

## Underlying conflicts between Vladimir Herzog and Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes? Different views on Brazilian cinema during the 1960s

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### Abstract

From an intellectual historical perspective, this essay analyzes the political-ideological disputes behind different projects for Brazilian cinema in the 1960s, focusing on two key figures: Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes and Vladimir Herzog. Salles Gomes, a renowned film critic and leader of the Cinemateca Brasileira and Brazil's first undergraduate film course in Brasília, is often depicted as an undisputed supporter of Cinema Novo and a mentor to younger generations. Herzog, initially a volunteer at the Cinemateca in the late 1950s, developed critical ideas on filmmaking, but his contributions remain overshadowed by his tragic murder by the Brazilian Military Regime in 1975. This essay examines Herzog's critique of Brazilian cinema in the 1960s, hypothesizing that his statements challenged the industrial vision for Brazilian cinema supported by Salles Gomes, even as Cinema Novo gained prominence. Through a discourse analysis of newspaper articles by both intellectuals (1956–1969) and Herzog's selected correspondence with friends, this essay explores intellectual exchanges that reveal the disputed and multifaceted nature of institutional projects. It argues that no cultural or institutional vision is monolithic; instead, they are shaped by overlooked dimensions and internal conflicts. This essay offers a new perspective on Brazilian film cultural and institutional history.

**Keywords:** Brazilian film history; Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes; Vladimir Herzog; Cinemateca Brasileira; Cinema Novo.

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## Conflitos subjacentes entre Vladimir Herzog e Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes? Diferentes visões sobre o cinema brasileiro durante os anos 1960

### Resumo

Sob uma perspectiva da história intelectual, este ensaio analisa as disputas político-ideológicas por trás de diferentes projetos para o cinema brasileiro na década de 1960, focando em duas figuras-chave: Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes e Vladimir Herzog. Salles Gomes, crítico de cinema renomado, líder da Cinemateca Brasileira e do primeiro curso de graduação em cinema em Brasília, é frequentemente descrito como um defensor incondicional do Cinema Novo e mentor das gerações mais jovens. Herzog, inicialmente estagiário da Cinemateca no final da década de 1950, desenvolveu ideias críticas sobre o fazer cinema, mas suas contribuições permanecem ofuscadas devido ao seu trágico assassinato pelo Regime Militar brasileiro em 1975. Este ensaio examina a crítica de Herzog ao cinema brasileiro, levantando a hipótese de que suas declarações desafiam a visão industrial do cinema brasileiro representada por Salles Gomes. Por meio de uma análise discursiva de artigos de jornal de ambos os intelectuais (1956–1969) e de correspondências selecionadas de Herzog com amigos, este ensaio explora trocas intelectuais que revelam a natureza conflitiva e multifacetada de projetos institucionais. Argumenta-se que nenhuma visão cultural ou institucional é monolítica; em vez disso, são moldadas por dimensões negligenciadas e conflitos internos. Neste ensaio oferecemos uma nova perspectiva sobre a história cultural e institucional do cinema brasileiro.

**Palavras-chave:** história do cinema brasileiro; Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes; Vladimir Herzog; Cinemateca Brasileira; Cinema Novo.

## Conflictos subyacentes entre Vladimir Herzog y Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes. Diferentes visiones sobre el cine brasileño durante los años 1960

### Resumen

Desde una perspectiva de la historia intelectual, este ensayo analiza las disputas político-ideológicas detrás de diferentes proyectos para el cine brasileño en la década de 1960, centrándose en dos figuras clave: Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes y Vladimir Herzog. Salles Gomes, crítico de cine de renombre y líder de la Cinemateca Brasileira y del primer curso de cine universitario en Brasília, es a menudo descrito como un defensor incondicional del Cinema Novo y mentor de generaciones más jóvenes. Herzog, inicialmente voluntario en la Cinemateca a finales de la década de 1950, desarrolló ideas críticas sobre la realización cinematográfica, pero sus contribuciones permanecen ensombrecidas por su trágico asesinato a manos del Régimen Militar Brasileño en 1975. Este ensayo examina la crítica de Herzog al cine brasileño, planteando la hipótesis de que sus declaraciones desafiaron la visión industrial del cine brasileño respaldada por Salles Gomes. A través de un análisis discursivo de artículos de periódico de ambos intelectuales (1956–1969) y de correspondencias seleccionadas de Herzog con amigos, este ensayo explora intercambios intelectuales que revelan la naturaleza disputada y multifacética de los proyectos institucionales. Se argumenta que ninguna visión cultural o institucional es monolítica; en cambio, están moldeadas por dimensiones pasadas por alto y conflictos internos. Este ensayo ofrece una nueva perspectiva sobre la historia cultural e institucional del cine brasileño.

**Palabras clave:** Historia de cine brasileño; Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes; Vladimir Herzog; Cinemateca Brasileira; Cinema Novo.

## Conflits sous-jacents entre Vladimir Herzog et Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes. Différentes visions du cinéma brésilien pendant les années 1960

### Résumé

Dans une perspective de l'histoire intellectuelle, cet essai analyse les disputes politico-idéologiques derrière différents projets pour le cinéma brésilien dans les années 1960, en se concentrant sur deux figures clés : Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes et Vladimir Herzog. Salles Gomes, critique de cinéma renommé et leader de la Cinemateca Brasileira et du premier cursus universitaire de cinéma à Brasília, est souvent décrit comme un partisan inconditionnel du Cinema Novo et un mentor pour les jeunes générations. Herzog, initialement stagiaire à la Cinemateca à la fin des années 1950, a développé des idées critiques sur la réalisation cinématographique, mais ses contributions restent éclipsées par son tragique assassinat par le régime militaire brésilien en 1975. Cet essai

examine la critique de Herzog sur le cinéma brésilien, en émettant l'hypothèse que ses déclarations défiaient la vision industrielle du cinéma brésilien soutenue par Salles Gomes. À travers une analyse discursive des articles de presse des deux intellectuels (1956–1969) et de la correspondance sélectionnée de Herzog avec des amis, cet essai explore les échanges intellectuels qui révèlent la nature contestée et multifacette des projets institutionnels. Il soutient qu'aucune vision culturelle ou institutionnelle n'est monolithique ; elles sont plutôt façonnées par des dimensions négligées et des conflits internes. Cet essai offre une nouvelle perspective sur l'histoire culturelle et institutionnelle du cinéma brésilien.

**Mots clés :** Histoire du cinéma brésilien ; Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes ; Vladimir Herzog ; Cinemateca Brasileira; Cinema Novo.

## 弗拉基米尔·赫尔佐格和保罗·埃米利奥·萨勒斯·戈麦斯对 20 世纪 60 年代巴西电影的不同看法

### 摘要

本文从思想史的角度，分析了 20 世纪 60 年代巴西电影业背后的政治意识形态争议，重点关注两个关键人物：保罗·埃米利奥·萨勒斯·戈麦斯(Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes)和弗拉基米尔·赫尔佐格(Vladimir Herzog)。戈麦斯是著名电影评论家、巴西电影学院的院长，他创办了巴西利亚大学首个本科电影课程，经常被电影评论界描述为巴西新电影无可争议的支持者和年轻一代的导师。赫尔佐格曾经是 20 世纪 50 年代末电影院的一名志愿者，他对电影制作提出了批判性的想法。虽然他在 1975 年惨遭巴西军事政权谋杀，但他的贡献仍然值得我们牢记。本文探讨了赫尔佐格对 20 世纪 60 年代巴西电影的批评，他的言论挑战了戈麦斯支持的巴西新电影工业愿景，尽管新电影已经声名鹊起。通过对两位知识分子在 1956-1969 期间发表在报纸上的文章的分析，以及赫尔佐格与朋友的精选信件，本文探讨了有关新电影项目的争议性和该项目的多面性。作者认为，没有任何一个文化项目或制度是铁板一块的。相反，它们是由被忽视的维度和内部冲突不断塑造的。本文为研究巴西电影文化和制度史提供了新的视角。

**关键词：**巴西电影史；保罗·埃米利奥·萨勒斯·戈麦斯；弗拉基米尔·赫尔佐格；巴西电影中心；新电影

## Unterschwellige Konflikte zwischen Vladimir Herzog und Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes? Unterschiedliche Ansichten über das brasilianische Kino in den 1960er Jahren

### Zusammenfassung

Dieser Aufsatz analysiert die politisch-ideologischen Auseinandersetzungen hinter verschiedenen Projekten für das brasilianische Kino in den 1960er Jahren aus einer Perspektive der intellektuellen Geschichte, mit Fokus auf zwei Schlüsselfiguren: Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes und Vladimir Herzog. Salles Gomes, ein renommierter Filmkritiker sowie Leiter der Cinemateca Brasileira und des ersten Filmstudiengangs in Brasília, wird oft als unangefochtener Unterstützer des Cinema Novo und Mentor für jüngere Generationen dargestellt. Herzog, der Ende der 1950er Jahre zunächst als Praktikant bei der Cinemateca tätig war, entwickelte kritische Ideen zum Filmemachen, doch seine Beiträge bleiben durch seine tragische Ermordung durch das brasilianische Militärregime 1975 überschattet. Der Aufsatz untersucht Herzogs Kritik am brasilianischen Kino und stellt die Hypothese auf, dass seine Aussagen, die von Salles Gomes unterstützte industrielle Vision für das brasilianische Kino. Durch eine Diskursanalyse von Zeitungsartikeln beider Intellektueller (1956–1969) und ausgewählter Korrespondenzen Herzogs mit Freunden erforscht dieser Aufsatz intellektuelle Austausche, die die umstrittene und facettenreiche Natur institutioneller Projekte aufzeigen. Er argumentiert, dass keine kulturelle oder institutionelle Vision monolithisch ist; vielmehr werden diese von übersehenen Dimensionen und internen Konflikten geprägt. Dieser Aufsatz bietet eine neue Perspektive auf die kulturelle und institutionelle Geschichte des brasilianischen Kinos.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Geschichte des brasilianischen Kinos; Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes; Vladimir Herzog; Cinemateca Brasileira; Cinema Novo.

## Desiderata

Historiography has paid little attention to the intellectual and ideological disputes behind cinematheques, film museums, film archives, and film schools – institutions, which were paramount to shaping tendencies in film history. They also shaped the knowledge and perception we have on films nowadays. This lack of attention is particularly pronounced concerning women and men who founded, developed, and directed these institutions during their formative years. Another frequently overlooked question in historical literature relates to the different projects for film that played a crucial role in the institutionalization process of cinematheques and film archives. Our approach underlines the relevance of contact networks and concrete exchanges for this institutionalizing process. Furthermore, many works in film history remain excessively Eurocentric, treating Latin American culture in general and cultural institutions specifically, as mere byproducts of European or North American developments (Stam; Shohat, 2014, p. 30). Stam and Shohat (2014, p. 232) even go further in their critique to Eurocentric visions as to state that “the conventional paradigm for the representation of Latin America was premised on a notion of the continent’s political incapacity and cultural nullity”. This Eurocentric vision has resulted in a failure to account for the political, cultural, and intellectual nuances specific to Latin America, and each of its countries. Therefore, film history has struggled to capture certain entanglements and knowledge exchanges facilitated by intellectual contact networks. Against this background, candid discussions and disputes on the structure and aim of filmic institutions and film studies were part of day-to-day business.

Our focus here will be a detailed examination of mostly unknown relations between Brazilian film scholar and film critic Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes (1916-1977) and journalist-filmmaker Vladimir Herzog (1937-1975) during the 1960s. On one hand, Salles Gomes is a well-known figure in Brazilian film history, often regarded as the ‘father’ of the Cinemateca Brasileira. He was also an influential film critic (Paranaguá, 2014) through his regular column in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* (called *Estadão*), one of Brazilian biggest (Salles Gomes used to write for the highly regarded *Suplemento Literário*, the cultural section the *Estadão* newspaper). On the other hand, the relevance of Vladimir Herzog in Brazilian film history remains largely unknown. As shown in the 2005 documentary ‘Vlado: 30 Years Later,’ directed by Herzog’s friend and filmmaker João Baptista de Andrade, the public hardly remembers who Herzog was, let alone his importance in the cultural debates of the country. When he is remembered at all, it is as a victim of a brutal murder by the Brazilian military

dictatorship (1964-1985) in 1975. One of our aims here is to shift that perception of Herzog's as a victim and present him as an active character in the cultural debates of the country, especially those concerning film. We want to emphasize his contributions to Brazilian film history through the analysis of selected active correspondences from the 1960s, which were recently digitalized by the Acervo Vladimir Herzog (Instituto Vladimir Herzog, 2020). Besides that, the importance of those two historical characters, Salles Gomes and Herzog, goes beyond their individual roles, as we will argue. Their relevance extends to the networks they build up, which fostered the exchange of ideas and made political and ideological disputes also emerge. Those contact networks, as we will show, greatly influenced the institutionalization of film preservation institutions and of film studies in Brazil.

Salles Gomes was one of the leading film critics and scholars in the country. With his newspaper column he reached a wide reading public among the lettered elites of Brazil (Paranaguá, 2014, p. 105). Salles Gomes was 21 years older than Herzog and, despite being a mentor not only to Herzog, but to a whole generation of film makers and critics (Paranaguá, 2014, p. 108), his institutional views for the Cinemateca Brasileira and for the teaching of films were not undisputed. The primary sources we will analyze, mostly letters, point out that neither his institutional project for the *Cinemateca*, nor his design for a film school in the newly founded University of Brasília (UnB) were undisputed. On the contrary, there were many conflicts and those were quite intense.

As a starting point we will put the following question: with whom was Herzog (1963a) dialoguing, i.e., whom was he implicitly criticizing when he drafted his critical essay *Carta aos Cariocas* ("Letter to the Cariocas")<sup>1</sup> for the *Jornal do Commercio* on February 17th, 1963? We consider this article paradigmatic of Herzog's approach on films, because it reveals conflicting views with ideas explicitly expressed by Salles Gomes in his articles for the *Estado* around that same period. We will read these conflicts as an example of significant generational conflicts during the rise of Cinema Novo, against the backdrop of the emergence of the Cinemateca Brasileira and the broader institutionalization of film studies in 1960s Brazil—a tumultuous period marked by substantial political and cultural upheaval. There is no reason these tensions should be any different in the film scene from other cultural or artistic milieus since film institutions are an essential part of the general cultural institutions. Followingly we will examine

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<sup>1</sup> All English translations of titles, quotations, or letters in this article are free translations by the authors with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence.

Herzog's article from 1963, which will allow us to gain a broader perspective of the existing underlying tensions in Brazilian film culture.

### ***Carta aos Cariocas*: underlying (political-ideological) conflicts?**

In 1963 when he wrote the *Carta aos Cariocas*, Herzog was living in Rio de Janeiro, the former capital of the country. In his article, he states that Rio would release more than thirty feature films that year of 1963, establishing itself as the forefront of national film production (Herzog 1963a). Herzog's argument is that, despite having more financial resources as Brazil's industrial locomotive, São Paulo, one almost does not hear anything about the city regarding its film production (Herzog 1963a).

Herzog's perspective stands in flagrant contrast to that of Salles Gomes, as expressed in articles written in the years before. In a newspaper article from 1960 for instance, Salles Gomes states clearly that almost everything "useful and important" in Brazilian cinema in recent years can be attributed almost exclusively to the establishment of the Vera Cruz Studios (Gomes, 2016, p. 70). This prominent studio complex was based in São Paulo during the 1950s and it went bankrupt in 1954. Regarding the case of Rio de Janeiro, however, Herzog underlines that financial resources alone do not automatically lead to great film production, and that conclusion contradicts, according to him, the "apostles of industrial cinema, according to whom money makes good films" (Herzog 1963a). If it were the case, the city of São Paulo would be, so Herzog, "the Brazilian Hollywood" (*a Hollywood tupinambá*) (Herzog 1963a). Our hypothesis here is that Herzog is having an underlying dialogue with Salles Gomes, and criticizing the industrial dreams for Brazilian film that he represents: the so-called apostles of industrial cinema.

According to Herzog's *Carta*, so-called "new talents" had fallen into "conformism" in São Paulo, while the context required "courage and audacity" – and "Rio has plenty of that." Meanwhile, in São Paulo "dozens of articles", and "essays" would be written and "much beer" would have been consumed before the first tape could have been recorded – if anything ever happens at all (Herzog 1963a). Herzog states that Rio was producing films and was doing it quite successfully, from both an artistic as a commercial point of view. Herzog mentions films such as *Cinco Vezes favela* (1962), *Porto das Caixas* (1962), and *Boca de Ouro* (1963) as examples of this success (Herzog 1963a).



Some of the articles written by Salles Gomes during the 1960s were published at *Visão* Magazine, which would be latter edited by Herzog himself.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, from 1959 on, Herzog starts working for the *Estadão*. So, it is quite probable that Herzog did know Salles Gomes' articles quite well. By February of 1963, when Herzog wrote his article, Salles Gomes had already written several articles in the press since 1956, but especially after 1960, praising past industrial initiatives in filmmaking (almost exclusively in São Paulo).<sup>3</sup> In those writings, he underlines the positive effects that the Vera Cruz Studios had for the Brazilian film market in general (Borrmann, 2024). There is a clear underlying assumption in Salles Gomes' writings that what is good for São Paulo (in terms of films and film industry), is good for Brazil.

The victory of São Paulo cinema would be, at the same time, and in such an indisputable manner, the victory of intelligence, competence, and good faith, which could cause the most beneficial impact on vast sectors of Brazilian life that are numbed by skepticism and indifference (Gomes, 2016, p. 34).

Herzog seems to argue on the opposite direction: according to him, Rio was paving the way, showing how it should be done and not how it should be written or talked about: "It's funny: you talk little about what you're going to do. You just do it. We only start discussing the film in depth after it's finished" (Herzog 1963a). This divergence reveals a much wider dispute regarding the way films should be taught and made. This difference is quintessential for a deeper understanding of the cinematographic thinking in Brazil because it is also revealing of different intellectual and ideological approaches to filmmaking. Our main argument here is that Herzog was reacting (indirectly for sure) to Salles Gomes' views and, moreover, to the vision he represented in terms of an institutional project for the Cinemateca Brasileira and for the structuring of the cinema school in Brasília. Herzog was clearly questioning Brazil's "Industrial Cinematographic Thinking" (Autran, 2013).

The assessment Herzog's in his article from February 1963 directly contradicts Salles Gomes' views published in December of 1956 ("O gosto da realidade" – Gomes, 2016, p. 68-72), where the latter praises the efforts of São Paulo's independent filmmakers, despite the end of the industrial "pretensions" regarding filmmaking in the State (Gomes, 2016, p. 33), which he

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<sup>2</sup> Herzog would later, during in the 1970s, assume the position of chief editor of *Visão*. For more detailed information on Herzog's life during this period, see <https://www.acervovladimirherzog.org.br/acervo-detalle.php?cod=69&t=2>. Access: November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Salles Gomes (2016, p. 80, 160-161) frequently mentions *Maristela* and *Multifilmes*, both from São Paulo. From the period before, the 1930s and 1940s, he mentions *Cinédia* and *Atlântida*, both from Rio de Janeiro (Gomes, 2016, p. 158-159).

traces back to the bankruptcy of the Vera Cruz Studios. In his article, Salles Gomes is all enthusiastic about the efforts towards a big studio complex in São Paulo and shows a lot of regional pride in the choice of his words in his descriptions. He specially stresses the return to Brazil of avant-garde filmmaker Alberto Cavalcanti's (1897-1982), after living for a long period abroad, and the success of film maker Lima Barreto, which he describes as "spectacular" (Gomes, 2016, p. 33). *O Cangaceiro* (1953), directed by Lima Barreto, had just won, among other international awards, the Best Adventure Film category at the 1953 Cannes Film Festival.

Salles Gomes (2016, 35-36) mentions filmic institutions from the State of São Paulo, basically ignoring other film movements and institutions from other parts of the country, as if the whole film scene was restricted to São Paulo. One of the initiatives he mentions is the film-clubs, stating that the creation of the *Centro dos Clubes de Cinema do Estado de São Paulo* ("Centre for film-clubs of the State of São Paulo") will "enable the development and spreading of spots of cinematographic culture" (Gomes, 2016, p. 36). Other sources, however, such as famous Cinema Novo filmmaker Glauber Rocha (1939-1981), underline other circles and groups (Rocha, 2003). Those other groups mentioned by Rocha were also discussing and quite successfully making films in other parts of the country too. According to him, those regional initiatives were equally important for the avant-garde movement that was emerging with Cinema Novo, as well as for the parallel new directions in documentary film making (Rocha, 2003, p. 148-151).

In a letter from May 8th, 1963, to his close friend Jean-Claude Bernadet, Herzog (1963d) describes the Cinema Novo as being "formerly baiano, formerly paulista, doubtfully carioca, possibly Botocudo, certainly paranoic etc. etc..." (*ex-baiano, ex-paulista, duvidosamente carioca, possivelmente botocudo, certamente paranoico etc. etc...*) as to underline the various regional trends that developed into it. Nevertheless, Salles Gomes states in the closing of his article from 1956 on "new horizons" (*novos horizontes*) for Brazilian filmmaking that the film clubs have played an important role in creating new spots of "cinematic culture," although he mentions only the creation of the *Centro dos Clubes de Cinema do Estado de São Paulo* (Gomes, 2016, p. 36).

In the 1960 article called *O gosto da realidade* (*The taste of reality*), Salles Gomes (2016, p. 68-72) summarizes his argument by underlining the relevance of the *I Convenção Nacional da Crítica Cinematográfica* ("1st National Convention of the Cinematographic Critique"), held a month earlier in São Paulo, for the birth of a "conscience" of a "superior phase" in Brazilian cinematography (Gomes, 2016, p. 72). Throughout both his articles from 1956 (*Novos horizontes*) and 1960 (*O gosto da realidade*), Salles Gomes seems to reveal a São Paulo (and



industrially) centered perspective on the Brazilian film culture, since he almost never mentioned institutions or initiatives from other regions of the (big) country. Especially if one considers that at that time *Rio 40 Graus* (1955), by Nelson Pereira dos Santos (1928-2018), produced in Rio, and seen as one of the precursors of Cinema Novo (Rocha, 2004, p. 85), had already been around for at least five years. In various periods of Brazilian film history, as Salles Gomes himself would admit, in his other historical essays, as one from 1969 for instance (“Pequeno cinema antigo” - 2016, p. 181), film productions in Rio de Janeiro were more innovative in term of film aesthetics than those from São Paulo. This basically kept the Brazilian film market alive (Gomes, 2016, p. 181) according to him. Furthermore, by the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, the film culture scene in Bahia – in the Northeastern region of the country – was also growing rapidly, as Rocha (2003, p. 153-165) emphasizes. Bahia gave birth to a bunch of new film productions considered to be groundbreaking for the whole Cinema Novo (Ramos, 2018, p. 41), such as *Bahia de todos os Santos*, *Barravento* and *A Grande Feira* (Rocha 2004, 51).

As our analysis of Salles Gomes’ and Herzog’s writings from the first half of the 1960s shows, there were fundamental differences in their views for the future of Brazilian Cinema. These differences are also related to two different concepts for the teaching of cinema, as we will analyze in the following part. There is a clear dispute between a more industrial perspective and a more avant-gardist and praxis-oriented view of cinema.<sup>4</sup>

### **Herzog’s experience at Sucksdorff’s seminar: a hub for new tendencies?**

Brazilian Cinema underwent a major shift in the late fifties and early sixties in terms of movie making practices, which paralleled those new tendencies in European avant-garde: using natural light, mixing actors with none-actors, and filming out in the streets instead of in studios. Emerging artists and intellectuals who would later become well-known for the consolidation of Brazilian Cinema Novo had a key role not only in the audiovisual history but were also engaged in the political arena. The possibility of direct sound recording, and new editing techniques opened new and pioneering aesthetic possibilities. Against this background, the Brazilian Ministry of International Affairs, in association with the UNESCO, organized a course in documentary filmmaking to be taught by Swedish documentary maker and Oscar-winner Arne Sucksdorff

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<sup>4</sup> On the industrial cinematographic “dreams” of Brazil, see Autran (2013).

(1917-2001). Sucksdorff also brought the first Nagra sound recorder with him to Brazil – a crucial tool for the realization of films with greater mobility (Hamburger, 2020).

Sucksdorff's seminar was supposed to be divided into three different parts: (A.) plot and filming; (B.) film analysis and editing and (C.) film analysis and editing. But since the equipment arrived late, part B came to be the first one (Hamburger, 2020, p. 99). In total, the course lasted a little less than one semester – going from November 1962 until March 1963 – and brought together different students, who would later become key figures in Brazilian film, such as Eduardo Escorel, Arnaldo Jabor, Eduardo Coutinho, Luiz Carlos Saldanha, Dib Lutfi, among many others (Ramos, 2018, p. 63; Hamburger, 2020). The course was controversial with respect to the relationship between the lecturer and his students. As Hamburger (2020, p. 105-106) points out, some of the students questioned his views, considered his aesthetics as anachronic and his ideas not politically engaged enough. During that period *Nouvelle Vague* set the standards for the younger generation, rather than the erudite techniques represented by Sucksdorff.

Herzog basically started his career in films, as a volunteer at the Cinemateca Brasileira. The *Cinemateca* was led by Salles Gomes since 1956, when it became an independent institution from the *Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo*. He attended Sucksdorff seminar together with Lucila Ribeiro<sup>5</sup> (from 1964 on, Lucila Bernardet), the only woman to stay until the end (Hamburger, 2020, p. 89), and both got a scholarship from the State of São Paulo arranged by Salles Gomes (Bernardet, 1990).

In an interview given in 1990 to the *Museu da Imagem e do Som* ("Museum of Image and Sound", MIS-SP), Ribeiro explains that she met Herzog – "Vlado" as everyone would call him –, because of the seminar, since they were the only ones from São Paulo. She explains that she had just come back from a longer period in France and decided to enroll. It was Herzog who suggested her to contact Salles Gomes to get the scholarship too, since there were two and no one had gotten the other one. She met Salles Gomes while he was in Rio for film shooting, where he had a small role. After meeting Salles Gomes she got the scholarship, what surprised her, since she had never work with cinema before in her life and had no experience in the area (Bernardet, 1990). Ribeiro went to become Salles Gomes' main archival researcher

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<sup>5</sup> Lucila's name written in some sources with two "l" in the middle, "Lucilla", but we have opted for the most common writing as used by Herzog in his letters to her. After marrying Jean-Claude Bernardet, in 1964, Lucila begins using his last name. That is the reason she is sometimes called Lucila Bernardet, as seen in Herzog's letters to the couple from London.

for the Cinemateca: She was fundamental for its development as an archival institution, and it was Herzog who put her in contact with Salles Gomes.

Sucksdorff's seminar was a turning point, not only for Herzog in his career, but for an entire generation of young filmmakers who were just starting and would later transform the cinematic landscape of Brazil (Hamburger, 2020). Behind the scenes, the not so invisible hand of Salles Gomes played a vital role in making it possible for Herzog (and Ribeiro) to move to Rio and, therefore, get into closer contact with a whole circle of cinephiles and film makers. The period in Rio would change his life permanently.

The main direct accounts of the atmosphere of the seminar come from Lucila Ribeiro's and Herzog's notebooks. According to Hamburger (2020, p. 100), they were the two representatives of São Paulo. Followingly a brief description of the classes:

The films mentioned in class confirm the broad range that constituted the course's repertoire. In class, the professor articulates his critiques of Glauber Rocha's debut film [...]. He compares the fishermen in Barravento with the hardworking fishermen in *La terra trema* (1948), another film by Luchino Visconti. The discussions are heated. Lucila Ribeiro recounts a discussion on January 25 in which the professor criticizes Brazilian cinema for focusing on structural problems and not allowing itself to look at the 'thousand little revolutions that occur every day.' In Brazil, according to the professor and as critically noted by Lucila, it is 'forbidden to be a poet.' In Ribeiro's notes, Nelson Xavier defends Brazilian cinema against the professor's criticisms: 'Brazil is beginning to express itself. The problems are structural, so it's natural that we are concerned only with the big problems.' Carlos Henrique Escobar, Orlando Senna, Arnaldo Jabor participate in the discussion. The notes allow us to imagine an atmosphere of debate that alternated between the discussion of contemporary films, such as *Yojimbo* (1961) by Akira Kurosawa, and historical documentaries, including *The Man of Aran* (1934) by Robert Flaherty, *World of Plenty* (1943) by Paul Rotha, *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* (1927) by Walter Ruttmann. *The Beast and the Arrow* (1958), by the director himself, was screened at INCE [Instituto Nacional do Cinema Educativo] and discussed in the first class of January (Hamburger, 2020, p. 100-101).

Despite all the critique addressed by the younger Generation to which Herzog belonged, his experience with Sucksdorff allowed him to produce and finish a short documentary film called *Marimbás* (1963):

[...] the only film directed by Vladimir Herzog, a practical outcome of the Arne Sucksdorff Seminar. It is a short film aligned with socially oriented documentary cinema: Herzog chose as its theme and subject individuals on Copacabana Beach who lived off the leftovers from the fishermen's catches. This focus on social injustice and marginalized individuals would become a constant in Vladimir Herzog's trajectory, whether in journalism or in his other unfinished film projects (*Marimbás*, [2020?]).

According to Hamburger (2020, p. 101), the script was selected among between 22 and 18<sup>6</sup> scripts to be shot in the last part of the seminar. Four people sign the original script, in this order: Lucilla (Ribeiro), Chauili (Isaac), Vladimir (Herzog) and Roberto (Bakker).<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Herzog only signs the original text. Hamburger (2020, p. 102) adds that the film's credits reveal the movie was made by seven people: Vladimir Herzog, Lucila Ribeiro, Dib Lutfi, Roberto Bakker e Luís Carlos Saldanha, while Shauli Isaac and Francisco Chagas da Costa are credited respectively as co-writer and for sound.

Its relevance is due especially to the use of the Nagra equipment and the capturing of direct sound. *Marimbás* was the first documentary film in Brazil to use this kind of equipment since it was bought with resources from the financing of the seminar and brought by Sucksdorff together with an Arriflex camera 35mm. This last piece of equipment was very heavy for the kind of agile cinema they were trying to make (Hamburger, 2020, p. 99). Herzog notes several classes on cinematography with the camera, followed by classes with the Nagra on direct sound recording. He also mentions the variation in the speed of film cameras in Brazil, which made synchronization with sound harder (Hamburger, 2020, p. 101). In a letter from May 2, 1963, to his close friend and fellow employee at the Cinemateca Brasileira, Jean-Claude Bernardet, latter to become a famous film historian and critic, Herzog (1963c) describes his work with *Marimbás* as follows:

My film is still in the preparation stage for editing because I must still solve the sound issue. The recordings came out in horrible quality, and I intend to improve it technically. Maybe I will go to São Paulo for this. The script is barely ready. In the same editing room (over there at Sucksdorff's) Nelson's Barren Lives is being assembled in the afternoon. So, I profit from it anyway.

Hamburger (2020) states that the filming team met with Argentinian filmmaker Fernando Birri (1925-2017), what makes sense, since 1) the existing primary sources confirm that Birri was in Rio around that time<sup>8</sup> and 2) Herzog had already met him the year before in Mar del Plata (Herzog 1963b). During the time in Rio, Herzog would also deepen his contacts with Birri with whom he would develop a life-long friendship. Herzog had met Birri for the first time the year before, in March 1962, while covering the Mar del Plata Film Festival for *Estadão* (Herzog 1963b). Later that year of 1963 (July) he would travel to Santa Fe with his fellow friend Maurice

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<sup>6</sup> Hamburger (2020, p. 101) underlines here that two different sources diverge on the number of scripts evaluated.

<sup>7</sup> We have chosen to write the names as they are found in the original document.

<sup>8</sup> See especially Vladimir Herzog's letter to João Claudio (Jean-Claude Bernardet) from Rio de Janeiro, Mai 2<sup>nd</sup> 1963, where he mentions having talked thoroughly with Birri "here in Rio" on the University of Brasília.

Capovilla (1936-2021) specially to visit Birri's film school in the Argentinian city. The whole contact was probably established while Birri was in Rio during the filming of *Marimbás* for the Sucksdorff seminar. In a letter from July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1963, written by Capovilla and signed by Herzog too (written from Santa Fe to Bernardet) they state the following on their ideas for the new film department at the University of Brasília:

I want to tell you that our opinion, mine, and Vlado's, is that we should immediately begin the experiment in Brasília. I will write to Paulo Emílio to inform him of our ideas. My concern is that the possibility of making films might be forgotten, or that we might wait too long for the equipment to arrive, and in the meantime, we are left doing nothing. It is not really necessary to wait for any equipment. If there is a genuine desire to create something, and if there is no bad faith on anyone's part, then we can start the experiment immediately, with a preparatory phase that only requires a few cameras, a photo development lab, and later, a 16mm camera, raw film, and a minimal team of people. Two films are being proposed and will officially be presented by us to Paulo Emílio, Paulo de Tarso, and Darci Ribeiro, if we can reach them. The first film is the one that emerged from the [Sucksdorff] Seminar, and Vlado is proposing it on behalf of everyone interested in this project. It is a film about Brasília's Cidade Livre: a relationship between the Plano Piloto and the slums of Cidade Livre. In short, the theme is as follows: the man who builds the city does not have the right to live in it. The second project could be carried out separately from the first film and in parallel, with the formation of two teams—one to create the film about Brasília, and another to produce the film I am proposing with Lucila, which is about Paulo Freire's method. I believe I can generate interest in this project as well, and I have already asked Paulo Emílio for a placement with the teams that carry out literacy programs in various parts of the country. I personally spoke with Paulo Freire in Porto Alegre and managed to pique his interest in the project. Although nothing concrete was decided, as Paulo Freire left things contingent on Paulo Emílio's willingness. This is where things stand. As soon as we return, we will commit to these two proposals, which are nothing more than the expression of our desire to start working immediately (Capovilla; Herzog, 1963).

The small documentary Herzog's that emerged from Sucksdorff's Seminar is also important because it was a first attempt to setting standards for the documentaries shoot in the scope of the Caravana Farkas ("Farkas Caravan"), such as [Subterrâneos do Futebol](#) (Maurice Capovilla, 1965) and [Viramundo](#) (Geraldo Sarno, 1965). Those documentaries were a watershed in terms of socially engaged documentary film making in Brazil. Despite this attempt at film making being Herzog's only direct experience as a director, the experience with *Marimbás* had a deep impact on his views on cinema and opened new ways in his career. As he would later state in a letter from August 7, 1965, sent from London and addressed to his friends Jean-Claude and Lucila Bernardet, despite the harsh critiques he does on his own work, he proudly brings a 35mm copy of it (with French subtitles) to the British capital. His wish was to promote Brazilian cinema abroad. As he explains in that letter, he clearly sees himself as a diplomat of Brazilian films abroad and even intends taking a documentary seminar to improve his directing skills.

I brought with me to England a significant amount of material on Brazilian cinema (photos, books, documents) for me to use when it becomes necessary and helpful to promote our stuff. I also brought with me a 35mm copy with French subtitles of *Marimbás* because, if possible, I intend to take a documentary training course here or in another European country, and I will use it (whether well or not) as a sample (Herzog, 1965).

Although he spent three years (1965-1968) in London as a correspondent for the BBC Radio to Brazil, he did not abandon completely his desire to dedicate himself to film making. He clearly expressed the wish to use the result of his participation at Sucksdorff's seminar as part of his portfolio to apply for a documentary-making internship at the BBC. The British public broadcaster was on the top in terms of producing documentaries at that time, what explains Herzog's goal. Interestingly, before leaving Brazil, Herzog also leaves a copy of his film with his mentor, Salles Gomes, so that he could take it with him to the new Capital, Brasília. There, together with Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Lucila, and Jean-Claude Bernardet, Salles Gomes would structure in 1964 the first Undergraduate course in cinema at the newly founded University of Brasília. Herzog's aim, as he explains himself in that same letter, was to submit the film to the "scrutiny" of Salles Gomes' students at the University (Letter from Vladimir Herzog to Jean-Claude Bernardet and Lucila Ribeiro from London, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965). Herzog also stresses being curious about how the reaction of the students will be. He even asks Jean-Claude and Lucila, who were brought in by Salles Gomes to take part in the Undergraduate film course, to be his "spokesperson" (*porta-vozes*) regarding the discussions on the tape. They were aware of Herzog's approach, since Lucila took part in the making of the film. Therefore, he makes the following request:

By the way, speaking of the film, I suggested to PESG [Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes] that he takes the copy [of *Marimbás*] from the Cinemateca to Brasília one day and subject it to the scrutiny of his students. I'm very curious to know what their opinions would be. You, who know my thoughts about the film (especially you, Lucila), could be my spokesperson. I believe that 'Marimbás' serves primarily as an example of what not to do, that is, the wrong paths that a certain superficial conception of 'cinema-verité' or 'cinema-inquiry' can lead to. As you know, my mistake was repeated and multiplied in some films that came after, such as Saraceni's 'Integração racial,' a film that can be refuted with just five lines of a serious study of the problem, approached as the researches conducted at USP and elsewhere [on that topic, racial integration]. It would be interesting, for the purpose of demonstrating working methods, for you to compare, on one hand, my film and Saraceni's (both made without prior knowledge and critical position regarding the problem), and, on the other, Leon and Geraldo's films, which, in my view, represent the prototype of what Brazilian cinema needs, then and now. I also believe that we are at a dangerous crossroads for the so-called 'committed cinema,' and it is necessary, while encouraging the emergence and work of new talents, to engage in a wide critical self-examination. Ambiguities and misunderstandings, particularly in Rio, are beginning to assume alarming proportions, if you agree with me (Herzog, 1965).



In the beginning of this same letter, Herzog had already mentioned Salles Gomes' name, stating that right before his departure to England, (which was on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1965), he talked "quickly" with him in the "Faculty" (of Communications at the USP) and Salles Gomes handed him a draft of the structure of the future cinema course in Brasília (Herzog, 1965). This letter is also representative for Herzog's intellectual circle and his influences, since he mentions some friends with whom he had long talks before leaving Brazil: Geraldo Sarno, Maurice Capovilla, Octávio Ianni (1926-2004) and Alex Viany (1918-1992). The conclusions he draws from these exchanges are harsh: he thinks the whole problem lays in "intellectual laziness" (*indolência intelectual*), which according to his judgement results in nothing being taken to "its last consequences and with rigor" (*quase nada seja levado às últimas consequências e com rigor*). This situation results in a maintenance of the status quo and makes them all accomplices to the whole situation of mediocrity in the cinematic scene (Herzog, 1965).

More to the end of this letter he criticizes directly what he regards as "erudite inclinations" (*tendências eruditizantes*) and a neglect of practical work at the cinema course (Herzog, 1965). Herzog knows what he is talking about, since he was aware of the structure draft Salles Gomes handed to him. Jean Claude and Lucila were also actively taking part in this institutional construction, and both were living in Brasília for that purpose. The letter Herzog's is addressed to Lucila, at the "Cinema Department of the Journalism Course" of the University of Brasília. Herzog compares the project of the Film Course in Brasília with the *Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques* (IDHEC) in a negative way. He asks them (Lucila and Jean-Claude) if they were trying to make a new succursal of the IDHEC, with the same theoretical centered approach, as opposed to a more practical one (Herzog, 1965). Herzog's critics will be better understood if we analyze the model he had in his mind of how should film teaching should look like.

### **The role model: Fernando Birri and the Santa Fe Film School**

Fernando Birri also visited Rio de Janeiro while Herzog was living in the city for the Sucksdorff seminar. They both frequented similar social circles around the Cinemateca do MAM, in Rio, and the movie scene in general. Birri had already established himself as a documentary filmmaker with [\*Tire Dié\*](#) (1958), considered a milestone in the Latin American film documentary scene. He had studied at the *Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia* in Rome during the 1950s, before making *Tire Dié* (Herzog 1963b). But Birri was also the head of the newly founded *Instituto de Cinematografia da la Universidade Nacional del Litoral*, in

Argentina's province of Santa Fe, popularly known as the "Santa Fe Film School." Those credentials were highlighted by Salles Gomes (Gomes; Andrade, 1964) in a recommendation letter he wrote for the Argentinian addressed to the filmmaker and critic Alex Viany (1918-1992), who received Birri in Rio de Janeiro later in 1964. The letter was written on a Cinemateca Brasileira's official paper letter and was signed together with Rudá de Andrade (1930-2009), his main right hand at the institution. This letter underlines the social network Salles Gomes opened for the younger generation, not only for Herzog or Lucila Ribeiro, but also for other Latin Americans such as Birri. In the letter of recommendation Salles Gomes wrote for Birri, he promotes Birri's book about his experience in Santa Fe. He also suggests it to be published in the collection coordinated by Viany at the publishing company *Civilização Brasileira*. If Viany accepts it for publication, so Salles Gomes, the Cinemateca team would be willing to make an introduction and translate the work (Gomes; Andrade, 1964).

Herzog described his first contacts with Birri in the already quoted article he wrote in 1963 for *Estadão*. The article was published in the same section where Salles Gomes wrote his critiques. According to Herzog, the first contact between him and Birri took place in Buenos Aires at an exhibition of *Tire Dié* at the Ministry of Education. Herzog's first impression of Birri was that of "a thin man with traces that denounced his Italian descent and who had recently shown his debut feature film *Los Inundados*" (Herzog, 1963b) at the [1962 International Film Festival of Mar del Plata](#) – which was held that year, between March 21<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Herzog went to Argentina to cover the festival as a journalist for the newspaper. As contradictory as it may seem, on his account of the Film Festival, Herzog describes it as not having been even close to interesting, since it did not present anything new. His overall feeling was that it was almost "melancholic" (Herzog, 1963b). Nevertheless, those festivals are spaces for meetings, social networking, and exchanges. Not only did it attract international stars, but also the Latin American avant-garde in filmmaking, including Birri himself and Nelson Pereira dos Santos.

Regarding Herzog's impressions of Birri, and the impact *Tire Dié* had on him, he states that "for the first time, a work of art produced in South America was indeed South American" (Herzog, 1963b): "For the first time in a movie, the men from this continent, that is, most of the people, the 'other side' of those millions of individuals, whose rights to a dignifying life were outraged since the times of Cortez, had a voice in a movie" (Herzog, 1963b). In contrast to "intellectualized, cold and personalistic approaches on certain social problems often regarded as urgent," according to Herzog, after *Tire Dié* it would not be possible anymore, to stand for "neutral and confusing" movies with a "clean conscience", which are misleading exactly

because they are sold as being “neutral.” He describes Birri’s movie as transparent, “violently transparent.” Its strength and dynamism, according to Herzog’s analysis, derives from its “dialectic structure between the images and the soundtrack” (Herzog, 1963b): first the camera depicts the “reality as it is presented” and, subsequently, different elements are separated according to their relationship with “global causes, in which the particular elements are inscribed in their national social context.” This context is “by its nature and consequence also continental.” Therefore, the movie approaches a practice, “penny giving” (*tire dié*), as an inhuman one that has its equivalent all over the world in the great urban centers (Herzog 1963a). It is important to note that the impact of *Tire Dié* and the relationship established with Birri would prove to be enduring. The two became close friends, and Vladimir Herzog remained a steadfast advocate for the cause of “social documentary” until his death. This commitment to the transformative power of documentary filmmaking is a testament to the profound influence Birri and his work had on Herzog’s perspective and career (Fontinele, 2019).

### **A practical approach for the film course in Brasília**

On July 24, 1963, more than two months after the exchange of letters from that same year with Jean-Claude and Lucila, Maurice Capovilla and Herzog send that letter together, drafted by Capovilla from Santa Fe. According to Capovilla’s description, both were enthusiastic about the school and the possibility of replicating that experience in Brasília. They believed that there was no need to wait for machines and equipment; instead, they should start directly with practice, which required in fact simple technical support. They should just begin making films. This is the lesson they learned after watching *Tire Dié* just before writing the letter – “we just watched ‘Tire Dié’ in its original 55-minute version”, they underline (Capovilla; Herzog, 1963). They stated that they intended to write to Salles Gomes immediately to share their ideas and propose two films to Salles Gomes himself, to Paulo de Tarso Santos (1926-2019) and to Darci Ribeiro (1922-1997). Paulo de Tarso and Darcy Ribeiro were, respectively, Ministry of Education under João Goulart’s (1919-1976) Presidency (1961-1964), and Chief of Staff of the Presidency (*Casa Civil*, between 1963-1964). Both had their mandates revoked by Institutional Act No. 1 (*Ato Institucional No. 1* – Brasil, 1964) of the military dictatorship and went into exile in Chile (de Tarso) and Uruguay (Ribeiro). Another idea Herzog and Capovilla suggested was to make a film (together with Lucila Ribeiro) about Paulo Freire’s method of teaching. They even managed to get Freire himself interested in the idea, but “Freire made it contingent on

Paulo Emílio's willingness" (*colocou as coisas na dependência da vontade de Paulo Emílio*) (Capovilla; Herzog, 1963).

According to Herzog's assessment, Birri's movie draws its strength from being the product of a collective initiative constructed around the *Instituto de Cinematografia*, in Santa Fe. Herzog's admiration for Birri's work in Argentina becomes quite clear as he states that the film was the "first true Latin American film experience realized collectively," (Herzog, 1963b) since *Tire Dié* was made between 1956 and 1958 with the participation of several of Birri's students at the School in Santa Fe. According to Herzog, Birri started his seminars for an initial group of 104 students coming from all types of backgrounds, mixing up workers, lawyers, photographers, domestic female workers, a police officer, an industrialist, and a peasant (Herzog 1963b). Herzog stress in their letter the objectives of Birri's collective work through the words of his former disciple, Juan Fernando Oliva,<sup>9</sup> as follows: "the desire to transcend his [Birri's] conceptual and technical expertise acquired in Europe to a national cinematic language both in its form and content (Herzog, 1963b). According to Herzog (1963b) in his newspaper article from March 1963 on Birri, at the premiere of *Tire Dié*, which was attended by 4,000 spectators, a circular defined the group's purposes: "To put cinema at the service of the university and the university at the service of popular education". For Birri, the university "should be a center of cultural production" (*deve ser um centro produtor de cultura*) and therefore be useful to a broader "collectivity" (*útil à coletividade*) (Herzog, 1963b). Herzog (1963b) states that Birri's project in Santa Fe should serve as a model for "those who fight for the reformulation of our own high education structure [in Brazil]" (*Aqueles que combatem pela reformulação de nossa estrutura de ensino em nível superior*).

## Conclusions

Because of his new cinematographic approach to filmmaking (inaugurated with *Tire Dié*) and because of the Film School in Santa Fe, Birri was a major influence on Herzog's views on filmmaking and on what a film school should produce/look like (Fontinele, 2019). The conflicting views with Salles Gomes, which we underlined in the beginning, become clearer when analyzing the correspondence exchanged between Herzog and Jean-Claude Bernardet in early

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<sup>9</sup> There is little bibliographical information available on Oliva. He directed *Los cuarenta cuartos* (1962), which also began as a photo-documentary focusing on Santa Fe's derelict housing. Birri referred to the film as the "second filmed social survey" after *Tire Dié* (El Litoral, January 30, 1963). See Mestman and Moore (2021).

1963. The letters display the different approaches with respect to the ways Salles Gomes conducted the Cinemateca, as well as to his visions for the conservancy of films and for the project of the future Institute for Film Studies at the University of Brasília. Those letters were written between May and June 1963, exactly the period when Salles Gomes was committed to the project in Brasília.

According to the information drawn from these letters, Birri was in Rio de Janeiro for some time between 1963 and 1964, since Herzog (1963c) writes to Bernardet about having “a long chat with him” “here,” in Rio, before he left for São Paulo (Herzog, 1963c), where he would probably meet Salles Gomes. In his letter, Herzog highlights the achievements in terms of filmmaking by the group of the so-called *Centros Populares de Cultura* (CPC), which produced the film *Cinco Vezes Favela* (1962), including filmmakers such as Marcos Farias, Miguel Borges, Cacá Diegues, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, and Leon Hirszman. This film is considered one of the founding oeuvres of Cinema Novo. Herzog also mentions *Porto das Caixas* and *Boca de Ouro*, stating that these films had huge critical potential. *Porto das Caixas* went to Cannes in 1963 and was selected to be screened at the “International Critics’ Week,” together with Chris Marker’s and Adolf Mekas’s movies.

As we can apprehend by analyzing Salles Gomes’s articles from the late 1950s and early 1960s, despite being praised as one of the main supporters of Cinema Novo, he arrived rather late in praising—at least in his writings—the avant-garde (“revolutionary,” as their members would define themselves) tendencies in moviemaking represented by the younger generation, while voguing industrial cinema attempts from the decade before. Nevertheless, Salles Gomes seems wise enough to carefully observe the younger generation, learn from them, and later become a public supporter of Cinema Novo as an original style of Brazilian filmmaking. It is necessary to say, though, that in the background—that is, on the social networking side—he was always a supporter of the younger generation. That is quite clear in the of Lucila Ribeiro’s and Herzog’s participation in the Sucksdorff Seminar. Furthermore, the letters analyzed show that Salles Gomes always employed his international contacts and his social-cultural capital to support the younger ones. Therefore, he had a sort of hub position in this (film cultural) network, connecting people, and he was paramount too for the development of the careers of many from the younger generation.

Herzog started his career and first set foot professionally in the world of cinema with the group around Salles Gomes at the Cinemateca Brasileira. Salles Gomes undoubtedly was a key figure in the Brazilian film scene of the mid-20th century, as he is mentioned by almost

everyone as a mentor or figure of considerable influence. Another aspect to be underlined is that he is perhaps one of the first ones to academically discuss the topic of film conservation in Brazil up to date with the discussions being conducted abroad under the auspices of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF, founded in 1938). Furthermore, he is one of the main actors behind the creation of the first film course/department in Brazil in the 1960s. Salles Gomes belonged to a generation that was a bit older than Herzog's and was also a mentor to a whole generation of filmmakers and film scholars, not only in Brazil but also in the U.S. academia, since he was a lecturer at the NYU during the 1970s and influenced scholars such as Richard Peña.<sup>10</sup> Those first filmmakers from the avant-garde of Cinema Novo were essentially forged around both small local film clubs and the newly structured cinemateques, much like the Nouvelle Vague in France with the Cinémathèque Française. Despite his centrality, though, Salles Gomes was not the only one regarded as a mentor. Neither was his São Paulo-centered project of a "national" ("Brazilian") cinemateque undisputed: that is one of the conclusions we draw from Herzog's letters in the first half of the 1960s. Other institutions, such as the Cinemateca do MAM in Rio, where the Sucksdorff Seminar took place, or the Film School in Santa Fe, played a significant role in shaping the younger generation's visions for a new form of filmmaking in Latin America. This socially engaged filmmaking emerged in Brazil and Latin America and developed into Cinema Novo and Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano.

Even as Herzog criticized Salles Gomes, his respect for Salles Gomes's influence and international connections remained evident. In a letter written during his self-exile in London on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Herzog requested Gomes's assistance in securing a scholarship for a BBC television course (Borrmann; Ludmer, 2020). This plea demonstrates Herzog's acknowledgment of Gomes's standing within both Brazilian and international cultural circles. Despite Herzog's frank critiques, especially in letters to Jean-Claude and Lucilla Bernardet, he understood the value of Gomes's mentorship and recommendations.

Herzog's letters also shed light on his generational critiques of the University of Brasília's Film Institute, which he described as overly theoretical and disconnected from practical filmmaking. His preference for a hands-on approach mirrored Birri's Santa Fe model, centered on projects like *Tire Dié*. The generational divide is further underscored by Herzog's frustration with the "elitist" tendencies he attributed to São Paulo's intellectual and economic elites,

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<sup>10</sup> This was told by Richard Peña himself in a meeting in New York City we had in the Spring of 2023. When he heard the name of Paulo Emílio, he immediately replied: "my master".



epitomized by Gomes. Herzog's criticisms reflect broader structural issues tied to social class and cultural capital in Brazilian cinema during this period (Borrmann, 2024).

Finally, Herzog's letters serve as crucial historical documents that illuminate his intellectual network and the broader cinematic landscape of Brazil. They reveal a vibrant exchange of ideas among individuals who would go on to shape Brazilian cinema and intellectual thought in the latter half of the 20th century, extending their influence into the political sphere during Brazil's transition to democracy after 1985. Herzog's frankness in these letters, combined with his acknowledgment of the mentorship provided by figures like Salles Gomes, encapsulates the complexities of generational and ideological change in Brazilian cinema.

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