Bye Bye Brazil

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Citas recomendadas

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BYE BYE BRAZIL

Bye Bye Brazil (1980), a comedy written and directed by Carlos Diegues, follows the adventures of the one-truck Caravana Rolidei (a misspelling of "holiday") across Brazil. The mastermind of this "underdeveloped" carnival is Lord Cigano (José Wilker), a poorly educated but astute and flashy magician, pseudo clairvoyant, and showman. His supporting cast includes the sexy, long-legged rumba dancer Salomé (Betty Faria); an accordionist, Ciço (Fábio Júnior), whose stoic face recalls the young Buster Keaton; Ciço's wife, Dasdô (Zaira Zambelli); and a Black strong man and human flamethrower (Príncipe Nabor). When the troupe loses its strong man and its truck, Lord Cigano sets his woman, Salomé, to work as a prostitute. In Belém the two couples finally part company, and Ciço and Dasdô go off in search of a new life in Brasilia. An insert title announces that time has passed, and then we watch Ciço and his wife perform as musicians in a Brasilia dance hall. This performance is interrupted when Lord Cigano and Salomé arrive in the caravan's new vehicle: a modern, neon-lit truck, which features dancing girls in a rear compartment. Lord Cigano proposes that the musicians join the company for a tour of Rondônia, but Ciço resists the temptation and elects to remain at home. The movie ends à la Orfeu Negro: Lord Cigano conjures up the sun - i.e., life goes on - as the Caravana Rolidei speeds off towards faraway Rondônia.

Diegues has spiced this minimal picaresque plot with a four-cornered love affair involving both of the caravan's couples. Several torrid love-making scenes feature nude actresses and actors; such sequences seem to have become de rigueur in contemporary Brazilian commercial cinema.

To make Bye Bye Brazil, Diegues and his filmmaking team traveled 15,000 kilometers across the Northeast, the North, and the Central Plateau. As a result, the film at times resembles a travelogue; its attraction is enhanced by Lauro Escorel Filho's lush color cinematography. In order to show viewers the look of a region, the filmmakers present both broad views - such as a helicopter shot which follows a truck through the Amazon forest - and closer shots which focus on typical objects. A montage sequence early in the film consists of brief shots which flash images - boats, pottery, market goods - typical of a town along the São Francisco River; viewers are thus introduced to the locals before their attention is drawn to the actions of the central characters. Local color is woven into the plot; a sequence in Belém treats the audience to a tour of the picturesque Ver-o-Peso Market as the protagonists search for the red-light district.
Regional types abound; and the sertanejos, Amazon Indians, and others are played by local non-actors. We see regional customs, such as a procession of backlanders praying for rain, as well as national pastimes; e.g., the Brazilian penchant for betting. The film not only conveys the look of given regions and their inhabitants, but also their authentic sounds. On the banks of the Xingo River, Cruari Indians sing a ritual song as a farewell to the troupe's strong man. Authentic regional music, played by local musicians, is effectively used to establish setting and atmosphere.

A text appended at the end of Bye Bye Brazil dedicates the film to the Brazilian people of the twenty-first century. Diegues has explained that in his film he attempts to register a particular moment in his country's history; namely, the rapidly changing present - when the old Brazil of the ox cart is disappearing and the new jet-age nation is emerging. Bye Bye Brazil suggests that this transitional period is a very difficult one for the nation's poor and dispossessed. During most of their travels, the principal characters encounter few employment opportunities other than carnival work or prostitution. An old sertanejo explains that in the backlands an intractable socio-economic system and a hostile climate have conspired against the inhabitants: periodic droughts and the concentration of land in the hands of a few owners have combined to drive poor people from the area. When Dasdô and Ciço arrive in Brasilia, shots of the city's slums reveal that governmental social services have failed to keep pace with the needs of the thousands of migrants who flock to the capital weekly.

In the Amazon region, the culture of native peoples disintegrates in the face of modernization. Along the highway, a group of Indians meets the Caravana Rolidei and requests a ride to the nearest city. The camera, in medium shot, travels over the members of this indigenous group in order to register the Westernization of their attire; the camera comes to rest on the face of an old woman clutching a transistor radio to her ear. This old woman wishes to fly in an airplane, and an Indian lad carries a toy plane that he has fashioned. The airplane motif is a fitting symbol of the Indians' overly optimistic attempt to fit themselves into the national scheme of economic growth. Like the Pacific Islanders who established the Cargo Cult, these Indians await the airplane bearing the wonderful products of modern technology. When the Indians arrive in the city, however, they find that the only airplane ride available would transport them to a remote, foreign-owned paper mill, where Indian laborers receive lower wages than other workers.

The most inspired aspect of Bye Bye Brazil is its illustration of the costs of modernization. Majestic shots of the Rolidei truck traveling the tree-lined
Transamazônia suggere la grandeur di questo costruzione, mentre un brutto immagine - una close-up di un armadillo squattato e sangue - simboleggia il prezzo ecologico del progetto. La lotta tra il moderno e il tradizionale è espressa con la massima efficienza nell'approccio alla trattazione delle medie e dell'entertainment. Questa lotta è affermativamente annunciata al principio del film, quando la musica pop amplificata dall'impianto Rodei soffoca un pezzo tradizionale suonato da una banda rustica. In un paesino del sertão, Lord Cigano incontra Zé da Luz (Jofre Soares), un proiettore ambulante che mostra un'16mm stampa di Gilda de Abreu's melodrammatic O Ebrio (1946) in remoti insediamenti non toccati dall'elettricità e dalla televisione.

Come Zé da Luz, Lord Cigano si rende conto che il potere sempre crescente della televisione sta riducendo l'attrattiva dell'entertainment tradizionale e che deve cercare città prive di chicane de peixe (antenne della televisione). 

La visione televisiva in Bye Bye Brazil è ipnotizzata dal programma mediocro; alcuni spettatori passivi guardano persino il test pattern sulla schermata. All'inizio del film, Diegues si è ingeniosamente inventato di rappresentare l'incubo della televisione sul mondo brasiliano: in una loro performance da ballo in Brasilia, Cico e Dasdo giocano dietro a più televisioni che simulativamente trasmettono la loro performance - come se non potesse essere reale o utile a meno di essere televisato. La televisione non si limita più a proiettare suoni e immagini; nel nuovo Brasile, la televisione è diventata necessaria per conferire realtà e, in effetti, realizzarla.

Quando Brasile passa alla tecnologia aeronautica, modello straniero, diffuso dai media, cresce sempre di più l'influenza sullo scenario culturale nazionale. La traccia sonora del film riflette questa crescente influenza, e le canzoni di lingua inglese e portoghese competono per la supremazia. Entrambe le canzoni vengono composte dal team Chico Buarque-Roberto Menescal, che ha composto il tema, ma nessuna delle due vince il duello musicale; la musica brasiliana e la musica americana esistono in pace, influenzandosi a vicenda. Tuttavia, Diegues scherzosamente suggerisce che Brasile non si renderà facilmente libero dal suo complesso di inferiorità e non emergerà dallo sguardo degli Stati Uniti e dei paesi sviluppati. In una delle scene più belle del film, Lord Cigano causa «neve» durante una loro performance nel sertão; lui afferma che la neve cade come nel sertão sviluppato; quando si sente «I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas», uno spettatore si accorge che la neve assomiglia a grattugiato cocco.

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