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## Dwelling the precariousness

### Ozualdo Candeias' A margem | The Margin (1967)\*

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#### **Abstract**

In *A margem / The margin* (1967), directed by Ozualdo Candeias, the actor's bodies, the landscape, the houses are imbedded in precarious aspects. There is not a past or a future of the people filmed, therefore the time suggested by the film is the present. As the film's title indicates the margins of Tiête river are the location where four figures' actions take place. Tiête river surrounds the city of Sao Paulo and draws a border between the city's center and the periphery, consequently, the river's margin is the dwelling place of people who are economically at the margins of the city. *A margem* embraces the precariousness transforming it into an audiovisual expression that evokes possible ways to dwell in the transitory territory relying on the present. Hence, this paper aims to discuss the precariousness dwelling featured in the film that is the result of Candeias' phenomenological approach of a river's fringes and its inhabitants. I will be referring to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological discussion of visual expression and the notion of *perambulação* (wandering/walking aimlessly) developed by Uchôa (2013).

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\* This paper is an extract of my PhD thesis in which I approach cinema and visual in the Brazilian context. See: Froehlich, J. *Painting Cinematic Art. A study on abstraction, expression and experimentalism in visual arts and cinema from Brazil, 1922 - 1931 and 1950 -1968*. Antwerp: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Antwerp, 2018. 413p. PhD. Thesis in Film Studies and Visual Culture. Available at: <https://repository.uantwerpen.be/docman/irua/7945f8/155975.pdf>

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*A margem* / *The margin* is Ozualdo Candeias' first fictional feature film. At the time of the film's production in 1967, Candeias was around 45 years old, having "had at least 12 years of professional experience as documentarist" (Uchôa, 2017, p.2). Candeias wrote, directed, and edited the film. Before focusing predominantly on filmmaking, Candeias divided his time between films and other professional activities, working primarily as a truck driver and auditor for the city hall (Uchôa, 2017, p. 9). He had an unusual trajectory as a filmmaker. His films have a peculiar, unconventional aesthetic, which is typically associated with modern cinema and the Cinema Marginal movement (Machado Jr. 2007a, 2007b; Ramos, 1987; Uchôa, 2013a, 2013b, 2017). Candeias studied several instructional books about cinema and attended the Cinema Seminar at *Museu de Artes de Sao Paulo – MASP* / *São Paulo Museum of Art* in the 1950s, which brought together central intellectual figures in cinematic thought and production, before the inclusion of film and cinema studies in universities<sup>1</sup>. Film critics and cinema theorists have referred to Candeias' film style and aesthetic as naïve, primitive (Biáfora, 1967), and surrealist (Machado Jr., 2007b). However, in accordance with Uchôa (2013a, 2013b, 2017) and Teles (2006, 2007), this paper understands *A margem* as visual expression, as thought, arguing that the film's contribution to modern cinema aesthetics consists in its experimentalism and phenomenological approach of São Paulo's fringes and meadows during the 1960s.

Some film theorists and Brazilian cinema historians consider *A margem* to be the precursor to the confluence of films and filmmakers that defined the Cinema Marginal movement (Stam & Johnson, 1982; Ferreira, 1986; Eugênio Puppo & Albuquerque, 2002; Ramos, 1987; Teles, 2006, 2007; Uchôa, 2013a, 2013b). *A margem* experiments with a non-representational and fragmented narrative, as well as non-fiction and abstract elements (Stam & Johnson, 1982). As the film's title indicates, a riverbank and its surrounding are the locations where the actions of four figures take place. The river is the Tietê (Eugênio Puppo & Albuquerque, 2002, p. 20), which surrounds the city of Sao Paulo, forming a border between the city's center and its periphery. Consequently, the riverbanks are the dwelling place of people who were economically at 'the margins' of the city and of society during the 1950s and 60s (Teles, 2006). Thus, the term 'margin' of the title relates to both landscape and people. The conscious choice of elements within the framing, the long silences and constant motion of the figures (Uchôa, 2013a), construct a sensorial and sensual logic of the marginal people's ontology and reality. Thus, I argue that *A margem* proposes to its viewer (spectator) a phenomenological living experience of people's dwelling precariousness<sup>2</sup> and adversity. Furthermore, the four people followed by the camera in the film appear to resist the precariousness and adversity through their constant moving. The wandering of the characters in *A margem*, as other Candeias' films, Uchôa (2013a, 2016) denominated *perambulação*, here referred as the act of wandering/walking aimlessly. Dwelling at the margins as portrayed by Candeias seems to point to a constant wandering, the constant

1 Fábio Uchôa analyzes the MASP Seminar in relation to Ozualdo Candeias' documentary films in "O Seminário de cinema do Masp e a produção documental de Ozualdo Candeias (1955-66) / The Masp film seminar and the documentary production of Ozualdo Candeias (1955-66)." *Revista FAMECOS* 24, no. 2 (2017): 21.

2 It is relevant to highlight that, in Portuguese, precariedade means "precarity" or "precariousness", as well as deficiency, privation, imperfection, or insufficiency. Therefore, this text, in referring to 'precariousness', these meanings are also implied.

physical displacement of the people who live between the meadows and the urban center (Uchôa 2013a, 2016). The individuals constant wandering and walking is accompanied by the changing and mobile space.

Adversity (Dezeuze, 2013; Oiticica, 2007) and precariousness (Teles, 2006, 2007) characterize both the themes and form of Candeias' films. To this extent, *A margem* is no exception. Candeias made films using very small budgets, shooting under the same conditions as the films' motifs. Thus, Candeias made films in conditions of adversity and precariousness, which subsequently formed the basis of Candeias' aesthetic (Teles, 2006). In the case of *A margem*, Candeias borrowed the camera, used remnants of film negatives, and could only pay the actors after resources returned from the film's distribution (Eugênio Puppo & Albuquerque, 2002; Teles, 2006). Likewise, in *Zézero* (1974), Candeias used remnants of film negatives and worked with amateur actors. Nevertheless, being conscious of every step taken in his films, from the first idea to the final editorial cut, Ozualdo Candeias created a unique ensemble of newsreels, documentaries, and fictions of short, medium and feature lengths, which Ângela Aparecida Teles (2006, 2007) identifies as "an aesthetic of precariousness". Teles defines the aesthetic of precariousness in Ozualdo Candeias' films as "[...] a creative form of rendering problematic the cultural hybridization processes that occurred during the modernization of the city of São Paulo in the second half of the 20th century". Thus, by producing an aesthetic of precariousness, Candeias expressed "the historical experience of precariousness and the displacement of rural populations, as well as the urban precariousness engendered by the excluding effects of economic modernization" (Teles, 2007, p. 164, own translation).<sup>3</sup>

Teles defines Candeias' work through its context, which includes the relation between countryside and metropolis, specifically the city of São Paulo, where a considerable contingent of countryside migrants went looking for opportunities to work and live between the 1950s and 1980s (Teles, 2007). Ozualdo Candeias made films addressing migration from the countryside and northeastern part of Brazil to the metropolis, especially São Paulo. The short-film, *Zézero* (1974), which paints a portrait of a migrant's progress in São Paulo, does so while employing an ironic formula (Machado Jr., 2007b). For Teles (2007), precariousness is a socio-economic issue involving status, one's social mobility, and the cultural hybridization of a marginalized population, which Candeias experienced himself throughout his life and in making his films. Such precariousness is associated with the marginal and peripheral status of a population and is presented aesthetically through the portrayal of specific characters and the few resources available for filming, as well as through experimentations with cinematographic language, which is "constituted inside the premises of the auteur cinema and the break with procedures of classical cinematic style" (Teles, 2006, p. 22, own translation).<sup>4</sup>

3 Original text: "A estética da precariedade elabora uma forma criativa de problematização dos processos de hibridização cultural que se deram ao longo da modernização realizada na cidade de São Paulo na segunda metade do século XX. Nela surge um tempo híbrido constituído pelos saberes tradicionais, pela experiência histórica da precariedade e do deslocamento das populações rurais, e pela precariedade urbana engendrada pela modernização econômica excludente e pelos meios de comunicação de massa."

4 Original text: "A estética da precariedade foi constituída dentro das premissas do cinema de autor

In a similar direction, Anna Dezeuze (2013) contextualizes the “precarity” of socio-economic status and invokes precariousness to describe a broader existential state, which is transformed into a positive experience in the artworks of Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica (Dezeuze, 2013, p. 227). Dezeuze relates precariousness, from an unstable and insecure socio-economic condition of living, to a broader use, whereby it can be engaged aesthetically and artistically. The author analyzes precariousness in Brazilian artworks from the 1960s onwards, focusing primarily on Clark’s *Caminhando/Going* (1963), about which she remarks that the precariousness of an artwork can also indicate a “new idea of existence” (Dezeuze, 2013, p. 227). Therefore, Dezeuze redefines the concept of precariousness, as presented in the discourse of artworks and artists, pointing to how the artistic contributions may reveal positive interpretations of what it *means* to exist precariously. Dezeuze argues that, “[...] these artists (Clark and Oiticica) turned precariousness into an experience of freedom rather than a loss of hope or the impossibility of relating to the world” (Dezeuze, 2013, p. 228).

Hence, adversity and precariousness are discussed as *aesthetics*. I furthermore examine the method of the filmmaker’s phenomenological expression, which, through relations of space, body, landscape and displacement constructs an experimental practice that engages the spectator in experiencing the marginal dwelling place. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1993, 1952/1992, 1961/1993), when thinking about modern art as expression, emphasizes how forms conceived in painting can result from the artist *phenomenologically* interpreting his or her world. Aligned to the philosopher’s approach of modern art I address the film as the filmmaker’s phenomenological approach of the world. This understanding of Candeias’ approach of the world is also based on his method of filming and editing his films, as it is the case of *A margem*. The filmmaker is in a constant reversible relationship with the place and spaces he is at. The film reflects “as a mirror” the consciousness (the incarnate mind) (Merleau-Ponty, 1961/1993). The perception of the world, therefore, constitutes the artwork. As Yacavone explains: “[as] in all art, there is no recipe for creating this perceptual and expressive unity and sense of formal necessity, which resists rational definition, and depends upon de experimentation and intuition of filmmakers” (Yacavone, 2016, p. 178). As follows, I analyze Candeias’ *A margem* from the notions of precariousness and adversity present in the films content and topic that were transformed by the filmmaker in an aesthetic result. Candeias phenomenological approach of the place, space and people that he filmed assure a living experience of the fringes in which people dwelled in Sao Paulo in the 1960s.



Figure 1: Film Credits, in *A margem* (Ozualdo Candeias, 1967).

In *A margem*, the main character is a riverbank (*margem*) and its inhabitants. The river forms the boundary to the big city. Therefore, the inhabitants and individuals filmed by Ozualdo Candeias are the ‘marginals’ of and at the margins; people who thrive on the fringe and meadows. *A margem* “gives a series of direct and sympathetic portraits of people stuck on the fringe” (Cutler, 2014). Candeias abstract elements of society’s fringes alongside elements of the semi-urban and meadow landscape. As he remarks: “I looked for an approach between the real and the abstract to present my characters and tell their ‘drama,’ purposely avoiding the objective without many omissions of the real” (Candeias in Fonseca, 1968, p. 25, own translation).<sup>5</sup>

The film is not a documentary but nevertheless portrays documental images of São Paulo in the 1960s (Teles, 2006), showing both the periphery where the River Tiete flows as well as the city center (Uchôa, 2013a) (Figure 2). For Teles (2006), Candeias’ films are a hybrid sitting between fiction and documentary. This is because Candeias filmed exteriors, on location, a result from a lack of resources. Candeias is exemplary of a filmmaker who did the most with the poor conditions he had; the camera was his main instrument to express his world, as Godard remarks: “is to do what you can and not what you want. To do what you want out of what you can, to do what you want out of what you have and not dream about doing the impossible” (Godard, 2014, p. 18). Candeias combines such premises in *A margem*.

e do rompimento com procedimentos da narrativa clássica do cinema.”

5 Original text: “Para cada pessoa, a linguagem deve ser distinta, assim sendo, pelas razões acima, procurei uma maneira entre o real e o abstrato, para apresentar os meus personagens e contar o seu ‘drama’, fugindo propositadamente do objetivo sem muita omissão do real.”





Figure 2: Documental images of São Paulo, in *A margem*.

*A margem* lacks a linear narrative, and only shows the actions of four people. The camera follows four individuals who rarely speak and are not given names. Despite being nameless, these individuals are introduced at the beginning of the film. The camera frames two individuals at the river's margins and the other two over a small bridge, from the inside of a boat (Figure 3). They all cross this bridge routinely throughout the film. The four individuals, who are followed by the camera throughout the film, are also romantic couples. The first couple comprises a man wearing a suit and a woman who becomes a bride; the second comprises a psychologically-disabled man and a woman who works selling coffee downtown.



Figure 3: Opening sequence, in *A margem*.

There is a woman in the same boat as the camera that is filming the four individuals. After passing the bridge, the boat stops and the woman gets off the boat. She looks at the four individuals, and the camera makes a close-up of their faces. At the end of the film, after the four of them have died, they sit inside the boat with the woman, and the camera frames, from inside the boat, the five individuals, moving away from the bridge and the riverbanks (Figure 4). The woman who comes and leaves with the boat is interpreted as a mythical death, as Charon: a ferrywoman that carries the souls of the recently deceased (E. Puppo, 2008; Uchôa, 2013a) (Figure 5).



Figure 4: Five individuals inside the boat, in *A margem*.



Figure 5: Ferrywoman, in *A margem*.

*A margem* portrays four lives coming to their end in a discontinued narrative between scenes. Their lives are marked by a beginning and an ending, respectively indicated by the arrival and departure of the boat. The actions of the individuals are introduced as they happen, in a flow of a 'constant present'. They 'live' scene-by-scene, one succeeding the other. The composition of the film suggests the ephemeral, the transitory. Moreover, the constant motion of the bodies as well as the camera evokes the continuous present. The individuals are constantly passing, walking, and running through the landscape, ruins, streets, and architectural spaces (Figure 6). The camera follows them with constant tracking shots, passing over their bodies from feet to head and head to feet, and moving from medium shots to close-ups. The physical movement of the four central individuals and the camera movements are accompanied by the boat's movement that marks the beginning and the end of their fictional lives. There is no stillness or repose in the dwelling at and in the margins. As this film suggests, the population that is thriving on adversity (Dezeuze, 2006; Oiticica, 2007) is constantly wandering, transiting.



Figure 6: Individuals constantly wandering and moving through the landscape and spaces, in *A margem*.

The people in the film live, walk, act, and eat in improvised, impoverished conditions with transitory, unstable, and ephemeral materials, food, and things, which are in various stages of dissolution. The same is true of their clothing. The individuals wear rotting, dirty clothes. The fabric has the same visual appearance as the landscape and the buildings at the surroundings of the river, which are mostly either in ruins or in the process of construction. Ozualdo Candeias' expression of the fringe and the marginal consists in exhibiting an intrinsic relation between the fabric (sc. stuff) of the body, the fabric that it carries (the clothes), and the fabric of the world in which one dwells. Candeias, therefore, does a film that is aligned with what Merleau-Ponty indicates philosophically as the carnal relationship between people and their world, he writes: '[t]hings are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are encrusted in its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the very stuff of the body.' (Merleau-Ponty, 1961/1993, p.125).

Candeias expresses the fabric of the world as the same as that of the body. Accordingly, as the painter's brush strokes made possible for the landscape to be painted through him (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1993, Câmara, 2005), Candeias movements made possible for the fringes to be portrayed through him.

Merleau-Ponty perceives, in the gestures expressed in Paul Cézanne's (1939-1906) paintings, a subject's phenomenological presence, emphasizing the role of the body in not only perceiving, nor being a 'mosaic of sensations', but in constructing and expressing thought. Thus, for instance, in the moving images the gestures can be present in the choice of framing, in the movements of the camera and in the editing. Candeias presents a similar method to film the meadows and floodplains around São Paulo. Moreover, the filmmaker lived among that population and filmed at the place where people who are pushed into the margins dwell (Teles, 2006; Uchôa, 2013b).

*A margem* constitutes a living experience of precariousness, adversity, and ephemerality. It does this by expressing a univocal relation between bodies and the landscape and places in which they perdure spatiotemporally. The existence of the four individuals in Candeias' film happens in the present time. As the past is something that happened and the future is something to happen, the present is the movement, the moment one is moving from the past to the future. Candeias does not insert projections to the future, the film ends when all four individuals have died. Thus, dwelling at the fringes and floodplains is dwelling in the present time, constantly. Consequently, the spectator is invited to experience the "presentification" of time. There is no other time to be experienced, but the moving present.

The precariousness of *A margem* is constituted by a landscape that comprises houses made out of improvised, poor, and crumbling materials, and ruins of houses and a church, construction sites, wild grasses, and trash (garbage). Furthermore, precariousness is conveyed through the aimless wandering of bodies, as well as the ephemeral and momentary actions of the four central characters. Indeed, the precariousness here indicates ephemerality, of accessing the eternal present, and of processes of dissolution and disappearing (mirroring the fate of the four people whom the camera

Additionally, the conditions and resources that Candeias had recourse to were themselves precarious, limited and transitory. Therefore, the film's location (the reality/the world) afforded all the materials Candeias needed. Two essential things come together in Candeias' expression in *A margem*: the first is the univocal relation that he establishes with the world he films; the second is the precariousness and adversity of the world that constitute the film's aesthetic and is present in the individuals' movements.

As mentioned previously, Uchôa (2013a, 2016) designates the constant motion of bodies in *A margem* as *perambulação*, meaning the movement of wandering aimlessly: coming from nowhere and going nowhere. Furthermore, Uchôa defines this aimless wander as part of the modern film aesthetic, he says:



Firstly, wandering can be thought of as a “walking without a purpose”, a purely physical event, which opposes the drama existent in classical cinema. In modern cinema, such practice tends to dissolve the relations between cause and effect, paying attention to the simple movement. Finally, leading to the construction of a space (Uchôa, 2013a, p. 13, own translation).<sup>6</sup>

Thus, in accordance with modern cinema, the characters in *A margem* wander “walking aimlessly” and the camera that follows them around constructs the space. Space appears to be also mobile. In one hand because of the camera’s and frame’s constantly moving along with the bodies. On the other hand, because the houses and buildings at the fringes and in the meadows are in the process of construction and destruction. The materials and buildings in transition are the dwelling places of people that are in transit, who wander continuously aimlessly. Furthermore, the camera frames the bodies along with highways, streets, and bridges where automobiles are passing through and along with the flowing river, passing cows and trees moving with the wind (Figure 7). The film is marked by the wandering of the bodies and a mobile (moving) space.



Figure 7 – People framed along with moving elements, in *A margem*.

The space expressed in the film is the space experienced by the bodies in front of the camera as well as by Candeias’, as he is the one filming them. As an indivisible unity, the subject is at the same time perceptive and expressive through the same body (Merleau Ponty, 1945/1993, 1952/1992, 1961/1993, 1945/2012). Thus, the world constitutes the subject and the subject expresses him/herself in the same world. Moreover, this relation always presupposes an ambiguity, not a distinction (Merleau-Ponty, 2011). The body exists and moves in time and space. Its essence of mobile-Being (Merleau-Ponty, 1961/1993) is both moved by consciousness and moves consciousness.

<sup>6</sup> Original text: “Num primeiro momento, a perambulação pode ser pensada como um “andar a esmo”, evento puramente físico, que se opõe à dramatização existente no cinema clássico. No cinema moderno, tal prática tende à dissolução das relações entre causa e efeito, atentando ao simples movimento, levando à construção de um espaço”.

Depth, as Merleau-Ponty conceives it, is that which the body experiences as it moves through space and time. There are no delimitations, nor measurements, or even distinctions. Therefore, modern art and modern cinema, as modern thought, suggest us to return to experiential space, which is lived experience, particularly through the space expressed in the (moving) image. Additionally, Merleau-Ponty (1961/1993) argues that depth does not amount to the three dimensions. Rather, depth is that which the “flesh” perceives, and is made possible by the reversibility of the incarnate mind, that is, the mind that is a body.

Fontes Filho (2005) uses the term ‘rhythm’ to explain the process by which the modern artist, according to Merleau-Ponty, transforms through painting his/her world, as well as the space through which they move. Rhythm, as Fontes Filho explains, ‘has no place in space: it implies space; it opens up space as its articulation’ (Fontes Filho, 2005, p.114, own translation)<sup>7</sup>.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, space, as expressed in painting, is constituted by rhythm. Owing to this, it is possible to affirm that space in *A margem* express rhythm of the space and place he filmed.

Candeias was not attached to any preconceived ideas about what the film should be; it was to unfold as an artistic work in its process of being made. As he states:

The only thing I know is that I don’t take the scripts out at the moment of filming. There is a reason for that: it is not to show off, it is because in the place I am filming I begin to have ideas (Ozualdo Candeias in Puppo & Albuquerque, 2002, p. 28, own translation).<sup>8</sup>

Candeias’ choice to frame the river’s margins, and following each individual’s steps, was a conscious choice. The camera follows bodies that pass through, step on, and extend over the river’s margins, and try to “overcome” the wild grasses. Candeias frames ruins of ancient buildings being ‘devoured’ by the grass and buildings under construction, denoting works in progress, just as the film too is an ever-unfolding work in progress.

There is an evident cohesiveness and coherence between what is being framed and constructed by the editing and shooting conditions. After all, these qualities are mutually influential. Therefore, in *A margem*, ‘there is no break at all in this circuit; it is impossible to say that here nature ends and the human being or expression begins’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1961/1993, p. 147). Consequently, Candeias proposes that the spectator take part in the world he is filming and that is also his own. Merleau-Ponty in *Cézanne’s Doubt*, when questioning the relation between painter, artwork, and viewer (spectator), states:

The painter can do no more than construct an image; he must wait for this image to come to life for other people. When it does, the work of art will have united these separate lives; it will

<sup>7</sup> Original text: “o ritmo não tem lugar no espaço: ele implica o espaço; ele abre o espaço enquanto sua articulação”.

<sup>8</sup> Original text: “Quase sempre os troços que eu invento têm um pouco disso: eu saio na rua e tropeço nas coisas. Umás eu chuto e outras não, eu levo pra casa. Só o que eu sei é que eu não levo os roteiros pra passear na hora de filmar. Isso tem uma razão: não é para dar uma de bom, é que no local de filmagem eu passo a ter algumas ideias”.

no longer exist in only one of them like a stubborn dream or a persistent delirium, nor will it exist in only space as a colored piece of canvas. It will dwell undivided in several minds, with a claim on every possible mind like a perennial acquisition (Merleau-Ponty, 1952/1993, p.70).

The most the painter can create is an image. Similarly, all the filmmaker can make is a composition of *moving* images. I would like to call attention to what Merleau-Ponty identifies as the 'dwelling' of the artwork of a subject within another, which can transform the spectator. All that Candeias wanted to make was an unpretentious film, focusing on 'the margins', though ultimately fictionalized. And he achieved this. The film, therefore, *contains* his expressive gestures, which emanated from his encounter with that world. Consequently, that same world is then awakened in the spectator. What Candeias achieves in *A margem* is that "the margin" he perceives also forms part of the spectatorial experience; the spectator succeeding in sharing in that same perception.

Candeias arrived at the idea of making *A margem* after reading the news about a bride who was jilted at the altar, and subsequently never took off her wedding dress. This conceptual image is present in film's composition (Figure 8). Indeed, the newspaper story is what motivates Candeias to film. However, the connection between the filmmaker and the place in which he is filming - and *what* indeed is being filmed - is what constructs the film. Accordingly, Candeias extirpates any sense of a storyline, refraining from imposing any preconceived rules about film, onto *A margem*.



Figure 8 – Bride, in *A margem*.

Candeias remarks:

What motivated me was this woman with the veil, that she never took it off again. The rest of the film: I invented it. I used to walk at Tiete riverbanks. I lived there [...]. What is more important is how I invent these silly things, we stumble around them, right? (Ozualdo Candeias in Puppo & Albuquerque, 2002, p. 28, own translation).<sup>9</sup>

Candeias works with an experimental attitude. His process in *A margem* (as in most of his films) is based on experimenting with the conditions available at the moment of shooting, as well as experimenting with the editing until the film reaches and reveals its final form. As Cutler explains: '[the] film feels fresh partly because it was invented moment to moment. Its sequences flow intuitively, resulting in story progressions that often feel more rhythmic than narrative' (Cutler, 2014). Thus, the film's rhythm and narrative are given by the present moment, the ephemeral, in which Candeias was filming, whereby transitory moments are connected scene-by-scene through the relation of landscape to bodies. Candeias' experimental attitude constructs an open film, through which the spectator is invited to take an active position, experiencing life at the 'margins', on the fringes of society.

There are few interior spaces in the film and few scenes in the dark of the night. The majority of the moments are embedded in the tension between construction works and nature, captured under intense sunlight. Therefore, the bodies are framed and "deframed" (Bonitzer, 2000) with the landscape, indicating an intrinsic existence of landscape, spaces, and people; they mutually construct one another (Figure 9). Furthermore, the individuals' bodies are predominantly framed with the landscape, either in close-ups or in wide shots.



Figure 9 – Bodies and the landscape, in *A margem*

<sup>9</sup> Original text: "O que me motivou foi essa mulher do véu, que ela não tirou mais. O resto do filme (eu inventei) é que eu andava lá pela beirada do Tiete, morei ali .... O que é importante é como eu invento as besteiras, a gente tropeça com elas por aí, né?"



Feet, hands, and faces touch the ground, the grass, the dirt, and the crowd in close-ups (Figure 10). In the wide shots, they are immersed in trees, trash, houses, ruins, and construction materials (Figure 9 and 11). Thus, Candeias establishes an intrinsic relation between individuals' bodies and their surroundings through camera movements, framings, and "deframings". Candeias' experimental attitude with the location and the individuals' bodies is constitutive of the film's composition, and proposes that the spectator take part in this relationship with society's margins. It is not about *telling* the spectator what to think, but *inviting* the spectator to experience for him/herself as he/she follows the fragmented, abstracted actions of these individuals. Therefore, Candeias invites the spectator to continue what his own artistic gesture commenced. For a filmmaker, as for an artist, it is not enough 'to create and express an idea; they must also awaken the experiences which will make their idea take root in the consciousness of others' (Merleau-Ponty, 1952/1993, p.70).



Figure 10 – Bodies close-up and the landscape, in *A margem*.



Figure 11 – Wide shots, in *A margem*.

The camera positions and movements are close to the bodies, which are embedded in their surrounding spaces and landscapes. The river, its borders with plants, constructions in progress, ruins, slums, cars, and roads are shot in relation to bodily positions. Nonetheless, bodies, the landscape, and space share the same relevance in the frame. Thus, the framing and the editing visually connect the bodies and the landscape in a carnal relation (Merleau-Ponty, 1961/1993, p. 130). Câmara comments: 'in the rhythm of forms that appropriate the rhythm of the very gestures that originated them, in the living logic of the movement that fecundated them' (Câmara, 2005, p. 138, own translation).<sup>10</sup> Thus, the filmmaker's gestures that arise out of his encounter with his world give form to the space, landscape and people in the moving image.

Candeias expresses what he perceives and experiences, proposing that the spectator take part in the film as a living bodily experience. Furthermore, the ephemeral and transitory dwelling

<sup>10</sup> Original text: "[...] no ritmo de formas que assumem o ritmo dos próprios gestos que as geraram, na lógica viva do movimento que as fecundou."



portrayed in *A margem* are expressions of an intrinsic relation between the filmmaker and his world. Cinema as visual art 'is not imitation, nor is it something manufactured according to the wishes of instinct or good taste. It is a process of expression' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1993, pp. 67-68). The living experience of the marginal's existence becomes the film's aesthetic and an opening for the spectator. Relying on improvisation during the film's shooting, as well as the possibilities that the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1993) gave him, Candeias made a film about the precariousness of life on the river's margins, proposing that the spectator take an active position, enabling him/her to experience such precariousness.

*A margem* proposes to the spectator to actively follow the film as an ephemeral, living experience of precariousness, as its characters are constantly in motion, in action, in communion with the landscape and things. Candeias portrays the precariousness of the fringes, evoking the precariousness of existence itself. Moreover, the basis of the film is discontinuity as well as constant movement (Uchôa, 2013a). The film's form and rhythm, constituted by the choices of framing and camera movements, are based on a sensorial relation between bodies and the landscape.

The margins' inhabitants make the most of their existence at the present moment as a result of their precarious conditions of living. Precariousness in *A margem* is connected to the present time and its materiality. Precariousness becomes a way of living: an existential mode. This existential mode is moreover evoked given that the four individuals, who are followed by the camera, die, also emphasizing the "presentification" of marginal existence. Aligned with Deuze's (2013) notion of precariousness as an aesthetic proposal in which there is a positive key *A margem* presents precariousness as an experience of living the present time in which life needs to be in constant movement.

Lastly, *A margem* is not a film that represents space and time. It rather simply presents time from the living experience of the world. Candeias conceived the film as it was being made. The experimental attitude of the filmmaker resulted in abstracting elements from the landscape and bodies as they dwell at the fringes. Candeias' *A margem* is thus an expression of the phenomenological relation with the fringes. About his conception of cinema, Candeias says:

I am, if I am not mistaken, by those who think that cinema is something serious and very expensive, to become only a 'spectacle,' without other consequences. I think that to the spectacle we should add another dimension, which 'dimension', in my view, is the man. When talking about man, it would be difficult not to talk about their problems. I am not against; I do not like the cinema that is only a spectacle [...] (Candeias in Fonseca, 1968, p. 23, own translation)<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Original text: "Sou, se não me engano, daqueles que acham que o cinema é coisa muito séria e de custo muito alto, para que se faça dele somente um 'espetáculo', sem outras consequências. Acho que ao espetáculo se deve acrescentar uma outra qualquer dimensão, e a 'dimensão', a meu ver, é o homem. Quando se fala em homem, difícil seria não se falar de seus problemas. Não sou contra, somente não gosto do cinema só espetáculo [...]."

Therefore, Candeias conceives a film directly pertaining to the human condition, that is, the dimension of an incarnate mind in the world with others (Merleau-Ponty, 1961/1993). Further, the filmmaker portrays lives and human relationships in adversity. The present tense of *A margem* reminds the spectator of his/her own ephemerality and that present is what moves existence. Candeias '[...] turned precariousness into an experience of freedom rather than a loss of hope or the impossibility of relating to the world' (Dezeuze, 2013, p. 228). If there are possible ways of engaging the spectator in changing reality and precarious conditions of living, Candeias' film might be one.

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**Films**

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