

Amazonas, Amazonas by Glauber Rocha and Villa-Lobos’ music: representations between past, present and future

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-58442021304>

Luiza Beatriz Alvim¹

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4816-6790>

¹(Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Escola de Música, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Música. Rio de Janeiro – RJ, Brasil).

Abstract

Glauber Rocha made the commissioned documentary *Amazonas, Amazonas* (1966) after *Black God, White Devil* (1964), employing once more Villa-Lobos’ music: the piece *Uirapuru* and *Guitar studies*, some of them already utilized in *Arraial do Cabo* (Paulo Cezar Saraceni and Mário Carneiro, 1959). We highlight the musical choices and how they, in conjunction with images and other sound elements, act in *Amazonas, Amazonas*, in view of the representations of the Amazon region, among myths, its deconstruction, and evocations of underdevelopment and progress, in an aesthetic between institutional film and Cinema Novo. We observe that in the distribution of the two sets of pieces (*Uirapuru* and guitar pieces) throughout the film, besides a temporal relation with a mythical past or with the present of the region, there is a geographical logic. We also highlight reemployments of *Uirapuru* in other films.

Keywords: Cinema Novo. Glauber Rocha. Villa-Lobos. Cinema and Music. Representations.

In his huge work, composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) has quite many elements considered nationalists, such as Indian melodies and lyrics, as well evocations of Brazilian rural and popular urban universes. In cinema, he was responsible for the music of *The Discovery of Brazil* (1937), a film by Humberto Mauro,¹ in addition to pieces of his in two other Mauro’s films, *Clay* (*Argila*, 1942) and *O canto da saudade* (1952).

In spite of Villa-Lobos’ association with Getúlio Vargas’ government – he was the “sound of Getúlio”, as Carlos Diegues stated in an interview with Guerrini Júnior (2009, p. 171) – and even with the military dictatorship (for the use of his music in propaganda films), by including Villa-Lobos’s music in their films, Brazilian Cinema Novo’s directors advocated and emphasized a nationalist image of the composer, of one able to express Brazilian identity through his music. They have then used it quite a lot as pre-existing music in their films. For Guerrini Júnior (2009, p. 125), it became a kind of “allegory of the nation” in the Cinema Novo of the sixties.

1 Humberto Mauro was a reference of “paternity” for Cinema Novo’s filmmakers and it is curious that also the reference of Villa-Lobos’ music used in Mauro’s films is transferred to them.

A similar appropriation of Villa-Lobos' music with that kind of representation can be already observed in the short documentaries by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade of 1959, *O mestre de Apipucos* and *O poeta do Castelo*, and, mainly, in *Arraial do Cabo*, by Paulo Cezar Saraceni and Mário Carneiro, from the same year. In this last one, it can be particularly noticed by the use of Villa-Lobos' *Guitar studies* in association with images of fishermen in their daily lives. An instrument of urban music, the guitar used to be linked with the image of urban "trickery", but it gains contours of "Brazilian's" when associated with the images of traditional fishing (ALVIM, 2017).

Walter Lima Júnior, Glauber Rocha's assistant director in *Black God, White Devil* (1964), told that he was the one who had the idea of putting Villa-Lobos' music still in the production stage. Having been totally impacted by the music, Glauber stated afterwards that the composer may have been the one who better "put all of Brazil in terms of art" (*apud.* GUERRINI JÚNIOR, 2009, p. 127).

Black God, White Devil ran for the Palme d'Or at the 1964 Cannes Film Festival, a fact that gave Glauber Rocha legitimacy as a filmmaker. Despite the new political situation in Brazil after the 1964 Coup, still due to the success of the feature, Glauber Rocha ended up being invited to make some institutional documentaries. This was the case of *Amazonas, Amazonas* (1966) and *Maranhão 66*, in the same year.

In this article we will analyze the use of Villa-Lobos' music in *Amazonas, Amazonas*, considering the relationship of the musical pieces with representations of the Amazon region, between the evocation of myths, identity relationships and indications of underdevelopment or progress. We will give more prominence to *Uirapuru*, also bringing information about it from the Musicology field. In addition to the direct association with an Amazonian legend inspired by its title, *Uirapuru* was the basis for another documentary about the region and, after a decade, it was reemployed in another film by Glauber Rocha, *Claro* (1975).

Glauber's path to *Amazonas, Amazonas*

In 1965, the government of the State of Amazonas was in hands of historian Arthur Cézár Ferreira Reis, who had been placed there for his friendship with military president Castelo Branco. Arthur Reis was an Amazon history scholar and defended Brazilian sovereignty in the Amazon region against foreign interests.

Intending to produce a film to promote the image of the Amazonas before the rest of the country, the director of the Department of Tourism and Promotion (DEPRO), Luiz Maximino de Miranda Corrêa, suggested Glauber Rocha's name to governor Reis, as well emphasizing the power of dissemination and penetration of cinema in society. Glauber's indication was probably also influenced by Amazonian writer and cinephile Márcio Souza, with whom the director exchanged letters since 1964 and to whom Glauber would have mentioned his desire to make a film about the region, including because he agreed with the governor in his defense of a Brazilian Amazon (MENDONÇA, 2018).

The contract was signed in October 1965, but Glauber was arrested in November 1965, together with other intellectuals protesting against the military regime in front of the Hotel Glória, in Rio de Janeiro, during the opening of a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS). Therefore, he arrived in Manaus only on December 14th, 1965 (MENDONÇA, 2018).

In spite of the original intention mentioned to Márcio Souza, in a letter to the film's producer, Luiz Augusto Mendes, Glauber showed concerns about the responsibility and confessed having arrived there without knowing anything about the region (ROCHA, 1997). One may wonder, as Mendonça (2018) did, about the mental schemes that Glauber brought with him before arriving in the Amazon region. Mendonça (2018) observes that *Amazonas*, *Amazonas* became Glauber's first color film, in addition to being one of his few institutional documentaries, which, in a way, contradicts the precepts of "author cinema" defended by Cinema Novo. How close to one or to the other would be the final result of the film?

In that letter to the producer, Glauber also explains that, although he did not want to make a socioeconomic treatise and demonstrated his unwillingness to make an institutional touristic documentary, he did aim to show the mythical Amazon ("wild and legendary"), in a contrast between past and present:

I want to make it clear to you: there was no transformation of a touristic documentary into a socio-economic one. What happened was an improvisational approach, as there is actually not much to film about tourism here. On my arrival I have observed two problems: either I would make a series of fake views for a touristic propaganda or I could make a documentary with the minimum of aims in order to justify itself, surrounded as it was already with gossips in the government, etc. The little script I have written is not complicated [...]: to show something of the wild and legendary Amazonas and some of today's Amazonas. So, there would be a contrast and it would arouse some interest (ROCHA, 1997, p. 264 – Our translation).

In another part of the letter, Glauber mentions a series of clichés commonly related to the Amazon region and the contradiction suggested by the fact that a film "without Indians, without jaguars, without snakes, without water lilies, without fishing, without 'seringueiros' (rubber collectors) – would not be a film in the Amazonas" (ROCHA, 1997, p. 264). The director concludes, however, that he considers the "problem of the Indians" "indispensable" (ROCHA, 1997, p. 264). It is quite true that Glauber also explains that his conversations with the Amazonian governor prevented the documentary of having "inevitable failures" (the clichés resulting from the director's ignorance about the region?²). He also complains about many production problems, such as excessive rainfalls.

² It is interesting to compare Glauber's letter to the producer with the one he sent to his daughter Paloma in the same January 1966. In the latter, he reinforces all the Amazonian clichés for his child, in addition to drawings with captions in which he mentions a snake,

Then, Glauber made a documentary in which he mainly uses voice over, but also includes an interview in which he himself appears on-screen, in a mixture of expository, participatory, reflexive and performative modes (in relation to the latter two, *Amazonas*, *Amazonas* anticipates some stratagems that Glauber employ in his 1977 film *Di-Glauber*), coined by Nichols (2005). The soundtrack is omnipresent and consists of musical works by Villa-Lobos: the symphonic poem/ballet *Uirapuru* and the *Guitar studies* n. 1, 4 and 6.

Before making a detailed analysis of those works in the film, we will first consider the position of the *Uirapuru* within the general work of Villa-Lobos, his relationships with the Amazonian representations and a supposed “Brazilian’s” in the composer’s work.

Villa-Lobos’ path to the *Uirapuru*

In Villa-Lobos’s works, references to Brazilian Indians or their legends are mainly in the ones of the 1920s, especially those written during the composer’s periods of residence in Paris³, when he composed so-called “avant-garde”⁴ music marked by a “primitivism”, which was present in several other composers admired at that time, such as the Russian Igor Stravinsky in his *Rite of Spring* (1913).

“Primitivism” is defined by Bernstein (2009, p. 25), within the context of the time, as:

a movement or artistic and aesthetic inclination that emerged in the first decades of the 20th century centered (...on the) rejection of the bourgeois society, its values - considered a source of spiritual corruption - and its art, considered decadent, (...in) attempt to reform art (...) with radical techniques developed from the art of non-European peoples, so-called “primitive” (Our translation).

The stories that Villa-Lobos told the French about his supposed contact with anthropophagous Tupinambá Indians ended up fitting perfectly into their imagination already tending to exoticism. The composer converted himself to the “primitive aesthetic”, as, according to Guérios (2003), he only “discovered himself” as a Brazilian when living in Paris, that is, his “Brazilian’s”, plenty of “primitivism”, came from the eyes of the other. Musically, primitivism is characterized by Bernstein (2009, p. 25)

a jaguar and the “uirapuru” (was he already thinking about Villa-Lobos’ music?), signed as “Glauburu”: “There are a lot of animals here: macaws, parrots, snakes, manatees, alligators, jaguars. The river here is very big, almost the size of the sea. And there is an Indian who always comes to talk to Dad. ‘Indian wants to see Paloma girl’. There are Indians Mauê, Waupe, Manco, all naked, with feather on their heads, with bow and arrow” (ROCHA, 1997, p.265, our translation).

3 The first Parisian season was from 1923 to 1925; the second, from 1927 to 1930.

4 Villa-Lobos was the only composer who took part in the 1922 “Semana de Arte Moderna” (Modern Art Week), in São Paulo, but the aesthetics of his pieces presented there was rather closer to that of French composers Debussy and Vincent d’Indy.

by the rhythmic animation of musical elements, that is, by the abundant presence of *ostinato*, pedal notes and melodic fragments, which, rhythmically animated in the form of repeated cells and circular melodies, become themselves little *ostinato* (Our translation).

Among Villa-Lobos's works with such aesthetics and Indian references are *Nonetto* (1923), *Três Poemas Indígenas* (1926) and some of the *Chorus* with vocal parts in Indian languages, such as *Chorus* n. 3 and n. 10.⁵

As for the symphonic poem *Uirapuru*, it refers to an Amazonian legend and the score was dated by the composer as 1917. However, this date is refuted by many musicologists, since the composer used to attribute previous dates to his pieces, in order to disconnect possible suspicions of Stravinsky's influence on him. As *Uirapuru* was premiered in 1935, many attribute the composition to the year 1934.

Villa-Lobos also used to rework materials and Salles (2005) indicated *Uirapuru*'s origin in the piece *Tédio da Alvorada*, composed in 1916 and premiered in 1918. He points out that, as the musical sections of *Uirapuru* closer to Stravinsky's style are not present in *Tédio da Alvorada*, they were probably composed after 1923. Furthermore, musicologist Manoel Corrêa do Lago⁶ indicated that this piece had an atmosphere in ancient Greece and not in the Amazon region or Brazilian.

In his youth, between 1905 and 1915, Villa-Lobos did travel around Brazil, including the Northern region, however, his supposed contact with Indian peoples in the Amazon Forest and with their primary musical sources seems to be a myth created by the composer himself. In fact, his access to Indian musical material probably came through various secondary sources.

In the case of *Uirapuru*, Volpe (2009) defends the hypothesis that the composer came to know the legend through the 1908 book by British botanist Richard Spruce (*Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes*), which even contained a musical transcription of the bird's song, quite similar to the *Uirapuru*'s theme in Villa-Lobos' symphonic poem. Felicíssimo (2016) lists, as possible sources, in addition to Spruce's book and the work *O Selvagem* (1876) by José Vieira Couto de Magalhães (also mentioned by researcher EeroTarasti), the books by medical doctor and novelist Gastão Cruis, *Amazônia misteriosa* (1925) and *Amazônia que eu vi* (1930). The first one contained the uirapuru legend.

According to it, the nocturnal singing of the uirapuru attracted female Indians, to whom it had been revealed that the uirapuru was the most beautiful chief in the world. One

5 *Nonetto*, parts of the *Três Poemas Indígenas* and *Choros* n.3 are in the soundtrack of *The Discovery of Brazil* (Humberto Mauro, 1937, with musical score by Villa-Lobos) in the version prior to the 1997 restoration (in which the music score was completely redone). According to Tatyana Jacques (2014), Villa-Lobos employed in the film pieces that he had already composed; some of them received different versions, probably recorded especially for the film. Those mentioned pieces are not part of the four *Suites* of the *Discovery of Brazil*, premiered by Villa-Lobos on different dates, which were used as the musical score of the film in its 1997 restoration.

6 In lecture at X Simpósio Internacional de Musicologia, in Rio de Janeiro, on August 14th 2019.

evening, as they hear the song, a group of them sees an ugly Indian defying the bird. The women chase the ugly Indian away and look for the bird. A beautiful young woman finds it, throws an arrow at him, and, being struck, he becomes a beautiful Indian. He is then disputed by all the other women. In the middle of this dispute, the ugly Indian emerges and mortally injures the beautiful Indian, who ends up becoming an invisible bird.

Volpe (2009) considers that, as opting for the uirapuru's legend as the theme of his ballet, Villa-Lobos was discarding the thrush, which was far more representative of the Brazilian Romanticism literary tradition, in favor of a mysterious and magical bird. In doing so, he was reformulating the romantic convention of identification of the Indians with Nature by introducing the "wonderful" component contained in the metamorphoses of the uirapuru's legend, first from bird to Indian, then from Indian to bird. Volpe considers that the work is inscribed in the "Edenic imaginary" of colonial writings, travelers and folklorists of the early 20th century. Interestingly, a similar kind of displacement is suggested by Glauber Rocha, when he said that his goals in *Amazonas, Amazonas* were to show "the wild and legendary Amazonas", and not "jaguars", "snakes" or "water lilies".

On the other hand, the reinterpretation of romantic Indianism by Brazilian musical modernism considered by Volpe finds parallels in Stravinsky's works, more specifically, *The Firebird* (1910), in whose thematic content there are also a series of metamorphoses, in addition to musical elements similar to several of *Uirapuru*.

Such approaches reinforce the existence of an international modernist aesthetic at the beginning of the 20th century, in which Villa-Lobos was inserted and from which, in a certain way, he moved away with his *Bachianas Brasileiras* series (his *Guitar studies* are precisely in the transition between the two phases). Indeed, Bernstein (2009) observes that Tarasti considered the *Choros* series, whose compositional approach is similar to that of *Uirapuru*, as characteristic of a "Brazilians' in an international avant-garde form", while the *Bachianas* would "express nationality in a much more popular, entirely traditional way" (TARASTI, 1995, p. 151 *apud*. BERNSTEIN, 2009, p. 24 – Our translation).

Uirapuru, Villa-Lobos' Guitar studies, voices and images in Amazonas, Amazonas – between past, present and future

Music is practically in the entire length of *Amazonas, Amazonas* (Table 1): musical pieces are sutured to each other and there are only short interruptions, usually due to loud machine noises. Even during the interview included in the documentary, there is still music in the background, while speech is in the sound foreground. This aesthetic of uninterrupted music along with voice over was quite common in documentaries, especially short films from the 1950s (for example, in films by Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, Jean-Luc Godard, in addition to the already mentioned Brazilian examples of Joaquim Pedro de Andrade and Paulo Cezar Saraceni and Mário Carneiro), and it was present in Glauber's short documentaries in the 1960s and 1970s.

Table 1 – Villa-Lobos’ works in *Amazonas, Amazonas*

	Time	Musical work	In film
1	0’ - 2’01’’	Uirapuru	Titles. Aerial shots of forest and river. Waterfalls and interior of forests.
2	2’01’’ - 2’54’’	Study n. 4	Continuation. Canoe on the river in the background. Another in closer shot. Stilt house and people working. Beginning of interview.
3	2’54’’ - 5’13’’	Uirapuru	Continuation (interview). Workers with hoes, sawing wood, in the fields. Plantation. Canoe. River. Rubber tree.
4	5’18’’ - 6’15’’	Uirapuru	Close shot of rubber tree and rubber extraction. Rubber collectors.
5	6’37’’ - 8’21’’	Uirapuru	Chandelier, interior and exterior of Amazonas Theater. Deteriorated houses.
6	8’21 - 8’45’’	Study n. 1	Aerial view of Manaus. City sign.
7	8’45’’ - 10’08’’	Study n. 6	Buses and streets in Manaus with carts, cars, pedestrians. Port. Workers unloading truck.
8	11’04’’-12’49’’	Study n. 4	Street Market. River (traveling shot). People on the river banks in the distance, then in closer shots. Canoes. Cattle (traveling shot).
9	12’50’’ to the end	Uirapuru	Continuation. Riverside villages. Man in the hammock. Aerial shots of river, refinery and road. Final titles.

Source: author.

The film begins with aerial shots of the immense Amazon forest and the “Meeting of Waters” (between the Solimões River and the Negro River), in addition to a basically informative male voice over that guides the images,⁷ something quite common in classic documentaries, in Nichols’ (2005) “expository mode”. This beginning of the film evokes a critical revisiting of traditional touristic documentaries about the Amazon region, those that Glauber Rocha considered as no longer necessary to be made.⁸

Mendonça (2018) attributes the visual codes contained in those first images to the documentary *No Rastro do Eldorado* (1925), by pioneer Silvino Santos, who filmed the expedition of the American geographer Alexander Hamilton Rice Jr. through the Rio Branco region (currently, in the state of Roraima) between 1924 and 1925. For Mendonça (2018, p. 98 – Our translation), “behind this code is the suggestion of a primeval and

⁷ In voice over: “The Negro meets the Solimões. Two waters flow into one. Great waters, great river”.

⁸ In a letter to the film producer: “about the so-called ‘tourism’, J. Borges made here the ten minutes short *Manaus* for the Itamaraty, which I saw, and it exhausted the subject” (ROCHA, 1997, p. 264).

homogeneous Amazonian landscape (...), which hides vegetation treasures and exotic fauna under the rainforest”.

Soon the voice *over* assumes another personality: it is no more a third person narration and the same male voice becomes that of the historical character of Spanish navigator Francisco de Orellana (“(...) I discovered on June 22th, 1542 on a mission to the Spanish kingdom. I, Francisco de Orellana, faced the unknown (...)”⁹). In this shift of discourse, we could say that there acts Glauber’s intention expressed in the formerly mentioned letter to show the “legendary and wild” Amazonas. Moreover, this representation is something that Villa-Lobos’ *Uirapuru* (extract 1 of Table 1), heard since the initial titles of the film and charged with the associations of meanings previously considered, was already suggesting.

We see, then, images of waterfalls in the interior of the forest, something that reminds us both of colonial reports of conquest and of films already made about the Amazon region with appeal to exoticism. Although snakes and Indians are not shown in the image, they are evoked by the narration, which alternates between Orellana’s report, plenty of elements of the “wonderful” (“(...) I fought against long-haired Indians who resembled warrior women from other legends (...)”), and the objective voice *over*, now in a critical tone (“Green hell, green paradise, this is the classic Amazon, related to which one thinks of the past, of giant snakes, (...)”): it makes clear that this kind of thought about the Amazon region (and, by extension, the kind of documentary that Glauber seemed to be making in the beginning of the film) is something of the past. On the other hand, as noted by Mendonça (2018), this shift in the position of the documentary is in accordance with the effort undertaken by the Amazonian intellectuals, including governor Arthur Reis, to draw attention to local socioeconomic problems in a realistic and not fanciful way, besides revealing the economic potential of the region.

When the music suddenly changes, in the middle of the shot, to Villa-Lobos’ *Study n. 4* (extract 2 of Table 1), it indicates that something will also change in the dynamics of the film. As a matter of fact, a few seconds later, we see, in addition to the nature, the human element: firstly, we see a canoe with two people in the depth of the shot; then, another canoe with people is seen in closer shots, and, then, we see people working next to a stilt house: human work definitely goes to the center of the documentary, as well it is no longer the Amazon of the past that is emphasized, but the one of the present, in which the future is being built, something that is also highlighted by the voice *over*:

The Amazon we know is another one. Today’s Amazonas, the largest state in Brazil, where man has already set his roots and struggles to develop civilization, where man, turning trees into houses, seeks a culture based on the special conditions of the environment.

9 However, Mendonça (2018) notes that the report of this first expedition along the entire length of the Amazon River was written actually by the Fray Gaspar de Carvajal.

Mendonça (2018) points out that this emphasis on the human aspect as a productive element and not simply as part of the natural landscape, on the one hand, was already present in the representations of classic documentaries produced in the region in the early 20th century; on the other hand, it was part of a political project to integrate the region into the country during the Military Dictatorship in opposition to foreign interests and to underdevelopment. Furthermore, we consider that, at that moment, although Villa-Lobos' *Study* is still heard over images of the forest, the human element indicates the nearby city, pointing to a geographical aspect of separation in the use of music in this documentary (*Uirapuru* and *Studies*), beyond the temporal aspect (past and present).

Actually, if we take into account the intertextual associations arising from the use of music in the documentary *Arraial do Cabo* (1959), we could say that the very presence of Villa-Lobos's *Guitar studies in Amazonas, Amazonas* evokes the human and, to a certain extent, urban element. In Saraceni and Mário Carneiro's film, as we analyzed in a previous article (ALVIM, 2017), pieces for guitar (*Studies* n. 1, 5, 8 and 11; *Preludes* n. 1 and 4) are placed over images of the daily lives of fishermen, in an association of a "Brazilian's". As a matter of fact, there was an emphasis in Cinema Novo's first years, under the influence of Italian Neo-realism, in rural areas or village workers, seen as a synthesis of the real Brazil, one that was not shown on screen before. It is interesting, however, that, although Villa-Lobos was also interested in this rural Brazil, his guitar music has its origin in his contact with the "chorões", with the urban popular element.

We still hear *Study* n. 4, as begins Glauber's interview with a rural worker of the region. The music soon changes to *Uirapuru* (extract 3 of Table 1). Therefore, we cannot make the association of *Uirapuru* solely with parts of the film related to the "legendary Amazonas", reserving the *Guitar studies* to the "Amazonas of the present" (if we take into account Glauber's intentional "contrast" in previously quoted), since the film, from then on, is almost entirely focused on that second, with the exception of the shots of Teatro do Amazonas (to the sound of *Uirapuru*) and its association with the glories of the past. However, it is still possible to relate *Uirapuru* to an environment more related to the forest (its riverside populations, rural workers, rubber collectors and the result of rubber extraction: the theater) and the *Studies* to the urban aspect of Manaus as a big city, in a more geographical than temporal association, as previously mentioned. Moreover, some parts of the film with *Study* n. 4 as soundtrack (extracts 2 and 8) could be considered a mix of urban and rural elements, functioning as a bridge to the *Uirapuru*, which also closes the film.¹⁰

10 As the student Marcos de Oliveira observed (in the Music post-graduating discipline at UFRJ, in the first semester of 2019), almost all the images in the film show the river, in a relationship as unequivocal as the duplication of the name "Amazonas" of the title (in a reference to the State of Amazonas and the river that names it). In addition to the intrinsic relationship of populations in Brazilian North region with the rivers (which function as means of subsistence, transportation, etc.), Glauber Rocha himself shows also a fascination with the sea, an element present in the end of his *Black God, White Devil* (1964), in the opening of *Land in anguish* (1967), as well a fundamental element in *Barravento* (1962) and even in the experimental film *O patio* (1959), being at the edges of the frame. We may also consider the already mentioned letter to his daughter, in which Glauber stressed that the Amazon River was very large, "almost the size of the sea".

The interview, having the background sound of *Uirapuru* (extract 3), takes place in a clearing in the forest, and the interviewee mentions the problem of land ownership. Then, with the sound of his speech and the music, we see images of other rural workers. Glauber interrupts the man abruptly, in a Brechtian way, with a “Cut!”¹¹, while we see a man, possibly an employee and not the owner, working the land. Mendonça (2018) wonders if the interview’s cut was not because of Glauber’s veiled criticism of the land issue (which was very dear to him, as we can see in *Black God, White Devil*) contained in that part of the interview and the director’s fear of censorship.

In the end of extract 3, now without the sound of the interview, during a travelling shot along the river, we hear a part of the *Uirapuru* whose aesthetic with *ostinato* is quite reminiscent of that of Stravinsky, something that promotes a sense of urgency, which will finally end when we see a tree trunk (next identified as a rubber tree) to the abrupt cut of the music. The voice over comes back, taking the personality of a new character: now, the rubber collectors seem to say “We came from far away in the hinterland of Ceará, touched by drought, searching in the jungle wealth for our hunger. Hope was in the trees that the Cambebas¹² had discovered. In the big lost trees that bled the strange mixture”.

In the middle of the narration begins another *Uirapuru* extract (4) with the bird’s theme. The rubber extraction processes are shown to the sound of music, inserted in the present reality of Manaus in the 1960s and interrupted by the noise of the machines of the place identified by Mendonça (2018) as the National Rubber Company.

The cut to the images of Teatro Amazonas brings music back (extract 5). Although the images were made by Glauber in the present time, the sumptuousness of the theater evokes the glory of the past of the Brazilian Rubber Cycle. The narrator acquires again the omniscient aspect of the third person and we hear the *Uirapuru*, which could well have been taken on the theater stage as a ballet¹³. We hear the bird’s theme once again, a glimpse of mythical times, which, now, do not only refer to the legendary element, but also to the aspect of the wealthy resulting from the distant times (also mythical in this sense) of rubber exploitation as said in the voice over: “The ambition that generated the conquest. [...] It was the Eldorado.” Then, dissonances in music, together with the narration of the crisis caused by the competition with the rubber from Asian English colonies, are over images of Belle Époque architecture palaces in a state of deterioration.

A sharp cut to an aerial shot of Manaus coincides with the change of music to Villa-Lobos’ *Study* n. 1 (extract 6). As we have seen, this extract and the following two (7 and 8) with other Villa-Lobos’ *Guitar studies* are in urban spaces, reinforcing the geographical change of the narrative of the film from the forest (including, the rubber extraction and one of its results, the Teatro do Amazonas) to the Amazonian capital. According to Mendonça

11 Such an exhibition of film making, with reflexivity and performative mode (NICHOLS, 2005), will also be present in the documentary *Di-Glauber* (1977).

12 In the whole film, this is one of the very few direct mentions to Brazilian Indians. They are only present in the image as acculturated city workers or as an a-historical element (MENDONÇA, 2018). Glauber definitely did not solve “the problem of the Indians”.

13 We do not know if there were ever performances of the ballet there.

(2018, p. 113), throughout this part of the film, “the intention is no longer to highlight only architectural elements (essentially linked to the past) that reinforce the discourse of the city in crisis, but to update the viewer in relation to the current state of the capital of Amazonas, which now summarizes the situation of the entire state.” It is the Manaus of integration, which “expects Amazonas to be incorporated into Brazil” (in the voice over).

The transition to extract 7 (*Study* n. 6) is almost imperceptibly along with the cut to shots of a series of buses, all moving to the right of the screen. In contrast, travelling shots to the left show carts pulled by horses, which symbolize what would be necessary to put down to achieve the goals of Arthur Reis’ developmental project. During the travelling shots, music has a continuous chord progression. Then, there are travelling shots through the streets of the capital and the chords’ progression continues, reinforcing what is intended to be shown in this part of the film: the modern city, in spite of traces of archaic elements. Music tempo gets faster as we continue to see the movements of the tracks in the port of Manaus. Still according to Reis’ project, they represent the development of the region.

The music is interrupted by the noise of an engine. We see then a street market in the port region and banana carriers, the harsh reality of the present that “makes us think of the most remote past”, in the Amazon region as “the most underdeveloped region of the country”, as the voice over says. In the last images of the street market begins *Study* n. 4 (extract 8). However, it is then over images of the river and riverside populations. The voice over says: “We are back on the trip. It was difficult to beat Indians, to make Portuguese settlers cross with these defeated Indians, to forge the new race, to fight malaria, worms, to conquer the ravines devastated by the force of the unstable river”. It is like a return to the beginning of the film, to extract 2, also with *Study* n. 4, which started precisely by the images of the river, even if still evoking the urban element.

Study n. 4 is linked with *Uirapuru* (extract 9) in the middle of a traveling shot that shows the cattle by the river. According to Mendonça (2018, p. 127), this final part of the documentary has a tone of “exaltation of an Amazon that tries to rise above adversity”, pointing to a future and showing a “real Amazon, without ghosts” (in the voice over). The *Uirapuru*’s theme is heard over the image of a local man with Indian physical traces lying in a hammock (an evocation of the Indian of the legend?). In the end, the music with *ostinato* à la Stravinsky evokes the Brazilian modernist claim to “catch up the delay”, a “developmentalist” need that the film also affirms, having as its final images the aerial shots of Isaac Sabbá Refinery and a road through the forest (identified by Mendonça as possibly Manaus-Itacoatiara). *Uirapuru* is here in the forest, however, in a forest invaded by the city.

***Uirapuru* beyond Amazonas, Amazonas: other appropriations**

Long before Glauber employed Villa-Lobos’ *Uirapuru* as a score in *Amazonas*, *Amazonas*, in 1950 (when Villa-Lobos was still alive), a film was based on the musical work itself and the uirapuru’s legend: *Uirapuru*, by the Israeli Sam Zebba. The film was

supported by the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), where Zebba studied cinema, and had the assistance of Brazilian consul in Los Angeles at the time, Vinícius de Moraes. According to what Zebba (2010) reports, Villa-Lobos had no participation in the film beyond the assignment of rights for the use of his music.

Zebba (2010) told that the idea of the film came to him, as he listened to an LP with Villa-Lobos' *Uirapuru*. He filmed the story of the legend in Brazilian Amazon region with the Urubú-Ka'apor Indians, in state of Maranhão. However, the nocturnal references of the legend are not present in the film, as it takes place only in daytime environments. For Santos (2014), this was probably due to the difficulties of filming in the evening.

We do not know if Glauber knew about Zebba's film. On the other hand, the music of Villa-Lobos' *Uirapuru* seems to have got deep in his mind, since the Glauber employed it again in a film 10 years later, *Claro* (1975), in a quite different context.

Claro was filmed in Rome, by Glauber's exile there. Excerpts from *Uirapuru* are heard mainly in the first third of the film, in which we see the French actress Juliet Berto, Glauber's girlfriend at the time, performing in the city streets, under the direction of the Glauber, who appears on-screen. She seems to dance with an open poncho, which resembles the wings of a bird – maybe this aspect gave the idea to Glauber of including the *Uirapuru* over those images. Furthermore, there are other works by Villa-Lobos in the film, such as the two parts of *Bachianas* n. 5 (the *Cantilena* had already been used in *Black God, White Devil*).

Conclusion

Glauber Rocha went to Amazonas in the end of 1965, as he was invited by the State Government to make an institutional documentary there. He did not want to repeat the clichés of touristic films, something that was neither the intention of Amazonas' governor, who wanted instead to emphasize the integration of the region in the country. As a starting point, Glauber had the idea of establishing a contrast between the “legendary Amazonas” and the “Amazonas of the present”.

This aspect is present in *Amazonas, Amazonas*, a hybrid between traditional expository, participatory, reflexive and performative documentary¹⁴. It also contains a polyphony (in Bakhtinian sense) in the use of voice over, which is divided between the voice of knowledge in third person and the subjective voice of the first explorers in the region and that of rubber collectors, in a confluence of different times in the same masculine voice.

However, by analyzing Villa-Lobos' works used throughout the film, we observed that their distribution does not function only according to the schema of past and present, even if one of them, *Uirapuru*, is directly linked to an Amazonian legend and could exerts this role, while the *Guitar studies*, due to the symbolic character of the instrument in the

¹⁴ According to Nichols (2005).

beginning of the 20th century (related to the “chorões” and urban environment), could be linked to the “Amazonas of the present”.

We observed a slightly more subtle contrast, more linked to the geographical element than to the temporal: *Uirapuru* is more related to the forest (with associations with the past or the present, with its riverside populations, rubber collectors and the beautiful theater, symbol of the Rubber Cycle), while Villa-Lobos’ three *Guitar studies* (n. 1, 4 and 6) are more associated with the urban aspect of Manaus as a big city, with all its contradictions, as the progress, so desired by the film’s financiers, and the coexistence with archaic elements (as in the moment when, after a busy jam of buses, we see a cart pulled by a horse) and poverty.

We also evoked reemployments of these musical works in other films.

References

- ALVIM, L. Música e som em três documentários brasileiros curta-metragem de 1959: nacionalismos, tradição, modernismos e identidade brasileira. **Doc On-Line**, n. 22, p. 163-184, sep. 2017.
- BERNSTEIN, G. Os Choros e as Bachianas como princípios composicionais. **Brasiliana** (Revista da Academia Brasileira de Música), n. 29, p. 23-30, aug. 2009.
- FELICÍSSIMO, R. Uirapuru: a lenda do pássaro encantado, de Heitor Villa-Lobos. In: II SIMPÓSIO NACIONAL VILLA-LOBOS. Rio de Janeiro, nov. 2016. **Proceedings...**
- GUÉRIOS, P. R. **Heitor Villa-Lobos: o caminho sinuoso da predestinação**. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2003.
- GUERRINI JÚNIOR, I. **A música no cinema brasileiro: os inovadores anos sessenta**. São Paulo: Terceira Margem, 2009.
- JACQUES, T. **O descobrimento do Brasil (1937): Villa-Lobos e Humberto Mauro nas dobras do tempo**. 428 f. Thesis (Doctorate in Social Anthropology) – Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, 2014.
- MENDONÇA, R. N. **Amazônia de Glauber Rocha: uma análise do documentário Amazonas, Amazonas**. 166 f. Dissertation (Master’s Degree in Society and Culture in the Amazon) – Federal University of Amazonas, Manaus, 2018.
- NICHOLS, B. **Introdução ao Documentário**. Campinas: Papyrus, 2005.
- ROCHA, G. **Cartas ao mundo**. Org.: Ivana Bentes. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997.
- SALLES, P. T. Tédio de Alvorada e Uirapuru: um estudo comparativo de duas partituras de Heitor Villa-Lobos. **Brasiliana** (Revista da Academia Brasileira de Música), n. 20, p. 2-9, may 2005.
- SANTOS, D. Z. *Uirapuru* de Villa-Lobos e Sam Zebba: uma análise comparativa entre música e cena. In: XXIV CONGRESSO DA ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DE PESQUISA E PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM MÚSICA, São Paulo, 2014. **Proceedings...**
- VOLPE, M. A. Villa-Lobos e o imaginário edênico de Uirapuru. **Brasiliana** (Revista da Academia Brasileira de Música), n. 29, p. 31-36, aug. 2009.
- ZEBBA, S. Making “Uirapuru”: a musical quest in the Brazilian Rain Forest. **Bol. Mus. Para. Emílio Goeldi. Cienc. Hum.**, Belém, v. 5, n. 1, p. 173-184, jan./apr. 2010.

Luiza Beatriz Alvim

Post-doctoral Fellow in the Music Department at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. PhD in Communication and Culture (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) and in Music (Federal University of State of Rio de Janeiro). Temporary lecturer at the *Escola de Comunicação* of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and at Cinema Department of Federal Fluminense University. Author of the book “*A música no cinema de Robert Bresson*” (Music in the cinema of Robert Bresson). Coordinator of GP Cinema at Intercom. E-mail: luizabeatriz@yahoo.com.

Received on: 01.17.2020

Accepted on: 12.20.2020

This is an Open Access paper published under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial license (CC-BY-NC), which permits its use, distribution and reproduction in any media, with no restrictions, provided there are no commercial purposes and the original work.

