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Cinema Novo Português / The New Portuguese Cinema

1963 – 1967

by

Anthony De Melo

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis examines the New Portuguese Cinema of 1963-1967 in the context of its break from the Portuguese cinema's isolation and accepted indifference under the Salazar regime. Drawing upon archival research undertaken in Lisbon, the thesis investigates the cultural and political trends that helped to shape the New Portuguese Cinema, and it also analyzes the movement's major films via the study of surviving 35mm film prints and video copies. As the thesis details, the New Cinema's key directors – Paulo Rocha, Fernando Lopes, António de Macedo, along with their producer, António da Cunha Telles – inspired by other new film movements exploding internationally, developed a novel art-cinema alternative to Portugal's established genre cinema. Revitalizing the national film industry through its sudden prominence in international film festivals and in the pages of leading international film journals, the New Portuguese Cinema dispelled the atmosphere of mediocrity and fatalism that had hung over the national film culture since the end of World War Two. With regard to this break from the past, the New Portuguese Cinema's interaction with the French New Wave – at the level both of production techniques and of film-critical institutions such as cine-clubs and film journals – proved crucial. Moreover, as the thesis demonstrates, an inquiry into the New Portuguese cinema can offer new insight into the French New Wave, particularly with respect to the latter's influence on the “young” cinemas of other European countries.

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Table of Contents

	Abstract	i
	Acknowledgements	ii
	Introduction	1
1	The Years of “Regrettable Mediocrity”	12
2	António da Cunha Telles	31
3	Paulo Rocha	39
4	Fernando Lopes	57
5	António de Macedo	71
	Conclusion: From a Movement to a National Cinema	83
	Notes	90
	Bibliography	98

During that period [of] political and cultural wretchedness, there was a need for a new cinema, creative, artistic and independent from the government. Initially, we found a producer, António da Cunha Telles, who accepted to finance our films and was driven to bankruptcy because of it. It was a difficult cinema with a limited audience, mostly from the “cine-club” area, which at that time, was composed of important cultural groups.

Fernando Lopes¹

INTRODUCTION

The Cinema Novo Português (New Portuguese Cinema) of the mid 1960s, influenced and inspired by young film movements taking place in other countries, effectively revitalized the film industry in Portugal, transforming it from formulaic genre production into the auteur cinema that it remains today. From 1963 to 1967, a coterie of young filmmakers 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. During the previous three decades of political isolation, the cinema in Portugal mirrored the contemporary climate of social regression, functioning as a strictly domestic industry that favoured genre films made by directors with no faith in the Portuguese cinema’s capacity, or will, to compete artistically internationally. The new movement’s three young directors – Paulo Rocha, Fernando Lopes, and António de Macedo – along with their producer – António da Cunha Telles – refused to accept the familiar defeatist sentiment and instead, invigorated by their interest and knowledge of world cinema, set out to revitalize the cinema in Portugal, and thereby shape the direction that film would take in their country to this day.

Indicative of the many “new” cinemas of the 1960s, and of film movements in general, the New Portuguese Cinema likewise declared a break from the “old” established cinema – a break actualized by the arrival of a series of innovative films made by new, first-time filmmakers. Inevitably, it seems, young film movements of this sort imply links with trends in filmmaking occurring internationally. Although an ostensibly national movement, the New Portuguese Cinema 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, when critics hailed the emergence of two young directors, Leitão de Barros and António Lopes Ribeiro as exemplars for the Portuguese cinema’s future. The Portuguese critics of the time had become disenchanted with the silent films being produced in the country and latched onto these two directors, noted for their admiration of the soviet montage cinema, as the hope for the national cinema’s future. 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 ultimately 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.

This coincidence of crisis and innovation appears to be a constant in film history. Film movements typically arise in film-producing nations at times of crisis in the state of the national film production. Referring to the rise of German Expressionism and Russian cinema in the 1920s, as well as Italian Neo-Realism post World War Two, Andrew Tudor (1974) argued that these movements “developed distinctively new approaches to cinema”

and came to establish an “aesthetic break” in response to the perceived bankruptcy of past film practices (168). An art form tightly connected to technological innovations and, since World War One, dominated by a single production centre, Hollywood, whose film techniques have been emulated in virtually all film-producing countries, the cinema exhibits a history that invites analysis as a series of “aesthetic breaks” enabled by revitalized “new cinema” movements.

An inevitable point of reference here is the most heralded “new” movement in film history, the French New Wave, whose tremendous impact on contemporaneous film movements has been documented recently by several film scholars. For instance, according to Richard Neupert (2002), “[t]he New Wave dramatically changed filmmaking inside and outside France by encouraging new styles, themes, and modes of production throughout the world” (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 in Portugal. Indicative here is a review written by Fernando Duarte (1964c) on the first of the New Portuguese Cinema films, *Os Verdes Anos / The Green Years* (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” (1).² 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 New Portuguese Cinema.

The New Portuguese Cinema 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. Although often defined by national labels, film movements tend to extend beyond national boundaries (Tudor 1974, 168-169). Again the French New Wave provides an example. According to Susan Hayward (1993), the New Wave inspired “film-makers, underground movements and the emergence of new cinemas elsewhere in other countries and as such represented a moment in France’s cinema history when cross-fertilization was once again a two-way process” (236). This “cross-fertilization” is particularly relevant to the historical relationship between the French and Portuguese film industries. This 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.³ Some twelve years later, when the industry converted to sound, it was to the Paris-based firm Tobis Films Sonores and René Clair that director Leitão de Barros turned for assistance.⁴ 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 New Portuguese Cinema – a strategy that will be elaborated on in the second chapter.

A defining aspect of the critical writings in the film journals reviewing and analyzing film movements, and also taken up by film scholars conducting historical evaluations of these movements, is the frequent use of words such as “revitalization,” “rejuvenation,” “renewal,” and so on. A discourse of revitalization seems unavoidable in discussions of young cinemas and new waves, which typically position themselves as a new national cinema that can replace an established cinema seen as tired, stale, and mediocre. Demands for revitalization, particularly in regards to the film movements of the 1960s, sometimes amounted to calls for revolution. As Terry Lovell (1971) wrote:

A revolution often, perhaps usually, is the outcome of many movements which may be heterogeneous and even opposed in their aims and interests....Nevertheless, it is not merely an umbrella concept, since each of the movements may arise from the same cause, and ultimately, will be analyzed in terms of their contribution to the final outcome; to the breaking up of the old order, and the forging of the new. Such a phenomenon is unitary, when its several elements arise from the same circumstances, and jointly lead to some definite and radical change, whether that outcome was intended or not. (19)

The film movements of the 1960s, and particularly in Europe, can usefully be seen as part of a broad process of social and cultural change that took hold after World War Two.

One way to characterize this process is in terms of the five-stage model proposed by anthropologist, Anthony F.C. Wallace.⁵ Wallace (1961) published an article in the journal *American Anthropologist*, titled “Revitalization Movements,” in which he defined a revitalization movement as follows:

[A] deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture. Revitalization is thus, from a cultural standpoint, a special kind of culture change phenomenon: the persons involved in the process of revitalization must perceive their culture, or some major areas of it, as a system (whether accurately or not); they must feel that this cultural system is unsatisfactory; and they must innovate not merely discrete items, but a new cultural system, specifying new relationships as well as, in some cases, new traits. (207)

According to Wallace, this process of revitalization occurs over the following five stages:

1. Steady State; 2. Period of Individual Stress; 3. Period of Cultural Distortion; 4. Period of Revitalization (in which occur the functions of maze reformulation, communication, organization, adaptation, cultural transformation, and routinization), and finally, 5. New Steady State. (210)

Wallace's description and stages of a revitalization movement are pertinent to the wave of film movements that arose in post-World War Two Europe, beginning with Italian neo-realism. These movements can also be seen to exhibit the five-stage model of revitalization, which is mirrored, too, in the contemporaneous economic and political rebuilding undertaken in Europe after the war's trauma and destruction.

Politically and economically, those countries directly affected by the war can be said to have moved through the five stages. The "steady state" applies to the pre-war years, and came to an end with wartime social upheaval. Next, during the decade and a half after World War Two, came a time of revitalization as the economies and the

political situation stabilized. Emerging from this stage was a “new steady state” that would ultimately make possible the European Union of the late 1980s.⁶

When applied to the situation in Portugal, this five-stage model for revitalization works out as follows. The “steady state” coincides with the establishment of Salazar’s Estado Novo (New State) in 1932, followed by the years of “stress” and “distortion” as various groups and individuals attempted to remove Salazar from power. This stage culminated in 1958, when a retired Air Force General, Humberto Delgado, gained the support of a vast majority of the population, but ultimately lost the election through manipulation of the results by the government.⁷ The people’s evident desire for fundamental political change forced the government to initiate programs that answered popular demands for liberalization, eventually culminating in the peaceful overthrow of the regime in 1974, and thus, establishing the “new steady state.” I will discuss in greater depth Salazar’s Estado Novo in the first chapter and its influence over the film industry.

In relation to the revitalization movements of national cinemas in Europe, the stages can be adopted as follows. The “steady state” is the established cinema, which then experiences a time of upheaval as criticism rises to denounce it. The “period of revitalization” occurs when the first films of the young directors are screened, which then lead to a “new steady state” for the national cinema. It is not necessary that there be a removal of figures connected to the old cinema, nor any end to genres or conventions; it is enough for the revitalization movement to have established itself within the national cinema discourse and have garnered international recognition for it to exercise impact on that national cinema.

The movements that emerged in post-war European cinema can be argued to have been connected under one revitalization movement that ends in the 1980s. As each movement takes hold, it affects the other movements in a “cross-fertilization” of cultural contact, exchange, and negotiation, as Susan Hayward has pointed out. What occurred with the formation of the European Union in 1983 is a “new steady state” where co-productions come to dominate. At this point, film scholarship turned to debates surrounding the formation of a “European Cinema,” whose invocation of a common European identity might transcend the continent’s variety of distinct national cinemas.⁸

The New Portuguese Cinema, I will argue, counts as a clear example of a revitalization movement whose outcome was the creation of a “new steady state” that profoundly affected the national cinema, beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the present. Prior to 1963, Portuguese national cinema was exclusively a domestic entertainment cinema, and thus received virtually no attention internationally. With the rise of the young filmmakers of the New Portuguese Cinema, film in Portugal would forever leave behind the genre-defined filmmaking that dominated the national cinema’s first five decades, as the country’s established directors retired from filmmaking and the new crop of filmmakers quickly came to replace them. In the wake of the infusion of new personnel, Portuguese national cinema evolved into the cinema of auteurs that it remains today.

Just as neglect defined the Portuguese cinema within the country, the cinema of Portugal has been neglected by film scholars. This is, partly, understandable due to the small number of films produced. When averaged yearly over the course of the history of sound film in the country, the figure works out to six films per year. Given the tiny output

of films, the Portuguese cinema would offer little by way of trends, either in leading, or offering a sizable comparison to, an international film movement. As Pierre Sorlin (1991) writes:

[T]he film output of many countries is irregular and, rightly or not, remains almost unknown outside their own borders. Denmark, Greece, Portugal and Sweden have made excellent movies which deserve close attention for the part they have played in the evolution of cinematic language; however, these films are isolated works which are not merged in a wider, less artistic, production. Comparisons are therefore impossible, and there is little that the social historian can gain from an analysis of these movies. (20)

It is my belief that the New Portuguese Cinema, as an example of a film movement from a small film-producing nation, proves the above statement to be incorrect. Of course, given the relative miniscule number of films included in my study – four – compared to the dozens of films often included in studies of the French New Wave, one could ask – how could such a small corpus possibly constitute a viable film movement? Nonetheless, in terms of the overall output of films produced in Portugal over this four-year period, the New Portuguese Cinema represents approximately, twenty-five percent of the national cinema's total output. In terms of its significance to the national film culture, the New Portuguese Cinema proved overwhelming.

To establish the context for the crucial period from 1963 to 1967, this thesis begins with an overview of the decades leading up to the emergence of the New Portuguese Cinema. The first chapter focuses on individuals who were representative of

the genre-based cinema, and who were ostensibly responsible for the state of the cinema in Portugal prior to 1963. No historical study of culture in Portugal during the twentieth century would be complete without considering the pervasive figure of António de Oliveira Salazar, the dictator who ruled the country from 1932 to 1968. The myriad ways in which his government's policies hindered, and/or helped, the national cinema, are thus surveyed in this chapter. An examination is also undertaken of the critical reception of the movement within the country, which made a significant contribution to the formation of the New Portuguese Cinema. Indeed, in many ways, the movement was as much a creation of the critical discourse as it was a purely director-driven phenomenon.

Before moving to a discussion of the directors, it is necessary to look into the contribution of the key producer of the period, António da Cunha Telles (b.1935). Telles' role as the movement's de-facto spokesman warrants inclusion in any study of the New Portuguese Cinema. Therefore, the second chapter highlights Telles as producer and promoter of the New Portuguese Cinema. It shows how his connections to the French New Wave provided him with a model for producing films in Portugal, and how recognition from critics of his artistic and strategic abilities helped him carry out a near impossible task.

Given the nature of art-cinema institutions, histories of film movements often include the auteurist study of directors and their films. As this thesis shows, Portugal's New Cinema was widely understood in the auteurist terms familiar to the art cinema of the 1960s. Paulo Rocha (b.1935), whose film *Os Verdes Anos / The Green Years* (1963), launched the movement, is the focus of the third chapter. After a brief biography of Rocha's career, the film's critical reception will be examined, specifically the way in

which critics took up this film as a long-sought exemplar for the “new” cinema that might emerge in 1960s Portugal. Next comes an analysis of the film, centering on the film’s engagement with established Portuguese-cinema conventions, and its subversive re-interpretation of the city of Lisbon, a long-familiar icon of the “old” Portuguese cinema.

Fernando Lopes (b.1935) and his film *Belarmino* (1964) is the subject of the fourth chapter. Again, the chapter presents a biography and an overview of the critical reception of the film. Central to the analysis of the film is a comparison to *Belarmino* and a musical comedy, *A Canção de Lisboa / A Song for Lisbon* (1933). This chapter examines Lopes’ transfiguring of the genre conventions of the old musical comedy through incorporation into the hybrid documentary/fiction of *Belarmino*. Also factoring into the analysis is the iconic representation of Lisbon.

Finally, in chapter five, António de Macedo (b.1931) and *Domingo à Tarde / Sunday Afternoon* (1965) will be examined in terms of the film’s novel reworking of art-cinema form and style. This film confirmed the status of the New Portuguese Cinema as a viable film movement, and the auteurist aspirations of the three directors. The adoption of an allegorical film-within-the-film, not only to reflect the psychology of the lead character but also to comment on the dominant role religion held in Portugal, hinted at the political stance adopted by many Portuguese artists a few years later, during the twilight of the Salazar regime.

The fourth film, *Mudar de Vida* (1966) is dealt with, albeit briefly, in the conclusion. Paulo Rocha’s second film acts as a bridge between the New Portuguese Cinema proper, and the emergence of these directors, along with another group of young filmmakers, as the established national cinema.

1

The Years of “Regrettable Mediocrity”

This chapter will explore the significant role of the Portuguese film-critical community in the shaping of the New Portuguese Cinema through an examination of changes in film-critical practices during the years leading up to 1963. The investigation centres on the contributions of the government and the cine-club culture in creating conditions and infrastructure for the birth of the New Portuguese Cinema.

At various times in the course of its history as a small film-producing nation, Portugal has proclaimed the renewal of its film industry. Such proclamations acquired unusual credibility during the early 1960s, when a new generation of filmmakers appeared ready to make good on familiar calls for the national cinema’s rejuvenation. Indicative here is an article that appeared in 1960 in the Portuguese film magazine, *Filme*, which proclaimed:

[T]he Portuguese cinema has suffered from regrettable mediocrity in the last years, and needs fresh blood. Those who have been left behind and have been living off their own limitations, creating the myth of the impossibility of making cinema in Portugal, seem to have nothing to say now. Therefore, the future of the Portuguese cinema is now in the hands of the people we have brought together in these pages. (quoted in Costa, 1991, 123)

The article goes on to publish the names and bios of directors, actors, writers, and technicians, all between the ages of twenty and forty, who appeared to form the core

group for a “new Portuguese cinema.” The new cinema’s promise appeared to have reached a fulfillment of sorts in 1964, when *Celuloide* published a chronology of the New Portuguese Cinema that began in 1945 with the founding of the Porto Cine-club (Cronologia do cinema novo português 1964). In retrospect however, the New Portuguese Cinema of 1964 looked less like a culmination of film-cultural efforts that began in the years after World War Two than as the beginning of a film-cultural development that would reach fruition only later, in the wake of the decline of the Salazar regime. Thus, *Celuloide* would once again herald the coming of a new cinema after the formation in 1969 of the Centro Português Cinema (Duarte 1972b). Portugal’s national cinema, years after the end of the new cinema of the 1960s, remained very much an unfinished project.

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. These directors all were young (born in the 1930s); were devoted cinema lovers familiar with the films of other countries; had trained and worked as filmmakers outside Portugal; and had made films that were garnering critical attention at international film festivals. Further, 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.

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,”¹ Costa declared that the intention of the magazine was to champion a “Portuguese cinema made for a new audience, with new themes” (quoted in Duarte, 1972a , 6). As 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.² The emerging new critical dialogue on cinema played a major role in the materialization of the new cinema movement in Portugal. In fact, the desire for a “new wave” to emerge in the country is, arguably, the most important of the historical forces behind the New Portuguese Cinema. Considering the small output of films from this group of directors, the films might not have been perceived as a movement at all had it not been for the intense interest on the part of Portuguese critics.

Leitão de Barros and Portugal’s Cinema of Genres

In the view of many critics, the cinema in Portugal of the 1940s and 1950s was, to put it mildly, not terribly vital. Dominated by evidently formulaic musical comedies, historical adaptations, and literary adaptations, the Portuguese cinema was routinely said to suffer from a lack of artistic ambition. Attacked by critics and ignored by the

government, there appeared to be no end to the stagnation that had become the norm for the industry. The latter's infrastructure appeared chronically weak, with only 200 theatres, many of which were located in the major cities of Lisbon and Porto, and just two sound-film production studios. The dearth of inspiring Portuguese-made films fed into a general sense of hopelessness. Writing on the future of Portuguese cinema in *Sight and Sound* in 1948, Armando Aragão saw little hope:

The Portuguese cinema may be considered as the least interesting in the world's history of cinematography. Generally speaking, all nations, even the smallest ones, which have dedicated themselves to film-making, have endeavoured to impress in their work certain characteristics to distinguish it from others, so that we recognize to-day the existence of French, English, Swedish, Russian and American styles. The reason why the Portuguese cinema has not yet found its own way is chiefly due to the neglect with which it has been treated by the official authorities, together with the lack of artistic probity and even cinegraphic sense of the Portuguese technicians and producers. (36)

Aragão goes on to emphasize the lack of artistic aspirations of the filmmakers themselves, unable to see the Portuguese cinema attaining any vibrancy locally, let alone, internationally. Indicative here were remarks by the director, Leitão de Barros, whose film, *A Severa / The Severe Woman* (1931) – reportedly the first Portuguese sound film³ – met with considerable critical success, but who went on to make numerous folkloric, popular (“popularucho”) films. Commenting on his career, and its commercial, genre-

cinema trajectory, Barros seemed to speak for an entire generation when he claimed that, “one cannot think of creating a Portuguese style in cinema” (quoted in Aragão, 1948, 36).

Leitão de Barros began making films in 1918. Critical praise for his 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* who, full of courage and faith, have made their debut in the difficult craft of creating images in movement (and in sound too, now...)” (382). The remainder of his article is devoted to Leitão de Barros, who Costa places at the forefront of the young directors. According to Costa, Barros had “rapidly created for himself a remarkable position in the Portuguese world of the cinema” (382). Effusive in his praise for Barros, Alves Costa also stated his belief that the cinema in Portugal would embark on a period of unparalleled artistic activity, one certain to elicit respect from the international community (386).

The films that so impressed the critics 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, 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. This time, for *Lisboa* (1929), he turned to the country's capital city, focusing on the seedier side of the city where he searched for what he called the "poor but happy side of the fatalism without rebellion of the riverside people of old Lisbon" (quoted in Costa, 1991, 45). Barros followed this with *Maria do Mar / Maria of the Sea* (1930), a feature film about life in Nazaré. It was *Maria do Mar* that drew acclaim as a masterpiece of the national cinema:

With a mastery rarely found in Portuguese films, Leitão de Barros has captured in swift images of a rare poignancy and visual beauty, all the joys, and the sufferings of these simple and congenial folk. The first parts of the film, aided by excellent photography, contain a splendid rhythm which carries us from image to image, each beautifully composed, forming a little sea poem filled with charm and a truly remarkable cinematic orchestration. (Costa 1930, 383)

Nevertheless, over the next two decades, Barros would become known as a director of the critically reviled genre films that dominated the Portuguese cinema until the 1960s. An example is *As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor / Mr. Reitor's Students* (1935),⁴ a film that helped to establish the "popularucho," folkloric film. Set in 1863, the film's central aim is to depict the customs and dress of Portugal's rural people. In this film Barros abandoned any connection to the Russian style that had influenced his silent films, instead opting for the "canned theatre" approach familiar to much of the early sound cinema. The emphasis in *As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor* on the social and traditional rural lifestyle, via folk songs and dances, would become the hallmark of precisely the sort of folkloric cinema that the young directors of the 1960s sought to supplant.

The other major film genre prior to 1960, the historical drama, presented narratives featuring the small country that had achieved great prominence during the fifteenth century. I will further elaborate on the significance of these films to the cultural project of the Salazar government up to 1960, but at this point my discussion will be confined to the style of these films, which presented the lives of the Portuguese kings and explorers in lavish productions that glorified the discoveries and conquests that had established Portugal as an imperial power. The negative reaction to these films, particularly outside of Portugal, combined with the large budgets and box-office failure, were disastrous for Portugal's small film industry. Here again, Leitão de Barros' name surfaces. According to João Bénard da Costa (1991), it was Barros' 1949 film, *Vendaval Maravilhoso / Magnificent Storm*, a co-production with Brazil and Portugal's most expensive film to date, which resulted in the sudden reduction of the Portuguese cinema "to its most simple state, an industry solely for internal consumption" (108). The film's status as a critical and financial disaster signaled the beginning of the notably sad decade for Portuguese film production, and ended the feature filmmaking career of Leitão de Barros.⁵

Film and Salazar's *Estado Novo*

A consideration of the history of the Portuguese sound film is inseparable from Portugal's political history. A key factor here concerns the film policies promulgated by the small nation's head of state, António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), who became the leader of the government in 1932 and maintained his control until 1968.⁶ Coming to power nearly at the same time that Germany became a Fascist dictatorship, Salazar found

support within Europe – from Germany, Italy, and, in the late 1930s, Spain – for implementing an isolationist foreign policy and tight control over social freedoms. Salazar’s “Estado Novo” (New State) has generally been described as fascist; however, this characterization of the regime only imperfectly fits its system of government. A right-wing authoritarian, Salazar invites comparison to Hitler and Mussolini, yet as historian David Birmingham (1993) writes, the Salazar regime was more self-effacing than its counterparts in Germany and Italy:

Instead of being visible [like Hitler and Mussolini, Salazar] became reclusive and his propaganda machine presented him as a wise and monkish father, the saviour of the nation, pictured on posters with a crusader’s sword in his hand or written into history books as the patriotic successor to the liberating hero of the nation, John IV of Braganza. The violent repression of alternative visions was undertaken discreetly by trained police agents and not nazi-style mobs. Yet similarities with fascism were evident and despite all his acclaim of Christian morality after the atheism of the republic, Salazar founded concentration camps for dissidents and decreed forced labour for the unemployed. (158-159)

The predominance of the folkloric current in Portuguese cinema was conditioned by Salazar’s carefully crafted persona. Salazar appealed to the deeply held Catholic beliefs of the people by presenting himself as a righteous, moralistic, leader and defender of the simple Portuguese life, evoked in his ideological catchphrase, “Deus, Pátria, Família,” (“God, Motherland, and Family”). Salazar also championed what he believed to

be the, allegedly, traditional way of life, also called the “blandness of the Portuguese way of living” (Costa 1991, 38), in which ostentatiousness was frowned upon.

Although film production was not a priority for the Salazar regime, the same cannot be said of film exhibition. The model of the vertically integrated film industry that had prevailed in the world’s major film-producing countries by the 1930s never existed in Portugal. In significant respects, film production in Portugal was determined by the interests of the ‘twenty families’ whose close ties to Salazar put them in control of much of the country’s economic and industrial power.⁷ These families had unfettered access in manipulating the economic landscape for their own benefit, while smaller businesses and industries were saddled with restrictive licenses and permits (Kaplan 1998, 130). The Portuguese cinema’s exhibition sector came under the control of these ‘twenty families,’ whose policy rested on the importation of foreign films – specifically Hollywood films – which were expected to bring in far more money than domestic films.

The relative economic health of the Portuguese film industry’s exhibition sector served as a justification for the government’s neglectful stance toward the country’s film producers. In fact, it was not until 1948 that the government legislated the protection of Portuguese film production – some twenty years after such legislation had been passed in Britain, Germany, and other European countries. In a manner comparable to Britain’s Cinematographic Film Act of 1927, Law 2027 established a fund to finance production, while mandating the exhibition of Portuguese films, with exhibitors expected to devote one full week out of every six to the screening of domestic films. However, the law merely demonstrated the government’s lack of interest in the national film industry by

continuing to under-fund film production (the total capital amounted to approximately \$140,000 US), and applying no penalty to exhibitors who failed to respect the law.

In Portugal, national film production came to depend on the National Propaganda Secretariat, which was created in 1933 under the directorship of António Ferro. A right-wing journalist, who had interviewed Salazar on numerous occasions, Ferro set forth a cultural project that focused on an “ethnographic folkloric movement which included revitalizing (pure fabrication in most cases) local folk groups, restoring the symbols of Christian reconquest and their social use, holding competitions for ‘the most Portuguese village in Portugal,’ and the like” (Costa Pinto 1992, 90). In keeping with this cultural project, Ferro sought the promotion of Portuguese cinema along the lines described above. That is, as a cinema that “transmitted the healthy values of Christian honesty and the poor but honourable family” (Costa Pinto 1992, 90). Given the emphasis on a core set of traditional cultural norms, it is easy to see how the national cinema became oriented around genres, and associated with artistic staleness and mediocrity.

One of the first projects undertaken by Ferro was to script a film that glorified the revolution of 1926, which eventually led to the establishment of Salazar as head of the government. *A Revolução de Maio / The May Revolution* (1936) did not specifically deal with the revolution but with life under Salazar ten years later. The film’s rhetoric is heavy-handed to say the least. The film’s protagonist is a communist typographer who returns to Portugal in order to incite the people to revolution. But the workers he attempts to rally for his cause explain to him that their standard of life has never been better since Salazar assumed control. The young communist agitator is eventually convinced that life in Portugal is idyllic and attends the May 28th anniversary rally, where Salazar spoke of

“God, Motherland, and Family.” The film ends with Salazar asking the crowd, “Who follows me?” and the crowd responding, “all of us, all of us.”

The director of *Revolução de Maio*, António Lopes Ribeiro,⁸ would soon become known as the ‘official director’ of the Portuguese state, a position he held for some thirty years, from 1937 to 1974. During the next several decades, Lopes Ribeiro, in effect, came to control film production in Portugal and thereby contributed crucially to maintaining the mediocrity that had come to characterize the national cinema.⁹ In the opinion of Armando Aragão (1948), Lopes Ribeiro had come to symbolize the establishment’s disingenuous “commitment” to improve the state of the national cinema:

António Lopes Ribeiro – the Portuguese Pagnol – is, among all our film directors, the one who has been afforded the best conditions for turning our cinema into a serious art and industry, but, incidentally, he has been the one who has rendered it the worst services. This director and producer are chiefly a film-merchant and publicist who before selling his wares proclaims that they are the best ever made.... (36)

If there is a single person who could be said to have been responsible for the “regrettable mediocrity” that *Filme* referred to, and which the New Portuguese directors rebelled against, it would be Lopes Ribeiro. The tendency to single out Lopes Ribeiro is understandable. Primarily a director of comedies, Lopes Ribeiro also produced the majority of Portuguese films during the forties and fifties. Favouring light entertainment, he concentrated on simple rustic narratives and cultivated an unimaginative film style, which came to dominate this period in Portuguese cinema. Like Leitão de Barros before him, Lopes Ribeiro, once he became the regime’s favourite director, had no interest in

establishing Portugal as a site of vital international cinema. In the following quote, Lopes Ribeiro writing in 1941 for the magazine, *Animatógrafo*, states his disdain for the cinemas of Germany, England, and Hollywood, and his preference for what he sees as the alternative:

The cinema, mirror of life, could not avoid reflecting as a fundamental mission, here as everywhere, the human show surrounding it. And if the Berlin laboratories send us images of battles and parades, those in London send examples of civism and images of ruins, those in New York different aspects of hectic civilization that was being destroyed in Europe under the bombs, the Lisbon laboratories launch on the screens the flowers of Guimarães, the Belém pavilions, the delicate craftsmanship of filigree and lace, songs vibrating like applause, and applause as harmonious as songs.
(quoted in Costa 1991, 79-80)

The Government to the Rescue?

Major changes began to occur in 1959, when Lopes Ribeiro made his last feature film, *O Primo Basílio / Cousin Basílio* (1959), and the National Information Secretariat (formerly the National Propaganda Secretariat)¹⁰ came under the directorship of César Moreira Baptista. Seeing little value in the films that had come to exemplify the country's cinematic mediocrity, the new director set out to reform the industry. Uninterested in searching for new talents among Portugal's communist-leaning cinema clubs, Baptista turned to the country's young television industry. Ironically, the fledgling television industry was a chief source of employment for many of the country's aspiring young

filmmakers. Thus, many of the beneficiaries of the state's new largesse toward cinema were more culturally and politically sophisticated than Baptista had hoped for.

Baptista's solution to Portugal's artistically stagnant film industry was to provide scholarships that would enable young emerging talents to study filmmaking in Paris and London, the two chief film education centres. It seems that the government's expectation was that these young men, upon their return to the country, would make films sympathetic to the regime (Costa 1991, 122-123). So, Fernando Lopes, Fernando Matos Silva, and João César Monteiro, went off to the London School of Film Technique, while António da Cunha Telles, and Paulo Rocha, attended the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris. All of these filmmakers did return, and would ultimately play decisive roles within the New Portuguese cinema of the 1960s, although in ways that the Salazar regime had never imagined.

A further government initiative was launched upon the return of the young graduates in 1961: the creation of the *Estúdio Universitário de Cinema Experimental* (University Experimental Cinema Studio).¹¹ The studio's program of study was directed by IDHEC graduate, António da Cunha Telles, and had an inaugural enrollment of 200 students.¹² For the first time, Portugal had a state-funded institution devoted to the training of filmmakers within Portugal itself. A crucial step had been taken toward the creation of the infrastructure of the New Cinema.

Although opposed to the leftist movements that were spreading to student campuses throughout the western world, the government, in attempting to rejuvenate the national cinema, inadvertently contributed to the period's climate of radical change. This contribution became evident in the movement's films. I do not wish to suggest that the

filmmakers comprising the New Portuguese Cinema were necessarily politically motivated; nonetheless, the films they made certainly did not satisfy the regime's desire for films sympathetic to the ideology of Salazar and his government.

Thinking About Cinema: Film Clubs and a Nascent Film Culture

While film production in Portugal during the 1940s and 1950s underwent what historians regard as a dark period of low productivity and quality, a vibrant film culture nonetheless developed, organized around film clubs and magazines. Beginning with the Porto Cinema Club created in 1945 and reaching a peak of 45 clubs by the early 1960s, the clubs initiated critical dialogue about the state of the cinema in the country.¹³ Many of the clubs were formed at universities where they sparked a wave of interest in film among the youth of Portugal. As was also evident in the rise of the New Wave in France, this film-club culture was a major factor in creating a favourable climate in which alternate film movements could thrive. As Richard Neupert (2002) has stated:

It is important to note that much of the New Wave's eventual audience sat right alongside the young critics and future filmmakers in the cine-clubs and the Cinémathèque française, or read about the debates over film history and film style in the many new film magazines. The New Wave would not fall from the sky in the late 1950s, nor would its audience appear magically out of thin air. Serious film buffs were carefully nursed along and encouraged by the conditions of postwar film culture. (26)

Along with the clubs, the publication of film magazines helped to cultivate a young audience that not only loved going to movies, but also, through the consumption of

critical writing on film, engaged in forms of film reception of unusual sophistication. In this regard, the film journals provided a crucial factor in the genesis of the New Portuguese Cinema movement.

Critics writing for the film magazines greatly desired a national cinema that might draw interest from journalists in other European countries. When, in 1964, Pierre Kast wrote an article in *Cahiers du Cinéma* about *Os Verdes Anos* and *Belarmino*, it was reportedly the first discussion of Portuguese cinema in a foreign film magazine since 1952. For the filmmakers and the critics it was a major accomplishment:

This “Lettre de Lisbonne” by Pierre Kast, published in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, is of great significance for our national cinema, and especially for our own new wave. It is only the second time that this magazine has published an article about our cinema. The first article appeared many years ago in *Cahiers* no. 18, December, 1952, written by José Augusto França. It is important for us here to be discussed in this French magazine, and to have the Portuguese situation referred to in even a small article.

The Portuguese cinema has not received any attention from the international magazines. (Duarte 1964b, 3-4)

The role played by the critics in promoting the movement cannot be underestimated. Regardless of whether the filmmakers themselves perceived their films as representative of a movement, Portuguese critics boldly declared the birth of a New Portuguese Cinema, and delighted in comparing it to the French New Wave and other young cinemas.

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” (*Os Verdes Anos* 1964,33). A similar sentiment was expressed by Fernando Duarte (1964c) 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’” (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 (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 (Braganca et al. 1964), 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” (131). After nearly two decades of lamenting the state of the national film industry, critics suddenly became effusive in their praise of the New Portuguese Cinema.

The positive impact of the film clubs was evident years prior to the emergence of the New Portuguese Cinema. For instance, in the very difficult year of 1955, the newly formed Radiotelevisão Portuguesa (RTP), a public broadcaster heavily financed by the

National Propaganda Secretariat, drew funding sources away from film production.¹⁴ In this year not a single Portuguese film was released, in what has come to be known as “year zero” (Costa 1991, 115). The Porto Cinema Club, in response to this dreadful situation, held a retrospective of the films of Manoel de Oliveira. Although unable to make a film since *Aniki Bóbo* (1942) due to Salazar’s dislike of the film’s “realist” portrayal of life in Portugal, Oliveira was highly regarded by film club critics and cinephiles as the nation’s greatest director. After the screening of Oliveira’s *Aniki Bóbo*, critic Manuel de Pina wrote in *Filme* that Oliveira was the only director in Portugal who mattered artistically, concluding that:

What further productions can this extraordinary man give us? The answer remains in the hands of those who give subsidies to the cinema industry; may their silence be broken and provide Manoel de Oliveira with new opportunities: the national cinema industry needs to be refreshed with men like Manoel de Oliveira. (quoted in Costa, 1991, 116)

Oliveira did soon begin to work again filming the short, *O Pintor e a Cidade / The Painter and the City* (1956), followed by the feature-length film, *O Pão / The Bread* (1959). The return of Oliveira to the cinema proved highly significant for the young filmmakers who comprised the New Portuguese movement. Thus, a few additional remarks concerning the career of this extraordinary filmmaker and national cultural figure are in order.

Manoel de Oliveira (b. 1908) began his film career in 1928 as an actor. His first film as a director, *Douro, faina fluvial / Hard Labour on the River Douro* (1931), was made with a 35mm camera he purchased for himself. The film is a documentary short

about the area of Northern Portugal where he lived. During the subsequent decade, Oliveira continued to make short films exploring the relationship between documentary and fiction.

Aniki Bóbo, the story of a group of young children and the harsh social conditions of life in Porto, resembled the style of French poetic realism, just as it seemed to look forward to Italian neo-realism (Stam and Vieira 1987, 491). Oliveira's steadfast commitment to his craft and his highly personal ideals made him an unpopular figure in António Lopes Ribeiro's film industry; at the same time, it allowed Oliveira to cultivate the singular talent that during the 1960s would provide the young cinephiles of the New Cinema with a role model and hope for the future of Portuguese cinema.¹⁵

The young filmmakers who shunned the work of established Portuguese directors were able to embrace the filmic vision of Manoel de Oliveira. The retrospective devoted to Oliveira screened by the Porto Cinema Club in 1955 allowed young film enthusiasts to view the films of a master Portuguese director, and thus refute the notion expounded by Lopes Ribeiro and others that the cinema in Portugal could not achieve a level of artistry and craftsmanship exhibited elsewhere. Here was a Portuguese director whom the young filmmakers could take pride in, who had never compromised his artistry in the face of rigid censorship, film-industry complacency, and bureaucratic indifference.

The creation of RTP could easily have brought about the demise of the national cinema, which had been suffering from its own slow death from a lack of both leadership and institutional stability. From the standpoint of historical hindsight, however, the infamous "year zero" of 1955, rather than representing the *death* of Portugal's cinema

instead can be seen as its *birth*. In the face of the industry's failure that year to release a film, it fell by default, as it were, upon the young enthusiasts in the cinema clubs to revitalize the national cinema. Exposed to a plethora of international cinemas via the cinema clubs, the young filmmakers were able to incorporate styles and practices from different sources into their films. Not content to continue along the path of the old Portuguese cinema, the younger generation believed that film in Portugal could achieve a level of craftsmanship and experimentation unimagined by those before them.

The filmmakers of the New Portuguese Cinema – ironically, with the aid of the dictatorial government of António Salazar – were able to learn and study in the lively film centres of Paris and London. Hoping to indoctrinate young professionals into the ranks of the regime, the government provided scholarships to these filmmakers, mistakenly expecting them to make films imbued with the dictatorship's ideology. Instead the young filmmakers, ignoring the official culture, made films that represented the Portugal that they knew: the lives of the young adults and disenfranchised of Lisbon.

The young filmmakers, acutely aware of national-cinema history, discarded the cinema of the past via the embrace of a figure from that past: Manoel de Oliveira, a director silenced by the government for fourteen years, and whose highly personal films explored cinema's possibilities as an art form at a time when the norm in Portugal was to turn out films marked by the "regrettable mediocrity" associated with established genre cinema. It is fitting that when the New Portuguese Cinema was reshaping the national cinema, it did so just as Manoel de Oliveira returned to filmmaking to enter a "new" beginning in his illustrious career – a career whose significance would soon be transformed by the New Portuguese Cinema itself.

2

António da Cunha Telles

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. 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 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 New Portuguese Cinema.

After returning to Portugal in 1961 from two years of study at 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.¹ 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 (Conversa com dois produtores 1963, 29). Moreover, as Telles (1964) 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. (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 Portugeisas / A Portuguese Vacation* (1963), co-produced with the French company, JAD Films, and directed by Pierre Kast. Next, in 1964, came three co-productions: *Le Pas de Trois*, directed by Alain Bornet; *Le Grain de sable*, another Pierre Kast film; and Francois Truffaut's *La Peau douce*.

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.

(Conversa com dois produtores, 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 New Portuguese Cinema 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" (quoted in Marie, 2003, 50) is pertinent. 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. (Conversa com dois produtores 1963, 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, 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” (*Cinema Novo Português* 1985, 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. (quoted in Marie, 2003, 58)

Chabrol's concluding observation may be quite accurate with respect to the situation in France, but it doesn't extend to circumstances in Portugal, where it was precisely this "conveyor belt system" that Telles put into practice in his role as the New Cinema's pre-eminent producer.

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 the Portuguese film world, has figured prominently in the historiography of the New Portuguese Cinema.² 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, 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" (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, 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 in the area of filmmaking.³ His education at IDHEC, experience with the French New Wave, and desire to 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.

Insofar as any single figure would be said to have represented the New Portuguese Cinema, it was Telles. This was especially true for the Portuguese critics of the 1960s. 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 (2003) 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" (28). Certainly, for critics in Portugal, Telles was the New Cinema'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 (1964b) stated that it was obvious who had set forth the "principles" by which the New Portuguese Cinema 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. (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 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" (*Conversa com dois produtores* 1963, 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 (Schiro and Sotto Mayor 1963) 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. (9)

António da Cunha Telles' importance to the New Portuguese Cinema (indeed, to Portuguese cinema generally) is unquestionable, but one must avoid seeing Telles as the sort of "great man" familiar to certain forms of film scholarship. For one, Telles was not a dominating producer in the mould of David O. Selznick, the Hollywood mogul; Telles allowed each director the freedom to make their film without any interference or imposition of authority. He clearly had a strong desire to promote Portuguese film internationally, and believed in the talents of the young men he had come to know while at film school and then upon his return to Lisbon.

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. All of this was accomplished without government subsidy, strictly on the basis of his personal finances, which in the end he exhausted.⁴ In key respects, he forced a challenge that remains ongoing in Portuguese cinema. It is still the case today that a 100 percent, Portuguese-funded film will lose money because of Portugal's limited number of screens and small population base.⁵ In this context, art films with a potential for export might prove more rewarding than commercial national films with no export possibility, whatever the risks of art-cinema productions. Perhaps it is best to let Telles provide his own conclusion with regard to the preceding inquiry into his significance for film history:

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, 6)

3

Paulo Rocha

With the premiere of Paulo Rocha's *Os Verdes Anos* in 1963, the New Portuguese Cinema can be truly said to have begun. After years of declaring their hope for the arrival of a "new" cinema in Portugal, Portuguese critics 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*, and at least, allowed discussions of Portuguese cinema to culminate in declarations of hope and promise. According to Alberto Seixas Santos (Braganca et al. 1964), "[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" (134).

Born in 1935 in the northern city of Porto, Paulo Rocha, moved to Lisbon to study Law at the University of Lisbon. While a student he became a member of the University's Cineclube Católico (Catholic Cinema Club). The club had close ties to the cultural journal *O Tempo e o Modo*, which focused on literature and cinema. Other members of the club who contributed articles to the journal and would later become key critical figures writing on the New Portuguese Cinema included, João Bénard da Costa, Alberto Vaz da Silva, Jose Domingo Moras and Nuno Bragança. All claimed a devotion to French cinema and culture as well as American cinema and literature. Bragança, whom Rocha characterized as the most radical and political, and therefore the most "French," of the group, would write the screenplay for *Os Verdes Anos* (Paulo Rocha 1996,16).

In 1959, Rocha obtained a grant from the Fundo de Cinema Nacional (National Cinema Fund) to study filmmaking at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris. Although already familiar with international cinema through his involvement in the cinema-club culture in Portugal, in Paris he became exposed to an even wider range of films. He also observed first-hand the explosion of French New Wave films during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Commenting in a 1990 interview, Rocha recalled his time in Paris: “Paris was a festival: doomed love, introduction to Japanese culture, the beginning of the New Wave, Mizoguchi, Fritz Lang, Renoir. The New Wave went...the rest stayed with me” (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 36). At a time when the young filmmakers in Lisbon were talking about the *nouvelle vague*, Rocha, as his friend Fernando Lopes noted, seemed interested in an unusually varied assortment of international directors (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 50).

Upon graduating from IDHEC in 1961, Rocha began his career in filmmaking auspiciously, working with two masters of European cinema. First, he served as an assistant to Jean Renoir on *Le Caporal épinglé / The Elusive Corporal* (1961). Then, upon his return to Portugal, he assisted Manoel de Oliveira on two films – the short *A Caça / The Hunt* (1963), and the feature *O Acto da Primavera / Spring Mystery Play* (1963). The experience of working with these two venerable filmmakers appears to have been personally transformative. Rocha would write an admiring homage – “Remembrances of the White Elephant” – about his time with the French director for *O Tempo e o Modo* in 1965, where he would refer to Renoir as his “mentor” (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 47). Working with Manoel de Oliveira was likewise a great experience for the young, aspiring filmmaker, introducing him to the aesthetic possibilities of a distinctly,

Portuguese cinema. Years later Rocha would describe Oliveira as the forefather of the New Portuguese Cinema and a radical modernist director, who at that time was a decade ahead of his European cinema contemporaries (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 36). In 1993 Paulo Rocha would direct a documentary about Oliveira titled *Oliveira, o Arquitecto*.

Os Verdes Anos / The Green Years (1963)

Os Verdes Anos tells the story of two young lovers in Lisbon. Having recently arrived in Lisbon from a small rural town, Júlio (Rui Gomes) is to be apprenticed to a shoemaker. He meets Ilda (Isabel Ruth), also from the rural countryside, who works as a maid for a wealthy couple. The two “provincianos” fall in love and adjust to life in Lisbon. For Júlio the adjustment is difficult. At one point, while at a dance club with Ilda and two friends, he refuses to learn how to dance to American “rock-and-roll” and instead goes in search of a pharmacy for aspirin to cure a headache. When he returns he finds Ilda dancing with another man who is teaching her the latest dance steps. Furious, Júlio starts a fight. This incident crystallizes the differing desires of the two lovers; while Ilda wishes to escape her provincial background and become a “modern” woman in Lisbon, Júlio copes with urban life by reverting to traditionalist values.

Shortly after, Júlio insists they marry immediately, but Ilda refuses, instead urging Júlio to enrol in night courses that will enable him to move onto university and a high paying job. Júlio calls on Ilda that night, at the apartment of her employers, and then, in a sudden attack, stabs her. True to the ambiguity of art-cinema narration – evident, for one, in the latter’s tendency to avoid narrative closure – no clear reason is provided for Júlio’s action and the film ends with him “trapped” by the headlights of cars.

The critical reception of *Os Verdes Anos* within Portugal demonstrates the desire within the country's film culture for a concrete example of a revitalized cinema.

Celuloide magazine hailed the film as the sign of the arrival of Portugal's own New Wave: "This film has launched the New Portuguese Cinema. It deserves our continued appreciation and critical interpretation. It is an extraordinary achievement in film" (*O Triunfo de Os Verdes Anos* 1964, 1). The critics at *Filme* were also in agreement, gauging the film's impact on Portuguese cinema as follows:

We cannot repeat enough how this film has brought Portuguese cinema into a new era. *Os Verdes Anos* is the first film to come from the new generation [who are] aware of cinema culture and technically trained.

They are determined to make Portuguese cinema vital. Portuguese cinema has drawn level with Europe. (*Os Verdes Anos* 1964, 33)

Here was a film to compare with the best of the *nouvelle vague* and the contemporary art cinemas of Europe. Indeed, the original poster for the film posed the question: "Have you hoped for a Portuguese film that possessed the quality and style of the best films from France and Italy?" (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 54). Echoing the question raised by the film's promotional materials, reviews focused on the film's importance to the country's cinema culture. For critics, the film contradicted the accepted view (associated with established directors like António Lopes Ribeiro) according to which the cinema in Portugal could never amount to art but only entertainment. In this regard, *Os Verdes Anos* marked a new artistic and cultural beginning. *Celuloide* declared: "It is a great Portuguese film. Perhaps the greatest we have seen. Its style displays a truth and an artistry we have longed for. It serves notice that our young directors have surpassed the

old technicians” (O Triunfo de *Os Verdes Anos* 1964, 2). In Paulo Rocha the critics and cine-club enthusiasts had found a young director whom they could embrace as the forerunner of a revitalized national cinema.

The enthusiasm among the critics in Portugal for *Os Verdes Anos* was matched by the response the film received elsewhere in Europe. *Os Verdes Anos* was shown at the Locarno Film Festival in 1964 where it received critical praise from the foreign press. In particular, Jacques Bontemps (1964), in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, singled out the film as the exception in a year when many films seemed mediocre (39).¹ At Locarno, Paulo Rocha received the “Silver Sail” award for a first-time director. No Portuguese director or film, up to this point, had garnered this kind of honour at an international festival, as critics in Portugal were keen to point out.

A New Generation of Stars

Similar to the French New Wave, with its roster of new acting talent, the New Portuguese Cinema would introduce fresh, young faces to film audiences. As Susan Hayward (1993) has pointed out, the *nouvelle vague* did not draw on actors from a “star-system” but, over time, created its own “fetish-stars” (238).² Thus, Anna Karina, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean-Claude Brialy, Jeanne Moreau and others became major stars in the French film industry as a result of their leading roles in New Wave films.

Facing the same sorts of obstacles as the New Portuguese filmmakers, young actors in Portugal also encountered meager career possibilities. Particularly imposing were the small number of films being produced and the dominance of genres that favoured older actors. In an interview conducted during a break in filming in the

apartment of Paulo Rocha's parents – which was used in *Os Verdes Anos* as the set for the home of Ilda's employers – Rui Gomes, the film's lead actor, commented on the possible impact of the film on his career:

For me, *Os Verdes Anos* represents a way through the door that I have found closed to me: it is an opportunity to possibly showcase if I have the qualities to continue. (Schiro and Sotto Mayor 1963, 11)

Gomes was also aware of the inevitable comparison to the French New Wave that this film would generate, stating, perhaps for promotional intent, that the film was the “first true attempt at making a *Nouvelle Vague* film in Portugal” (Schiro and Sotto Mayor 1963, 11). Comparing the film to the debuts of Chabrol and Godard, Gomes hoped that the public would come to appreciate the young generation's enthusiasm and fresh talent, reminding the readers that all involved had studied filmmaking, contrary to the commonly-held belief at the time that new film movements were comprised mainly of amateurs (Schiro and Sotto Mayor 1963, 11). Gomes' comment here seems quite prescient considering scholarship on the French New Wave, which has debunked the myth that it was a movement of only amateur filmmakers.³

For the part of Ilda, Rocha cast a young, former ballet dancer whose acting experience consisted of some minor work in the fledgling television industry. Rather like Anna Karina in France, Isabel Ruth would become the “face” of the New Portuguese Cinema. She starred in three of the four films to be discussed in this thesis, and would go on to become a major star in Portugal, recognized internationally. Ruth represented a break from the traditional role of the young woman in Portuguese society. Strong-willed, opportunistic, and ambitious, Ruth played characters that refused to accept the

paternalism that confined women to traditional roles as mothers and wives. Images of Isabel Ruth were used to market these films and helped to brand the New Portuguese Cinema as a recognizable movement.

The “New” Traditional

Throughout the history of industrialized media such as film, traditional cultural forms of artistic expression are incorporated, and re-interpreted, within new modes of cultural expression. For instance, the narrative of *Os Verdes Anos* displays characteristics typical of Portuguese canonical literature, while drawing on experimental techniques familiar to the new Portuguese literature of the 1960s. The film’s atmosphere of fatalism is also a hallmark of traditional Portuguese literature; indeed “fatalism” is a theme linked to the Portuguese cultural phenomenon of *saudade* – a state of longing, coloured by nostalgia, and regarded as uniquely Portuguese (Costa 1991, 129). It is this aspect of the film that Alberto Vaz da Silva (a fellow-member of the Catholic Cine-Club) discusses in his review in *O Tempo e o Modo*. For him, the film is a great triumph because the story about two doomed lovers works well as a metaphor for all of Portugal; “very seldom has a work of art disclosed, among us, all its fatalism,...[which] took root so long ago in our homeland, hence defining our future” (quoted in Costa, 1991, 129).

However, while the film maintains a connection to Portugal’s cultural and literary history, it also makes use of new trends in literature through the contribution of scriptwriter, Nuno de Bragança (1929-1985). Another member of the Catholic Cine-Club, Bragança would go on to become a major figure in the new Portuguese literature movement of the sixties and seventies.⁴ Bragança was familiar with the underground

youth culture and wrote scenes that took place in the seedier bars and jazz clubs in Lisbon – an aspect of the film that Paulo Rocha himself was unfamiliar with, and which required that he lean heavily on Bragança's knowledge (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 17). One scene, which was not allowed to be filmed, had Júlio and his uncle talking to prostitutes in a bar (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 17).⁵ Any representation that reflected “negatively” on Portuguese society, that is, the society that the Salazar government wished to promote, however falsely it mirrored reality, was censored. Thus, a mere suggestion of sexual promiscuity did not coincide with the traditional Catholic values of the Estado Novo.

New modes of expression were being explored, not only in literature, but also in traditional music. Carlos Paredes (1925-2004), a young guitarist who was making a name for himself in the clubs of Lisbon, composed the music for the film. Working with the conventions of Fado⁶ and folkloric music, Paredes injected modern influences into this very traditional form of Portuguese cultural expression. Originally, Rocha intended to use various Jazz standards as the score for the film following the example of the New Wave. However, he was persuaded by Telles to listen to Paredes play in a bar (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 15), where Rocha became persuaded of the suitability of Paredes' novel approach to Portugal's musical tradition for the soundtrack of *Os Verdes Anos*. A fusion of musical styles, Paredes' score offers an atmospheric hybrid of Jazz and Fado, played on the Portuguese guitarra.

One scene, in particular, illustrates Rocha's updated way of re-interpreting traditional Portuguese culture. A long, fluid tracking shot of Júlio and Ilda dancing arm-in-arm to a Fado song, during which they never take their eyes off one another, poignantly illustrates that the young “provinçianos” have fallen in love. Keep in mind

that had it not been for Telles suggesting that Rocha consider the music of Carlos Paredes, the music for the film would have been Jazz. By using Fado, *Os Verdes Anos*, rather than appearing as a copy of the New Wave aesthetic, is clearly inscribed as a Portuguese film aware of the country's cultural history, in which Fado has long served as a deeply emotional expression of Portuguese desire and fate. Fado historian, Pinto de Carvalho, writing in 1904, stressed Fado's strongly sentimental character:

Both words and music reflect the abrupt turns of fickle fortune, the evil destiny of the unfortunate, the irony of fate, the piercing pangs of love, the poignancy of absence or despair, the profound sobs of discouragement, the sorrows of Saudade, the caprices of the heart, and those ineffable moments when the souls of lovers descend to their lips and, before flying back on high, hover for an instant in a sweet embrace. (quoted in Vernon, 1998, 3)

Given Fado's longstanding importance to Portuguese identity, it featured extensively in the films of the "old" cinema. For example, *A Severa* (Leitão de Barros, 1931), the pioneering sound film, told the story of Maria Severa (1820-1846), the legendary Fadista (singer of Fado) whose performances popularized the music in the nineteenth century. Subsequent to *A Severa*, Fado became a staple ingredient in Portuguese films, temporarily interrupting the narrative's progression while a Fadista performed. The modern equivalent of Maria Severa, Amalia Rodrigues (1920-1999), who also starred in numerous films, would become the first crossover star in Portugal, becoming an international Fado singer of great renown.

In *Os Verdes Anos*, Júlio and Ilda dance to a song written specifically for the film and also titled "Os Verdes Anos." The lyrics, by Pedro Tâmen, a young poet associated

with the new literature, and Carlos Paredes' music, elucidate the love, desire, and saudade, typical of the Fado tradition. The lyrics are as follows:

It was love that left the same way it came.

Our being together consumed us with heat.

There was no relief, no before or after.

It was a secret for no one to hear.

It was deceiving and frightened us.

It was death laughing at our green years.

It was a time that dried the flower that was yet to be.

Like an Autumn that took the place of Spring.

Rather than ignore the country's cultural roots in an internationalist attempt to move away from any connection to the national films of the past, *Os Verdes Anos* self-consciously invokes that very past so as to transfigure the tradition through the incorporation of modern styles and international influences.

The Personal and the Political

Overtly political-themed films – other than the few that were not put forward as propaganda for the Estado Novo, as discussed in chapter one – were extremely rare in Portugal. Very rarely did a filmmaker dramatize the harsh social realities of life under Salazar, or focus critically on the government itself. Instead the cinema remained within the limits of established national genres, offering little opportunity for a director to explore personal themes.

With the strict censorship laws and the menacing presence of Salazar's secret police (Pólicia Internacional para Defesa do Estado – PIDE) Portuguese filmmakers rarely ventured into depictions of the consequences of the state's policies on the people. The refusal to provide Manoel de Oliveira with any funding after *Aniki Bóbo* (1942) effectively shut down his career for fifteen years, and offered an example of the consequences for anti-state films, however subtly crafted.⁷ In light of the growing cry among the populace for more liberalization in the wake of the 1958 elections, Salazar put into place measures to appease the population with the appearance of movement toward liberal democracy.⁸ As a result of this loosening of control, in 1961, *Dom Roberto*, directed by Ernesto de Sousa (1921-1988), became among the very few films to depict the struggles of the working class in Portugal.⁹

Paulo Rocha also seized the opportunity at this time to make a film that hinted at the political and social realities of 1960s Portugal. At the same time, *Os Verdes Anos* is a highly personal film, focusing on the desires and frustrations of Rocha's generation, born in the 1930s. Similar to the main characters, Júlio and Ilda, Rocha had experienced Lisbon from the perspective of a *provinçiano* and felt the estrangement of those who were forced to the edges of the city (Schiro and Sotto Mayor 1963, 12). Rocha would recall this personal remembrance in an interview conducted in 1968 during a festival celebrating the films of the New Portuguese Cinema:

I chose to make a film about the Lisbon that I had come to know: that is, of a *provinçiano* who comes to the city and is faced with difficulties and humiliations. The initial idea for the film came out of my own experience of adapting to Lisbon. *Os Verdes Anos* tells the story of a timid apprentice

shoemaker who arrives in Lisbon – a modern city – that is so different from what he knows and feels comfortable in. Because of this, he struggles profoundly with his own emotions. (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 55)

In this respect, Rocha was quite unusual. Other than Manoel de Oliveira, Portuguese directors stayed away from personal expression in their films, instead relying on the genre conventions of the literary adaptation, historical drama, the musical comedy, and the popularucho film.

The political aspect of the film's status as personal expression is evident in its subtle reference to Portugal's foreign policy. Among the most unpopular foreign policy decisions of the Estado Novo was the prosecution of the colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique. These wars were particularly pertinent to Rocha's generation because of the state's implementation of a military draft, together with its prohibition of dissent of any kind regarding the government's colonial policy. The repression of dissent did not prevent Rocha from referencing the anxieties felt by young men and women in Portugal over the wars. Ilda, when refusing to accept Júlio's offer of marriage, reminds him that very soon he will be drafted into the army and sent to Africa. The draft clearly figures as a reason for the couple to carefully consider future plans. At another time the wars are alluded to visually. As Ilda walks past a soldier, the young man salutes her, showing respect for a woman. Again, without being overt, the reminder that there are men, predominantly twenty year olds, fighting, and dying in Africa, illustrates how *Os Verdes Anos* mixes the personal with the political. For all Portuguese, the colonial wars affected their daily lives, tragically for some. As this brief scene suggests, these wars were a constant source of concern for the young.

For Júlio, the difficulty of adjusting to life in Lisbon is presented beginning with his initial appearance in the film. His uncle, Afonso, has arranged to pick up Júlio at the train station, but instead stops at a bar where he sits down with friends to have some drinks. Júlio steps off the train and is left standing on the platform, unsure of where to go. There is a long tracking shot in toward Júlio who is standing motionless, his luggage by his side. The camera then stops at a medium close-up, as Júlio stares directly into the camera, isolated and lost. A reverse shot reveals an empty platform. The following sequence has Júlio wandering the streets and riding on the metro, where he is befriended by an old man who tells him, “Lisbon is a beautiful city – a paradise. It has changed. It is hectic, but you will get used to it.” Clearly uncomfortable on a crowded metro car, where he is constantly shoved about, Júlio appears restless.

For Júlio, the city will prove difficult to adjust to, while for Ilda, Lisbon clearly offers the promise of a bright future. This narrative thread is explored nicely when Júlio and Ilda spend a Sunday afternoon at the home of her employers. Ilda wishes to impress Júlio with the extravagances and style of the upper class. She delights in making him “special tea” from England and China – an extravagance otherwise unavailable to them. While Ilda preens and mimics the behaviour of the Lisbon elite whom she has served in this house, Júlio, clearly uncomfortable – he is stiff and reticent – finds the tea bitter, and does not respond to Ilda’s social gossip.

She then brings him to the master bedroom where she will “model” various clothes that her mistress owns. Filmed in close-up, Ilda is smiling and excited as she changes into the expensive clothes. Conversely, when she exits the change room to display her “new” look for Júlio, he is filmed in long shot. He sits motionless in a chair at

the far end of the room, seemingly confused and scared, distant from the role-playing that Ilda wishes to engage in. The high-angle long shots of Júlio reveal a young man isolated and removed from the Lisbon that Ilda longs to be a part of. She, in turn, is unaware of the difficulty that he is having in adjusting to life in the city.

Lisbon: The White City and the Shanty Town

Júlio's difficulty at adapting to Lisbon and the profound emotional struggle that he endures is a major visual theme of the film. For him, Lisbon is either a menacing, overpowering presence or a confining, claustrophobic entrapment. The shoe store Júlio works at resembles a bunker, a semi-basement dwelling, with a service window at the level of the sidewalk. Customers do not enter the store – they bend down and hand their shoes to the men, who work in a confined space that allows them to see only the lower half of people as they walk by the cinemascope-like service window. Perhaps the most striking visual of this “new” cinematic Lisbon occurs at the end of the film, when Júlio, after stabbing Ilda, runs through the streets of the city at night, eventually “caught” by the headlights of cars. Júlio is cornered - the lights of the cars accusing him – and as the camera pulls back and up, he is a solitary figure surrounded by a Lisbon that has him trapped.

This contrasts sharply with the depiction of the city in the genre cinema of the past, in which Lisbon was filmed as an exotic, idyllic location in keeping with the reputation of Portugal's capital as the fabled “White City.” Pertinent to this discussion is Antonio Lopes Ribeiro's assertion – referenced in chapter one – that Portuguese filmmakers should present Lisbon as a city of “flowers,...lace, songs vibrating like

applause, and applause as harmonious as songs” (Costa 1991, 80). Lopes Ribeiro’s view of Lisbon as the city of white lace and flowers was in key with the Salazar government’s imagined geography of Portugal. *Os Verdes Anos* would offer up another view of Lisbon that sharply deviates from this conventional depiction.

As in other major cities throughout Europe, shanty towns were springing up in the outskirts of these cities as populations grew and work became scarce in the rural regions. Pierre Sorlin, in his book *European Cinemas, European Societies, 1939-1990* (1991), examined the representation of these spaces in post-war European cinema. He writes:

...shanty towns were presented as fairly different, as another world, what I would like to call a third world. The social function of images is manifest in this case. The cinema disclosed something that most viewers had good reason to be unfamiliar with because neither the politicians nor the media wanted to unveil them; it described the terrific growth of depressed, abandoned areas. (129)

The cinematic shanty town depicted in *Os Verdes Anos* fits into Sorlin’s account of realist trends in European cinema after 1945.

Julio’s uncle, Afonso, lives in a “hut” in one of these shanty towns just outside Lisbon. In the distance the apartment buildings that make up the new Lisbon suburb are visible. Establishing shots of the shanty town are often framed in a way that shows these buildings dominating the skyline. Sorlin describes general characteristics of a shanty town, and its relation to new suburbs as follows:

While the suburbs are dependent on more urbanized areas and are linked to them, cinematic shanty towns exist by themselves and have identifiable

characteristics. They are, first of all, half-void spaces with long patches of empty ground spread between ill-built huts. Here, people constantly move on motorbike or delivery tricycles or even on foot. (1991, 127)

The film opens with Afonso in his hut preparing to leave for the city as he is on his way to pick up Júlio at the train station. His hut is one among many that fill the hills north of Lisbon. These “half-void spaces” are scattered among the hills with no identifiable streets or neighbourhoods. The white apartment buildings of the suburbs, always framed in the distance, conjure up images of a modern city, urbanized, with people living and working in neighbourhoods and communities, taking taxis or public transit as they work toward middle class respectability. As Afonso exits his hut, he hops onto his motorbike, heading for the city.

The shanty town acts as a space somehow in between the rural and the urban. In this respect, it acts as a metaphor for the two lovers. The shanty town – a cruel parody of a provincial town – like Júlio and Ilda, is hopeful that one day it will become part of Lisbon, no longer an alienated stranger at the outskirts of the city, but a welcome part of the national landscape. After a disagreement, silently the young couple wanders among the huts and hills of the shanty town. The clash of tradition and modernity has threatened to end their relationship, with Júlio resistant to forget his provincial values and Ilda embracing the life in a modern city. The “white city,” the site of their anxious feelings, always remains in the background of the frame, a different world, and a reminder that – however much they try – they will always be provincianos.

Os Verdes Anos, an internationally acclaimed art film, was a lightning strike against the moribund national cinema. Especially powerful was the film's melding of new international film techniques with national cultural references. Rather than simply mimic the narratives and styles of European cinema's "new" movements, the film embraces Portuguese society and culture, without appearing to condescend. Indeed, unlike the directors of the past, Paulo Rocha boldly proclaims, with his first feature, that Portuguese films need not perpetually recycle generic constructs of an idyllic, glorious past, or a comical, pastoral never-land, but that contemporary narratives could offer a director an opportunity to make a film rivalling the finest works of world cinema.

Paulo Rocha's contribution to Portuguese cinema is significant, marking, as it does, several key transitions in the latter's history. First, in 1963, Rocha became the standard bearer for the New Portuguese Cinema with the release of *Os Verdes Anos* and its subsequent showing and award at the Venice Film Festival. Then, in 1967, the release of *Mudar de Vida* appeared to signal the end of the New Portuguese Cinema, an event confirmed in the following year when The Gulbenkian Foundation,¹⁰ in support of Portuguese cinema, joined up with Rocha and other young directors, who had become, in effect, the key figures in a new national cinema establishment.

A further development in Paulo Rocha's career can be said to have occurred in 1975, when Rocha was appointed Cultural Attaché at the Portuguese Embassy in Tokyo. For Rocha, an enthusiast of Japanese culture since his days in Paris, this position provided the welcome opportunity to experience Japanese culture first-hand. He subsequently directed films exploring the transcultural relationship between Portugal and the Orient. Most notable among these films is the 1982 film *A Ilha dos Amores / Island of*

Love, which Rocha had been preparing for fourteen years, and took four years to shoot and edit.

4

Fernando Lopes

Fernando Lopes' career in cinema began not in the film industry but at the newly created public television broadcaster, Radio Televisão Portuguesa (RTP), in 1957. Thus, Lopes' career can serve to illustrate a key aspect of the Portuguese film culture at that time: the national cinema's interface with Portuguese state television. Within the film industry there were few opportunities open to novice filmmakers. As António da Cunha Telles stated when referring to his experiences of the attitude of the established filmmakers toward the younger generation of directors: "When we returned to Portugal...all the doors [to work in film] were closed to us" (Telles 1964, 5). It appears that a view at that time, within the established national film industry, wasn't to cultivate the young talent that had returned from London and Paris. Therefore, many of the aspiring directors, technicians, and actors began their careers at RTP in the television rather than the film industry. Therefore, after a brief stint as a bookkeeper in Lisbon, Lopes joined RTP where he trained as a newsreel editor. For Lopes, RTP was a step toward a career in film that he had hoped for since his association with the Imagem Cine-Club and his intellectual appetite for film books and magazines (Telles 1964, 5).

In 1959 Lopes became one of the initial recipients of the National Information Secretariat's scholarship grants awarded to young aspiring directors who wished to study filmmaking outside the country. Lopes attended the London School of Film Technique, thus making him the only recipient of the grant not to choose IDHEC in Paris. The reason for this is that, like most of his generation who had become admirers of French films

through the cinema clubs, Lopes felt it was important for his development as a filmmaker to familiarize himself with a film culture less well-known in Portugal (*Fernando Lopes Por Cá* 1996, 64). While in London he directed three short 16mm films, *Interlude*, *The Bowler Hat*, and *The Lonely Ones*, all completed in 1960.

After graduating in 1960 he returned to Portugal, and to RTP, directing documentary television programs. As well as his work for RTP, Lopes approached the director of the National Information Secretariat, Moreira Baptista, with a documentary project. The proposed film, a short, *As Pedras e o Tempo / The Stones and the Temple* (1960), was to be a “city” film about the provincial town of Évora, a town renowned for its Roman and Moorish monuments, and hence, a key site in Portuguese national history. In an interview for *Filme* Lopes explained that he was exploring new forms of documentary filmmaking with this film (Fernando Lopes apresenta o seu primeiro filme 1960, 44). He would continue the experimentation, a few years later, with his first feature film, *Belarmino* (1964).

In 1965, Fernando Lopes was awarded a Fulbright scholarship and spent three months training in Hollywood. He would assist on two films, *The Chase* (Arthur Penn, 1966), and *The Group* (Sydney Lumet, 1966), as well as spend time with Jean Renoir who at that time was living in Los Angeles. Of his time spent in the United States, Lopes later recalled it as having a tremendous impact on him as a filmmaker, affording him the opportunity to immerse himself within the industrial complex of Hollywood, acquainting himself with an important style of production that he would never have experienced otherwise (*Fernando Lopes Por Cá* 1996, 76).

With the bankruptcy of Cunha Telles Productions in 1968, Lopes formed a film co-operative with future directors, Alberto Seixas Santos, Alfredo Tropa, Manuel Costa e Silva, and Fernando Matos Silva. It is through Media Filmes that Lopes released his second feature film, *Uma Abelha na Chuva / A Bee in the Rain* (1971), in co-operation with the Portuguese Cinema Centre. The film is an adaptation of a novel by the same name written by Carlos de Oliveira and published in 1953. Lopes uses the story of a crime that takes place on a farm to explore the disillusionment of a wealthy family in rural Portugal faced with the failure of the Estado Novo's policies on agriculture at the end of the 1960s. *Uma Abelha na Chuva* counts as a political intervention, while it also continues Lopes' interest in experimentation with non-conventional film storytelling, especially in the translation of a third person narrative. This is accomplished in scenes of great emotional and psychological intensity. The scenes operate according to an odd temporality. Presentations of the action are sometimes repeated, but the second version may not include dialogue, but only exaggerated non-verbal diegetic sound and inner monologues.

Lopes would take on a significant role in the founding of the Portuguese Cinema Centre in 1968 – the joint venture between the Gulbenkian Foundation and the New Portuguese Cinema. He would be appointed the centre's first president, a position he would hold until 1972. It would be a position that would prove difficult to manage because of having to make decisions on the production of films by his colleagues and close friends, fellow members of what critics were referring to as the New Portuguese Cinema (*Fernando Lopes Por Cá* 1996, 82).¹ When funding could not be wholly raised by the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Portuguese Cinema Centre, Lopes sought co-

production funding with studios long associated with the “old” cinema, such as Tobis Portuguesa, the Dutch-German company whose studio facility in Lisbon became a cornerstone of the Portuguese film industry since opening in 1933.

Fernando Lopes did not limit himself to filmmaking, but also was committed to political action in the cultural domain. In 1973 he launched a magazine, *Cinéfilo*, which not only dealt with cinema culture, but also surveyed the arts in Portugal in general. The *Estado Novo*, founded some forty years earlier in 1932, was a year away from coming to an end. But the dictatorship maintained a firm grip on censorship in the country, and *Cinéfilo* was routinely censored. When the revolution brought down the decades-old Salazar regime on 25 April 1974, Lopes quickly rushed into print an issue of the magazine that dealt with censorship during the Salazar years. That same year Lopes would also collaborate with his fellow New Portuguese Cinema directors and colleagues at the Portuguese Cinema Centre on the film, *As Armas e o Povo / Arms and the People* (1974), a documentary on the Carnation Revolution.

Fernando Lopes continued to make feature films, as well as play a leading role in the management of Portuguese film and television. Lopes was named the Program Director of Canal 2, the second channel of RTP in 1978. The following year he headed the Department of Cinema Co-Productions at RTP. As a director, Fernando Lopes influenced a number of younger directors, such as Alberto Seixas Santos and Fernando Matos Silva, both of whom had assisted Lopes on his films before making their first feature films. If that were his only influence, along with his work as a director, then Lopes’ contribution to Portuguese cinema would be great. To the culture of Portuguese

cinema, however, Lopes' continued commitment, as an administrator in film and television, and in the printed media, has been a significant addition.

Belarmino (1964)

Belarmino is a hybrid film, utilizing the techniques of both documentary and fiction filmmaking. Its subject is the life of the boxer, Belarmino Fragoso, who enjoyed a successful career in Portugal, but one that did not provide the wealthy lifestyle he had imagined, as boxing in Portugal at that time was not a well-paid profession. The film shows the impoverished Belarmino making extra money hand-colouring photographs, while his wife works as a cleaning lady. They live in the poor neighbourhoods of Lisbon, raising a daughter and living as best they can.

Critically, the film received praise that echoed many of the pronouncements made following the premier of *Os Verdes Anos*. Unlike the many declarations made in the past regarding a "new" cinema, this time a second film had followed the critical success of the first, as was noted in *Celuloide* magazine:

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. (*Critica de Filmes: Belarmino* 1964, 11)

With *Belarmino*, the promise raised in 1960 by the short documentary *As Pedras e o Tempo* had been confirmed for the critics. According to the review of *As Pedras e o Tempo* in the October issue of *Filme*: “Simply, unpretentiously and with a passion for cinema, Fernando Lopes is a newcomer to our cinema with the sensibility of the Portuguese *nouvelle vague*, who will, now or later, have a revitalizing influence” (Fernando Lopes apresenta o seu primeiro filme 1960, 43). Those that heralded a “new” cinema in the years before 1960, only to be left with nothing more than hope, now had two directors who broke with the established cinema, and who did so by aligning themselves with trends internationally. At last, with Lopes’s film, Portuguese cinema seemed to take significant steps beyond the limitations imposed by the Salazar regime.

Once again, the critics turned to comparisons with the established national cinema, and similar to the reviews of *Os Verdes Anos*, Lopes and *Belarmino* suggested a rejuvenation of the national cinema. The rhetoric of the previous decades returned. Writing in 1964 for *O Tempo e o Modo*, future director António-Pedro Vasconcelos, argued that the film injected truth and life into the “sick corpse” of the Portuguese cinema (Braganca et al. 1964, 129). Vasconcelos’ view of the “old” cinema recalled the writing of Armando Aragão (1948), and was shared by many film critics and cinephiles in Portugal during the beginning of the decade, including the editors of *Filme* (*O novo cinema português* 1960). As if in direct response to the long held belief that, film, as an art form, is impossible in Portugal – a belief put forward, for one, by veteran director Leitão de Barros (Aragão 1948, 36) – Gerard Castello Lopes wrote: “Fernando Lopes’ film has set a new standard. No one anymore can say, not any critic, director, producer, or distributor, that cinema is not possible in Portugal” (Braganca et al. 1964, 131).

Unfortunately, the critics' enthusiasm did not translate into box-office success for *Belarmino*. Paulo Rocha, talking about the film in 1967, noted: "when *Belarmino* presented the day-to-day life of a boxer in Lisbon, filmed with a revelatory sharpness, the people were not ready for that" (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 73). It appears that after three decades of repressive government policies, Portuguese people were not yet able to see a film that exposed the harsh reality of their lives. The popular audience preferred Hollywood imports to Lopes' film, with its uncompromising realism.

Portuguese Cinéma-Vérité

Lopes brought to *Belarmino* techniques familiar to the documentary cinema that he was exposed to in London, as well as the television-reportage techniques that he learned at RTP. *Belarmino* also suggests the cinéma-vérité associated with Jean Rouch, in that the subjectivity of the director, his role as instigator of the events filmed, is present throughout. Rather than a straight documentary whose purpose is to capture "truth" as it unfolds before the camera, *Belarmino* incorporates its documentary moments into the fictional story of two young lovers in the Jazz underground scene of Lisbon. Thus, at key moments, *Belarmino*'s story is no longer the sole focus of the film, allowing the city of Lisbon to come forward, so that the setting itself takes on a personality of sorts, appearing vibrant as well as melancholy. A key factor here is that the film focuses on many areas of the city never depicted in the musical comedies of the "old" cinema.

Under the direction of Fernando Lopes the life of *Belarmino* becomes a metaphor for the struggles of the young generation as they fight to make their way in Lisbon, trapped by the fatalism associated with being Portuguese: "If *Belarmino* had lived in

another country, he would most probably have been a great champion,” says the narrator of the film. The Lisbon of *Belarmino* is not the Portugal that António Lopes Ribeiro talked about when he spoke of flowers and pavilions, lace and songs, as the “mirror of life” for the Portuguese people (Costa 1991, 79-80). The Lisbon of *Belarmino* suggests a Portugal defined through the daily struggles of life, marked both by a resigned acceptance of one’s fate and with a willingness to fight on.

This blend of resignation and tenacity is evident in the many interview sequences that take up, roughly, half the film. Lopes films *Belarmino* from one camera position; a medium close-up with *Belarmino* sitting on the right side of the frame, in front of a plain draped background, always directly addressing his interviewer who is never shown. The film’s co-writer Baptista Bastos, another cinema club denizen and author of the books, *Cinema in Contemporary Polemics* (1959) and *Films and Realism* (1962),² who had worked with Lopes at RTP, conducted the interviews. The interviews consist of recollections of his life, growing up poor, training as a boxer, and thoughts on his current situation as an aging unemployed athlete.

At one point he is asked if he is ever scared when he enters the ring for a match. He replies that, no, he has never felt the “fear of the ring,” but adds that he is scared only in the way any man is scared to face the reality of his own life. This confession exhibits the matter-of-fact tone that *Belarmino* utilizes for all of the film’s interview sequences. It would not be wrong to simply disregard this statement as another bland assertion from a man who avoids revealing any true feelings or thoughts. His flippant response to many questions mimics the boxer who ducks and weaves to avoid the jabs and uppercuts of his opponent.

Lopes creates interesting effects, reminiscent of certain moments in the cinéma-vérité work of Jean Rouch, by intercutting these interviews with shots of Belarmino going about his daily life. Examples occur during moments when Belarmino acknowledges the presence of the camera and appears to “act.” For example, while sitting at a table outside a café, Belarmino is filmed from across the street, as he finishes a cup of espresso. As the take lengthens, he continually looks to the camera, apparently seeking direction or a “cut” signal. He begins to laugh (perhaps out of nervousness) and as women walk past him, he whistles at them. After every whistle, he looks to the camera and laughs. Lopes often uses long takes that result in Belarmino looking unsure, and also long shots that isolate him amongst the city’s architecture. The final sequence of the film shows Belarmino alone in the rain by the side of a fountain in Lisbon; there is no one around and the great city surrounds Belarmino in the frame.

Belarmino and A Canção de Lisboa (1933)

Invoking the filmic past in ways that highlight its own novelty, *Belarmino* announces, in effect, its break from the “old” cinema. This is not just simply because it is reflective of the many diverse and exciting new modes of filmmaking that became the hallmark of the late 1950s and early 1960s cinema. The influence of cinéma-vérité and English documentary tradition, combined with the naturalism of the Italian neo-realists and kitchen-sink English dramas, are evidence of the knowledge of world cinema that Fernando Lopes brought to his film. Like the directors of the French New Wave, Lopes and his compatriots of the New Portuguese Cinema, were students of the history of cinema. They were products of the cinema-club culture that introduced the young

generation of Portuguese filmmakers to a variety of films from around the world, and exposed them to the debates and criticisms that were shaping emerging trends that would define the study of cinema for the next several decades.

This sets the New Portuguese Cinema apart from the “old” film industry exemplified by António Lopes Ribeiro and Leitão de Barros, who assumed the impossibility of creating a Portuguese cinema comparable to the art cinemas of France, Germany and Italy. Challenging the film industry’s elders, the New Portuguese Cinema filmmakers refused to recycle the clichés of Portugal’s established entertainment cinema. Their generation was witness to a transitional Portugal, and therefore, they believed, a transitional cinema.

This generational difference was particularly obvious in the New Portuguese Cinema’s representation of Lisbon, which departed strongly and deliberately from the iconography of Portugal’s great city familiar to the “old” cinema. Just as the French New Wave reclaimed the Paris of their generation, setting the narratives of their films away from the hermetic locales of the “tradition of quality” films, the New Portuguese Cinema also filmed the contemporary Lisbon of their own generation. This Lisbon is not the bright city of gardens, pavilions, and outdoor Fado cafes, evident in a film such as *A Canção de Lisboa* (1933), but one that is run-down, dark, and where freedoms are to be found underground in the city’s smoky, basement Jazz bars.

Belarmino’s representation of life in Lisbon contrasts sharply with that of *A Canção de Lisboa*, a film that Lopes admired (*Paulo Rocha* 1996, 65), notwithstanding its old-cinema status. Filmed in 1933, *A Canção de Lisboa* features in Portugal’s film historiography as the first Portuguese sound film made entirely in Portugal.³ It was

directed by Cottinelli Telmo, a modernist architect who had made some short films. *A Canção de Lisboa*, Telmo's only feature-length film, was also Portugal's first musical comedy, and set the standards for the genre in Portugal, where it remained the dominant film genre up to 1960. The "ideal" Lisbon of *A Canção de Lisboa* also figures prominently in many subsequent Portuguese musical comedies, thus setting the representational norms against which the directors of the new cinema defined their work.

The narrative is simple enough: a young University student, Vasco, is nearing the end of his studies in medicine. He is living off the money that his wealthy aunts send him. He squanders his money living the bohemian life and is thrown out of his apartment. Vasco's aunts decide to visit him in Lisbon and he sets about deceiving them, acting as if he were already a practicing doctor. The aunts discover the truth and cut off his funds, so a friend gets him a job singing Fado. There is also a young woman, a seamstress, who Vasco is in love with, and as it turns out, she is also in love with him. The film ends with their marriage and Vasco's graduation as a doctor.

The impression of Lisbon in this film is idyllic, to say the least. During a dream sequence, where the seamstress imagines her honeymoon with Vasco, the young couple is shown strolling through the gardens of Lisbon and along the beachfront paths, and among the old castle ruins with the city visible in the distance. They embrace under an arch of flowers and branches that suggests a "Garden of Eden" – a sunlit paradise where they can sing and hug each other. The representation's kitsch-like character is imposing.

Belarmino also presents a narrative set in Lisbon about a young couple that meets in a Jazz club. This is the fictionalized narrative that, as discussed above, is intercut with the "documentary" story of Belarmino. One scene in particular seems intended as

something of an inversion of the depiction of life in Lisbon offered by *A Canção de Lisboa*. After spending the night at the club, the couple is shown dancing in the early morning, tightly embracing, on the patio of a tenement apartment. After awhile, the camera tilts up to follow the staircase of the nearby fire escape, stopping at the staircase's top. The romance occurs without words, with the couple exchanging furtive glances in the club, and then moving from the basement club to the tenement patio where, in an apparent allusion to the *mise-en-scene* of the earlier film, the fire escape serves as the lover's arch of paradise. In *Belarmino* the idyllic setting of *A Canção de Lisboa* is now mediated through the urban reality of 1960s Lisbon, with its shadowy, underground youth scene.

The outdoors café depicted in *A Canção de Lisboa* is like the same film's dream sequence, nestled within a garden. The patrons sit at their tables surrounded by flowers and trees as the sun provides warmth and light. The camera tracks left to right, across the patrons at their tables, moving slowly from the front near the stage to the back of the café. On the stage is a *Fadista*, a female *Fado* singer dressed in the traditional black shawl accompanied by two men on guitars. The camera tracks toward the front and then holds on the *Fadista* as she finishes the song. The entire café has been on display during the *Fadista*'s performance, and that seems to be the point of the sequence; to put on display, not only the singing of *Fado*, but the pastoral and communal setting of the café. This film seems clearly intended to offer Portuguese viewers a cinema of escape and tranquil delight.

In contrast to the open-air café of *A Canção de Lisboa* is the Jazz club of *Belarmino*. A basement space, with low ceilings and no windows, the cavernous club

features bare concrete walls and shadowy pockets of patrons sitting at tiny tables. Everyone is smoking and drinking, and wreathes of smoke hang over them, lingering in the light. The band plays in a self-absorbed manner, as if detached emotionally from those who have come to hear them. The camera tracks through the club, going away from the stage towards the back. It stops on a young woman who stands, talking on a phone. Her right arm stretched out, caressing the wall as a cigarette dangles from her fingers, she hangs up the phone and walks towards the stage to sit at a table near the front. The saxophone player looks her way. She returns his gaze, peering over the sunglasses that have slid down her nose. This is the young couple that will dance on the patio.

This sequence from *Belarmino* is similar enough to the café sequence in *A Canção de Lisboa* to suggest that Fernando Lopes had the earlier film in mind. There is the same slow track covering the entire space, placing the people and decor on display. Also central to both scenes' construction is a musical performance. However, the environment depicted is vastly different. The Jazz club, dark and seedy, is certainly not intended as a tourist promotional commercial in the manner of Portugal's established popular cinema. Instead *Belarmino* depicts a setting never allowed in the "old" cinema, a setting similar to the dreary locales of realist European films à la *Le Quai des brumes* (Marcel Carné, 1938), which António Lopes Ribeiro and other old-cinema figures had detested. Fernando Lopes is revealing on film a lifestyle never allowed before in Portuguese cinema – the underground culture of young, urban adults. Far from the musical comedies and their idyllic, pastoral settings and fairy tale plots, *Belarmino* suggests the stories of those not heard in official Portuguese culture, and the Lisbon that they inhabit, a Lisbon largely alien to the Portuguese cinema under Salazar.

Fernando Lopes had already established himself as a talented director upon his return from the London School of Film Technique in 1961 with his television work. Based on his RTP short documentaries, critics in the country had been admirers of Lopes long before he had made *Belarmino*. With the premiere of *Belarmino*, Lopes had cemented his place within the Portuguese cinema. More importantly, his critical triumph gave much needed credence to the declaration that a movement was developing – one that would inject the moribund national cinema with a vitality that young, adventurous, and driven directors could bring to the industry. No longer were the pronouncements of a “new” cinema merely, naively hopeful utterances.

Belarmino, through its hybridization of the documentary and the feature film, including techniques common to the new cinéma-vérité style, was an exciting contribution to the national cinema after decades of the “regrettable mediocrity” that had defined the latter’s recent past. In contrast to *A Canção de Lisboa* (1933), the transformation of Lisbon as the site of a cinematic “paradise” common to the genre cinema of the past is contemporised. Lisbon is displayed as a city that not only has an exciting youth culture – one where the young generation search for romance – but also as a city whose daily-life conditions can be harsh and unforgiving. *Belarmino* confirmed Fernando Lopes’ role in the transformation of the country’s film industry.

5

António de Macedo

António de Macedo came to his first feature film from a different route than his New Portuguese Cinema compatriots. Unlike Telles, Rocha, and Lopes, Macedo did not apply for one of the government grants to study at IDHEC or the London School of Film Technique. However, he was no less a student of cinema than the others.

After graduating with a degree in Architecture in 1957, Macedo pursued his interest in film by taking courses in film theory at the University of Coimbra, and at the School of Dramatic Arts in Barcelona. Macedo's interest in issues of theory and philosophy of cinema led him to publish a book on film in 1959, *A Evolução Estética de Cinema (Aesthetics in Cinema)*.¹ Film studies would continue to fascinate Macedo throughout his career, leading to a position as a professor of film aesthetics at the Instituto de Novas Profissões – a position he held from 1970-1972. This engagement with the academic study of film separates Macedo from his more practically trained colleagues of the New Portuguese Cinema. It can be argued that Macedo represents within the New Portuguese Cinema a persona similar to that of Alain Resnais within discussions of the New Wave. Further consideration of Macedo as a Portuguese “Left Bank” filmmaker can be deferred for now, however. It is enough at this stage to note that parallels to the French film movement indicate the need for further study of the New Portuguese Cinema's links with contemporaneous international trends in cinema.

Macedo, like many university educated young men and women, frequented ciné-clubs and engaged in film discussions at the clubs and in the pages of various film

journals. He contributed articles and reviews to the journals, while expanding his training in the arts by studying music composition. Macedo's wide interest in artistic endeavours also became manifest in his becoming a published novelist, especially in the fields of science fiction and fantasy. This eclecticism sets Macedo apart from his fellow New Portuguese Cinema directors.

Then, in 1961, as Telles, Rocha, and Lopes were returning from their studies abroad, Macedo obtained an 8mm camera and began to shoot amateur films. Eager to move beyond 8mm, Macedo turned to a beer manufacturer who agreed to finance his first professional film, a short documentary, *Verão Coincidente / Coincidental Summer* (1963). Given the opportunity by Telles to direct a feature film, Macedo turned to the Fernando Namora novel, *Domingo à Tarde*. Fernando Lopes, collaborating with Baptista Bastos, had intended to use this novel as the basis for his first feature, but abandoned the idea to make *Belarmino* instead. *Domingo à Tarde* would be the third film of the New Portuguese Cinema, and António de Macedo the movement's next young turk.

As I have noted, a major aspect of the New Portuguese Cinema's revitalization of the national industry was the movement's effort to re-engage with international cinema. This effort was fulfilled primarily through the inclusion of their films in competitions at international film festivals. Here Macedo figured prominently. In 1972, Macedo would accomplish what no feature film Portuguese director had managed to achieve since 1946, when his film *A Promessa / The Promise* became an entry at Cannes.² Leitão de Barros' 1946 historical drama, *Camões*, was presented at the inaugural Cannes festival. *Camões*, which Salazar had stated was of "national interest" (Costa 1991, 98) because of its glorification of Portugal's history of exploration, received negative reviews from the

international press. The film also fared poorly in Portugal, drawing only 80,000 to the theatres, and amassing a debt of 1.2 million escudos, the biggest in Portuguese film history. In contrast to this early and inauspicious participation, Macedo's *A Promessa* was positively received at the Cannes festival and received critical praise from the foreign press.³

Domingo à Tarde / Sunday Afternoon (1965)

Jorge (Rui de Carvalho), an oncologist, falls in love with a patient, Clarisse (Isabel de Castro). Her condition is terminal, and while he attempts to search for a cure, or at the very least, a way to prolong her life, she desperately wants to spend as much time with him as possible, while emotionally attempting to cope with her situation. For Jorge, the desire to be with her is tempered by his drive to heal her. On one occasion an afternoon spent with Clarisse in his home leads to conflicting feelings for him – while Clarisse pleads for Jorge to stay, he cannot reconcile his yearning to remain with the understanding that he must continue to work in his lab searching for an answer. Anguished by his inability to cure her, Jorge is tortured with thoughts of the tenuous relationship between life and death, and the fickleness of fate. The film ends, as it began, with Jorge at his desk in his office, lit only by a desk lamp, and his head in his hands, with the deafening sound of a train speeding by the hospital.

Domingo à Tarde further confirmed the status of the New Portuguese Cinema as a viable film movement within the country. Declarations for revitalization of the national cinema had begun to seem hollow, and no longer routinely surfaced in the film press. Now the critics began to drop any reference to the “old” cinema, and instead begin to

discuss the New Portuguese Cinema as if it were a positive force in its own right. Thus, when Fernando Duarte (1966) wrote his review of *Domingo à Tarde*, he declared the film to be the finest feature yet produced by the New Portuguese Cinema (15); rather than state that the film represented a further example of the promise the New Portuguese Cinema held for the national film industry, Duarte asserted that *Domingo à Tarde* proved that this young movement was taking Portuguese cinema on the “right road,” and that it was, “artistically, our best film to date” (15). The New Portuguese Cinema had moved beyond its origins within a group of upstarts and dissidents, and had – in the minds of the critics, at least – become established as a serious contribution to Portugal’s national cinema.

Macedo had, with *Domingo à Tarde*, continued a well-established tradition in Portugal of adapting literary works to the screen. Previously, adaptations had been derided by the critical community of the country as mediocre cinematic translations – poorly directed and artistically forgettable. *Domingo à Tarde* proved the exception to the rule. For J.M. Bastos da Silva (1966), an admirer of the novel, the film, much to his surprise, had visually captured the existential anxiety and psychological realism of the novel (22). Fernando Duarte (1966) also agreed, citing the exceptional performances of the actors, Isabel de Castro, Rui de Carvalho, and Isabel Ruth – the “face” of the New Portuguese Cinema and star of *Os Verdes Anos* (17). Isabel Ruth, in particular, as Lúcia, assistant to Jorge, with little dialogue, conveys her character’s deeply conflicted emotions – while dedicated as a physician to care for Clarisse and to help Jorge in the lab, she must also cope with her own romantic feelings for Jorge.

The film's apparent borrowings from psychological realism, existentialism, and allegorical symbolism (evident in the film-within-the-film, to be discussed later in this chapter), offers up comparisons to the art-cinema of Ingmar Bergman. In its review of *Domingo à Tarde*, *Cahiers du Cinéma* places the film firmly within a modernist art-cinema discourse associated also with the films of Bergman (*Domingo A Tarde* D'Antonio de Macedo (Portugal) 1965, 52). Fernando Duarte (1966) also notes the connection to Bergman – specifically the allegorical film-within-the-film, which he describes as a fine example of avant-garde filmmaking, in that it is neither gratuitous in its form nor out of place relative to the film's narrative (16). These assessments of Macedo's *Domingo à Tarde* foreground the differences in style between the three New Portuguese Cinema directors, and further support the notion that the movement achieved unity less through aesthetics than through shared methods of production.

Sound and Colour

One dramatic stylistic difference between *Domingo à Tarde* and *Os Verdes Anos* and *Belarmino* concerns the expressive use of sound and colour. Sound is heightened to convey psychological subjectivity in ways not previously explored in Portuguese cinema. The lack of non-diegetic music only adds to the sound's evidently subjective function.

The fear and anxiety felt by the patients in the hospital is not only presented visually – generally with the use of extreme close-ups of the faces – but with exaggerated sound levels. For example, when Clarisse comes to the hospital for x-rays, there is an old woman in the room with her also awaiting an examination. The laboured breathing of the old woman is unrealistically aurally foregrounded. She is filmed in extreme close-up, her

eyes staring straight into the camera as she fights for every breath. This shot is followed by a series of shots of the x-ray machine in extreme close-up. The x-ray machine's mechanical sounds heavily manipulated during post-production, reflects the unease of Clarisse and the old woman.

The intrusive and invasive medical procedures that the women must undergo, combined with the uncertainty of the outcome, is subjectively expressed through the scene's soundscape. A strategy common to art-cinema narrative form is the displacement of classical cause-and-effect plot construction in favour of character-driven psychological subjectivity (Bordwell 1985). In this sequence, a delineation of the mental states of the women takes precedence over advancement of the plot, with diegetic sounds allowing for the viewer's emotional engagement with, and understanding of, the plight of the women. At this point, the story is no longer focused solely on Clarisse but seems to comment generally on the fragile nature of human health in the face of the sterile, unsympathetic coldness of medical examinations. The sequence ends with Jorge and Lúcia standing before the developed x-rays. The shot resembles the projection of a movie in a theatre, with the two actors positioned as audience members, lit only by the exposed x-rays.

It is important to note that the scene is shot without non-diegetic music, as is the bulk of the film. Once again, Macedo eschews the use of classical narrative form, not wanting to rely on a musical score to add emotional atmosphere to the film. Macedo plays with this conventional expectation of music later on in the film, when Jorge is driving in the rain, and suddenly a steamy Jazz song intrudes for the first time. However, what might be a musical score turns into a sound-bridge with a dissolve to the inside of a Jazz club where the same song is being played by the band on the stage.

While the previous New Portuguese Cinema films were shot entirely in black and white, *Domingo à Tarde* incorporates colour film into one memorable sequence. Clarisse has come to the hospital for a blood transfusion prior to the beginning of her love affair with Jorge. In the hospital, she is being examined by Jorge, who responds remotely to her – as he does to all his patients – when she asks, “how much longer must I stay here?” He does not answer and she reaches out, tenderly, to take his hand and says, “I wish I could stay.” The close-up on her face dissolves to an out-of-focus image that, when it is pulled into focus switches to a colour film image of a close-up of a bottle of blood being rotated by a machine. The vibrancy of the red blood contrasts sharply with the stark black and white cinematography of the preceding shots. Again, the sound that accompanies the image features the heavy breathing that suggests her subjective experience of what is happening.

The following shot is a close-up of a hand, whose fingers clench into a fist and then release. The breathing is replaced by the sound of the machine rotating the blood bottle. Then a cut to a wide shot shows Clarisse lying down on a bed with Lúcia administering what we now know is a blood transfusion. Up to this point the nature of Clarisse’s affliction has not been made clear. However, the dramatic switch to colour, with its emphasis on blood red, suggests that she is suffering from a disease of the blood, a suggestion soon confirmed by a diagnosis of leukemia.

After the monochromatic black-and-white sequences that preceded this scene, the white of the walls, the bed-sheet, and Lúcia’s lab coat, take on a vibrancy not usually associated with whiteness, which here acquires definition through juxtaposition with the deep red of the blood. While Clarisse and Lúcia maintain a somber mood throughout, the

colour, ironically, offers hope for life – and specifically for the possibility that Clarisse might be cured.

The colour sequence continues after the transfusion is completed. A nurse is helping Clarisse back to her room. As they walk down the corridor, Clarisse stops at a window. As she looks out, she recoils as if blinded by the intense sunlight. At this moment the entire frame is awash with light, and immediately the film returns to black and white. The nurse, unaware of Clarisse's reaction to the sunlight asks, "what is wrong?" Clarisse does not answer, and continues to make her way to her room, and once again the film switches to colour. It returns to black and white – and remains this way for the remainder of the film – when Clarisse reaches her room, only to find that the old woman who occupied the room across from hers has died, and her body is being placed on a gurney. The possibility that the blood transfusion would somehow result in Clarisse being cured is put to rest with the reminder that death is inevitable. The vibrancy of the colour sequence must make way for the stark reality of Clarisse's condition, hence the return to black and white.

The cinematographer for *Domingo à Tarde*, Elso Roque, was a graduate of Telles' Experimental Cinema Studio and had also served as assistant on both *Os Verdes Anos* and *Belarmino*. This was his first film as director of photography, where his exemplary work shows that the New Portuguese Cinema contributed not only directors, but significant technical talent, too.

Allegory and the Subversion of Religion

As the review in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (*Domingo A Tarde* D'Antonio de Macedo (Portugal) 1965) points out, the most overt reference in *Domingo à Tarde* to the films of Ingmar Bergman is in the use of a film-within-the-film. Occurring three times throughout *Domingo à Tarde*, the film-within-the-film acts as an allegory of the significant role that religion plays in Portuguese society. As was mentioned in the first chapter, Salazar appealed to the deeply felt religious convictions of the Portuguese people in order to gain their loyalty. As such, he not only provided the Catholic Church with an important place in the Estado Novo, but also made religion a central political tool to hold onto power. Therefore, negative representations of the Catholic religion were not tolerated under Salazar's regime.

Religion is absent in the Fernando Namora novel, which the film is adapted from. Macedo uses the film-within-the-film device to comment on the socio-political relationship of religion with the Portuguese people, which also figures in the helplessness that Jorge experiences as a doctor unable to cure the woman he has come to love.

The allegory is triggered early on in the film when Jorge and Lúcia are shown going to a movie theatre, an event that occurs shortly after Jorge examines Clarisse for the first time. The film they go to watch will turn out to be the film-within-the-film. This film tells the story of a young priest who resides in what appears to be a medieval village, and who ends up dying suddenly. As he lies on the floor of the parish, wearing only a loincloth and arms outstretched, he strikes a crucifix-like pose obviously meant to signify his status as a Christ figure. As last rites are being administered, the young priest bolts to his feet and directly addresses the camera. He then runs over to the altar and motions to

grab the crucifix. After he collapses once again on the floor, an old man enters with a blanket, which he uses to cover the priest. As the old man exits, the priest reaches for the crucifix and gestures to break it. There is then a cut to a shot of the church gate being unlocked, a shot accompanied by the sound of the crucifix breaking. The following sequence shows a funeral that Jorge is attending. We later learn that this is Clarisse's funeral. At this point this sequence's objective has been to familiarize the audience with the characters and setting of the film-within-the-film. Nonetheless, the repetition of the "breaking" of the crucifix, implies a supplemental, irreverent intention.

The second use of the allegory in the film-within-the-film occurs after Jorge and Clarisse share their first kiss. This time the young priest is shown walking through the village performing exorcisms. The dialogue in this sequence is incomprehensible. It appears to be Portuguese but played backwards on a tape machine, as if to suggest, in a parodic fashion, that this film is a "foreign" art film that Jorge and Lúcia have gone to see. The link between Jorge and the priest is now established – just as the priest goes about the village, laying his hands on those whose souls need "saving," Jorge lays his hands on his patients in hopes of saving them.

The final occurrence of the film-within-the-film comes at the end of the film, after Clarisse's funeral. Jorge is shown at her grave, the only mourner, as three gravediggers cover her coffin with soil. There is a cut to a medium shot of Jorge riding inside a bus, where he holds a branch in his hand that he will soon snap. This shot is matched graphically and aurally with the shot in the film-within-the-film of the priest breaking the crucifix. The old man enters once again, but this time speaking backwards Portuguese. A series of cuts follow, jumping from Jorge on the bus, back to the Priest, and to an old

woman in the hospital – a mask over her mouth and nose. A final cut returns to the Priest, this time wearing his cassock and exiting out of the parish into the blinding light of the day. The sequence seems intended to suggest that Jorge has forsaken any connection to a higher religious power that dispenses comfort, with the breaking of the crucifix in the film-within-the-film literalizing his own loss of faith. By using the ambiguity of art cinema narration within these sequences, Macedo was able to subtly subvert the role of religion as a powerful institution, pointing out its hypocrisies and shortcomings, yet in a manner carefully avoiding obvious violations of the state's censorship code.

The stylistic singularity of *Domingo à Tarde* undermines the notion that the New Portuguese Cinema was a movement of directors united by a common aesthetic vision. The distinct individual styles of Macedo, Lopes, and Rocha – the movement's key figures – did, however, signal a break with Portugal's history of genre-driven filmmaking, and provided concrete models for aspiring directors committed to unique artistic visions. In the wake of Macedo and his new-cinema colleagues, Portuguese cinema could, once and for all, dispense with the long-held belief that there was no possibility of competing artistically with the finest of international films. In effect, Rocha, Lopes, and Macedo provided role models for a generation of aspiring filmmakers, who would further contribute to the auteurist transformation of the national cinema.

Macedo, with his background in academic film theory and aesthetics, had come to directing from a different route than his two colleagues. Rather than study filmmaking in a school, Macedo began by making amateur 8mm films before moving onto professional productions. *Domingo à Tarde's* art cinema aesthetic drew comparisons to the films of

Ingmar Bergman, and the film, clearly bears a resemblance to the Swedish director's work. The subjective use of sound, along with the bold incorporation of colour, helped define Macedo as a director who challenged the audience's expectations for a Portuguese film. In tackling the near taboo subject of religion, Macedo dared to infuse his film with a political sensibility, and did so in a way that hinted at what was to come during the next nine years, as Portugal moved toward revolution and ultimately toward democracy.

Conclusion

From a Movement to a National Cinema

Paulo Rocha's *Mudar de Vida / Change of Life* (1966)

With the release of Paulo Rocha's second film, *Mudar de Vida*, the New Portuguese Cinema can be said to have come to an end. Although some suggest that the movement lasted until 1974, when the Estado Novo ended, and democracy came to Portugal,¹ what took place in the eight years after *Mudar de Vida*, I argue, is best understood as a new phase in the development of the Portuguese cinema's change from a cinema of genres to a cinema of auteurs. From the latter standpoint, *Mudar de Vida* acts as a bridge, linking the New Portuguese Cinema to the final phase in the revitalization process, and, according to the terms proposed in the Introduction, to the formation of a "new steady state."

For *Mudar de Vida*, Rocha left Lisbon behind to instead tell a story of the effects of emigration and the colonial wars on rural families. Set in the northern fishing village of Furadouro, the film centres on the character Adelino (Geraldo del Rey), who has recently returned to Furadouro after serving in the army in Africa. He soon discovers that his brother, Raimundo (Nunes Vidal), has married Julia (Maria Barroso), the girl Adelino had loved and planned to marry upon his return. Raimundo, a migrant worker, no longer lives in the village, but returns when he can from work in other European countries. Adelino takes on work as a fisherman, and meets Albertina (Isabel Ruth), a young woman who works in a factory near the village. She is desperate to leave the village, and together with Adelino, she plans to begin life elsewhere.

Critically, *Mudar de Vida* was a rousing success. Like *Domingo à Tarde* before it, its reception entailed no reference to the “old” cinema; instead the film was discussed as a further example of the vitality of the current national cinema. Paulo Rocha, at the age of thirty, had become not just a director of the New Portuguese Cinema, but a leading figure of the national cinema as a whole. Indeed, where the inclusion of New Portuguese Cinema films at an international festival was once cause alone for jubilation, now critics rejoiced in reporting the tremendous ovation *Mudar de Vida* had received at the Venice Film Festival (*Mudar de Vida em Veneza* 1966, 1). The movement had established its festival presence, and credentials, among critics not only in Portugal but internationally as well.

With their second films, Fernando Lopes and António de Macedo also constructed narratives set outside Lisbon. The shift in the later films away from Lisbon as the principal setting and toward the rural villages of Portugal marks a significant development in the history of the New Portuguese Cinema. For this group of filmmakers, the move beyond Lisbon represented a move away from the critical expectations that had defined them as a “young” cinema. *Mudar de Vida* signifies a turning point in the new-cinema movement’s history, declaring the movement’s end, while simultaneously pointing ahead to a new phase in the directors’ careers.

Politically, the film is far more overt than the movement’s earlier work. Rocha exposes the harsh reality of the affects of Salazar’s social policies, although without specifically indicating the Salazar regime. Families were torn apart as husbands and children had to seek employment outside the country, a problem explored in the film’s narrative.² The effects of this migration were particularly devastating in the rural villages,

where agricultural policies left many families without any source of income. Throughout *Mudar de Vida* men are shown leaving the village in tearful farewells as work becomes harder to find in the region. And for those returning to their homes after serving in the military in Africa, they must also contend with the lack of employment, receiving no monetary compensation, or other sort of help, for their service. The new-cinema films that followed *Mudar de Vida* would also take a frank approach to social conditions brought about after forty years of regressive government policies. This decidedly political stance further marks the break with the New Portuguese Cinema as it developed from 1963 to 1967.

Centro Português de Cinema (Portuguese Cinema Centre)

In 1968 the state of Portuguese cinema changed with the formation of the Centro Português de Cinema (Portuguese Cinema Centre). The Centre was funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, which had decided, based on the accomplishments of the New Portuguese Cinema, to support filmmaking in the country. After decades of limited government funding and a tightly controlled national production system that had favoured older directors, the Foundation decided that the time was right to follow the example of the young filmmakers and promote Portuguese cinema on the international art-cinema market. In effect, by supporting Paulo Rocha, António da Cunha Telles, Fernando Lopes, António de Macedo and others, the Gulbenkian Foundation, under the auspices of the Portuguese Cinema Centre, shifted the power-base of the Portuguese cinema away from the old guard and toward the young generation of filmmakers. For example, the Portuguese Cinema Centre produced the second films of Fernando Lopes

and António de Macedo, and the first features of New Portuguese Cinema assistants, Fernando Matos Silva and Alberto Seixas Santos, both of whom also had significant film careers lasting to the present day. Subsequent to Salazar's death, all of these directors collaborated on a documentary, *As Armas e os Povos / Arms and the People* (1974), a film that examined the Salazar years and the recent events of the Carnation Revolution.

As discussed in the first chapter, beginning in the early 1930s with the emergence of Portugal's genre cinema and continuing up through the early 1960s, Portuguese film existed in a state of "regrettable mediocrity." The government's neglect and policies had a devastating effect on the industry, almost permanently harming its development, as the infamous "year zero" in 1955 proves. Things begin to change, however, with the loosening of repression in the 1960s, which, for one, provided the young filmmakers with an opportunity to study abroad and thereby gain the experience and desire to change the industry.

As noted in chapter two, producer António da Cunha Telles, having worked with the French New Wave, created a new-cinema production company and took it upon himself to become the movement's promoter. Along with many of Portugal's film critics, Telles helped herald the rise of the New Portuguese Cinema. But, the failure of the New Portuguese Cinema to match the critical praise with success at the box-office eventually resulted in the demise of Cunha Telles Productions in 1968. A similar situation arose for many of the "new" cinemas of the 1960s. Many small companies were formed, but were unable to survive in the film business, which was founded upon popular genre films, rather than experimental art cinema. As Pierre Sorlin (1991) states, "[e]ven when they were awarded international prizes, the new films met with a weak response from the

general public” (166). In an interview conducted in Montreal for *La Presse* in 1967, Rocha noted that the Portuguese “prefer to see foreign films [most of which came from Hollywood]. They are not ready to see their problems on the screen” (quoted in *Paulo Rocha* 1996, 75). The films of the New Portuguese Cinema, despite the critical acclaim and international recognition, failed to find wide acceptance with the general public.

Nevertheless, the lack of financial success does not diminish the tremendous impact of the New Portuguese Cinema on the national film industry. The complacency and mediocrity that had plagued Portuguese cinema for much of its history had been replaced by a vibrancy that would continue to flourish. Directors were no longer working within the stale genres that had previously dominated the country’s film production, and were often inclined to cultivate their own individual styles and themes, rather than work in the standardized manner familiar to commercial cinema.

Chapter three highlights the film *Os Verdes Anos* and its director Paulo Rocha, showing how the film helped to establish the careers of the actors Isabel Ruth and Rui Gomes, as well as promote the music of Carlos Paredes. Transfiguring traditional conventions in film and music, *Os Verdes Anos* looks forward to a new style of film in Portugal, while not denying the cultural roots of Portuguese cinema. The film also frames Lisbon in a more contemporary, realistic fashion, dispensing with the idyllic version of the city of the “old” cinema. The film’s representation of the urban geography of Portugal is informed by deep understanding of the country’s history.

The first film of Fernando Lopes, *Belarmino*, again re-configures the cinematic Lisbon – the city itself becomes a character in the film, one that the boxer, Belarmino Fragoso, must fight daily. Chapter four also analyzes the film against the 1933 musical

comedy *A Canção de Lisboa*, showing that, while the New Portuguese Cinema was moving away from the genre-based filmmaking of their predecessors, they nevertheless were aware of their nation's cinema history.

Finally, in chapter five, António de Macedo's *Domingo à Tarde* offers an adaptation of a Portuguese novel that the critics declared was the finest literary adaptation produced in the country. Its art-cinema style and form varied dramatically from the earlier two films, *Os Verdes Anos* and *Belarmino*, confirming that the New Portuguese Cinema was not a movement of filmmakers with a shared aesthetic. Rather, the movement produced three auteurs who drew on a vast knowledge of international cinema to explore themes and narratives in highly distinctive ways.

It is this establishment of a cinema of auteurs that is the New Portuguese Cinema's greatest contribution to Portuguese cinema. As a revitalization movement, the "new steady state" that emerged after 1967 accomplished what not even the French New Wave had achieved – that is, a national cinema wholly different from what had preceded it. Contrary to Pierre Sorlin's remarks regarding the limitations inherent in the study of small film producing countries, this thesis has demonstrated ways in which a study of the New Portuguese Cinema might cast new light on the "new wave" and "young cinema" phenomenon in world cinema during the 1960s. The New Wave affected cinema everywhere, but meant different things in different places. National comparisons can add new layers of meaning, broadening the scope of our understanding of how national cinemas interface with international currents. Indicative here is the New Portuguese Cinema's complex relationship to the French New Wave. Given the unique conditions in Portugal, the latter's effects on the former, were often unpredictable. For instance, as I

have shown in chapter two, the New Portuguese Cinema was able to put into practice a mode of production that the New Wave had imagined, but in the end did not practice.

This is certainly not a definitive history of the New Portuguese Cinema, and further study into this movement will yield deeper meanings and greater insight. The thesis is intended as an initial investigation into the national cinema of Portugal, and its intersection with major currents in world cinema. The genres that dominated the early sound era deserve a study all of their own, allowing for a cataloguing of the conventions and trends that might clarify differences (and similarities) between Portugal's popular cinema and that of other nations. The censorship of film under the forty-year Salazar regime also deserves study, as does the question of how Portuguese cinema under Salazar compares to other national cinemas under similar dictatorships. Finally, the incredible career of Manoel de Oliveira, who at the time of this writing, continues to direct powerful films at age ninety-five, is a filmmaker whose work deserves careful study. More work needs to be done in situating Portuguese cinema in international contexts. I look forward to continuing with this scholarship, and hopefully, along the way, to encourage new interest in what the cinemas of small countries such as Portugal can reveal of international cinema trends.

Notes

Introduction

1. Taken from the press release of the 40th International Thessaloniki Film Festival, Nov. 12-21, 1999. See http://www.filmfestival.gr/1999/press/press3_uk.html
2. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Portuguese texts are my own.
3. 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 *Lion, Mariaud, Pallu: Franceses Tipicamente Portugueses* (2003).
4. 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.
5. Wallace had observed that certain cultural systems recurrent in history share common characteristics. Of particular interest are what he calls revitalization processes. "Nativistic movements," "reform movements," "cargo cults," "messianic movements," to name just a few, are all processes of revitalization. Wallace limits his examples to areas of religion; however, in defining the five stages, he refers to all cultural systems.
6. For an incisive history of the European Union, see Dinan (2004).
7. After the election Delgado failed to secure any support from the military, despite protests, strikes, and demonstrations in support of Delgado, and international condemnation of the election results. Delgado was eventually forced into exile. In 1965 he and his secretary were murdered in Spain by four PIDE (state police) agents.

8. For example, see Dyer and Vincendeau (1992), Petrie (1992), Everett (1996), Forbes and Street (2000), and Ezra (2004).

Chapter 1. The Years of 'Regrettable Mediocrity'

1. See Nichols (1976).
2. See *O novo cinema português* (1960), *Cronologia do cinema novo português* (1964), Duarte (1964a), and Duarte (1965).
3. The exteriors for *A Severa* were filmed silent in Portugal, while the interiors were filmed in the Tobis studios in Paris. The sound was also recorded at Tobis with the assistance of René Clair. The first sound film produced and recorded in Portugal was Cottinelli Telmo's *A Canção de Lisboa* (1933), a musical that served to establish conventions that would become familiar to much subsequent film production in Portugal.
4. Barros' *As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor* was the second film version of the popular novel by Julio Dinis (1839-1871). In 1923, Maurice Mariaud filmed a version of the novel for his second film in Portugal.
5. Made for 6,000,000 escudos, the film lost 4,000,000 escudos. Leitão de Barros would effectively end his filmmaking career with two documentaries made a full decade after *Vendaval Maravilhoso – Comemorações Henriquinas* (1960) and *Escolas de Portugal* (1962).
6. The nation-state of Portugal was established in 1147 with the defeat of the Moors by Afonso Henriques, who became Portugal's first king. The country remained a monarchy until 1910 when the army and navy successfully launched a coup, sending into exile King Manuel II ("the unfortunate"). For the next sixteen years, there were forty-five changes of

government, sometimes through violent overthrow, as the establishment of a “democratic” republic was attempted. Portugal, finally, experienced political stability when General Carmona emerged as President – a position he held until his death in 1951. Because of the sad state of the economy (the country was near bankruptcy), Carmona turned to Dr. António de Oliveira Salazar, an economics professor, to become Finance Minister. However, Salazar quickly became disillusioned with political infighting within the government and resigned after only a few days in office. The country’s economic situation continued its decline over the next two years, and in desperation, Carmona, once again turned to Salazar, who accepted the post of Finance Minister under the condition that he have complete control over all government spending. Solidifying his power within the government, Salazar officially was named Prime Minister in 1932, and thus, established the Estado Novo.

7. Salazar believed in an economic system, dominated by a group of elites, whose wealth would ensure a healthy economy. Among these ‘twenty families,’ was Alfredo da Silva, who owned some one hundred companies, and when he died in 1942 was listed by *Time* as the sixth richest man in the world (Kaplan 1998, 130).

8. António Lopes Ribeiro (1908-1975) first worked as film critic for the newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* from 1926 until 1928 when he became a filmmaker. After making a number of short silent films, he travelled to various film studios in Europe. After directing *A Revolução de Maio* in 1937, he was contracted to the state-controlled Sociedade Portuguesa de Actualidades Cinematográficas, making short propaganda documentaries, with titles such as; *A Manifestação Nacional a Salazar / National Homage to Salazar* (1941), *Gentes Que Nós Civilizámos / The People We Civilize* (1944),

and *Lisboa Vista pelas Suas Crianças / Lisbon As Seen By Its Children* (1958). He continued to make these films until the 1974 revolution.

9. In addition to his work as a director, Lopes Ribeiro, through his work as a producer, had the authority to provide funding for a film through his government connections.

10. In 1944 the government decided to change the name, omitting the word “propaganda,” because of its negative connotations.

11. This program was sponsored by the Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth), the Fundo do Cinema (Cinema Fund), and the Ministério da Educação (Ministry of Education). The Mocidade Portuguesa, a fascist youth organization, hoped the program would indoctrinate young people into the aging regime.

12. Among the students at the studio were, eventual New Portuguese Cinema cinematographer, Elso Roque (Paulo Rocha’s 1967 *Mudar de Vida*), and assistant cinematographer, Acácio de Almeida (António de Macedo’s 1965 *Domingo à Tarde*). Both men would become, arguably, Portugal’s greatest cinematographers, continuing to work with their contemporaries of the New Portuguese Cinema, as well as Manoel de Oliveira.

13. The number of film clubs dwindled to only 18 by 1970. This may have resulted from the instability that gripped the nation during these tumultuous and final years of the Salazar regime. The film clubs had long been regarded as hotbeds of leftist thinkers and sympathizers opposed to the Salazar regime. The regime, in an attempt to maintain its’ control had severely restricted freedoms in the country during this time, as is evident in the area of film censorship. After the 1974 revolution, *Cinéfilo* magazine devoted an entire issue to censorship under Salazar. See (1974).

14. The country's public broadcaster held a monopoly until 1992. RTP now houses one of the largest public audio-visual archives in the world.

15. Paulo Rocha's professional career in Portugal began as assistant to Oliveira on the films *Acto da Primavera / Spring Mystery Play* (1963) and *A Caça / The Hunt* (1963).

Chapter 2. António da Cunha Telles

1. In the early years of the New Wave both men received inheritances, which they put to use to fund film projects. See Michel Marie (2003) and Richard Neupert (2002).

2. See *The Portuguese Cinema* (1975), Passek (1982), Coelho (1983), *Cinema Novo Português* (1985), and Costa (1991).

3. Telles would direct his first feature film, *O Cerco / The Circle*, in 1969. It made a star (and a sex symbol) 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. See, *Exito de O Cerco em Paris* (1967), 29-31. 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.

4. 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 (1991), 134-135.

5. With a population of approximately 10 million, and a yearly attendance figure of 20 million, the average of 2 films per person in Portugal makes it impossible for a Portuguese film to recoup its cost without the assistance of international funding. With

Portuguese screens dominated by Hollywood films (a situation common in many countries), international co-productions have become the norm in Portugal.

Chapter 3. Paulo Rocha

1. Jacques Bontemps would also praise Manoel de Oliveira's *A Caça* (the short film which Paulo Rocha assisted on).
2. For an analysis of the French New Wave "star-system" see Marie (2003).
3. See Monaco (1976), Hayward (1993), Neupert (2002), and Marie (2003).
4. See Costa (1991), 127-128.
5. At that time, the film script was submitted to the censorship board, which resulted in many scripts being rejected until after the 1974 revolution. For example, Fernando Matos Silva, Rocha's assistant on *Os Verdes Anos*, had a script with which he wanted to begin his own career as a director. He was denied funding because of its overtly sexual and political content. The film, *O Mal Amado*, was eventually made and released shortly after the 1974 revolution.
6. "Fado is a strophic song-form peculiar to Portuguese culture, sung equally by both sexes and accompanied almost exclusively by two stringed instruments, the guitarra and the viola. The lyrical content of the Fado is of paramount importance, and the ability of the singer to communicate a range of emotions through the lyrics lies at the very heart of the genre. Fados emanating from Lisbon can be broadly divided into three main subject groups: love, jealousy and passion; celebrations of local areas such as Alfama and Mouraria; and songs about Fadistas and the history of the Fado....Every Fado must, however, contain two essential ingredients: poetry and saudade" (Vernon 1998, 1).

7. Oliveira's assistant on *Aniki Bóbbó*, Manuel Guimarães (1915-1975) would later direct the film *Vidas sem Rumor / Lives on the Loose* (1953, released in 1956), which experienced censorship problems that affected his career for many years afterward.

António da Cunha Telles produced two films for Guimarães – *O Crime da Aldeia Velha* (1964) and *O Trigo e o Joio* (1965). See Costa (1991), 115-116.

8. For a brief discussion of the 1958 elections consult the Introduction to this thesis, pp.6-7.

9. Sousa's *Dom Roberto*, a film in the style of Italian neo-realism, has been considered as the first film of the New Portuguese Cinema. See Costa (1991), *Cinema Novo Português* (1985), for arguments made for its inclusion. However, I argue that the film is a pre-cursor, in the way that *Bob le Flambeur* (Jean-Pierre Melville, 1955) and *Les Amants* (Louis Malle, 1958) are considered pre-cursors of the French New Wave (Neupert, 2002). Furthermore, Sousa was primarily a short film director, and *Dom Roberto* was his only feature length film. Nonetheless, Sousa is an important figure in the history of Portuguese cinema. In 1946 he founded the film club, Circulo de Cinema, and along with the Porto Cinema Club, initiated the cine-club culture, crucial to the revitalization of the national cinema.

10. Calouste Gulbenkian, a wealthy Hungarian émigré, had established a Foundation to fund cultural activities in Portugal as a sign of his appreciation for the country that offered him refuge during WWII.

Chapter 4. Fernando Lopes

1. After 1967, critics were still referring to the New Portuguese Cinema. See O "Boom" do Cinema Nacional (1972), Cardoso (1972), Duarte (1972a), and Duarte (1972b).

However, I argue that once the Gulbenkian Foundation steps in with financial support, and the young directors become the de facto national cinema, they have established a "new steady state" and no longer are a "new" film movement.

2. I have been unable to locate publication information for these books. They are referenced in, *Cinema Novo Português* (1985), 155.

3. The film also features a young Manoel de Oliveira among its cast.

Chapter 5. Antonio de Macedo

1. I have been unable to locate publication information for this book. It is referenced in *Cinema Novo Português* (1985), 167.

2. In 1958, João Mendes' documentary, *Rapsódia Portuguesa*, was shown at Cannes.

3. See Ciment (1976), 78.

Conclusion

1. See *The Portuguese Cinema* (1975), Passek (1982), Coelho (1983), *Cinema Novo Português* (1985), and Costa (1991).

2. Between 1961 and 1974 it is estimated that 1.5 million Portuguese emigrated to other countries looking for work. Many young men left to avoid military service in the African colonies. See Gallagher (1983), 157.

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