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# New Waves and New Cinemas

## Introduction

Dr Chris Homewood

The first of its kind in the country, the Centre for World Cinemas at the University of Leeds takes a positive, inclusive and democratic approach to film studies. Rather than ratifying the usual division between the centre (Hollywood) and the periphery (the rest of the world), it defines world cinema as a polycentric phenomenon with (often overlapping) peaks of creation in different places and periods. As part of the AHRC Research Training Network in Modern Foreign Languages, the Centre held the first of two student-run conferences in July 2006: 'New Waves and New Cinemas' brought together both modern foreign language postgraduates studying film and established scholars in the field to discuss 'waves' in world cinema.

The event was headed by Professor Geoffrey Nowell-Smith whose plenary lecture – 'What is a New Wave?' – established a historical perspective through which to examine any emerging films or film movements. The conference started from a historical point of departure since offered by Nowell-Smith in his study *Making Waves*, that is:

by treating under the rubric 'new cinemas' those films and film movements which had the label attached to them, formally or informally, at the time of their emergence, any time from the late 1950s onwards. Thus, obviously, the French New Wave or Nouvelle Vague. Brazil's Cinema Novo, the Czechoslovak New Wave. Germany's Young German Cinema (Junges deutsches Kino), and, at the end of the period, New German Cinema (Neues deutsches Kino) (2008: 1).

There are, of course, more besides, from the cinema that emerged in the wake of Italian neo-realism to developments in Japan, all of which embodied an aesthetic, if not also political, rebellion against that which had gone before.

Above all, the delegates were shown that ‘waves’ in filmmaking are not isolated cases but part of an international network: the new cinemas which came into being during the 1960s and 1970s transcended national borders, even when in many cases their original aim was to reaffirm (cinematic) identity at the level of the national. Indeed, the example of new waves and new cinemas of this period speaks to Lúcia Nagib’s inclusive view of world cinema by demonstrating that influential ‘peaks of production, popularity and artistic input are attained in different times and places across the globe’, many of which have since gone on to become part of the bedrock of film history (2006: 33).

The event was not, however, limited to an exploration of cinemas past with papers establishing and reflecting on a historical bridge between recent cinematic developments, and the ‘new waves’ of the 1960s. Delegates from across the UK reflected on political and aesthetic changes in a wide range of cinemas, with papers on the demise of the Serbian political liberalism (Dušan Radunović, University of Sheffield) to a new wave of South-African cinema (Lizelle Bisschoff, University of Stirling).<sup>1</sup> Three papers from the event are included in this volume. In the first, Paul Castro considers a dialogue between the Brazilian Cinema Novo and the 1990s renaissance of cinema in Brazil, focusing on Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas’s *Foreign Land* (1996) and its examination of a rootless society. Anthony De Mello’s essay explores António da Cunha Telles’s role as producer within the Portuguese Cinema

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<sup>1</sup> For a full list of papers see the conference report:  
[www.german.leeds.ac.uk/update/NewWavespostscript.htm](http://www.german.leeds.ac.uk/update/NewWavespostscript.htm)

Novo with particular focus on the transnationalism of 1960s new waves mentioned above. In the final essay, Karolina Ziolo considers the as yet unheard role of the censors in bringing *Man of Marble* (1977) by Andrzej Wajda (one of the most iconic directors associated with what has been termed the ‘Polish School’) to the screen. I would like to thank the contributors and other editors for their hard work and patience in bringing this issue of *eSharp* together.

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## ‘Finally, we have our own *nouvelle vague*.’ António da Cunha Telles Productions and the Cinema Novo Português (1963-1967)

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While critics in Portugal and elsewhere routinely drew comparisons between Portugal’s new cinema and the French *nouvelle vague*, there was little in the way of a shared aesthetic between the two new cinemas.<sup>2</sup> With regard to production methods, however, there is much to compare, specifically with respect to the vital role of António da Cunha Telles in shaping the history of the Cinema Novo Português (New Portuguese Cinema). His self-financed company, Cunha Telles Productions, not only bankrolled the making of many of the movement’s key films, but his enthusiastic efforts to promote Portuguese cinema internationally was a major factor in the transformation of the national film industry during the 1960s. Telles’ involvement with the French New Wave as a producer marked a new stage in a history of film-industrial collaboration between the two countries dating back to the silent era. It is in this context at the level of production practice, where the French New Wave, via Telles, can be observed to have had a tremendous impact upon the Cinema Novo Português.

This article will focus on the figure of António da Cunha Telles and his role as producer of Cinema Novo Português films of the mid 1960s. It begins with a general introduction to the Cinema Novo Português, focusing particularly on the movement’s

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<sup>2</sup> This article is a revised version of a chapter in my MA thesis, *Cinema Novo Português / The New Portuguese Cinema: 1963-1967*, completed in 2004 at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. I wish to thank Charles O’Brien for his supervision and support.

connection to the growth of new cinemas internationally. Emphasis is also placed on the Cinema Novo Português' interaction with the French New Wave – at the level both of production techniques and of film-critical institutions such as film journals. Finally, the importance of António da Cunha Telles as producer and spokesperson for the Cinema Novo Português will be directly addressed, along with specific production strategies he implemented.

### **Cinema Novo Português as a new cinema**

With the premiere of Paulo Rocha's *Os Verdes Anos / The Green Years* in 1963, Portuguese critics, after years of declaring their hope for the arrival of a 'new' cinema in Portugal, embraced this film and its director. At twenty-eight years old, Paulo Rocha, trained in Paris and a regular fixture in the cine-club culture in Lisbon, easily invited comparison to certain leaders of the *nouvelle vague*. Rocha's film was followed by *Belarmino* (Fernando Lopes 1964), *Domingo à Tarde / Sunday Afternoon* (Antônio de Macedo 1965), and Paulo Rocha's second film, *Mudar de Vida / Change of Life* (1967).

From 1963 to 1967, Paulo Rocha, Fernando Lopes, António de Macedo, and António da Cunha Telles, demonstrated that Portugal could be a site of artistically relevant film production through a series of ambitious films that effectively reintroduced Portugal to the international cinema community. Indicative of the many 'new' cinemas of the 1960s, and of film movements in general, the Cinema Novo Português declared a break from the 'old' established cinema – a break actualized by the arrival of a series of innovative films made by these young, first-time filmmakers.

The emerging critical dialogue played a major role in the materialization of the new cinema movement in Portugal. As far as the Portuguese critics of the early 1960s were concerned, filmmakers such as Paulo Rocha, Fernando Lopes, António de Macedo, and

António da Cunha Telles, fulfilled the period's requirements for a new cinema. Chief among these reasons were the ways in which these films signalled their difference from the Portuguese cinema of the previous decades. In its review of *Belarmino*, *Celuloide* magazine highlighted this particular point:

This first feature film, *Belarmino*, by the young documentary director, Fernando Lopes, has opened a new chapter in the new cinema. Those who feared that the example of Paulo Rocha's *Os Verdes Anos* would not be continued, now have hope. The Portuguese cinema, no longer settling for compromises, is firmly announcing its distinction from the commercial cinema of fado and concert halls, of melodramas, comedies, and canned theatre ([anon.] 1964a, p.11).

The explosion of 'young' cinemas worldwide inspired them to make personal films as distinct from those of their Portuguese forbears, as they were similar to the various national new cinemas. In keeping with the style of new cinemas, the Cinema Novo Português utilized the lightweight camera equipment and faster film stock to shoot on location with minimal lighting effects, and experimented with editing, sound, and colour. They focused their cameras on the youth culture of Portugal, preferring the underground jazz clubs of Lisbon to the gardens and idyllic representations of the 'old' cinema. They favoured moral ambiguity in their narratives of disaffection and alienation, tackling highly sensitive social and political issues such as unemployment, the colonial wars, migration, and the power of the Catholic Church. Like their contemporaries, the young cinephiles of Portugal were active in the cine-club culture, had studied filmmaking, and drew inspiration from various world cinema figures, most notably Visconti, Rossellini, Renoir, Cassavetes, Mizoguchi, Bergman and Antonioni.

For the critics in the country, the films allowed discussions of Portuguese cinema to culminate in declarations of hope and promise

after years of uninspiring formulaic genre pictures. According to Alberto Seixas Santos, '[w]ith the release of *Os Verdes Anos* this past year, we have been introduced to a new name in the history of Portuguese cinema – Paulo Rocha. Made by a genuine auteur, *Os Verdes Anos* signals our cinema's resurgence' (Braganca et al 1964, p.134). In its review of *Os Verdes Anos*, *Filme* declared that this first film from a new generation of filmmakers had brought 'Portuguese cinema to the level of European cinema' ([anon.] 1964b, p.33). A similar sentiment was expressed by Fernando Duarte in *Celuloide* in an article titled '*Os Verdes Anos* and the New Portuguese Cinema': '[Portugal's new cinema movement] compares to the New Wave born in France, and the New York school of independent cinema, as well as the British *free cinema*' (1964a, p.1). Duarte goes on to suggest that this burgeoning Portuguese movement exemplifies a 'Film Culture' whose influence can be felt in Japan, Russia, Brazil, Argentina, Italy, Poland, Sweden, and Spain (1964a, p.1). The admiration expressed for the emerging 'young' cinemas of these countries could now be applied to films from Portugal.

The critics rejoiced in witnessing the emergence of a group of films and filmmakers that seemed part of an international trend. Proclaiming a 'new wave' of their own, the critics put to rest the myth associated with the country's established directors and perpetuated by the industry that cinema, as practiced in Portugal, was entertainment rather than art. Writing about *Belarmino*, Gérard Castello Lopes, proclaimed: 'Fernando Lopes' film has set the standard. No one can say, not a critic, director, producer, or distributor, that it is impossible to make cinema in Portugal' (Braganca et al 1964, p.131). After nearly two decades of lamenting the state of the national film industry, critics suddenly became effusive in their praise of the Cinema Novo Português.



The films of the Cinema Novo Português were also garnering critical attention at international film festivals alongside the films of celebrated new cinema directors, much admired by the Portuguese critics. In particular, *Os Verdes Anos*, proved a high point. It was shown at the Locarno Film Festival in 1964 where it received plaudits from the foreign press. In particular, Jacques Bontemps, in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, singled out the film as the exception in a year when many films seemed mediocre (1964, p.39). At Locarno, Paulo Rocha received the 'Silver Sail' award for a first-time director, an accolade that no Portuguese director or film, up to this point, had managed at an international festival. Furthermore, these credentials were similar to those of the filmmakers associated with the French New Wave and therefore, were exactly what had been longed for in Portugal – a Portuguese cinema whose artistic and cultural worth could attract international acclaim, equal to that of the young cinemas of numerous other nations in Europe, and increasingly in Latin America.

Although an ostensibly national movement, the Cinema Novo Português was, at the same time, profoundly conditioned by a world cinema culture. This sort of national/international dialectic was evident in the history of Portuguese cinema as early as 1930, with the emergence of two young directors, Leitão de Barros and António Lopes Ribeiro, noted for their admiration of the soviet montage cinema. The films that so impressed the critics of the day were two silent documentaries and a silent feature all made by Barros between 1927 and 1930. The first of these was *Nazaré* (1927), a short documentary about the life and work of fishermen in the village of Nazaré. Inspired by the films of Sergei Eisenstein and V.I. Pudovkin, *Nazaré* exhibited an approach to montage and close-ups that mimicked the style of the Russian filmmakers in a manner

unique to Portuguese cinema at that time (Costa 1991, p. 44.). Barros then went to France, Germany, and Russia to study filmmaking practices in those countries – an effort he put to use when he returned to Portugal two years later to make another documentary.

Praise for their work was couched in terms that, decades later, would be echoed in critical commentary on the directors of the New Portuguese Cinema. For instance, Alves Costa, writing in 1930 in the British film journal *Close-Up* on the situation in Portuguese cinema, was disappointed with the lack of artistic ambition in many of the films. However, he recognized that a group of ‘young *cinéastes* [...], full of courage and faith, have made their debut in the difficult craft of creating images in movement (and in sound too, now...)’ (Costa 1930, p.382). Just as during the 1960s, declarations of revitalization were commonplace during the early 1930s. The declarations, however, were premature and these two directors, who initially inspired great hope, ultimately became the leaders of a cinema that by the 1950s was dismissed as hopelessly mediocre. Nonetheless, despite the history of failed promise, the critics and cine-clubs throughout the country once again took up the call for a new cinema in the late 1950s.

The desire for a new cinema to emerge in Portugal was articulated as early as 1957, when cine-club enthusiast and eventual film director, José Fonseca e Costa, argued for a fundamental change in the national film practice in an article titled, ‘Cinema Novo’ (‘New Cinema’), and published in the first issue of the magazine, *Celuloide*. In this manifesto-like article, comparable in stance to Truffaut’s scandalous 1954 article, ‘A Certain Tendency in the French Cinema,’ Costa declared that the intention of the magazine was to champion a ‘Portuguese cinema made for a new audience,

with new themes' (cited in Duarte 1972, p.6). As Fonseca e Costa saw it, Portuguese cinema had to break away from the malaise of the established national film industry and enter into a phase of renewed vitality – a renewal marked in part by participation in critical debates and dialogues on the future of world cinema. The degree to which the spirit of Costa's plea affected the criticism and sheer enthusiasm for film on the part of intellectuals within the country can be seen in the many declarations in the film and cultural press concerning this new cinema.<sup>3</sup>

The Cinema Novo Português can be examined as part of a greater, international current in world cinema that developed during the late fifties and early sixties. This transnational current was profoundly youth-oriented, and is today widely regarded as formative for the subsequent history of film. In France, Germany, Brazil, Poland, Japan, to name but a few countries, the audacious talents of young filmmakers were in evidence at major film festivals.

An inevitable point of reference for the Cinema Novo Português is the most heralded new movement in film history, the French New Wave, whose tremendous impact on contemporaneous film movements has been documented by numerous film scholars. For instance, according to Richard Neupert, '[t]he New Wave dramatically changed filmmaking inside and outside France by encouraging new styles, themes, and modes of production throughout the world' (2002 p. xv). In addition to the influence of the New Wave directors on Portugal's aspiring filmmakers, the sort of critical discourse and media attention associated with the French movement helped stimulate calls for a similar movement to emerge

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<sup>3</sup> See [Anon], 1960. 'O novo cinema português', *Filme*, 20, pp.17-20; [Anon], 1964. 'Cronologia do cinema novo português', *Celuloide*, 73, pp.3-4; Duarte, Fernando, 1964. 'Dicionário da nova vaga portuguesa', *Celuloide*, 81, pp.4-10; Duarte, Fernando, 1965. 'O novo cinema português continua', *Celuloide*, 86, pp.2-3.

in Portugal. Indicative here is a review written by Fernando Duarte on the first of the Cinema Novo Português films, *Os Verdes Anos / The Green Years* (Paulo Rocha 1963). Duarte wrote:

In Portugal, a new wave has arrived. These young men who studied cinema in London and Paris,[...]and immersed themselves in the cine-club culture, have begun to revitalize our national cinema. A Portuguese New Wave is emerging (Duarte 1964a, p.1).

The example of the French New Wave, both as a film critical phenomenon, and as a template for a new auteur-oriented mode of production is key to my investigation into the Cinema Novo Português.

The influence of the French New Wave is yet another example of the co-operation between the French and Portuguese film industries. This historical relationship can be traced back to 1918, when the Invicta Film Company, a Portuguese firm that had been founded in 1910, was revived with the intention of becoming a major producer of Portuguese films. To facilitate the revival, the company owners looked to France for support from the Pathé Company. Director Georges Pallu, art-director André Lecointe, camera operator Albert Durot, and editors Georges and Valentine Coutable, were hired as the production team and for six years their work gave a new direction to the Portuguese film industry.<sup>4</sup> Some twelve years later, when the industry converted to sound, it was to the Paris-based firm Tobis Films Sonores and René Clair that

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<sup>4</sup> Following the example of Invicta, two rival film companies also contracted French directors. In 1922, Caldeville Film hired Maurice Mariaud, while Fortuna Films hired Roger Lion. A retrospective of the films of these three French directors took place at the Cinemateca Lisboa in May 2003. An edited book accompanied the festival. See [Anon.], 2003. *Lion, Mariaud, Pallu: Franceses Tipicamente Portugueses*. Lisbon: Cinemateca Portuguesa - Museu do Cinema.

director Leitão de Barros turned for assistance.<sup>5</sup> Finally, during the 1960s there were the New Wave films that António da Cunha Telles co-produced with France as part of his overall strategy for Cunha Telles Productions and the Cinema Novo Português.

### **Cunha Telles Productions**

After returning to Portugal in 1961 from two years of study at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris, Telles co-produced a number of films with French New Wave directors. Telles had recently received a sizable inheritance and, following the example of Louis Malle and Claude Chabrol, used his family money to form a production company.<sup>6</sup> Seeking co-production possibilities with *nouvelle vague* directors, Telles hoped to gain foreign box-office receipts, which he could then channel into his production efforts in Portugal ([anon.] 1963, p.29). Moreover, as Telles later explained, the financing of ambitious French films offered a host of additional benefits, including high-quality film-production training:

Co-productions provide access to foreign markets that were principally closed to us. A co-production with a prominent director gives us contact with quality filmmakers and technicians – it's like a practical film school. Furthermore, Portuguese films that have big name foreign actors or experienced cinematographers make it easier to market worldwide. A co-production overcomes our national limitations (Telles 1964, p.6).

Telles' first effort as a producer was the documentary *PXO* (1962), co-directed by Pierre Kast and Jacques Doinel Valcroze. He followed this with *Vacances Portuguesas / A Portuguese Vacation* (1963),

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<sup>5</sup> At that time there were no facilities within the country equipped for sound. Sound production would come to Portugal in 1933 when Tobis opened a studio in Lisbon.

<sup>6</sup> In the early years of the New Wave both men received inheritances, which they used to fund film projects. See Michel Marie (2003) and Richard Neupert (2002).

co-produced with the French company JAD Films and directed by Pierre Kast. Next, in 1964, came three co-productions: *Le Pas de Trois / The Step of Three*, directed by Alain Bornet; *Le Grain de sable / Grain of Sand*, another Pierre Kast film; and Francois Truffaut's *La Peau douce / The Soft Skin*.

In an interview published in *Filme* in 1963, Telles linked his goal as an international producer with his role as promoter of Portuguese cinema:

On the other hand, with the co-productions that I pursue, I hope to introduce an international climate for our cinema – one that integrates Portugal into European cinema. The foreign filmmakers are not coming here merely because of the beautiful scenery or the cheaper currency, but they are also pursuing great technical and creative conditions in collaboration with professionals in an exchange of ideas. With this kind of engagement, Portuguese cinema will no longer be a minor cinema. ([anon.] 1963, p.29)

Given Telles' interest in raising the level of filmmaking in his country, enough to draw attention from the international film community, it is understandable that he would turn to the French New Wave, which offered a director-centred mode of production suitable to the conditions under which he and the Cinema Novo Português would have to operate.

The goal then became the formation of an auteur-driven cinema where small budgeted films that explored personal themes would be made outside the established film-industrial system. In this respect, Jean-Pierre Melville's characterization of New Wave cinema as 'an artisanal system of production, shot in real locations, without stars, with minimal equipment and very fast film stock, without first worrying about a distributor, or official authorization, or servitude of any sort' is pertinent (cited in Marie 2003, p.50). As Telles had learned upon his return from Paris in 1961, there were no

opportunities for young, aspiring filmmakers within the tightly controlled Portuguese film industry. He had also come to regard the national film industry's traditional methods and genres as irrelevant to the cinema's current demands:

We must abandon the traditional concepts of studio filmmaking because it is not conducive to the financial conditions of our present state. Instead, we must look to a system of interior and exterior natural locations, and restructure the technical system to facilitate production with the best people in order to take risks ([anon.] 1963, p.29).

It is clear from this quote that Telles was arguing for a mode of production that closely resembled the New Wave and, in its rhetoric, echoed the statement made by Melville. The small budget film made outside the accepted studio system had been established, and mythologized, by the New Wave providing Telles with a model that he could replicate in Portugal. He admitted as much in 1964 when he remarked that '[t]he *nouvelle vague* demonstrated that the quality and interest of a film is not a condition of grand production style, but of the ideas of the auteur' (Telles 1964, p.7).

Without an opportunity to make films within the Portuguese system, Telles devoted his entire inheritance to the creation of Cunha Telles Productions, which enacted a production strategy capitalizing on recent trends in art-cinema production. The first phase of this strategy entailed investing in co-productions that might ultimately fund Portuguese films, as well as establishing links with international filmmakers. The second phase involved the rapid production of films by young Portuguese directors. Speaking about this approach years later, Telles explained that the financial situation dictated the course of action:

[i]t was pre-determined. We could not wait for the films to be successful. Therefore, when *Os Verdes Anos* opened, *Belarmino* was being filmed, and when it

premiered, *Domingo à Tarde* was in production ([anon.] 1985, p.51).

This ‘conveyor belt system’, to borrow a phrase by Claude Chabrol, had been invoked already as a desirable model for art-cinema production by members of the New Wave, but it was not actually practiced by them. Chabrol described the ‘system’ as follows:

To make films we came up with a sort of co-operative. It was understood that Resnais, who was one of our friends and whose short films we had praised, would direct his first feature with Rivette as his assistant director. Next, Rivette would direct his own first film with Truffaut as assistant. Truffaut would take his turn, assisted by Charles Bitsch. When Bitsch got his turn to direct, I would be his assistant, etc. This conveyor belt system was not without merit, but it never did get under way (cited in Marie 2003, p.58).

Chabrol’s concluding observation may be quite accurate with respect to the situation in France, but it does not extend to circumstances in Portugal, where it was precisely this ‘conveyor belt system’ that Telles put into practice in his role as the Cinema Novo Português’ pre-eminent producer. Telles provided opportunities to novice filmmakers to learn their craft. On *Os Verdes Anos*, Telles employed French cinematographer Luc Mirot and assigned Elso Roque, a young graduate of the newly formed Estúdio Universitário de Cinema Experimental (University Studio of Experimental Cinema) as assistant cinematographer. Roque then went on to photograph *Domingo à Tarde / Sunday Afternoon* (Antônio de Macedo 1965) and *Mudar de Vida / Change of Life* (Paulo Rocha 1967). As well, Fernando Matos Silva worked as assistant director on *Os Verdes Anos / The Green Years* (Paulo Rocha 1963) and *Belarmino* (Fernando Lopes 1964) before directing his own features.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Elso Roque shared the cinematography duties on *Domingo à Tarde* with another University Studio of Experimental Cinema graduate, Acácio de Almeida. Roque



Histories of film movements often overlook the role of the producer, and instead focus exclusively on the achievements of the director-auteur. Telles, however, perhaps because of the force of his personality, his enthusiasm for film culture, and his longevity in Portuguese cinema, has figured prominently in the historiography of the Cinema Novo Português.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, recent books written by Michel Marie (2003) and Richard Neupert (2002) on the French New Wave have discussed the contributions of the producers of those films. Writing about Pierre Braunberger, Anatole Dauman, and Georges de Beauregard, Richard Neupert argues that these '[t]hree bold entrepreneurs in particular helped launch many of the New Wave features with their clever strategies developed specifically for the new cinema culture of 1960' (2002, p.42). These three men had established careers as film producers prior to their involvement with the New Wave, but seized on the marketability of the young generation and their new style of film practice (Marie 2003, p.62). Telles, the former IDHEC student and devotee of cinema-club culture, similarly recognized the viability of a young cinema for Portugal. However, unlike the three French producers, Telles was part of the same generation as the directors, and, like them, he harboured his own ambitions as a director.<sup>9</sup> His education at IDHEC, experience with the French New Wave, and desire to

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and Almeida would become Portugal's most celebrated cinematographers. Fernando Matos Siva after working as assistant director received a grant to study at The London School of Film Technique in 1963. When he returned to Portugal in 1969 he was drafted into the military where he made training films. His first feature film, *O Mal Amado / The Ill-Loved* (1972) was censored and not released until after the revolution in 1974.

<sup>8</sup> See [anon.]. (1975); Passek, J. -L. (1982); Coelho, E.P. (1983); [anon.]. (1985); and Costa, J.B.d. (1991).

<sup>9</sup> Telles would direct his first feature film, *O Cerco / The Circle*, in 1970. It made a star of Maria Cabral, who plays a model entangled in various affairs with men who vie for her attention. Much to Telles's delight, the film was well received in Paris. Also, that same year, Telles would establish a distribution company, Animatógrafo, dedicated to screening, in Portugal, the films of international directors, such as Nagisa Oshima, Alain Tanner, and Glauber Rocha.

revitalize the Portuguese cinema differentiated him from the Portuguese producers who clearly had no interest in exploring new trends in filmmaking, let alone opening new possibilities for a younger generation of directors.

Telles, whether intentional or not, also became the spokesperson for the Cinema Novo Português, and as such, it appears that for the critics he was the movement's chief polemicist. As the historiography of film movements suggests, a necessary condition for the formation of a movement is the designation of a particular individual as the movement's leader. Michel Marie describes this figure as 'a leader (such as the strongest personality or spokesperson of the group) and/or a theoretician (the so-called "pope" of the group) to represent the movement' (2003, p.28). Certainly, for critics in Portugal, Telles was the Cinema Novo's 'pope,' the leader whose vision of cinema defined the movement as a whole. Focusing on the role of Telles in an article titled, 'Três conceitos de produção' ('Three Concepts of Production'), Fernando Duarte stated that it was obvious who had set forth the 'principles' by which the Cinema Novo Português would operate:

The conception was clear from beginning to end: to produce superior art films in an industrial style; focus on themes similar to those explored by the French New Wave; to revitalize Portuguese cinema, not merely as a group of young men with new ideas, but through a rigorous professionalism without compromise. These are the general conditions, in my opinion, put forward by the young and irreverent producer, António da Cunha Telles (Duarte 1964b, p.1).

The outspoken Telles was frequently interviewed, offering strong, passionately stated opinions about the state of cinema in the country. Telles was particularly vehement in repudiating the national film industry's traditional system of production, and its extraordinary resistance to change. Just as Salazar, Portugal's totalitarian dictator,

distrusted modernization, preferring instead to promote old world values with a condescending paternalism, so too did the men of the established cinema regard the aspiring directors as impertinent youngsters. Telles voiced his frustration in an interview for *Filme* in 1963:

I tell you the old directors, many times, were distrustful of us, despite the sad state they had made of our cinema. You would think they would give us young guys a chance ([anon.] 1963, p.29).

The exasperation informing such statements was born, not simply, of a brazen desire to pursue a career as a filmmaker, but to change the perception of Portuguese cinema as chronically mediocre. This sense of a higher purpose was clearly what endeared Telles to the critics and enthusiasts of the film magazines and the cine-clubs. In their review of *Os Verdes Anos*, Bensaja Del Schiro and Maria Antoineta Sotto Mayor wrote admiringly of Telles:

When the young producer of *Os Verdes Anos* speaks about the Portuguese cinema it is with the concern of one who understands its problems. There is not anger in his voice, but a resolute determination to produce, finally, a proud national cinema (Schiro and Sotto Mayor 1963, p.9).

## **Conclusion**

Enthusiastically supported by the film-critical community in Portugal, the Cinema Novo Português achieved the revitalization of the national film industry long hoped for. Capitalizing on the connections and friendships established during his time in France, António da Cunha Telles put into practice a mode of production that achieved success with modest financial resources and limited support from the national film industry. Inspired by the French New Wave, Telles recognized an opportunity to produce films by emulating a production system that proved successful by his friends in France:

I produce films with directors for whom the cinema represents a universal expression and not simply as a mass entertainment. Each director is free to explore, in whatever way they choose, ideas and authorial concepts within their films. In this way, I can help by bringing directors with diverse styles into a shared working relationship (Telles 1964, p.6).

All of this was accomplished without government subsidy, strictly on the basis of his personal finances, which in the end he exhausted.<sup>10</sup> The new movement's three young directors – Paulo Rocha, Fernando Lopes, and António de Macedo, along with their producer, refused to accept the familiar defeatist sentiment and instead, invigorated by their interest and knowledge of world cinema, set out to revitalize the Portuguese cinema, and thereby shape the direction that film would take in their country to this day.

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<sup>10</sup> Given the relatively small budgets for the films – *Os Verdes Anos* and *Domingo à Tarde* cost approximately 800,000 escudos, while *Belarmino* cost 500,000 escudos – the films failed to turn a profit, partly due to the public's distrust in the quality of Portuguese films. See Costa, J. B. d. (1991, p.134).

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## Lisbon Close-up, Seen From Afar: The Representation of the City in Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas's *Foreign Land* (1996)

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One of the first films of the 1990s *retomada* or renaissance of Brazilian cinema, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas's *Terra Estrangeira* (1996), or *Foreign Land* as it is known in the English-speaking world, has often been discussed in terms of its Brazilian *Cinema Novo* precursors, both by film critics and by co-director Salles himself. In this article, *Foreign Land* will be discussed initially in terms of its aims and techniques, which can indeed be seen to reprise, or at least to reference, those of the Brazilian cinema of the 1960s. Upon this basis, Salles and Thomas's film will then be analysed in terms of its representation of Lisbon, which can be understood as building on and extending the image of the city generated by the *Novo Cinema Português*, the new wave of Portuguese cinema that was contemporary with its counterpart in Brazil and shared the critical impulse central to the New Waves of the time.

For José Carlos Avellar, *Foreign Land*'s visual quality of image somehow comes from the particular way of shooting of Brazilian cinema of the 1960s, the *Cinema Novo*:

hand-held camera, natural light, shooting on location, setting the operator in the middle of the scene as any other character in the film, action that seems to be improvised or created in that moment – without previous preparation or rehearsal – as if the camera

would have recorded it by chance (cited in Elena 2003, p.216).

Avellar's appraisal is typical of the way that *Foreign Land* has been seen to owe a debt to its Brazilian New Wave predecessors of the 1960s in terms of its approach, in some ways perhaps more so than Salles's later, glossier works.

Moreover both the film's critics and Salles himself have claimed that in making *Foreign Land*, the directors were reprising 'the idea already put forward by the *Cinema Novo* [...] to put Brazil in front of the camera, to show us who we are and where we come from' (Salles cited in Elena 2003, p.213). The film's aims clearly dovetail with those guiding the original *Cinema Novo*, whose cultural importance and political relevance to the nation Salles has often spoken of emulating. However, whilst *Foreign Land* does share many of the aims and impulses of the original *Cinema Novo*, the film contains no direct imitation of these earlier works. The connection is more a bond of moral kinship than aesthetic resemblance.

Notwithstanding this kinship in terms of ambition, it is in its subject matter that *Foreign Land* really differs from the trends of its predecessors. In lieu of the travails of life in the *favelas* or the *Nordeste*, the tensions inherent in urban existence in Lisbon and São Paulo set the frame of the film, and in place of the hardships of internal migration it is the trials of emigration that serve to propel the narrative. Rather than a thematic departure, however, this change should be seen rather as an updating of subject matter. The 1990s saw Brazil become an even more city-centred country than it had been in the heyday of the *Cinema Novo*, with urbanisation having increased by more than 20 per cent (Schneider 1996 p.2). This decade also saw the first major waves of emigration to Europe and the United States from what had traditionally been a receiver



country (Elena 2003 p.213). In focusing on social and economic precariousness within an urban setting and on the migration of outsiders to Lisbon, *Foreign Land*, it can be argued, reworks some of the key themes of Portuguese cinema, but with a Brazilian twist.

## **Synopsis**

*Foreign Land* revolves around two plot strands that meet halfway through the film. The first concerns Paco, a young man from São Paulo. His elderly mother is a Basque immigrant who dreams of returning home to San Sebastián. When the *Plano Collor* is implemented by the newly-elected President, which at the time froze all private bank accounts, the shock of seeing her life savings seemingly stolen is too much for her and she dies of a heart attack. Paco is left distraught and penniless. He meets a Luso-Brazilian antiques dealer named Igor, who offers him a job as a courier transporting merchandise to Europe. Paco accepts and leaves for Lisbon.

The second strand involves Alex, a young Brazilian immigrant to Portugal. Stuck in a dead-end job as a waitress, she is involved with Miguel, a Brazilian musician and heroin addict. To make ends meet, Miguel fences smuggled goods sent to him from Brazil by Igor. We realise that Paco has unwittingly become entangled in an international smuggling ring dealing in diamonds. Frustrated by his continued drug abuse, Alex leaves Miguel and goes to stay with Pedro, a friend who is secretly in love with her. Miguel decides to double-cross Igor, sell the diamonds directly and use the proceeds to flee Lisbon with Alex. He manages to offload the diamonds, but receives only a tiny fraction of their true value. Igor's boss then has Miguel murdered.

Paco arrives in Lisbon at the Hotel dos Viajantes, the normal stay-over destination for Igor's couriers. He discovers a violin in his luggage, but does not suspect that it contains diamonds. Paco's contact – the deceased Miguel – does not show up and the young Brazilian feels lost. He meets Loli, an Angolan immigrant living in a different *pensão*, or boarding house, on the floor above Paco who shows him the way to Miguel's house. Paco discovers Miguel has been murdered and finds a piece of paper with Alex's address. After he tracks her down, Alex mistakes Paco for an accomplice of the smugglers and hatches a plan to seek revenge on Igor. Alex distracts Paco for a night, while Pedro steals the case containing the violin. Paco returns to the hotel to find that the case is gone and that he has received instructions to meet a man named Krafft.

The encounter between the young Brazilian and the kingpin of the smuggling ring takes place at a night club that plays traditional Portuguese music. Igor appears and Paco realises that the smugglers do not have the case. Paco flees the nightclub and finds Alex, who then admits to having given the case away. Without the merchandise their situation is desperate, and made even worse by the fact that Alex had previously sold her passport to traffickers. Pedro gives the couple his car and they try to escape to Spain. Igor and one of Krafft's henchmen catch up with them at the border. Paco kills the henchman, but is mortally wounded in the process. Alex bundles Paco into the car and they escape over the frontier. Their situation seems hopeless: the film ends in a long shot of their car as it speeds away along an empty highway.

### **Foreign Land at Home and Abroad in the Collor Years**

The Collor incumbency was a difficult period for Brazilian filmmaking. The *Plano Collor*, which triggers *Foreign Land's* narrative,

had been paralleled by the dismantling of the main mechanism of film funding in Brazil. Just as the freezing of her savings account shatters the dreams of Paco's mother, the economic policies that Collor imposed upon taking office destroyed the plans of Brazil's filmmakers. After *A Grande Arte (Exposure)*, a film with international financing and English dialogue released in 1991, *Foreign Land* marks Salles's return to filmmaking in his native tongue. This return to the Portuguese language is accompanied by a turn to Portugal. In order to re-discover Brazil cinematically and to renew the project of the Brazilian *Cinema Novo*, Salles and Thomas invert the route of discovery and travel to Lisbon so as to consider the country from the outside, to look at Brazil from its point of origin in order to gauge its position in the world system today. This inversion reflects a shift in the real world. Portugal, which for hundreds of years had sent its excess population to Brazil, became one of the principal destinations for the young emigrants fleeing the Collor years.

Thomas and Salles' focus on the struggling immigrants of the Portuguese capital in *Foreign Land* is far removed from the short-haul exoticism that characterised other contemporary non-Portuguese representations of the city, such as Wim Wenders's *Lisbon Story* (1994) or *Until the End of the World* (1991). The discrepancy between Salles and Wenders's take on Lisbon is ironic, as Wenders is one of the most discernible non-Brazilian influences on Salles. Instead of resonating with *fado*, the emblematic folk music of Lisbon, and embodying the possibility of community (perhaps due to a perceived lack of modernity), as the city does in Wender's films, in *Foreign Land* Lisbon is enmeshed in the contemporary world and is once again the 'dark city' described by Portuguese film historian Bénard da Costa. Costa sees the representation of Lisbon in the Portuguese cinema as being characterised by

the closed horizons of a dead-end city, a slave of its own tricks and traps, that would forever insinuate themselves, in filigree or as a predominant note, in almost all the films that had Lisbon as the main setting' (1991, p.40; translation mine).

This vision of Lisbon reaches its zenith with the *Novo Cinema Português*, and can be seen to carry on into *Foreign Land*'s noir-tinged depiction of the city. Urban space is never celebrated in Salles's oeuvre: both Rio and São Paulo are shown as de-humanised megalopolises in works such as *Foreign Land*, *O Primeiro Dia* (1998) and *Central do Brasil* (1998). In *Foreign Land*, for the most part, it is Lisbon that is under scrutiny, and though lacking the monstrous proportions of these Brazilian cities, Portugal's capital fares little better.

### **Lisbon: the Real and the Reel City**

In this article, it is *Foreign Land*'s portrait of Lisbon that I shall analyse in detail. According to Avellar (2002), Salles carries aspects of documentary research over into his fictional filmmaking, specifically in the way in which he permits his experiences during filming to influence the narrative. It has been suggested that *Foreign Land* evolved through the contact its directors had with the actual conditions of the city, as well as the input of the Portuguese and African actors involved in the project, such as the Zaire-born Angolan director José Laplaine, who plays the Angolan, Loli. Here it must be remembered that in filming Lisbon, even with a documentary bent, Salles and Thomas were not just tackling a historical, social and economic reality, but also a cinematographic one. In capturing the spaces and situations of Lisbon, *Foreign Land* necessarily engages with the city's film history. Thus, as well as

building on the Brazilian *Cinema Novo*, *Foreign Land* also relates to previous representations of Portugal's capital.

Rather than looking at *Foreign Land* in relation to preceding representations of Brazil then, I shall look at the film in relation to the *Novo Cinema Português* and the current situation of Lisbon. To do so necessitates some consideration of the *Comédia à Portuguesa* from the 1930s, the Portuguese tradition that the *Novo Cinema Português* sought to overhaul, in order to pinpoint the depiction of the city that is built up in Salles and Thomas's film. Both the *Novo Cinema Português* and the *Comédia à Portuguesa* were film movements that avowedly represented Lisbon, although the latter showed the city as a negative space in reaction to the way the former projected it as a utopian city. The *Comédia a Portuguesa* began in 1933 with Cottinelli Telmo's *A Canção de Lisboa* (1933), its most representative exemplar, and remained the paradigm for Portuguese film until the 1960s. The *Comédia à Portuguesa* was then replaced by the *Cinema Novo*, which began with Paulo Rocha's *Os Verdes Anos* (1963) and Fernando Lopes' *Belarmino* (1964). This new wave arose in response to the perceived aesthetic bankruptcy of the *Comédia à Portuguesa* and the inadequacy of its cheery vision of a village-like Lisbon, portraying the city as an urban space racked by civil repression, beleaguered by the effects of the wars in the African colonies and depleted by mass emigration in response both to these strictures and also the country's ongoing economic underdevelopment.

The differences between the contrasting representations of Lisbon in the *Comédia à Portuguesa* and the *Novo Cinema Português* can be summed up by reference to German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies's concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (see Tönnies, 2001). The *Gemeinschaft* refers to a rooted, solidaristic, human-centred community (which corresponds to the vision of the first

movement) and the *Gesellschaft* signifies a mercantile, atomised, money-driven society (which corresponds to the critique of the second). *Foreign Land*, in turn, can be seen to update the representation of Lisbon made by the *Novo Cinema Português* to reflect the pressures of post-coloniality and postmodernity, whilst displaying the humanism that characterises Salles's *oeuvre* by keeping some of the utopian elements of the *Comédia à Portuguesa*'s representation of the city alive, albeit in similarly updated forms.

The difference between Tönnies's two concepts neatly encapsulates the shift between these two movements in Portuguese cinema, one that finds a parallel in the narrative strategy used to depict urban space. Gelfant (cited in Caws 1991) draws an important distinction between ecological city novels and portrait city novels, a distinction that can be applied usefully here to film narratives of the city. The ecological novel focuses on a community and its relation to its immediate surroundings, whilst the portrait novel depicts a single character alone in the metropolis and often on his or her uppers. Extending this taxonomy to the city films under analysis here, the *Comédia à Portuguesa* works are ecological city films that posit an idealised *Gemeinschaft* within the city. The example I will use here is Cottinelli Telmo's *A Canção de Lisboa*. In this film, the protagonist Vasco, with the help of his friends and fellow residents of his *bairro*, wins the girl, passes his medical exams and lives happily ever after. It is an idealised version of neighbourhood life in Lisbon, where everyone knows one another and everyone looks out for each other's interests. The *Novo Cinema Português* works are portrait city films that revolve around a single protagonist at odds with the city and struggling to survive in the *Gesellschaft*. In Paulo Rocha's *Os Verdes Anos*, Júlio is a young man, as inexperienced as the title suggests, who in-migrates from the countryside to work in the city as a low-

paid cobbler. He meets a woman and falls in love, but is sent crazy by the anomie of urban life; eventually he murders his fiancée and the film ends in tragedy. Fernando Lopes's *Belarmino*, on the other hand, is the story of an ageing boxer who has a mental image of himself as a great champion but whose life in the city reveals him to be almost down and out. Like Júlio in *Os Verdes Anos*, in *Foreign Land* Paco is young, inexperienced and alone in the city, and he pays for his naivety. Echoing the fate of *Belarmino*'s boxing protagonist, Paco ultimately loses his bout with the city.

### **Lisbon as Semi-Peripheral *Gesellschaft***

*Foreign Land* synthesises these two views, sharing the pessimistic bent of the *Cinema Novo*, but at the same time keeping open some possibility that humanity can survive in the modern city. In doing so Thomas and Salles's film takes key spaces represented in both the *Comédia à Portuguesa* and the *Cinema Novo* and updates them for the 1990s. Lisbon becomes represented as a *Gesellschaft* where the Third World encounters The First World, an idea that can be explained in reference to the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos's concept of the semi-peripheral as expounded in his work *Pela Mão de Alice* (2002).

The general idea behind Sousa Santos's notion is that Portugal belongs neither to the First World nor to the Third. Instead it acts as a link between the two. Historically, Portugal was the mediator between the resources of its colonies and the economic interests of First World countries such as Britain, to which Portugal had a semi-peripheral relationship. Today, Sousa Santos argues, this role has been actualised to fit a post-colonial world. At a micro-level, Lisbon becomes a foreign land where immigrants from the Third World and the economic interests of the first collide. However,

Sousa Santos's focus is on the main ways in which Portugal's semi-peripherality can be recuperated as a competitive advantage. Salles and Thomas's film, on the other hand, focuses on the ongoing depredation to which Lisbon is home as a consequence of this situation.

For Tönnies, 'we go out into the *Gesellschaft* as into a foreign land' (2001, p.18). This encapsulates exactly Paco's experience in Salles and Thomas's film, both on what is supposed to be home soil and when he leaves for Europe. Thanks to the *Plano Collor* a lifetime's savings and hopes are seemingly obliterated, provoking a situation in which the value of money, the search for liquid currency and the risk of inflation dominate society. It is within this situation that Paco is employed by Igor. Igor initially seems friendly, but is in fact only interested in Paco insofar as he can make use of him. What seems like a meeting based on sympathy reveals itself to be solely profit-driven; *Gesellschaft*, not *Gemeinschaft*.

During the scene in the storeroom where Igor first suggests to Paco that he accept a job as a courier to Europe, the antique dealer denounces what he sees as the 'ignorant yuppies' responsible for Brazil's 'false modernity', the 'empire of mediocrity'. Yet the Luso-Brazilian Igor can in fact be seen as a very small cog in the machine producing the situation he so vehemently seems to deride, a semi-peripheral status that is confirmed in Igor's later interactions with Krafft, the Frenchman who appears to be his immediate superior in the smuggling ring. Igor mentions that all he has are 'little souvenirs,' that the gold of Brazil is gone, and that few diamonds remain. We later learn that these few diamonds are being trafficked out of the country under Igor's orders. Igor has thus criticised a wider process, the exploitative basis of which in fact mirrors his own activities. However, this display of hypocrisy on Igor's part pales in



comparison to the dissimulation on the part of the President of Brazil who instigates the *Plano Collor* and is later impeached for gross corruption.

Later in the film we discover that beyond Brazil's borders it is no different: the *Gesellschaft* is a global situation. Once Paco arrives in Europe he is ignored while the smugglers go after Miguel, and then, once their attention returns to the diamonds in his possession, the young Brazilian becomes someone to deal with or to eliminate purely in the interests of getting hold of the merchandise. All relations between the First World and the Third have a hierarchical mercantile basis in *Foreign Land*.

### **At Home and Abroad: Spaces of Accommodation and Entertainment in *Foreign Land***

I shall now turn to two particular aspects of Salles and Thomas's film, with reference to the two paradigms in Portuguese cinema outlined above, in order to explore how the two directors continue and update common spaces traditionally used in the representation of Lisbon. The first aspect is the representation of habitation and the relationships between the characters and the wider society that these imply. When Paco reaches Lisbon he rooms in the Hotel dos Viajantes. Upon arrival, as he climbs the stairs alongside the proprietor, Paco sees Loli, the Angolan. The hotel owner comments 'on the third floor is a black establishment. It has nothing to do with us'. The Third World lives in and works for the city, but is excluded from belonging to it. Later, when Paco tries to make friends with the personable Loli, one of the other Angolans in the *pensão* upstairs tells him that whites are trouble, that the blacks should stick with blacks and whites with whites. Rejection of the mainstream is shown to be

the reaction to rejection by the mainstream, as the cause of a dangerous circularity within the social and physical fabric of the city.

Ironically, Paco himself finds that despite his white skin he is regarded with mistrust and a certain amount of contempt as a Third-World Brazilian. This experience is Alex's daily reality: the young waitress is shown suffering abuse and anti-Brazilian jibes from her boss in the restaurant in which she works. She is shown reaching the end of her tether with what is presumably a constant experience, and then quitting her job in exasperation at her treatment. Rather than the racial and class homogeneity of the *Comédia à Portuguesa* where, even if a richer or poorer or even a 'coloured' person appears, the essential harmony of the community is undisturbed, *Foreign Land* develops the stance of the *Novo Cinema Português* to show Lisbon as a city criss-crossed with unbridgeable racial and class divisions. Despite being innocent of any wrongdoing, when Loli sees the police outside of Miguel's house, the Angolan voices his distrust of the *chotas*, or police, and retires from the scene. In today's Lisbon, it would seem to the viewer, one can not be too careful.

Temporary accommodation, such as the Hotel dos Viajantes, is redolent of the dislocations of the big city as shown in Portuguese cinema. In the *Comédia à Portuguesa* it performs a mustering role for the unlikely assembly of an improvised family. In *A Canção de Lisboa*, Vasco's landlord in the end lends him a paternal hand despite the fact that Vasco owes rent in arrears. In *Foreign Land* the manager of the Hotel dos Viajantes compromises Paco's position by handing over his suitcase (and thus the merchandise) to an unknown person who pays his bill. This is a fatal turning point for Paco. Once the diamonds are lost, so is he. In the *Cinema Novo*, in films such as *Os Verdes Anos*, itself a tale of impoverished migration, temporary accommodation is a space of frustration and disconnection. This quality comes through

in *Foreign Land* when Paco is lying in bed in the Hotel dos Viajantes waiting for the contact that never comes. He hears the sounds of the city existing around him: the hum of trams, the rattle of buses and, at night, the horn of the *cacilheiros*, or river ferries, as they ply their way between Lisbon and the south bank of the Tagus. These noises are what theorist of film sound Michel Chion calls *anempathetic* sounds (1994), that is sounds lacking in sympathy, sounds that go on in the background at moments of heartbreak or crisis as if nothing were amiss. It is in these ways that the city is shown as an intrinsically unsympathetic place.

In the Hotel dos Viajantes, Paco feels his lack of connection to anything or anybody, yet something occurs that relieves his sense of isolation and exclusion. It is here that he meets Loli, the affable Angolan who breaks through Paco's fear and reserve to create the start of a budding friendship, though later events in the film mean that this relationship will ultimately go unfulfilled. Despite the evident racism and antagonism of the city, Loli and the other African emigrants are able to carve out a space of community. Paco, alone and lost in his rented room, steps out onto his balcony to while away another few minutes looking out over the river. Above him he hears the joyous strains of African music. He looks up and sees the Angolans hanging out their washing. They are evidently not a traditional family unit, rather people thrown together by the chance combinations of city life. Nonetheless, as in the vision of the city propounded by the *Comédia à Portuguesa*, their residence forms a space of *Gemeinschaft*, where each looks out for the other and has the community's best interests at heart.

The second strand of Lisbon life that is represented in both the *Comédia à Portuguesa* and the *Novo Cinema Português*, and which is then picked up by *Foreign Land* are the spaces where music is

performed, important sites in the modern city for the encounter and coexistence of friends, of foes perhaps, and of those simply unknown to one another. In the *Comédia à Portuguesa*, the key space is of course the *fado* club, as well as traditional neighbourhood festivities. The playing of traditional music is an opportunity for the *Gemeinschaft* to convene and confirm its identity, a phenomenon that recurs repeatedly throughout the films comprising this genre. In *A Canção de Lisboa*, everyone gathers at the *fado* club to hear Vasco sing and thus redeem himself from his earlier misdemeanours and rejoin the ranks of his community. At the neighbourhood festivities, despite some rivalry and conflict at the beginning, the whole *bairro*, or neighbourhood, draws together as one to dance and enjoy the fireworks. The nature of these gatherings shifts in the *Novo Cinema Português*, possibly due to the decreased relevance of *fado* for the city at a time when its place in society had been enshrined by the Salazar regime and its popularity was beginning to be undermined by postwar developments in popular music. In *Belarmino*, the *fado* club gives way symbolically to a jazz club, depicted in a way redolent of the British Free Cinema, and a nondescript cabaret club called The Ritz. In Fernando Lopes's film, the jazz club and the cabaret club become spaces of freedom, places of dark, smoky escape from the strictures of the *Gesellschaft* outside its doors.

In *Foreign Land*, we see two spaces of entertainment and, again, find a mix of the qualities of the *Comédia à Portuguesa* and the *Novo Cinema Português*. The first club is called the Ritz Clube, just like that in *Belarmino*. Perhaps it is the same club, separated by 22 years. The Ritz Clube is where we see Miguel, Pedro and Alex together for the first time. Miguel has just played a long, abstract trumpet solo, which receives little acclaim from the audience. No sooner has Miguel finished, than a dance number starts up and the

hitherto subdued crowd takes to the floor. Pedro praises Miguel's musicianship, but Miguel is bitter and not in a mood to receive praise, making the quip that 'next time I'll mix rap with Bossa Nova and my samba will turn out just like this' as he gestures to the quick African dance music swirling around the club. Pedro, who is shown to be an empathetic if unfortunate character in the course of *Foreign Land*, suggests he should try doing just that and observes that the spirit of the Ritz lies in the sort of syncretism suggested by Miguel's joke, not in the esoteric purity of his jazz compositions. Pedro surveys the room, commenting that 'there are people here from Brazil, from Angola, from Guinea, what do you expect?' to which Miguel retorts that it is nothing but 'a colonial cabaret'. The Ritz is an example of a *Gemeinschaft* coming together tentatively in an otherwise hostile city and affirming its identity, an identity created by the collision of people from diverse Third-World origins mustered cheek by jowl on the margins of Lisbon's *Gesellschaft*.

Spaces where community might possibly emerge in *Foreign Land* are evident when the characters begin to speak each other's languages. This miscegenation occurs musically at the Ritz Clube and also occurs in Paco's exchange with Loli on the hotel balcony. This latter meeting transpires at a point when Paco is confused but not disheartened and, needing someone to talk to, he seeks out Loli in the *pensão* on the floor above. When Paco enters he is the only white person present, and is subjected to comments, jibes and recriminations. The atmosphere in the *pensão* can be seen as an inversion of the climate of racism found outside its walls in the rest of the city. Paco finds Loli and they chat. Paco recounts how he was seduced by Alex and uses the Brazilian idiom 'ela me comeu' or literally 'She ate me'. Loli at first does not understand but then catches on, and starts to joke about it, quipping 'and then it is us [the

blacks] that are called cannibals!’ Paco arranges for them both to meet for a drink, to which Loli replies ‘está fixe’ (a European phrase much used in African Portuguese, meaning something like ‘great’). Paco seems unfamiliar with the phrase but understands the sentiment and repeats the words, the first tentative steps towards the linguistic complicity of friendship. This potential connection is never realised, even though Loli later shows some loyalty towards Paco, despite the Brazilian having accused Loli of stealing his case.

There are further moments of linguistic approximation between other characters too, such as when Miguel bids farewell to his friend Pedro by saying ‘tu és um gajo porreiro’, a very Portuguese phrase meaning ‘you’re a nice bloke.’ The juncture when both musical and personal languages mix is the point at which community can start to be established between different groups in an urban space otherwise crammed with strangers.

These interactions contrast with encounters between Miguel and the taxi driver who helps to fence the stolen diamonds. The taxi driver at first imitates a Brazilian accent to feign friendship with Miguel, but when it comes to talking business he drops the phony Brazilian pronunciation and returns to regular, European Portuguese. Later, when the taxi driver is trying to convince Pedro to accept a price for the diamonds that is much lower than their true value he says ‘after all, what language are we speaking?’ Here the imposition of European Portuguese reflects the desire to cow and control those whose Third-World accents are, in Alex’s words, ‘an offence.’

The second club we see in *Foreign Land* is the Fado venue where Paco meets Krafft, Igor and Krafft’s henchman. Before Paco arrives we see the Frenchman Krafft being regaled with platitudes about *fado*. In the background a singer is pointedly performing a very well-known Amália Rodrigues song entitled ‘Estranha Forma de

Vida' or 'Strange Sort of Life.' This exchange between the two men seems to be just the sort of discussion typical of the 'ignorant yuppies' Igor railed against when he first sounded Paco out. When Igor makes a surprise entrance half-way through the meeting, he comments 'I really needed to revisit home soil and take in some beautiful *fado*', yet of course his real reason is to find Paco and the diamonds, and to secure his investment and position in the smuggling hierarchy, not to refresh his cultural roots.

As (folk-)Portuguese as the setting may be, the official language of the meeting is French, and the monolingual Paco is excluded by language from the money-driven negotiations between the First-World Krafft and his semi-peripheral associates. When Paco eventually escapes, Krafft scornfully upbraids his two Portuguese collaborators and it becomes clear that, dangerous as they are to Paco and Alex, in the grand scheme of things these two figures are very much secondary. If the smuggling ring somehow represents an unfair economic order, the degeneration of *fado* - from a form of musical expression that unites a community to a curio which foreigners and faux-nostalgic émigrés consume - shows this musical form's *Gemeinschaft*-related associations to be an easily digestible and shallow image of Lisbon that no longer matches the city's reality. The short haul exoticism that we see in the club is a veneer over the true bottom line. Back in Brazil, Paco had been an aspiring actor and at the beginning of *Foreign Land*, we see Paco practising lines from the play *Faust*. Now, while he sits at the table with the gangsters, with his hopes of becoming an actor long relinquished, the words he had been committing to memory return and he stands up and declaims the lines as a prelude to his escape. For Avellar (2002), this moment of recall is when Paco realises he has sold his soul to the devil. Suddenly Paco realises that in this foreign land his life is worth less

than the merchandise he has mislaid. Rather than a place where community is confirmed, the *fado* club now becomes a space in which the emptiness and exploitative nature of the modern *Gesellschaft* is revealed.

### **Conclusion: Taking that Old Boat**

If the *Comédia à Portuguesa* posits Lisbon as the happy, self-contained centre of the world, the Portuguese *Cinema Novo* refutes this vision. In these films, Lisbon becomes a place of anomie and marginality. For Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, despite the many differences between different national cinemas, the New Waves of the 1960s were characterised by a revolutionary hope for the future (2006). The Portuguese *Cinema Novo* differs, offering little hope for the future, perhaps because of the oppressive weight of almost half a century of dictatorship and the unlikelihood, in the 1960s, of its quick demise. *Belarmino* ends with a shot of the protagonist behind symbolic bars, whilst *Os Verdes Anos* closes with Júlio's arrest. In *Foreign Land*, the Brazilian *Cinema Novo*'s dynamics of social marginality and inclusion are expanded to a world-wide scale, a situation where life is ever more global yet ever more rootless and Lisbon becomes a particular – semi-peripheral – embodiment of this generalised *Gesellschaft*. Yet Salles, ever hopeful for the future despite the iniquity of the present, eschews the overtly revolutionary stance of the Brazilian *Cinema Novo* in favour of a cautious humanist hope that a way will be found to allow the sort of potential or temporary meetings witnessed in *Foreign Land*, such as those between Paco and Alex and Paco and Loli, to gain a permanent foothold. Until then, as suggested by the lyrics in the song 'Velho Navio' (or 'Old Boat'), which plays in an extra-diegetic manner at the end whilst Alex whispers its words to the dying Paco, the only thing that can be done is to hold on.



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# Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Marble* and the struggle with censorship

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## Introduction

The story of Andrzej Wajda's famous and celebrated movie *Man of Marble*<sup>11</sup> has been told many times before by critics and the director himself, but the voices of the censors, who undoubtedly played an important part in the fate of the movie have, to date, not been heard. This article explores these previously unheard voices by investigating the unpublished memoirs by Stanisław Kosicki, Chairman of the Main Office of Press, Publications and Public Performances Control (Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy i Widowisk) from 1973 to 1990 as well as unique documents from his private archive.

Censorship tends to be described as an outcome of the weakness of the totalitarian system which is established by the ruling minority in order to maintain power. Therefore, censorship is portrayed as a desperate means of oppression; typical for the countries in the state of decline. This was not the case in either post-war Poland or the post-revolution Soviet Union. In both cases censorship was established along with the new political system and from its start was an integral part of it. However Jane Leftwich Curry (1982, p.116) argues that the most developed system of external control existed in Poland, where the Communist Party was the

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<sup>11</sup> *Człowiek z marmuru (Man of Marble)*, dir. Andrzej Wajda, screenplay Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski, 1976, Poland.

weakest among the countries in Eastern Bloc. Curry's argument does not question the fact that censorship had accompanied the establishment of the Communist system from the beginning, but rather undermines the effectiveness of propaganda and censorship as one of its instruments. In Poland and the USSR censorship should be seen as a forecast of political changes. Censorship was established when new governments were in an initial phase of gaining the power, but did not disappear when they become more stable. The process that took place seems to be the opposite of the common belief presented above: along with the strengthening of the state came more severe censorship and at times of relative liberalization the censorship was less oppressive. Therefore the existence of the censorship is not a sign of the system's weakness, but its integral aspect. Censorship was a part of the political system both in Poland and the USSR and the significant changes in that system were accompanied by changes in censorship. Any change in government or change in the policy required an alteration in the directives that influenced censorship and its decisions; hence the state controlled censorship was a very precise and accurate mechanism that was sensitive to even very minor change. Stalinism, Khrushchev's thaw, Brezhnev's freeze and Gorbachev's glasnost as well as the 'Polish months' of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1980 and 1981 influenced censorship and the way it operated.

Censorship in Poland and the USSR originated from the totalitarian nature of the state that attempted to control every aspect of social life and so the life of every citizen. Although officially censorship was institutionalised, in reality it was not limited to one administrative body but was overwhelming and omnipresent and could be detected in any aspect of cultural and artistic life. The significant place of censorship in the system of oppression is

described by Martin Dewhirst when he refers to the 'three headed monster' that controlled Soviet society, whereby Glavlit (the Soviet office responsible for the censorship) was situated next to the Communist Party and KGB (Dewhirst 2001, p.186).

### **Film censorship in the post-war Poland**

The introduction of post-war Communist censorship in Poland had many stages. From the beginning the idea of its existence and the way it was supposed to operate was copied from the Soviet Union. As early as November 1944, Piotr Gladin and Kazimierz Jarmuż, two employees of Glavlit, arrived from Moscow to advise the Polish Committee of National Liberation (proclaimed in a Manifesto on 22 July 1944) on the matters of censorship (Nałęcz 1994). The Committee was established with the help of the Soviet government and consisted mainly of Polish Communists. In August 1944 the Censorship Department in the Ministry of Public Security was established and in January 1945 it was renamed as the Central Office for Press, Publications and Public Performances Control. In November 1945 the office received yet another new name and a different classification in the administration: it became known as the Main Office for Press, Publication and Public Performances Control (Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk, GUKPPiW) and was under the authority of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. The official decree that specified the role of censorship was issued on 5 July, 1946. GUKPPiW, subordinate to the Council of Ministers, was responsible for the implementation of law that was created by the Central Committee of the Party. Although GUKPPiW appeared to be the most important organ of state censorship, in reality it had no power to introduce or change any directives. Officially, GUKPPiW was the final authority on the

ensorship matters, but in practice important decisions were reached at the level of the Central Committee of the Party.

In the beginning Polish censorship was organized similarly to Glavlit, that is it was closely connected with the Ministry of Public Security (which was in charge of the political police and internal intelligence unit- Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, renamed in 1956: Służba Bezpieczeństwa -III Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs). However it was advised by the authorities that the regional branches would be established in the regional Party Committee offices rather than the political police buildings. This was done in order to avoid possible connotations with the police, which might otherwise have suggested that censorship belonged to the apparatus of oppression. For the same reason the GUKPPiW was officially subordinate to the Council of Ministers. At the end of the 1970s, when the first unofficial publications started to circulate in Poland, closer cooperation between the political police and the GUKPPiW was again suggested as those who organized illegal printing were under close police surveillance. But this raised adverse criticism of the GUKPPiW. This undoubtedly shows, however, that although censorship *was* a part of the oppression system and helped to maintain control over the nation, it was important for the authorities to maintain the GUKPPiW's image of being a 'regular' administrative body. Furthermore, censorship was not limited to the GUKPPiW and as the fate of Andrzej Wajda's film *Man of Marble* proves, censorship implemented in a less official way could be regarded as equally severe.

Control over films in Poland after War World II was officially established in 1945, with the set up of the National Enterprise of Polish Film (Przedsiębiorstwo Państwowe Film Polski) [see Machwitz, 1999]. In the 1940s and 1950s, until the 'thaw' in 1956,

the Party's Central Committee was in charge of cinematography and, just as in the Moscow Kremlin, films were watched attentively by members of the Politburo themselves, sometimes along with the First Secretary. At that time, censorship was concentrated on screenplays and scripts, so that the production of potentially controversial pictures was difficult, if not entirely impossible. However, starting from the mid-1950s the situation began to change and the deputy minister of the Ministry of Culture was in charge of cinematography.

The first required stage of control was the acceptance of a twenty-page treatment; next came the finished screenplay (like the treatment, this was submitted to the Ministry of Culture); third, supervised production took place; the final stage was *kolaudacja* – the pre-release screening of the film.<sup>12</sup> Only at this final stage were there official representatives of the main censor's office present and only here were they allowed to make comments. Bodies, such as film units (all of those involved in the film industry were grouped into film units), could also be involved in the process of the unofficial censorship and managed the censorship process prior to the final stage. The transcript of the *kolaudacja* meeting, where the movies *Palace Hotel* (*Palace Hotel*, 1977) by Ewa Kruk and *Co mi zrobisz jak mnie złapiesz* (*What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*, 1978) by Stanisław Bareja, were discussed, appeared in the underground journal *Zapis* (A.B 1979). This document gives fascinating accounts

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<sup>12</sup> The commission consisted of: Ministry of Culture representatives, where necessary representatives of the Ministry of Education; representatives of artistic societies; writers, critics and censors. All parties were equally entitled to express an opinion about the movie, and the censors were charged with recommending whether and what kind of changes should be made, if the movie should be released without restrictions or with restrictions – for example, in a limited number of copies, for a limited time, only in so called art houses (*kina studyjne*). In charge of the commission was the deputy minister in the Ministry of Culture, which had oversight of cinematography. His decision was final. After his decision, and based on the commission report, the Main Office of Press, Publications and Public Performances Control was obliged to issue an authorization for release, or what became known as the 'censor's visa' (*wiza cenzorska*).

of how movies were criticised and assessed and how ideology and artistic aspects of creative work were juxtaposed in order to justify the decision of rejecting the movie and condemning it, more often than not, to oblivion.

### ***Man of Marble vs. authorities***

*Man of Marble* (*Człowiek z marmuru*, 1977) tells the story of the stachanovite worker, bricklayer Mateusz Birkut, who becomes disillusioned with the political and social system in the post-war Poland and simultaneously the film describes the art of making movies in the 1970s. It is achieved by narration conducted on two levels: Birkut's life story is told in retrospect by a young film school graduate, Agnieszka, who is conducting research for her documentary. Agnieszka meets people who knew Birkut, discovers his life story and at the same time begins to understand the difficult truth about Stalinist Poland. Mateusz Birkut, a simple young man from the country, gets a job as a bricklayer, but as he starts to be more and more effective in his job he is also used for propaganda and becomes the symbol of the new era. After the accident on the building site, he becomes disillusioned with the new reality and gradually loses his privileged position as well as his family.

The film dealt with historical issues, which could be controversial in the eyes of the authorities. First of all, *Man of Marble* was a brave attempt to describe the history of Poland in the 1950s and, most importantly, the story of the working class without the common propaganda simplifications. Second of all, the movie described the struggle of the filmmaker trying to convey his creative ideas in spite the net of unofficial censorship and overwhelming bureaucracy.

Bearing in mind the situation described above and the many stages of official and unofficial control and censorship at work, it is no surprise that the story of the movie *Man of Marble* started many years before its official release. The *Man of Marble* screenplay waited for fourteen years to become a feature film – the script was first published in the literary journal *Kultura* in August 1963 but, because of the Party officials' disapproval, it could not be produced immediately. It must, however, be stressed that it was not an official body, such as the Main Office of Press, Publication and Public Performances Control, that banned the production. Rather, the movie was doomed to failure by unofficial 'friendly' advice and interference from the authorities. As has been mentioned above, GUKPPiW was the final and only official stage of the censorship, but unofficial censorship operated at the earlier stages of film control, such as editorial boards, artistic societies or simply amongst colleagues. Censors also noted this phenomenon and sometimes just the very fact of the existence of censorship triggered either self-censorship or other unofficial 'advice' given to the filmmaker before his work reached GUKPPiW. Just being aware of the censorship was in many cases enough and so works which reached censors often required minimal interventions. This phenomenon of the many stages of the unofficial censorship was also noted by Stanisław Kosicki, who was in charge of the Main Office for almost twenty years. Kosicki argues that watching almost every movie produced caused problems for his office, and he insisted on introducing a change whereby censors were only required to read screenplays instead of watching the film, but '[...] leading filmmakers were unwilling to agree to this change. For them censorship was less unbearable than bureaucracy in the Ministry' (Kosicki 2005). Feliks Falk, one of the leading directors of the Cinema of Moral Concern



confirms Kosicki's opinion that the Ministry was much stricter and more bureaucratic than the actual censors (Rubenstein 1984).

However, censorship's role was not limited to censoring the finished film but also operated after its release. Censors sought to influence public opinion about the film by banning unwanted reviews, yet encouraging those which would help to secure the desired reception. The difficult social existence of the *Man of Marble* was described by Andrzej Drawicz in the underground literary journal *Zapis* (Drawicz 1978). The movie was officially ignored by the critics and newspapers but triggered strong interest from the audience. Drawicz was interested in the phenomenon of Wajda's work – the film that received 'special attention' from the authorities and yet contrary to their demands and efforts to minimize the range of the audiences, became a 'must see movie' before its release and was soon elevated to legendary status.

Nevertheless giving suggestions to critics on positive or negative reactions was not the only the role of censorship. As Józef Tejchma, Minister of Culture between 1974–1978 and then 1980–1982 noted in his memoirs from 10 December 1976 regarding the reception of the *Man of Marble*: 'Suggestions to critics: outline that the main character – stachanovite, in spite of all harms, does not turn his back on Poland as it is, but continues to work for it' (Tejchma 1991). This does not mean that Józef Tejchma objected to the production of the film. On the contrary, he was simply searching for a reason that would be acceptable by the authorities as to why the movie *should* be released. Andrzej Wajda, on his official website, confirms that the movie owed its success to the enthusiastic and persistent behaviour of the viewers as well as open-minded Józef Tejchma:

Fourteen years passed. What follows sounds like a fairy-tale, but it was true. The generally hated Gomulka was deprived of his position as First Secretary, taking the cult of the fifties with him. His successors were younger politicians, former ZMP members, and we began negotiations with them from scratch. Józef Tejchma took full responsibility for *Man of Marble*, and it is only owing to his influence that the film was made and, more importantly, released. In spite of protests from various rungs on the decision-making ladder, *Man of Marble* was released (Wajda 2000).

The audience did the rest. Quotes from Tejchma's memoirs and Wajda's internet site describe the complex situation of artists in post-war Poland. The authorities, in general, were unable to deal with their art and struggled to place it in the political system of propaganda. It is true that Józef Tejchma supported the making of the *Man of Marble* and its release, but at the same time he played the role of the Party's official, trying to influence critics and the reception of the film so as to potentially minimise its real meaning and significance. In this situation Tejchma acted in a dual role: as a person truly capable of understanding the art and the artists' need for, however relative, creative freedom, and as a state official, struggling to secure his own and his superiors' interests, in this case to prevent an already turbulent social situation from being exacerbated.

The positive decision allowing the movie to be produced was announced to the director himself by Minister Tejchma on 03 February 1976 and *Man of Marble's* premiere took place on 22 February the following year (Tejchma 1991). Mieczysław Wojtczak, deputy Minister in the Ministry of Culture in charge of cinematography (from 1973 to 1977), saw the film for the first time in 1976 and started to negotiate changes with Wajda and Ścibor-Rylski (author of the screen play) in order to make it more 'bearable'

for the censors. The artists nevertheless were reluctant to consider any possible changes (Wojtczak 2005). Before the pre-screening Wojtczak had a private conversation with Stanisław Kosicki who confirmed that the censors would be critical towards the film, but would allow it to be realised (Wojtczak 2004). Also Minister Tejchma had the possibility to see *Man of Marble* on 2<sup>nd</sup> November before the official premiere (Tejchma 1991).

Another interesting fact worth mentioning can be found in the memoirs of Stanisław Wojtczak, where he describes briefly a screening of *Man of Marble* organized exclusively for the employees of the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw. The goal of this special screening was to present the film before it became a politically sensitive subject that might even cause political and international scandal. After the screening a telegram with a positive opinion about the movie was sent to Moscow and it stopped possible future negative reactions from the Soviet authorities regarding the movie (Wojtczak 2004). As mentioned, the interest of the authorities was exceptional and even unusual measures were taken in order to eventually make the first public screening possible.

## **Behind the closed doors**

The fascinating behind-the-scenes account is given by Stanisław Kosicki in an unpublished statement written in 1990.<sup>13</sup> This can be supplemented with documents from Kosicki's private archive which

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<sup>13</sup> Stanisław Kosicki wrote this document as a letter to the editor of the weekly journal *Polityka*, inspired by the critical commentary preceding the presentation of *Man of Marble* on television. The editor promised to publish Kosicki's text if he agreed to make some changes to it. Kosicki refused. In 2003 he tried to send this text to another weekly, *Przegląd* – again no one was interested in this fascinating document and its author, who had remained silent since 1990. Ironically, Kosicki himself was censored twice – both times after the collapse of Communism in Poland.

includes the classified letter sent by Stanisław Kosicki to the Polish Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz, in which he explains the problems concerning the release of Wajda's film.

In general, the censors, as such, made a few minor comments, leading to amendments on *Man of Marble*. One involved cutting out one frame, in which a monument to Lenin could be spotted among other monuments in the National Museum's warehouse. Some minor changes were also made to the dialogue. After these changes had been made, official permission (censor's visa) to release the movie was issued. Some amendments were also suggested by Minister Tejchma. In his opinion the final scene involving the Gdansk cemetery (where the main character's grave is located) needed to be changed as it could be obviously associated with commemorating tragic events that took place in the December of 1970. Furthermore, scenes involving state security police were to be toned down and the sentence 'what hideous architecture,' referring to Nowa Huta city but easily associated with Lenin's monument standing in this town, should be removed. The scene where Birkut, the film's protagonist, breaks the state security police office window with a brick that he had earlier received as an award for his achievements, should also be changed. As a result this particular scene remained, but was cut short (Tejchma 1991).

According to Stanisław Kosicki, before the film was presented to a wider audience, a rather unusual thing happened. Kosicki received a telephone call from the Prime Minister, who asked what decision had been made regarding *Man of Marble*. The Prime Minister had watched the film along with a number of other officials, and he expressed clearly to Kosicki his opinion that film should be banned. According to Kosicki, the Prime Minister seemed very firm on the matter (Kosicki 1990). Kosicki organized a further showing in

his office, and afterwards wrote an official letter to the Prime Minister in which he defended his earlier decision. In response, the Prime Minister accused Kosicki of insubordination and disrespect towards a superior (in formal terms the censor was directly subordinate to the Prime Minister). A few days after their first conversation the Prime Minister called Kosicki again, but this time signalling a change of mind. He no longer wished to ban *Man of Marble*. His change of mind may have been influenced by Kosicki's argument. However, Wojtczak suggests that the Prime Minister's opinion was changed by the influence of his wife (a journalist) who had more liberal approach (Wojtczak 2004).

Stanisław Kosicki had argued in his letter that all possibilities of pushing Wajda to make further changes had been exhausted, and that, therefore, banning the film in the existing political climate would do more harm than allowing its restricted release. Kosicki gives the impression of being not so much in favour of the film as anxious about the consequences of stricter action on the part of the censors. The ideological and social content of the movie was unacceptable for the authorities within the existing political climate. It was released just a few months after the 'Radom events' of June 1976 (general strikes) and the establishment of the first open opposition organization, the Workers' Defence Committee in September of the same year. In the letter Kosicki assured the Prime Minister that reviews of the movie would be thoroughly checked, and only those of which guaranteed the desired reception would be published. The evidence of the moves made to ensure this can be found in the New Act Archives: a classified document dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 1977 (AAN) stipulated that all reviews must be approved by the Party's Central Committee Office for Press, Radio and TV, and that no detailed information about the premiere be allowed.

Such high-level approval – rather unusual in itself – proves how important *Man of Marble* was for the authorities.

The consequences which followed the release of the movie were not only suffered by the director but also by the authorities involved in supporting the film. Minister of Culture, Józef Tejcma, was dismissed and his deputy in charge of cinematography, Stanisław Wojtczak, was accused of losing control over the film industry (Wojtczak 2005). This demonstrates that the case of *Man of Marble* was not an artistic but a truly political matter.

What was really so dangerous about the *Man of Marble*, the simple story about devoted and then later disillusioned workers? Why did it take such a long time to finalize the release of a film about one man's fate that symbolically portrayed the fate of the troubled nation? Was the subject inherently rebellious or did it just tackle inconvenient social and historical problems? Is the story of the *Man of Marble* an example of typical director-censor-authorities relations in Poland after War World II? First of all, as has been mentioned, the political circumstances and social climate at the time of its production and release added a new dimension to the film. More importantly it is not only a film about 1950s Poland seen from a distance of more than 20 years, it is a film about making a film in the late 1970s. *Man of Marble* indirectly tells its own story of the meanderings of unofficial censorship, the direct and indirect relations between the people involved in making the film, and their struggle to tell the truth about reality. And in this respect *Man of Marble* was not acceptable to the authorities – it revealed one aspect of the political system, the problem of the limitation on artistic freedom and of the turbulent relationship between the artist and the state. That is why its release had direct and serious political consequences.

The example of the fate of *Man of Marble* shows how the mechanism's of official and unofficial censorship co-operated, and that the Main Office of Press, Publication and Public Performances Control, nominally the only body in charge of censorship, was technically the ultimate or penultimate (before Central Committee of the Party) link in a chain of repression, the main responsibility of which was to sanction and execute decisions already reached elsewhere.

## **Conclusion**

Preconceptions about film censorship in Central European countries should be revised. Only a small amount of the censors' activity involved the cutting out of scenes, an activity which, otherwise, seemed to be their principal business. To a far greater extent censorship was engaged in attempts to influence and fabricate public opinion. Therefore the question remains: is it possible to research the reception of art in Poland if the opinions expressed publicly, and reviews in general, were subject to actions on the part of the censor? Are they in any sense a reliable source of information? Unpublished documents written by Stanisław Kosicki show how sensitive and difficult the position was for the censorship authorities, especially in the case of Wajda's film. However, while there were no clear, explicit reasons to ban the film, the atmosphere surrounding topics raised by *Man of Marble* was sensitive and controversial. The censorship office was a place where many interests collided; hence it is very difficult to judge and condemn the office and its employees. The ambiguity of the state patronage system manifested itself in the context of Wajda's film. One could argue that in many ways this was rewarding for the artist as he was allowed to develop his artistic ideas

and was not obliged to limit the budget or take future profits into consideration (as long as his ideas were ‘politically correct,’ or at least their lack of correctness was not revealed until the pre-release screening).<sup>14</sup> Undoubtedly, in this difficult situation Polish cinema in the 1970s and 1980s was able to achieve very high intellectual and artistic standards, but at the same time, as Andrzej Wajda put it in 1975, ‘the art of making a film in Poland is the art of constantly giving up’ (Hammer 1975).

Jerzy Fedorowicz in his satirical essay ‘Let us love the censor’ challenges the concept that censorship can in any way be beneficial for artists (1985). He admits that it can help to maintain the standards of satire, but argues that, in general, it is its worst enemy. In the situation where censorship exists the audience is concentrated on the task of solving the puzzle, therefore the satire does not have to be funny but has to give pleasure in the task of deciphering ‘subtexts’ (Fedorowicz 1985). It creates a very dangerous situation: what is being expected from literature or film is not a real artistic quality. Quality, therefore, is measured by the amounts of tricks that are employed to deceive the censor. For that reason, an audience may value the art less than the political subtexts contained therein. The representatives of censorship not only fulfil their professional duties of cutting out certain parts of a text, but try to look at a text in the way it might be interpreted by a reader, in an attempt to foresee public reaction. It proves that the divide between the reader and the censor is not, in fact, so sharp. Furthermore, when the artist thinks about the reception of his work he includes both the reader or spectator *and* the censor into his consideration, hence it can be said that the author takes his pleasure in outwitting the censor. The

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<sup>14</sup> Marek Piwowski’s legendary debut in 1970, *The Cruise (Rejs)*, was not based on a submitted script, and rumour had it that there was no script at all, but that this was no obstacle to the film’s production.



ensor, at the same time, tries to outwit the author by discovering his veiled intentions and also the reader/viewer as he anticipates the possible reception. In the situation described above, the destructive influence of censorship on art is evident, because the artistic quality is no longer the most important notion. In some situations, any communication between the writer and the reader through the agency of the censor yields additional information about censorship. The writer communicates the existence of censorship and the limitations it imposes through having to apply various artistic devices and techniques, such as Aesopian language, to ‘smuggle’ in the meaning of his work. In 1988 Wajda described this struggle as such:

The crucial problem of political cinema is not to accept or reject interference by the censor but to create work that makes the censor’s methods inoperable! Only what stays within the range of the censor’s imagination can be censored. Create something really original and censors will throw away all their scissors and mumbo jumbo (Wajda 1988) .

And that is the fact: in *Man of Marble* Andrzej Wajda definitely succeeded in outwitting censorship, making a film that has remained a true masterpiece of Polish cinema.

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