> <p>Shot distance and frame: the frames are usually large, that is, the portion of space available in the screen to explore <i>mise-en-scène</i> is not limited. Even when the characters are framed in a big close-up it is possible to comprehend the space in which they exist. The use of deep focus helps to emphasise the relevance of the background space. For instance, in the scene of the park where Philip and Alice went bathing, the use of deep focus in association with the use of the CU to frame the characters never impedes the revelation, at the distant background, of a view of a park peopled with children and adults sunbathing.</p> <p>The use of the CU rarely elides completely the space where characters exist. For instance, the framing of Alice and Philip inside the car in CU does not reinforce the sense of enclosure of the space (see Contreras, p. 253), because the space in which they move is always visible through the car windows, even when they are framed in a CU. Important details of the passing landscape are thus always being enhanced when Philip and Alice are on the move.</p> <p>Characters are not usually seen leaving or re-entering the frame.</p> <p>The LS is mostly associated with the moving camera and is intended to depict the space the characters travel. It is also conventionally used as an establishing shot.</p>

	<p>Focus: deep focus is widely used in order to allow a greater exploration of mise-en-scène; it is particularly helpful when exploring the relation between characters and surrounding space. Characters are usually framed in a CU or MS in a space unfolded in different layers shot in deep focus. This is visible in a complex composition of mise-en-scène that we can find, for instance, in the scene in which Philip seated in front of a TV with his notebook shortly before he left New York: in the foreground, the viewer can see Philip's hands taking notes, whilst, in the middle-ground, a TV without sound is switched on, and, in the distant background, Alice can be seen sleeping in a bed.</p>
<p>A6: Camera movement</p>	<p>The camera is highly mobile in that it often tracks either forward or backwards the space Alice and Philip travel by train, car and through boat. When showing settings and landscape, camera work relies heavily on the mobile camera that is placed on tracks (see Wenders, 2001: 174). The camera often pans slowly to follow Alice and Philip's movements, for instance, crossing a street. Panorama shots (i.e. slow panning of landscape) are also widely used, often as establishing shots. For instance, when Philip and Alice first arrive to Amsterdam, the camera pans to follow a boat in a canal, which is a very emblematic image of the city. The same occurs with the slow panning of boats in the Rhine (1:48:16), which also helps to unveil details of that specific setting before revealing Alice and Philip in a boat.</p> <p>The camera often tilts to indicate the point-of-view of a character and its own perspective of the space. For instance, when Philip gets to the skyscraper where the editor's office is located, the camera tilts to indicate Philip's glance from down to the top of the huge building. The same happens when Alice and Philip are on the top of the Empire State building observing aspects of New York through a telescope; the camera's panning and tilting reflects with exactitude Alice and Philip's manoeuvrings at the telescope.</p>
<p>A7: Sound</p>	<p>Dialogue is at times mumbled or punctuated by long silences. In certain scenes it recalls a monologue (e.g. when Philip tells of his feelings and identity crisis to a lady friend; or when Philip reads to Lisa some of his notes about the impact of TV in people's lives). Here, the narrative aims to draw attention for 'what is being said'. There is no use of voice-over but, at times, Philip speaks to himself in a kind of a mumbled monologue.</p> <p>There is a recognizable music track that helps to enhance the pace of the journey. It plays a role in marking the passage from one scene to another as the narrative proceeds episodically and no dramatic twists in the story line are easily anticipated. The music track is usually introduced when a</p>

	<p>scene is approaching its end and before it, eventually, fades to black. It occurs less frequently within scenes, but, in any case, it appears to indicate that Philip and Alice's travels stretch for a longer span of time than the actual duration of a scene. To this extent, it also helps to build up a sense of the so-called '<i>temps morts</i>' of the voyage itself.</p> <p>Diegetic music is mostly contemporary rock music (e.g. Chuck Berry, the Doors). It plays a role in the narrative as American rock music clearly binds Philip and Alice. Both of them enjoy listening to rock music, and Philip, who rarely raises personal questions, even asks Alice if she likes to listening to rock music when he tells her he went to see Chuck Berry in concert. Philip's fondness for American rock music is suggested almost since the beginning of the story, when one sees Philip getting annoyed when a DJ interrupts the music he is listening to on the car's radio. Alice is often seen listening to music on her walkman. American rock music emerges as one of the few interests Alice and Philip have in common.</p> <p>Sound effects are important in that they are intentionally made loud or aggressive in specific spaces or contexts. This is especially the case with regard to sounds of technological apparatuses that are made unusually loud. Televisions playing loud in scenes shot in the American context confront the viewer with what is being 'said' or 'shown' in a TV in different moments. In Wuppertal, the very loud and aggressive sound of the funicular train running on the tracks disturbs the dialogue and tense conversation between Alice and Philip. These important audible details help to depict a particular landscape; one can listen to the train, which is an emblematic feature of Wuppertal, running loudly at several times in the scenes shot in the city.</p> <p>Sound is employed in a stylised manner. Off-screen sound is also very important in that it helps to emphasise off-screen space. For instance, in New York, the sound of cars and busy streets or the tube running in the tracks helps to convey a sense of a city environment; or the off-screen sound of children playing in the park.</p>
<p>A8: Themes</p>	<p>The voyage of the two main protagonists, Alice and Philip, from New York to Germany, emerges as an opportunity to reflect on the Germany's social and economic condition in a period of rapid change.</p> <p>The impact of American mass culture in German culture is the cornerstone of a subtle critique of Germany's 'Americanisation'. It is through Philip's own subjectivities that we learn about a dehumanising and disorienting</p>

American landscape. His attitude towards American television, which is well epitomized by what Philip considers an “inhuman television” (e.g. Philip even smashes a TV in an American motel), also mirrors his disdain for American mass culture.

The sense of the impact of American mass culture in Germany becomes clear as the differences between Germany and America start getting blurred. In Germany, some of the settings where Philip and Alice move are depicted as undifferentiated and alienating as those they could find in America, i.e. hotel rooms, petrol stations, airport lounges, easily recall those they could find in America. The landscape depicted is hardly a picturesque one, as they travel across the highly industrialised and polluted Ruhr region where supposedly Alice’s grandmother’s house is located. It appears that Germany has turned, for both Philip and Alice, into a foreign place, as it proves almost impossible to find the house they are looking for. Philip and Alice’s inability to find her grandmother’s traditional house appears to be a metaphor for a Germany that is vanishing under rapid industrialization.

American landscape functions here as a mirror for the dilemmas of German society and culture in the period that followed World War II; in this time, German culture was clearly dominated by American culture and the nation was still trying to come to terms with the memories of a traumatic past. Such dilemmas are also suggested by Philip’s conflicting feelings towards American mass culture: while running away from an alienating American landscape where “everywhere looks the same”, Philip goes to Europe to find his native Germany at odds with growing industrialisation and pervaded by icons of American culture. However, he truly appreciates some of these, e.g. coke and American rock music. The scene of Philip attending a Chuck Berry concert in Wuppertal while drinking coke is clearly emblematic of Philip’s ambivalent feelings towards American culture. Germany has turned for Philip into a foreign place not as much because of the effects of industrialisation or the impact of American mass culture in his native Germany, but because of his identity crisis that affects his way of seeing the world. In the end, it is Alice, through her peculiar views of the world, which will help Philip to recover his sense of identity and ability to relate to others and to see the world from a different perspective.

APPENDIX B : Film Analysis of *Kings of the Road*

STYLISTICS FEATURES	
B1: Narrative structure	<p>Plot synopsis: Bruno is an itinerant film projector repairman who works in small-town rundown cinemas along the East-West German border. Robert is a child psychiatrist who is under a marital crisis. They meet by chance when Robert plunges his car in the River Elbe. Bruno gives Robert a ride in his van and this encounter marks the beginning of a friendship in which they rediscover themselves. They move from town to town, following Bruno's itinerary as a projector repairman. They also have fun together either by playing a pantomime for a children audience or making an incursion to Rhine by bike. They pursue their journeys separately after a bitter row in an abandoned station by the East-West border.</p> <p>Main sequences: 1 - Bruno meets Robert by chance when Robert plunges his car in the Elbe's river in a failed suicide attempt and kindly offers him a ride (scenes 1 to 2); 2 - They go from one film theatre to another following Bruno's itinerary as film projector repairman. As they get to know each other, they start having some fun together but also experiencing some conflicts and uneasiness. At the same time, Robert keeps trying to telephone his estranged wife (scenes 3 to 13); 3 - After their meeting with a despairing man whose wife had just committed suicide, Robert decides to go to visit his father (scene 14); 4 - While Robert has a long, tense and bitter conversation with his estranged father, Bruno meets Pauline in an amusement park and spends the night with her at the theatre where she works (scenes 15 to 17); 5 - Bruno goes to meet Robert at his home town and, at Robert's suggestion, both head to Rhine by bike to revisit Bruno's childhood house. Bruno weeps at his ruined childhood home (scenes 18 to 21); 6 - While both men keep pursuing Bruno's original itinerary, Robert manages to establish contact with his wife. Bruno confesses Robert he is glad he went to Rhine and to have reencountered his past (scenes 22 to 25); 7 - The two men are forced to spend the night at an abandoned station by the East-West German border. Here they have a bitter and violent row over the contradictions of Bruno's lonely lifestyle and Robert's attempts to be distant of his wife (scene 26); 8 - The film ends with both men pursuing their journeys apart (scenes 27 to 29).</p> <p>General narrative structure: The film has an episodic structure and scenes are built around chance encounters (e.g. meetings with Pauline, Robert's father, the despairing man,</p>

etc.) and aimless wanderings.

Bruno's itinerary as film projector repairman helps to build a sense of route, but there is not a strong sense of a goal to pursue (i.e. neither Bruno or Robert have a strong motivation to be on the move).

There is also a sense that there is no story to tell and that time flows slowly and in a circular manner. Many scenes of the scenes covering the two men wanderings from one cinema to another appear as a repetition of previous ones. Not surprisingly, and despite some significant encounters, the film ends just like it had started; with Bruno repairing some projection machine.

The narrative deals largely with the *temps morts* of the story being told. For instance, the two men silencing drives, Robert's wanderings in the places where Bruno has to stop to work, or the occasions in which they stop to eat. Suspense and dramatic incidents almost vanished from the plot in a road full of unremarkable events. The story runs at a slow-paced narrative that becomes regular, unchangeable and without a recognizable climax.

The chance encounters between the two men on the move and other relevant characters, such as Pauline and the despairing man or the sought encounter between Robert and his estranged father, play a significant role in terms of dramatic progression of a story where so little seems to happen. These encounters draw attention to the characters' personal dramas, whilst providing some insight into Germany's cultural, social and political situation.

Sub-narrative pattern of aimless journeys: The departure moment is not clearly defined (the first scene shows Bruno working at a projection room as to indicate that the journey already started). The film starts with an ongoing journey that has apparently no strong justification. In Bruno's case, the journey seems motivated for professional displacement and he follows an indexed itinerary. The other voyager, Robert, easily follows Bruno, regardless of his route, when they meet by chance after his marriage has fallen apart. Their journey together turns even more aimless as they perform a diversion from Bruno's professional route and go to Rhine where Bruno has the chance to come to terms with unhappy memories of his childhood.

Bruno's and Robert's journey does not configure any specific internalised goal to attain or a destination point to achieve. The West/East German border helps to build a sense of a route. The act of being on the move whilst clearly bonding the two men is also suggesting an eventual change might occur in Bruno's and Robert's lives as they start to reveal their inner self to each other. It is while on the move across Germany that they appear to get a sense of being at home and

	<p>they also get the chance of confronting their own personal past in visiting their childhood homes. It is on the road, and through shared daily routines and conviviality in a very confined space (i.e. the van), that Robert's and Bruno's friendship grows and they, somehow, rediscover themselves and their difficult past. In fact, Bruno's van is portrayed more like a house, where they perform daily routines such as eating and sleeping, than as a means of transport. The ending emerges as ambiguous; the border station by the East-West border seems to mark the end of their journey together, and Bruno and Robert pursue their journeys apart. However, it is not clear whether Robert is definitely going back to his wife (this is implicit in Robert's mysterious note: "Everything must change. So long. R."), or if Bruno maintains his regular trajectory (Bruno tears up his indexed itinerary in the last scene): the journey may well continue. What is at stake here is that the togetherness of the journey opened the prospect for a change in Bruno's and Robert's lives.</p>
<p>B2 : Mise-en-scène</p>	<p>Lighting: The use of deep-focus required a great amount of key light, which resulted in hard lighting. The use of backlighting which conceals the subjects with shadows (e.g. scene of Bruno revisiting his childhood his figures is mostly obscured by shadows) or sidelighting (e.g. scene of the two between Bruno and Robert at the abandoned border station the scarce candle lighting helps to enhance the overt tension and violence of the scene as it highlights characters figures) has a powerful dramatic effect.</p> <p>Setting: the film is shot in location (this is also mentioned in the opening credits). Settings and space do not function as a mere background for character interaction or action. On the contrary, the narrative comments on the importance of setting by depicting in long takes the main characters aimless walks through the spaces and landscapes (e.g. desolated riverbank or a deserted field). Robert and Bruno often appear remarkably oblivious of what their surroundings. Characters rarely comment on the sets or intensively gaze the landscape or observe particular visual details. Bruno's and Robert's attitude is of indifference rather than curiosity towards what surrounds them. Settings and landscapes are depicted in a sharp, bleak black-and-white cinematography, almost in sterile manner. Settings are usually deprived of people: desert streets, large and empty buildings and places, and flat and monotonous landscapes pervade in this film. Film theatres are all depicted as alike rundown buildings and thus clearly indicating the crisis of German cinema industry.</p> <p>It is difficult to distinguish between specific locations (e.g. between different villages or cities). Only the opposition countryside/urban space appears clearly marked as to</p>

	<p>emphasise the effects of rapid industrialisation in post-war Germany.</p> <p>Mise-en-scène plays an important role in unfolding a visual imagery that emerges as a succession of flat and undifferentiated landscapes. This produces a sense of a deliberate monotony (see, Goldmann, 1985). The film’s visual imagery (props, sets and locations) encompasses a strong presence of technological apparatuses, especially communication technologies (e.g. telephones, the newsprint machinery, projectors, trains on the run, busy motorways) that emphasise the effects of rapid industrialization (e.g. a V.W. factory on the background of a flat landscape) whilst alluding to aspects of the so-called ‘economic miracle’. At the same time, the characters are rarely portrayed in traditional familiar environments (e.g. home, work). They are mostly framed in environments pervaded by dusty roads motorways, shabby roadside cafes, petrol stations, and decadent cinema theatres. These spaces help to depict the space travelled as an increasingly impersonal and unfamiliar place.</p> <p>When the characters are shot in conventional traditional “familiar environments” (i.e. their childhood houses), these sites, which are portrayed as either ruined or decadent, emerge as spaces for the unfolding of inner and hidden emotional conflicts. When Bruno and Robert go to revisit their childhood homes, there is no doubt that both Bruno and Robert find difficult to ‘feel at home’ when confronting a past difficult to remember. Traditional familiar settings, usually associated with the warmth of close kinship and affective ties, turn into places for overt conflict and angst.</p>
<p>B3: Characters</p>	<p>It is difficult to assess character development in this story as both main characters, Bruno and Robert, emerge as silent and reserved individuals. They are only occasionally outspoken about their inner feelings and thought. Despite the forced closeness enabled by the journey itself, for most of the film the two men remain silent about their inner motives, feelings and very rarely express their thoughts. It is difficult to get a grip on their growing friendship. while it is clear that Bruno and Robert have some close affinities (e.g. the pleasure of listening to rock music), it is also true that they often experience some uneasiness in each other presence (e.g. scene in which both men confess they felt helpless after performing a comical mimicking at a film theatre for a children’s audience).</p> <p>The narrative closely aligns the viewer to the two main characters, Bruno and Robert. We are dealing with individuals that appear as detached from conventional familiar environments (e.g. family, work) and suffer from</p>

some sort of personal crisis. We are first introduced to Bruno who travels for professional reasons along the East-West German border. We become aware he lives entirely in his truck where he is able to satisfy all his daily needs while following a regular trajectory. He appears as an enigmatic character. His apparent detachment and nonchalant attitude towards others and the surrounding space suggests he has no desire to question himself and the world; it appears he expects nothing from people and the world in being self-satisfied with his lonely and self-sufficing existence. Nonetheless, when in contact with others (e.g. Pauline), Bruno is able to show some sense of humour and kindness, emerging even as an attentive listener to others. He rarely expresses his inner thoughts or engages on elaborated dialogues. However, in several occasions, he makes a strong point about the crisis of German cinema in consequence of the growing popularity of television. This is, for example, apparent in a scene when he edits a piece of footage with the constant repetition of an ironic line: "brutality, action, sex - a film TV won't show".

Robert appears as a more straightforward character; he is a researcher in child linguistics who is under a marital and existential crisis, as his marriage is breaking apart. This is already suggested by the beginning of the film at the occasion of Robert's failed pathetic suicide attempt. This is also visible in his clumsy attempts to interact with children (e.g. Robert's failed attempt to make a floating paper boat; his acting at the theatre in a clown-like manner; or his playing with a hoop) or in his bitter argument with his father over his mother's mistreatment. Thus it is hardly surprising that Robert follows Bruno in his aimless drive to get away from his wife. His state of disorientation also becomes evident in his successive attempts to telephone her whenever he gets the chance to do so. It is clear that Robert is determined to resolve his personal crisis, although the narrative withholds important information about his inner thoughts. Robert's thoughts when expressed emerge as fragmented and confused.

Both men maintain unhappy childhood memories, which are to a great degree revived by the voyage itself. The visit to their childhood homes turns into a difficult and painful experience. Bruno weeps as he finds a box with some of his childhood possessions while wandering through the ruins of his childhood home. At the same time, Robert has a bitter argument with his estranged father over his mother's mistreatment. It appears that both Robert and Bruno attempt to reconcile with a difficult past through a process that involves both loss and despair.

We can say that while for Bruno the voyage is like an indexed itinerary marked by loneliness and the meaninglessness of the world, for Robert the voyage emerges more as a process of self-discovery and reconciliation.

	<p>Robert and Bruno do not actively seek to interact with others, but it is also true that they do not intentionally avoid contact with others. In their chance encounters they even appear as attentive listeners of others, such as Pauline and the despairing man whose wife committed suicide, or film theatre owners faced with the crisis of the German film industry. The narrative, however, remains silent and withholds important information about Bruno's and Robert's thoughts about the dramas of these people they encounter.</p> <p>Minor characters, such as Pauline, the despairing man, Robert's father or a cinema owner do not represent necessarily a particular "type", i.e. they do not necessarily stand for some social or professional category. They emerge rather as "real" people with concrete personal problems that one can assume shared by many others living in that very same social, political and cultural condition. These minor characters, whose social roles are not always fully clarified, provide important information about the social, political and cultural condition of post-war Germany. This is the case especially in references to the crisis of the German film industry under the control of American majors (e.g. the opening and closing scenes respectively feature film theatre owner speaking of the crisis of the German film industry).</p> <p>The story revolves around the comradeship between two male, rather than in recognizable male/female relationship. This does not mean that the latter is unimportant. On the contrary, and as we become aware in the occasion of Bruno's and Robert's violent confrontation at the abandoned Army station, the two men's problematic and troubled relationship with women is at the centre of their inner personal crisis. Women are largely physically absent in this film but they remain inescapably present in Robert's and Bruno's disoriented minds. Robert's continuous attempts to ring his estranged wife and Bruno's final confession of his loneliness in the company of women constitute strong reminders of the importance of male/female relationships.</p>
<p>B4: Editing</p>	<p>The story develops in a slow-paced narrative in which the succession of scenes that seem all alike creates a sense of the continuity and repetition of events. This effect is especially emphasised by the consistent use of landscape shots in-between scenes, invariably revealing the van running at the distant background of the same undifferentiated landscape. These shots cover the passage between scenes and are introduced by means of the use of 'dissolves' and 'wipes' that cut from one scene to another. This editing device is intended to connect distinct narrative units, i.e. episodes, which are not necessarily causally linked. Hence, it helps to link isolated</p>

	<p>episodes otherwise hardly related.</p> <p>The shot/reverse shot technique is barely used to frame dialogue sequences; often the person speaking is not viewed. The refusal in providing the reverse-angle shot in a 'dialogue set' has the effect of arising some ambiguity in terms of the comprehension of the affinities between characters.</p> <p>Crosscutting is consistently used when the two main characters pursue their journeys independently. This editing strategy is employed to cover the scenes, going on different places, of Robert's visit to his father and of Bruno's encounter Pauline. However, crosscutting is never employed when the two men are travelling together. The use of crosscutting has the effect of giving some sense of route and continuity for the voyage itself in maintaining both characters as central for the story, instead of privileging one over the other.</p>
<p>B5: Shot composition</p>	<p>Tone: sharp contrast black and white cinematography when colour was available.</p> <p>Shot distance and frame: This film strongly relies on the use of LS and ELS, even to frame characters. This is especially the case in the landscape shots revealing the van running at the distant background; or in the scenes showing the characters wandering across a flat landscape. The characters are often kept at the distant background; the use of the LS to frame characters helps the viewer to relate characters to the space in which they exist.</p> <p>MS and MFS are mostly used to frame characters engaging in dialogue or to follow characters performing action (e.g. Bruno repairing a projector). When inside the van, Bruno and Robert are usually featured in MS or MCU of a relatively small frame (i.e. the character's figure dominates the frame). Off-screen space is, however, strongly implied through a careful exploration of mise-en-scène as important details of the passing landscape are getting reflected in the van's windows and side mirrors. The viewer becomes thus aware of the presence of the road and of a continuous sense of movement. The occasional CU provides important visual cues about the characters' inner feelings, but never fully unfolds their inner state of mind as the camera privileges MS and MFS to frame characters in the background. In the stops, characters are often shot abandoning and entering a frame, which is often a LS. In this context, the camera remains placed at the distance whereas the character walks away without following his or her movement.</p>

	<p>Focus: deep focus is consistently used. In association with the use of a black-and-white cinematography, deep-focus enables the use of bold shadows and to frame the characters at a distant background of a very deep space.</p>
<p>B6: Camera movement</p>	<p>The camera rarely tracks either forward or backwards the movement and actions of the characters, as it is the case in most classical Hollywood films.</p> <p>The camera often pans the landscape in long takes where we can see Bruno or Robert walking. Long takes of landscape framed in LS are usually associated to a slow travelling shot or panning shot.</p>
<p>B7: Sound</p>	<p>Dialogues are rare, often mumbled and marked by long silences. Early 1970s pop music has a significant presence in this film through the records Bruno plays in his truck. In respect of diegetic music, pop music plays an important role in Bruno and Robert's bonding as, in several sequences, we can see them happily listening to records on the road (see Garwood, 1999). LS of landscapes and characters wanderings are often marked by silence. There is a melancholic music theme that is played when a clip of LS of landscape shots with the van running in the background is introduced to cover the passage between scenes.</p>
<p>B8: Themes</p>	<p>The film is primarily concerned with the cultural, political and social situation of post-war Germany at a time of rapid industrialisation. The story of the aimless journey of Bruno and Robert along the East-West German border emerges as an opportunity to reflect upon the social, cultural and economic crisis of German society. What is at stake here is a concern with the specificity of German cultural identity vis-à-vis a defence of Germany's distinctiveness. This is primarily expressed in deliberate and direct critical references to the crisis of German film industry under the domination of American majors, and the growing popularity television. Robert's famous line at the abandoned border station, "the Americans colonized our minds", clearly epitomizes such concerns.</p> <p>Bruno's and Robert's existential angst and their traumatic childhood memories mirror the traumas of a past difficult to remember. This is because in the immediate post-war decades many Germans were not able to face the legacies of their Nazi past. This is also hinted, for instance, in the strange names of villages that are part of Bruno's professional itinerary (e.g. 'Powerless', 'Peaceless').</p> <p>The East-West German political border helps to build a sense of a route whilst also working as a reminder of a 'divided Germany'. That is a symbolically charged boundary that</p>

emerges as a path for the characters to “find” and comprehend themselves within the nation.

The film’s visual imagery is imbued of a sense of bleakness and decadence suggesting nostalgia for a sense of home within a country faced with rapid and deep social and economic changes. Ruined or rundown settings deprived of the presence of people permeate this film (e.g. a ruined factory in the countryside; a ruined border station; rundown film theatres). The space Bruno and Robert travel may well work as a metaphor for a rural and picturesque Germany that is vanishing under the effects of vast industrialisation.

Information technologies and other technological apparatuses permeate the visual imagery of this film comments on the problem of the lack of communication between individuals. It appears that in a Germany undergoing a process of deep economic and social changes the increasing possibilities of new and improved means of communication do not necessarily accomplish, in the social sphere, a more effective communication between human beings. What is at issue here is a longing for a better and more effective communication between people. Robert’s attempts to connect by telephone with his wife he had abandoned clearly illustrate the dramas of poor communication between people. In a world that is depicted as empty, homogenous and “dehumanised”, technology is always present and suitably integrated (see Goldmann, 1985).

The destruction of familial universe emerges here as in other Wenders’ films (e.g. *Paris, Texas*) as a source of displacement in Wenders’ films.

The narrative also suggests that being on the move emerges as an alternative to the rootedness of place. Bruno’s and Robert’s Being in transit does not necessarily imply a disruption with the social sphere but a move towards a new a new way of ‘being at home’, which is not necessarily bound to the certainties of place. Bruno and Robert are not trying to escape society despite being constantly on the move. They wish to ‘feel at home’ whilst trying to come to terms with their difficult personal and collective past (i.e. their personal and collective stories). Thus being on the move, i.e. being continuously displaced may well open the prospect for a reencounter with one’s self and collective past.

APPENDIX C : Film Analysis of *The Suspended Step of the Stork*

STYLISTICS FEATURES	
<p>C1: Narrative structure</p>	<p>Plot synopsis: The plot concerns the events surrounding a TV reporter's quest for a man's identity that is never resolved (an Albanian refugee who sells potatoes in the market? A political exile? Or a famous missing politician?). In the course of his investigation the reporter, Alexandre, comes upon a middle-aged refugee who cultivates potatoes to sell in the market. The reporter believes the man to be a famous Greek politician who disappeared years before, leaving behind him many unanswered questions, and an influential book: "Melancholy of the End of the Century". Intrigued with the vanishing of the famous politician, Alexandre wants to understand what could drive a man to abandon a successful and promising political career for such a modest living in a forgotten village. The reporter is soon confronted with a territory marked by the despair of the refugees in a no-man's land. In the end, he obtains no conclusive answer for his quest whilst learning something about the dramatic situation of refugees in Greece.</p> <p>Main sequences: 1- The reporter goes to work on a story in the Albany/Greece border and comes upon a man who sells potatoes at the village's market (scenes 1 to 5); 2 - Back to Athens, he researches at the TV's photographic archives to find information about the famous Greek politician who vanished in mysterious circumstances: He decides to go to meet the politician's ex-wife to get more information about the events surrounding the man's disappearance; the woman initially refuses to cooperate but ends up telling the story of her ex-husband's mysterious vanishing. (scenes 6 to 10) 3 - The reporter embarks on a voyage back to the border-town where he tries to find out more information about the whereabouts and identity of the man; he encounters a mysterious refugee girl at a café and follows her around town, whilst still searching for the alleged missing politician that he finds is living at a wooden carriage (scenes 11 to 13) 4 - Meanwhile, Alexandre learns from the colonel about the dramas of the refugees who inhabit the town. He starts to comprehend the tensions, divisions, and ethnic conflicts among the refugees as he witnesses the dramas of these people's lives (e.g. fight in the café, a man hanged at a crane by the railway station, meeting with a border-guard and an Albanian waiter). The politician's ex-wife comes to the</p>

border-town to meet the man who sells potatoes at the market and help to resolve his true identity; the reporter and the TV crew shoot the meeting between the two but the woman says that she does not recognize the man (scenes 14 to 25). **5** - The TV crew goes to shoot the orthodox wedding of a mysterious refugee girl that is set by the river. After witnessing the wedding and comforting the bride who suffers for having to live apart from her husband because he is not allowed to cross the border, the reporter acquires a new understanding of the desperate situation of the refugees (scenes 26 to 27) **6** - The colonel informs the reporter that he got several unconfirmed reports about the whereabouts the man he is looking for and who he has apparently vanished from town. The reporter says it's not important anymore and wanders along the border observing some man repairing the telephone cables along the border (scene 28).

General narrative structure: there is a tenuous link between the events structuring the quest. This is because the reporter, in the course of his investigation, gets involved in episodes (e.g. the meeting with the mysterious girl, the fight among refugees at the café, the man hanged by the railway station, the wedding by the river, etc.) that disturb his commitment to the search for a man's identity. The narrative structure does not conform to a classic drive-to-a-goal pattern, even if there is a strong sense of a goal to pursue. This goal starts losing its centrality in terms of plot development when the reporter is also driven to the observation of the surrounding space and the understanding of the plight of the refugees. The plot does not flow as in a detective story where one clue leads to another until a final resolution of events. Instead, plot development is constantly retarded: characters often engage in the recounting of previous events or in the telling of stories, which sometimes are only symbolically linked to the plot (e.g. story of the "Great Migration"). The use of voice-overs to narrate enigmatic stories about refugees, without unfolding key events, has the same effect. These strategies emphasise the importance of visual and social details of a particular space whilst compressing time. Alexandre's journey back to the border-town transforms into a new experience of discovery of the drama of people living in such an alienating space. The ending does not conform to a classical narrative format since there is not a satisfactory resolution of the quest because the man's identity is never resolved.

Sub-narrative pattern of journey-quests: the voyage is structured as a quest. There is neither a clear-cut path to follow, nor the guarantee of a definite ending for the journey. The departure moment is clearly defined (though this does not

	<p>matches the beginning of the film) and configures a well-defined goal to pursue: the reporter's quest to confirm the identity of a man he believes to be missing politician and to find out the reasons for his disappearance. This is a journey where the movement of displacement from one place (i.e. Athens) to another (i.e. the border-village) is completely elided. This voyage does not follow a linear structure in which the array of stops helps to structure the sense of a route. The pattern of the journey conforms to what we may call a radial structure: the journey as an act of being on the move confines itself to a restricted space (i.e. the border-town), which the voyager is compelled to explore so as to pursue his quest. This does not prevent the voyager of getting personally involved with this space and of perceiving himself in it. The voyager (i.e. the reporter) emerges as an attentive and curious observer of the surrounding world, and his initial goal is progressively abandoned in view of a 'reality' he cannot avoid to gaze and comprehend. The ending only configures the lack of centrality of the initial goal (i.e. the search for clues that might lead to resolve the mystery of a man's identity). In itself, the ending does not offer any conclusive outcome and even more unanswered questions: What happened to the missing politician? Who was the man that intrigued the reporter and whose identity is never resolved? What did the reporter learn from this experience? Such questions are left for the viewer to respond. The film ends with the reporter walking along the river-border observing the surrounding landscape: the voyage may well continue. This narrative follows the so-called reporter/foreigner correspondent narrative (see Christie, 2000).</p>
<p>C2 : Mise-en-scène</p>	<p>Lighting: the use of low-key lighting in creating areas of high contrast between light and dark is crucial to depict settings in the border-town. The framing of characters is associated to distinctive uses of key-light. Characters, especially when speaking, are usually shot as immersed in a relatively darkened setting and occasionally concealed by shadows (e.g. the scene where the alleged missing politician tells the story of the "Great Migration" to a child). This pattern may alternate with the use of key-light to highlight a specific part of a character's body (e.g. face or hands) in a darkened setting. Such a distinctive use of lighting in concealing character's figure directs the viewer's attention to "what is being said".</p> <p>Setting: the film is shot in location. Setting appears not to have a relevant function in expressing character mood. The characters emerge mainly as observers of the surrounding world and are shot at a distant background.</p>

	<p>The setting corresponds mostly to exteriors or public places (e.g. the market's square, the hotel's dancing hall, the hotel's halls, popular cafes, the railway station, the border-station), i.e. locations where transitory meetings take place.</p> <p>The bleak and deserted streets of the village (often covered in snow or wet), the often empty village square, the marketplace, the slummy and ruined exteriors of buildings, the wooden boxcars functioning as homes, all help to portray the image of the border-town as an alienating and strange place. The constant portrayal of military personnel and jeeps, the zooming in of the watchtower, emphasises the climate of uncertainty and despair and the strict surveillance surrounding people are exposed in daily life. Homely and familiar environments (e.g. house, schools, work place) are rarely, and never clearly, depicted. This helps to stress the unfamiliarity and strangeness of the town. Space is often perceived as imprecise and unconfined (i.e. it might be difficult to distinguish between private and public spaces, between interiors and exteriors). The space of the border-town emerges ultimately as an estranging space where everyone feels displaced. This is truly a world where identities are easily mistaken and irrelevant (e.g. the refugees present themselves with a name of their choice). In scenes of Athens, settings correspond either to public spaces (TV's production room, library, screening studio) or to bleak homely environments (e.g. the minimalist decoration of the reporter's house).</p> <p>The bleak and alienating settings of the border-town epitomize a truly 'no man's land', whilst commenting on the perils of refugees in Greece whose lives are marked by poverty and social exclusion.</p>
<p>C3: Characters</p>	<p>The main character in this film is the reporter and the narrative continuously attaches the viewer to this character by following his movements and actions along the film. This does not necessarily mean an easy access to the subjectivities of this character. In general, we have little access to the reporter's thoughts, voice, and also bodily and facial expression. This is especially the case when the reporter embarks on his voyage back to the border-town to pursue his quest. In aligning the spectator with the reporter, the narrative drives us to see the surrounding world 'through the eyes' of the reporter.</p> <p>In the first scenes, the camera follows the actions of both the reporter and the colonel though their names and social roles are not immediately provided. Then the narrative aligns us more closely with the reporter in following his movements alone in the marketplace and in observing his interest, which is expressed by gaze, in a man who is selling potatoes. The</p>

	<p>reporter's name and social role are finally provided when the hotel receptionist recognizes the reporter from TV. As the story unfolds, the narrative provides important clues about Alexandre's familiar and work environments and his intentions. This pattern changes when he embarks on his return journey to the border-town (scene 10): from this point onwards, the narration starts to withhold important information about his motives and inner thoughts as he pursues his quest. Also, framing and shot-scale (mainly LS and FS) make it difficult to fully comprehend Alexandre's emotional and personality traits whilst, in fact, the viewer is being pushed away from the reporter's subjectivities. Dialogue is rarely deployed to provide relevant information about the character's thoughts and motives.</p> <p>In respect of other characters, i.e. the refugee girl and the alleged missing politician, the narrative does not ever provide their names and their social roles remain ambiguous. Framing and mise-en-scène (e.g. characters are often concealed by shadows) make difficult to perceive their facial and bodily expression, and very rarely we have access to their thoughts and inner feelings. Also, the kinship ties between the girl and the man are never clarified. In withholding significant information about these characters (i.e. identity, motives and intentions) the narrative highlights the curiosity of the reporter, who is often shot following or looking for both the girl and alleged father.</p> <p>Other minor characters (e.g. the members of the TV crews, the colonel and the missing politician's ex-wife) although not always named have clear-cut social roles. The colonel emerges as a flat character whose main function in the narrative appears to be providing information about the story-world as a typical Greek choric figure: he is often involved in the recounting or recalling of past events. The politician's ex-wife, unlike other characters, outspokenly expresses her inner thoughts and feelings when recalling the disappearance of her husband. The TV crewmembers have a minor role in the film in that they rarely involved in plot-significant action and we have little access to their inner feelings and thoughts.</p>
<p>C4: Editing</p>	<p>The story evolves at a slow-paced narrative that is concerned with the continuity of space and exploration of mise-en-scène. Scenes are usually shot in very long takes. Cutting is more often used to mark the end of a scene and, more rarely, within scenes. When used within scenes, the cut is deliberately made "visible": it can cover, for instance, the passage from a FS of a character to LS of a landscape; or it may signal the passage from one location (e.g. shot of a street) to another (e.g. shot inside the hotel).</p>

	<p>There is a deliberate refusal to use the shot/reverse shot technique in the dialogues: the dialogue is shot with no cuts as the characters are usually shot in FS or LS. The absence of such a standard device, in association with character framing and mise-en-scène, may disturb the understanding of the affinities between characters in a dialogue scene (e.g. MS or CU are not used in dialogue shots; a careful exploitation of mise-en-scène often darkens and conceals a character's figure). The effect produced is largely that of distancing the spectator from characters by making difficult to gain access to characters' subjectivities (e.g. bodily and facial expression).</p>
<p>C5: Shot composition</p>	<p>Tone: colour but avoiding bright and sharp colours. The tone is very similar to black and white: this allows a better manipulation of depth of field and more extravagant lighting. This enables the depiction of the town settings as part of a misty and wintry environment.</p> <p>Shot distance and frame: characters are usually framed in LS or MFS. The camera is purposely moved at the distance so as to emphasise the importance of settings and landscape over character's action. LS and ELS are widely used to draw attention to the landscapes and settings the reporter attentively observes. Characters are at times framed in LS or ELS at a distant ground of the frame (e.g. the scene of the wedding by the river; the closing scene showing the reporter wandering along the border) while the camera unfolds a space shot in deep focus. This enables the viewer to perceive how a character relates to a specific space.</p> <p>The characters are sometimes framed leaving and re-entering the frame. Such a device strongly implies off-screen space as the camera remains mostly still.</p> <p>Focus: deep-focus is widely used to centre the attention of the spectator on objects, characters and props positioned in different grounds (usually placed on the middle-ground and on the background). Deep focus is particularly helpful when it comes to explore the relation between characters and their surroundings.</p>
<p>C6: Camera movement</p>	<p>The use of zooming associated with the movement of the still camera centres the viewer's attention the importance of key objects (e.g. the book authored by the vanished politician in the reporter's hand), a character's action (e.g. man selling potatoes on the market) or specific details (e.g. the line that demarcates the border drew in the middle of the bridge), and vice-versa (i.e. to decentre spectator's attention from one detail to the overall space). The camera literally dictates</p>

	<p>“what to watch” (i.e. camera work makes it difficult or impossible to see space and action on other planes). Off-screen space (especially when associated with off-screen sound) is highly emphasised through camera work.</p> <p>Camera work enables a sense of the intrusive presence of the camera. This is especially the case when it suggests that a scene is being shot from the point-of-view of the TV crew’s camera (e.g. scene of the meeting between the woman and the alleged missing politician; or scene in which the woman, wandering outside, tells the reporter the circumstances and events surrounding the disappearance of her ex-husband). This strategy draws attention for the ‘constructedness’ of the film as it blurs the boundaries between the fictional and documentary.</p>
<p>C7: Sound</p>	<p>Dialogues are rare and usually brief with the characters framed in FS and LS. Often the conversation is dominated by one character as another character is acting as a listener (e.g. the several scenes deploying dialogue between the reporter and the colonel). Dialogue rarely assumes the form of a discussion or an argument. It often involves a recounting of previous events (e.g. the two scenes in which the woman recalls the events surrounding her ex-husband’s vanishing) or the telling of a story (e.g. scene in which the alleged missing politician tells the story of the “Great Migration”; scene in which the colonel tells the story of a mad singer who died burnt). Considering that characters are often concealed by shadows or shot at the distance, it is not always possible to perceive the identity of the speaker (e.g. scene 12, in which the TV crew discusses the identity of the man who they believe might be the famous missing politician), or if the speech is a direct result of conversation or of a voice-over (e.g. scene 2). It appears that these narrative strategies drive spectator’s attention to “what is being said” while minimizing character’s action. A careful exploitation of mise-en-scène is also crucial to deploy such an effect.</p> <p>Voice-overs and off-screen sound are crucial to depicting the border-town’s environment. Diegetic (e.g. reporter’s voice-over telling the story of a group of refugees who died in the sea; tape recording containing the last message from the missing politician to his wife) and extra-diegetic voice-overs (narrating the painful and personal experiences of refugees who successfully crossed the border) have a crucial role in the depiction of the existential, social and political condition of refugees in the border-village. Often a diegetic sound (e.g. the speech of a given character) continues in the following scene as a voice-over. Metaphorical and poetic lines by several voice-overs help to convey the dramas and ambiguities of the refugees’ life. Off-screen sound (bells tolling; background</p>

	<p>sound of children playing and crying; background sound of trains arriving and departing; sound of cars running fast in a motorway, background sound of loud TV that echoes at a café; background sound of steps, etc.) is crucial in that it draws attention for the importance of off-screen space. It also helps the viewer to apprehend the space in which characters play, especially when camera work, or the use of lighting (e.g. the slats of shades) makes it difficult to see significant portions of the represented space.</p> <p>There is not a recognizable musical theme though some specific themes and motifs are used in relation to specific images. The theme played in the first scene (i.e. the scene showing helicopters flying over the bodies of dead refugees in the sea) is the same being played in the scene (5) that shows the TV crew shooting a train full of refugees at the village. This same theme is maintained in the scene of the reporter watching in Athens same images.</p>
<p>C8: Themes</p>	<p>The film deals primarily with the plight of refugees in Greece. By means of a narrative structured as a journey-quest, the story follows a TV reporter and his crew across a border-town as they shoot a documentary about refugees. The journey emerges as an opportunity to reflect upon the plight of refugees in Greece whilst deploying a powerful visual imagery: the images of the watchtower; the evocation of dead bodies floating on the sea; the constant arrival and departure of trains transporting refugees; the allusion to fugitives who are found dead in the river; the lure of escape from unbearable social or political conditions evoked by enigmatic voice-overs; the blue line drawn at the bridge to mark the border and meaning death for those attempting to cross it illegally; the man hanged at a crane; and the strong presence of military personnel portray important aspects of the life of refugees in Greece whilst mirroring the desperate social and political condition of the refugees.</p> <p>The question of hardly permeable political borders is also raised as the refugee border-town, which is bisected by a river that also marks a political border, imposes itself across the carefully patrolled political divide between Greece and Albania. The depiction of the wedding ritual by the river (the bride at one side of the riverbank, the groom on the other) symbolically enhances the ambiguity and artificiality of frontiers in keeping apart those who belong to a same family, home or country.</p> <p>The film's visual imagery is imbued of a sense of nostalgia for home mostly suggested in misty and bleak settings that estrange its inhabitants.</p>

	<p>We are also dealing here with a journey towards a true 'no man's land' where the political border works mainly as a 'barrier' rather than a 'gate' to the mobility of those who are forced to flee from their homelands to escape poverty or a desperate situation. The film is thematically looking at how the border as a political and territorial divide affects the lives of the refugees.</p>
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APPENDIX D : Film Analysis of *Ulysses' Gaze*

STYLISTICS FEATURES	
<p>D1: Narrative structure</p>	<p>Plot synopsis: A. is a Greek-American filmmaker who has returned to his native Greece after 35 years. From Florina, in Northern Greece, he initiates a journey across Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Bosnia in search of three lost film-reels by the Manakis brothers, two pioneer filmmakers of the early twentieth-century. His personal obsession with that 'lost gaze' of the beginning of the twentieth-century turns into a journey of discovery into the troubled social and political history of the Balkans. In war-torn Sarajevo he encounters Ivo Levy, the Jewish director of the film archive, who finally manages to develop the three reels in a last attempt to find the chemical formula. As they go out to celebrate their achievement in the company of Ivo's family, tragedy strikes and the whole family is shot dead. A., shattered, weeps in the destroyed Sarajevo archive.</p> <p>Main sequences: 1 - A. sets off from his native town, Florina, in Northern Greece in search of the missing reels; 2 - After crossing Albania by taxi under heavy snow, A. gets to Monastir, in Macedonia, where he heads to the Manakia cinema. Here, he meets Kali and attempts, unsuccessfully, to get some information about the lost reels. They meet again, apparently by chance, in the train heading to Bucharest. As A. speaks of his obsession for the work of the Manakis brothers, Kali, moved, tells him the film archive in Skopje does not have what he is looking for and ends up following A. 3 - A. revisits his childhood in Constanza in the years following World War II and from there he gets into a barge heading to Germany along the Danube. Sadly, he leaves Kali behind. 4 - He arrives in Belgrade to meet his friend Niko, a war correspondent, who introduces him to an old man (Mr. Yovisca) who was in charge of the Belgrade film archives. A. learns that the three reels are now in the possession of Ivo Levy, of the Sarajevo film archives, who had offered a long time ago to try to discover the chemical formula to develop the film-reels. 5 - A. heads to Sarajevo and here he persuades Ivo Levy to try to develop the film reels in a last attempt. As they go out to celebrate their achievement amidst the deep fog and in the company of Ivo's family, tragedy strikes and the whole family is shot dead by snipers. A., shattered, weeps at the Sarajevo ruined cinema and speaks of himself as a man in 'other man's clothes', quoting Homer's words of Ulysses to Penelope.</p>

General narrative structure: the story consists of several 'wisps of narratives' all well interwoven with each other by means of a main story line: the story of A., a Greek-American filmmaker, embarking on a voyage across the Balkans in search of three lost film-reels containing documentary footage of life in the Balkans. The narrative by playing with intertextuality (e.g. direct quotation from Homer's *Odyssey* in the last scene; the use of lines from Angelopoulos' other films as, for instance, the lines from *The Suspended Step of the Stork* coming from loudspeakers in the square in Florina) and the use of collage (e.g. the use of footage of a documentary about the Manakis brothers) constantly blurs the boundary between fiction and reality whilst drawing the viewer's attention to the 'constructedness' of the film. This is particularly emphasised by a few scenes staged in non-chronological tableaux pointing clearly to the 'unreal' (e.g. the scene of A., who appears to embody the figure of Yanakis Manakis, being condemned to exile at a rundown train border station by the Macedonian-Bulgarian border in 1916; the scene of A. 'revisiting' his childhood, though with his adult appearance, when his family was exiled in Constanza at the time of the Greek Civil War). These unorthodox scenes are interlocked with the more conventional and temporally arranged scenes that cover A.'s ongoing journey across the Balkans. The plot enables the non-linear and intricate telling of several sub-stories symbolically interrelated: one relating to the striking events of the real-life figures of the Manakis brothers on the occasion of important political and social stirrings of the twentieth-century Balkans history; another relating to A.'s past life in the Balkans; and, finally, the main story line following A.'s journey in search of the missing reels. The story of A.'s quest turns, after all, into a journey of discovery through the complex space and history of the Balkans in the twentieth-century, and of A.'s own roots and identity. The narrative loosely follows the reporter/foreign correspondent narrative where the viewer 'sees through' the eyes of the visitor in a trope of discovery and revelation (see Christie, 2000).

Sub-narrative pattern of journey-quests: The voyage is structured as a quest. The search for the lost three reels by the Manakis brothers shapes A.'s route across the Balkans, whilst unveiling the complexity of three different goals intricately interlocked. The voyage "is a search for the roots of the cinema of the Balkans", which is materialised in the more practical aspect of the journey, i.e. A.'s journey across the Balkans in search of the lost reels by the pioneer filmmakers, the Manakis brothers; it is also a "voyage through the modern history of the Balkans including the ongoing tragedy of the

war in Bosnia"; it is, finally, "a personal journey for a man through his life, his loves and his losses" (see Horton, 1997a). The search for the lost and undeveloped reels has, ultimately, a deep metaphorical meaning: they represent a search for a 'a lost gaze', 'the first gaze' of life in the Balkans as grasped by the Manakis brothers' camera (i.e. a search for meaning to 'the Balkans'). Although the departure moment is clearly indicated as A. gets into taxi towards the Greek/Albanian border, A.'s personal journey may have already started. This is suggested in A.'s rather enigmatic lines when, after arriving in Florina for the release of his last and controversial film, he confesses to a long-term friend that "I used to dream this would be the end on the journey. My end is my beginning".

The array of stops plays an important role in linking, on the one hand, the different episodes and sub-stories, and, on the other hand, in shaping A.'s trajectory across the Balkan countries. Each stop introduces a new Balkan location (successively, Korytsá, Monastir, Bucharest, Constanza, Belgrade, Sarajevo) with its characters, settings and events, or a new political border to be crossed (all the political borders A. crosses are narratively indicated). The voyage, as the act of being in transit, emerges as an opportunity for carefully unveiling, both visually and narratively, the details of the multi-layered Balkan reality, from the deserted and run-down town of Korytsa, in Albania, to war-torn Sarajevo, in Bosnia. A.'s journey also recasts the Manakis brothers' own journeys across the Balkans so as to record aspects of everyday life. This is well illustrated in the sequences recounting events concerning the Manakis brothers' pioneer filmmaking experiences and life.

The voyager, A., emerges as an attentive observer of the surrounding world. This is especially emphasised in long 'contemplative sequences' shot in long takes, often with no dialogue or voice-over, showing A. gazing upon the space he travels. Such visually striking scenes are meant to comment on the Balkan situation by unravelling the powerful symbolic and affective connotations of the Balkans imagery (e.g the scene of A.'s crossing the flat Albanian landscape covered in snow and pervaded by many people who remain silent and still while gazing at the mountains that border Albania and Greece; the scene of A. travelling in a barge transporting a giant broken statue of Lenin along the Danube). As the journey progresses amidst rundown cities, war-torn landscapes and ruined cinemas, A.'s determination to find the three reels grows stronger. A.'s trajectory across the Balkans, from one city to another, embraces an important diversion from his more practical goal of finding the lost reels, when he decides to go to Romania despite having no clue indicating the reels could be there. The scenes set in Constanza emerge as an opportunity for A.'s difficult reencounter with himself

	<p>and his past. This is especially suggested in the scene of A. revisiting his childhood in the late 1940s Romania. By the end of the film, A. manages to find the lost three reels that Ivo Levy develops in a last attempt to release the 'first gaze'. However, it is not clear whether the journey has finished. It appears that for A. the voyage also entailed a greater sense of spiritual loss and angst in view of the absurdity and horror of the Balkan war. Narrative closure is ambiguous and, somehow, suggests that A. has not yet found his "first glance lost long ago". The last scene closes with A.'s voice-over speaking Homer's words of Ulysses to Penelope about 'the Journey', while a shattered A. weeps at the ruins of the Sarajevo cinema after the killing of his loved Naomi and her family. A.'s journey will probably continue until he feels again at 'home'.</p>
<p>D2: Mise-en-scène</p>	<p>Lighting: lighting is soft so as to express a sense of nostalgia associated with the winter and misty landscapes that A. travels. Sidelighting is often used to produce a sense of desolation (e.g. the hole in the wall through which A. gets into the ruined film theatre in Sarajevo is a source of light that produces a sense of devastation; in the scene of A. reading a book and seated over the broken pieces of a giant statue of Lenin only his figure is illuminated). In night settings, the use of shadows helps to convey a sense of the sombre, war-torn and deserted settings through which A. travels (e.g. the shadows of troops marching in the scene of A./ Manakis being helped to escape to Greece).</p> <p>Settings: the film is shot on location. Settings do not work as a mere background for character action and character interaction. By means of a careful composition of mise-en-scène and camera work, the viewer is pushed away from A.'s movements and action (A is often framed at the distance or looking away from the camera) and driven to centre its attention in the surrounding space as 'through the eyes' of A. Important visual cues help to unveil the affective and symbolic meanings of settings and props carefully staged (e.g. the broken statue of Lenin being transported from Odessa to Germany in a barge along the Danube can be seen as a metaphor for the 'ruins of communism').</p> <p>Space is represented realistically (i.e. space is represented as 'reality' itself), except for the few highly stylised 'unreal' tableaux. A. is never shot in traditionally homely environments, except for the tableaux of A. revisiting his childhood home. The quest takes A. through empty streets of rundown towns, a shabby hotel in Constanza, train compartments, ruined film theatres, displaced film archives, etc. He appears as a stranger gazing an alien world.</p>

It is difficult to distinguish between different places in the Balkans, despite the precise narrative references to identify each specific location. The cities A. visits all share the same ghostly aura amidst rundown buildings and deserted streets (e.g. Korytsa, in Albania, is not much different from Belgrade), or a war-torn environment (e.g. Constanza at the end of World War II and Sarajevo). The 'unreal' tableaux set in a supposedly past time help to depict past conflicts and wars on the Balkans, whilst providing important visual cues that comment on important historical events (e.g. the scene of A. revisiting his childhood home in Constanza reveals the streets are crowded with Russian soldiers and trucks carrying troops. A march of citizens holding red flags sing to celebrate the victory of the Russian army over Germany at the end of World War II; the scene of the Bulgarian peasant at the time of World War I unveils a war-torn and deserted landscape of burned houses by the riverbank of the Evros).

The story provides important narrative and visual cues that raise the controversial question of borders in the Balkans in drawing attention to the role of geographic formations, such as rivers and mountains, as relevant political borders.

For instance, the question of illegal emigration from Albania to Greece is clearly addressed in the scene of A. crossing the Albanian/Greek border. This is a carefully staged tableaux showing a flat landscape covered in snow, where no bush or tree grows, populated by many people who either stare motionless or walk towards the mountain range that borders Greece and Albania. Shortly before A. had learnt, from the taxi driver, of how so many Albanians attempt to enter Greece illegally across those mountains.

The rivers that A. travels are, on the one hand, important natural divides turned into political borders, and on the other hand, alternative routes to travel across the Balkans cutting across hardly permeable political divides. A. gets illegally from Constanza to Belgrade in a barge along the Danube, which is also an important political border for several Balkan countries. As the barge stops at the Romanian/Serbian/Bulgarian border control, no one is declared on board and A. manages to pass safely into Serbia. The landscape unfolded in long travelling shots is one that is populated by faceless people, including many children, who gather by the riverbank to observe the huge broken statue of Lenin passing by. Several watchtowers and shabby thatched houses aligned along the river appear to suggest that this border zone is an object of surveillance. In a scene set at the time of World War I, A./Yannakis can be seen escaping from Bulgaria through the river Evros (a political border between

	<p>Greece and Turkey) following the instructions of the Bulgarian peasant. It is also by river that A. manages to get from Belgrade to Sarajevo following Nikos' advice: "The only way to get there (Sarajevo) is by river. There is a boat down the Danube to the Sava. Then along the tributaries to Sarajevo. Yugoslavia is full of rivers. But take care. It's dangerous".</p>
<p>D3: Characters</p>	<p>The film attaches the viewer primarily to one single character: A. a Greek-American film director who, after a 35 years absence, returns to his native Greece.</p> <p>As the camera persistently and self-consciously tracks A.'s movements across the spaces in which he moves, one is driven to see the surrounding space as 'through the eyes' of A. The viewer has little access to his thoughts, feelings and even facial expression (e.g. A. is often framed looking away from the camera), especially concerning his impressions about the places he so attentively observes. These are occasionally provided when a new location is introduced in a descriptive manner (e.g. "We entered Albania with snow and silence ..."; in the sequence of A.'s arrival in Sarajevo A.'s voice-over describes what he sees, "I raised my head and on the right and on the left of the canal were tall buildings turned apart by the artillery fire ..."). In the end, the narrative remains mostly silent about A.'s feelings and thoughts with regards to the dramas of life in the Balkans. The narrative, however, does not withhold information about A.'s inner motives to embark on the journey. His motives, which were only vaguely suggested shortly before he departed from Florina, are clarified when A. tries to persuade Kali to give him some information about the whereabouts of the lost reels. In gaining access to A.'s facial expression, inner thoughts and feelings, the viewer learns about A.'s deep personal crisis; he emerges as a filmmaker who has lost the ability to see himself and the world and is desperate to resolve it. He tells Kali of how his personal crisis started a few years ago when in the isle of Delos he took Polaroid pictures of a pond with a palm tree by it and nothing came out: "I felt I was sinking into darkness. When the film archives suggested this project I was only too eager, it was a way out. I'd given up soon enough, only I discovered something ... three reels of film not mentioned by one film historian, I don't know what came over me then ... I was strangely disturbed. I tried to get rid of this feeling, but I couldn't. Three reels, perhaps a whole film undeveloped ... the first film, perhaps, the first glance, a lost glance, a lost innocence. It turned into an obsession as if it were my own work, my own first glance lost long ago".</p> <p>A.'s role is not consistently 'realistic' and it is difficult to have a sense of character development. A.'s name is never provided, although his social role is clear. He sometimes</p>

speaks in an obviously mannered style (often as voice-over) as if reading his lines from a book or playing a part in a stage. In other sequences, A.'s acting is less affected and appears more 'natural', for instance, when the rare CU unveils A.'s facial expression as emotionally charged (e.g. in the scene of A. abandoning Kali). This is also visible when A.'s speech, though rare, becomes mumbled expressing his increasing sense of despair and disorientation. On the other hand, A.'s persona often gets blurred with the figure of Yannakis Manakis whose figure he appears to embody in some scenes (e.g. the scene of A./Manakis being sentenced to exile in Bulgaria; scene of A./Manakis being helped by a Bulgarian peasant to escape to Greece). This self-conscious blurring of identities appears to emphasise A.'s determination in following the footsteps of Yannakis Manakis who he knows died without finding his missing reels.

Dialogue and interaction with the characters A. encounters along the journey play an important role in unfolding the different aspects of the dramas of the current Balkan situation. They play 'realistic' roles, i.e. they emerge as 'real' inhabitants of the Balkans (i.e. as genuine representatives of that specific social space) and the viewer gets to know, both visually and narratively, how their lives have been dramatically affected by the conflicts in the Balkans. These characters play minor roles, as the narrative only attaches the viewer to such characters for the few scenes in which A. interacts with them. The Greek taxi driver speaks of the Greeks as 'dying people' attached to the ruins of the past and shouts his revolt to the distant mountains. Shortly before he had also informed A. about the terrible situation of the Albanian refugees in Greece, as they observed a group of Albanians being brought across the border by the Greek police. The old lady to whom A. gives a lift to cross the border, after a taxi driver had refused to do so, tells A. she is going to Albania to visit her sister she has not seen since the Greek Civil War; A.'s long-term friend, Nikos, tells A. of how the war-correspondents in Belgrade fake pictures of the war to avoid the dangers of the front line; Ivo Levy, the director of the Sarajevo film archive, speaks of the insanity of the war. He also guides A. through the streets of Sarajevo and explains how people in Sarajevo manage to survive and enjoy themselves regardless of the war going on.

The women A. falls in love with, but is forced to leave behind along his journey, are all played by the Romanian actress Maia Morgenstern. Agnes, the woman he was forced to abandon in Florina many years before; Kali, a guide at the Manakia cinema in Mosnatic; the lonely Bulgarian peasant grieving for her missing husband; and Naomi, Ivo Levy's

	<p>daughter, who gets killed at the end on the film, all represent A.'s past and current loves. Except for Kali who emerges as a more consistent character (i.e. the viewer has wide access to her facial expression though she barely speaks), the other women are never fully drawn as characters. They appear to epitomize A.'s lost love as he is driven to move on to pursue his quest alone. "I can't love you", he confesses to Kali shortly before he leaves her at the Constanza harbour. "I'll come and take you away", he promises to Naomi. Even if dialogue with each of these women is scarce or even non-existent, each scene is carefully staged so as to visually unfold A.'s emotional involvement and pain for having to leave each of them behind.</p> <p>Some characters do not easily fall into any conception of character as is the case of A.'s relatives in the 'unrealistic' tableaux of A.'s revisiting his childhood home in the late 1940s; the Bulgarian peasant that helps A./Yannakis to escape from exile at the time of World War I; and the Bulgarian officer in the tableaux of A./Yannakis being sentenced to exile.</p> <p>A.'s personal journey loosely recasts Ulysses' journey (see Horton, 1997). However, unlike Ulysses who is prevented from getting back home, A. embarks on a quest for 'home'; a quest for the ability to feel again at home in the Balkans reality. His journey has not yet finished. In the end, the search for the three reels paves the way for A.'s descent into despair in facing the dramas of life in the Balkans and the horror of the Bosnian war.</p>
<p>D4: Editing</p>	<p>The film is shot in long takes that privilege the continuity of space and a slow-paced narration. Editing itself works as a device to draw attention to the constructed character of the film. Cross-cutting is widely used and enables the alternation between the 'unreal' and highly stylised tableaux, scenes of the ongoing journey and clips of old documentary footage. This highly self-conscious and unorthodox editing strategy in disturbing the temporal arrangement of events draws attention to the elusive symbolic and metaphorical links between scenes.</p> <p>There is a clear attempt to avoid fast cutting, which is typical of Hollywood mainstream cinema. The glance-object cut is not used to link A.'s gaze to the spaces he so attentively observes, nor is the shot-reverse shot technique used to frame dialogue sequences.</p> <p>A clip of footage by the Manakis brother's is used to mark the end of some scenes, almost as a punctuation mark.</p>
<p>D5: Shot</p>	<p>Tone: colour, though avoiding bright and sharp colours, and</p>

<p>composition</p>	<p>black-and-white (in the case of old footage)</p> <p>Shot distance and frame: The film is mostly shot in LS and ELS. The MS and the CU are very occasionally employed to suggest characters' feelings and interaction.</p> <p>A is mostly framed in FS, LS or even ELS with the camera placed at the distance. The use of very large frames enables the viewer to relate A. to space in which he exists; A. is often framed in the distant background whilst other kinds of action might occur in the foreground and middle-grounds of a deep and multi-layered space (e.g. in the sequence of A. walking with his mother through the streets of Constanza, the camera frames A. walking towards the background whilst a march of political activists passes across the foreground).</p> <p>The use of LS or even ELS to frame A., which is often portrayed moving through deserted and rundown cities, helps to create a sense of isolation in such empty and bleak spaces (e.g. sequence of A. framed in the very distant background running amidst the destroyed buildings of Sarajevo). The sequence of the taxi stopping in Korytsa to drop the Greek old lady creates the same sense of solitude, as the camera slowly tracks backwards to unveil a huge and completely deserted square as the old lady remains motionless at its middle.</p> <p>A. is rarely shot leaving and re-entering the frame.</p> <p>Focus: deep-focus is consistently used. It enables a careful exploration of mise-en-scène while revealing, for instance, action occurring in different grounds of a depth space. A. is mostly framed in oblique angles that emphasise a sense of depth in the spaces in which A. exists.</p>
<p>D6: Camera movement</p>	<p>The camera tracks forward and backwards following A.'s movements in an obtrusive, persistent and self-conscious manner. There is a clear attempt to preserve the continuity of space as the camera often pans and tracks behind walls, columns and doors in the process of unveiling the space in which A. moves.</p> <p>The static camera, often associated with zooming, is commonly used to explore, from the distance, a deep space in which A. moves (e.g. sequence of A. running through the streets of Sarajevo in search of the film theatre), or yet to explore how A. relates by gaze to such spaces. In this case, the camera might, for instance, zoom in on something A. is observing at a distance (e.g. the blue ship A. gazes at from Salonica's harbour in the opening scene), or might centre on a slow zooming-in to A.'s figure at the distance looking at action occurring in the foreground (e.g. sequence of A.</p>

	<p>observing a march in Constanza).</p> <p>Camera movement is also important to indicate that the story is told from A.'s point-of-view. The static camera might pan and zoom out so as to unveil a particular space, or action, until it finally reveals A.'s figure gazing at that precise space (e.g. sequence of A. watching a play at a ruined theatre in Sarajevo). The camera may also pan and tilt to cover the integrity of what A. is seeing" without cutting, whilst keeping A.'s figure on-screen (e.g. in the sequence of A. by the Albanian/Greek border control, the camera pans to follow A. gazing at a group of Albanian illegal immigrants being brought by the police). The long travelling shots of landscape, revealed from the perspective of a camera placed in the moving vehicle that transports A., also suggest that the scene is being shot from the point-of-view of A. (e.g. scene of A. crossing by taxi a deserted landscape full of Albanians gazing the mountains; scene of A. travelling at a barge along the Danube).</p>
<p>D7: Sound</p>	<p>Dialogue is rare and often mumbled, especially towards the end of the film, so as to indicate A.'s growing sense of loss and disorientation.</p> <p>Voice-over plays an important role in this story in linking the different sub-stories and in providing relevant narrative information. A.'s voice-over is crucial to clarify his thoughts and feelings (e.g. sequence of A. following Agnes through the streets of Florina; sequence of A. arriving at Sarajevo). Miltos Manakis' voice-over in the sequence of old documentary footage provides information about how the wars in the Balkans affected his life as a pioneer filmmaker. Voice-over can also be used to make allusions to other texts (e.g. A.'s voice-over speaking lines from Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>; the lines from Angelopoulos' <i>The Suspended Step of the Stork</i> coming from a loudspeaker at a square in Florina) only symbolically linked to the story being told.</p> <p>Off-screen sound provides important cues about the war-torn environments A. encounters (e.g. sound of cannons firing in the scene of A.'s encounter with the Bulgarian peasant; sound of bombs exploding at the distance; loud sirens in Sarajevo). The sound of bells tolling sadly, and women crying in the distance, emerges in several scenes and helps to convey a sense of the dramas of the war. Off-screen sound is crucial to depict the sequence of Ivo Levy's family being killed in the deep fog. The sense of the horror of their deaths is purely and self-consciously conveyed through off-screen sound since the only thing the viewer can see is a deep white fog.</p> <p>Folk music in different Balkan languages, coming possibly</p>

	<p>from a radio or loudspeaker that might not be visible on-screen, is audible in most scenes. It draws attention to the diversity of music styles in the Balkans. Diegetic music also helps to situate a scene in time (e.g. 1940s piano music at the scene of A. revisiting his childhood).</p> <p>Background music helps to create a sense of nostalgia encompassing the story being told. This is mainly achieved by means of the film's music theme that is played at various times.</p>
<p>D8: Themes:</p>	<p>The wars and conflicts in the Balkans in the twentieth-century have been mostly related to the desire for territorial expansion in a zone where different ethnic groups and religions blend. Territorial expansion is obviously related to the question of borders, which became even more complex with the rapid decline of the Ottoman Empire and the intervention of the so-called Great Powers (France, Britain, Germany and Russia) in the two World Wars (see Mazower, 2000).</p> <p>The film revolves mainly around the question of borders by addressing the issues of exile and the elusive nature of political borders in the Balkans.</p> <p>The story tells of how the Manakis brothers and A. himself were forced to live in exile in different Balkan locations because of wars going on: A.'s family was exiled in Romania during the Greek Civil War; and the Manakis brothers were continuously displaced by the First Balkan Wars and World War I. In the scene of A./Manakis being condemned to exile by a Bulgarian officer, the time is that of World War I when Bulgaria attempted to annex Macedonia with the help of Germany (see Mazower, 2000: 93). What is also being suggested is how their condition of exile mirrors the destiny of so many people continuously displaced by wars in the Balkans (e.g. documentary footage reveals the massive flight of people at the time of World War I).</p> <p>The film is also concerned with the controversial question of borders as hardly permeable political divides across the ethnic patchwork of the Balkans. <i>Ulysses' Gaze</i> raises the question of the possibility of a trans-Balkan identity by transforming the political divide, the fissure, into a path. In fact, during more or less half of the journey A. travels, often illegally, along carefully patrolled rivers that had been transformed into important political borders: along the Danube he gets from Constanza to Belgrade, and from here again along the Danube, then along the Sava and its tributaries, to Sarajevo. In a scene set at the time of World War I, one can see A./Manakis escaping from exile in Bulgaria to the Aegean sea</p>

along the Evros river. Curiously, historically, some rivers in the Balkans have been of limited use for trade and communications (see Mazower, 2000: 19). The film also suggests that political borders work more as a divide, i.e. a barrier to the mobility of people, rather than a gateway.

The rise and the fall of communism in the Balkans is another relevant theme being addressed, as 'communism' has played a major role in Western constructions of the region as "East". The scene of A. revisiting his childhood home in Constanza shows in one sequence-shot covering a four years period, i.e. the period of the Greek Civil War, the rapid rise of communism in Romania in the aftermath of World War II. The following scene is one that may well epitomize the "ruins of communism", as A. gets on board in a barge transporting a giant broken statue of Lenin along the Danube from Odessa to Germany.

The role of the media in depicting the Bosnian War is addressed in the scene of the encounter with Nikos, A.'s best friend and war-correspondent, that speaks of how the war-correspondents "invent a picture of the war for a few dollars" in order to avoid the dangers of the front line. Ethnic conflicts and historical rivalries in the Balkans are also addressed: at the hotel where the war correspondents gather in Belgrade the topic of a discussion is "who arrived first the Serbians or the Albanians?". The scene of the Greek old lady A. met at the Greek/Albanian border draws attention for the bitter Albanian/Greek relations; a taxi-driver had just refused to cross the border to Albania where the old woman intended to visit her sister she has not seen since the Greek Civil War (1946-1949).

A. travels in search of three lost reels that would contain the 'first gaze' of life in the Balkans mirror, ultimately, a search for the memory of cinema in the Balkans, which is also a 'memory of the past': "the contrasts, the conflicts in this area of the world are reflected in their [the Manakis brothers] work", A. explains to Kali.

A.'s quest is ultimately meant to be also a search for home, i.e. a search for a meaning of home in the Balkans. That is, a quest for the ability to grasp a territory that has been historically constructed in bloodshed and trouble, as a place where 'one can feel at home'.

APPENDIX E : Film Analysis of *Five Days, Five Nights*

STYLISTICS FEATURES	
<p>E1: Narrative structure</p>	<p>Plot synopsis: In the late 1940s Portugal, the 19-year-old André is forced to leave the country after escaping from prison where he was incarcerated for political reasons. Some friends manage to arrange a smuggler (Lambaça) who knows very well the Trás-os-Montes border and is paid to help André to safely traverse the border. Mutual antipathy and untrustworthiness arise when André first meets Lambaça. However, along five days and five nights, through mounts and valleys, and while trying to hide from the political police with the help of Lambaça's friends, both men will have the time to get to know each other. The initial antipathy will give place to a mutual admiration when they finally split by the Trás-os-Montes/Spanish border.</p> <p>Main sequences: 1 - André and Lambaça journey across several villages in the North of Portugal by train or bus and, in the case of André, on foot, whilst hiding from the political police (scenes 1 to 5); 2 - The two men get into the woods and spend the night with the smuggler's family (scenes 6 to 8); 3 - André and Lambaça keep going across the woods but are forced to turn back when they bump into the police (scenes 9 to 10); 4 - André and Lambaça have a meal at Zulmira's house before heading to the mountain ranges. Lambaça decides it is not safe to keep going and they return to Zulmira's house where they spend the night. At the same time, the political police enquires the smuggler's family about the whereabouts of André (scenes 11 to 13); 5 - André and Lambaça head again to the mountain ranges and André finally manages to cross to the border (scenes 14 to 15).</p> <p>General narrative structure: The narrative structure follows the conventions of the so-called classical narrative cinema in that the array of events is arranged in a linear, temporal sequence.</p> <p>It follows a drive-to-a-goal pattern that is characteristic of classical narrative cinema, which respects a strict chronological order. It is not difficult to distinguish between the significant narrative units (i.e. scenes) that are clearly demarcated, often by using fade-outs to black.</p> <p>Story and plot are well matched and the narrative builds up the spectator's expectations in terms of 'what's coming next'</p>

and of an understanding of how the voyage itself is affecting the main characters. The narrative evolves around the events preceding the André's illegal crossing of the Trás-os-Montes/Spanish border. The plot carefully deals with the psychological state of André in exploring the uneasiness and tension marking his relationship with Lambaça. As the story progresses (e.g. their attempts to avoid being caught by the political police; the meeting with the smuggler's family; the encounter with the police in the woods; the visit to the prostitute Zulmira) the latent conflict between the two men culminates in overt physical confrontation (scenes 10 and 11). After this climax moment, the narrative pattern changes and the story line rapidly develops towards a conclusive outcome: as they reach the 'border zone', visually and symbolically demarcated by the rocky mountain range, André's attitude toward Lambaça leans to a more empathic behaviour. In the closing scenes, André's voice-over confirms this very change of attitude when he tells how Lambaça was conveying "a feeling that they were walking through a safe terrain". André's ultimate acknowledgement of Lambaça's honourable intentions is only fully accomplished in the last scene: with the help of Lambaça, André manages to safely pass the border (which is symbolic marked by the crossing of stream of water in a small rowing boat) and his distrust and antipathy towards Lambaça is finally resolved in the act of the 'passage'. André's voice-over conclusively closes the story by saying: "only now I felt a sudden wish to speak to him and to give him a hug".

Sub-narrative pattern of aimless journey: the voyage structures as an experience of wandering for André who fully embodies the figure of the voyager. He is escaping from the prison where he was incarcerated for political reasons and the purpose of the voyage is, naturally, to cross the border. However, the wish to cross the border emerges more as a practical matter of survival than a clear-cut goal or inner motivation to do so. André finds himself in a situation in which he has to rely on in the endeavours of Lambaça, a smuggler of notorious reputation. The departure point is narratively elided and occurs shortly after the beginning of the film: after their first meeting, where the terms and price of the 'passage' are agreed, we see the two men travelling by train in silence. The narrative provides no indication of an intended arrival point: the journey will certainly continue after the crossing of the border. The aimless pattern derives primarily from the fact that André emerges a character more affected by action than responsible for this: that is, the narrative unfolds an array of events that affect André and which are not the result of action he has taken (e.g. Lambaça's decisions regarding the route to follow are

	<p>determined by circumstances related to the proximity of the police). André finds himself involved in a social and spatial context that he experiences as strange and unfamiliar and where he is forced to maintain distance toward 'others'. Along the journey, he becomes acquainted with several characters (e.g. Zulmira, the smuggler's family) that kindly offer him shelter and food. André emerges as a more detached observer of the surrounding environment. This is because he has obviously to be alert to prevent any chance of being caught by the police. It is difficult to get a grip on the process of learning or changing of the voyager: for most of the narrative, André's attitude develops around a growing distrust in Lambaça, a tacit distance and reserved behaviour towards others, and the need of avoiding being caught by the police. André's actions appear basically as a 'natural' consequence of practical survival or of his unshakable ethical beliefs. Nonetheless, the ending scene suggests a much less straightforward conclusion to the story being told. André manages to pass safely the border while accepting that Lambaça never intended to deceive him, but the voyage itself brought a new understanding of the country's social and political situation. In some enigmatic but, symbolically, highly relevant lines, Lambaça speaks of the impossibility to change the world "whatever happens". To this, André promptly replies: "everything will change whatever happens. It only depends on the man's will, whatever happens". The journey evolved ultimately as an experience of discovery of 'others' in a space experienced as alien by the voyager. The ending not only suggests André's renewed understanding of the country's social and political condition, but also configures the internalised process of learning of the voyager as matter of recognition that 'something has to change'. This last scene reveals André's conviction on the ability of everyone to change his or her own destiny. And the voyage will certainly continue, as he is just about to escape the country and its oppressive political regime.</p>
<p>E2: Mise-en-scène</p>	<p>Lighting: There is a naturalistic use of lighting. The contrast between lighting and shadows varies according to the specific settings where the characters play. In scenes of interiors, for example, the fireplace (or a small window fitted in very thick stone walls) is usually the only source available of lighting, and in emanating from below makes the destitute houses to look gloomy. This 'realistic' use of lighting reflects lighting conditions in the 1940s poor and isolated villages of Trás-os-Montes. These settings are depicted as partially immersed in darkness and it is difficult to make sense of the details of the overall space (e.g. size of the room and some props). A darkened setting associated with specific visual details suggesting poverty helps to portray a sense of the hardships of life at these villages in the late 1940's.</p>

A so-called 'realistic' use of lighting also prevails in scenes of the two men crossing the woods and hills by night. In these scenes, characters' figure is mostly concealed by shadows and their presence is often signalled by on-screen sound (e.g. the sound of steps; the breaking of trees' branches).

Settings: the film is shot on location. The setting emerges basically as the background for action and for character interaction, as in classical narrative cinema. However, settings and plot are closely related in that the main characters, André and Lambaça, mingle with people, props and sets in the different spaces they travel.

The use of deep focus associated to 'continuity' cutting and the moving camera bring forward a rich visual imagery (props, locations and sets) that helps the spectator to make sense of the sets and customs of the people inhabiting the region of Trás-os-Montes. Without breaking the flow of movement of a coherent story line, the plot unfolds the social and economic practices of a distinct way of living, i.e. of a specific 'culture of frontier', during the times of the dictatorship. Settings, background action, and the social roles of the minor characters (e.g. the family of smugglers, the prostitute Zulmira) provide an accurate and realistic image of the way of life at that time. One of its most distinctive aspects is the depiction of some of the common social and economic practices of the people living in the Trás-os-Montes ("Across the mountains") region, i.e. the smuggling of goods and the illegal passage across the border of individuals that intend to run away from the oppressive political regime. This eminently nocturnal and pedestrian activity represents for many an important source of economic subsistence in an impoverished and deserted area of the country. The landscape settings display important visual details regarding the topography of a region, which is known by its rocky and irregular crests of mountains and poor weather conditions (cold winters and summer droughts) that inhibit agriculture. Some shots of Lambaça and André climbing a sharp slope over of a river carved deep, usefully signal that not only they traverse land of little attraction, but also that this is an area of effectively difficult access and attractive for the illegal transaction of goods due to the proximity of the border.

Local traditional costumes are depicted in realistic manner suggesting that this is a predominantly rural area. This is also indicated by the local economic activities (e.g. the selling of vegetables, chickens and ducks at the small fair by the station; the trade of these products, certainly cultivated in small plots). The women dressing in black, the houses built in stone with their typical wooden balconies, the often deserted street

	<p>villages, the absence of electric light, the farming instruments and products visible in the scenes of interiors, are important aspects of this particular rural settings. The depiction of the smugglers' house offers important visual details of the activities concerning their illegal transaction of goods (e.g. the piece of shiny luxury silk in such a poor and gloomy environment; the loose bullets the policemen accidentally finds when interrogating the smugglers about the whereabouts of André).</p> <p>The visual imagery comments, both thematically and narratively, on some of the most striking social, political and economic aspects of the country in the height of the dictatorship: the impoverishment of agriculture, the strict control of the passage of people and goods across the border, strict surveillance by the political police, the existence of a 'subterranean' economy based on illegal activities, the exclusion of women from all non-domestic activities, the inexistence of freedom of speech, etc.).</p>
<p>E3: Characters</p>	<p>The narrative aligns the viewer with the two main characters, André and Lambaça, and we have wide access to their feelings and thoughts. André's thoughts and feelings are often expressed through voice-over. Both characters fall easily into a conception of 'flat' character that we can find in classical narrative cinema. Here, the figure of the young and idealistic André sharply contrasts with the experienced and morally ambiguous smuggler.</p> <p>Lambaça emerges as a rough and experienced individual. He has a personality marked by an ambiguous sense of integrity: it appears he is involved in illegal activities for a matter of practical survival rather than by choice. He maintains close friendships with several characters (e.g. smuggler's family) that are marked by mutual understanding, trust and silence. However, he also mistreats the prostitute Zulmira and he is prompt to accept from André more money than the amount initially agreed. He shows tenacity and caution when it comes to decide when it is safe to keep their way, despite André's incisive questioning and lack of trust. Lambaça ignores André's insults and even tries to calm down André when he unfairly loses his temper. He is also able of acts of kindness in offering some bread to André that though starved arrogantly rejects the offer.</p> <p>André emerges as an upright and immature young man who is forced to abandon the country for political reasons. He has strong personal and moral convictions that drive him to clash with Lambaça's dubious behaviour. André mistrusts Lambaça from their first encounter, especially because he had been informed of Lambaça's fondness in drinking, prostitutes and smuggling. André's moral stand cannot easily cope with</p>

	<p>Lambaça's dubious behaviour (e.g. he is visibly disgusted and upset over Lambaça's mistreatment of Zulmira). André's unsympathetic attitude gets a turn-around when, after witnessing the mutual trust and friendship between Lambaça and his smuggler friends, he starts realising that Lambaça has no intentions to deceive him and is led by honourable intentions.</p>
<p>E4: Editing</p>	<p>Editing follows the common patterns of classical Hollywood cinema. The editing techniques employed (e.g. eyeline matching, glance-object cut, shot/reverse shot, crosscutting) are responsible for a 'continuity' editing that aims at maintaining the continuity between sequences. Editing helps to present a coherent story line (i.e. events are typically placed in an ordered temporal arrangement and causally linked) as it the case in classical Hollywood cinema.</p> <p>The <u>shot-reverse shot</u> technique is consistently employed to shoot dialogue and explore the affinities between characters, especially between André and Lambaça. The shot/reverse shot technique helps to build a sense of suspicion and distrust that marks the relationship between the two men, especially when one considers that verbal communication between them is scarce and difficult.</p> <p>The so-called <u>eyeline matching</u> technique is used in a singular manner to explore the uneasiness governing the relationship between André, a young political prisoner on the run, and the characters he encounters in his way. It is also used to suggest the attraction of André for the young females he meets during his escape. This is the case, for instance, in the scene of the meeting with the old smuggler's daughter who comes in the morning to pick up André from the granary where he spent the night. Without exchanging a word, André follows the girl who, while apparently running away and hiding from him, does not miss the chance of peeping at him whenever he is not able to see her. In the scenes with the prostitute Zulmira, they barely exchange a word but when André walks away from Zulmira's house and turns his back to look at the distant balcony, a combination of several eyeline match shots associated to camera angle link the glances of both characters. In the end, the eyeline-match cutting unveils the enforced physical distance and attraction underpinning the relations between André and the people he encounters during his escape.</p> <p>The <u>glance-object cut</u> is widely used to explore the relationship between the main characters, André and Lambaça, and their surroundings. This is especially visible when this editing technique is used to depict André or</p>

	<p>Lambaça cautiously looking off-screen surveying the surrounding environment. The glance-object cutting plays an important part in the depiction of space where the main characters are on the run from the police. A combination of several glance-object cuts, often associated to off-screen sound, is consistently used to create suspense and draw the spectator's attention for forthcoming action.</p> <p><u>Crosscutting</u> is used at times to follow two different lines of action. It is particularly visible in a scene where shots of André and Lambaça walking fast through the woods alternate with shots of action occurring at the smugglers house, where the police is inquiring the family about the whereabouts of André and Lambaça. It is also used in the scenes where they follow their voyage apart to alternate between shots of André and Lambaça in different locations.</p> <p><u>Fade-outs to black</u> are used at times to split between different scenes. In addition, the opening scene opens with a black frame with subtitles that provide information about the location and date ('North of Portugal, 1949'). In this case, the black frame serves as an establishing shot.</p> <p>Two different editing strategies interfere with the pace of the film. The sequences showing Lambaça and André walking fast through woods, valleys and mountain ranges are usually marked by a fast-paced narration, which is a consequence of the jerky effects of the handheld camera and jump cuts. In scenes revealing Lambaça and André at their stops (e.g. at Zulmira's house, at the smugler's house) or simply wandering in a village prevails a more slow-paced narration that aims at exploring the subtleties of the interaction between the different characters, and the relation between these, particularly André and Lambaça, and their surroundings. This is achieved through longer takes and camera panning.</p>
<p>E5: Shot composition</p>	<p>Tone: colour but generally avoiding bright and sharp colours. Colour is used in a naturalistic manner.</p> <p>Shot distance and frame: the characters usually occupy the centre of the frame. This strategy is characteristic of Hollywood narrative cinema and aims at following a particular line of action as performed by a character.</p> <p>There is a balanced alternation between the CU and the MFS/FS that conforms to the conventions of classical narrative cinema: the CU is employed when it comes to provide important cues for the comprehension of subtle facial expression. It is specifically used to depict characters' feelings in view of ongoing action (e.g. meeting between André and the family of smugglers) or an unexpected event</p>

(e.g. André's distress for not being able to spot the bus while crossing the mountain on foot). The MFS/FS is consistently utilized to frame the characters performing action: it emerges most visibly as a movement shot showing the characters moving from one place to another (e.g. across the woods and mountain ranges). The MS emerges particularly associated to the framing of dialogue.

The LS is mostly employed as an establishing shot, for instance, to introduce a new location where a character is arriving (e.g. the village André observes from the top of the hill). It is also employed to indicate the end of a scene in showing, for instance, the characters vanishing at a distant background. The LS is also consistently used to explore visual details of the rich and diverse spaces the characters travel. It usually alternates with a MCU or a FS of a character walking, framed either from the front or from behind, and overlooking off-screen the surrounding landscape. This particular use of the LS enables the viewer to relate the characters to their relevant surroundings while on the move. It may also create a sense of isolation. This happens, especially, when the LS foregrounds the monumentality of the mountain range while the minuscule figure of André is framed walking at the distant background. For instance, in the scene of André walking on foot across a desert mountain, the MCU reveals the André's tiredness and disorientation, whereas the LS suggests the sense of isolation of the André in such an environment.

Except for the occasional use of the CU, character's figure rarely dominates the closer foreground. In sequences revealing a more overt confront between André and Lambaça, the frame gets tighter to reveal important details of facial expression and of the interaction between the two men. In the scenes of the two men walking fast and disguisedly across woods and a mountain range, and in the scenes shot at the places where they stop by, prevails a larger frame. This enables a better exploration of the relations between André and Lambaça and their surroundings.

Focus: deep focus is consistently used to centre the viewer's attention in characters and props positioned in different grounds of a considerably larger frame. The use of deep focus, in bringing out the different layers of a deep space, centres the viewer attention on ongoing action while unfolding important visual details of the overall space where the character plays. This is especially the case in the scenes of Lambaça or André moving and overlooking their surroundings as to prevent being caught or seen by the police.

	<p>They mingle with locals and cluttered settings (e.g. a fair) so as to escape being seen for the police. Although the narrative follows the pattern of classical Hollywood cinema, the film's style is more close to the sensibility of European cinema for its slow-paced narrative and deep focus (e.g. the background is never blurred as, for example, it is the case in the films of the Indiana Jones's serie films).</p>
<p>E6: Camera movement</p>	<p>The moving camera tracks either forward or backwards the movement and the actions of characters through the sets. Camera work is, here, subordinated to the requirements of narrative development: it consistently follows plot-significant action as performed by the characters. The fact that the camera is mainly following André and Lambaça's movements and actions, together or in isolation, accounts for the centrality of these characters for the story being told.</p> <p>The still camera is less often employed. It is particularly used in scenes shot at the locations (i.e. the villages) and places André and Lambaça stop by. The still camera usually pans or tilts to follow the movement of a character so as to pick up important details of ongoing action (e.g. at the scene shot at Zulmira's house, the camera pans to follow Zulmira heading to the door at the call of the hunter who has just arrived and shortly after tilts to follow her movements down the stairs to try to dissuade the man of getting into her house). Panning it is also associated to the so-called 'panorama shot', which is occasionally employed to unfold a LS of the landscape the characters are travelling or observing at the distance.</p> <p>The moving camera is also linked to the exploration of depth-through-movement in that it often tracks in the main characters coming from back to front or vice versa. This happens particularly within the scenes in which André and Lambaça walk fast and silently through woods and a mountain range. This stylistic device, in association with jump cuts, has the effect of emphasising a sense of the fast paced-walk of Lambaça and André through sets they experience as dangerous and hostile, while compressing time.</p>
<p>E7: Sound</p>	<p>Dialogue is rare and marked by long silences. It helps to portray the uneasiness and the difficulties of communication governing the relationship between the two men. It also emphasises the dangers of the journey itself, particularly when considering that silence is vital to avoid arising any kind of suspicion.</p> <p>André's voice-over is basically employed to transmit André's inner feelings and thoughts about the experience of the journey and, especially, André's sense of distrust toward Lambaça. It is also used to provide information on how the story being told is located. The opening scene starts with the</p>

	<p>following lines: “I was not yet 19 years old when I saw myself forced to emigrate. I was given some money and an address in Oporto where I was told it would be resolved the problem of the passage of the border to Spain”.</p> <p>There is a music track, which usually goes sad and melancholic, that is particularly employed in sequences of the two men (or André alone) walking across woods or simply contemplating the surrounding landscape. It is also consistently used to comment on action; variations in the music theme may anticipate or foreshadow a twist in the action (e.g. the music theme builds a sense of eminent threat when André and Lambaça encounter two policemen at the small fair; in the scene in which André unexpectedly meets Zulmira again the music theme is suitably employed to express his surprise).</p> <p>Diegetic sound is used in a ‘naturalistic’ manner as to depict a typically rural environment. The rural spaces the characters travel are also depicted aurally: they are constructed as ‘noisy’ environments punctuated with sounds of animals (cows, ducks, and chickens) and farming apparatuses, fountains and streams of running water, birds singing, etc. Off-screen sound is then important in that it helps to characterize the environment the camera is soon going to explore (e.g. scene of Lambaça and André wandering around the small fair set around the railway station).</p> <p>André’s sophisticated diction and accent contrasts with the strong regional accent and poor phrase construction of Lambaça and the characters he encounters. This stresses the distance between André and the people he meets, while emphasising even more André’s sense of displacement in such a remote and impoverished area of the country. This distance is not only cultural but also social in that André’s speech and manners clearly indicate a privileged social background.</p>
<p>E8: Themes</p>	<p>The fatalism that is associated to the so-called Portuguese national character is here thematically enhanced through André’s ‘optimistic’ stance, i.e. his inner conviction in the ability of every individual to change his or her own destiny regardless of the circumstances (“everything will change whatever happens”) that contrast with Lambaça’s attitude. During the dictatorship, fatalism and the acceptance of existing social conditions were widely encouraged by the regime and orchestrated via political propaganda.</p> <p>The film is also concerned, both narratively and symbolically, to the question of borders. It draws attention to the impermeability of borders at the time of the dictatorship (i.e.</p>

the restriction to the circulation of people and goods across the border). Visual images of Lambaça and André, either walking or overlooking, rocky mountain range, high slopes and small canyons, prove effective in depicting a geographic boundary zone that has served for centuries Portugal and Spain as the basis for political and historical borders. In fact, the rocky mountain crest of difficult access that bounds the region constitutes an area of undesirable weather conditions. Topography plays a significant role not only in depicting a 'boundary zone' but also in suggesting how a whole 'culture of frontier' developed through strong kinship ties that assure and foster the illegal activity of smuggling, and other alternative economic practices in such isolated and impoverished area.

Topography provides also important markers for relevant political and historical borders. Symbolically, however, this film conveys a more complex reflection on questions of boundaries that are both cultural and political. If the story line closely follows the flight of a young political prisoner across the Trás-os-Montes until he successfully crosses the national border, the background settings visually unfold the subtleties of borders that are more imposed and artificial than physical, i.e. geographic. National borders prove more artificial and clearly they do not match geographic outlines, such as a mountain range. In the last scene, the crossing of a stream of water symbolically marks the moment of the 'passage' to Spain whilst bringing the story to a conclusive ending. Nonetheless, the boundary itself goes practically unnoticed. When Lambaça decides to inform André that they have already 'passed', André reacts with surprise and disbelief. He suspected already that the voyage was coming to an end but there was no relevant topographic formation or even a signal post (as Lambaça ironically suggests) that could function as a significant boundary line and indicate that they have definitely crossed the border. This is why, narratively, the crossing of the border is only fully accomplished when André manages to get into boat to the other shore, shortly after he learnt from Lambaça they have already 'passed' This last scene succeeds in suggesting that national borders are, above all, a product of ideological manoeuvres that are likely to make use of suitable geographic formations (e.g. as rivers and mountain ranges) to consolidate and legitimate the nation's political outlines. Settings and narrative work together to subtly unfold the topographic similarity between Portugal and Spain along the border area. It is also the case that the monumental mountain ranges surrounding the Trás-os-Montes region not only demarcate the specificity of a 'culture of frontier', but also expose the asymmetries of a supposedly culturally homogenous nation.

APPENDIX F : Film Analysis of *Journey to the Beginning of the World*

STYLISTICS FEATURES	
<p>F1: Narrative structure</p>	<p>Plot synopsis: Afonso, a French actor of Portuguese descent, comes to the North of Portugal to act in a film. He wants to visit Lugar do Teso, the village his father left many years earlier. Manoel, the director, and two other actors, Judite and Duarte, come along to help him. Manoel recalls his memories as they pass by places he knew as a child, such as the spa at Vila de Peso, the river Minho and the statue of Pedro Macao. At the same time, Afonso tells everyone about his father's hardships. Having left his village at the age of 14, Afonso's father crossed Spain during the civil war, entered France illegally, worked in a garage until he became his own boss, and died at the age of 40. When they reach Lugar do Teso, Afonso visits his father's sister, who has stayed in the village. His aunt is reticent at first in accepting the existence of a nephew whose existence she knew nothing about and who can't even speak her language.</p> <p>Main sequences - Manoel, an ageing director, and Judite, Afonso and Duarte, actors, are on their way to shoot a film in Portugal; Manoel and Judite's discussion about the generation gap (scene 1); 2 - Stop by the river Minho (a northern border between Portugal and Spain) where Manoel recounts his childhood memories at the Jesuit-college, followed by conversation about the origins of the fortress town of Valença, as they cross the city walls (scenes 2 to 3); 3 - Stops by the statue of Pedro Macao and the decaying 'Great Hotel of Peso' emerge as an opportunity for Manoel to recall his childhood memories in those places (scenes 4 to 6); 4 - While heading to Lugar do Teso, Afonso's tells the story of how his father emigrated illegally to France. Meanwhile, the group stops by an old roman bridge and observe the landscape (scenes 7 to 8); 6 - Visit to Afonso's aunt at Lugar do Teso marked by Maria's initial disbelief on her nephew's identity (scene 9); 7 - The groups walks the streets of Lugar do Teso and heads to the house where Afonso's father was born. Here, Maria's comments on the way of living in such a poor village and on her brother's character, followed by visit to the cemetery (scenes 10 to 12); 8 - Afonso's impression of Pedro Macao at the shooting place, and Afonso's recognition that the voyage has changed him (scenes 13 to 14).</p> <p>General narrative structure: the narration is structured mainly around the recounting of events, which are more or</p>

less connected to the places the group travels and stops by. For the first-half of the film (from scenes 1 to 6), the plot assumes an episodic structure in that each scene is built around the telling of a story concerning past events, which are linked to the places the group is either passing (e.g. the story about the origins of the fortress town of Valença) or stopping by (e.g. the story about Manoel's childhood in the Jesuit boarding-school). This is achieved through long expository passages that are responsible for a slowly paced narration, which forces the spectator to centre on "what is being said" (i.e. on the message itself), instead of 'what's coming next' (i.e. the upcoming events). The long tracking road or landscape shots help to connect important narrative units; they also help to convey a sense that the pace of the journey itself corresponds to the pace of the film. It is difficult for the spectator to build up expectations about dramatic progression, i.e. in terms of anticipating upcoming events or of understanding how the voyage itself is affecting each character. This is because characters engage for most of the time in dialogue concerning past events, often unrelated, and referring mostly to one recognizable character - Manoel. The other characters (Judite, Duarte and Afonso) pose basically as observers of the surrounding space and listeners to the old director's memoirs, intervening mainly to ask a question, make a remark or to ask for a clarification. Up to the second-half of the film, the narration is marked by a long exposition of past events that have an affective and symbolic linkage to the feeling of nostalgia experienced by the ageing director, as he recalls the time and the places of his childhood.

This pattern changes when the group starts to approach their destination - Lugar do Teso (scene 7). The second-half of the film (from scenes 8 to 14) precipitates events that start to progress more straightforwardly towards a conclusive resolution of affairs. Only here it becomes possible to speak of considerable dramatic progression or to raise stronger expectations about the ongoing chain of events: Maria's initial refusal to accept her nephew's identity and Judite and Duarte's unsuccessful attempts to persuade her otherwise; and, finally, the acceptance of Afonso's identity followed by the visit to his father's house of birth and to the cemetery.

Sub-narrative pattern of journey-quest: The voyage is structured as a quest: Afonso's quest for roots and identity. Although there is clear route to follow and an intended destination (the shooting place), these appear as completely irrelevant for the purpose of the quest. The 'real' goal to pursue, which is only revealed halfway through the film (scene 6), concerns Afonso's intention to visit his ageing aunt who he had never met at the village of Lugar do Teso. The voyage's goal is then that of fulfilling Afonso's longing

for his roots. For Afonso, the voyage configures a process of discovery of himself and others across the cultural and geographical space of Northern Portugal. The stops and the places the group travels become very important in terms of attaining such a goal: Afonso is a French citizen of Portuguese descent who has never had the chance to visit the country where his father was born. The 'voyage to Lugar do Teso' turns into an experience of unfolding and discovery of the self and others. This is a voyage that aims at rendering familiar the unfamiliar. Afonso, who fully embodies the figure of the voyager, is trying to learn something about himself by means of attentive observation of the places he travels: "You know Manoel, all the past belongs to your memory: I like to learn things about it but you understand that this does not refer to my father's past". The journey-quest configures a process of changing and learning for the voyager, which is deeply embedded in the discovery and comprehension of a complex space (cultural, geographic and political). This process is disturbed by Maria's refusal to accept that Afonso is her nephew because he is unable to speak her language. Afonso understands that getting to know his ancestors is not just a question of comprehending their culture but also of being accepted as one of 'them' (i.e. the family). It is noteworthy that until the group arrives at Lugar do Teso (i.e. the first-half of the film) the voyage proceeds smoothly and Afonso learns about the culture and history of the region and of Portugal through his companions in a rather passive manner. In the second-half, there is a visible dramatic progression that is expressed in the Afonso's emotional appeal to persuade his aunt that "it is not the language that counts. What counts is the blood!". Maria's acknowledgement of Afonso's identity is both symbolically and narratively important in that it triggers the narrative outcome: Afonso who had arrived as a stranger to his ancestor's village leaves as one of 'them'. The ending suggests that the voyage is about to begin for the 'renewed' Afonso: "It is like being a stranger travelling to his imaginary and finally meeting the reality of places, of those places I heard my father speaking. I've got a feeling of having gone back in time". The last scene symbolically links Afonso, who is depicted as wealthy and successful actor, to those who suffer and manage to overcome the hardships of life. Afonso, dressed as Pedro Macau, is at his dressing room and while getting ready for shooting recites the verses he learnt about the statue (which is meant, as previously revealed, to represent the suffering and the strength of 'forced heroes' like Afonso's father). The film ends with Afonso following Manoel for shooting. Shortly before, he had just remarked looking himself at the mirror: "You too Afonso are not the same. You are an other". Meanwhile, Judite and Duarte wait

	<p>outside dressed in traditional Portuguese. Interestingly, in one of the dressing room's walls it's possible to read the following graffiti: "Voyage to the Beginning of the World". This mark of intertextuality and self-reflectivity may well indicate that, in the end, the journey is about to continue in reinventing itself through the film to be shot. (the credits also reveal that the film is based in the true story of a French actor who came to act in a film in Portugal).</p>
<p>F2: Mise-en-scène</p>	<p>Lighting: lighting is intended to express verisimilitude as much as possible. In scenes shot inside the van, the contrast between lighting and shadows varies and the characters' faces are often concealed by shadows, which are a reflection of the passing landscape (buildings, woods, trees, etc.) as to express a 'naturalistic' use of lighting. For instance, when the van passes through the thick walls of the fortress town of Valença lighting is scarce inside the van and characters' faces are depicted as concealed by shadows, being difficult to gain access to their facial expressions. This use of lighting helps to convey a sense of the strength and width of such walls, that demarcate the Northern Portuguese border since medieval times (this information is provided by Duarte while crossing the walls). This 'naturalistic' use of lighting is more carefully explored in the scene shot at the house where Afonso's father was born. Here, the fireplace is the only source available of lighting, and in emanating from below it makes the house to look gloomy. While the group gathers around the fire to listen to Maria's speaking of the hardships of living in such a poor village, only the body (or the face) of characters is highlighted. The setting is depicted as immersed in darkness and is difficult to make sense of the surrounding space (size of the room and existing objects). This is a quite accurate and realistic depiction of lighting conditions at the time when Afonso's father inhabited the house (a time when villages were still deprived of electric light).</p> <p>Setting: the film is shot in location. The setting has the important function of enacting the recollection of past events and the telling of stories related to the places the group passes by. Setting and plot are closely intertwined. Each stop, for instance, is an opportunity to embark on the telling of a story related to that specific setting (e.g. Manoel's recalling of his childhood at the boarding-school while stopping by the river Minho), which might dominate the action of a whole scene. Setting and props are important in illustrating the topics of an ongoing conversation: the tradition of the women to dress in black (which is commented on at Maria's house), either to mourn a relative or simply to indicate the absence of the husband, is emphasised through the portrayal of Maria and Christine dressed in black costumes; the conversation about the ancient origins of the fortress town of Valença benefits, at</p>

least symbolically, from the long tracking shot of the crossing of the extraordinarily thick city walls.

The long tracking shots of landscape when the van is on the move, beyond their narrative function of splitting the action in relevant narrative units, also help the spectator to make sense of the rich and layered landscape, which is recognized as typical of Northern Portugal: the fortress and historic town of Valença now cluttered with souvenir shops and crowded with visitors; the large vineyards surrounding the typical northern Portuguese house with its adjacent and distinctive stone granaries; the distinctive agrarian landscape of a region traditionally devoted to agriculture; the decaying Hotel of Peso once famous for its spa; the typical Portuguese northern villages with their granite houses exhibiting their typical wooden balconies, and cluttered around a small square at which centre rise a stone pillar.

The differences between specific geographic spaces, mostly rural, become mostly visible through the landscape shot: for instance, the contrast between the green and fertile areas made mainly of vineyards and small vegetable plots, and rough mountain ranges with their wild water streams and rocky areas scattered of old roman vestiges. The customs of the people inhabiting remote villages such as Lugar do Teso are also suggested by the settings, especially in the scenes shot at Lugar do Teso: the dogs barking at the arrival of strangers suggests the isolation of people living in such remote villages and the underdevelopment of the region; the LS portraying a typical Northern village square where a group of locals, gathered around a stone pillar, comments on the van's passengers, who appear to be tourists, also suggests the state of isolation of these people. The scene at Maria's house, with a table displaying local food illustrates the warm welcoming visitors get in these villages, already anticipated by Duarte's comments on their way to Lugar do Teso.

The setting provides the iconic material, an imagery, which helps the spectator to make sense out of the many stories and remembrances the surrounding landscape and the voyage itself evokes among the group. It is also the case that the places and spaces depicted are meant to represent genuine locations (Lugar do Teso is, in fact, Lugar do Teso). Visual depictions of monuments, landmarks, and in general the architecture and topography of the spaces the group travels, play an important role in enhancing symbolic and mythic contents (especially when associated with dialogue): such as the origins of Portugal, the dramas of a historical mass emigration, the desertification of the interior and its ageing population, the political and cultural meanings of geographic borders (e.g. the mountain; the river Minho), etc. For instance, the scene showing the group walking along the narrow streets of Lugar do Teso is powerful in conveying a

	<p>meaning for the state of underdevelopment of the village (as of many others alike).</p> <p>The visual imagery (props and settings) also has an important role in unfolding the tension the national and regional dimensions of space. In fact, this voyage throughout northern Portugal towards a deserted, rural and underdeveloped region of the country might also stand for an accepted image of contemporary Portugal, with its associated structural problems (e.g. historical emigration, ageing of the population, economic underdevelopment in the context of the EU). At the same time, the rich and diverse topographic, architectural and cultural imagery deployed along the journey also suggests the existing regional cultural and economic asymmetries (e.g. the highly populated and industrial littoral vs. the deserted, agrarian and economically underdeveloped interior) within the national space.</p>
<p>F3: Characters</p>	<p>This film attaches the spectator to a group of characters that are - 3 middle-aged actors and an old director (who is only able to walk with the help of a crutch) - heading to some destination to shoot a film. The narrative presents the characters as a group and very rarely in isolation. Each character is introduced in the first scene and their social role is provided. The narrative ends up closely aligning the spectator with two characters: Manoel and Afonso. Although the group travels for professional reasons, Afonso is the character that actually embodies the figure of the voyager, and the actual aim of the journey is to enable Afonso to get to know his ancestors. During the first half of the film (scenes 1 to 6), the narrative aligns us more closely to Manoel's character in providing wide access to his inner thoughts and remembrances of his childhood in long expository scenes. The remaining characters pose mainly as mere listeners and observers of Manoel's memoirs, and the spectator does not have a wide access to their thoughts or feelings. The spectator only starts to align more closely with Afonso, the voyager, when he assumes a more active role and his thoughts and intentions are made clear (scene 6). From scene 7 onwards, the spectator starts to learn more about Afonso's feelings, thoughts and expectations. The second half of the film is clearly dominated by Afonso's character that can now easily be recognized as the voyager. The spectator is drawn to understand Afonso's expectations and aims through his desperate struggle to be recognized as his aunt's nephew and, finally, how the whole experience has changed him.</p> <p>Judite and Duarte maintain their role as minor characters throughout the film. The narration does not provide enough information on their inner thoughts and feelings although they intervene expansively along the story line. This is particularly emphasised by their obvious inexpressive and mannered</p>

	<p>acting style. Judite and Duarte play an important part, especially during the first half of the film, in stimulating the conversation by asking questions, or making brief remarks about what is being said. Duarte assumes the role of a typical Greek choric figure in both commenting and participating on the events, or in announcing a forthcoming event (e.g. in scene 3 Duarte announces “we are going to get in the fortress are of the city of Valença ...”). He appears as both involved in the action and detached from it. Duarte’s remarks are extremely relevant in that they provide important information about Portuguese history and costumes. Stylistically, Duarte’s chorus role is particularly suggested in the static and balanced composition, framed in medium close-up, invariably revealing Manoel (on the left corner of the frame), Duarte (on the centre), and Judite (on the right corner of the frame). In scenes inside the van, it is important to note that Duarte is never framed in a single MCU when he intervenes to comment on action.</p> <p>In short, the narration evolves in presenting Afonso and Manoel as the central characters and in driving viewer’s attention towards their thoughts, feelings, expectations and especially the deep sense of nostalgia that seems to dominate these characters’ state of spirit. In deploying Manoel’s longing for his happy lost childhood and Afonso’s yearning for his roots, mainly through dialogue, the narrative is also unveiling the complexities of the mythic feeling of ‘saudades’ to which a sense of belonging is usually attached. Manoel and Afonso are the only characters that, in being represented in their ‘complexity’, are able to obtain an adequate evaluation and emotional response from the spectator. Duarte and Judite provide the information the spectator requires to make it sense of the narrative context.</p>
<p>F4: Editing</p>	<p>A peculiar editing strategy is employed to frame characters within scenes depicting dialogue inside the van: a strict alternation between medium close-ups of Manoel, Judite and Afonso is consistently followed. A MCU of one of these characters (not necessarily when they speak) cuts at times to a 3MCU of Manoel, Duarte and Judite. Some of these scenes last for over five minutes. This editing strategy appears as an alternative to the conventional shot/reverse shot technique, which is never employed to shoot dialogue inside the van. The consistent use of cutting between medium close-ups in a very small frame (i.e. the character’s face dominates the whole screen) associated with the refusal to provide the reverse-angle shot in a dialogue scene has the effect of undermining the spectator’s expectations in terms of the comprehension of the affinities between characters, and the relation between these and their surroundings. The absence of the oblique counter-shot, that usually suggests the relation between two characters, when associated with mise-en-scène</p>

and shot-scale has an important effect: it directs the spectator's attention to "what is being said" in depriving the spectator of a significant portion of the represented space. In fact, the portion of space available in the screen for the exploitation of mise-en-scène is limited due to the use of very tight frames. This makes difficult the task of perceiving the space in which the characters play and how it is that characters relate to such a space. These subjects, so static and formally arranged, reinforce the sense of enclosure of the space.

The shot/reverse shot is occasionally used when the group meets with other characters on their route, and especially at their destination (e.g. scene at the cemetery when Maria says goodbye to Afonso). The interaction between characters, and between these and other props and their surroundings is thus made relevant.

Cutting from a character's MCU, framed inside the van, to a tracking or travelling shot of landscape, and vice-versa, is another important editing device. These shots are usually framed from the point-of-view of the static camera positioned by the back window or side window, as the spectator observes the passing landscape. The interplay between a MCU (i.e. a static shot) and a tracking shot (i.e. a movement shot) has the effect of linking character's gaze to the surrounding landscape. It is also crucial in terms of plot development: it may be used to introduce a stop (e.g. scene in which the van crosses Vila de Peso and Manoel recalls his childhood holiday's at the Great Hotel do Peso; or scene in which Manoel, while watching the surrounding landscape, recalls that the statue of Pedro Macau is located somewhere nearby); it can enact the telling of a story related to the surrounding landscape and settings (e.g. when crossing Valença, Duarte tells the story of the ancient origins of the fortress town); or it can enact the recounting of past events (e.g. scene in which Manoel recalls a trip he made with his elder brothers and speaks of his childhood in Oporto). These shots help to structure the array of stops in that they mark the alternation between a scene of movement (i.e. characters are framed inside the van) and a stop.

The use of long tracking/travelling shots road or landscape shots is part of a widely used editing device that basically aims at covering the passage between significant narrative units (or scenes). In the opening scene, a high-angle tracking shot of the road marks (no landscape is depicted) is used as an establishing shot to define the mood of the film: the spectator knows the film is concerned with a journey. The tracking shot also functions as a kind of punctuation mark that continuously

	reminds the spectator of the ' <i>temps morts</i> ' of the journey itself.
F5: Shot composition	<p>Tone: colour but generally avoiding bright and sharp colours. Colour is intended to be used in a naturalistic manner.</p> <p>Shot distance and frame: The small and static frames (MCU) typical of the scenes shot inside the van contrasts with the use of larger frames and 'open' frames that prevail in scenes shot at the places the group visits. MFS and FS of the characters, either in isolation or as a group, dominate the scenes shot at the places where the group stops by. Characters leave and enter the frame while the camera may follow a specific character (e.g. in the scene of the Great Hotel of Peso the camera continuously follow Manoel while the other characters may abandon the frame or remain in the background). In the stops, the CU is used to pick up specific details (e.g. details of the statue of Pedro Macau; or a flower Manoel tries to reach in a tree at the Great Hotel of Peso). FS and MFS are here intended to reveal characters' movement and actions in the places they visit. They help the spectator to perceive how they relate to the surrounding space.</p> <p>The LS that is widely used in the landscape tracking shots, also appears as an establishing shot to introduce a stop or to indicate the end of a visit (e.g. the van is shot either parking or departing). The LS is also associated to the so-called empty frame (i.e. a reasonably long take where no character is framed performing action). Some static 'empty shots' are symbolically important in this film, even if they are not used narratively. The empty frame (LS) appears, for example, twice, in a scene where José tells Duarte of his brother-in-law's obsession in crossing the mountains that border Spain; the empty frame is used here to suggest the desire to cross borders. The last empty frame is visually striking in that it shows a balanced composition of the mountains involved in mist and depicted in a grey tone, which suggests gloominess. The image resembles a painting in a frame: the mountains rising out of the misty background are pushed forward in being framed, on the left and on the right, by the corners of two village houses in the immediate foreground. The deep space that mediates between the village and the distant mountains is flattened (i.e. the middle-ground plane almost disappears) so as to focus the viewer's attention on the monumentality and gloominess of the mountains in a highly stylised image to stress the remoteness of the village of Lugar do Teso.</p> <p>Focus: In dialogue scenes inside the van, the absence of the reverse-shot, the scarce background dominated by van's low ceiling, and the back and side windows slightly out-of-focus provide a depiction of an extremely confined space where</p>

	<p>characters occupy most of the frame. In the 3MCU (Manoel, Duarte and Judite), constantly used in shots inside the van, Duarte occupies the huge foreground in sharp focus, whereas Judite and Manoel are shot on a background slightly out-of-focus.</p> <p>Deep focus, often associated with the moving camera, is extensively used within scenes relating to the places the group visits. This is the case, for instance, in the scene where the group wanders around the decaying Great Hotel of Peso; or in the scene shot at Maria's house, where the use of deep focus allows the spectator to see in the background through a window, positioned in the middle-ground, the roofs of houses nearby and the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>In the scenes by the river Minho and at the house where Afonso's father was born, sharp focus is mostly used on characters (mostly framed in MCU or MS) positioned on the foreground. This is justified by the need of driving the viewer's attention for 'what is being told', for the conversation itself.</p>
<p>F6: Camera movement</p>	<p>The camera remains static and placed inside the van in every scene happening inside the van when the group is on its way to Lugar do Teso. The use of narrow frames to shoot characters (especially in long dialogue scenes like those inside the van) and the refusal in using panning or zooming makes it difficult to show the characters and their surroundings simultaneously. For this reason, cutting off from a character's CU inside the van to a travelling shot of the passing landscape becomes a way of linking the protagonists, confined to the strict space of the van, to the relevant surrounding space and without losing grasp of the movement. The consistent use of the static camera complies with the limited pattern of movement of the characters (i.e. their static posture) and at times with a slow-pace editing.</p> <p>The static camera also alternates with the use of the mobile camera that is consistently used in scenes of exteriors to track forward the characters walking in the places the group visits. Here, the relation between the characters and the space through which they pass is especially emphasised through tracking shots. For instance, in the scene in which the group heads to the house where Afonso's father was born along the narrow streets of the village, the camera tracks forward the characters that occupy different layers of a deep space: Afonso and Maria are positioned at the distant background, being followed by Judite who goes by side with Manoel, and finally, on the close foreground, we can see the backs of José and Duarte. Here, the tracking shot offers a perspective of the surrounding space almost identical to that experienced by the characters. The spectator experiences the space as if walking through the village's narrow streets, just like the characters.</p>

	<p>The use of deep focus associated to the tracking camera emphasises the narrowness of the streets and details of the surrounding buildings and environment (e.g. a passing flock of sheep).</p>
F7: Sound	<p>The dialogue is never loud or mumbled, but soft, clear and marked by an obviously mannered style as if the actors were acting in a play (this acting style is a distinctive feature of Oliveira's films). What emerges as important is "what is being told" and not as much an intense or psychologically driven character construction.</p> <p>The sound is used in a 'naturalistic' manner. Except for the musical score, which is mostly played alongside the long tracking shots of landscape that split the main scenes, the sound is mainly diegetic. It becomes narratively and stylistically important when it helps to depict the space where the characters play. This is especially the case when off-screen sound has the effect of extending and layering off-screen space. For instance, when the group crosses the town of Valença, over the images of the passing landscape they observe it becomes audible at times the sound of people laughing and speaking at the town's busy streets, or the church's bells tolling at the distance. These distinctive sounds overlap continuously with sound of the van's engine, which is a constant reminder that the group is on the move. In some scenes shot at Lugar do Teso, the peculiar background sound of birds singing, of dogs barking or yet of bells tolling are important elements of off-screen sound that strongly emphasise different layers of a very distinctive off-screen space.</p> <p>Off-screen sound helps to portray the space where the characters play in creating rich aural images, which function as an important complement of the shot's visual imagery. Such a use of sound would be an accurate depiction of the way in which the characters experience the surrounding space, i.e. both visually and aurally. For instance, in the scene where the group stops by a bridge to observe the landscape, the persistent sound of a stream of water running loudly in a mountain range dominates the entire sequence and helps to portray a space that the camera 'refuses' to explore. Even visually this space is more implied than explored. Notably, no dialogue or music is deployed until the end of the sequence, when the music score finally starts still over the sound of the running water.</p>
F8: Themes:	<p>Thematically, this voyage across northern Portugal unravels, mainly through its long expository dialogue scenes, some of the most striking issues about Portuguese national identity: issues such as the traditional domineering influence of the catholic church on Portuguese social and cultural life; the perils of a historical Portuguese emigration; the regional asymmetries between an industrial and highly populated</p>

littoral vs. an agrarian and deserted interior; the problematic integration of Portugal in the EU; the structural technological and economic underdevelopment of Portugal; the influence of the mass media in ageing and isolated populations; and, especially, issues of social belonging as associated to the mythological feeling of 'saudade'.

Lugar do Teso is a metaphor for the current social and political situation of Portugal, especially with regard to issues often dismissed by political agendas and the media in general (e.g. such isolated villages usually come to public knowledge when associated with images of the picturesque and bucolic countryside). The voyage to Lugar do Teso emerges, both literally and metaphorically, as a search for the identity of the nation which manifests itself in the search for roots of the voyager (i.e. Afonso).

The film also raises important questions on Portuguese national identity as related to questions of border-crossing: the evocation of the medieval origins of the fortress city of Valença that borders northern Portugal is a strong reference to an important historical and political border; the same applies to river Minho and mountains range Afonso's father had to cross to illegally emigrate to France. These geographical borders are also important cultural and political borders. What is at stake in this film is the symbolic evocation of how borders can persist in time. This issue becomes particularly clear in the scene in which Maria refuses to accept Afonso's identity for he cannot speak her language. He promptly attempts to persuade her otherwise in appealing to the idea of a 'shared blood'. 'Language' and 'ethnic group' are, in fact, highly symbolic 'identity markers' in the definition of national identity, and other forms of collective identification. What emerges as crucial in the film is that resilient identity markers such as 'language' and 'blood' have an important role in negotiating the difference between 'us' and 'them'.

FILMOGRAPHY

Alice in the Cities (Wim Wenders, 1974, West Germany)

Badlands (Terrence Malick, 1973, USA)

Bonnie and Clyde (Arthur Penn, 1967, USA)

Crazy Stranger, The (Tony Gatlif, 1997, Romania/France)

Down By Law (Jim Jarmusch, 1986, USA/West Germany)

Easy Rider (Dennis Hopper, 1969, USA)

Five Days, Five Nights (aka *Cinco Dias, Cinco Noites*) (José Fonseca e Costa, 1996, Portugal)

Grapes of Wrath, The (John Ford, 1940, USA)

It Happened One Night (Frank Capra, 1934, USA)

Journey to the Beginning of the World (Manoel de Oliveira, 1997, Portugal/France)

Kalifornia (Dominic Sena, 1993, USA)

Kings of the Road (Wim Wenders, 1976, West Germany)

Landscape in the Mist (Theo Angelopoulos, 1988, France/Greece/Italy)

L'Avventura (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960, Italy/France)

Leningrad Cowboys Go America (Aki Kaurismäki, 1989, Finland/Sweden)

Lost Highway (David Lynch, 1997, USA/France)

Lost in America (Albert Brooks, 1985, USA)

Natural Born Killers (Oliver Stone, 1994, USA)

Perfect World, A (Clint Eastwood, 1993, USA)

Pierrot Le Fou (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965, France/Italy)

Radio On (Christopher Petit, 1979, UK/West Germany)

Rain Man (Barry Levinson, 1988, USA)

Searchers, The (John Ford, 1956, USA)

Sicilia! (Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub, 1999, France/Italy/Switzerland)

Something Wild (Jonathan Demme, 1986, USA)

Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939, USA)

Strada, La (Frederico Fellini, 1954, Italy)

Stranger than Paradise (Jim Jarmusch, 1983, USA/West Germany)

Sugarland Express, The (Steven Spielberg, 1974, USA)

Sullivan's Travels (Preston Sturges, 1941, USA)

Suspended Step of the Stork, The (Theo Angelopoulos, 1991, France/Greece/Italy/Switzerland)

Thelma & Louise (Ridley Scott, 1991, USA)

Ulysses' Gaze (Theo Angelopoulos, 1995, Greece/France/Italy)

Vanishing Point (Richard C. Sarafian, 1971, USA)

Voyage to Italy (Roberto Rossellini, 1953, France/Italy)

Wild at Heart (David Lynch, 1990, USA)

You Only Live Once (Fritz Lang, 1937, USA)

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