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Becoming Modern at the Movies:
Gender, Class, and Urban Space in Twentieth-Century Brazil

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Becoming Modern at the Movies: Gender, Class, and Urban Space in Twentieth-Century Brazil By Lena Oak Suk

This dissertation analyzes the physical expression of modernity through two overlapping narratives: the emergence of women in public spaces of leisure in Brazil, and the history of movie-going in its largest city, São Paulo. In the early and mid-twentieth century, both cinemas and movie-going women were powerful symbols of what was modern in Brazil. Cinemas screened the latest Hollywood films and imported advanced projection technologies. The presence of women in cinemas, streets, and shops signaled Brazil's entry into a cosmopolitan culture that was represented in glamorized images of Paris and New York. The focus on movie-going rather than movie-making reveals how modernity was physically constructed in the built space of cinemas, in the slender bodies of fashionable women, in the "photogenic" gestures of actors, and in the practices of everyday moviegoers. It also emphasizes the transnational dimensions of local film culture as Brazilian movie fans wrote letters to their favorite stars and interpreted the images of Hollywood. The geographic, material, and social accessibility of movie-going offers the opportunity to analyze how people of various class and racial backgrounds came together within cinemas, simultaneously sharing spaces and creating difference. An investigation of class in cinemas reveals the history of middle-class culture in Brazil, and how it was constructed through rituals of dating and images of romance. Through the close analysis of diverse sources such as photographs, blueprints, oral history, and literature, this dissertation examines how modern girls and cinema kings, Catholic women's societies and shopgirls, municipal officials and everyday moviegoers, constructed modernity in Brazil through their interaction with cinema.

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Abbreviations

AHSP Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo

AESP Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo

CB Cinemateca Brasileira de São Paulo

CCSP Centro Cultural São Paulo

DEOPS Departamento Estadual de Ordem Política e Social

FAU Faculdade da Arquitetura e Urbanismo

USP Universidade de São Paulo

Introduction

Going to the movies in São Paulo, Brazil. My spouse and I got off the bus on Avenida São João and walked up to the Cinema Marabá, a movie theater that first opened in 1945. We waited in several lines: one to buy a ticket, another to enter the cinema, and a third to receive 3D glasses from an attendant who carefully picked them out of a foam-lined case. There was a constant stream of confused questions: “what line is this? Do you have your ticket? What are you waiting for?” I showed my passport, my visa, and my health insurance card to get a student discount on the already discounted weekday special; it came out to eight *reais*, about four dollars. The first time we went to the Cinema Marabá, we went with nothing but a half-melted bar of chocolate in my purse. This time, we followed the example of others in the audience, and came in with burgers, fries, and ice cream cones from the McDonald’s across the street. Others preferred the kibes and esfihas from Habib’s, a Brazilian, Middle-Eastern fast food chain that was also just across the street on Avenida Ipiranga. We put perspiring *latões* (16 oz cans) of *Skol*, Brazil’s cheap beer of choice, in our cup holders. The movie began, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*. As soon as it began one woman moaned, “it’s subtitled? Laaaaame... (*é legendado? Chaaaaato...*)” Another man peppered the audience with questions; “What happened to Sirius (*cadê o Sirius?*) [character in the Harry Potter series]?” Kids in the audience answered: “He died in the fifth! (*morreu na quinta!*)” and others answered with an even louder shush “*psssssssst!*”

Substitute the cheap beverage of choice and the preferred globalized cuisine, and it was a scene that might have been anywhere else in the world, from the movie on the screen to the jeers in the audience. Yet, it was also one that was distinct to that particular

theater in that neighborhood of São Paulo, Brazil. The Cinema Marabá opened in 1945 when the blocks surrounding Avenida São João and Ipiranga were called “Cinelândia,” or “Movie-land,” named for the cluster of deluxe cinemas that were a part of middle-class consumption and culture. Over the next sixty years, the social status of the cinema reflected the overall economic decline of the downtown Centro neighborhood as residents and businesses moved southward. The soft-core porn, martial arts, and “B” films the cinema screened in the 1970s were a visible mark of the neighborhood’s marginality. In 2011, the newly renovated Cine Marabá was one of the few “street cinemas” left in a city better known for its traffic, high-rise apartments, and horizontal sprawl. The R\$8 student ticket (usually R\$5 on Wednesdays for a non 3D film) was one of the cheapest available in a city in which “VIP” cinemas, with reclining seats and full wait staff, charged up to R\$50, or \$25 a person.¹ I doubt moviegoers snuck in cheap beer to eat with goat cheese quiches, which are available to order at the Kinoplex in Vila Olimpia, 25 miles south of the Centro.

That night at the Cine Marabá, the most quotidian and mundane of practices, from the way we stood in line, the food we ate, to the jokes we told and heard, spoke to issues of modernity, class, and urban space. Even the bureaucratic process of waiting in several lines and the special case that held 3D glasses had meaning; the latter was a marker of sanitary practices that made the 3D experience modern and up-to-date. When the first 3D movie opened in São Paulo in 1954 at the Cine República, a few blocks away from the Cine Marabá, the cinema employed women in white uniforms to sanitize the glasses with

¹ Miguel Barbieri Jr., “São Paulo é a Cidade com Mais Salas de Cinema VIP do País,” *Veja SP*, October 6,

an imported “Sanitron” machine after each use.² In order to avoid paying extra taxes, the cinema managers “rented” the glasses instead of including them in the elevated ticket prices.³ To signify the separate transactions, moviegoers waited in at least two different lines: one to purchase tickets and enter the cinema, another to rent and receive the 3D glasses. An usher held his arms across the door, between the two lines like a human turnstile.⁴ The manager of the Cine República complained, however, that moviegoers had been purchasing or stealing 3D glasses from other movie theaters to use at the Cine República, cheating the cinema out of the profits it had so cleverly attempted to hide from the government. Modernity, bureaucracy, *jeitinho*, or Brazilian “shortcuts,” with a dash of Hollywood, were bundled together at the movies.

For much of the twentieth century across the globe, cinema and the movie-going experience were bound up with the concept of modernity, an imagined ideal of what was supposedly “advanced” or representative of “progress.”⁵ Intellectuals, politicians, and artists from countries like the U.S., Russia, and Brazil, hailed cinema as not only a modern medium, but a tool to build nation-states, disseminate images of industry and urbanization, and to educate a populace.⁶ In early twentieth-century Brazil, legislators demanded that cinemas be constructed with incombustible and sanitary materials in order

² Inimá Simões, *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo* (São Paulo, Brazil: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura de São Paulo, 1990), 91.

³ Edgard Oliveira, “Cine Republica - Flash Light Publicidade Aluguel de Óculos,” May 17, 1954, Cinemas Caixa 3, Pasta 2, Processo 2007-0.300.228-3, número da capa 0.163.528-53, AHSP.

⁴ “Cinema e Teatro” in *Bandeirante da Tela*, No. 591. (São Paulo: Divulgação Cinematográfica Bandeirante, 1954). VHS VV00048. CB

⁵ See the introduction of chapter three for a larger discussion of the concept of modernity and cinema in Brazil

⁶ On the U.S., see Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). For a study of early, pre-Soviet Russian cinema, see Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and Its Cultural Reception*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. Alan Bodger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). For a brief introduction to the theme of modernity in Latin American cinemas, see Ana M. López, “Early Cinema and Modernity in Latin America,” *Cinema Journal* 40, no. 1 (2000): 48–78.

to build a safe, hygienic, modern city. Film intellectuals proclaimed that “the progress of a country is measured by its number of movie theaters and by the films it presents to the world,” clamoring for a Brazilian production and exhibition industry to counter North American and European cultural imperialism.⁷ At the same time, they remained ambivalent regarding the working-class audiences, scantily-clad women, and the immigrant film exhibitors who surrounded movie theaters. In the 1940s and 1950s, moviegoers who saw the latest Hollywood films in air-conditioned cinemas participated in a global leisure activity that represented the epitome of modern and middle-class taste, mirrored in cultural capitals like New York and Paris. The declining social status of movie-going after the 1970s spoke to intellectuals’ and everyday moviegoers’ concerns that modernity was a lost dream in Brazil; abandoned movie theaters became a symbol of urban deterioration and a metaphor for Brazilian economic and social malaise.

At its broadest level, this dissertation is about physical expressions of modernity, in the built spaces of cinemas, in the gestures of aspiring actors, in the practices of everyday moviegoers. Examining the physicality of the movie-going experience has ramifications for the study of urbanization, the performance and construction of gender, class and race, and the meanings of modernity in early and mid-twentieth century Brazil. In this study of cinema, the concept of “Brazilian cinema” shifts focus from production to reception, from movie-making to movie-going.⁸ While the movies themselves fade into

⁷ “O progresso de um país mede-se pelo número de Cinemas que elle possui e pelos filmes que apresenta ao mundo” “Apresentação” *Cinearte, Álbum de 1928*, January, 1928. Various film historians, including Ismail Xavier and Sheila Schvarzman, have referred to this slogan to illustrate the nationalist ideology of the film intellectuals writing for the Brazilian film magazine *Cinearte*.

⁸ In the examination of movie-going, my project is part of the growing field of “new film history” which responds to film scholar Richard Maltby’s call for film historians to make film history “matter more” and to embed cinema into social and cultural history. See Richard Maltby “Introduction” in Richard Maltby, ed. *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), 3. This call has yielded rich scholarship on issues such as segregated movie-going practices in the

the background of this dissertation, the social experience of cinema highlights how film exhibitors, moviegoers, politicians, and moralists, interpreted and produced modernity in their everyday lives.

These themes are central to a historical narrative of one of the largest cities in the Americas, São Paulo, Brazil. A distinctly twentieth-century city, São Paulo's exponential growth in population and economy occurred in a very short period of time. A "sleepy town" of 35,000 people 1880, the city swelled to 600,000 in 1920, and 2.2 million by 1950.⁹ The population hovers around 20 million today.¹⁰ Many of the 4 million immigrants who arrived in Brazil in the early twentieth century came to São Paulo, working in the factories that made the city "the most important industrial center, not just of Brazil, but of all of South America."¹¹ Historian Nicolau Sevcenko has characterized the city's transformation in the 1920s as an "ecstatic Orpheus," in which *paulistanos*, residents of the city, danced and walked to the beat of jazz-bands and the hum of new machinery.¹² Cinemas were both an outcome and a factor in this transformation, as immigrants dominated the growing film exhibition industry, factory workers filled the seats, women emerged in public spaces, and glittering marquees flashed on the sidewalks.

U.S. south, or on how class difference has been expressed in the spatial distribution of movie theaters. For recent work, see Richard Maltby, ed. *Going to the Movies*, Richard Maltby, Daniel Biltereyst, and Philippe Meers, eds., *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011). For issues related to identity and movie-going, especially in relation to race, class, gender and space in the U.S., see Jacqueline Stewart, *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Jeffrey F. Klenotic, "Class Markers in the Mass Movie Audience: A Case Study in the Cultural Geography of Moviegoing, 1926-1932," *The Communication Review* 2, no. 4 (1998): 461-95, doi:10.1080/10714429809368568; Kathryn Fuller-Seeley, *Hollywood in the Neighborhood: Historical Case Studies of Local Moviegoing* (University of California Press, 2008).

⁹ George Andrews, *Blacks & Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 21.

¹⁰ "Brazil," *The World Factbook*, June 23, 2014, accessed August 1, 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>.

¹¹ Andrews, 19

¹² Nicolau Sevcenko, *Orfeu Extático na Metrópole: São Paulo, Sociedade e Cultura nos Frementes Anos 20* (São Paulo SP: Companhia das Letras, 1992).

In the 1980 film *Bye Bye Brasil*, a magician speaks of snow as the specter of civilization in the advanced world, of what Brazil, as a hot, tropical country, can never attain.¹³ Whereas in Rio de Janeiro in the 1910s, *cariocas* fretted that the Rio de Janeiro heat made it impossible to go to the cinema in the summertime,¹⁴ São Paulo film critic Rubem Biáfora nostalgically remembered how mid-twentieth-century São Paulo “was a cold city, and cold is civilized.”¹⁵ Although São Paulo’s moniker of “the city of drizzle” (*a cidade da garoa*) is decidedly dreary, it also signifies the city’s romanticized difference from the heat and natural beauty of Rio de Janeiro. It was in São Paulo, not Rio de Janeiro, where the first “talkie” film opened in 1929. Film critics from Rio de Janeiro bittersweetly congratulated São Paulo on acquiring the advanced technology, remarking, “São Paulo represents one of the largest cinematographic centers of the country, and is every day gaining an advantage over Rio de Janeiro, even though the *paulista* [referring to São Paulo state] capital has only half the population.”¹⁶ When journalists deemed movie-going the “only” or “most popular” diversion in São Paulo in the 1940s, they were not just affirming the popularity of cinema, but the imagined status of a city that was somehow “inherently” modern and cosmopolitan: cold, industrialized, and privatized.

Focusing on movie-going in São Paulo not only provides a cultural history of a city better known for its industry than its leisure, it focuses on the construction of the city

¹³ *Bye Bye Brasil*. Directed by Carlos Diegues (Luiz Carlos Barreto Produções Cinematográficas, 1980) DVD (New Yorker Video, 2007)

¹⁴ José Inácio de Melo Souza, *Imagens do Passado: São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro nos Primórdios do Cinema* (São Paulo: Senac, 2003).

¹⁵ Rubem Biáfora, Interview with Inimá Simões. Transcript and cassette tape, March 31, 1982, Arquivo Multimeios, CCSP.

¹⁶ “S. Paulo representa um dos grandes centros cinematographicos do país e centro que dia a dia vai se avantajando ao Rio de Janeiro, embora a capital paulista tenha apenas a metade da população do Rio de Janeiro.” *Cinearte*. April 24, 1929 no. 165.

through its affective spaces. Bruce Larkin's study of movie-going in Northern Nigeria stresses how the open-air cinemas of contemporary Kano are physically and socially embedded in the lights of the city, the smells of the streets, and even the rumble of evening thunderstorms.¹⁷ The physical and affective element of cinema has been present since the inception of the medium. Filmmakers produced pornographic films almost as soon as the technology became available.¹⁸ The Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein revolutionized filmmaking with his use of abrupt cuts and "collision" montage that aimed to "shock" moviegoers out of their capitalist slumber.¹⁹ Contemporary "gross-out" and "trash" filmmaker John Waters has been called the "Prince of Puke" for the gagging he both features in his films and hopes to incite in his viewers.²⁰

While these are all extreme examples of how cinema has functioned as an affective medium, the more quotidian aspects are well-known and even cliché: romantic love both on and off screen, comedy and raucous laughter, action and adventure, melodrama and tears. My exploration of movie-going, however, focuses on a time period when the medium and its associated emotions were very new, especially for the women who began to occupy public spaces of leisure in the early twentieth century. Connected through the growth of Hollywood, women filled the seats of cinemas in São Paulo, as they did in other cities, from Rio de Janeiro, to New York and Tokyo, and participated in a transnational culture of movie-going. This dissertation examines both the social history

¹⁷ Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁸ The now classic scholarly examination of pornographic films is Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

¹⁹ For an analysis of Sergei Eisenstein's writing on emotional responses to film, see Greg Smith, "Moving Explosions: Metaphors of Emotion in Sergei Eisenstein's Writings," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 21, no. 4 (2004): 303–15.

²⁰ John Waters and Simon Doonan, *Shock Value: A Tasteful Book about Bad Taste* (Thunder's Mouth Press, 2005).

of this phenomenon and the how the image and body of the female moviegoer constructed modernity in São Paulo and in Brazil.

Previous historians have thoroughly documented the greater visibility of women in public space in early twentieth-century Brazil. The subject of working-class culture has been especially rich in analyzing how women's daily lives were integrated into urban space, and how women were active in labor organization.²¹ Work has also focused on the public prominence of middle-class and elite women in political and religious organizations, and as intellectuals.²² Recent literature with a focus on public health and the body has addressed women's reproductive work as fundamental to concepts of a healthy nation.²³ While much of this historiography focuses on women's interaction with

²¹ On women's working-class culture in the early twentieth century in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and its integration with urban space, see Margareth Rago, *Do Cabaré ao Lar: A Utopia da Cidade Disciplinar, Brasil 1890-1930*, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Paz e Terra, 1997) and Rachel Soihet, *Condição Feminina e Formas de Violência: Mulheres Pobres e Ordem Urbana, 1890-1920* (Forense Universitária, 1989). On working-class women in public and private spaces in the nineteenth-century, see Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Rutgers University Press, 1995); Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (University of Texas Press, 1992). On women's involvement in labor organization and in factory culture, see Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); John French, *The Brazilian Workers' ABC: Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern São Paulo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); John French and Daniel James, eds., *The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers: From Household and Factory to the Union Hall and Ballot Box* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997); Barbara Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil: Industrialists and the Remaking of the Working Class in São Paulo, 1920-1964* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²² On studies of women involved in civic associations and politics, see June Edith Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex: The Struggle for Women's Rights in Brazil, 1850-1940* (Duke University Press, 1990). On women's leadership roles in Catholicism and Christianity, see John Burdick, *Blessed Anastácia: Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil* (Psychology Press, 1998) and Maria José Rosado Nunes, "Freiras no Brasil," in *História das Mulheres no Brasil* (São Paulo: Contexto, 1997), 482-509. On the emergence of feminism and female intellectuals, see Heloisa Pontes, *Intérpretes da Metrópole: História Social e Relações de Gênero no Teatro e no Campo Intelectual, 1940-1968* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo / FAPESP, 2010) and Rachel Soihet, "A Pedagogia Da Conquista do Espaço Público Pelas Mulheres e a Militância Feminista de Bertha Lutz," *Revista Brasileira Da Educação*, no. 15 (November 2000), <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/rbedu/n15/n15a07.pdf>.

²³ For discussion of women and reproduction in the context of Latin American eugenics, see Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991). For a more recent analysis of the discourse on motherhood and women's health, focusing on Bahia, Brazil, see Okezi T. Otovo, "To Form a Strong and Populous Nation: Race, Motherhood, and the State in Republican Brazil" (PhD Diss, Georgetown, 2009). Also see Ana Paula Vosne Martins, *Visões Do*

public space through their labor, my dissertation focuses more emphatically on public displays of consumption and leisure. Previous historians and anthropologists have examined issues of the female body and consumption, especially in relation to sport, fashion, and in contemporary times, plastic surgery. I draw from this literature but through movie-going, I examine an activity that was uniquely accessible, materially and socially, to women in the early twentieth-century.²⁴

I analyze images of modern femininity, especially the Brazilian version of the slim, fashionable “modern girl” that appeared in popular culture around the globe. Sometimes called the “melindrosa” or Brazilian flapper, this figure was ubiquitous in magazines, literature, and in cinemas of the 1920s. An edited volume on permutations of the modern girl around the world, as well as Joanne Hershfield’s and Ageeth Sluis’ work on the “modern girl” in Mexico, has influenced my approach to studying this figure in Brazil.²⁵ Other historians have examined variations of the modern girl in 1920s Brazil, such as Sueann Caulfield, Susan K. Besse, Margareth Rago, and Maria Lucia Mott and Marisa Maluf, who all address how politicians, religious leaders, intellectuals, and other

Feminino: A Medicina Da Mulher Nos Séculos XIX E XX (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2004). for an analysis of medical literature on women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

²⁴ Chapter two includes information on movie ticket prices and workers’ wages in the 1920s, as well as how movie-going became respectable for middle-class and elite audiences in the same time period. On the emergence of sport among elite women, see Mônica Raisa Schpun, *Beleza Em Jogo: Cultura Física e Comportamento em São Paulo Nos Anos 20* (São Paulo: Editora SENAC, 1999); On the social barriers blocking women's participation in sport, see Silvana Vilodre Goellner, “Mulher e Esporte No Brasil: Entre Incentivos e Interdições Elas Fazem História,” *Pensar a Prática* 8, no. 1 (2006): 85–100. On elite women’s consumption habits in the center of São Paulo, see Maria Claudia Bonadio, *Moda e Sociabilidade: Mulheres e Consumo na São Paulo dos Anos 1920* (São Paulo, SP: Editora SENAC São Paulo, 2007). For an ethnography of plastic surgery in contemporary Rio de Janeiro and how it relates to issues of transnational standards of beauty and modernity, see Alexander Edmonds, *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex, and Plastic Surgery in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

²⁵ Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*, Next Wave (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). Joanne Hershfield, *Imagining La Chica Moderna : Women, Nation, and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917-1936* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Ageeth Sluis, “BATACLANISMO! Or, How Female Deco Bodies Transformed Postrevolutionary Mexico City,” *The Americas* 66, no. 4 (2010): 469–99, doi:10.1353/tam.0.0258; Ageeth Sluis, “City of Spectacles: Gender Performance, Revolutionary Reform and the Creation of Public Space in Mexico City, 1915-1939” (University of Arizona, 2006).

figures of moral authority used the image of the modern girl to trace standards of female morality and changing (or static) gender roles.²⁶ Literary scholars Maite Conde and Beatriz Resende have focused on the *melindrosa* in literature and film as an emblem of urbanization in Rio de Janeiro.²⁷ My approach differs by utilizing visual sources to emphasize how the “modern girl” was not a single, uniform figure, but one with multiple, diverse meanings for race, class, and national identities. Examining various permutations of the modern girl allows me to nuance how women could embody modernity through specific practices and spaces. Women produced modernity not just when they went to the movies, but through the company they found there, not just by aspiring to become actresses, but in the gestures they practiced and performed.

Historians of women and gender in the U.S. have examined forms of leisure and consumption, including movies, dime store novels, amusement parks and world fairs, as a platform for social transgressions, and to construct class identity.²⁸ Movie-going has been a particularly rich arena to discuss these themes because of the “feminization” of movie-

²⁶ Sueann Caulfield, “Getting into Trouble: Dishonest Women, Modern Girls, and Women-Men in the Conceptual Language of ‘Vida Policial’, 1925-1927,” *Signs* 19, no. 1 (October 1, 1993): 146–76, doi:10.2307/3174748; Margareth Rago, *Prazeres da Noite: Prostituição e Códigos da Sexualidade Femenina em São Paulo (1890-1930)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2008); Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Marina Maluf and Maria Lúcia Mott, “Recônditos do Mundo Feminino,” in *República: Da Belle Époque à Era do Rádio*, ed. Nicolau Sevcenko and Fernando A. Novais, *História da Vida Privada no Brasil*, 1998, 367–421.

²⁷ Maite Conde, *Consuming Visions: Cinema, Writing, and Modernity in Rio de Janeiro* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011). Beatriz Resende “Introdução” in Benjamim Costallat, *Mademoiselle Cinema: novela de costumes do momento que passa* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 1999).

²⁸ On moral deviance, see Lauren Rabinovitz, *For the Love of Pleasure: Women, Movies, and Culture in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998). On consumption and women’s working-class culture, see Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). On movie-going as space for men’s working-class solidarity and eventual politicization, see Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

going that occurred in the early twentieth-century.²⁹ While I explore similar issues, I use a diverse set of sources and methods that allow my research to dialogue more closely with issues in urban history. In emphasizing the interconnections between identity and urban space, I opt to use the term “public space” throughout this dissertation rather than the Habermasian concept of the “public sphere,” which, as Swati Chattopadhyay points out, implies that individuals form intact bourgeois identities in private spaces, and then emerge into the “public sphere” to exchange ideas and generate political dialogue. An emphasis on public space, on the other hand, makes room for the formation of social identity through public interactions outside of the domestic sphere. The separation of public sphere and public space also recognizes how marginalized groups like women might participate in one but be barred from the other.³⁰

Histories of female sexuality in Brazil have focused on forms of deviance, such as prostitution and cases of deflowerment (loss of virginity), and notions of sexual honor in the legal system.³¹ These works have been invaluable in tracing standards of female sexual morality and how they fluctuated according to race, class, and geography. My

²⁹ On the concept of “movie-struck girls” and the rise of movie-going among women, see Shelley Stamp, *Movie-Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture after the Nickelodeon* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000). On how movie theaters could be a space for assimilation and the expression of immigrant identity, see Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985). On how “movie-struck girls” pursued professional opportunities and impacted the economy and society of California, see Hilary A. Hallett, *Go West, Young Women!: The Rise of Early Hollywood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

³⁰ For a concise and helpful analysis of “public space” versus “public sphere” see Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006). For a thorough analysis of Habermas’ definition of the “public sphere” and the treatment of it in Latin American historiography, see Pablo Piccato, “Public Sphere in Latin America: A Map of the Historiography,” *Social History* 35, no. 2 (May 2010): 165–92, doi:10.1080/03071021003795055.

³¹ See Rago, *Prazeres da Noite: Prostituição e Códigos da Sexualidade Femenina em São Paulo (1890-1930)*; Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Sueann Caulfield, Sarah C. Chambers, and Lara Putnam, *Honor, Status, and Law in Modern Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Martha de Abreu Esteves, *Meninas Perdidas: Os Populares e o Cotidiano do Amor no Rio de Janeiro da Belle Époque* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1989). Also see chapter two for additional bibliography on the concept of honor in modern Latin America.

research however, focuses on more quotidian transgressions: flirting and holding hands in the darkness of the cinema, sneaking away from chaperones and mothers, dreaming of Hollywood and romance, in order to show how women participated in cosmopolitan consumption and explored the boundaries of bourgeois behavior. While Thales Azevedo and Marta de Abreu Esteves have respectively explored elite and working-class dating rituals in late nineteenth Rio de Janeiro, my dissertation provides a perspective into mid-twentieth century São Paulo. Additionally, it explores how moviegoers cast dating, flirting, and *namorar* (which I translate as “romancing” as well as “dating,” since it refers to ambiguous physical acts such as holding hands and kissing) specifically as middle-class activities. Alternatively, I explore the role that women played in reproducing standards of gendered and class-based morality through the prohibitions they placed on themselves and upon other women. Mothers and society ladies who took it upon themselves to police middle-class respectability also participated in the moralization of women’s leisure habits.

The characterization of São Paulo as cold and civilized, the condemnation of cinemas as crowded and dark, the designation of women as sensual or sophisticated – all of these affective terms had implications for the understanding of race and class in Brazil. Other historians have demonstrated how concepts of race lurked beneath euphemisms like “modern” and “degenerate.”³² The diversity of the movie-going audience offers the opportunity to study how moviegoers from various social and racial backgrounds came

³² Barbara Weinstein, “Racializing Regional Difference: São Paulo vs. Brazil, 1932,” in *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, ed. Nancy Appelbaum, A. Macpherson, and Karen Rosenblatt (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 237–62. Dain Borges, “‘Puffy, Ugly, Slothful and Inert’: Degeneration in Brazilian Social Thought, 1880–1940,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25, no. 02 (1993): 235–56. Jerry Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1917-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). For a contemporary study of the construction of whiteness, see Lia Vainer Schucman, “Entre O ‘Encardido’, O ‘Branco’ e O ‘Branquíssimo’: Raça, Hierarquia e Poder na Construção da Branquitude Paulistana” (PhD Diss, Universidade de São Paulo, 2012).

together within the same spaces. Unlike in the United States, there was never legally mandated racial segregation in Brazil. In 1951, UNESCO famously declared Brazil a “racial democracy” because of the perceived integration and fluidity of racial categorization. In contrast to the U.S. law of hypodescent, racial categorization in Brazil is based on physical and cultural markers, such as skin color and social/class status. Gilberto Freyre’s classic analysis of African and slave culture in Brazil has popularized the concept of racial mixture as the central narrative of Brazilian society.³³ Although racial identity can be fluid, Brazil is far from a “racial democracy.” Afro-Brazilians experience racial discrimination in employment, access to health care, and in political enfranchisement.³⁴ As competition for jobs grew in the early twentieth century, tensions with European immigrants also arose, and although the phrase “money whitens” is commonly used to characterize racial identity, immigrants and native Brazilians, both black and white, face limits to this flexibility.³⁵

³³ Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1986). For an analysis of race and national identity in Brazil, see Jeffrey D. Needell, “Identity, Race, Gender, and Modernity in the Origins of Gilberto Freyre’s Oeuvre,” *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (February 1, 1995): 51–77, doi:10.2307/2167983. For the counterpart to Freyre’s romanticized vision of slavery in Brazil, one that instead argues for slavery’s lasting negative impact on both Afro-Brazilians and Brazil at large, see Florestan Fernandes, *Integração do Negro na Sociedade de Classes*, vol. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Globo Livros, 2008).

³⁴ For the classic study of racial discrimination in employment, see Andrews, *Blacks & Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988*. Utilizing ethnography and oral history, Jeferson Bacelar provides a study of racial discrimination in Salvador in Jeferson Afonso Bacelar, *A Hierarquia das Raças: Nnegros e Brancos em Salvador* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2001). On discrimination in contemporary Brazil, see Michael Hanchard, *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). On inequality and civil rights, see Brodwyn Fischer, *A Poverty of Rights: Citizenship and Inequality in Twentieth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

³⁵ On black intellectuals’ conceptualization of Afro-Brazilian identity, see Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). For contemporary discourses of race and Afro-Brazilian identity from leading scholars from Brazil and abroad, see Yvonne Maggie and Claudia Barcellos Rezende, eds., *Raça como Retórica: A Construção da Diferença* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 2002). On immigration to Brazil, both European and non-European, see Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present*, *New Approaches to the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).

What an examination of movie-going offers is an analysis of how visual images and concepts of race and ethnicity translated across national borders, demonstrating the elastic interpretation of whiteness and foreignness in Brazilian popular culture. Film critics and society columnists imagined movie-going Parisians to be the model of cosmopolitan taste, while writers lamented the scourge of French prostitutes in the cinemas of Brazil. Hollywood studios called for actors of “Latin blood” to become movie stars, while aspiring actors in Brazil affirmed their sexual appeal was not in their blood, but in their embodiment of idealized Hollywood aesthetics. Due to the overwhelming presence of Southern European immigrants, mostly Italian, in the Brazilian film industry, Maria Rita Galvão refers to the film exhibitors and filmmakers in São Paulo as people of “Brás, Bexiga, and Bom Retiro,” referencing a collection of short stories about immigrant, working-class neighborhoods to summarize their social status.³⁶ This Europeanness was a double-edged sword as film intellectuals interpreted these immigrants as both white and non-white, or desirable and undesirable, in Brazilian society.

In addition to race and ethnicity, this dissertation examines how individuals of varying class backgrounds shared the same spaces as consumers. While there is rich historiography on working-class culture in various cities of Brazil, this dissertation examines the social and physical encounters between classes.³⁷ This approach

³⁶ Maria Rita Galvão, *Crônica do Cinema Paulistano* (São Paulo, Brazil: Ática, 1975), 54.

³⁷ Too rich to summarize here, a few key works on working-class culture include Sidney Chalhoub, *Trabalho, Lar e Botequim: O Cotidiano dos Trabalhadores no Rio de Janeiro da Belle Époque*, 2a. ed. (Campinas SP Brasil: Editora da Unicamp, 2001); Rago, *Do Cabaré ao Lar: A Utopia da Cidade Disciplinar, Brasil 1890-1930*; Paulo Fontes, *Um Nordeste em São Paulo: Trabalhadores Migrantes em São Miguel Paulista* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2008); Maria Auxiliadora Guzzo Decca, *A Vida Fora das Fábricas: Cotidiano Operário em São Paulo (1920/1934)*, vol. 3 (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1987); Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955*.

demonstrates the fluid, spatial dynamics of class positioning, wherein women became “ladies” depending on the location of their seat in a cinema, or how going to the movies in the center of the city, rather than in the periphery, affirmed middle classness. As opposed to a view of class that is based primarily on economic capital and relationship to productive labor, Pierre Bourdieu outlines how class is also based on cultural and social capital. Cultural capital can be embodied, in the form of taste, manner of speaking, in sun tans and fit bodies, or objectified, for example in artwork, literature, and appliances. Bourdieu makes clear that the cultural capital of such objects is only transmissible when one already possesses the embodied (taste, education) or economic capital necessary to “properly” consume such objects.³⁸ These various forms of capital are aggregated into social capital, or membership within a group with collective “credentials” or status. Bourdieu’s understanding of capital emphasizes how class status might be attained or approximated through consumption and taste, but he also emphasizes how ultimately, one’s ability to generate cultural or social capital is limited by economic capital. Cultural and social capital is self-generative, and the “payoff” is not immediate (i.e. the single act of buying a vacuum cleaner does not make one middle-class; having the money to purchase it, owning the house in which to use it, socializing with those who similarly appreciate the meanings of its use, are what allow one to reap the objectified cultural capital of the vacuum cleaner).

Movie-going in São Paulo, especially in the mid-twentieth century, was disproportionately high in cultural capital to the generally low cost of ticket prices. This

³⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1984). For a brief introduction to these terms, also see Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 41–58.

disjunction created unique social situations in which individuals with varying levels of cultural and social capital came together and shared the same spaces. On the other hand, the disjunction revealed the strategies and structures that moviegoers used to preserve class distinctions. For example, as will be discussed in chapter three, one São Paulo film critic pointed out that the latest and most modern Hollywood films were not screened in the city center, but in peripheral neighborhood where they were geographically and economically accessible to the working classes. Those from the center had to go to the periphery to see the best films. However, he also complained that the cultural capital of these films was wasted in these neighborhoods, as working-class moviegoers were incapable of appreciating good cinema.

In its examination of class positioning, this dissertation explores the understudied topic of middle-class culture in Brazil. For much of the twentieth century, the middle class in Latin America was equivalent to snow in Brazil, a specter of what the region lacked, a modernity it could never attain. As anthropologists Rachel Heiman et. al have remarked, studies of the middle class remain not only scarce, but controversial, flying in the face of the concept that anthropologists should study “the other,” or histories and structures “from below.” Similar themes have prevailed in Latin American historiography. However, both Heiman et. al.’s and Barbara Weinstein and Ricardo Lopez’s recent edited volumes point out the centrality of the middle class to understanding a globalized concept of modernity.³⁹ A tenet of modernization theory holds that the rise of the middle class symbolized the transformation of Brazil from a slave-holding, backwards country into a modern, more egalitarian society. Brian Owensby has

³⁹ Rachel Heiman, Carla Freeman, and Mark Liechty, eds., *The Global Middle Classes: Theorizing Through Ethnography* (SAR Press, 2012); A. Ricardo López and Barbara Weinstein, *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History* (Duke University Press, 2012).

countered this idea by showing how, through preservation of their own class status, middle-class individuals adopted ideals that were considered both modern and traditional.⁴⁰ Studying the middle class offers a way to explore the politics of who was included and excluded from an emergent global middle class. In addition to addressing material consumption (Maureen O'Dougherty argues that the middle class is indeed defined not only by consumption but by consumerism),⁴¹ this project also examines the embodiment of middle classness through the everyday practices, such as dating, choosing a movie theater seat, and even dining.⁴²

Finally, my work rests upon the substantial literature on Brazilian cinema and film culture. Cinema is a multi-faceted industry consisting not only of the production of films, but also films' distribution, exhibition, and reception (how films were viewed and interpreted). As in the fields of art history and architecture, film studies developed from early examinations of film aesthetics and "great artists" to a "historical turn" beginning in the 1980s, which shifted attention from cinema as art to cinema as industry and mass medium.⁴³ From the turn of the century to roughly 1930, Brazilian cinema was a nascent

⁴⁰ Brian Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

⁴¹ Maureen O'Dougherty, *Consumption Intensified: The Politics of Middle-Class Daily Life in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

⁴² While Owensby and O'Dougherty study middle-class culture, previous studies have examined middle-class politics, for example, Carlos Steven Bakota, "Crisis and the Middle Classes: The Ascendancy of Brazilian Nationalism, 1914-1922" (PhD Diss, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973). Maria Cecília Spina Forjaz, *Tenentismo e Política: Tenentismo e Camadas Médias Urbanas na Crise da Primeira República* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1977). Décio Saes, *Classe Média e Política na Primeira República Brasileira (1889-1930)*, vol. 3 (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1975).

⁴³ For the classic studies of Hollywood as a multi-faceted industry, see Robert Clyde Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (New York: Knopf, 1985); David Bordwell, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). For classic studies of reception, see Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1991); Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Barbara Klinger, *Melodrama and Meaning: History, Culture, and the Films of Douglas Sirk* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). For an analysis of cinema as a mass medium central to an understanding of U.S. cultural history, see Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Random House LLC, 2012).

industry in which upstart entrepreneurs moved between the roles of producer, distributor, and exhibiter, depending on where profits lay (just as producers could also be actors and directors, depending on what role was needed to complete a film). There was even a blurring of reception and production as film critics dabbled in filmmaking. Studies of early Brazilian cinema reflect this overlap. For example, Maria Rita Galvão's examination of early São Paulo cinema addresses both the state's earliest films and its exhibition circuit.⁴⁴ José Inácio de Melo Souza's *Imagens do Passado* traces the very beginnings of film production, exhibition, and reception in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the 1900s and 1910s, integrating the early industry with the urbanization of both cities.⁴⁵ Additional literature from architectural and urban history has examined cinemas and movie theaters as unique built spaces and the meaning of their geographic distribution in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.⁴⁶ Recently, a flourishing of historical scholarship has emerged tying the cinema industry to issues of urbanization, social standards of gendered beauty, and regional cultural production and sites of sociability.⁴⁷ In addition to various histories of movie-going in different Brazilian cities, or in specific time periods, my history of movie-going practices has relied heavily upon several

⁴⁴ Galvão, *Crônica Do Cinema Paulistano*. Also see Vicente de Paula Araujo, *Salões, Circos, e Cinemas de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Ed. Perspectiva, 1981). And Máximo Barro, *A Primeira Sessão de Cinema Em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Tanz do Brasil, 1996) for reviews of very early film exhibition in São Paulo.

⁴⁵ Souza, *Imagens do Passado: São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro nos Primórdios do Cinema*.

⁴⁶ Renato Luiz Sobral Anelli, "Arquitetura de Cinemas Na Cidade de São Paulo" (Master's, Universidade de Campinas, 1990); Paula Freire Santoro, "A Relação da Sala de Cinema com o Espaço Urbano em São Paulo: Do Provinciano ao Cosmopolita" (master's thesis: Universidade de São Paulo, 2004); Evelyn Furquim Werneck Lima, *Arquitetura do Espetáculo: Teatros e Cinemas na Formação da Praça Tiradentes e da Cinelândia* (Editora UFRJ, 2000); João Luiz VIEIRA and Margareth Campos da Silva Pereira, "Espaços do Sonho: Arquitetura dos Cinemas no Rio de Janeiro 1920-1950," *Rio de Janeiro*, 1982.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Julio Lucchesi Moraes, *São Paulo Capital Artística -- A Cafeicultura e as Artes na Belle Epoque (1906-1922)* (São Paulo: Azougue Editorial, 2014); Isabella Regina Oliveira Goulart, "A ilusão da imagem: o sonho do estrelismo brasileiro em Hollywood" (master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2013), <http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/27/27161/tde-06052014-104345/>; Alice Dubina Trusz, "O Cruzamento de Tradições Visuais nos Espetáculos de Projeções Ópticas Realizados em Porto Alegre Entre 1861 E 1908," *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material* 18, no. 1 (June 2010): 129–78, doi:10.1590/S0101-47142010000100005.

previous projects.⁴⁸ One is Inimá Simões photographic book *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo*. Published by the São Paulo Municipal Secretary of Culture in 1990, it provides a history of the city's cinemas, anecdotes about movie-going, and a rich collection of photographs related to São Paulo cinemas in the twentieth century.⁴⁹ Another is Heloisa Buarque de Almeida's master's thesis on *Cinema em São Paulo - Hábitos e Representações do Público (Anos 40-50 e 90)*, which is an ethnography of middle-class movie-going habits in the 1940s and 1950s of São Paulo.⁵⁰ I had access to the primary sources used in both Simões' book and Buarque's thesis, which include oral histories conducted by both authors in the 1980s and 1990s. These oral histories allowed for analysis of both movie-going habits in the mid-twentieth century, and how these habits were remembered. I discuss my approach to these oral histories in greater detail in chapters one and two. Finally, I make use of José Inácio de Melo Souza's database on *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo, 1895 to 1929*, which not only digitally maps movie theaters across the city, but which impressively provides primary sources and brief histories on each one.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Sheila Schvarzman's article on movie-going in 1920s São Paulo has been an excellent resource, particularly on the representation of movie-going in the film criticism of Octávio Glabus Mendes. See Sheila Schvarzman, "Ir ao Cinema em São Paulo nos Anos 20," *Revista Brasileira de História* 25, no. 49 (2005): 153–74. Recent examinations of movie-going in other Brazilian cities, with an emphasis on the 1920s and urbanization include Márcio Inácio da Silva, "Nas Telas da Cidade: Salas de Cinema e Vida Urbana na Fortaleza dos Anos de 1920" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2007); Eva Dayna Felix Carneiro, "Belém Entre Filmes e Fitas: A Experiência do Cinema, do Cotidiano das Salas às Representações Sociais nos Anos de 1920" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal do Pará, 2011); For cinemas as a site of gendered socialization, see Alexandre Vieira, "Sessão Das Moças: História, Cinema, Educação. (Florianópolis: 1943-1962)" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2010), <http://repositorio.ufsc.br/handle/123456789/103298>.

⁴⁹ Simões, *Salas de Cinema Em São Paulo*.

⁵⁰ Heloisa Buarque de Almeida, "Cinema em São Paulo - Hábitos e Representações do Público (anos 40-50 E 90)" (master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 1995).

⁵¹ José Inácio de Melo Souza, "Salas de Cinema Em São Paulo 1895-1929," 2012, <http://www.arquiamicos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>. I discuss the primary sources made available in the database and in the "Cinemas" collection held at the Historic Archive of São Paulo in chapter one.

In focusing on the spaces and practices of cinema, these works recognize the omnipresence of Hollywood on Brazilian screens. Vicente Paula de Araújo refers to the era between 1908 and 1911 as the “golden age” of Brazilian cinema because domestic film companies held a substantial share of the exhibition market.⁵² However, beginning in the 1920s, Hollywood films dominated over 85% of screens in Brazil, as well as other markets in Latin America, Europe and Asia.⁵³ While Hollywood’s presence in Latin America has spurred criticism of cultural imperialism, recent literature has examined cinema as a transnational or cosmopolitan project, thus reinterpreting the concept of “foreign” versus “national” cinema.⁵⁴ This project similarly focuses on transnationalism rather than nationalism, and how Brazilian moviegoers interpreted Hollywood films as part of a total movie-going experience. Moviegoers were not the passive receptors of foreign media, but produced meaning through their local viewing practices.⁵⁵

Hollywood’s presence in Brazil was not immaterial; for example North American images

⁵² Vicente de Paula Araújo, *Bela Época do Cinema Brasileiro*, 2nd ed., Debates, 116 (Rio de Janeiro: Perspectiva, 1985).

⁵³ Randal Johnson, *The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and the State* (Pittsburgh Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987). For data on Hollywood’s market share around the world, as well as how Hollywood studios adapted films to cater to foreign audiences, see Ruth Vasey, *The World according to Hollywood, 1918-1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).

⁵⁴ On Hollywood as imperialist and detrimental to national film production in Brazil see Ismail Xavier, *Sétima Arte, um Culto Moderno: O Idealismo Estético e o Cinema* (São Paulo, Editora Perspectiva, 1978) For a history of Hollywood during the U.S. “Good Neighbor” Policy, see Antonio Pedro Tota, *O Imperialismo Sedutor: A Americanização do Brasil na Época da Segunda Guerra* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000). Recent work that searches for transnational and regional connections in film production, particularly within Latin America rather than an exclusively U.S./Latin America or Europe/Latin America paradigm include Rielle Edmonds Navitski, “Sensationalism, Cinema and the Popular Press in Mexico and Brazil, 1905-1930” (PhD Diss, University of California, Berkeley, 2013); Nicolas Poppe, “Made in Joinville: Transnational Identitary Aesthetics in Carlos Gardel’s Early Paramount Films,” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 4 (December 2012): 481–95, doi:10.1080/13569325.2012.743883 and Laura Isabel Serna, *Making Cinelandia: American Films and Mexican Film Culture Before the Golden Age* (Duke University Press, 2014).

⁵⁵ The classic cultural studies take on the adoption/interpretation of “foreign” ideas in Brazil is Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced ideas: Essays on Brazilian culture*, trans. John Gledson (London: Verso, 1992).

of whiteness affected concepts of modern beauty in Brazil. However, Hollywood was not hegemonic or unchallenged by local interpretations.⁵⁶

The narrative organization of this dissertation is not chronological but thematic. Chapters one and two cover a broad time period, from the 1910s to the 1980s in order to trace the class underpinnings of movie-going in São Paulo through the twentieth century. These two chapters include the rise of movie-going in the 1910s and 1920s, when cinemas shifted from a working-class amusement to one that also included the elite, the 1940s and 1950s when movie-going in the center of São Paulo became an important symbol of middle-class behavior and consumption, to the 1980s when the decadence of movie-going illustrated middle-class concerns about the perceived racial and moral decline of the city. The goal of these chapters is not to provide a comprehensive, “grand narrative,” but to analyze specific episodes and anecdotes that portray the diverse practices and interpretations of movie-going in the city. Chapters three, four, and five focus primarily on the 1920s, a time period that Susan K. Besse has addressed as an era in which gendered norms were temporarily destabilized by the appearance of the “modern girl” and the anxieties she represented.⁵⁷ Moving beyond the spaces of cinemas, these chapters examine the rise of movie-going as part of a larger culture of public consumption in which women were highly visible. Women were not just moviegoers; from the cities of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Pernambuco, to the countryside of Minas Gerais, women were amateur film critics, aspiring actors, and moralizers of the changing urban scene. Chapters four and five examine the representation and

⁵⁶ For analysis on the popular connections between the U.S. and Brazil that stresses the transnational rather than imperialist relationship between the two nations, see Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁵⁷ Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*.

participation of women in transnational film culture; chapter five demonstrates the centrality of public forms of leisure to an elite Catholic organization, even as their members cautioned against the dangers of frivolous amusements.

Through the analysis of ethnography and oral history, municipal processes and blueprints, chapter one juxtaposes events in several time periods to demonstrate the role of state regulation and cinemas in constructing an idealized vision of the city, and explores which *paulistanos* were included or excluded from this vision. In the 1910s and 1920s, municipal officials established stringent building codes for the construction of cinemas, targeting them as particularly dangerous and unsafe spaces. Although this legislation regulated cinemas with new scrutiny, it also opened a space for the political participation of cinema exhibitors, who altered city planners' visions for an orderly city through protracted negotiations to construct cinemas. Unlike recent work on Brazilian cities that has focused on the tensions between the planned city and the unplanned slums, or between the regulated and illegitimate, I demonstrate how even structures that were planned, stamped, and approved, were nevertheless negotiated and extralegal.⁵⁸ In the 1940s, movie-going in the “deluxe” cinemas of Cinelândia was the epitome of middle-class consumption. When the municipal government attempted to regulate movie ticket prices in 1947, they sought to categorize movie-going as a “basic necessity” of citizens, thus normalizing middle-classness as representative of São Paulo’s modernity. This

⁵⁸ On autoconstruction of slums/favelas, see Bryan McCann, *Hard Times in the Marvelous City: From Dictatorship to Democracy in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Fischer, *A Poverty of Rights*; James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). On practices of the informal economy in Rio de Janeiro, see Amy Chazkel, *Laws of Chance: Brazil’s Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). On legislation and city planning, see Raquel Rolnik, *A Cidade e a Lei: Legislação, Política Urbana e Territórios na Cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Studio Nobel, 1997); Candido Malta Campos, *Os Rrumos da Cidade: Urbanismo e Modernização em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Editora SENAC, 2000).

regulation spurred a legal and public debate on the spatial boundaries of middle-classness, and whether middle-class consumption was actually accessible to all *paulistanos*. Finally, this chapter briefly contrasts the Centro in the 1940s to the 1980s to demonstrate how the deterioration of movie-going was symbolic of the city's perceived urban and racial decadence.

While chapter one focuses on the role of cinemas in the urbanization of São Paulo, chapter two draws upon blueprints, legislation, and oral history to provide a micro perspective into the spaces and practices inside of cinemas. This chapter first examines the class and gendered divisions present in 1920s *cine-teatros*, cinemas built in the style of grand theaters with galleries and private boxes, and how identities and perceptions shifted according one's location within the audience. By analyzing the appearance of bathrooms, segregated entrances, and other physical barriers within these cinemas, I demonstrate how built space constructed class and gendered difference. This chapter also examines the balconies and bathrooms of deluxe cinemas in the 1940s and 1980s, using oral history sources to demonstrate how, through use, the same spaces transformed from elite to deviant.

Chapters three and four shift away from physical spaces, and focus on representations of race and the modern body, not just in São Paulo, but in other cities and regions of Brazil. Chapter three analyzes representations of two groups associated with the rise of movie-going: women and immigrant cinema exhibitors. These chapters utilize film reviews, cartoons, and short stories from the leisure magazine *Para Todos* and the film magazine *Cinearte*; the latter had a circulation of 60,000 by the end of the 1920s.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Tais Campelo Lucas, "Cinearte: O Cinema Brasileiro em Revista (1926-1942)" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2005),

Less information is available for *Para Todos*, but it was one of the major forums for famous artists like J. Carlos, whose work is analyzed in this dissertation.⁶⁰ Chapter three uses these magazines to situate visual and textual representations of the “melindrosa,” or Brazilian “modern girl,” in a transnational context, and reveals how writers, artists, and film critics assessed a woman’s moral and racial status through her movie-going habits. In the case of immigrant entrepreneurs, film critics and intellectuals conferred “brazilianness” based upon these immigrants’ contributions to the Brazilian film industry. Those who built impressive theaters were depicted as hard-working, white immigrants who were assets to the nation, while those who established fake film schools to con aspiring actors were depicted as degenerate foreigners.

As a counterpart to chapter three’s focus on representations of moviegoers, chapter four examines the attitudes of the moviegoers themselves. I analyze fan letters, applications for film academies, literature, and newsreels to demonstrate how moviegoers thought about, wrote about, and sought to produce film culture in Brazil. Through the embodiment of the concept of *fotogenia*, or “photogenic-ness,” aspiring actors and actresses imagined how their bodies, their skin, and their gestures could conquer Hollywood. Through *fotogenia*, men and women in the countryside of Brazil imagined how they would not only participate in, but embody, cosmopolitan modernity. In addition, fans who wrote letters to their favorite film stars and to film magazines like *Para Todos* and *Cinearte* developed amateur film criticism and formed transnational

http://www1.capes.gov.br/teses/pt/2005_mest_uff_tais_campelo.pdf, 68, Lucas draws this data from Silvia Steinberg “Cinearte – a forma de um ideal” em *Cinearte: Seminário Centro de Pesquisadores do Cinema Brasileiro/Cinemateca do MAM-RJ*, 1991, 58

⁶⁰ As evidence of their perceived cultural importance, the Brazilian state oil company Petrobras has sponsored the digitization and online publication of both periodicals, available at <http://www.bjksdigital.museusegall.org.br/>

connections between Brazil and the United States. Two of São Paulo's most famous women participated in this burgeoning film culture: the modernist writer Patricia Galvão and the first lady of São Paulo state Leonor Mendes de Barros. Personal papers and love letters demonstrate that these women, though on opposite ends of the political spectrum, similarly transformed from consumers to moralizers of cinema.

Chapter five examines the geography of women's leisure habits outside of movie-going. It shifts focus back onto the city of São Paulo, and how the socially elite League of Catholic Women created leisure opportunities for themselves while policing the leisure habits of lower-class women in the earlier twentieth century. Utilizing photographs, meeting minutes, and personal papers from the organization's private archives, I argue that the League set forth their own vision of a Christian, feminine, modern city through their public fundraisers and institutions. I pay special attention to the League's establishment of a women-only restaurant in the city center and how it enforced middle-class values through the cultivation of a feminized, "pink-collar" workforce, defined through dress and dining habits. Although the women of the League set themselves (and their members) apart from the "melindrosas" represented in chapter three, they nevertheless incorporated similar images of modern femininity into their idealization of the *paulistana* woman. In addition, like the legislators, city planners, and moviegoers who imagined they could build an ideal city through the regulation of cinemas, the League sought to construct an ideal city by policing the leisure habits of the women associated with this culture of consumption.

This dissertation uses diverse sources such as oral history, photographs, legal documents, and intellectual production, to examine the construction of gender, race, and

class in Brazil. Through two overlapping narratives, the history of movie-going in São Paulo, and the emergence of the “modern girl” in Brazil, I explore the physical expression of modernity in the twentieth century. Women were connected to the city through the built spaces of cinemas, and connected to a wider culture of consumption through their embodiment of modern femininity. By focusing on the transnational aspect of popular culture in São Paulo, I provide a glimpse into a series of perceived oxymorons: leisure in São Paulo, a history of cinema without movies, working women as consumers, and the middle-class in Brazil.

**Chapter 1: City of Cinemas:
State Regulation and Class Differentiation in “the City that We Want,” São Paulo,
1916 to 2012**



Figure 1: Protestors on Avenida Angélica in support of the Movement for the Belas Artes Cinema. March, 17, 2012. The last two lines of the sign in front read “Our cinema! Our city! (Nosso cinema! Nossa cidade!” Photo by author.

“The streets belong to the people! Bring bicycles and cinema back to the streets!”⁶¹

On March 17, 2012, The Movement for the Belas Artes Cinema (*Movimento pelo Cine Belas Artes*, MBA) held a protest and group bike ride to re-open the movie theater and declare it a site of cultural patrimony. Fifty to seventy local artists, advocates of urban sustainability, students, and film enthusiasts gathered in front of the Belas Artes Cinema (“Fine Arts Cinema”), which had screened independent, foreign, and student films since 1967.⁶² Threats to close the cinema and convert it into retail space in 2010

⁶¹ “A rua é do povo! Bicicleta e cinema de novo!” Protest chant. Recorded by author. São Paulo, March 17, 2012.

⁶² Ana Paula Sousa, “Folha.com - Ilustrada - Após 43 Anos, Belas Artes Vai Fechar as Portas em São Paulo, June, 1, 2011, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/855158-apos-43-anos-belas-artes-vai-fechar-as-portas-em-sao-paulo.shtml>.

and 2011 sparked a social movement online, signing petitions and organizing meetings on Facebook. Local restaurants attempted to provide sponsorship by offering free movie tickets to patrons.⁶³ Yet, the cinema closed on March 17, 2011, celebrating its final sessions by playing a marathon of classic films. In the first days after it closed, cinephiles stood outside of the theater day and night, reciting scripts from films that had played there in the years past, trying to maintain the location as a source of art cinema.⁶⁴

According to one of the leaders of the Movement for the Cinema Belas Artes, the organization's Facebook page had 90,000 supporters.⁶⁵ Prominent individuals who signed the organization's manifesto included famous film directors, architects, urban planners, and former president of Brazil Fernando Henrique Cardoso.⁶⁶ In a time when pirated versions of any film could be bought for fifty cents in the street from numerous dvd peddlers, why were these protesters so focused on preserving the Cinema Belas Artes?

I attended the MBA's protest in 2012 and conducted interviews with protesters, listened to the planned and impromptu speeches that they gave via megaphone in front of the cinema. In these interviews and speeches, protesters explained that the movie theater was more than just a place to watch films; it was also a site to exercise their rights to citizenship, culture, and an accessible urban environment. The MBA wrote a manifesto calling for the cinema to be preserved as a site of cultural patrimony and declared that, "to ensure street cinemas is to value a way of experiencing the city with its bars,

⁶³ "Patrocine o Cinema Belas Artes: Campanha de Apoio 'Tudo Pode Dar Certo,'" July, 2010, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://patrocineocinemabelasartes.blogspot.com/2010/07/campanha-de-apoio-tudo-pode-dar-certo.html>.

⁶⁴ Afonso Lima. Interview with author. Personal Interview. São Paulo, March 17, 2012.

⁶⁵ "Belas Artes - Festa na Paulista no dia 24 de janeiro, sexta-feira -19h" email from Afonso Lima to MBA listserv, 1/19/2014

⁶⁶ "Manifesto em Defesa do Cine Belas Artes, Patrimônio Cultural, Artístico e Afetivo de São Paul e do Brasil." July, 13, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. <http://movimentocinebelasartes.com.br/manifesto-em-defesa-do-cine-belas-artes-patrimonio-cultural-artistico-e-afetivo-de-sao-paulo-e-do-brasil/>

restaurants, bookstores, popcorn, pizza, and the meetings between lovers, friends, and acquaintances. It is, above all, an exercise in citizenship – a place of communion between memory, culture, and affect—one that should be protected and fostered by the power of the public.”⁶⁷

The manifesto, as well as statements from the organization’s leaders and protesters, reveals the strong urban component of the movement’s demands. This was not just a protest about access to culture or education. The manifesto specifically supported “cinema da rua,” cinemas located on streets, as opposed to “cinema do shopping,” or cinemas located inside of shopping malls. The movement of cinemas from streets to shopping malls is emblematic of São Paulo’s transformation in the 1980s and 1990s to what Teresa Caldeira calls a “city of walls,” in which residents live in increasingly segregated spaces. The middle and upper classes ensconce themselves behind protected spaces, such as gated, luxury neighborhoods and guarded shopping malls, in fear of urban violence and robbery.⁶⁸ Clamoring for street cinemas stemmed from a very different concept of urban life than what protestors believed that São Paulo currently offered: a city that was safe, open, and geographically accessible to all. When, for example, I pointed out to Maria Helena, one of the leaders of the MBA, that the government did support public movie-going by sponsoring the Cinemateca Brasileira, a film archive with cultural and educational film programming, she responded, “oh, the government loves talking about the Cinemateca.”⁶⁹ She and Afonso, another leader of the MBA, countered

⁶⁷ “Garantir o cinema de rua é valorizar um modo de vivenciar a cidade com seus bares, restaurantes, livrarias, as pipocas e as pizzas e os encontros com amores, amigos e conhecidos. É, acima de tudo, um exercício de cidadania — lugar de comunhão entre memória, cultura e afeto — que deve ser protegido e fomentado pelo Poder Público.” Ibid.

⁶⁸ Teresa Caldeira, *City of Wall: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁶⁹ Maria Helena. Interview with author, March 17, 2012.

that the Cinemateca, in the upper-class neighborhood of Vila Mariana, was not centrally located and was more than twenty minutes from any public metro station. The Belas Artes Cinema, however, was located at the corner of Avenida Paulista and Rua Augusta, the location of the city's major banks and museums, and one of the financial and cultural centers of São Paulo that was "accessible by foot and by metro."⁷⁰ Much of the protest online and in the streets focused on the Cine Belas Artes as a venue to express frustrations with urban life in São Paulo, especially the geographic immobility caused by traffic and segregation, the dampening of street culture, and political corruption.⁷¹ A supporter of the MBA, urban studies professor Nabil Bonduki, wrote that "street cinemas exert a fundamental role in the re-peopling of public space, a strategic element in the construction of the city that we want."⁷² For Bonduki, this "re-peopling" of public space was a step towards breaking down São Paulo's status as a "city of walls."

Who, however, was included in this normalized "we"? As Afonso and Maria Helena pointed out, the Cinemateca Brasileira in Vila Mariana was an exclusive space because it was not geographically central. Although the Cine Belas Artes was accessible in this regard, it was exclusive in others. One of the chants during the protest was "More Belas Artes, less Big Brother!" a reference to the reality show *Big Brother Brasil*, which is a famous example of supposedly crass television.⁷³ Although the protestors clamored

⁷⁰ "facilidade de acesso a pé e por transporte público." "Manifesto em Defesa do Cine Belas Artes, Patrimônio Cultural, Artístico e Afetivo de São Paulo e do Brasil."

⁷¹ During the online campaign to save the Cine Belas Artes, political corruption became an issue as the owner of the building had the unfortunate name of Flávio Maluf. Although no relation, he shared the same name as the oldest son and associate of Paulo Maluf, a former governor of São Paulo indicted for corruption and money-laundering.

⁷² "Os cinemas de rua exercem um papel fundamental no repovoamento do espaço público, elemento estratégico da construção da cidade que queremos." Nabil Bonduki, "Dois Anos Sem O Cine Belas Artes: Sim!, Há o que Comemorar — CartaCapital," last edited June, 13, 2013, accessed May 18, 2014, <http://www.cartacapital.com.br/cultura/dois-anos-sem-o-cine-belas-artes-sim-ha-o-que-comemorar/>.

⁷³ "Mais Belas Artes, menos Big Brother!" Protest Chant. Recorded by author. São Paulo, March 17, 2012

for democratic access to art cinema, they criticized the highly popular *Big Brother Brasil*. Distinctions of class and taste were also embedded in the chant cited at the beginning of this chapter: “the streets belong to the people; bring bicycles and cinemas back to the streets!” Recent movements to make São Paulo more bicycle-friendly are based on idealized images of European cities like Amsterdam and Berlin. Cycling is an inexpensive alternative to buying a car, but it is also a symbol of cosmopolitan taste and habit.⁷⁴ Although the Movement for the Belas Artes Cinema used terms like “we” and “the people” (*o povo*), this group was circumscribed by high standards of class and taste. The Cinema Belas Artes was a place to exercise citizenship, to communicate social frustrations, to “build the city that we want,” but it was also a site of class differentiation that defined who was a part of this construction.

Throughout the twentieth century, cinemas have been a space for cinema owners, engineers, moviegoers, and legislators to imagine and construct their ideal city. Because of what cinema has represented throughout Brazilian history – modern technology, cosmopolitan culture, transnational medium, a space of dreams and visions-- movie theaters have been especially powerful symbols of urban life. Defining who was included and excluded from the space of cinemas also defined who could take part in this idealized city. Unlike the Cine Belas Artes in 2011, cinema for most of the twentieth century was a mass medium that was accessible in terms of ticket prices, popularity, and geographic range. As both symbols of cosmopolitan modernity and a popular diversion, cinemas were both exclusive and inclusive, constantly expanding and contracting the boundaries around who belonged within an idealized vision of the city.

⁷⁴ For an analysis on bicycles as a symbol of progress in turn-of-the century Mexico, see William Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

In the 1910s and 1920s, the municipal government began to regulate cinemas with new scrutiny in order to reconcile the medium's simultaneous associations with cosmopolitan modernity and working-class audiences in dark, crowded spaces. By passing legislation to make cinemas safer and more hygienic, the government involved these structures in a larger political and public health movement to build an orderly city. The process of regulation allowed a group of socially mobile cinema owners and managers to participate in political culture and to interpret and adapt municipal legislation. By negotiating with the government and quibbling over building codes, these cinema managers affected the process of city planning and included themselves in the construction of São Paulo's urban landscape.

In the 1940s, public health officials and legislators no longer perceived cinemas as diseased, unhealthy spaces; "deluxe" cinemas in the center of the city were the epitome of middle-class consumption. In one instance of state regulation, the municipal government targeted movie ticket prices, sparking a debate as to whether cinema was popular, middle-class, or elite, or perhaps all three of these things at the same time. In the pages of the popular press, the municipal government argued that the "deluxe" cinemas in the center of the city were popular, therefore normalizing middle-class consumption as representative of a modern São Paulo. Cinema exhibitors who wished to avoid regulation of ticket prices, however, countered that the center of the city was a "luxury zone," enjoyed only by a select class of patrons. The result of this debate was the codification of class distinctions according to the varying quality of cinemas throughout the city, demonstrating how accessibility to the city's best cinemas was limited by class and taste. In discussing the state regulation of cinemas in these two time periods, this chapter

analyzes the role of cinemas in visions of an ideal São Paulo, and who was included in this urbanization.

I. State Regulation of Cinemas and Urban Space in São Paulo, 1916-1929

A. Cinemas and the Sanitary Movement in São Paulo

In 1927, a restaurant in the center of São Paulo called “Kursaal Steaks” attempted to attract more patrons by offering free movie screenings. With the name “kursaal,” which referred to the dining halls in German spa towns like Baden Baden, the restaurant aspired to an image of elite, continental leisure.⁷⁵ In keeping with this image, the restaurant drew on cinema, the globally popular, modern amusement, to advertise itself as “the most modern and well-frequented movie theater” of the city.⁷⁶ This claim was certainly an overstatement in a city where more than a dozen large cinemas sat between one and two thousand spectators each.⁷⁷ Moreover, in contrast to its cosmopolitan name, “Kursaal Steaks” was far from a marbled dining hall or a modern movie theater. Officials in São Paulo’s municipal Department of Administrative Police and Hygiene described the establishment as a “wooden shack” and ordered its owner, Mr. Galbasera,

⁷⁵ Carlotta Sorba, “The Origins of the Entertainment Industry: The Operetta in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 11, no. 3 (September 2006): 282–302, doi:10.1080/13545710600806730; Jill R. Steward, “Moral Economies and Commercial Imperatives: Food, Diets and Spas in Central Europe: 1800–1914,” *Journal of Tourism History* 4, no. 2 (August 2012): 181–203, doi:10.1080/1755182X.2012.697487.

⁷⁶ “Kursaal Bife.” *O Estado de S. Paulo*. October 30, 1927. Clipping in “Cine Kursaal Bife – cinema sem licença” Cinemas Caixa 26, Cinemas 52, Processo 2009-0-226.983-2, AHSP.

⁷⁷ For example, the Cine República, inaugurated in 1921, sat 1800 spectators. The Cine Central, inaugurated in 1924, sat 1,945 spectators. The Oberdan, inaugurated as a cinema in 1929 also seated close to 2,000 spectators. In addition to these, Jose Inácio de Melo Souza lists thirteen other large cinemas in neighborhoods outside of the Centro. The Cine Odeon, inaugurated in 1930, had two screening rooms, which combined, sat 4,530 spectators total. José Inácio de Melo Souza, “Cine República,” “Cine Central,” “Cine Oberdan,” “Grandes Salas de Bairro” in “Salas de Cinema em São Paulo 1895-1929” base and exposição, published September, 17, 2012, accessed February 5, 2014, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>.

to shut down the restaurant/cinema.⁷⁸

The combination “Brewhouse-Bar-Restaurant-Cinema” represented all of the problems that the municipal government had attempted to regulate and control in the decades since cinema became popular in Brazil. The establishment had a German name, was owned by a person of possibly Italian origin, and was located on Formosa Street in the center of São Paulo. “Kursaal Steaks” blurred the boundaries between good taste and cheap amusement, between modern and backward technologies, and between desirable and undesirable immigrants -- all in the area of São Paulo that municipal authorities sought to keep as orderly as possible. The “wooden shack” also dared to mix steaks and beer with a highly volatile medium: cinema.

In the early twentieth-century, cinema was volatile in multiple senses of the word. In a physical sense, celluloid film was highly flammable. Legislators for the city and state of São Paulo sought to contain this flammability through rigorous building codes and regulations developed specifically for cinemas. As an industry, cinema was also volatile in the fierce competition that it provoked among entrepreneurs who wished to take advantage of the lucrative industry. Finally, as a social activity, cinema sparked debate among scientists, film critics, and moviegoers who all examined the role of movie-going in the rapidly urbanizing city.

The “Old Republic,” 1889-1930, was a political time period when Brazil was nominally a liberal republic but characterized by de-centralized rule among a handful of oligarchs. Only 1 to 3% of the population voted in federal elections that were more perfunctory than democratic, catering to regional rivalries rather than to public

⁷⁸ “Cine Kursaal Bife – cinema sem licença” Processo 2009-0-226.983-2. Cine Caixa 26, Cinemas 52. AHSP.

mandate.⁷⁹ Joseph Love has found that although voter participation increased in São Paulo, even by 1936, only 7% of the state population voted in the presidential election.⁸⁰ Other scholars have similarly characterized republicanism in various regions of Brazil as a monolithic system that shut out popular mobilization and participation.⁸¹ Revisionist histories of republicanism in São Paulo include Mauricio Font's work on the coffee-planting elite, which demonstrates how political fractures within the elite impeded hegemonic rule and opened the way for political change in the 1920s.⁸² James Woodard's recent work on São Paulo state describes the vibrant political culture that extended beyond the local oligarchy. County school teachers, soldiers, young professionals, and government officials participated in "layers of republicanism" across the state. Woodard also examines the ways in which a vocabulary of republicanism, which included concepts like "prestige," loyalty, progress, and culture, circulated among politicians and citizens.⁸³

Many of these terms, in particular "order" and "progress," (the motto of the republican government and printed on its flag) emerged from the liberalism that characterized nineteenth-century political culture in Europe and the Americas.⁸⁴ In nineteenth-century Brazil, political elites who espoused liberalism were often landowners

⁷⁹ Joseph LeRoy Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1980), xv.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 144–145.

⁸¹ In addition to Joseph Love's *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation*, see also Leslie Bethell, "Politics in Brazil: From Elections without Democracy to Democracy without Citizenship," *Daedalus* 129, no. 2 (April 1, 2000): 1–27. Leslie Bethell, *Brazil: Empire and Republic, 1822-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Outside of São Paulo, also see Robert M. Levine, *Pernambuco in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978); John D. Wirth, *Minas Gerais in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977).

⁸² Mauricio A. Font, *Coffee, Contention and Change in the Making of Modern Brazil*. (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1990).

⁸³ James P Woodard, *A Place in Politics : São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigneurial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 47–62.

⁸⁴ For an analysis on how the markers of "progress," such as railroads and republicanism, when adopted in Latin America, impoverished the majority of Latin Americans, see E. Bradford Burns, *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

and slaveholders; these liberals sought to maintain economic and social systems like clientelism/patronism that contradicted tenants of European liberalism. Emilia Viotti da Costa points out that “liberal ideas were ideological weapons to reach some very specific political and economic goals” in Brazil, not a cursory imitation of European ideals.⁸⁵ Jeffrey Needell has also shown how Brazilian elites might have fetishized aspects of European culture, but adapted and interpreted liberalism into a new national context.⁸⁶

The concepts of liberalism, related to order, progress and civilization, also inspired new movements in city planning in Latin America, often in ways that reified identity difference and geographically marginalized the urban poor. Much of the historiography of these processes has been inspired by Foucault’s analysis of the panopticon (a nineteenth system of surveillance used in prisons) as a symbol of the systemic forces that control and discipline individuals and populations, even on the level of quotidian habits and behaviors. Panopticism privileges the spatial dimensions of discipline, and how power relationships are bound up in the ordering of space.⁸⁷ Joel Outtes and Margareth Rago both utilize this concept to demonstrate how city planning was a strategy to inscribe behaviors and habits upon urban residents in Recife and São Paulo, Brazil.⁸⁸ Outtes writes that, “zoning decisions, such as restricted use of areas,

⁸⁵ Emilia Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985), 56.

⁸⁶ Jeffrey D. Needell, *A Tropical Belle Epoque: Elite Culture and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Rio de Janeiro*, 1st edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁸⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1977).

⁸⁸ Joel Outtes, “Disciplining Society through the City: The Genesis of City Planning in Brazil and Argentina (1894-1945),” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 22, no. 2 (April 1, 2003): 137–64; Rago, *Do Cabaré ao Lar: A Utopia da Cidade Disciplinar, Brasil 1890-1930*. For other studies of urbanization that rely on Foucauldian concepts of knowledge, power, discipline, and punish, see David Bray, *Social Space and Governance in Urban China: The Danwei System from Origins to Reform* (Stanford University Press, 2005); Tim Richardson, “Foucauldian Discourse: Power and Truth in Urban and Regional Policy Making,” *European Planning Studies* 4, no. 3 (1996): 279–92, doi:10.1080/09654319608720346; Leonie Sandercock, *Property, Politics, and Urban Planning: A History of Australian City Planning, 1890-1990* (Transaction Publishers, 1990).

prohibition of parking in certain streets, allocation of parts of a waterfront for discharge of freight from ships instead of swimming – all have an effect on individual freedom. If a prison is the place in which freedom is completely suppressed, a restrictive zone is a place in which freedom is slightly diminished.”⁸⁹ Specifically focusing on São Paulo, urbanists Raquel Rolnik, Nadia Somekh, and Cândido Malta Campos have written histories of the city’s urbanization with special attention to municipal legislation and its interaction with both architecture and the geographic distribution of people, wealth, and rights.⁹⁰ Rago and other historians, for example Teresa Meade, Brodwyn Fischer, and Bryan McCann, have emphasized not only the effects of urban planning on marginalizing the poor in Brazilian cities, but also popular resistance and its impact upon urban space.⁹¹

In *Laws of Chance*, Amy Chazkel focuses specifically upon the effects of municipal regulation in republican Rio de Janeiro upon a growing leisure activity, the illegal lottery system called *jogo do bicho*, or “animal game.” Chazkel uses the Marxist concept of enclosure to describe not the physical fencing in of common agrarian lands, but as a metaphor for the encroachment of both privatization and state regulation upon public spaces. Enclosure touched leisure activities as *cariocas* (residents of Rio de Janeiro) used public transportation to travel downtown in order to pay for entertainment in theaters, cinemas, and cabarets. “Public domains formerly outside of the state’s purview now attracted official attention. The criminalized *jogo do bicho* was a creature of

⁸⁹ Outtes, “Disciplining Society through the City,” 139.

⁹⁰ Raquel Rolnik, *A Cidade e a Lei: Legislação, Política Urbana e Territórios na Cidade de São Paulo* (Studio Nobel, 1997); Nadia Somekh, *A Cidade Vertical e o Urbanismo Modernizador: São Paulo, 1920-1939* (Edusp, 1997); Cândido Malta Campos, *Os Rumos da Cidade: Urbanismo e Modernização em São Paulo* (Editora SENAC São Paulo, 2000).

⁹¹ Teresa Meade, “Civilizing” Rio: *Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City, 1889-1930* (University Park Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); Fischer, *A Poverty of Rights*; McCann, *Hard Times in the Marvelous City*.

this transition.”⁹² While *jogo do bicho* in Rio de Janeiro operated on the fringes of state regulation, cinema in both Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo moved into the enclosed domains.

The first cinema entrepreneurs in Brazil were ambulatory peddlers or entertainers who screened films while operating circuses, entertainment houses, and even illegal gambling houses and brothels.⁹³ However, as leisure activities like cinema grew in popularity, they attracted more official attention. This enclosure had a distinctly spatial aspect; it legally defined what cinemas were in terms of built space. Whereas cinema was a transient medium in the earlier part of the century, municipal legislation defined and limited the experience of cinema to a specific type of building that has come to be called a movie theater: “the words building and cinema, used in this article, mean the house and all of its linked dependencies, forming one unit, destined for cinematographic spectacles.”⁹⁴ After 1916, it became illegal for other types of buildings, especially “wooden shacks” like *Kuursal Bife*, to project films. By defining the physical construction of “cinema,” the state began to enclose cinema within a wider movement to sanitize and order São Paulo.

In the 1910s and 1920s, cinemas as a physical space were of greater concern to urban planners and legislators than cinema as a social activity or mass medium. Although the content of films fell under regulation in later years, in the early period of silent

⁹² Chazkel, *Laws of Chance*, 11.

⁹³ Julio Lucchesi Moraes, “A Valencian Tycoon in Brazil: The Economic Trajectory of Francisco Serrador Carbonell (1887-1921),” *Filmhistoria Online* 1, no. 2 (2012), <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/FilmhistoriaOnline/article/view/262569>.

⁹⁴ as palavras prédio e cinematographo, usadas neste artigo, significam a casa e todas as dependencias a ela ligadas, formando um só corpo, destinadas a espectaculos cinematographicos.” Municipal law 1954 of 1916 (February, 23, 1916), Article 162, paragraph 1.

cinema, the flammability of film was cinema's primary danger.⁹⁵ From 1899 until the invention of acetate-based or "safety film" in 1949, films were printed exclusively on nitrate film. Nitrate is highly flammable, and when ignited, burns twenty times faster than wood, can continue to burn underwater, and produces a toxic gas that can cause lethal nitric acid poisoning in the lungs.⁹⁶ The flammability and rapid decomposition of nitrate film is responsible for the depletion of film archives around the world, from Mexico to Sweden. Reels from the early period of Brazilian cinema are no exception, and few examples exist today.

Although nitrate film is composed of chemicals similar to those found in explosives, cinema exhibition in the first decade of the twentieth century fostered few safeguards to protect its audiences. Moviegoers were aware of and even exaggerated the dangers of nitrate film. The twentieth-century writer and essayist Jacob Penteadó recalled these rumors in his memoir of growing up in the primarily working-class, immigrant neighborhood of Belénzinho in 1910, just east of São Paulo's city center. At the time, some patrons of the Cinema Belém would always sit in the back of the theater, away from the projector because, "they said the film could burn your eyes" (during this time, cinemas used retro-projection, in which the projector was set up behind the screen rather than behind the audience). In addition, before screenings, the movie screen would be doused in water with "the most primitive instrument possible: a cane of bamboo with a

⁹⁵ While both the Estado Novo and the military dictatorship of Brazil managed political censorship of films (both imported and domestic) on a federal level after 1940, various, decentralized organizations managed the moral censorship of films, including local priests, exhibitors, and the Orientação Moral dos Espetáculos (OME), which was affiliated with the Catholic church. The latter classified films according to moral content and published these lists in newspapers and magazines beginning in 1937. See *Enciclopédia do Cinema Brasileiro* (São Paulo, SP: Editora SENAC São Paulo, 2000), 113 and Johnson, *The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and the State*. For political censorship during the military dictatorship, see Inimá Ferreira Simões, *Roteiro da intolerância: a censura cinematográfica no Brasil* (Senac, 1998).

⁹⁶ Anthony Slide, *Nitrate Won't Wait: A History of Film Preservation in the United States* (McFarland, 2000), 2–3.

bulb at the tip.”⁹⁷ Although this was supposed to make the cloth screen more transparent, some fans “insisted that it was to prevent the screen from burning.”⁹⁸ Anselmo Duarte, one of Brazilian cinema’s most famous actors and directors, revealed that this practice continued into the 1920s in the countryside of São Paulo. Growing up in the town of Salto, his first job in the film industry was to use this makeshift “syringe” to douse the screen at his local movie theater.⁹⁹

In addition to the flammability of film itself, legislators and medical professionals in Brazil saw cinemas as particularly dangerous and unhealthy because they were dark, crowded spaces, similar to factories and slums. Concentrations of poor people caught the attention of medical intellectuals and scientists who espoused eugenics, the early twentieth-century scientific movement that sought to “improve” the human race through breeding and environment.¹⁰⁰ Latin American intellectuals favored Lamarkian eugenics that focused on environmental factors. For these pseudo-scientists, “the poor were poor because they were unhygienic, dirty, ignorant, and hereditarily unfit.”¹⁰¹ Although eugenicists particularly targeted the *cortiços*, or slums, of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo as the breeding ground for disease, a 1916 article in the well-established medical journal

⁹⁷ Jacob Pentead, *Belênzinho, 1910: retrato de uma época* (São Paulo: Carrenho Editoria : Narrativa Um, 1962), 172.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Anselmo Duarte, Interview with Roberval Lima, “Ninguém Segura Esse Russo Louco,” *Memória Viva: História Rima Com a Memória*, 2004, accessed 8/10/2014, <http://www.memoriaviva.com.br/siteantigo/anselmo.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1. For more on eugenics in specifically in São Paulo, where Mendelian eugenics was more popular than in other parts of Brazil, see Robert Wegner and Vanderlei Sebastião de Souza, “Eugenia ‘negativa’, Psiquiatria E Catolicismo: Embates Em Torno Da Esterilização Eugênica No Brasil,” *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos* 20, no. 1 (March 2013): 263–88, doi:10.1590/S0104-59702013005000001. André Mota, “Eugenics and Medical Specialties: The 1930s,” *Circumscribere: International Journal for the History of Science* 6, no. 0 (2009): 12–18

¹⁰¹ Stepan, 37.

Medico-Cirurgica do Brazil found cinemas to present similar dangers.¹⁰²

Influenced by French medical literature on “miasmas,” or the supposedly diseased air in humid, enclosed spaces, the public health officials and professors who wrote the article announced that even Rio de Janeiro’s best cinemas had a shocking number of “germens” per cubic meter.¹⁰³ Comparing the “corrupted air” (*ar viciado*) of cinemas to that found in factories and prisons, the authors claimed that so many people crowded together produced a toxic, even lethal “carbonic gas.”¹⁰⁴ The authors reported that, “even hours after being emptied, the smell characteristic of confined spaces persists. The reason for this is in the condensation of air, which comes into contact with walls, furniture, clothing, leaving tiny droplets of organic material that then permeate the atmosphere with this unmistakable odor.”

Scientists and legislators in São Paulo, in describing factories and slums, also referred to the “unmistakable odor” of crowded spaces. Margareth Rago finds medical professionals using nearly identical language in 1926: “The air of these confined buildings [factories] creates the characteristic, repugnant smell.”¹⁰⁵ In this medical literature, stale, smelly air, dust, “germens,” and imagined “microbial agents” all combined to make diseased, unhealthy spaces. In the case of factories, “corrupted air” resulted in the moral and physical degeneration of workers, who would then lead to a less

¹⁰² This journal ran from 1893 to 1949, and with a national and international circulation that extended not only to the medical schools of São Paulo, but was even available as a French edition available in Paris.

¹⁰³ Alberto da Cunha, Domingos Cunha, and João de Almeida Pizarro, “Inspeção Hygienica dos Cinematographos. Os Cinematographicos E a Saude Publica,” *Medico-Cirurgica Do Brazil* 24, no. 5 (May 1916): 103.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 125–126.

¹⁰⁵ José Oliveira Netto, “Profilaxia das causas directas de insalubridade das fábricas de fiar, tecer e tingir algodão. Comentários à situação das fábricas paulistas em face destas causas”, in *Boletim da Sociedade de Medecina e Cururgia de São Paulo*, 1922, no. 5, p. 181, quoted in Rago, *Do Cabaré ao Lar: A Utopia da Cidade Disciplinar, Brasil 1890-1930*, 42.

productive, less healthy nation.¹⁰⁶ In the case of cinemas, however, the authors' main preoccupation was its potential to spread disease beyond the working poor. The cinemas addressed in the article were all located on Avenida Rio Branco, a chic avenue in the center of Rio de Janeiro, and, as discussed in chapter three, frequented by elite and middle-class moviegoers. Thus, the discovery of the resistant, tuberculosis-causing "Koch bacteria," in a "well-frequented" (but unnamed) cinema was doubly dangerous as the "corrupted air" could rise and infect nearby apartment buildings, spreading diseases to Rio de Janeiro's well-heeled elite.¹⁰⁷

Cinemas, therefore, were especially dangerous because they might affect all economic sectors of the population. As damning as this study was, the authors cited and criticized other studies that were causing "undue panic."¹⁰⁸ In particular, Placido Barbosa, a Rio de Janeiro public health official, claimed that the characteristic odor of cinemas was due to the "unwashed bodies" of moviegoers. The authors countered however, that many studies exaggerated the poor's lack of hygiene, and that it was the built structure of cinemas themselves, not the unwashed bodies of moviegoers, that caused disease.¹⁰⁹ The ideas of the sanitary movement extended beyond medical literature, and condemnations of the lack of hygiene in cinemas appeared in the popular press and even in popular leisure magazines. *Para Todos*, which is discussed in chapters three and four, was a magazine that printed fashion news, society gossip, and film reviews, with numerous references to the sanitary conditions and odorous air of certain cinemas in Rio de

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 43; Raquel Rolnik, "The City and the Law: Legislation, Urban Policy and Territories in the City of São Paulo (1886-1936)" (New York University, Graduate School of Arts and Science, 1995), 78–79.

¹⁰⁷ da Cunha, Cunha, Pizarro, "Inspeção Hygienica Dos Cinematographos. Os Cinematographicos E a Saude Publica," 104–105.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 130.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 128–129.

Janeiro.¹¹⁰

In São Paulo, Rago and Raquel Rolnik have shown how scientific literature directly affected municipal legislation that sought to purify and sanitize factories and slums. Both the municipal and state governments aimed to do the same for cinemas, to make them both safer and healthier. In 1916, municipal legislators sought to regulate the construction of cinemas and safeguard moviegoers from the dangers of fire. Provisions in the municipal law 1554 of 1916 set standards for the width of hallways and doors, the use of “incombustible” materials like iron and cement, and the placement and construction of the projection booth. In 1917, the state government passed legislation to re-organize sanitation services and regulate the construction of commercial and residential establishments.¹¹¹ Among the butcheries, hotels, schools, and even hospitals addressed by the law, cinemas and theaters were singled out as particularly insalubrious, diseased spaces.

To prevent the spread of infectious diseases like yellow fever, typhoid, and dysentery, which was one of the major public health concerns in Brazil, the law proscribed specific methods of “disinfection.”¹¹² For example, when isolating typhoid patients, it instructed that, “precautions should be taken for the immediate and rigorous disinfection of feces and urine.”¹¹³ The terms “disinfection” (*desinfecção*) or “disinfected” (*desinfetado*) were applied to cleaning areas occupied by infected patients,

¹¹⁰ See, for example, Operador, “Chronica: A Hygiene e os Cochicholos da Avenida,” *Para Todos*, September 5, 1925, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

¹¹¹ “Reorganisa o Serviço Sanitario do Estado” State Law 1.596 (December, 29, 1917). Accessed 8/11/2014 <http://www.al.sp.gov.br/repositorio/legislacao/lei/1917/lei-1596-29.12.1917.html>

¹¹² For more information on early twentieth-century science in Brazil and the efforts to eradicate infectious diseases, see Nancy Stepan, *Beginnings of Brazilian Science: Oswaldo Cruz, Medical Research and Policy, 1890-1920* (New York: Science History Publications, 1976). Sidney Chalhoub, *Cidade Febril: Cortiços e Epidemias na Corte Imperial* (Companhia das Letras, 1996).

¹¹³ “serão tomadas precauções para a desinfecção immediata e rigorosa das fezes e da urina” State law 1596, 243-b

horse stables, transportation systems like railways, and to handling used goods. Theaters and cinemas, however, were uniquely singled out among public spaces occupied by people for requiring disinfection. The law demanded that cinemas and theaters “be assiduously cleaned and periodically disinfected.”¹¹⁴

There was no mention of the need to disinfect hotels, schools, factories, restaurants, butcher shops, or even hospitals, unless handling an actual case of disease. The only other service establishments, besides theaters and cinemas, that required disinfection were those dealing used goods (including libraries and auction houses) and barbershops: “barbershops and beauty salons should have floors made of smooth, impermeable material, walls painted in a light color, so as to permit complete cleaning and disinfection.”¹¹⁵ However, the law only demanded that barber shops be constructed with materials that facilitated cleanliness, not regularly disinfected, as was demanded for cinemas and theaters. If the primary purpose of disinfection was to protect the public from the spread of disease, then it might have been mandatory in schools. This was not the case; rather, “the interiors of schools, whenever possible, should be finished with a material that facilitates frequent washing.”¹¹⁶ As with barber shops, the law only asked that schools be built to facilitate cleanliness, but “rigorous cleaning” was not mandatory and “disinfection” was never even mentioned.

The movement to improve the safety and hygiene of cinemas was part of a national movement for public health in which São Paulo was supposedly at the forefront. When a Spanish flu epidemic killed thousands in 1918, the Brazilian government

¹¹⁴ “tães estabelecimentos deverão ser assiduamente limpos e periodicamente desinfetados” Ibid., 204

¹¹⁵ as lojas de barbeiro e cabelleireiro terão o piso revestido de material liso e impermeavel e as paredes oleadas de côr clara, de maneira a permittir completa limpeza e desinfecção Ibid., 198

¹¹⁶ o interior das escolas, sempre que possivel, deve ser revestido com material que permitta lavagens frequentes Ibid., 81

launched the National Department of Public Health.¹¹⁷ The state of São Paulo, however, maintained its own Sanitation Services department that set a standard in public health regulation for the rest of the country.¹¹⁸ To that end, cinemas were a significant point of contention because they were supposed to represent what was modern and advanced about São Paulo. With the popularity of movie-going in Europe and the U.S., cinemas, like train stations, post offices, and wide avenues, were symbols of modernity, culture, and advanced technology. The gap between the potential of cinema as a site for cosmopolitan modernity and the imagined use of cinemas as a breeding ground for disease produced a conflict in the spatial distribution of cinemas in the city. While cinemas like “Kuursal Bife” represented the ramshackle, disorderly structures that failed to contain the dangers of cinema within iron walls and zinc floors, cinemas that claimed to be the “luxurious” or “elite” created new loci of modernity.¹¹⁹

B. Translating Law into Built Space: Cinemas as Spaces of Contestation

While legislators and city planners might imagine that their regulations would build a more orderly city and a more hygienic population, cinema exhibitors and owners utilized the law for different means. The law provided a vocabulary for cinema

¹¹⁷ For an overview of the role of the republican state in providing public health services, see Gilberto Hochman, *A Era do Saneamento: As Bases da Política de Saúde Pública no Brasil*, vol. 113 (Editora Hucitec, 1998); Luiz Antonio de Castro Santos and Lina Rodrigues de Faria, *A Reforma Ssanitária no Brasil: Ecos da Primeira República* (EDUSF, 2003).

¹¹⁸ Significant work has been done on São Paulo state’s role in advancing public health initiatives on a national level. See Hochman, 1998 and Luiz Antonio Teixeira, “A Sociedade de Medicina e Cirurgia de Sao Paulo - 1895-1913.” ([s.n.], 2001). See also Almeida, Marta de. “São Paulo na virada do século XX: um laboratório de saúde pública para o Brasil.” *Tempo* 10, no. 19 (2005): 77–89 and Márcia Regina Barros da Silva, “O Processo de Urbanização Paulista: A Medicina e O Crescimento da Cidade Moderna,” *Revista Brasileira de História* 27, no. 53 (June 2007): 243–266, doi:10.1590/S0102-01882007000100011. Da Silva argues that the ideological roots of the state’s involvement in public health can be traced to the medical professionals in São Paulo’s beneficent hospital Santa Casa de Misericórdia, founded in 1878, before the establishment of the Republican government in 1889 and the federal reforms after 1910. Both Almeida and da Silva provide very concise and helpful overviews of the literature on the state’s role in public health in Brazil and in São Paulo.

¹¹⁹ A wider discussion of cinema as a symbol of modernity and the meanings of modernity in Brazil is in chapter three.

entrepreneurs to test the state's power and wield the law as a tool in the fiercely competitive entertainment industry. The process of regulation did not just “enclose” the peddlers and patrons of cinema, it offered a platform for them to employ the language of liberalism and laws of republicanism to assert their place in São Paulo's urbanization.

Historians of various Latin American nations have demonstrated how individuals marginalized from political power (by class, gender, or ethnicity) used the language of liberalism and the laws of republicanism to negotiate their rights as citizens.¹²⁰ In São Paulo, safety issues surrounding cinemas also brought terms like “order,” “progress,” and “civilization,” into public debate. Municipal workers, cinema entrepreneurs, writers, and moviegoers evoked liberal ideals in order to improve safety standards in cinemas, to shut down competitors, and to ask for a more egalitarian movie-going experience. In hundreds of petitions to construct, reform, and operate cinemas in São Paulo, cinema owners came into conflict with the municipal government.¹²¹ Like the *bicheiros* in republican Rio de

¹²⁰ See, for example, Christine Hunefeldt, *Liberalism in the Bedroom: Quarreling Spouses in Nineteenth-Century Lima* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Sarah Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854* (University Park Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999). Laura Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights: Indigenous Struggles for Land and Justice in Bolivia, 1880-1952* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

¹²¹ In addition to the cases discussed in this chapter, see for example “Reforma do Cine Olimpia” 02/27/1922. Cinemas Caixa 7, Processo No. 2008.0294.484-4, , AHSP; “Dez mezes de reforma Cine Apollo-Odeon” 04/09/1924 Cinemas Caixa 14, Cinemas 24, Processo No. 2009-0.115.846-8, AHSP; “Cine Esperia, Oberdan, São Luiz” 10/04/1930 Cinemas Caixa 25, Cinemas 51, Processo No. 2010-0.066.136-5, AHSP . This chapter section is based primarily on a collection of documents related to the database “Salas de Cinema de São Paulo,” organized by José Ignácio de Melo Souza, mentioned in the Introduction of this dissertation. The database was created in partnership with the Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo and the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), a federal institution that supports academic research in Brazil. Souza corralled existing cases (*processos*) related to cinemas or spaces of cinematographic exhibition from 1895 to 1929 from the Divisão de Arquivo Municipal de Processos – DGD-2 (which retains closed administrative processos from 1921 to the present) and the Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo's Department of Works collection. In partnership with the Cinemateca Brasileira, Souza has produced an online database of cinemas during this time period, complete with historical descriptions and information, as well as photographs, maps, and newspaper advertisements (when available) for each cinema. The research in this database is invaluable and provides a comprehensive panorama of cinema exhibition in São Paulo. While I refer to materials in the online database, I based the research for this chapter and chapter two on the actual documents, focusing on the processos from the Division of the Municipal Archive of Processes (processes after 1921) which are available in the Arquivo

Janeiro, these were individuals (almost exclusively men) whose businesses were being regulated with new scrutiny. Their establishments were characterized in municipal processes as illegal, outdated, and incompatible with the latest building codes. Most of the conflict in these petitions was seen in the lengthy process of cinema owners submitting petitions to construct or reform cinemas, being rejected for safety infractions, reforming their petitions and blueprints only to be either rejected again or approved for a license, in which case their cinemas would be subjected to detailed building inspections.

The built spaces of cinemas were thus the result of protracted negotiation between cinema owners and officials within the municipal government. This process complicates Michel de Certeau's concept of the "space planner urbanist, city planner or cartographer" who view plan, and represent cities from above while "ordinary practitioners of the city" alter the city by walking and using its spaces "down below."¹²² De Certeau describes the city map as a metaphor for the process of historical representation (he compares a route drawn on a map to the act of walking and states that the map, "itself visible, it has the effect of making invisible the operation that made it possible.") but in so doing, depicts maps as static representations. As other historians have pointed out, his depiction of mapping "from above" versus walking "from below," though useful, is dichotomous. Raymond Craib, for example, has shown how maps of the early Mexican nation were the result of struggle between cartographers, people, and nature, not from the lofty ideals of

Histórico de São Paulo. I sifted through the complete collection that was available at the time, which consisted of 41 boxes; this yielded some material that has been analyzed by Souza in his database, and additional material that has not been published in the database. At the time of research in 2011, this "Cinemas" collection was not yet catalogued for the public and the search function for the online database was under reform.

¹²² Michel Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 93.

those “above.”¹²³ Similarly, blueprints from the municipal archives of São Paulo demonstrate the messy process in which cinema owners and architects submitted, revised, and redrew their plans in negotiation with the government.

Rather than “making invisible the operation that made it possible,” these blueprints are visual representations of the negotiation itself. In addition, while there were a few prominent cinema owners who achieved great financial success, most cinema owners were much more like their working-class, movie-going clients than moneyed empresarios. Most were European immigrants, particularly from Italy,¹²⁴ and even the cinema exhibitors who achieved eventual success came from humble backgrounds. In the municipal government, the individuals reviewing building plans and performing building inspections were civil engineers and government employees, not prominent politicians. Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens has analyzed engineering schools and municipal departments like the Department for Public Works as “cradle organizations for the new middle class,” where the sons of immigrants and small business owners could become upwardly mobile professionals.¹²⁵ For example, Adriano Marchini, a Department of Works engineer who is discussed below, was the son of poor Italian immigrants.¹²⁶ Peixoto-Mehrtens emphasizes the role of these middle-class technicians in shaping the urban spaces of São Paulo. They, along with the immigrant cinema owners, were the individuals who debated where emergency exits should be implemented, how wide hallways should be, and whether bathrooms were large or numerous enough. Though seemingly minor in detail,

¹²³ Raymond B. Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes*, Latin America Otherwise (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004).

¹²⁴ The characterization of European-descendent cinema and theater owners as simultaneously valuable leaders of film culture and dangerous threats to social order, is discussed in chapter three.

¹²⁵ Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens, *Urban Space and National Identity in Early Twentieth Century São Paulo, Brazil: Crafting Modernity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 83.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 90 Documents

these debates altered legislators' vision of São Paulo as a safe, hygienic city. Cinema owners were not just "enclosed" by legislation, they were included in the process of urbanization, revealing how even structures that were planned and regulated were nevertheless negotiated and extralegal.

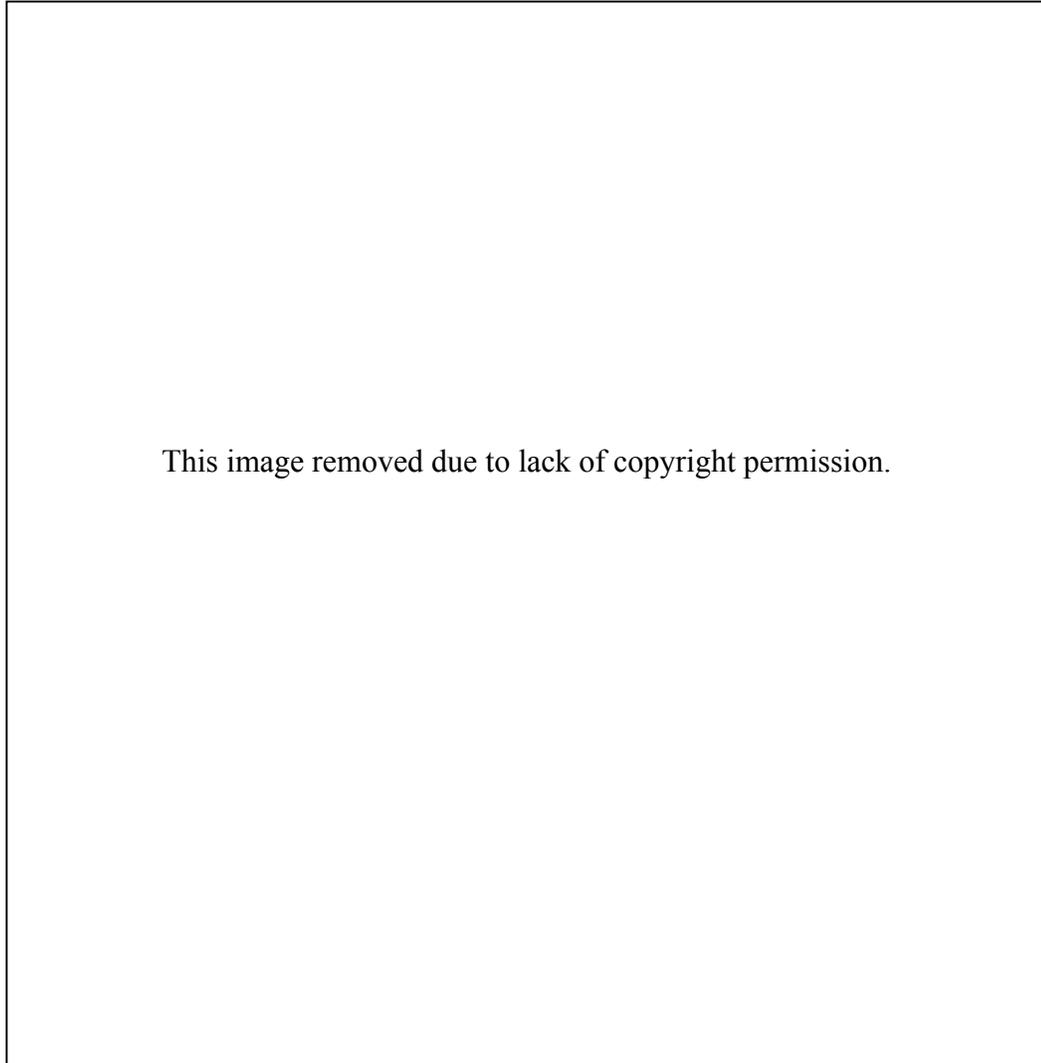


Figure 2: Urbanized area of São Paulo (Urbanized until 1914 in orange, urbanized between 1915 to 1929 in red). Source: "Histórico Demográfico do Município de São Paulo, 1915-1929" Empresa Paulista do Planejamento Metropolitano - Emplasa Mapa de Expansão da Área Urbanizada da Região Metropolitana de São Paulo, 2002-2003. Adapted by Secretaria Municipal de Planejamento - Sempla/Dipro, accessed May 25, 2014, http://smdu.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/historico_demografico/1920.php.

The Cine Sant-Anna, located on Rua Voluntários in Santana, a neighborhood in the northern outskirts of the city, operated on the geographical and legal fringes of São

Paulo. The cinema was constructed in 1914 and from its inception, was continuously out of step with the law. In particular, the proprietor of the cinema and his family lived in the floor above the cinema, which was illegal, and the cinema lacked proper emergency exits that opened directly onto the street.¹²⁷ In January of 1924, the cinema lost its license for failing to comply with building codes, including maintaining unsafe private boxes that were supposed to be demolished, not meeting minimum requirements for the width of hallways, having only one women's bathroom instead of two, a women's powder room that was half the size it should have been, lacking an emergency exit, and a projection room with a wooden (and therefore flammable) staircase.¹²⁸

The proprietor of the cinema, José Marino, was upfront in stating that he thought many of the mandated reforms were unnecessary. A few days before losing his license, Marino wrote a letter addressed to the mayor stating that “he did not see the necessity” of leaving a side emergency exit door open since the cinema had functioned for ten years without incident. He added that he owned a small cinema with only 369 seats, the thickness of the walls were thicker than mandated by the state, and that the cinema “offers all of the conditions of security, hygiene, and comfort desirable in such a small place of entertainment.” Additionally, he criticized the law itself, stating that law 1954 of 1916 was developed for older film technology, and that his cinema used the “most modern and perfected” equipment that prevented the combustion of film.¹²⁹ According to José Inácio de Melo Souza, officials in the municipal government, including the Director

¹²⁷ José Inácio de Melo Souza. “Cine Santana” in *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo, 1895-1929* <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine3p/historico/00253.pdf>. Date accessed: 1/13/2014

¹²⁸ José de Castro 1/17/1924 “Cine Sant-Anna – cassar a licença” Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 13, Cinemas 21, Processo 2009-0.094.523-7

¹²⁹ José Marino. “Cine Sant-Anna” 1/23/1924 Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 13, Cinemas 21, Processo 2009-0.094.532-6

of Public Works Arthur Saboya, agreed with Marino and allowed him to operate the cinema without the mandated modifications. Another official however, reviewed Marino's petitions, re-inspected the cinema, and again found it to be inadequate.¹³⁰ The cinema lost its license on January 17, 1924. Yet, after all of this back and forth between José Marino and the municipal government, on February 8, 1924, an official reported that "Despite being told to cease operations and being fined twice, the cinema Sant'Anna continues to open every night."¹³¹ José Marino, like his cinema, operated on the fringes of legality. He utilized the language of hygiene and security to petition the mayor through legal channels and keep his cinema open.

After the Cine Sant'Anna was found to be operating without a license in 1924, there is a gap in the municipal records. The cinema resurfaced in 1928, when Marino petitioned to reform his cinema again. As previously (and as with other cinema reform petitions), Marino submitted various blueprints, revising and reforming his plans in negotiation with the government. One of the submitted blueprints visibly demonstrates this process.

¹³⁰ José Inácio de Melo Souza. "Cine Santana"

¹³¹ "Cine Sant-Anna – cassar a licença" Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 13, Cinemas 21, Processo 2009-0.094.523-7

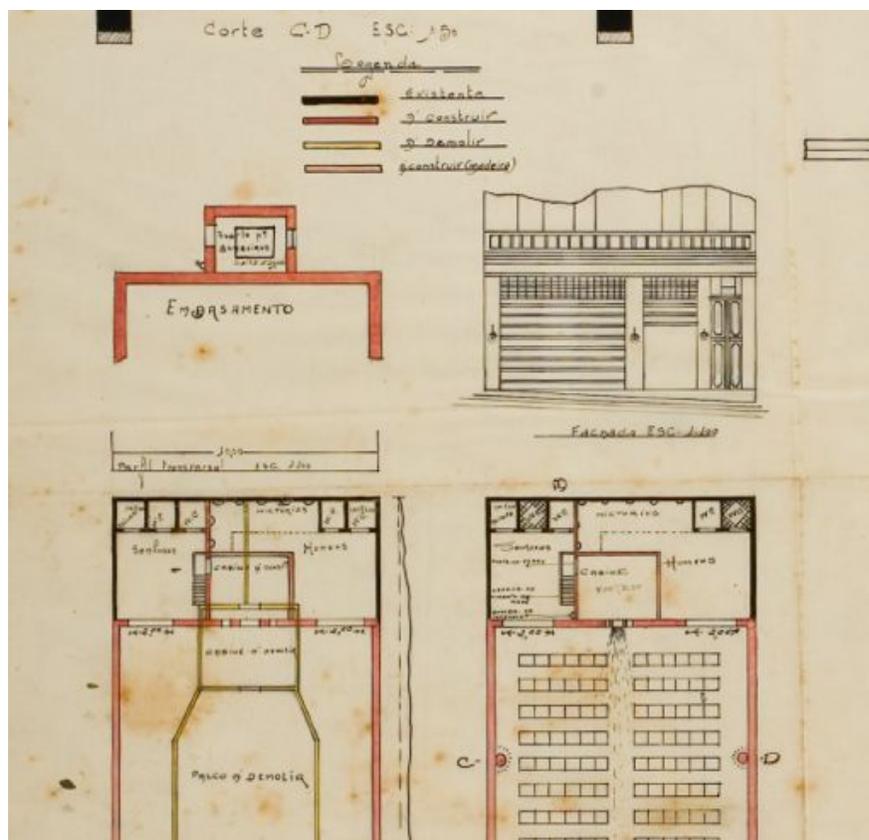


Figure 3: "Cine Sant'Anna" April, 19, 1928 Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 10, Processo 2009-0.102.715-0.

The legend codes the walls shaded in black as “existing,” walls in red are “to be constructed,” walls in yellow “are to be demolished” and walls in pink are “to be constructed with wood.” Blueprints like this one demonstrate the process of transition, as cinemas adapted to new technologies and uses. The view of the cinema on the left-hand side shows that the Cine Sant’Anna was still using retroprojection, the older system in which the film projector was behind the screen rather than behind the audience. In the plans for reform, however, the cinema converted to front projection, which was only legal with the implementation of emergency exits that the cinema did not (and did not plan to) have.¹³² The projection wall was to be demolished and audience members were to face the opposite direction so that the projector would be situated behind them.

¹³² São Paulo municipal law 1954 (February, 23, 1916). Article 16

The blueprint not only illustrates the process of transition, but the process of negotiation. There are visible points of contestation within the blueprint. For example, in the building inspection before the Cine Sant'Anna lost its license in 1924, engineer José de Castro noted that Marino “neglected to execute reforms in keeping with the approved blueprint.”¹³³ One of the inconsistencies was that the size of the women’s toilette was 1 meter by 1 meter instead of 3.5 by 4.5 as was proposed. In the later 1928 blueprint above, the toilette was still 1 meter by 1 meter, demonstrating that the reform was never completed, even four years later. More importantly, the blueprint shows no side emergency exits. The existence of side exits was mandated by the law, and represented a point of contention between Marino and the government. It was one of the reforms Marino thought “unnecessary” when he petitioned the government to keep his license in 1924. In 1928, Marino’s new blueprints not only show that he never implemented side exits, but that he still did not plan to build them into the new reforms. Omissions and inconsistencies like these were visual markers of dispute between entrepreneurs like José Marino and the municipal government. They show the gap between what the law demanded, what entrepreneurs envisioned, and how evasions of the law were hidden in plain sight.

In 1923, J. Fraissat, the engineer for the Cine Central in the Santa Efigenia neighborhood in the center of São Paulo, also contested municipal legislation. Rather than claim that the Cine Central was too small to adhere to building codes, the engineer J. Fraissat claimed that the cinema was too advanced, and like Marino, accused the legislation of being outdated. After inspecting the submitted blueprints in October of 1922, the municipal engineer Adriano Marchini demanded that, “the projection booth

¹³³ “Cine Sant-Anna – Cassar a licença”

should be in the back of the theater,” i.e., that it should use retroprojection with the projector behind the screen.¹³⁴ Months later, on March 21, 1923, Fraissat, sent a letter to the Department of Works to contest the decision, remarking that the best cinema in São Paulo used front projection, “not as the law demanded,” and that “in North America, according to cinema and theater magazines, the projection booth is behind the audience... in the American magazine ‘American Builder’ in May 1920, you can see a blueprint of a cinema belonging to the great actress Mary Pickford, in which you see clearly that the cabin is behind the audience, contrary to the municipal law.”¹³⁵

In response to the letter, the next day on March 22nd, the engineer Marchini also wrote a letter to the head of the Works department, declaring that he agreed with Fraissat. After insisting that the Cine Central use retro-projection months prior, why did he suddenly support Fraissat’s front projection blueprint? Although it may have been a case of bribery or an arrangement between the two engineers, Marchini’s reasons for changing his mind demonstrated the weight of cinema as a modern technology, and what having the latest technologies meant for a modern city. After admitting he knew, as Fraissat had claimed, that cinemas in the city used front projection (though only with side exits; otherwise they would be fined for the infraction), he recommended that Fraissat’s request be approved because:

“a) the view is much better for the public, without tiring their eyes b) the dangers of combustion are completely eliminated in modern projectors c) the cited requirement proves that the law is outdated (law

¹³⁴ “A cabina do operador deverá ficar no fundo da sala de espetáculos” Marchini, October, 15, 1922. “Cine Central –Rua General Osorio” April, 1923, Cinemas, AHSP. Caixa 8, Cinemas 9, Processo 2008-0.263.881-0; numero de capa 0.068.056-22

¹³⁵ “e não como a lei exige,” and that “na América do Norte, segunda as revistas de cinema e teatro, a cabine esta atrás do público... tornando a revista americana ‘American Builder’ de maio de 1920, vê-se nela a planta de um cinema da grande atriz Mary Pickford no qual vê-se claramente a situação da cabine ser atrás do público, contrário do que manda a lei do município” “Cine Central – Rua General Osorio.” For an overview of the history of this cinema, see “Cine Central” *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo*.

1954 of 1916), which was justifiable at the time it was passed, but since then, cinematographic equipment has reached relative perfection, which totally eliminates the dangers of panic.”¹³⁶

The case demonstrates the uneven application of the law; both parties already knew that there were constant exceptions to the rules. However, it also demonstrates the shifting transnational influences that affected what was considered “modern” and safe in São Paulo. Marchini’s first reason for approving of front projection was not the issue of safety, but one of aesthetics, namely that, “the view is much better.” While the demand to use retroprojection was based on reforms meant to make cinemas safer in 1916, its use in 1922 marked municipal legislation as out of date rather than modern. The influence of European scientific thought on “germens” and “microbes” still held sway in São Paulo municipal and state legislation, but Hollywood was an emerging locus of cosmopolitan modernity. Rather than cite the newest French medical study on the reduced lethality of “carbonic gas,” Fraissat cited the reigning expert on what was modern: Mary Pickford, the first and most successful female star and producer of Hollywood. The reference to Pickford is significant because of her reputation not only as “Hollywood royalty,” but as an innocent and virtuous woman (and therefore non-threatening to patriarchal gender norms); the effect of Mary Pickford on movie-going in Brazil is discussed briefly in chapter three.

¹³⁶ “A) a visão para o publico é muito melhor, sem fadiga de visto; b) os perigos de combustão de film são completamente evitadas nas modernas aparelhos de projecção; c) a citada exigencia provem de uma lei antiquada (lei 1954 de 1916), e que era justificavel no tempo de sua promulgação desde então os aparelhos cinematographicos atingiram uma perfeicção relativa, que evite totalmente os perigos do panico.” “Cine Central” Cinemas, AHSP Cine Caixa 8, Cinemas 9, Processo 2008-0.263.881-0; numero de capa 0.068.056-22

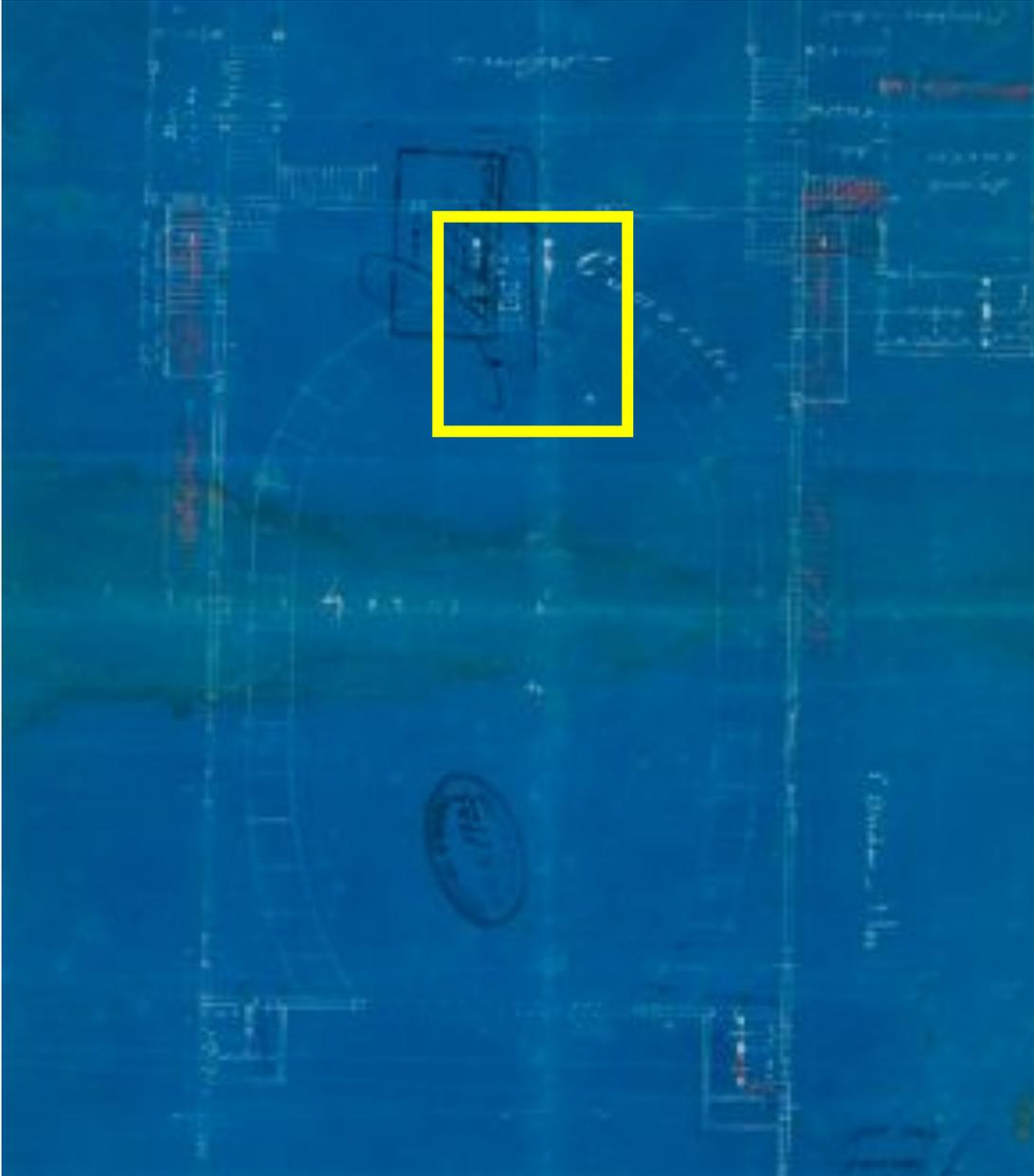


Figure 4: Detail of “Primeiro Pavimento, Cine Central” 1922. Cinemas, AHSP. Caixa 8, Cinemas 9. Processo 2008-0.263.881-0, Numero da capa 0.068.056-22. Location of projector behind audience (front projection) outlined in yellow.

In supporting front projection, Marchini revealed that he too, like Fraissat, was knowledgeable about the newest trends in Hollywood and the latest technological innovations. Constructing a modern São Paulo was about building a safe, orderly city, but it was also about building a cosmopolitan, cultured city in which engineers read *American Builder* and cinemas appeared like those owned by Mary Pickford.

The gap between municipal law and the built space of the city's cinemas prompted the newspaper *Jornal do Comercio* to print a sharp criticism of the government in 1928. The principal complaint of the article was that although cinemas were “spontaneously multiplying” in São Paulo, none of the cinemas were actually cinemas, but old theaters and buildings renovated to serve as cinemas. These renovated buildings were “full of defects,” the principal danger being the flammability of celluloid film and the possibility of electrical short circuits. With a lack of sufficient emergency exits, these old buildings were accidents waiting to happen. In addition, the writer advised that the engineers of cinemas should recognize the “excessive number of people who flock daily to shows” and adjust the maximum capacity of cinemas accordingly. The author of the article also ridiculed the claims that cinemas utilized “exhausts and ventilators with difficult names. If they exist, they are insufficient.” Finally, he directly blamed the government: “the guilt against public hygiene lies with Sanitary Services, who easily close their eyes and ignore all of these details. The public (*público*) is the only one to lose. But what value has the people (*povo*)?”¹³⁷

Although establishments like “Kuursal Bife” lost their licenses for not complying with municipal building codes, other cinemas like the Cine Sant’anna and the Cine Central were evidence that even planned, licensed structures were out of step with the law. While much of the historiography of urbanization in Brazil has focused on the planned versus the autoconstructed, the city versus the *favela*, blueprints like these demonstrate how planning was not a top-down process, but a messy, uneven, and negotiated one. Cinema managers argued that building codes meant to ensure the public’s

¹³⁷ “Cabe a culpa aqui ao Serviço Sanitário á hygiene publica, cujos olhos se fecham facilmente para desconhecer todos estes pormenores. O público é o único a perder. Mas que valor tem o povo?” *Jornal do Comércio* 7/22/1928. AHSP Cine Caixa 22, Cinemas 45 2009-0.335.700-0. Número de capa 0.044.867-28

safety were unnecessary, outdated, or so unevenly applied as to make them invalid. Their blueprints reflect how they were included within the process of planning, affecting the built space of São Paulo's cinemas.

C. Appropriating Republican Law for Material Gain

While the owner and engineer for the Cine Sant'Anna and the Cine Central argued that the municipal law was outdated or unnecessary, other cinema owners and small business owners used a different tactic. Arguing instead that the government had a responsibility to uphold the laws of safety and hygiene, they petitioned officials to enforce laws against competitors. Businessmen utilized extralegal tactics to gain advantage in the lucrative film industry. The use of bribery and personal favor, as became the standard practice among *bicheiros* in Rio de Janeiro,¹³⁸ existed, but details are not available in most of the cinema petitions. Informal negotiations with the law were hinted at in other ways, in anonymous letters that accused municipal employees of favoritism or questioned why certain cinemas that violated building codes were still granted licenses.¹³⁹

The case of the Cine Carlos Gomes illustrates how two cinema owners took this

¹³⁸ Chazkel, *Laws of Chance*.

¹³⁹ Not just limited to the republican government, in 1934, someone sent in an anonymous letter about the Cine Broadway to the government employee Carlos Assumpção. The anonymous writer claimed that they had met at "the association" and that in order to protect the prestige of the municipal administration and Assumpção's "honor,"¹³⁹ felt it upon himself to reveal important information. Although he claimed to be writing on behalf of the recipient, the letter was really a thinly veiled threat against the opening of the Cine Broadway. It could not open for two reasons, because 1) it was not isolated enough from other constructions and 2) because its hallways did not measure 2.5 meters. The writer then accused Assumpção of overlooking these details because he may have been related to the company that constructed Cine Broadway, which was called "Godoy e Assumpção." The writer then threatened, "this constitutes a scandal that will compromise your name. It is favoritism to a relative that perhaps your Excellency has overlooked. Check the law; verify the law and the information from the Works Department and avoid this stain on your administration because today or tomorrow, this information will be exposed and become public knowledge (*esta constitue um escandalo que comprometerá o seu nome. É um protecionismo a um seu parente que talvez V. Excia ignore. Mandé ver o processo, verifique a lei e as informações da diretoria de Obras e Evite essa mancha na sua administração porque hoje ou amanhã esse fato será explorado e levado ao conhecimento publico*)." "Cine Broadway" April 23, 1934, Cinemas, AHSP. Caixa 20, Cinemas 41, April 27, 1934, Processo 1989-0.024.950, Numero da capa 0.033.922-34.

approach to the extreme, employing municipal law, fake petitions, and coercion in order to eliminate competitors. The Cine Carlos Gomes was located on Rua Doze de Outubro in Lapa, a neighborhood in the west of São Paulo. In the 1920s, Lapa was a neighborhood that included factories and workers' residences. On July 30, 1923, 73 "proprietors and residents" of the Lapa district signed a letter, directed to the municipal council, requesting the removal of all "bars, stalls, and similar establishments" from the hallways of the Cine Carlos Gomes.¹⁴⁰ The petitioners alleged that these stalls blocked emergency exits and that, "this irregularity can cause danger to the people who frequent this place of entertainment."¹⁴¹

A few days afterwards, however, on August fourth, three of the residents sent another letter claiming that they were surprised to find out that their names were included in the petition and that, "this constitutes a true crime against the undersigned, who will take the opportunity to assert their rights by pressing charges."¹⁴² They added that, "we take this opportunity to declare that the complaints regarding the Theater [Cine Carlos Gomes] are completely unfounded and unjust. The theater is a modern construction, obeying all of the technical rules and ensuring the absolute safety of its patrons."¹⁴³ The residents claimed that the disputed emergency exits were actually very ample, and that, to the contrary of the original petition, it was rare to see a theater with such wide exits. On the same day, sixteen people submitted a similar letter, claiming that they had signed a

¹⁴⁰ "botequins, quintadas, e estabelcimentos congeneres" "Inquerito sobre uma representação dirigida á Camara Municipal com referencia ao Theatro Carlos Gomes." July 30, 1923. Cinemas, AHSP, Ciaixa 15, Cinemas 26 Processo no. 2009-0.149.301-0. Número da capa 0.027.817-23

¹⁴¹ "essa irregularidade pode causar perigos aos frequentadores dessa casa de divertimentos" Ibid.

¹⁴² "trata-se um verdadeiro crime contra os qual os abaixo-assignados farão opportunamente valer os seus direitos em processo policial que requererão." Ibid.

¹⁴³ "Aproveitando a oportunidade veem os abaixo-assignados declarar que a reclamação contra o referido Theatro é inteiramente infundada e injusta pois se trata de uma construcção moderna, obedecendo todos os preceitos technicos e de segurança absoluta para os frequentadores" Ibid.

petition, but thought it was for local neighborhood improvements, ranging from paving neighborhood roads to planting and mowing grass. They added that the Theatro Carlos Gomes was the best theater in the neighborhood, and that “there is no cinema as good in this neighborhood, very few in the capital can even compare. It is all constructed in cement and maintains all the necessary technical requirements enforced by the government.”¹⁴⁴

In response, the Department of Administrative Police opened an inquiry into the matter, sending two officials (one inspector and one transcriber) into Lapa to interview seventeen of the residents who claimed their signatures were either false or coerced. Although some claimed that they really had not or did not remember signing any petition, one of these individuals reported that, regarding the first petition against the Cine Carlos Gomes, he “heard that Renato Sbrighi, owner of the Theatro Santa Marina, circulated [the petition].”¹⁴⁵ Other interviewees also pointed to Renato Sbrighi, claiming that he presented them with a paper to sign under the pretense that they were petitioning to improve a neighborhood road. Yet another interviewee, Francisco Mandari, claimed that he in fact, willingly signed the petition against the Cine Carlos Gomes. However, after he had signed the petition, he was approached by Manuel Perrucci, whom he knew was the owner of the Cine Carlos Gomes. Perrucci convinced him to sign the third letter, which claimed that signatures had been obtained under false pretense.

Upon conducting the seventeen interviews regarding falsified signatures, the

¹⁴⁴ “não ha igual no bairro e mesmo na nossa Capital poucos podem lhe ser comparados. Foi construido todo em cimento... tem elle todos os requisitos technicos necessarios e que foram bem pesados pela Prefeitura ao approvar a sua construção.” Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ “ouviu dizer ter sido promovida pelo sr. Renato Sbrighi, proprietario do Theatro Santa Marina.” “Cine Carlos Gomes – Inquerito sobre uma representação dirigida á Camara Municipal com referencia ao Theatro Carlos Gomes” August 8, 1923, Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 15, Cinemas 26, Processo 2009-0.149.091-8, Número da capa 0.028.007-23

inspector reported that there were no witnesses to the event, and that due to the conflicting accounts, he would be unable to form any conclusions, leaving any further actions in the hands of his superiors.¹⁴⁶ The interviews suggest that Renato Sbrighi of the Teatro Santa Marina coerced local residents to denounce the safety standards in the Cine Carlos Gomes. In retaliation, the owner of the Cine Carlos Gomes, Manuel Perucci forced the retraction letters that claimed the signatures were false or coerced.

Whether Sbrighi and Perrucci's rivalry was personal or business-related is not evident in the documents. However, it does show how some theater owners and patrons responded to the increased regulation from the republican government. By utilizing the vocabulary of safety, cinema and theater owners used their knowledge of building codes as a tool to gain the upper hand against competitors. The feuding cinema owners Sbrighi and Perrucci took advantage of the republican government's standards for hygiene and safety with the ulterior motive of shutting down each other's cinemas. Sbrighi and Perrucci subverted the purpose of governmental regulation, coercing local residents to sign petitions rather than working to ensure their rights to safety. However, the tactics employed by both businessmen reveal how they used the opinion of "the people" to push for legal action. Rather than simply feud amongst themselves, they included the local residents in their schemes, revealing their expectations that the government would respond to popular agitation, and that they would uphold the standards of hygiene as established by law.

In addition, the seventeen residents who signed Sbrighi's petition against the Cine Carlos Gomes all claimed that they thought they were requesting "neighborhood improvements" such as the pavement of roads and the planting of grass. The residents

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

identified as a mix of Brazilians and European immigrants; most were employed in the nearby factories. Some of these residents reported that a group of men, including Sbrighi, approached them for signatures, implying that they could have been intimidated into signing the petitions or giving skewed testimony in the official interviews. Some, like Emilio Francisco, who identified as Italian, single, and a factory worker, claimed he did not remember who gave him the petition, but he did believe he was requesting the municipal council to irrigate Rua Guaciras and to plant a garden. Intimidation, lapses of memory, and the power dynamics between municipal officials and informants are factors in the reliability of these interviews. Nevertheless, a recurring theme among these residents is the stated desire for their municipal government to improve their neighborhood, to include Lapa in the urbanization of the city. Although Sbrighi and Perucci exploited this desire for their own financial gain, the fact that these petitions existed demonstrates how a glimmer of participatory politics. A small but diverse swath of *paulistanos* imagined how their neighborhood could be included in the urbanization of São Paulo. They were not petitioning for higher wages or lower food prices, but for paved streets and irrigation, hoping to shape the public spaces of their neighborhood.

The expectation that the government should guarantee certain rights was an uneven but persistent theme within petitions sent to the municipal government. Aside from Sbrighi and Perrucci's false petitions, proprietors and engineers of large cinemas petitioned the government to construct or reform their buildings. Small business owners and peddlers petitioned the government for operating licenses. Most of these petitions were addressed directly to "the illustrious Mr. Mayor," a flourish of deference (whether sincere or perfunctory) that revealed the level of patronage and clientelism still present

within Brazilian republicanism. More significantly, small business owners directly petitioned the mayor as an advocate of fairness and mercy. José Marino's arguments that the Cine Sant'Anna was a "small cinema" of "only 369 seats" was one example, as was the manager of the bar inside the Club Germania (a German-Brazilian cultural association) who called himself a "not the proprietor, but a simple administrator," and therefore should not be charged higher taxes.¹⁴⁷ Petitions and expectations were not just directed to the mayor, however.

One strange case reveals how a businessman not only expected the municipal government to police his competition, but how this expectation extended to other representatives of the government – whether they had anything to do with his case or not. Dante Stianzi owned an ice cream parlor in Cambuci, an industrial neighborhood southeast of the city center that, like the surrounding neighborhoods of Mooca and Ipiranga, housed factories and a largely immigrant population. Stianzi did not own a cinema, but his ice cream parlor was located next to the Cinema Marconi on the Largo de Cambuci. The popularity of movie-going made cinemas a commercial focal point where bar owners, bonbon stands, popcorn sellers, ice cream parlors and peddlers sold various goods to moviegoers. Ice cream was one of the most prominent side businesses, and multiple vendors applied for licenses to sell ice cream near the Cine Marconi and the Cine Cambuci. In 1925, Stianzi made several requests to the mayor that these ice cream vendors be moved away from the cinema, as they were hurting his business. He sent the first petition on February 9, 1925 and a second petition on May 2, 1925, begging the immediate cancellation of the other vendors' licenses. Municipal officials noted that the

¹⁴⁷ Carlos Grunhauer. "Salão Germania Reclamação" 3/2/1926 in Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 22 Cinemas 45. Processo 2009-0.268.870-0. Número da capa 0.003.230-26

vendors were granted licenses to station their carts a block away from the cinema but that they were indeed setting up directly in front of the cinema, as Stianzi had complained.¹⁴⁸

Stianzi sent in a third petition on June fifth, claiming that the ice cream peddlers stationed themselves in front of the cinema during the peak hours of business, presumably before and after film sessions. The ice cream vendors near the Cine Cambucy then retaliated by sending in their own petitions. Eugenio Ferro declared that he had as much right as anyone to set up his ice cream cart, and that he had a legal license for which he had paid the required fees. Referring to Stianzi, he remarked, “it so happens, however, that the owner of a bar happens to sell ice cream as well, and has made complaints against myself and other ice cream vendors as if the right of selling ice cream was exclusively his.”¹⁴⁹ Yet another vendor, Antonio Maria, reported that he had been harassed and intimidated by a government employee to move his cart — an accusation that the employee denied.¹⁵⁰ The competition became so fierce that at one point, Dante Stianzi threatened to kill a government employee. On September 3, 1925, a municipal employee named João Salermo reported that, “today, around 7am, on the way from my home to work, I was surprised by a person hiding behind a lamp post... holding a revolver, he threatened to kill me, saying that I was responsible for making ice cream carts set up in front of his business. Seeing the aggressive attitude of this individual, I treated him with extreme calm and delicacy, promising him to take his case with urgency

¹⁴⁸ “Cine Cambucy” February 9, 1925 and May 5, 1925. Cinemas, AHSP. Caixa 13, Cinemas 18. Processo 2009-0.077.686-9, Número da capa 0.005.778-25.

¹⁴⁹ acontece, porem, que o proprietario de um botequim, passou a vender, tambem, sorvetes, na porta de sua casa. . . desde então, reclamações do mesmo, contra o supplicante e outro sorveteiros d’esse local, como se a venda de sorvetes fosse privilegio seu.” “Cine Cambucy” June, 22, 1925. Cinemas, AHSP. Caixa 13, Cinemas 18. Processo 2009-0.077.714-8, Número da capa 0.021.335-25

¹⁵⁰ Antonia Maria, “Cine Cambucy” Cinemas, AHSP Caixa 13, Cinemas 18 1925-06-13 Processo 2009-0.077.640-0, Número da capa 0.020.564-25

to my superiors.”¹⁵¹

Dante Stianzi’s violent reaction against a government official was exceptional, but the target of his anger is relevant. Stianzi appealed directly to his local government to intervene on his behalf. When frustrated with government inaction, he attacked a government employee. Although João Salermo had nothing to do with his specific case, he was a representative of the government and the promises that the Republican government held for a small business owner. Stianzi’s extreme reaction might have been misdirected, but it nevertheless demonstrates one of the effects of the republican government’s increasing “enclosure” on public and private affairs: that individuals outside of the elite oligarchy expected the government to uphold the laws that it passed and to act on the regulations that it applied to businesses like cinemas.

II. Cinelândia: Social Divisions and Urban Space

A. Cinelândia and the Construction of Middle Classness

“...The directors of [Cinema] ‘Metro’, not considering the enormous cost, wanted to give the theater an indispensable indulgence: the installation of ultra modern machines for the production of AIR CONDITIONING, appropriate for all seasons of the year, from the world famous brand Carrier. Inside of the theater of the “Metro,” as in the lobby, the air will be cleaned, dehumidified, refreshed or heated as necessary, to always produce an agreeable, favorable temperature, and most importantly, stable, as it will be continually controlled by specialized technicians.”

- Cine Metro Inaugural Program¹⁵²

When the Cine Metro was inaugurated in 1938, it boasted comfortable seats, soft

¹⁵¹ hoje, pelas sete horas na manhã, ao sahir da minha residencia, com destino á Inspectoria, fui surprehendido por uma pessoa que se achava atraz de um post (Dante Stanziani)... que de revolver em punho, ameaçando-me de morte, e dizendo que eu era o único responsavel de fazer com que os carrinhos de sorvete estacionassem em frente ao seu estabelcimento; vendo eu a atitude aggressiva do tal individuo, tratei-o com extrama calma e delicadez, promettendo-lhe que será providencido com urgencia perante os meus superiores... Peço portanto a esta Directoria, providencias no sentido de ser-me fornecida uma garantia, para, poder livre e desabaracadamentes, trabalhar no meu districto, evitando assim, tão desagradaveis incidentes.” -João Salermo, September 3, 1925. “Cine Cambucy” Cinemas, AHSP. Caixa 13, Cinemas 18, Número da capa 0.030.365-25

¹⁵² “Inaugural Program” Cine Metro São Paulo, n.d. (likely 1938, date of inauguration). CB D1466/1

carpets, the latest speaker systems and projectors, decorous employees, and most tantalizingly, the innovation of air conditioning, which would clean and refresh the air. A clear departure from the “unmistakable odor” of cinemas in the 1910s and 1920s, the Cine Metro claimed to give *paulistanos* “a cinema that is truly ‘*up-to-date*.’”¹⁵³ The Cine Metro was certainly not the first cinema that claimed to be “elite.” As discussed in chapter two, numerous cinemas, including the Cine-Teatro República, which was inaugurated in 1921, were marketed as elite or even aristocratic. However, the Cine Metro was part of a new cluster of similarly modern and “deluxe” cinemas near the corner of Avenida Ipiranga and São João in the Centro of São Paulo, nicknamed Cinelândia, or “Movie-land.” The previous section focused on how state regulation included cinemas in the urbanization and sanitation of São Paulo, opening a path for cinema managers to negotiate with the government and affect built space. This section similarly focuses on how cinemas were integral to imagining São Paulo as a modern city in the 1940s, but rather than a site for political participation, cinemas were also a site for class differentiation, for defining who belonged within the boundaries of Cinelândia.

¹⁵³ “um cinema verdadeiramente ‘up to date’” Ibid.



Figure 5: Boundaries of Cinelandia highlighted in yellow. These boundaries are rough markers. As Inimá Simões writes, Cinelandia “had fluctuating boundaries, but always included the Avenida São João, the Largo Paissandu, Santa Efigenia, the Avenida Ipiranga. Walking from São João away from the Centro, the outer limit was marked by the Cine Metro building.”¹⁵⁴

In contrast to the 1920s, when most cinemas remained on the margins of respectability and hygiene, the cinemas of the 1940s Centro were the epitome of what was supposedly cosmopolitan and modern about São Paulo. Before the growth of television, movies in this time period were the primary form of leisure among the middle class. Film historian Inimá Simões refers to the decades after 1935 as a time when, “the city was on a honeymoon with cinema.”¹⁵⁵ In 1940, the population of the city was 1,317,396 while nearly 20,000,000 tickets were sold, filling the nearly 10,000 movie theater seats in the city. Between 1940 and 1950, the population of the city increased by

¹⁵⁴ Simões, *Salas de Cinema Em São Paulo*, 38. Map by author.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

60% while the movie-going public increased by 83%.¹⁵⁶ Literally millions of moviegoers came to Cinelandia to watch movies. For example, in 1948, 1,824,477 tickets were sold in just the UFA Art-Palacio alone, which held over 3,000 seats.¹⁵⁷ Anthropologist Heloisa Buarque de Almeida argues that “*ir ao cidade*”, or going to the city, was nearly synonymous with the movie-going and leisure experience; it meant to get dressed up, take a streetcar to the Centro, watch a movie in *Cinelandia*, have a drink in a chic department store, and to enjoy urban leisure.¹⁵⁸



Figure 6: Illustration of the Cine Metro from the Inaugural Program. Source: “Inaugural Program” Cine Metro São Paulo, n.d. (likely 1938, date of inauguration). CB D1466/1

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 89.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 69.

¹⁵⁸ Heloisa Buarque de Almeida, “Cinema Em São Paulo - Hábitos e Representações do Público (anos 40-50 E 90)” (Universidade de São Paulo, 1995).

The concept of “going to the city” and the cultural and geographic parameters surrounding Cinelandia had a distinct impact on the construction of class and its intersection with urban space in São Paulo. Much of the literature focusing on the construction of class in Brazil has been focused on the working class, inspired by E.P. Thompson’s call to study workers’ lives outside of the factory.¹⁵⁹ Studying the construction of class in the Centro, however, concerns the concept of the middle class, or “middle-classness” in Brazil. Brian Owensby writes that the middle class was as much a dream and an aspiration as it was a community or class of people. Middle-class people in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were “families headed by literate, white-collar employees and professionals, and to a lesser extent the self-employed, who did not engage in manual labor and who were overwhelmingly white or light skinned.”¹⁶⁰ More than income or profession however, the middle class was “a state of mind oriented to a dynamic social and economic arena.... People who lived as much by their yearnings and fantasies as by objective reality.”¹⁶¹ The middle class was also a symbol of modernity and progress. In 1935, French sociologist Jacques Lambert said that the emergence of a middle class in Brazil is what proved the country to have evolved from a slave-holding society, a tenet of

¹⁵⁹ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966). The historiography on the working-class in Brazil is too vast to present here, but significant work on the construction of working-class culture focusing on leisure in Brazil can be found in Sidney Chalhoub, *Trabalho, Lar e Botequim: O Cotidiano dos Trabalhadores no Rio de Janeiro da Belle Époque*, 2a. ed. (Campinas SP Brasil: Editora da Unicamp, 2001); Maria Auxiliadora Guzzo Decca, *A Vida Fora Das Fábricas: Cotidiano Operário Em São Paulo (1920/1934)*, vol. 3 (Paz e Terra, 1987); Paulo Fontes, *Um Nordeste Em São Paulo: Trabalhadores Migrantes Em São Miguel Paulista* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2008). Alexandre Fortes, *Nós do quarto distrito: a classe trabalhadora porto-alegrense e a era Vargas* (Editora Garamond, 2004).

¹⁶⁰ Brian Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil*, 1 edition (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). For social histories of the middle class in Brazil, see Owensby, 256, note 20, which includes Maria Cecília Spina Forjaz, *Tenentismo e Política: Tenentismo e Camadas Médias Urbanas na Crise da Primeira República* (Paz e Terra, 1977); Décio Saes, *Classe Média e Política na Primeira República Brasileira (1889-1930)*, vol. 3 (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1975); Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (Oxford University Press New York, 1967).

¹⁶¹ Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil*, 9.

modernization theory, or the idea that nations progress from “traditional” to “modern.” Owensby rejects modernization theory as teleological and maintains that the middle-class, while espousing “modern” ideals of egalitarianism, professionalism, and consumer culture, simultaneously utilized “traditional” systems of social hierarchy and patronage.¹⁶²

Consumption was an important aspect of middle-class identity in Brazil, as elsewhere. In a 1946 survey, the Brazilian Institution of Public Opinion and Statistics (IBOPE), which has conducted surveys of the Brazilian population since the mid-twentieth century, demarcated “rich,” “middle” and “poor” classes into “A,” “B,” and “C” categories, based not just on income, but on consumption habits, occupation, and neighborhood of residence. Although the income of class “B” individuals was closer to those in class “C” than “A,” white-collar occupations and ownership of appliances like vacuum cleaners and refrigerators affirmed their middle classness.¹⁶³

As much as working-class communities were associated with certain neighborhoods in São Paulo, middle-class consumption was associated with the Centro. Owensby and James Woodard have both written on the Mappin department store, located in the Centro, as the epitome of middle-class consumption.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, the cinemas of Cinelândia were status symbols for the middle class. Heloisa Buarque de Almeida writes

¹⁶² Ibid., 4–6. On the middle class and modernization, see also Robert G. Nachman, “Positivism, Modernization, and the Middle Class in Brazil,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, no. 1 (February 1, 1977): 1–23, doi:10.2307/2513540.

¹⁶³ Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil*, 102–103. On the importance of consumption to constructing the middle class in 1990s Brazil, see O’Dougherty, *Consumption Intensified*. For the centrality of consumption in defining the “new middle class” in contemporary Rio de Janeiro, see Hilaine Yaccoub, “A Chamada ‘Nova Classe Média’: Cultura Material, Inclusão e Distinção Social,” *Horizontes Antropológicos* 17, no. 36 (December 2011): 197–231, doi:10.1590/S0104-71832011000200009.

¹⁶⁴ Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil*; James P. Woodard, “Marketing Modernity: The J. Walter Thompson Company and North American Advertising in Brazil, 1929-1939.,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 2 (May 2002): 257

that, “The Centro and the most sophisticated cinemas are materializations that exemplify changing standards of consumption, style, and aspiration linked to the visible progress of the city.”¹⁶⁵ Buarque’s ethnography of movie-going in 1940s and 1950s São Paulo reveals the centrality of movie-going in Cinelândia to the experience of middle-classness and modernity. Interviewees remember cinemas in Cinelândia with comfortable seats, plush carpets, and luxurious decorations like stained-glass windows, mosaics, and chandeliers. The architecture magazine *O Acrópole* featured photographs of the cinemas in Cinelândia as feats of engineering and design. Demonstrating the integration between movie-going and the consumption of products, the manufacturers of seats, carpets, windows and even air conditioners boasted their products were used in cinemas as a sign of their quality.

¹⁶⁵ Almeida, “Cinema em São Paulo - Hábitos e Representações do Público (anos 40-50 e 90).” My thanks to Heloisa Buarque de Almeida, who generously gave me the transcripts to her oral history interviews, numbering 23 in total. Buarque conducted these interviews mostly from 1991 to 1993, utilizing the “snowball method” to find participants, mostly from the self professed middle class, but also attempting to interview individuals of working-class backgrounds. Little mention of race or ethnicity is made either in interviews or the resulting thesis, but given the professions and professed middle class-ness of individuals, I assume that most of them were also white or light-skinned, as Owensby claims in his definition of the Brazilian middle class. I analyze these interviews in this chapter and in subsequent chapters, and have noted when material appears in the thesis itself.



Figure 7: “Atlântida Carpet Company produced the carpets for the Cine Marrocos... Carpet runners of great luxury.” Source: Atlântida Carpet Company, Advertisement, *Acrópole 13*, no. 155 (March 1951) FAU USP

According to interviewees who described themselves as middle-class, “everyone” was in the Centro on the weekends. When pressed to explain who “everyone,” was, housewife Maria Leopoldina clarified that they were “well-dressed, fine people,”¹⁶⁶ suggesting that “everyone” was limited to a particular group of people. Clothing was a significant marker of respectability and status, and Buarque’s interviewees remember always wearing stockings, gloves, and hats to the movies, while men had to wear jackets and ties. In an interview, film historian Máximo Barro remembers the importance of clothing in cinemas. While people of classes “B and C” also went to the cinema, they had

¹⁶⁶ Maria Leopoldina. Interview by Heloisa Buarque de Almeida. Transcript.

to dress up in “the highest style that your economic condition afforded because you met other people there, so you had to dress up within the parameters of each class.”¹⁶⁷ Barro particularly emphasized the importance of ties, stressing that men would be denied entry or kicked out of cinemas for not wearing one. He remembered that some of his friends carried a bowtie in their pockets just in case they needed one for the cinema. The Cine Marrocos, inaugurated in 1951, was the last cinema to demand that men wear ties, and Barros’ friends, just to provoke others or “to do something different in the cinema,” would wear a tie to enter, and then “two steps after passing the doorman, they would take off the tie,” though they would risk being thrown out for doing so.¹⁶⁸

Barro’s stories exemplify the performative aspect of movie-going, or as Barro noted, “today people go to the theater to see what is on the stage. In that era [the 1940s], in relation to the stage, the audience was what was important.”¹⁶⁹ In the 1950s, it was clear that wearing a tie was not an everyday practice among youth; rather, ties were used as a marker of gendered respectability. Young men parodied this identity by provocatively donning and removing their ties in the entrance of cinemas. Barro points out that the “only” man to enter a Cinelândia cinema without a tie was artist Flávio de Carvalho, who once entered the Cine Marrocos wearing a roman-style skirt and fishnet stockings, “stupefying the ticket-taker.”¹⁷⁰ In removing their ties in a very visible way,

¹⁶⁷ Máximo Barro. Interview by Inimá Simões, transcript, July, 2, 1982, 4 Arquivo Multimeios, CCSP. Cassette tapes and transcripts of interviews conducted by Inimá Simões for *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo* are available in the Multimedia Archive of the Centro Cultural de São Paulo. I listened to the tapes while reading the transcripts. There are five interviews available; in addition to the interview with Máximo Barro, a professor of film studies, other interviews are with film critic Rubem Biáfara, film exhibitor Dante Ancona Lopez, cinema manager and then president of the Union of Cinema Employees Maria Lourenço Torres, and filmmaker Jairo Ferreira. Interviews were conducted in the early 1980s, a context that I analyze both in this chapter and in chapter two.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Also discussed in Simões, 83

these men echoed what film scholar Eric Schaefer has deemed the transgressive aspect of female burlesque or striptease films in the 1940s U.S. By exaggerating the removal of hyperfeminine articles of clothing like decorated brassieres and stockings, burlesque dancers “expose[d] the performative aspect of gender” and, quoting Judith Butler, revealed, “true gender identity... as a regulatory fiction.”¹⁷¹ Going to the movies in Cinelândia was a fairly respectable leisure activity, and was thus a much less subversive act than female striptease films, which were widely condemned as immoral in the U.S.

Nevertheless, Barro’s story exposes the extent to which material culture and performance constituted the “middle-classness” of movie-going in the Centro. Being middle class was not a fixed identity; although tied to relatively stable indicators such as occupation and income, the status of middle-classness could be more transient, bought along with an appliance or performed through the use of a tie. In 1940s São Paulo, middle-classness was also space that was constructed by the cinemas of Cinelândia. However, not everybody “belonged” to the middle class, and not everybody went to Cinelândia. Filmmaker Jair Ferreira remembers that without the right clothes, he did not even want to walk into the deluxe cinemas.¹⁷² Cinelândia was a neighborhood that represented what was modern and middle-class about São Paulo, but it was bounded by a high standard of class and taste.

Bread, Water, Electricity....and Cinema?: Cinemas on Strike

Millions of tickets were sold in Cinelândia, but does that mean that cinemas were popular? The simultaneous associations of Cinelândia with middle-class consumption,

¹⁷¹ Eric Schaefer, “The Obscene Seen: Spectacle and Transgression in Postwar Burlesque Films,” *Cinema Journal* 36, no. 2 (January 1, 1997): 62, doi:10.2307/1225774. For the now “classic” formulation of gender as performance, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁷² Jairo Ferreira, Interview by Inimá Simões, transcript, March 23, 1982, Arquivo Multimeios, CCSP.

elite “luxury,” and its popular use, came into conflict in 1948, when the municipal government tried to regulate the price of movie tickets. The popularity of movie-going on a national scene merited attention from the Central Commission of Prices (Comissão Central de Preços, CCP), which regulated the prices of foodstuffs, services, and other “basic necessities” for the nation. Created in 1946 as a part of the Ministry of Labor, Industry and Commerce, the CCP was designed to “control prices” and “impede the unaffordability of life.”¹⁷³ Without authority from the CCP, the Municipal Commission of Prices (CMP) in São Paulo released a table establishing movie ticket prices for the entire city. Exhibitors in São Paulo responded by going on strike and temporarily closing their cinemas. Although the strike was just a few days long, the ensuing legal and public debate exploited the cleavage between the municipal and federal government in order to resist price regulation, and also questioned the social and economic status of movie-going in the city. Cinemas, as they had during the Old Republic, functioned as objects of contestation between entrepreneurs and the government. By going on strike and closing the city’s cinemas, local entrepreneurs utilized cinemas and their popularity as bargaining chips against the government. The resulting compromise again proved how the construction of cinemas made their mark upon urban planners and legislators’ vision of the city.

The strike occurred in 1948, during a political era characterized by the centralized rule of Gétúlio Vargas, who was more or less in power from 1930 to 1955. Although his

¹⁷³ “Decreto-Lei N. 9.125 de 4 de Abril de 1946,” (April 4, 1946) accessed January 24, 2014, http://legis.senado.gov.br/legislacao/ListaNormas.action?numero=9125&tipo_norma=DEL&data=19460404&link=s. The CCP preceded the Federal Commission of the Regulation of Prices (COFAP), which was established in 1951 and operated until 1964 “Decreto N. 53.460 de 21 de Janeiro de 1964,” accessed January 24, 2014, http://legis.senado.gov.br/legislacao/ListaNormas.action?numero=53460&tipo_norma=DEC&data=19640121&link=s.

dictatorial regime, the Estado Novo, ended in 1945, he returned to power as the elected president in 1951. The era of *varguismo*, buoyed by the support of both a complicit elite and the popular masses, effectively disrupted the regional federalism of the Old Republic and the political sway of Minas Gerais and São Paulo. The Vargas regime replaced state governors with federal interventors and brought Brazilian society, from politics to popular culture, increasingly within federal purview. The involvement of the Central Commission of Prices in the 1948 cinema strike demonstrates the federal government's regulation of quotidian habits, including consumption, in this era. The Department of Political and Social Order of São Paulo, (DEOPS/SP) also became an increasing presence in the surveillance and policing of Brazilian society. Although the state organization responsible for monitoring social movements, including strikes, associations, and unions, was established in 1924 during the Old Republic, it gained greater reach during the Estado Novo.¹⁷⁴ São Paulo, as the most populous, wealthiest state of Brazil, was a persistent, potential threat to centralized rule.¹⁷⁵ As cinema entrepreneurs went on strike, they took advantage of this tension and made it a focal point in their battle to avoid price regulation.

On June 28, 1948, the Municipal Commission on Prices (CMP) released a table that controlled the price of movie tickets in the city, fixing them at Cr\$6.00 during the

¹⁷⁴ For a basic introduction to the Vargas regime, see Robert M. Levine, *Father of the Poor?: Vargas and His Era* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Angela Maria de Castro Gomes, *A Invenção Do Trabalhismo*, vol. 5 (Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro, 1988). Dulce Pandolfi, "Repensando O Estado Novo," 1999, <http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/dspace/handle/10438/6762>. On the DEOPS files at the state archive of São Paulo, see Larissa Rosa Corrêa, "O Departamento Estadual de Ordem Política e Social de São Paulo: As Atividades da Polícia Política e a Intrincada Organização de Seu Acervo," *Histórica (São Paulo)* 33 (2008): 1–11. For a collection of essays based on the DEOPS files at the state archive, see Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, *São Paulo, metrópole das utopias: histórias de repressão e resistência no arquivo Deops* (São Paulo: Lazuli Editora, 2009).

¹⁷⁵ For a brief introduction to the issue of federalism and the role of São Paulo in twentieth-century Brazilian politics, see Aspasia Camargo, "Do federalism oligárquico ao federalism democrático" in Pandolfi, "Repensando O Estado Novo."

daytime and Cr.\$7.00 at night. The following day, the Union of Film Exhibition Companies of the state of São Paulo went on strike, closing the doors to city's best cinemas with the following sign on their doors, directed to "the people of São Paulo":

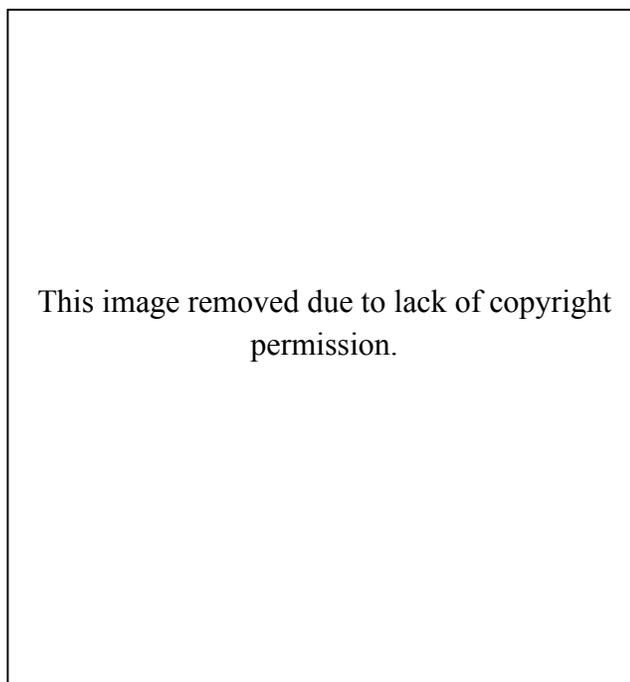


Figure 8“In response to the unexpected pricing rubric that the Central Commission of Prices has passed while the Central Commission of Prices assesses this subject on a national scale, the Union of Film Exhibition Companies of the State of São Paulo has recommended that its associates temporarily close all of the cinemas of São Paulo state until this situation is resolved. The cinematic sector apologizes to the people of São Paulo as these events are beyond our control.” Source: “Greve - Fechamento de Cinemas,” June 29, 1948, DEOPS 94542, APESP, pg. 5 "Doc. 1".¹⁷⁶

The leader of the “cinematic sector” was the Serrador Cinematographic Company (Serrador C.C.) one of the largest exhibition companies in Brazil with cinemas in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Francisco Serrador was the head of the company and the entrepreneur responsible for various exhibition innovations in Brazil, including the

¹⁷⁶ “Em virtude do inesperado tabelamento levado a efeito pela Comissão Municipal de Preços, quando esse assunto está sendo estudado pela COMISSÃO CENTRAL DE PREÇOS em caráter de âmbito nacional, o Sindicato das Empresas Exibidoras Cinematográficas no Estado de São Paulo, recomendou aos seus associados o fechamento temporário de todos os cinemas do estado de São Paulo até completa solução do assunto. A classe cinematográfica pede desculpas ao Povo de São Paulo por esse fato que ocorreu independente de sua vontade.”

development of “Cinelândia” in Rio de Janeiro.¹⁷⁷ While the exhibitors claimed that they were simply reacting to the CMP’s encroachment on the federal CCP’s regulation, the Serrador Cinematographic Company requested a federal injunction to stop the CMP from enforcing its ticket prices, which reveals other motives for the strike. The company sought to evade governmental price regulation entirely by questioning whether the CMP had any right to regulate cinema. The company argued that the commission’s duties were to fix “the maximum price of essential services or the sale of goods or essential utilities,” defining these “essential utilities and services” as “goods or articles of use for consumption by the middle class.”¹⁷⁸ Serrador C.C. pointed out, however that not only was cinema not a “good” or an “article,” its specific cinemas, which were among the most upscale in Cinelândia, were not middle-class establishments. Serrador C.C. argued that cinema should not be considered an essential service as were “water services, energy sources, light, gas, sewage, communication, transportation... schools, banks, pharmacies, hospitals, funeral services, and lastly, industries basic or essential to national defense,”¹⁷⁹ adding, “at the maximum, the Commission on Prices can set prices for cinemas frequented by the middle classes, but not the plaintiff’s cinemas, which are establishments of luxury.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ The image of Francisco Serrador as the hard-working immigrant who “made it” in Brazil is discussed in chapter three.

¹⁷⁸ “os preços máximos de serviços essenciais ou da venda de generos ou utilidades essenciais” ... “Inclui na definição de utilidades essenciais, ou serviços, generos ou artigos de uso ou consumo de classe média.” “Decreto-Lei N. 9.125 de 4 de Abril de 1946,” Article 4b

¹⁷⁹ “Greve - Fechamento de Cinemas,” June 29, 1949, 24, DEOPS 94542, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. Serrador C.C. claimed to have quoted this list of essential services from Decreto lei N. 9060 of March 15, 1946, but the current text of this law does not include this list. “Decreto-Lei N. 9.060 de 13 de Março de 1946,” accessed January 25, 2014, http://legis.senado.gov.br/legislacao/ListaNormas.action?numero=9060&tipo_norma=DEL&data=19460313&link=s.

¹⁸⁰ “quando muito as Comissões de Preços poderiam fixar os preços dos cinemas frequentados pelas classes medias e não os cinema da impetrante que são estabelecimentos de luxo.” “Greve - Fechamento de Cinemas,” 25.

Serrador's contention that cinemas were "establishments of luxury" rather than "basic necessities" for the middle class sparked a debate in the mainstream press. On the one hand, the Union of Exhibition Companies was leveraging the popularity and visibility of cinema as a tool to demand deregulation of ticket prices. On the other hand, was cinema really as necessary to *paulistanos* as bread, water, or beans? Serrador argued that legally, cinema was not an "essential service" as was water, electricity, or sewage, and that certain cinemas were "establishments of luxury" and were not intended for the middle class.

A local newspaper *O Correio Paulistano* reported on the three-day strike on the last page, which featured the most important headlines of local news. In lamenting the great inconvenience the strike caused, various articles suggested that cinema was more accessible and more important to *paulistanos* than the Serrador C.C. contended. On the day following the first day of the strike, the paper printed photos of closed cinemas with a caption that described "hundreds of disappointed moviegoers"¹⁸¹ waiting outside of the doors. The article lamented the "sudden and radical decision of the managers of cinema companies."¹⁸² Clearly opposing Serrador's claim, the paper criticized the strike as it "directly hurts the population, which clearly is an innocent bystander to the blows between the CMP and the cinema empresarios. Nor does the population deserve to be deprived of a diversion that for us, *paulistanos*, can be considered a primary necessity."¹⁸³

Despite what seems to be a rather insignificant event, a handful of theaters in the

¹⁸¹ "centenas de 'habitués' desapontados" *O Correio Paulistano* July 1, 1948. Pg. 12, microfilm, CCSP

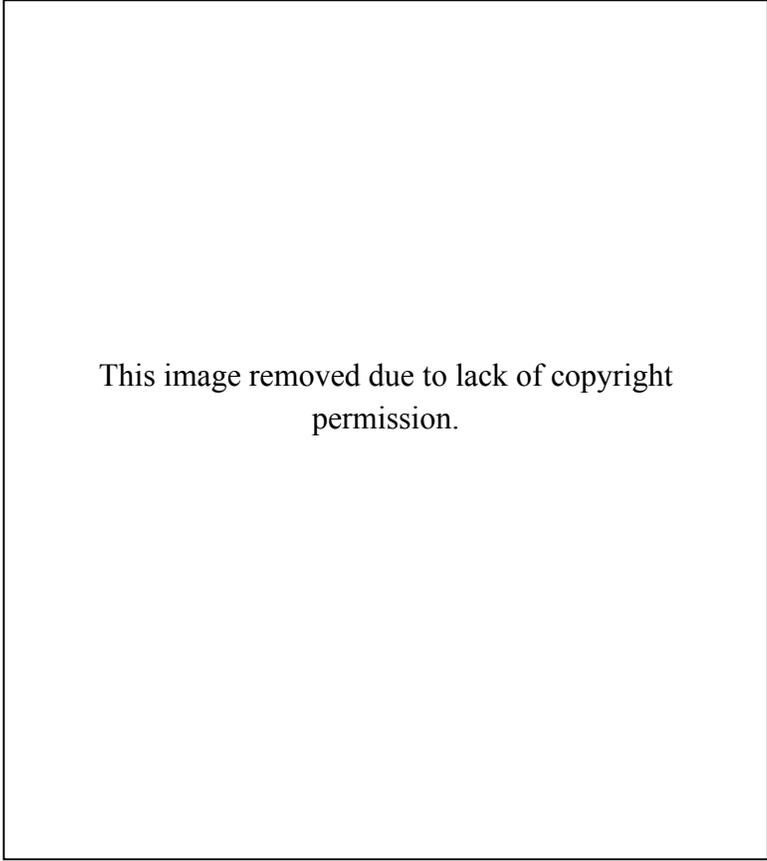
¹⁸² "a subita e radical decisão dos dirigentes das empresas cinematograficas." Ibid.

¹⁸³ "veio ferir diretamente a população, que, evidentemente, não tem culpa dos choques que se verificam entre o órgão de preços e os empresarios de cinemas, nem merece ficar privado de uma diversão que para nós, paulistanos, pode ser considerada como genero de primeira necessidade." Ibid.

center of the city closed during several weekdays, *O Correio Paulistano* claimed that the strike was damaging (*ferir*) to the people. The DEOPS file on the strike also reported it to “be provoking popular agitation.”¹⁸⁴ Outside of São Paulo, the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *Folha Carioca* referred to the residents of São Paulo as “cheated/injured people” and remarked that, “in a country like Brazil, there hardly exists any diversion for the people. Due to the caprice of certain public servants, Brazil’s most industrial state is deprived of its primary way of passing time, which is without doubt, the cinema. There are no words to express this.”¹⁸⁵ The article was reprinted in both *O Correio Paulistano* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*, two papers that chronicled the details of the strike. Accounts of the strike, whether in the mainstream press or in the DEOPS files, must be couched in a political climate of limited political dissidence. Yet, the dramatic statements claiming that cinema was “the only amusement” and that São Paulo’s people were “hurt” and “deprived,” speaks to the popularity of movie-going in a city that was known for its industry rather than its leisure. The DEOPS files included photographs of the closed cinemas, as if the real crime was the visibility of the closed doors and the blight they made on the city streets.

¹⁸⁴ “está provocando agitação popular” “Greve - Fechamento de Cinemas,” 2.

¹⁸⁵ “povo prejudicado...” “Num país como é o Brasil, onde não existe quase nenhum divertimento para o povo, fica o seu Estado mais industrial, por capricho de determinados servidores publicos, privado de seu principal passa tempo, que é, sem duvida, o cinema. Não ha palavras para explicações” “Fechados todos os Cinemas de São Paulo,” *Folha Carioca* June 30, 1948. Reprinted in *Correio Paulistano* July 2, 1948, pg. 11, microfilm, CCSP.



This image removed due to lack of copyright permission.

Figure 9: “Photograph in which you see the closed doors of the Cine Art Palacio, taken on the night of June 29.” Source: “Greve - Fechamento de Cinemas.”

The municipal government responded to the strike with a meeting between representatives of the C.M.P. and various lawyers from the exhibition companies. The *Correio Paulistano* portrayed clear antagonism toward the exhibition companies, claiming that the C.M.P. was acting on behalf of “popular motives” and blaming the striking exhibitors for “depriving the *paulistano* of his only amusement and causing unrest among those who want to enjoy [the movies].”¹⁸⁶ The article also presented the municipal government as an authoritative body backed by the federal government, quoting from the Director of the State Department of Labor who maintained he had a

¹⁸⁶ “Re-Abrem-se Amanhã os Cinemas do Estado,” *Correio Paulistano*, July 1, 1948, pg. 11. microfilm, CCSP.

right to interfere in the Union of Exhibition Companies. Announcing that the strike would end the next day (July 2, after a three day strike), the article reported that the union of exhibitors, “adopted the price regulation when threatened with intervention from the executive” The article further quoted a lawyer representing the CMP who aggressively denied the union’s request for a ten-day window to adopt the new price regulations by stating that, “the CMP would not concede any length of time at all, if the cinema owners thought this inconvenient, they could keep their cinemas closed.”¹⁸⁷

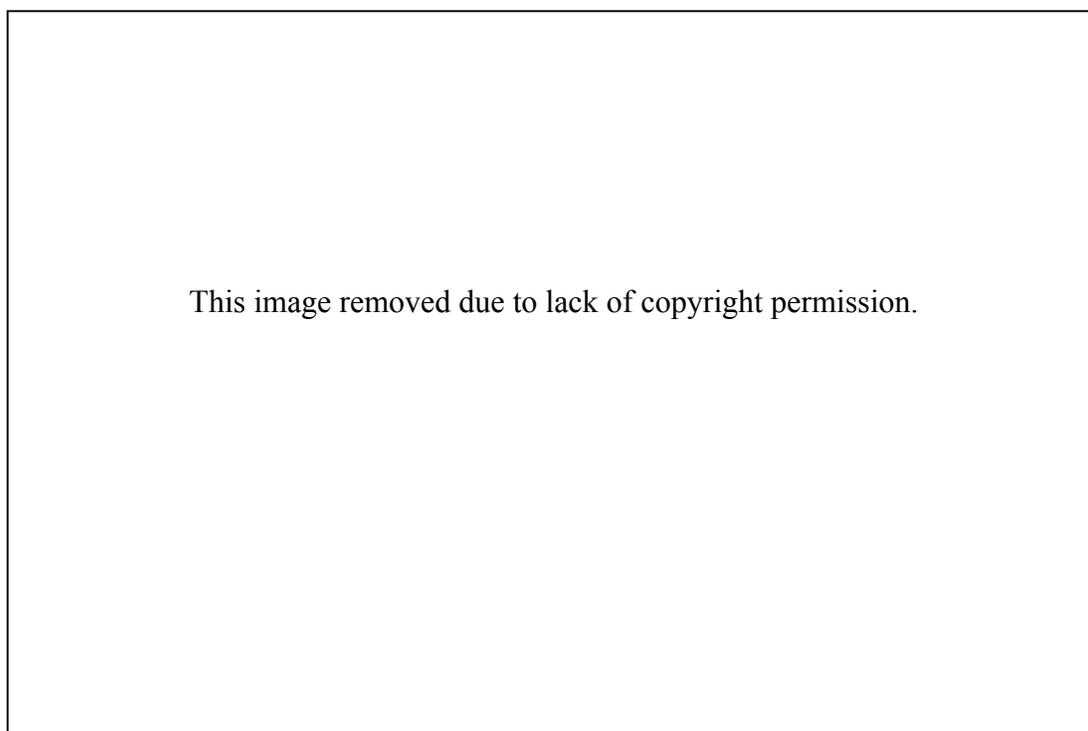
Although the CMP and the state government attempted to assert its authority by threatening to intervene in the union (though it is not clearly stated how) and by refusing to negotiate, its power was not absolute and the issue was far from over. Serrador’s request for an injunction to stop the CMP’s regulations was still being debated in the federal judicial system, as well as in the popular press. In fact, despite posturing by the CMP, the federal CCP temporarily suspended price regulations, and the cinemas re-opened with their former ticket prices. Meanwhile, exhibitors ran a series of advertisements against price regulation in the section for movie listings in *O Correio Paulistano* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*. One ad justified higher ticket prices by blaming high taxes, shifting the blame of greed from cinema exhibitors to the government. The quarter page ad listed movie ticket prices in June 1944 and June 1948 (prices before the CMP regulations), pointing out that, “In four years, the price before taxes increased by 5% and the tax by 90%!”¹⁸⁸ Another ad listed movie theater prices in New York, London, Paris, Buenos Aires, and Montevideo. Cinema tickets in London were the most expensive at 26 to 36 cruzeiros, Montevideo the cheapest at 10 to 15 cruzeiros. São

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ “Em 4 anos o preço liquido aumentou 5% e o selo 90%!” “Preços Dos Principais Cinemas Laçadores de São Paulo,” *Correio Paulistano*, July 9, 1948, microfilm, CCSP.

Paulo's prices, listed as 8 to 9 cruzeiros, 6.30 and 7.10 before taxes, made cinema in São Paulo, "the cheapest amusement in the world!"¹⁸⁹ While arguing that movie ticket prices in São Paulo were far from exorbitant, the ad also emphasized that cinemas elevated the cultural status of São Paulo, likening the city to the cultural capitals of New York and London.

Another ad compared the rise in ticket prices to the rise in the prices of "necessities" like milk, bread, and beans, claiming that in ten years, between 1938 and 1948, such items had risen between 235% and 1000%. In comparison, within a span of twenty years, from 1928 to 1948, the before-tax ticket prices of the Cine Paramount (a premiere cinema) had only increased by 40% while the tax on tickets increased by 340%.



This image removed due to lack of copyright permission.

Figure 10: Advertisement showing the price increase of foodstuffs in comparison to movie ticket prices. "In 20 years, the price before taxes of tickets has increased by 40%, and the tax by 340%! Note: The same Cine Paramount that today costs Cr\$5.00 with the increase in taxes, has a pre-tax price of Cr\$4.00, less than 11% more than the price in 1928 when the cinema exhibited ONLY ONE film while today it exhibits TWO films in the same program!" "Aumento Do Custo Da Vida!," *Correio Paulistano*, July 17, 1948, microfilm, CCSP.

¹⁸⁹ "Uma entrada de cinema lançador do centro da cidade custa" in *O Estado de S. Paulo*. July 4, 1948.

The ad not only argued that movie ticket prices were affordable, it subtly criticized the C.M.P. for failing to regulate the prices of basic necessities like milk, bread, and beans — goods, that the advertisements claimed were hundreds of times more expensive than they were twenty years prior. Yet, the CMP was taking up time and resources to regulate movie ticket prices, a non-essential service that, in comparison, had not even increased very much in price. An editorial in the *Correio Paulistano* asserted as much, pointing out that there were other goods and services that merited the attention of the CMP, especially housing and funeral services, which the author considered more wildly expensive and more socially “necessary.” The author criticized the CMP’s aims, begging that, “while this phase of price regulation continues, do something that actually benefits the people, who are so disillusioned by the promises of those that court them on the eve of elections.”¹⁹⁰

Taken together, the ads attempted to strike a balance in proving cinemas to be both affordable and a luxury. The ad about movie ticket prices in other cities, for example, listed cities in order of prestige, not price, with New York listed higher than London, although movie tickets in London were the most expensive. While Serrador claimed that his cinemas were “establishments of luxury... situated in the deluxe zone of São Paulo,”¹⁹¹ the CMP countered that, “No city in any part of the world has “luxury” zones.”¹⁹² The CMP reported statistics that movie-going in “deluxe” cinemas was actually too popular to be elite. “There is a great number of moviegoers of cinemas in the

¹⁹⁰“A Ronda Dos Tabelamentos,” *Correio Paulistano*, July 21, 1948, microfilm, CCSP.

¹⁹¹ “estabelecimentos de luxo... os cinemas tabelados estejam situados na zona de luxo de São Paulo” “Greve - Fechamento de Cinemas.”

¹⁹² “... não existe em nenhuma cidade, em qualquer parte do mundo, zonas carateristamente de luxo.” “Contestação do Mandado de Segurança Impetrado Contra o Tabelamento dos Cinemas” in *Correio Paulistano* 7/14/1948 pg. 12

center, and not just from privileged classes but from all classes, especially the middle class. These are the following numbers for moviegoers —Art-Palacio, 1.891.481; Bandeirantes, 1.268.578; Ipiranga,... 1.508.745; e Opera, 1.288.060”¹⁹³ With movie-tickets being sold by the millions in even the city’s most upscale theaters, movie-going, according to the CMP, was a middle-class service that merited price control.

Yet again, the federal government asserted its authority and contradicted the municipal commission’s statements. The Central Commission on Prices established new price regulations on July 20, 1948 that compromised between price regulation and the recognition São Paulo’s “deluxe” cinemas as “establishments of luxury.” The CCP model divided cinemas into various levels with distinct pricing and put a municipal commission (that included Jânio Quadros, future mayor of São Paulo city, governor of São Paulo state, and president of Brazil) in charge of surveying the city’s cinemas and categorizing them within these levels. While the CMP had avowed that “no city in any part of the world has ‘luxury’ zones,” the CCP’s new pricing structure codified categories of difference as represented by the social status of cinemas. The table divided cinemas into four classes, called “classe” A, B, C, D. – the same colloquial terms used to describe categories of economic class in Brazil today.

The commission released a table of prices on July 14, two weeks after the cinemas first went on strike. Class A cinemas included thirteen cinemas, mostly in Cinelândia, like the Cine Opera, Cine Metro, the Cine Marabá, and the Cine Ipiranga. Class B cinemas included ten cinemas, just outside of Cinelândia in neighborhoods like

¹⁹³ “informou a CMP que compulsando dados de 1947, verifica-se que é muito grande o numero de frequentadores de cinemas do centro, não se tratando, portanto, de pessoas pertencentes à classe privilegiada, porem representantes de todas as classes, principalmente da classe media. São os seguintes os numeros apresentados de frequentadores: Art-Palacio, 1.891.481; Bandeirantes, 1.268.578; Ipiranga,... 1.508.745; e Opera, 1.288.060.” Ibid.

Santa Cecilia and around Avenida Paulista. The remaining cinemas of the city, located in more peripheral neighborhoods were divided into the C and D classes. Each category of cinemas had different ticket prices, but the maximum price of the Class A (the “deluxe” cinemas) was still Cr.\$7.00, the same maximum set by the CMP weeks before. Members of the commission pointed out as much, commenting, “the maximum price that we will set will be the same that provoked the gentlemen of this business, as well as the cries and whimpers that still fill the free pages of the press—that is Cr.\$7.00, including tax.”¹⁹⁴

Although the strike did not increase the upper limit of maximum ticket prices, the ensuing debate regarding cinemas as a “luxury” or a “necessity” forced the municipal government to recognize and even codify class differences within the city. Although the CMP had affirmed that there was no such thing as a “luxury” zone, separating cinemas into A, B, C, and D classes recognized the spatial segregation between *paulistanos* with varying levels of income and consumption. Like the blueprints of cinemas in the 1920s, the table generated a vision of São Paulo that was different from the state’s ideal of a unified, egalitarian city without any “zone of luxury.” It clearly showed how the modernity and middle-classness that characterized the Centro did not apply to all of São Paulo. Eventually, the DEOPS file on the cinema strike shows that the federal government did concede to Serrador’s request for an injunction against the CMP. By July 29th, a month after the strike, the CCP suspended the enforcement of the CMP’s new table.¹⁹⁵ Although the neither the CMP ultimately did not enforce its table, the incident demonstrated how class distinctions could be mapped in the city according to its cinemas.

¹⁹⁴ O preço-teto que iremos fixar será o mesmo que provocou aos cavalheiros desse comércio, os clamores e as lamurias que ainda enchem as secções livre, da imprensa, isto é de 7 cruziros inclusive imposto.” Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ The issue did not however, disappear. A similar debate occurred in 1959 when the municipal government again attempted to regulate movie ticket prices. See Simões, 102.

The strike sparked debate about the popularity of movie-going in São Paulo, and drew class boundaries around moviegoers who went to Cinelândia, reifying the area as a middle class space. Cinemas that touted the most “up-to-date” air conditioners and luxurious carpeting represented an idealized vision of São Paulo that was not only hygienic, but modern and cosmopolitan, but they were only accessible to *paulistanos* of a certain level of class and taste.

Cinelândia Baianizada

By the 1970s, the popularity of television negatively impacted the popularity and profitability of movie-going all over the world. The Hollywood studio system experienced profound changes in its industrial practices, and the Hollywood “golden age” had ended.¹⁹⁶ Cinemas were still clustered at the intersection of Avenida São João and Ipiranga, but as the state invested in a metro system, bridges, and roads south of the Centro, businesses and cultural venues moved to neighborhoods like the Jardins and Pinheiros.¹⁹⁷ Rather than a symbol of what was modern and cosmopolitan, the Centro was a symbol of the center’s economic decline and the city’s rising crime rates. The state of the center inspired “Sampa,” Brazilian musician Caetano Veloso’s melancholic homage to the city:

Something happens in my heart
 Only when I cross Ipiranga and Avenida São João
 When I arrived here I understood nothing
 Of the hard, concrete poetry of your corners

¹⁹⁶ For a history of the Hollywood studio system, see Douglas Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System* (St. Martin’s Press New York, 1986).

¹⁹⁷ For a brief introduction to the decline of property values in the Centro, see Paulo Sandroni “A Dinâmica Imobiliária da Cidade de São Paulo: Esvaziamento, Desvalorização e Recuperação da Região Central” in Alvaro A. Comin and Nadia Somekh, *Caminhos Para o Centro: Estratégias de Desenvolvimento Para a Região Central de São Paulo* (EMURB, Prefeitura de São Paulo, 2004). The chapters in Somekh’s edited volume also provide a panorama of contemporary issues related to infrastructure, economy, and development or “redevelopment” of the Centro.

Of the special inelegance of your girls...

Of the people oppressed in lines, in the outskirts, in slums
 Of the power of money that lifts and destroys beautiful things
 Of the ugly smoke that rises, erasing the stars
 I see the rise of your poets of fields and spaces
 Your forest factories, your gods of rain¹⁹⁸

“Sampa” is written from the perspective of a “baiano.” Veloso makes two references to “novos baianos” at the end of the song: “the Novos Baianos walk in your rainy mist, the novos baianos kick back and enjoy you” (*os novos baianos passeiam na tua garoa/E novos baianos te podem curtir numa boa*). The final lines allude to both the popular Brazilian rock band of the same name, and more generally, the Northeastern musicians who were part of the *Tropicalia* movement, of which he was a part,¹⁹⁹ and finally, to the Northeastern migrant workers who flocked to the city in the mid and late twentieth-century. Between 1952 and 1961, the arrivals of approximately 330,000 Bahians were registered in São Paulo (not to mention those who were not registered, and Northeastern migrants from other states), the largest single group of migrants in this time period.²⁰⁰ Paulo Fontes has examined the discrimination that many Northeasterners faced. Many from the Northeast, whether from Bahia or from neighboring states, were all classified as Bahians: “From Minas [Minas Gerais, a state neighboring São Paulo to the Northwest] upward, it’s all Bahia” was a common and dismissive generalization. A caricatured figure of the Bahian became the butt of innumerable jokes, depicted as

¹⁹⁸ Original lyrics not reproduced due to copyright. Caetano Veloso “Sampa,” by Caetano Veloso, released on the album “Muito,” Polygram, 1978. Transcribed lyrics available at “Sampa” *Letras*, n.d., accessed August 1, 2014, <http://letras.mus.br/caetano-veloso/72788/#radio>

¹⁹⁹ Several other songs of the Tropicalist movement address the Northeastern experience in São Paulo. For an analysis of Tropicalismo as a counter-culture movement, see Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (UNC Press Books, 2001).

²⁰⁰ Fontes, *Um Nordeste Em São Paulo: Trabalhadores Migrantes Em São Miguel Paulista*, 70.

primitive, ignorant, and a blight upon São Paulo's modernity.²⁰¹ Denigrations like these racialized Northeasterners as non-white, and therefore unwelcome, migrants. As discussed further in chapter three, phenotype, as opposed to heredity, is an important marker of racial identity in Brazil, but class, education, and income also denote race. Despite the famous fluidity of racial categorization in a country once praised as a "racial democracy," racial prejudices in Brazil have valued whiteness as coterminous with modernity and health, and associated blackness with degeneracy and disease.²⁰² Prejudice against Northeasterners cast them not only as socially inferior, but racially inferior to the idealized, white *paulistano*.

Lucia Amaral's film *The Hour of the Star* (*A Hora da Estrela*, 1985), an adaptation of famed writer Clarice Lispector's novella of the same name, depicts the social difficulties that Northeastern migrants faced. Although Lispector's novella takes place in Rio de Janeiro, the film takes place in São Paulo, where Macabea, a typist from the Northeast struggles to work, dress, and behave as others do in the city. Her co-workers and roommates criticize her for being dirty and uncivilized. At the end of the film, she has lost her job, her boyfriend, and has failed to "progress." In the final scene, she dies while running towards an imagined specter of social ascension, a white man in a suit and an expensive car. The scene is a metaphor for the disappointment many migrant workers might have faced in pursuing social mobility in São Paulo.

The image of the *biaiano* in São Paulo reflected stereotypes about northeasterners, but was also a symbolic strawman of "what was wrong" with São Paulo and Brazil in the 1980s. In an oral history interview conducted in 1982, film critic Rubem Biáfora

²⁰¹ On cultural perceptions of Bahians, see Chapter 1 of Fontes.

²⁰² See Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness*. See chapter three for a more thorough explanation of the construction of race and ethnicity in Brazil.

expressed the decadence of Cinelândia explicitly in terms of a social hierarchy based on race, class, and culture, referring often to the caricatured image of the *baiano*. For Biáfora, the decline of Hollywood and the growing presence of northeasters in São Paulo, whether as migrant workers or popular musicians like Caetano Veloso, signified the city's racial and social decadence. For example, he described the way in which women dressed elegantly to the movies in the 1940s and 1950s, watching Hollywood movies with stars like Gene Tierney to imitate her manners, from how she opened doors to how she answered phones. Biáfora compared the women of the 1940s to the “pot-smoking girls [who] go out dirty, they don't bathe the whole week, with greasy hair styled like Maria Bethania, with big bags and dressed like hippies.”²⁰³ While his comment demonstrates the perspective of an individual of an older generation railing against youth culture, the reference to Gene Tierney and Maria Bethania has distinctly racial and cultural undertones. While Gene Tierney was a North American, Hollywood movie star, Maria Bethania is a singer from the Northeast, sister of Caetano Veloso, and part of the same 1970s Brazilian rock movement as the “Novos Baianos.” Complaining that women in São Paulo look and behave like Maria Bethania instead of Gene Tierney suggests Biáfora's disapproval of the “bahianization” of São Paulo.

Biáfora then explicitly said this, blaming the deterioration of Cinelândia on the presence of Northeasterners: “When the *baianos* came here and Avenida São João became a ‘casbah,’ then you see the group (*a turma*, sometimes meaning a classroom or classmates) heading to Augusta and Paulista, which is lamentable because [this area] cannot accommodate all of the population. Even today, it is easier to go to Augusta and

²⁰³ hoje não, as meninas maconheiras vão sujas, não tomam banho uma semana, vão com o cabelo enebado, com penteados de Maria Bethania, de sacolas, vestidas de hippies.” Rubem Biáfora, Interview with Inimá Simões, pg. 10

Paulista than to risk getting stabbed or mugged on the corner of Avenida São João and Ipiranga.”²⁰⁴ In the taped recording of the interview, the interviewer Inimá Simões did not respond to this comment and quickly changed the subject. Like Veloso’s reference to the same corner in his song “Sampa,” Biáfora referenced the corner of Avenida São João and Ipiranga as a symbol of the city. To Biáfora, the area that had once excluded moviegoers for not wearing ties had become a place of crime that alienated the middle class. His comments also reveal Cinelândia’s underlying racial exclusiveness; that *baianos* and other “uncivilized” people did not belong in this space.

Conclusion:

In referring to the corner of Avenida Augusta and Paulista as the new center of movie-going in 1980s São Paulo, Biáfora was actually referring to the Cine Belas Artes. Although the geographic location shifted from the Centro to Avenida Paulista, cinema remained a venue to express an idealized form of urbanization. In the first half of the twentieth century, the role of cinemas in urbanization revealed the limits of who was included in this ideal city. In the 1910s and 1920s, cinemas were part of a movement to transform São Paulo into a modern, safe, and hygienic city. Municipal legislation provided a space for the unlikely political participation of cinema managers who affected the process of planning built spaces. In the 1940s, cinemas in the Center symbolized the ascendance of middle class consumption and a modern movie-going audience, but litigation over movie ticket prices revealed how not everyone could be a part of this ideal city, and how the boundaries of Cinelândia were limited by both class and race. In

²⁰⁴ “Quando a bainada vem para cá e a av. São João fica uma 'casbah' aí você vê a tuma fugindo para a Augusta, para a Paulista, o que é latimável por que não pode servir toda a população. Mas hoje em dia inclusive, é mais fácil para você ir para a Augusta, para a Paulista, do que se arriscar a levar uma facada ou ser assaltado na Ave. São João com Ipiranga.” Biáfora, Interview with Inimá Simões, 11

2012, the protest to re-open the Cine Belas Artes used a contemporary vocabulary that expressed the right of citizens to have geographic accessibility to cultural venues like cinema, and utilized the image of “street cinema” as a way to envision a more accessible city, yet one held to high standards of taste.

On January 28, 2014, the leaders and members of the Movement for Belas Artes gathered again in front of the Cine Belas Artes, this time to celebrate its re-opening (projected in July 2014 but not yet completed) as the Cine Caixa Belas Artes. With sponsorship from the municipal government, the cinema is supposed to offer discounted tickets, cheaper than neighboring art cinemas, and screen domestically produced films. Urbanist Nabil Bonduki claimed that the re-opening was “an important stone in the construction of a more humane city”²⁰⁵ Yet, at the same time that the MBA celebrated the government’s preservation of the cinema, a much larger movement, concentrated in São Paulo, was protesting Brazil’s hosting of the upcoming 2014 World Cup, an investment made at the expense of public transportation, education, and infrastructure. While the two movements might seem diametrically opposed, one petitioning the local government to invest in public leisure in the form of *cinema da rua*, the other protesting a government and culture that prioritized soccer, Brazil’s most famous form of leisure, above social services, one issue was at the heart of both movements: the rights of residents to urban space. Frustrations surrounding the World Cup 2014 have been diverse and a comprehensive assessment is certainly beyond the scope of this chapter. However, Teresa Caldeira writes that one of the key themes of the protests that began in 2013 is the

²⁰⁵ Nabil Bonduki, “Folha de S.Paulo - Opinião - Cine Belas Artes, Um Avanço Fundamental” January 22, 2014 *Folha Online*, accessed February 12, 2014, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/opiniao/148739-cine-belas-artes-um-avanco-fundamental.shtml>.

“permanently congested” city that impedes residents’ geographical movement.²⁰⁶

Protestors of the MBA echoed similar frustrations with the traffic, congestion, and the feeling of entrapment. Instead of protesting for better public transportation, they protested for access to the arts, a *cinema da rua* that offered escape from the daily grind of work and traffic, a place that made a “chaotic” city “livable.”²⁰⁷ Cinemas, as they had throughout the twentieth century, played a significant role in constructing an idealized city, one that could be both inclusive and exclusive, both opening a space for increased political participation in the 1920s and excluding moviegoers according to taste, class, and race in the 1940s.

²⁰⁶ Teresa Caldeira, “São Paulo: The City and Its Protests” *Kafila* (blog), July 5, 2013, accessed January 24, 2014, <http://kafila.org/2013/07/05/sao-paulo-the-city-and-its-protests-teresa-caldeira/>.

²⁰⁷ Lais, Interview by author. Personal Interview. 3/17/2012

Chapter 2: The Gallery and the Private Box: Built Space and Movie-Going Practices in São Paulo, 1916 to 2011



Figure 11: Exterior of the Igreja Internacional da Graça de Deus, former location of the Cine Metro. October, 22, 2011. Photo by author.

I could smell grilled meat sizzling on *espetinhos*, candied and salted popcorn for sale in little bags, margarine on hot, steamed corn. A man was selling sunglasses from a small table; another was selling belts. There was still a sermon going on inside of the International Church of the Grace of God, but plenty of people were outside of the church instead of inside, chatting over cake and coffee, mingling, and enjoying a sunny Saturday. Seventy years prior, when the church was still the Cine Metro, one of the premiere cinemas of *Cinelandia*, the building functioned in a similar way. Where the International Church displayed posters of its different worship services (today, Saturday, was a service on the theme of prosperity) movie posters had announced the upcoming

Hollywood releases.¹ A woman invited me to join the service inside, where I saw the auditorium, which sat thousands, packed.

On the same street, three doors down, I paused in front of the Cine Art-Palacio. In contrast to the International Church, only a few men stood outside of the cinema, one slowly smoking a cigarette. The Cine Art-Palacio was still a cinema, but the glittering marquee that advertised Hollywood films when it opened in 1937 was now shuttered. In its place, posters invited spectators to watch “unedited films... prohibited for youths under 18.” Unlike the International Church, which utilized the Cine Metro’s capacity to seat thousands in one room, the Cine Art-Palácio divided the large auditorium into “ten films in three rooms” and “individual cabins.” I headed to the box office to buy a ticket for eight *reais* but never made it inside. This time, nobody was inviting me, and I was conflicted by recognition of my own status as a *pesquisadora norteamericana* (North American researcher), an intrusive outsider entering a semi-private space, and hesitance about what I might find inside. While I was disappointed in myself for not rejecting “the security of boundaries” that culturally demarcate masculine or feminine places, the men in the entrance were probably relieved.² When I tried to take a picture of the building, they scattered and hid their faces.³ Pierre Bourdieu writes that any encounter between individuals is never a “one-on-one,” interpersonal meeting, but an interaction of

¹ Brazil is still the world’s largest Catholic country in terms of population, but evangelical Christianity has been growing. See R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (Rutgers University Press, 1997); Ricardo Mariano, “Expansão Pentecostal no Brasil: O Caso da Igreja Universal,” *Estudos Avançados* 18, no. 52 (2004): 121–38.

² Feminist geographer Doreen Massey has argued that the characterization of places and identities as bounded, is culturally masculine and designed for domination. See Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 7.

³ For an introduction to the politics of photography in anthropological and ethnographic research as a form of “othering,” imperialism, and objectification, see Leslie Devereaux and Roger Hillman, *Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology, and Photography* (Univ of California Press, 1995); Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (University of Michigan Press, 1998); Raymond Corbey, “Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 1993, 338–69.

embodied structures. The way I dressed, walked, and photographed the Cine Art-Palácio, and the way the men stood in the entrance smoking, spoke not just to our present situation, but to a history of social positions. In this encounter, my own gendered and class “habitus” was evident in my reluctance to go inside the cinema, in “knowing my place.”⁴

The International Church and the Cine Art-Palacio porn cinema represent the divergent ways in which people continue to interact with the built space of historic cinemas in São Paulo. In a city that has expanded horizontally and where real estate is tight in the Centro, cinemas offer valuable square footage. Some of the largest cinemas of the Centro, like the Cine Art-Palácio, held over 3,000 seats. Because of their size, some cinemas have become parking lots, others renovated into theaters or concert spaces; some are shuttered and empty, and others are churches and porn theaters like the Cine Metro and the Cine Art-Palácio. The International Church of the Grace of God utilizes the seating capacity of the Cine Metro to hold services that would otherwise be impractically large, carving out a space for a growing religion in the crowded Centro. As a church, the Cine Metro continues to function as a space of sociability, a place to meet and talk, a place to see people and be seen. The Cine Art-Palacio porn theater, on the other hand, utilizes a different aspect of the 1940s space. Cinemas were a place not just to be seen, but to remain hidden. “In the darkness of the cinema” is a phrase that sums up the kisses, flirtations, and semi-licit activities that happened once the lights were off. The different uses of the contemporary Cine Metro and the Cine Art-Palácio demonstrate the multiple interpretations that can occur within the same built space.

⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), 82.

The physical spaces within cinemas were an important element of the movie-going experience. Not only did the architecture of cinemas facilitate meeting and socializing, in some cinemas, it created physical barriers that differentiated moviegoers' experiences according to race, class, and gender. How moviegoers used and interpreted cinemas could transform the meaning of these spaces, for example creating "elite" spaces within private boxes or "deviant" spaces in balconies. This chapter traces the layers of meaning within specific cinemas of the Centro in several time periods: the 1920s when the architecture of cinemas was a tool to elevate the respectability of movie-going, the 1940s when moviegoers utilized physical barriers to create elite and romantic areas, and finally the 1980s and 1990s when so-called *marginais* transformed these same cinemas into spaces of prostitution and perceived deviance.

Cine-Teatro República: The Traditional Cinema of the *Paulistano* Elite

As discussed in chapter one, municipal legislators sought to legally define and regulate the built space of cinemas in the 1910s and 1920s. Prior to (and to the consternation of municipal officials, after) the municipal law 1954 of 1916, cinema was a physically transient medium, appearing in amusement houses, theaters, and circuses, and even in restaurants. Brazilian film historian Maria Rita Galvão has referred to the construction of the Cine-teatro República (herein referred to by its later name, the Cine República) in 1921 as a watershed in the history of São Paulo film exhibition, one of the first structures dedicated to cinema, built in a grandiose style that elevated the social status of the movie-going experience. She writes that the Cine República was a departure from the "the old Bijou Theater, in which the red seats bled onto spectators' clothes, to the ultra-modern (*moderníssimo*) República, whose elegant showings were the most

refined that the city could imagine at the time.”⁵

The significance of the Cine República in São Paulo exhibition history has generated a number of historical analyses and projects. In addition to work by Maria Rita Galvão and Rino Anelli, José Inácio de Melo Souza has analyzed the history of the Cine República for the online database *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo*, published in 2011. In addition, from 2007 to 2009, the Historic Archive of São Paulo (*Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo*, AHSP), in partnership with the Laboratory of Integrated Systems of the University of São Paulo (*Labótorio de Sistemas Integráveis, Universidade de São Paulo*, LSI-USP), developed a three-dimensional digital model of the cinema. Using the blueprints and petitions available at the Historic Archive, the “Modeling Project,” led by Ricardo Mendes, archivist and researcher at the AHSP, and Leonardo Capelossi Caramori of LSI-USP, created a virtual model of the Cine República as it would have appeared in 1930. In 2012, the Modeling Project also produced a short video of the model, demonstrating various aspects of the cinema, including its façade and perspectives within the interior.⁶ The availability of blueprints, photographs, and the three-dimensional modeling project has facilitated analysis of the Cine República’s built space.

Although Galvão refers to the Cine República as “ultra-modern,” it was far from “modern” in an aesthetic sense. As architectural historian Renato Anelli points out, the cinema harkened back to theater styles of the nineteenth century.⁷ While in the U.S.,

⁵ Galvão, *Crônica Do Cinema Paulistano*, 37–38.

⁶ For information for on the Modeling Project and a link to the final video produced in 2012, see “O Reública: Um Cineteatro Paulistano Da Década de 1920,” *Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo - PMSP/SMC/AHSP - Modelagem*, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/modelagem/txt/geral/republica2012.htm>.

⁷ Renato Luiz Sobral Anelli, “Arquitetura de Cinemas na Cidade de São Paulo” (Master’s, Universidade de Campinas, 1990). On the architecture of cinemas in Rio de Janeiro, see Evelyn Furquim Werneck Lima, *Arquitetura Do Espetáculo: Teatros e Cinemas na Formação da Praça Tiradentes e da Cinelândia* (Editora UFRJ, 2000).

movie studios constructed “movie palaces” in art deco and art nouveau styles, cinemas in São Paulo looked like (or even were) older theaters. The Cine República was built in the same Beaux-Arts style as the Municipal Theater of São Paulo, which, like its counterpart in Rio de Janeiro, was itself imitative of the Palais Garnier Opera House in Paris.

When the Cine República opened in 1921, cinema programs and news articles emphasized that it was “elite” and “traditional” rather than modern. Demonstrating the importance of architecture in creating a distinct social experience, cinema programs primarily boasted that the Cine República was “the biggest and most comfortable of Brazil,” in distinct contrast to the cramped, enclosed cinemas of the previous decade.⁸ While an article in *O Estado de S. Paulo* mentioned “innovations” in lighting and the use of “incombustible” materials, terms that signaled modernity, the overall theme of the article focused on the cinema as elite. The Cine República’s primary point of departure from the sometimes ramshackle, working-class, and popular cinemas was that it was “aristocratic,” not that it was modern.

The cinema was not a new construction, but a renovation of a building that had been in operation since 1912. First established as a skating rink, the “Skating Palace” was replete with a “luxury” rink, twelve skating instructors who performed artistic waltzes, and sixty staff members to attend to patrons’ needs.⁹ Skating rinks were a fad in this time period, and the Skating Palace was one among at least five that appeared in the city from 1904 to 1912.¹⁰ While in operation, the Skating Palace was used occasionally as a theater, a dance hall, and even exhibited films until 1919, when the Ford Motor Company

⁸ See for example, “Cine-Teatro República” 2/18/1922. Advertisement. *Folha da Noite* 2/18/1922, pg. 16.

⁹ Ricardo Mendes, “Modelando o República: Um Cine-Teatro da Década de 1920,” *Informativo Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo* 7, no. 30 (September 2011), <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/info/info30/>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; Vicente de Paula Araujo, *Salões, Circos, e Cinemas de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Ed. Perspectiva, 1981), 107-109.

converted it into an automobile factory.¹¹ The previous uses of the building, rather than a negative indication of the cinema's dated construction, were actually lauded as proof of the cinema's distinguished history. On the day of the inauguration, December 29, 1912, *O Estado de S. Paulo* reported,

... the old building of the Skating Palace has transformed into one of the most beautiful and most luxurious theaters in our city. Today, whoever enters, will hardly remember the large salon in which, on certain days of the week, the finest of São Paulo high society gathered. [Nor would they remember] the grand mechanical factory where they fabricated and repaired the complex gears of cars. Due to all of the artistic renovations, the constant concern of luxury, of comfort, and of elegance, distinction is overflowing.¹²

The Cine República was “overflowing” with distinction due not only to the renovations that masked its prior uses as a skating rink and an automobile factory, but also precisely because of this history. It was a place where the elite had gathered (though the article failed to mention that many went to skating rinks to laugh at falling skaters rather than to dance waltzes),¹³ where the Ford Motor company built expensive automobiles (a symbol of modern technology), and now it was São Paulo's most prestigious cinema. *O Estado de S. Paulo* particularly commented on the connection between the cinema to a local sense of elite identity; the construction of the cinema “is in keeping with the great development of the city... [showing] the height of its great prosperity.”¹⁴

¹¹ Mendes, “Modelando o República: Um Cine-Teatro da Década de 1920.”

¹² *O Estado de S. Paulo* December 29, 1921. Pg. 4

¹³ On skating, see Araújo, 108. On automobiles and modernity, see Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁴ “... acompanhasse mais de perto o grande desenvolvimento da cidade, [illegible] S. Paulo de uma casa de diversões desse genero, perfeitamente a altura do seu grau de prosperidade.” *O Estado de S. Paulo* December 29, 1921. Pg. 4



Figure 12: “Cine-Teatro República. The biggest and most comfortable of Brazil. The Meeting Place of Paulistana High Society. São Paulo’s premiere exhibitor of the famed companies Paramount, Serrador, Fox-Realart. Source: *Folha de S. Paulo*. 2/18/1922, pg. 16.

Like theaters, the Cinema República distributed programs that listed the films to be shown. In the 1920s, a “cinema session” consisted of various short films in addition to a feature film, sometimes with music and dancing between reels. The publication of cinema programs was common throughout the 1920s and continued in the more “upscale” cinemas until the 1940s. Local businesses, restaurants, and bars, many of which purported to sell “aristocratic” or “elite” products, filled the Cine República program with advertisements. These included Ambra soap, which was advertised as “the perfume of the aristocracy,” and commodities that really were only for the very wealthy, such as cars and pianos.¹⁵ By 1929, one program claimed that the cinema was the “traditional cinema of *paulistano* (residents of São Paulo city) elegance.”¹⁶ In 1929, this

¹⁵ “O Perfume da Aristocracia” Ambra, Advertisement. Cine-Teatro República Program, n.d., CB D1981/28. On the history of advertising techniques, see Jackson T. Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York N.Y.: Basic Books, 1994).

¹⁶ Cine Republica Program. 12/6/1929. CB D1481/51-52

may have been a marketing technique to differentiate the Cine República from cinemas that purported to be “modern” instead of traditional. Nevertheless, through advertisements, cinema programs, and its representation in the popular press, the overall image of the cinema was one of local, “traditional” aristocracy, not cosmopolitan modernity, and certainly not of a working-class, accessible amusement.

Another architectural element that preserved the elitism of theaters was the tiered seating structure, which included box seats (*camarotes* and *frizas*), seats on the ground floor in front of the screen/stage (*plateia*), balcony seats (*balcão*, on the second level behind the private boxes), and gallery seats (*galeria*). The separation between the different levels was noted in the *Estado de S. Paulo*, which again emphasized how this made the cinema more aristocratic: “The gallery and the private boxes on the upper and lower levels were constructed in such a way that one cannot trespass from these locations to any of the floors below.”¹⁷ The private boxes were not just physically separated from the other sections in the cinema, they were reserved ahead of time. Just as in the Teatro Municipal, the two best boxes, located in the center of the upper level were reserved for the president of the state and the mayor of the city, who were present at the inauguration. As reported by *O Estado de S. Paulo*, “[The inauguration] has been awaited with vibrant anxiety as a truly fashionable and artistic event” and that so many of the city’s “most distinguished families” wanted to reserve boxes for the inaugural session of the cinema, that its office decided to hold two sessions to accommodate the demand.¹⁸

¹⁷ “as archibancadas, os camarotes e as frizas foram construidos de tal maneira que de qualquer dessas localidades não se poderá devassar as outras que fiquem em plano inferior.” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 12/29/1921, pg. 4.

¹⁸ “Aconteceu, porém, que, esperada com viva ansiedade como um verdadeiro acontecimento mundano e artistico, mal foram abertas as assignaturas, ao escriptorio da empresa accorreu tal numero de familias das mais distinctas, que, para attender aos muitos pedidos apresentados, se tornou necessaria a organização de duas sessões.” *O Estado de S. Paulo*. 12/29/1921, pg. 4.



Figure 13: Interior of Cine-teatro República showing private boxes on ground floor and second floor, and gallery seats on third floor, as it would have appeared in 1930. Still from Ricardo Mendes and Leonardo Capelossi Caramori, *O República: Um Cine-Teatro Paulistano Da Década de 1920*, video (Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo, 2012), <http://vimeo.com/49216028>. Still digitally brightened for better visibility.

In February of 1922, just a few months after its inauguration, box seats in the Cine República were priced at 9\$000, poltronas (seats in the *plateia*, or the ground floor in front of the stage) were 1\$600, children had discounted entry at 1\$100, and the gallery seats were be \$800, prices on par with other large cinemas. Box seats were both materially and socially out of reach for most *paulistanos*. They were over five times the price of a regular ticket, and over ten times the price of a gallery ticket. They nearly equaled the total daily wages, 9\$500 milreis, that male factory workers earned in 1925.¹⁹ The cost, however, was not the only barrier; because of the practice of renting private boxes on a monthly basis, even wealthy moviegoers felt excluded from this space.

The coffee baron Joaquim Franco de Mello wrote a letter of complaint to the mayor of São Paulo in May 1923, a year and a half after the cinema's inauguration. In it, Franco accused the theater owners of “exploiting” and “shamefully abusing” the movie-

¹⁹ Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 47.

going public.²⁰ By renting private boxes on a monthly basis to “moneyed magnates,” the cinema owners “only look at the money they make, only see the appeal of profits while they disregard the smallest rights of the public....”²¹ Rather than being available to anyone who wanted to buy a ticket, seats in these private boxes were only available for purchase at the last minute if the renters did not show up. De Mello viewed this exclusion as a political matter. Not only did he write a letter to the mayor, he accused the cinema owners of failing to live up to the “luminous and pompous name of Cinema República.”

From 1889 to 1930, Brazil was nominally a republican democracy, but a small group of regional elites shared power, and most of the population was shut out of the political system. Chapter one argued that on the municipal level, film exhibitors were able to participate in political culture through their interpretation of municipal legislation on the safety and hygiene of cinemas. De Mello invoked the concepts of popular political participation and republicanism for a very specific goal: to get a better seat at the movies.

He ended his letter stating that:

whether the managers of this [cinema] company be politicians or another one of our moneyed men, whether they be young guys, blacks or whites, the fact is that they have a place of diversion in a capital that claims to be civilized. For the honor and glory of São Paulo... I submit my complaint with complete confidence, certain that your Excellency will decide in my favor that these men of the cinema will learn to better respect the rights of each person that demands the use of their cinema with the purpose of enjoying himself, for the public is the people, a mass that forms a social community (*comunhão social*) with your Excellency as its head.²²

²⁰ “explora o publico Paulistano,” “abusa vergonhosamente” Joaquim Franco de Mello, letter addressed to Mayor of São Paulo (Firmiano Morais Pinto) in “Cine Republica - Reclamação Sob Cinema,” May 28, 1923, Cine Caixa 1, Cinemas 1. Processo 2007-0.323.120-7, Número da capa 0.075.243-22

²¹ “maganões endinheirados”... “só miram o oiro que recebe, só enhergam a conveniencia do ganho do lucro, o publico mesmo é menos prezado nos seus direitos os mais pequeninos...”Ibid.

²² Mas conheço os directores dessa empresa, seja há politico ou desses nossos ricos, sejam há moços, pretos ou brancos, o caso é que estão com uma casa de diversão numa Capital que se diz civilizada e por honra e gloria de S. Paulo temos V. Excia na frente dos nossos interesses e junto a V. Excia venho entregar com toda a confiança esta minha queixa na certeza de que, esses homens de cinemas saberão melhor

While he utilized rhetoric on “the people” de Mello was himself an elite, a coffee baron whose mansion, the “Franco de Mello Palace” is still preserved as a site of cultural patrimony on Avenida Paulista.²³ At the turn of the twentieth century, Avenida Paulista was the location of multiple *casarões*, fine mansions built mostly by the growing sector of bourgeois industrialists. The social and cultural divisions between industrialists and the landed aristocracy, of which Mello was a part, might have been a factor in his complaint.²⁴ As discussed in the following chapter, film intellectuals often accused cinema entrepreneurs, particularly those who were immigrants or immigrant descendants, of being con artists and lacking the cultural pedigree to appreciate cinema as an art form. De Mello made a similar criticism when he accused the cinema owners of thinking that “they are in Morocco or [illegible].”²⁵ While the second location would help contextualize his meaning, the mention of Morocco alludes to Brazilian perceptions of the Middle East as a “backwards” or uncivilized society. It might have also been a reference to the Middle-Eastern immigrants in urban centers of Brazil who were visible as peddlers, merchants, and even industrialists. While politicians and merchants sometimes positively associated Middle Eastern immigrants with commercial success, de Mello could have mentioned “Morocco” as a negative stereotype to insinuate that the cinema owners were overly concerned with money.²⁶ There is little existing information

respeitar o direito de cada um que demandam esse cinema com o fim de divertir se lhe dando ganho porque e o publico é o povo, esta massa que faz a comunhão social que tem V. Excria como seu chefe.” Ibid.

²³ Daniel Lomonaco, “Conheça Sua Cidade: ‘Casarão da Paulista’ É Alvo de Ação e se Deteriora,” *GI Globo*, July 11, 2013, accessed August 1, 2014, <http://g1.globo.com/sao-paulo/vc-no-g1-sp/noticia/2013/11/conheca-sua-cidade-casarao-da-paulista-e-alvo-de-acao-e-se-deteriora.html>.

²⁴ On class identity and conflict between industrialists and elite agriculturalists, see Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880-1945*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969).

²⁵ “pensam que estão em Marrocos” Joaquim Franco de Mello

²⁶ The Moroccan immigrants who arrived in Brazil in the nineteenth century were almost exclusively of Jewish descent. The social and economic ascendance of these immigrants from a “backwards” region

on the managers of the Cine República, Empresas Reunidas. Aside from the Cine República, in 1928 Empresas Reunidas operated the Cine Santa Helena, the Cine Paraiso, and the Cine Triângulo.²⁷ Whether any of the owners was an immigrant is unknown, but in any case, Mello perceived them to be undesirable immigrants.

Although his attitudes toward immigrants and nouveau riche industrialists might have spurred his tirade against the cinema owners, Mello frames his complaint not as an elite landowner, but as one among the people, or *o povo*. His letter explored the role of egalitarianism in a republican society wherein equal access to and enjoyment of consumption and leisure was a mark of citizenship. Part of his outrage stemmed not only from the fact that the cinema hypocritically used the name “república,” but that it heavily advertised itself to “all corners” of society, giving the impression that the cinema was open and accessible to all. Perhaps this was why he was so determined to sit in a private box!

In *Insurgent Citizenship*, James Holston contends that since independence, Brazil has maintained a system of “differentiated citizenship,” or “a national citizenship that was from the beginning universally inclusive in membership and massively inegalitarian in distribution.”²⁸ Within this system, there are various types of citizenship, each awarded a differentiated set of rights. Citizens are included in the membership of the nation-state, but are distributed rights unequally according to markers of “education, property, race,

became an issue in Brazilian-Moroccan diplomatic relations. As the Arab population in Brazil grew and became more diverse, so did the popular perceptions of Arabs, employing terms like “turk,” “Lebanese” or “Syrian” to signify various class differences with the Arab community. See Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).

²⁷ “De São Paulo,” *Cinearte* 3, no. 135 (September 26, 1928): 18.

²⁸ Holston, James. *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 7.

gender, and occupation.”²⁹ Holston focuses particularly upon the working poor’s unequal access to property and their expulsion from the increasingly modernized city center.

Using the cinema as a matrix for the differentiated rights of citizens, de Mello points to the unequal access to spaces within the cinema as emblematic of this hypocrisy. However, his complaint was clearly not part of workers’ organization for the eight-hour workday, or for the right to leisure time or leisure space.³⁰ Rather, it was a paradoxical argument that an egalitarian society should be a cultural meritocracy in which anyone, even the poor, could be elite. Mello complains that “moneyed magnates” have reserved the private boxes, excluding the “povo.” Having money, however, was not the same as being “civilized,” and in casting the exclusiveness of private boxes as an issue of civil rights, he was arguing that anyone who wanted to enjoy the cinema should be able to do so. Of course, with the private boxes as expensive as they were, those who were both “civilized” and wealthy enough to afford the private boxes was a very limited set of people.

Cine-Teatros and the Gallery

As noted in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, the structure of the Cine República did not allow moviegoers at the top to “trespass” to the floors below. Blueprints of the cinema show how this functioned, with a separate entrance for the gallery that led directly to a staircase, straight up to the third floor without a door or access to the second floor.

Although the three-dimensional model of the 1930 Cine República shows that there was a

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ On the impact of Taylorism and Fordism (the “scientific” management of factory life, which included how workers lived and how they spent their free time, see Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil: Industrialists and the Remaking of the Working Class in São Paulo, 1920-1964*. On access to playgrounds and parks as a citizens’ right to leisure and health, see Carlos Augusto da Costa Niemeyer, *Parques infantis de São Paulo: lazer como expressão de cidadania* (Annablume, 2002).

staircase leading up from the second floor to the gallery (highlighted in green below), this is clearly marked “emergency exit” on the blueprint.

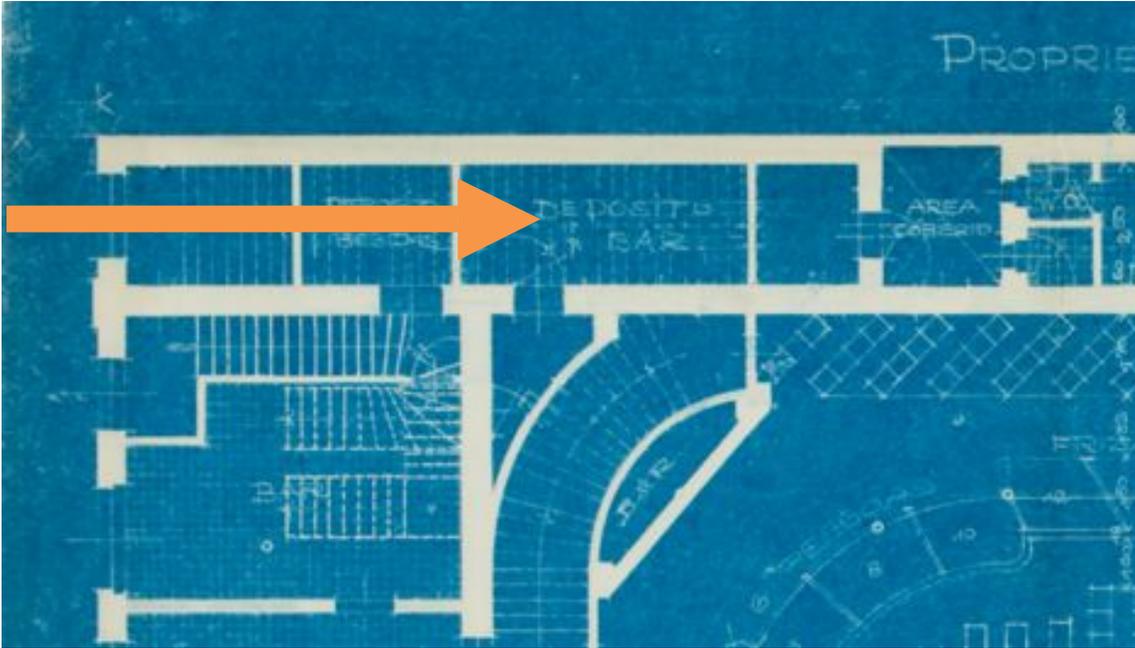


Figure 14: Detail from “Planta térreo.” 1931 Blueprint for ground floor of Cine-teatro República. Cinemas, AHSP, “Cine República – Reforma do Predio” Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 1, Cinemas1, Processo 2007-0.273.665-8, Número da capa 0.050.920-31



Figure 15: Detail from “Planta Galeria” 1931 Blueprint for third floor with gallery of Cine-teatro República with separate entrance and stairwell for gallery in “Cine República – Reforma do Predio” Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 1, Cinemas1, Processo 2007-0.273.665-8, Número da capa 0.050.920-31

The Cine República, however, was just one of many “cine-teatros” built in this

style. Although by 1929, film critics and writers were beginning to lament São Paulo's "cine-teatros" as old-fashioned and out of date, all of the largest cinemas, including the Cine Oberdan, the Cine Central, and the Cine Santa Helena, were built like theaters with a division between the gallery, private box, and *plateia*, with a separate side entrance for the gallery.

A separate entrance has been a powerful symbol of segregation in other historical contexts. Segregated cinemas in the U.S. South during Jim Crow forced African-American moviegoers to use a separate side entrance, and limited them their movement to the balcony. Sitting in these so-called "buzzards' roosts," and climbing up via an outdoor staircase, or even a fire escape, became a humiliation that many blacks in the U.S. south endured and remembered.³¹ Black moviegoers at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia, were not allowed to leave the balcony to buy refreshments; they ordered food and that was then brought to them. The use of balconies with separate entrances, however, was not limited to the U.S. South during Jim Crow. The balcony as a separate, marginalized space had earlier roots in theater. For example, in nineteenth-century theaters in the U.S., balconies were sometimes reserved for prostitutes, where they attracted and set up meetings with clients. These prostitutes also accessed the gallery from a separate entrance at the side of the building.³² Balconies in theaters, as the

³¹ The work on segregated movie-going practices in the early and mid twentieth-century U.S. has most prominently analyzed cinemas as physical structures. There were three primary mechanisms of segregated movie-going in the U.S.: separate theaters for whites and blacks that followed the contours of residential segregation, mixed-race theaters that cordoned off an area for African-Americans, usually in a balcony area, and segregation through time in which theaters normally reserved for whites would be open to blacks on certain days of the week or during midnight screenings. The distribution of films was also racially differentiated, as black theaters and screenings received independent and second-run films, or those thought to have "Negro appeal." Doherty, "Race Houses, Jim Crow Roosts, and Lily White Palaces" in Maltby, *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema*.

³² Claudia D. Johnson, "That Guilty Third Tier: Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century American Theaters," *American Quarterly* 27, no. 5 (December 1, 1975): 575–84, doi:10.2307/2712442.

cheapest seats, least visible to the other patrons, often functioned as a space for people marginalized by race, class, gender, or moral status.³³

In the case of the cine-teatros of São Paulo, moviegoers who entered through the side entrance were also cut off from an important social space—the lobby (*sala de espera*). The lobby was more than a place to wait; it was a significant part of the movie-going experience. Photographs and accounts from the 1920s and 1930s show as much activity in the lobby as there was in the theater. A column in the leisure magazine *Para Todos* called “Parlors and Lobbies” featured gossip and society news based on the audience members seen in the lobby, not just in their seats or on the screen. Blueprints show that some lobbies were often up to half the size of the actual theater, enough room to accommodate a band and dancing before the film began. The Cine República underwent various reforms to expand the size of its lobby, eventually constructing an adjacent building to make room for its size. Those in the gallery, however, were excluded from these activities. Even if gallery patrons were allowed into the lobby, the fact that the gallery was several floors up made it physically inconvenient to descend during the frequent intervals when other moviegoers conversed, danced, and used the restroom. The gallery section had its own bathrooms, and in the Cine República, this section had its own bar area, further reducing the chance that gallery patrons would want to descend out of their space. In terms of cinema architecture, the gallery area was clearly demarcated as a marginal space.

In contrast to the “buzzards’ roosts” of the Jim Crow U.S. South, however, there

³³ See, for example, a discussion of various class distinctions in the theater in Charles Sowerwine and Gabrielle Wolf, “Echoes of Paris in the Antipodes: French Theatre and Opera in Melbourne (1850-1914)1,” *Australian Journal of French Studies* (*Australian Journal of French Studies*) 45, no. 1 (January 2008): 81–98.

was never any mandated segregation that would have confined one to the gallery on the basis of racial identity. Quite the opposite, intellectuals and writers have represented racial mixing (in kinship, sex, and social relationships) as a defining feature of Brazilian national identity.³⁴ As discussed more thoroughly in chapter three, racial identity in Brazil is flexible; one can move in and out of racial categories depending on phenotype and social status, generating the popular phrase that “money whitens.” The fluidity of racial categorization and history of racial mixing gave Brazil the reputation as a “racial democracy” in the 1950s, but many historians have proven that racial discrimination has existed against both Afro-Brazilians and the general concept of blackness.³⁵ The fluidity of race exists in tandem with intense social stratification in which the poor and marginalized are often darker-skinned.

Although society columns reported on the members of the elite who sat prominently in the private boxes, information about those who sat in the balcony in the 1920s and early 1930s is scarce. From 2011 to 2012, I conducted several interviews with four women who were all children in 1920s São Paulo. Because of the difficulty of finding interviewees in their 90s, I relied on personal connections. I interviewed my neighbor Celia, whose parents were teachers, a friend’s grandmother Junes, whose father was a carpenter and mother a factory worker, and a friend’s aunts Lilita and Lucia, whose father was a musician of local repute. I had not intended to only interview women, but when asking friends about relatives who would be willing to give an interview, all happened to be women, likely due in part to women’s longer life expectancy. In terms of

³⁴ The “classic” examination of racial mixing and Afro-Brazilian culture is Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*.

³⁵ See for example, George Andrews, *Blacks & Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *O Espetáculo das Raças: Cientistas, Instituições e Questão Racial no Brasil, 1870-1930* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993).

income and professions of their parents, as children, Junes came from a working-class background, Celia was middle-class, and Liliana and Lucia were upper middle-class. All four women were white in the sense that they were light-skinned, of European descent (Portuguese and Italian, though Europeanness does not always connote white), and self-identified as middle class.

I spoke to interviewees in their homes, and, like a good Brazilian guest, I always brought cake; they always offered coffee. These were all quite informal, pleasant encounters; all the interviewees were very interested in me, where I was from, and eager to tell me stories of their childhood in São Paulo. Although they were confused about where I was from in the U.S. (they were not familiar with Emory University or Atlanta, Georgia), they were impressed that I had a local affiliation with the University of São Paulo, one of Brazil's most prestigious universities. Interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions about their memories of movie-going. Toward the end of interviews, I showed a series of photographs of old cinemas from both the 1920s and 1940s, and asked what they remembered about the different spaces. One of the photos was of the Teatro São Paulo in 1929, which showed a full audience in the gallery, private boxes, and *plateia*. I did not specify to interviewees the details of the photo; I merely used it as an example of what a large cinema would look like in the 1920s and then asked them to tell me about it.

Because of the limited diversity of these four interviewees, I also conducted a series of group interviews with members of various social clubs for elderly people. The Cinemateca Brasileira, which is the largest film archive in Brazil, hosts a program called "Cinema for the Elderly," *Cine Maior Idade*. Sponsored by the São Paulo state

government, the program brings members of elderly associations, with the attempt to include clubs from various social levels and areas of São Paulo, to the Cinemateca to watch films. With permission from the organizers, I participated in four of these sessions, which provided a more diverse sample population, speaking to groups of participants over coffee and cookies. I also held two interviews with the students of the *Oficina do Cérebro*, a private school for elderly people (more or less white and upper middle class, reflecting the population of Higienópolis, the neighborhood where it was located) to exercise their memories. I asked similar questions as I did in the individual interviews, but these interviews were much briefer, and it was difficult to record facts about who these people were, when they were born, or their social background. Given the hurried nature of the interviews, I took notes rather than audio recordings. These group interviews gave me, however, brief snippets and anecdotes about movie-going, and a glimpse into social mores. Nearly all the participants in these programs were women as well. One woman at the Cinemateca told me that her husband was “too macho” to participate, and he thought associations for the elderly were just for women.³⁶ Most of the women were in their 60s or 70s and told me stories about movie-going in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, but some had memories of the 1920s and 1930s or were otherwise familiar with the structure of cine-teatros, some of which remained in use for decades. The Cine Oberdan, discussed in the next section for example, was a cine-teatro that maintained private boxes and galleries at least until 1939.³⁷ In addition to these group interviews, I also relied on the transcripts of oral histories conducted by other film historians. Anthropologist Heloisa Buarque de Almeida generously shared the transcripts

³⁶ Group interview at Cine Maior Idade, Interview with author, São Paulo, 4/12/2011. São Paulo

³⁷ Souza, “Salas de Cinema Em São Paulo 1895-1929.”

of 23 interviews she conducted for her ethnography on movie-going in 1940s São Paulo. Transcripts and audio recordings of interviews with film critics and filmmakers conducted for film historian Inimá Simões' book on São Paulo movie theaters were also available at the Centro Cultural de São Paulo. Almeida's and Simoes' interviews were conducted in the 1980s and 1990s and provide insight on how movie-going changed over time.

When I interviewed Junes, she told me right away about her memories of leisure as a child in 1920s São Paulo, like when an elephant escaped from a circus and ran into the streets, and how she used to go fishing in the Tietê River, which runs through the city.³⁸ She also remembered, unprompted, going to the neighborhood cinema by herself when she was a child. To avoid paying for a seat, she would tell the ticket taker that her father would be coming soon to buy a ticket. The ticket taker would let her in and she would sit wherever she chose. Later, when I showed Junes a picture of the Teatro S. Paulo in 1929, and asked her who sat in the gallery, she responded, “the poorest people (*os mais pobrezinhos*).”³⁹ When I asked if she ever sat in the gallery, she responded that she did not have to since she had her little trick. Although prices might have confined Junes to a certain section, she easily navigated the various spaces and was able to choose her own seat.

In Brazil, tricks and shortcuts like these are called *jeitinhos*, and are the little ways, from bribery to smiles, that people get things done. Michel de Certeau refers to similar everyday practices as “clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things,

³⁸The river is now infamous for its stench of pollution and untreated waste. Legends of its odor include stories of people who have unsuccessfully tried to commit suicide by jumping in, expecting to eviscerate upon entering

³⁹“*os mais pobrezinhos*” Junes. Interview by author. São Paulo, October 8, 2011

‘hunters’ cunning,’ maneuvers...’ as “tactics.” People use “tactics” to momentarily subvert the “strategies” of governing rituals and regulations. More specifically, Junes’ *jeitinho* is what de Certeau would call a “pedestrian street act,” the way in which, through walking, one can change the significance of a space in the same way that a speaker can appropriate and change the meaning of a word. De Certeau writes, “And if on the one hand he actualizes only a few of the possibilities fixed by the constructed order (he goes only here and not there), on the other he increases the number of possibilities (for example, by creating shortcuts and detours) and prohibitions (for example, he forbids himself to take paths generally considered accessible or even obligatory). He thus makes a selection.”⁴⁰

Junes’ everyday tactic of sneaking in to the cinema changed the space of the *plateia*. While the cinema could represent a series of physical, social and material barriers, spaces where one cannot or should not enter, Junes trick made the *plateia* accessible. She was able to subvert the economic restrictions that might have kept her out of the cinema, or confined to the gallery. It is possible that the ticket-taker knew her trick and simply did not care whether a child paid for her ticket or not. In this case, Junes might have benefited from her age, which may have granted her some leeway with the rules. She also utilized, whether knowingly or not, the fact that she did have a father of whom to speak. Junes might have been of a working-class background, but she had a family, clothing, shoes, and a home. She was also not Afro-descendent; her parents were Portuguese immigrants. If her race or family circumstances had been different, the trick may not have worked so well.

While her appearance and age gave her enough social capital to easily gain entry

⁴⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, 2002), 22.

into the *plateia*, it was not sufficient to enter the most elite spaces of the cinema. When asked whether she had ever used the same trick to sit in the private boxes, Junes replied no. “You never know who would be sitting there – friends or family [of those who rented the boxes] would be looking at you.”⁴¹ As noted in the blueprints, the main entrance of large cinemas led to both the *plateia* and to the private boxes; in a physical sense, Junes’s trick would easily have worked. However, while de Certeau emphasizes how tactics are autonomous choices, he also admits that in pedestrian street acts, the walker “actualizes only a few of the possibilities fixed by the constructed order.”⁴² Within this order, the private boxes were a social boundary that she did not think of crossing, just as I “instinctively” did not enter the Cine Art-Palácio in 2011. In these circumstances, we both embodied “‘knowing our place,’ and staying there.”⁴³

Junes’ interview reveals that the physical and commercial structure of cinemas relegated some, whomever she considered “the poorest ones” to the gallery. It also reveals, however, that in not considering herself among “the poorest,” though similarly lacking in economic capital, she categorized herself on a different social level, one that sat in the *plateia*. Although Junes had grown up working class, she had studied economics and worked in an office. She eventually married a man who was relatively wealthy. Her current economic status might have influenced her representation of herself as not among the “pobrezinhos” who sat in the gallery. The architecture of the cinema provided a basic structure to separating its patrons. These barriers however, were a shell for patrons to create social spaces. The high walls and high prices designated the private boxes as an elite space, but it was the families who rented them that actually created a

⁴¹ Junes. Interview with author. 10/8/2011

⁴² De Certeau, 22

⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, 82.

social boundary.

Junes' response was, however, unique. When I asked Celia about the gallery, she had a different interpretation. For her, every seat was bought on the basis of price. When asked who sat in the gallery, Celia responded, "It was all based on price; whoever sat there paid less; whoever sat there paid more," excluding any qualifiers of identity. Even when I asked her pointedly about race and gender, she replied, "Everything was equal, all mixed together." Even when not asked directly about race or gender, other interviewees in the group interviews similarly explained that seating was an issue of price, not identity. Celia, like many other respondents, seemed to want to confirm to me, a North American, that racism was not a problem in Brazil as it was in the U.S. One Brazilian film historian warned me not to go looking for racial segregation in movie theaters, as this was not a problem in Brazil as it had been in the U.S. In one group interview, when I brought up the issue of gender or racial separation in movie theaters, one woman pointedly responded, "There wasn't any of that."⁴⁴

Yet, when I asked interviewees where they liked to sit, nearly all responded that they preferred to sit in the first few rows. Although some women told me they had never even been to the movies before, no one every told me they sat in the gallery. Celia also told me that she always sat in the first few rows of the *plateia*, as many other respondents did. To have never once sat in the gallery (or to deny ever sitting there) suggests that the decision of where to sit was more complex than paying a little bit less or a little bit more. De Certeau claims that through "pedestrian street acts," individuals not only create possibilities, but also "prohibitions (for example, he forbids himself to take paths

⁴⁴ "Não tinha isso." Group Interview at Oficina do Cérebro. São Paulo 7/18/2011

generally considered accessible or even obligatory).”⁴⁵ If analyzing these prohibitions only through the lens of class, then Junes’ refusal to sit in the gallery, even though she grew up working-class, is an example of a temporary subversion of regulating norms. If, however, we analyze this prohibition through the lens of gender, avoiding the gallery may have not been a subversive tactic, but rather an example of how individuals’ movements are limited by “the constructed order,” in this case, prevailing gender norms that limited female respectability to certain areas within the cinema.

Cinema Oberdan: The Construction of Class and Gender

The Cine Oberdan was one of the largest, most popular theaters in early twentieth-century São Paulo, seating close to 2000 spectators in 1929.⁴⁶ Originally constructed as a theater and Italian cultural association in 1889 in the immigrant, working-class neighborhood of Brás, the Cine Oberdan also maintained the architecture of a theater. According to newspaper advertisements from 1929, the year the theater was renovated and re-opened as a cinema, seats on the ground floor and balcony area were 2\$500; private boxes were 13\$000; a half-price ticket was 1\$000; the gallery section, the cheapest seats, were 1\$000. As in the Cine República, walls, flights of stairs, and separate entrances served to prevent moviegoers in the gallery from entering the other floors.

Bathrooms were organized differently in these separate sections as well. There were four restrooms and a *toilette* on both the ground floor and the second floor, where regular-price seats and private boxes were located. In the blueprint, these restrooms were prominently marked for “senhoras.” There were no men’s bathrooms on either of these floors. Men’s restrooms were located underneath the ground floor, only accessible

⁴⁵ De Certeau, 22

⁴⁶ Souza, Inácio de Melo. “Oberdan.”

through a staircase by the stage. In contrast, there were no designated spaces for “senhoras” in the top floor gallery, the cheapest seats in the house. Instead, on either side of the stage, there were five urinals and a “W.C.,” but without any indication of a “toilette” or mention of “senhoras.” Although separate bathrooms for men and women might seem a matter of sex, the way in which these bathrooms were located and labeled made bathrooms relevant to gender and class.



Figure 16: Cine Oberdan bathrooms on the second floor for private boxes and seats, with toilette and labeled 'senhoras.' Bathrooms in the gallery with only urinals and stalls. “Cine Oberdan, junção das plantas 1929” 1929, Cinemas, AHSP, Caixa 25, Cinemas 51. Processo 1989-0.025.116-3, Número da capa 0.024.117-29

Namely, the difference between the bathrooms on these floors takes on significance when considering the social meaning of “senhora,” which is a respectful term for married women and also for women of some moral/social status. Moreover, the São Paulo state maintained distinct provisions for the hygienic needs and habits of “senhoras,” as opposed to “women.” The São Paulo state law 1596 of 1917, which the municipal government adopted in Act 1235 in 1918, was a major piece of legislation that re-organized the state’s sanitation services and established building codes for various

types of establishments.⁴⁷ In regards to bathrooms, the language of the law reveals how the state categorized the needs of women according to their class and social status.

The law diverged in the requirements for women's bathrooms in places of work versus places of leisure. In "factories and offices (*fabricas e oficinas*)," article 120 of the law demanded that there should be "one latrine (*uma latrina*)" for each group of thirty "workers (*operários*)" and one urinal for each group of fifty.⁴⁸ These "*latrinas*" should be "separated by workers' sex."⁴⁹ Though mentioning that bathrooms should be separated by sex, the law never specifically referred to men or to women, but used the blanket term "workers." The law did not recognize women workers as a distinct social category; it did not define or guarantee any perceived hygienic "needs" in the workplace.

In contrast, in reference to "places of amusement and commercial establishments of public character, such as theaters, cinemas, pastry shops, cafés, bars, breweries, diners, restaurants, and dairies etc.,"⁵⁰ the law demanded "a sufficient number of lavatories and

⁴⁷ Although the São Paulo Municipal Act 1235 adapted almost verbatim sections of the São Paulo state law 1596 (also discussed in chapter one), going forward I will reference the municipal law, as that is what municipal officials referenced in their documents.

⁴⁸ Nas fábricas e officinas, as latrinas serão serparadas para operarios de um e outro sexo, havendo, no minimo, uma latrina para cada grupo de trinta operarios e um mictorio para cada grupo de cincoenta." São Paulo Municipal Act 1235 (May, 11, 1918), article 120.

⁴⁹ "*separadas para operários de um e outro sexo*" São Paulo Municipal Act 1235. The obfuscation of gendered identity under the blanket term of "operários" marginalizes both men and women by making them faceless workers. This is unsurprising given the political and social status of workers during the Old Republic. Although working men and women organized, demanded, and won better working conditions from their employers and from the state, the mass valorization of the industrial worker in both law and propaganda was not initiated until Getúlio Vargas' Estado Novo. Women workers faced additional challenges; a substantial historiography of women workers in Latin America, most prominently in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, details the daily struggles that women workers faced as they joined the work force in greater numbers. See, for example, John French, ed. *The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers: from Household and Factory to the Union Hall and Ballot Box* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997); Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, *Dulcinea in the Factory: Myths, Morals, Men, and Women in Colombia's Industrial Experiment, 1905-1960* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000); Susie S. Porter, *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions, 1879-1931* (University of Arizona Press, 2003).

⁵⁰ "casas de diversões e estabelecimentos commerciaes, de caracter publico, como theatros, cinematographos, confeitarias, cafés, bars, chopps, botequins, restaurantes, leiterias, etc." São Paulo Municipal Act 1235, article 121.

urinals for patrons and for *senhoras*, a vanity table or powder room (*toucadors*) with the necessary hygienic appliances.⁵¹ That the law required a vanity table or powder room, demonstrates how legislators defined women at leisure and their “necessities” differently from women at work. While the law de-gendered working women, classifying them under the general term of “worker,” it feminized women of leisure, referring to them as “senhoras” (rather than “woman/*mulher*” or the “female sex/*sexo feminino*”) and mandating that these “senhoras” have use of a vanity table/powder room. This distinction between women at work and women at leisure was not mirrored for men. The law used more neutral, utilitarian language, “urinals, latrines, and stalls for men”⁵² – not for *senhores*. Nor were there any provisions for specific hygienic needs as there were for the women’s powder room.

According to the law, women who used and frequented places of leisure, such as cinemas, theaters, bars, and restaurants, were not just women, they were “senhoras.” In practice, this cannot have been always the case, as not every woman in a bar or botequim would have been called “senhora”—this is evidenced by the structure of the Cine Oberdan. However, as imagined by the state, a woman with the social and economic capital to participate in the right kind of leisure was a “senhora.”

By making *toucadors* accessible only to women who sat in the more expensive seats, and by marginalizing women’s bathrooms in the cheapest seats, cinemas like the Oberdan mirrored the class distinctions in the law, establishing physical boundaries around women who could be called “senhoras,” and making invisible women who were not. The spatial isolation that characterized the women’s bathrooms downstairs was

⁵¹“lavatorios e mictorios em numero sufficiente para uso dos frequentadores e toucadores com aparelhos hygenicos indispensaveis, para as senhoras.” Ibid.

⁵²“mictórios, latrinas e lavabos para homens.” Ibid.

absent in the gallery. While the more expensive seating on the ground floor and second floor clearly demarcated and separated a space for “senhoras,” the organization of bathrooms in the gallery obfuscated the presence of women. The women who sat in the gallery were not considered “senhoras,” and they were made invisible within the physical structure of the Oberdan.

Bathrooms were also a marker of racial and gendered difference in the segregated cinemas of the U.S. South. In the Fox Theatre of Atlanta, built in 1929 and still in use as a performance venue today, the distinction between the segregated bathrooms is marked. The overall theme of the Fox Theatre is orientalist, with Egyptian and Middle Eastern motifs. Like the “toilettes” or “tocadores” in the Cine Oberdan, bathrooms in the whites’ only section had lounges and smoking rooms. These lounges were very opulent, with museum-quality reproductions of ancient Egyptian furniture in the women’s lounges and tapestries, mosaics, and fireplaces in the men’s “Turkish” style smoking lounge. While these restrooms were called “ladies” and “gentlemen’s” restrooms, the restrooms in the “coloreds” section were simply labeled “women” and “men.” These bathrooms were much smaller, and although there was a small room with a mirror leading into the bathroom, this lounge was small, cramped, and without any of the orientalist aesthetic or luxury items in the whites’ only bathrooms.



Figure 17: Clockwise from top left: sign for “ladies” and Egyptian-style lounge in women’s restroom in whites’ only area; door labeled “women” and lounge for restroom in blacks’ only area in historically preserved Fox Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia. Photos by author.

Joel Wolfe’s research has shown that the average daily wage in 1927 São Paulo was 8\$5000 for female factory workers and 16\$000 for male factory workers. Though the 2\$500 ticket price was less accessible than the 1\$000 gallery seat, it was not an impossible sum. Research by Kathy Peiss, Nan Enstad, and Christine Stansell have revealed the practices that women in the Americas used to pay for their leisure: “scrimping” on lunchtime meals, going to the movies with male dates (who received higher wages) who paid for tickets, and even prostitution purchased clothing, dime

novels, and movie tickets.⁵³ In Brazil, women employed similar tactics. One of Heloisa Buarque's interviewees remembered that her father never gave her money to spend at the movies. Rather than miss a film, she saved her lunch money, or lied to her father about school fees to acquire money for the movies.⁵⁴ Women could also go in the middle of the week to the "girls' night" (*sessão das moças*), when tickets were half price (the same price as a gallery seat).⁵⁵ A working-class woman, though receiving a wage that put her in the gallery, could actually sit in the mid-priced sections on the ground and second floors. No longer relegated to the gallery, these women then became "senhoras" within the space of the cinema.

In addition, the proportions of the Oberdan show that the *plateia* was not an elite space; it was the middle space. There were 794 seats in the *plateia* and balcony (both sections were the same price), 913 seats in the gallery, and 230 seats in private boxes.⁵⁶ The gallery was the largest section, but the *plateia* nearly equaled it in capacity. While there was a vast social gap between a "senhora" in the *plateia* and the invisible women of the gallery, the material gap was not as vast. It is possible that both sections seated many of the same people. The same woman who sat in the gallery one night, forced to enter through a side door on the street, without access to the lobby, the other moviegoers, and even a private bathroom, might become a "senhora" when she sat in the *plateia* another

⁵³ Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

⁵⁴ Anete Fuks, Interview with Heloisa Buarque de Almeida, transcript, São Paulo, n.d. (between 1991 and 1993).

⁵⁵ For analysis of the "sessão das moças" as a venue to establish standards of morality in Florianópolis, Brazil, see Alexandre Vieira, "Sessão Das Moças: História, Cinema, Educação. (Florianópolis: 1943-1962)" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2010), <http://repositorio.ufsc.br/handle/123456789/103298>.

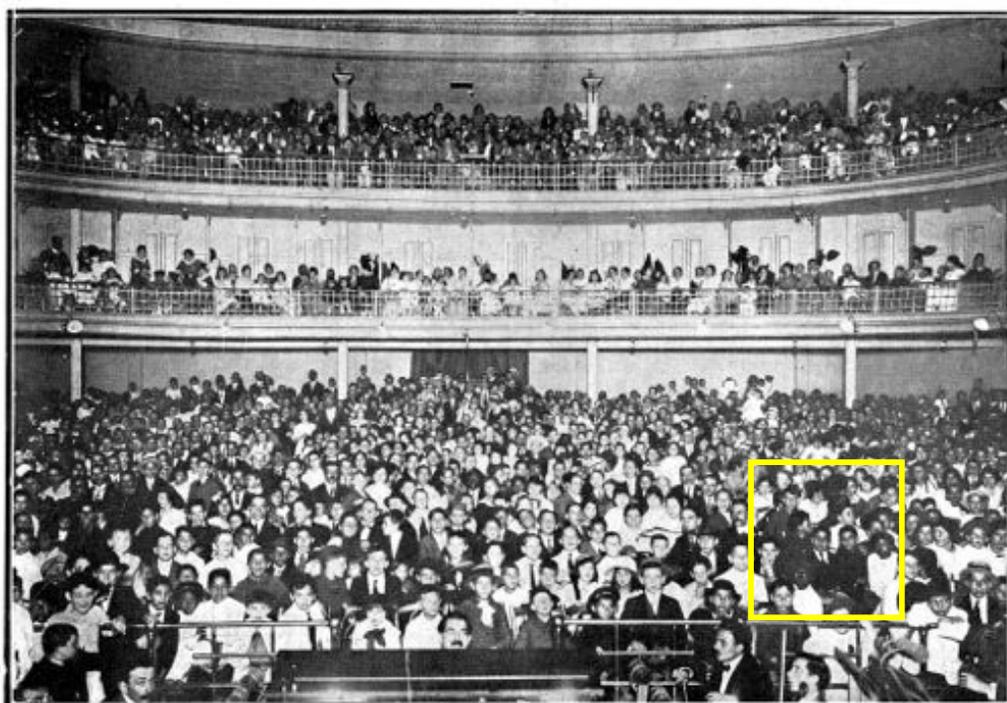
⁵⁶ Souza, "Oberdan"

night, shifting from “invisible” to “senhora” depending on whether she had an extra 1\$500 that day. Cinemas were thus an arena for women to perform as “senhoras,” and when coming through the main entrance instead of the side, or when powdering their noses in the “toilette,” they could enjoy all of the trappings of class, moral, and gendered status that this term included. However, the “senhoras” bathroom in the Cine Odeon did not have museum quality reproductions of Egyptian art, as the Fox Theater in Atlanta, Georgia did. In fact, there were only eight women’s stalls for a total of nearly 2,000 spectators. Although the female moviegoers of Brás might have enjoyed being called “senhoras,” this “senhoraness” might have been limited by the crowded bathrooms and long lines.

Like my interviews with Celia and Junes, I also showed Liliana and Lucia, two sisters who grew up in São Paulo in the 1920s, a photo of the Teatro São Paulo in 1929. Liliana claimed that she did not know much about movie-going, as her mother was very strict and almost never let her go to the cinema. I was not sure if her mother really was so strict, or if, by distancing herself from the cinema, she was trying to convey how respectable her family was. Lucia was less absolute, and after looking at the photo of the Teatro São Paulo, told me that she thought she could see herself and her mother sitting in the audience (in the first few rows, where so many of the interviewees also claimed to sit).

Although Liliana claimed not to know much about movie-going, she still interpreted the photo for me. She remarked that children would normally go to the movies accompanied by their parents or an older sibling. Looking at the photo again, she pointed to a few blurred, dark figures and said, “or you could go with a household servant

(*empregada*), see?”⁵⁷ To my eye, she had not pointed to a specific person, but to a grouping of figures that appeared dark because of a combination of skin tone, dark clothing, and poor picture quality. Yet, these signifiers, combined with the location of where they were sitting — in the mid-priced seats next to other, lighter figures — were sufficient enough to indicate “servant,” rather than “senhora.” Liliana’s comment points to the fact that while Brazil has been falsely declared a “racial democracy,” the working poor, particularly in domestic service, have historically been Afro-descendant or dark-skinned. Liliana’s comment demonstrates how dark skin connoted servitude. From Liliana’s point of view, dark-skinned women who went to the movies were *empregadas*, even if they sat in the section for *senhoras*.



Aspecto do Theatro S. Paulo, por ocasião de um dos últimos espectáculos realizados e que atrahiu uma enorme concorrência.

Figure 18: I used a printed version of this photograph during interviews that was slightly blurrier and darker than this digital copy. Laura pointed to this group of people when she said that moviegoers could go to the cinemas accompanied by their maid. Photo: *A Cigarra*, 1929, reprinted in Souza, “*Salas de Cinema em São Paulo (1895-1929)*.” <http://www.arquiamicos.org.br/bases/cine3p/img/teatroasaopaulo1.jpg>

⁵⁷ Liliana. Interview by author. Personal Interview. São Paulo, July 7, 2012

By 1927, the editor of Brazilian film magazine *Cinearte* specifically commented on the cine-teatros of São Paulo as vestiges of the past. As discussed in chapter three, *Cinearte* provided readers with Hollywood gossip and news, but was also the locus of Brazilian intellectual production on cinema. More than just a superficial link between Hollywood and Brazil, editors, contributors, and readers debated the merits of a Brazilian national film industry, the relationship between cinemas and modernity, and the effects of cinema on society. One of the editors, Adhemar Gonzaga spent over a year in the United States to report on the U.S. film industry (not, as he emphatically and repeatedly stated, on Hollywood gossip or news, as *Cinearte* already employed a correspondent in Hollywood). One of his “reports” analyzed the largest movie palaces in New York: the Roxy, the Paramount, and the Capitol, which he called “cathedrals of Cinema.”⁵⁸ In describing the Capitol, Gonzaga affirmed it was “a modern cinema,” with a “grandiose” staircase and lobby, a large seating area and an enormous balcony. He concluded that “a cinema is not an ordinary theater, with lines of despicable private boxes, in which ladies sit in the front with their heads tilted, and men stand on foot behind them. This is why I prefer the cinemas of Rio de Janeiro to the larger cinemas of São Paulo.”⁵⁹ By 1927, the theater-like structure with private boxes that made the Cine República an “elite” and “aristocratic” space, marked it as outdated. The bodily practices of seated ladies “with their heads tilted” and men on foot was also a form of gendered propriety that Gonzaga deemed passé. With the innovation of sound film, many cinemas and audiences of São

⁵⁸ “maior centro de exibição do mundo, as suas casas, sem essas tres cathedraes do Cinema, são relativamente fracas, sem importancia mesmo.” Adhemar Gonzaga, “Impressões de New York,” *Cinearte*, August 24, 1927.

⁵⁹ “Um cinema não é um desses theatros ordinaries, com aquellas filas de camarotes ignoveis, em que se sentam senhoras á frente, com a cabeça torta, e os cavalheiros ficam atraz, em pé. É por isso que tenho preferido as casas do Rio do que as maiores de São Paulo.” *Ibid.* Also quoted in Anelli, 42

Paulo struggled to adapt to the new technology and mode of film-viewing. In 1931, the proprietors of the Cine República entered a petition to convert the cinema back into a skating rink. After functioning as a skating rink for two years, the building was reconverted back into a cinema, but closed in 1937, having never recovered its former popularity or prestige.⁶⁰

Romance and Respectability in 1940s Movie-going



Figure 19 Façade of the Cine Ipiranga, designed by Rino Anelli. Source: “Cine Ipiranga E Hotel Excelsior,” *Acrópole*, February 1943, periódicos, FAU USP.

As Cine-teatros faded out of style and use, modernist cinemas began to appear in the Centro. For example, in 1937, the same year that the Cine República closed, the Cine Art-Palacio (originally the UFA-Art-Palacio) was inaugurated with over 3,000 seats, marble finishing, and a curved design by Brazilian modernist architect Rino Levi. According to film historian Inimá Simões, it represented “a new concept of a movie

⁶⁰ Mendes, “Modelando o República: Um Cine-Teatro da Década de 1920.”

theater.”⁶¹ The curved columns, walls, and entrances were both aesthetically innovative and designed to maximize acoustic reverberations inside the cinema.⁶² Unlike the embarrassment that I and the men in the doorway displayed in 2011, people in the 1930s and 1940s went to the Cine Art-Palacio to be seen. The *Correio Paulistano* reported that the innovative arrangement of lights in the cinema, which illuminated faces without any hint of shadow, even made moviegoers better looking.⁶³

Architectural historian Renato Anelli points to the construction of the Cine Paramount in 1929 as the first example of a “modern” cinema in São Paulo that was built and intended to be a cinema rather than a renovated theater. With its construction, the use of private boxes and galleries were phased out, and cinemas took on a modernist aesthetic instead of harkening back to the nineteenth-century. However, class differences did not disappear from the “deluxe” cinemas of Cinelândia, the district of upscale cinemas in the Centro of São Paulo. As discussed in chapter one, movie-going in the 1940s Centro was a very middle-class activity. Yet, floorplans of its “best” cinema, the Cine Ipiranga, demonstrate that class divisions still existed within cinemas. Most of these cinemas still retained two separate sections, a ground floor and a balcony, with the balcony more cheaply priced. The Cine Ipiranga, however, included a third floor, called the “Pullman,” for its padded, reclining seats. This was the most “elite” and most expensive spot to watch movies. Celebrities were rumored to only watch movies in the Pullman section of the Cine Ipiranga. Moreover, like the separate entrances and stairwells in the cine-teatros of the 1920s, the Pullman section was physically isolated from the other sections. In modernist design, this was accomplished through a private elevator rather than a

⁶¹ Simões, *Salas de Cinema Em São Paulo.*, 35

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Correio Paulistano* 11/14/1936, pg. 9. Quoted in Simões, *Salas de Cinema Em São Paulo*, 37.

stairwell. One of Heloisa Buarque de Almeida's informants remembered the section had, "very comfortable seats, almost better than first class in an airplane," and that "we went up in a private elevator." At one point, she rode the elevator with the governor and first lady of São Paulo state.⁶⁴

There were other physical barriers that kept moviegoers isolated from one another. Floorplans of the Cine Ipiranga demonstrate how patrons were "distributed" according to the ticket they bought. All of the moviegoers came in through the same door, bought their tickets at the same ticket booth, and then entered a large room labeled "distribution of public." From there, moviegoers in each section went into their own separate lobbies. Through the creation of separate lobbies, the cinema eliminated the opportunity for all of the moviegoers to socialize in the same space, instead physically separating them according to the price of their ticket, as cine-teatros did in the 1920s.

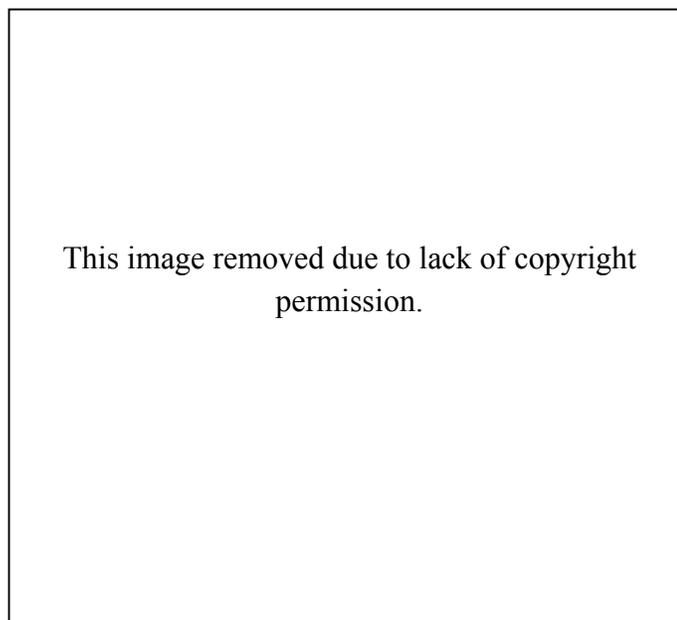


Figure 20: Cine Ipiranga Floorplan. Separate sala de espera with private elevator outlined in yellow. Source: Rino Levi et al., *Rino Levi: Arquitetura e Cidade* (Romano Guerra Editora, 2003)

⁶⁴ "poltronas super-confortáveis, melhor quase que primeira classe de avião....," but also that "a gente subia de elevador privativo." Maria Leopoldina, Maria Leopoldina, interview by Heloisa Buarque de Almeida, transcript, March 22, 1991, 5. Also quoted in Almeida, "Cinema Em São Paulo - Hábitos E Representações Do Público (anos 40-50 E 90)."

Cinemas were not only a place to construct a concept of elite luxury, they were an important arena for shifting habits of courtship and dating. In his study of the family in early twentieth-century Bahia, Dain Borges differentiates between *namoro portugues* (Portuguese dating) and *namoro americano* (American dating). While *namoro portugues* was a type of courtship that involved strict supervision from family and social rituals that were intended to lead to marriage, *namoro americano* allowed couples to see each other in public and to date without the intention of marriage.⁶⁵ Thales Azevedo marks this distinction in early twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro with the terms *namoro á antiga* (old-fashioned courting) and *flirt* or *paquera*, which was socializing without the expressed intention of marriage.⁶⁶ Urban forms of entertainment like shopping and tearooms provided enough anonymity so that men and women could “flirt” and go “footing”—English terms also used in São Paulo to describe socializing in public spaces.

The architecture of “deluxe” cinemas, by creating elite spaces and luxury zones, also elevated the respectability of public dating and physical intimacy. The Pullman section was not just the most “elite” section, it was the best section for dating and kissing because, from the second floor in the back of the cinema, moviegoers remained hidden.⁶⁷ The Pullman was a great place to be hidden, romancing (*namorando*). It was the chic place and the place to date (*namorar*).⁶⁸ I translate *namorar* as both “romancing” and “dating,” because the term could signify both the social act of “going on a date,” but also a more nebulous concept involving physical intimacy (holding hands, kissing, “making

⁶⁵ Dain Edward Borges, *The Family in Bahia, Brazil, 1870-1945* (Stanford University Press, 1992), 198.

⁶⁶ Thales Azevedo, “As Regras do Namoro à Antiga,” *São Paulo: Ática*, 1986, 32.

⁶⁷ Almeida, “Cinema em São Paulo - Hábitos E Representações Do Público (anos 40-50 E 90).”

⁶⁸ “O *Pullman* era muito bom para ficar escondidinho, namorando. Era o lugar chique e o lugar de namorar” Marisa e Rui, Interview with Heloisa Buarque de Almeida. São Paulo, n.d. (between 1991 and 1994). Also quoted in Almeida, 37

out”).

The concept of honor and shame has been a significant theme in the examination of gender and sexuality in Brazil and, more widely, in Latin America. While much of the historiography on honor, a social status “determined by varying combinations of an individual’s behavior, wealth, nobility, family precedence, race or ethnicity, physical traits, and other criteria,” has focused on the colonial era, honor remained a marker of social, moral, and gendered status in the modern period as well.⁶⁹ In addition to Sueann Caulfield’s work on the legal concept and use of honor in twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro, other literature has highlighted the importance of female sexual morality in building a modern or “civilized” state.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth Century Brazil*, 207 n. 16. For an excellent overview of the historiography of gender in Latin America, with emphasis on the importance of honor through both the colonial and modern eras, see Sueann Caulfield, “The History of Gender in the Historiography of Latin America,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 81, no. 3 (2001): 449–90, as well as the note cited above.

⁷⁰ Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Univ of California Press, 1993); Donna Guy, *Sex & Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Karin Roseblatt, *Gendered Compromises Political Cultures & the State in Chile, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Katherine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). de Abreu Esteves, *Meninas Perdidas: Os Populares e o Cotidiano do Amor no Rio de Janeiro da Belle Époque*. For more recent work on concepts of honor in twentieth-century Latin America, see Andrea da Rocha Rodrigues, “Honra e Sexualidade Infanto-Juvenil na Cidade do Salvador, 1940-1970” (PhD Diss, Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2007). Sandra Gayol, “‘Honor Moderno’: The Significance of Honor in Fin-de-Siecle Argentina,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 3 (2004): 475–98; Marlene Medrano, “Regulating Sexuality on the Mexican Border: Ciudad Juárez, 1900–1960,” (PhD Diss., Indiana University, 2009); Sarah R. Arvey, “Making the Immoral Moral: Consensual Unions and Birth Status in Cuban Law and Everyday Practice, 1940–1958,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (November 1, 2010): 627–59, doi:10.1215/00182168-2010-044. In addition, there has been a renewed focus on honor and masculinity in both nineteenth and twentieth-century Brazil, see Benjamin A. Cowan, “Sex and the Security State: Gender, Sexuality, and ‘Subversion’ at Brazil’s Escola Superior de Guerra, 1964-1985,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (2007): 459–81, doi:10.1353/sex.2007.0073; Marc A. Hertzman, “Making Music and Masculinity in Vagrancy’s Shadow: Race, Wealth, and Malandragem in Post-Abolition Rio de Janeiro,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (November 1, 2010): 591–625, doi:10.1215/00182168-2010-043; Martha S. Santos, “On the Importance of Being Honorable: Masculinity, Survival, and Conflict in the Backlands of Northeast Brazil, Ceará, 1840s-1890,” *The Americas* 64, no. 1 (2007): 35–57, doi:10.1353/tam.2007.0118; Karl Monsma, “Words Spoken and Written: Divergent Meanings of Honor among Elites in Nineteenth-Century Rio Grande Do Sul,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 269–302, doi:10.1215/00182168-1545692. Noelia Alves de Sousa, “A honra dos ‘homens de bem’. Uma análise da questão da honra masculina em Processos

In the 1920s, when cinema was still on the margins of respectability, forms of *namorando*, *flirt*, and *paquera*, caused concern among political, religious, and moral authorities. As discussed in the next chapter, the image of a movie-going woman in the street (or socializing with men in the street) was followed by, what Margareth Rago calls the “specter of prostitution.”⁷¹ In memories about dating, kissing, and *namorando* in 1940s Cinelândia, however, the concept of honor was largely unspoken. Men and women remembered dating as an innocent activity that did not threaten their social status. Heloisa Buarque de Almeida comments that some male interviewees seemed embarrassed to speak about dating, but in her interpretation, this was because they apologized for being too innocent and inexperienced, not because they had done anything they considered to be threatening to social standards of morality.⁷² Overall, women seemed more comfortable speaking about dating. In the group interviews I conducted, which were almost exclusively with women, I also found female informants to speak of dating fondly. This may be because these memories have been filtered through a contemporary perspective in which standards for women’s public behavior are more liberal, or because most of the individuals interviewed were of a very secure, middle-class status. However, memories of romancing at the movies were nearly always bound up with how “elite,” and “chic” the movie-going experience was, from sitting in the “pullman” to dressing up and wearing gloves (lace gloves even in the summertime), hats, and pantyhose.⁷³

A song by Brazilian rock/pop star Rita Lee, written in 1982, expresses some of

Criminais de Violência Contra Mulheres em Fortaleza (1920-1940).,” *Métis: história & cultura* 9, no. 18 (October 17, 2011), <http://ucs.br/etc/revistas/index.php/metis/article/view/999>.

⁷¹ Rago, *Prazeres Da Noite: Prostituição E Códigos Da Sexualidade Femenina Em São Paulo (1890-1930)*.

⁷² Almeida, “Cinema Em São Paulo - Hábitos E Representações Do Público (anos 40-50 E 90),” 74.

⁷³ Group Interview. Oficina do cérebro. 7/18/2011

the sentiments surrounding dating in the cinema:

In the darkness of the cinema
 Sucking on drops de anis [French anise-flavored candies]
 Far from any problem
 Close to a happy ending
 If it's Deborah Kerr
 If it's Gregory Peck
 I won't play the saint
 No!
 My girl is Mae West
 I am the Sheik Valentino..
 But suddenly the film goes black
 All the kids start to hiss
 The lights come back on
 Damn!
 We've been caught!
 We've been caught!
 We've been caught!⁷⁴

Rita Lee was the musician whom Caetano Veloso called “the purest translation” of São Paulo in his song “Sampa,” discussed in chapter one. She was a founding member *Os Mutantes* (The Mutants), the avant-garde rock band that collaborated often with Veloso and was part of the counter-culture *Tropicália* music movement. Like the other tropicalist musicians, *Os Mutantes* appropriated different musical styles to form a sometimes ironic pastiche. However, while Veloso and the other Northeastern musicians of the *grupo baiano* wrote lyrics grounded in allegories of the Brazilian landscape and in Brazilian history, *Os Mutantes*' lyrical and musical references were distinctly cosmopolitan. “Their music drew indiscriminately from psychedelic rock, blues-rock, iê –iê- iê [“yeah yeah yeah,” Brazilian pop rock music], the Beatles, bossa nova, French and Italian pop, Latin

⁷⁴Original lyrics not included due to copyright. Rita Lee, “Flaga,” Rita Lee and Roberto de Carvalho. First released on “Rita Lee Roberto de Carvalho,” *Som Livre*, 1982. Transcribed lyrics available at “Flagra” *Letras*, n.d., accessed August 1, 2014, <http://letras.mus.br/rita-lee/66794/> My thanks to Monica Cytrynowicz for introducing this song to me.

music, and a host of Brazilian forms.”⁷⁵ Also, unlike Veloso and the *grupo baiano*, Lee was a native of São Paulo. Her father, Charles Fenley Jones, was a descendant of the Confederate North Americans who, after the U.S. Civil War, came to Brazil, where slavery was legal until 1888. Lee’s mother was the descendant of Italian immigrants, and the couple moved to the city from the São Paulo countryside amidst their families’ disapproval.⁷⁶ São Paulo’s “purest translation,” Rita Lee was the child of immigration, cultural mixture, and cosmopolitan rock and roll.

Her song “Flagra” is no exception to the style that Lee and *Os Mutantes* represents, borrowing from 1950s U.S. “doo-wop” and containing multiple references to Hollywood movie stars from the 1920s and 1940s. The contrast between Hollywood cinema in the 1920s and the 1940s is significant because of the way that Lee appropriates Hollywood symbols to narrate the limits between respectable “namoro” and illicit sex in a movie theater. As mentioned in chapter three, Hollywood studios began to cater to a female audience though films featuring respectable female actresses and characters like Mary Pickford. However, no formal production code existed to censor violence or sexuality in films. Stars like Rudolph Valentino, Ramon Navarro, and Theda Bara represented foreign, exotic and overtly sexual characters. Lee mentions the “Sheik Valentino,” referencing *The Sheik* (1921), in which the Italian-descendent Rudolph Valentino starred as a Middle Eastern Sheik who was both the object of female sexual desire and the seducer who swept women off of their feet.⁷⁷ Brazilian interpretations and fan culture surrounding these stars are discussed in chapter four. Lee also mentions Mae

⁷⁵ Dunn, *Brutality Garden*, 203.

⁷⁶ Carlos Calado, *A divina comédia dos Mutantes* (Editora 34, 1996), 43–44.

⁷⁷ Miriam Hansen, “Pleasure, Ambivalence, Identification: Valentino and Female Spectatorship,” *Cinema Journal* 25, no. 4 (July 1, 1986): 6–32, doi:10.2307/1225080.

West, who was an actress in the 1930s. After the instillation of the Motion Pictures Production Code in 1930 that prohibited certain depictions of sexuality, Hollywood films could only hint at sex through insinuation.⁷⁸ The comedian Mae West became famous for a type of fast-talking dialogue filled with sexual double entendres that pushed the limits of the code.⁷⁹ In contrast to Rudolph Valentino and Mae West, Deborah Kerr and Cary Grant were stars popular in the 1940s and 1950s. During this time of the “Hollywood Golden Age,” studios produced glamorous stories of romantic love, but without the specter of illicit sex. They were the leading roles in *An Affair to Remember* in 1957, a melodrama about separated lovers and a self-sacrificing woman.

Rejecting the chaste romance of Deborah Kerr and Cary Grant, the narrator of the song says, “No, I won’t play the saint,” and declares “I am the Sheik Valentino” and “my girl is Mae West.” In Lee’s song, moviegoers in the audience mediate their sexual identities through images from Hollywood, ranging from the respectable romance of the 1950s to the subversive representations of sexuality in the 1920s and 1930s. However, although Lee sings about the “darkness of the cinema” and being “close to a happy ending,” which have obvious sexual connotations, the entire experience is limited by a moral boundary that prevents the “happy ending” from occurring. “Suddenly, the film goes black. All the kids start to hiss. The lights come back on.” The song hints that this particular cinema is not one of the finest of Cinelândia, given that the film unexpectedly cuts out (using the slang term *pifou*) and the crowd is mostly young adolescents (the

⁷⁸ For a history of how Hollywood studios navigated the production code and mediated representations of sexuality and love, see Lea Jacobs, *The Wages of Sin: Censorship and the Fallen Woman Film, 1928-1942* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁷⁹ For an analysis of the character of Mae West, particularly as a subversive performance of femininity, see Pamela Robertson, *Guilty Pleasures: Feminist Camp from Mae West to Madonna* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996).

audience is referred to as *a turma*, which can mean classroom or schoolmates).

Nevertheless, the illicit sex hinted at in Rudolph Valentino and Mae West movies is similarly only off screen in the song. Within the boundaries of the cinema, there is a limit to what can happen in the dark.

There were also ways to mitigate the “darkness of the cinema.” Until they were married, couples had to bring along a chaperone, called a *vela*, meaning “candle,” typically a younger sibling, a single aunt, or, as Liliana suggested, a maid. The “vela” served the purpose of allaying the romance that might happen in the dark.⁸⁰ Ushers were also called “lanterninhas” for the flashlights they used not only to lead people to their seats before the film, but to shine onto misbehaving moviegoers.⁸¹ Some places were darker than others, however, such as balconies, and these gained a reputation for being the best spots to *namorar*. When I asked one interviewee, Maria, if she ever sat in the balcony, she mockingly responded “Oh no, I’m pure!” as she and others giggled, demonstrating the pervasiveness of the balcony’s reputation.⁸² In the Cine Art-Palácio, the sides of the balcony were nicknamed *namoradeiras* or “flirt” because of the popularity of these areas for dating. Romance and dating in the cinema was by no means unique to Brazil. Anne Rubenstein also recalls jokes and stories of men and women going to the back of the cinema for kisses and romance in 1930s Mexico.⁸³

Although “flashlights” and “candles” policed behavior, class habitus governed the range of sexual acts that might actually occur in the cinema. Cinelândia was distinctly a place of middle-class consumption, a place in where “everyone went” to socialize and be

⁸⁰ Almeida, “Cinema em São Paulo - Hábitos e Representações do Público (anos 40-50 E 90),” 71.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 75

⁸² Group Interview at Oficina do Cérebro. Interview by author, São Paulo, July 18, 2012

⁸³ Ann Rubenstein, “Theaters of Masculinity” in V. M. Macías-González and A. Rubenstein, eds. *Masculinity and Sexuality in Modern Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, 2012).

seen. Within this expression and performance of middle-classness, there was an implicit limit on permissible sexual acts. *Namorar* was a sanctioned transgression, just scandalous enough to be hidden in the dark, but ultimately made safe by the middle-classness of the movie-going experience. That is not to say that moviegoers did not make choices as to how they might creatively use or interpret built space. Máximo Barro recalled that in the 1940s, it became more standard that men would pay for their dates' movie tickets. In order to avoid this, men would sometimes tell their date to meet them inside the cinema, rather than outside, so that the woman would have to buy her own ticket.⁸⁴ One woman I interviewed at the Cinemateca also subverted this practice when she promised an annoying man who had been aggressively asking her for a date to meet him outside the cinema. While he waited outside, she met her real date inside. To her embarrassment, however, her tactic did not work as well when the stood-up man came inside and in the middle of the movie, peered into each row to find her.⁸⁵

The middle classness that sanctioned and sanitized these flirtations did not apply to cinemas outside of the Cinelândia. In an oral history, Jair recalled that he would go to the Cine Colonial in Santa Terezinha where he knew the manager, Sr. Lacerda, who had been manager of a rundown theater (*pulgueiro*) in his neighborhood before it closed. Sr. Lacerda would allow Jair to watch films prohibited to children, so Jair went to this cinema often. At night, his parents asked that he not go alone, but go accompanied by their domestic servant Irma. He remembers one night that Sr. Lacerda asked him, “hey,

⁸⁴ Máximo Barro, Interview with Inimá Simões, transcript and cassette tape, São Paulo, July 2, 1982, Arquivo Multimeios, CCSP.

⁸⁵ Group interview at the Cinemateca Brasileira. Interview with author, São Paulo, July 24, 2012

how's the screwing (*fodas*) going with your girl? ”⁸⁶ Still in his early adolescence, Jair said he was scandalized, but was actually not quite sure what Sr. Lacerda meant.

Although it seems clear that Sr. Lacerda was joking, the joke was based on the perception that Irma was not, neither socially nor morally, a part of the middle class. Sr. Lacerda referred to Irma as a “moça,” which can refer alternatively to a young woman or to a woman of any age in a position of service. In this case, Sr. Lacerda's joke pointed out the stereotypically sexual relationship between a young man and the domestic workers his family employed. Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre fetishized this relationship in his work on the socio-cultural impact of African slaves in Brazil, describing the young master's contact with Afro-descendent female house slaves as his first sexual relationship.⁸⁷ Historians have detailed how domestic servant workers in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo had to negotiate sexual advances and power relationships with their masters.⁸⁸ Early twentieth-century São Paulo black press of community leaders cautioned women to avoid domestic service because of the risk of “loss of honor” and pregnancy.⁸⁹

Thus, while many of the women I interviewed giggled as they recalled memories of dating at the movies, and even poked fun at the idea of sexual “purity” and its place in the balcony, for other women like Irma, going to the movies did suggest a potential loss of honor. Rather than ask “how is the dating or *namorando* going with your girl,” Sr. Lacerda made a much more explicit accusation of “how is the screwing (*as fodas*) with your girl.” In the rundown Cine Colonial outside of the Centro, the “darkness of the

⁸⁶ “*escuta, como estão as fodas com a moça aí ?*” Jair. Interview by Heloisa Buarque de Almeida. Transcript. São Paulo, n.d. (between 1991 and 1994), pg. 4

⁸⁷ Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*.

⁸⁸ Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*, 1st University of Texas Press ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992). Dias, *Power and Everyday Life*.

⁸⁹ Andrews, *Blacks & Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988*, 513.

cinema” was not tempered by modernist architecture, the wearing of lace gloves and hats, a dutiful usher, or the standards of middle-class behavior.

Sex and Danger: Balconies and Bathrooms in Cinelândia and the Boca do Lixo in the 1980s and 1990s

[Fuentes] crossed the street and entered the [Cinema] Marabá. There were only a few people waiting for the 6:00 show to end. He walked around the cinema, as if he was looking for someone who hadn’t yet arrived...

The film ended and the doors to the cinema opened. The lobby was emptying and, in the end, one couple and two men remained...

... Fuentes entered the bathroom. [He] stood at a sink and watched the door to the bathroom through a mirror... The door hadn’t even closed when Fuentes grabbed the man in the gray suit by the lapels of his jacket, and pulled him backwards, hitting his head against the wall...

Fuentes left the stall, leaving the man’s body to fall forward with his feet stuck in the toilet, his head resting against the closed door.⁹⁰

Film scholar Máximo Barro remembered how, in the 1940s, one of his cousins always wanted to watch films in the Cine Metro, “Let’s go to to the Metro; it has the best bathrooms,” she would say, since she could never have such a nice bathroom in her own home. According to Barro, fancy bathrooms and marble columns in the cinemas of Cinelândia had no practical function, but made people “feel like they got their money’s worth.”⁹¹ The meanings of the bathrooms underwent a total transformation by the 1980s. With the economic decadence of the Centro, a space that was luxurious in the 1940s became a symbol of danger and illicit sexuality. Above, Brazilian crime novelist Rubem

⁹⁰ Atravessou a rua e entrou no Marabá. Havia pouca gente esperando terminar a sessão das seis. Circulou pela sala, como se estivesse à procura de alguém que ainda não havia chegado... A sessão acabou e as portas da sala de exibição se abririam. A sala de espera foi se esvaziando e, afinal, restaram um casal e dois homens... Fuentes entrou no banheiro. Fuenes postou-se na pia ao seu lado e, enquanto lavava as mãos, observava pelo espelho a porta de entrada do banheiro. Um dos homens da sala de espera entrou e foi até um dos mictórios... O sujeito que lavava as mãos abriu a porta do banheiro e saiu. A porta ainda não fechara quando Fuentes agarrou o homem de roupa cinza, pelas lapelas do paletó, e puxou-o para trás batendo sua cabeça de encontro à parede. Enquanto o homem desfalacia em seus braços. Fuentes o arrastou para uma das divisões onde estavam as latrinas. Entrou, fechou a porta e colocou o homem apoiado contra a parede com os dois pés dentro do vaso sanitário.” Rubem Fonseca, *A Grande Arte*, 12th ed. (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990), 145–147.

⁹¹ Máximo Barro. Interview with Inimá Simões.

Fonseca in his 1983 novel *A Grande Arte*, sets the scene of a brutal murder inside the men's bathroom of the Cinema Marabá, which ends with a corpse stuck in a toilet.⁹² In the Centro of São Paulo, cinema bathrooms were a place where Fonseca imagines someone can literally get away with murder. *A Grande Arte* is entirely fictional, but oral histories and ethnographies of the Centro have discussed other illicit practices that characterized cinemas as dangerous spaces completely deviant from the rules of middle-class *namorar* of the 1940s. These range from humorous jokes about masturbation, rumors of murder and violence, to ethnographies that document acts of sex and prostitution. In many of these stories, specific areas within cinemas, in particular balconies and bathrooms, take on particular meaning and use as dangerous places.

As discussed above, the Cinema Ipiranga in the 1940s was one of the most luxurious cinemas in São Paulo. Specific areas, because of their isolation from other parts of the cinema, were designated as especially elite and romantic, like the Pullman. The isolation of these spaces, however, made them dangerous in the 1980s. Film critic Jair Ferreira claimed that the balcony area (he does not specify whether it is the balcony or the Pullman) became “a den of *marginais*.” The term “marginal” can be translated as “criminal,” but signifies more broadly anyone considered without social or moral status. Anthropologist Daniel Linger, in his study of everyday violence in the city of São Luis, writes that “marginal,” along with words like *maconheiro* (pothead), *ladrão* (thief), and *palhaço* (clown), are in “a category designating social refuse... these are types who simply do not count in the scheme of things.” Accusing someone of being a *marginal* is a

⁹² The Cine Marabá has been restored and still operates today. It is the cinema where I watched *Harry Potter 7*, discussed in the introduction.

“symbolic nullification,” labeling the person a non-entity.⁹³ Anthropologist Don Kulick, on the other hand, stresses the identification of *travestis*, transgender prostitutes, as *marginais*, and rather than a non-entity, a *marginal* is someone who is considered particularly dangerous, untrustworthy, and in the case of *travesti* stereotypes, both sexually and morally transgressive.⁹⁴

Jair Ferreira associated the balcony of the Cine Ipiranga with the state of being *marginal*. According to Ferreira, during a showing of the Brazilian film *Os Trombadinhas* (The Little Pickpockets), there were *trombadinhas* “running loose [in the balcony]... what a terror. They really were pickpockets/thieves, yelling, creating chaos... it was impossible to watch a film up there.... Later, they locked that part on top, and they started to put a guy up there to keep an eye on things.”⁹⁵ The stairs leading up to the balcony also became a place of sexual and criminal violence. Whereas heading up to the “Pullman” section by elevator was an act of distinction in the 1940s and 1950s, Ferreira claimed that in the 1980s, heading up to the higher floors was an act of potential danger:

It came to the point that you could be stabbed in the stairwells of the Ipiranga. You go ten steps down the stairs and get scared to pass. Another [cinema] that has this problem is the Paissandú, the stairwell there is scary business.... each step you take, [you think] “Now I’m coming face to face with this guy here. If this guy gets me, he’ll rob me, no problem” Not to mention the weird characters, they are *viados* [pejorative term for effeminate gay man], very strange, with the look of a *marginal*. You walk past, and you don’t know if the guy wants to rob you or to hook up with you. They hang out there, smoking, like this... total seclusion on each step of the stairs. It’s the life of the cinema, it’s the social life inside of the cinema.⁹⁶

⁹³ Daniel Touro Linger, *Dangerous Encounters: Meanings of Violence in a Brazilian City* (Stanford University Press, 1995), 239.

⁹⁴ Don Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 10.

⁹⁵ Ferreira, Entrevista com Jairo Ferreira realizada para a pesquisa “Salas de Cinema em São Paulo,” 18.

⁹⁶ “Se tornou um negócio poderíamos ser esfaquiado nas escadarias do Ipiranga. Vc desce assim uns dez lances de escada, dá medo de passar ali. OUtro que tb tem esse problema é o Passandú, a escadaria é um negócio temoso. Vc fala "pô, se tiver um cara aqui me assalta na maior." Cada lance que vc faz, "agora vou encontrar o cara aqui. Se o cara me pega aqui, me rouba na maior." Sem falar de umas figuras estranhas,

Ferreira associated stairwells not only with crime and violence, but also with sexual perversion, with being “viado.” In addition to the Pullman section transforming from the cinema’s elite space to a place of crime, the *asas* (“wings”) or side balconies also transformed through practice. Ferreira recounted that the side balconies in the 1940s were a place where “you felt like you were suspended in air, a “place of the elite.” In the Cine Art-Palácio, these side balconies were even called *namoradeiras* or “flirt” because of the popularity of these areas for dating. By the 1980s, however, Ferreira claimed that, “This became the most deteriorated spot, a place for *marginais*, for *bichas* (male homosexuals considered to be overtly feminine).”⁹⁷

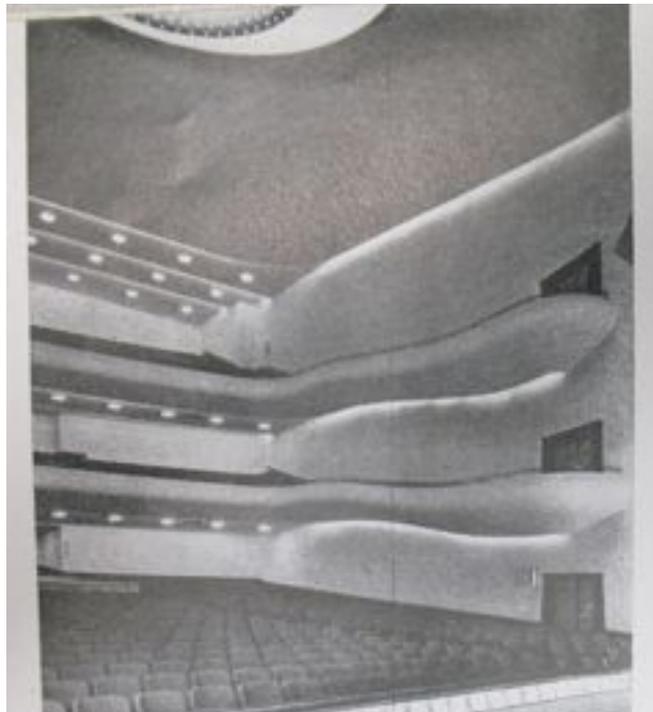


Figure 21: Side balconies in the Cine Ipiranga in 1943 when it was inaugurated. Source: “Cine Ipiranga e Hotel Excelsior,” *Acrópole*, February 1943, periodicos, FAU USP.

são os viados assim, meio estranhos, com cara de marginal. Vc passa assim, vc não sabe se o cara vai querer te assltar ou pegar em vc. Ficam lá parados, fumando, assim... uma solidão total em cada lance da escada. è a vida do cinema, é a vida social dentro do cinema.” Ibid.

⁹⁷“o ponto mais deteriorado, um ponto de marginais, de bichas” in Ferreira, Entrevista com Jairo Ferreira realizada para a pesquisa “Salas de Cinema em São Paulo,” 13.

In Ferreira's interview, the connection between sex and cinemas is more of a threat than a reality. In addition to his impressions of the Cine Ipiranga, he related various "legends" and rumors that combined sex and violence within cinemas. Some of these rumors specifically involved elements that once marked 1940s and 1950s cinemas as elite, like balconies and ushers. In one rumor, a man is masturbating in the balcony; when his semen falls on a moviegoer below, the moviegoer yells, "*porra* (an expletive meaning "damn" but also "semen"), it really is *porra!*" Another rumor involves a female usher who performs oral sex on male moviegoers, and yet another about a woman who, while performing oral sex on a man, bites him and nearly (or actually) kills him. Ferreira referred to all of these stories as "folklore," and each is a narrative that characterizes the decadence of cinemas through forms of sexual deviance.⁹⁸

Although Ferreira's impressions of the Cine Ipiranga and other 1940s cinemas were based on mostly imagined threats, various sexual practices considered illicit, such as prostitution and homosexual sex, have been documented in the cinemas of the Centro in later years. Although certain blocks of the Centro were called Cinelândia in the 1940s and 1950s, by the 1960s, overlapping blocks were nicknamed *Boca do Lixo* (Mouth of Garbage) or "*Quadrilátero do Pecado* (Quadrangle of Sin) for the preponderance of visible prostitution, and later, of drugs. The self-appointed "King of Boca," Hiroito Moraes Joanides, a local drug-dealer, pimp, and murderer, described the limits of the "Boca do Lixo" as "all of the area bounded by the streets and avenues Timbiras, São João (praça Mesquita), Barão de Limeira, Duque de Caxias, Largo General Osório e rua dos

⁹⁸ In the book *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo*, for which Ferreira's interview was conducted, Inimá Simões briefly discusses the appearance of porn theaters in the Centro. However, in a book published by the São Paulo municipal government, he otherwise avoids the topic of sexual acts within the cinemas, and excludes Ferreira's stories and rumors completely.

Protestantes, in which came to constitute the infamous “Mouth of Garbage, or “Quadrangle of Sin.”⁹⁹ Like Cinelândia, these are rough boundaries that have fluctuated through time. Writing in 1987, Anthropologist Nestor Perlongher described how police repression resulted in a dispersal of the *Boca do Lixo*, moving towards “Avenida São João and both sides of Avenida Duque de Caxias, afterwards to the Avenida Duque de Caxias, after that to the Largo do Arouche and to Rua Rego Freitas, which became known as the “Mouth of Luxury,” (*boca do luxo*, a play on *boca do lixo*).¹⁰⁰

Contemporary journalists have also extended the boundary to now include Avenida Ipiranga.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ “..toda a área circunscrita pelas ruas e avenidas Timbiras, São João (praça Mesquita), Barão de Limeira, Duque de Caxias, Largo General Osório e rua dos Protestantes, no que veio a constituir a famigerada ‘Boca do Lixo’; o ‘Quadrilátero do Pecado.’” Hiroito de Moraes Joanides, *Boca do Lixo* (Labortexto Editorial, 2003), 26. Joanides’ biography has recently been adapted into a film, *Boca*, directed by Flavio Frederico (Nossa Distribuidora, 2010)

¹⁰⁰ Néstor Perlongher, *O Negócio do Michê: a Prostituição Viril em São Paulo* (São Paulo, SP: Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2008), 73.

¹⁰¹ Renata Bortoleto, Ana Laura Diniz, and Michele Izawa, *Contos de bordel: a prostituição feminina na Boca do Lixo de São Paulo* (Carrenho Editorial, 2003); Gustavo Pinchiaro and Ricardo Casarin, *Glamour e boca do lixo: histórias da prostituição no centro de São Paulo* (Editora Multifoco, 2010).

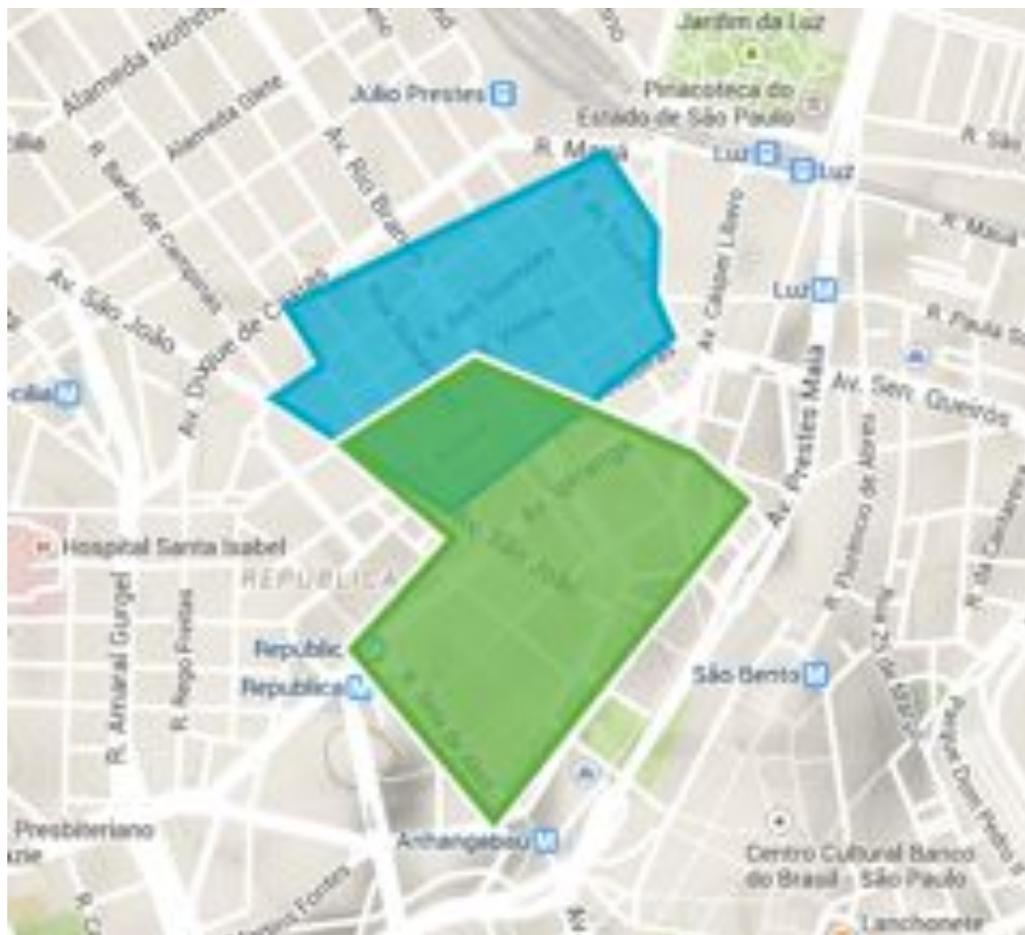


Figure 22: Map of São Paulo Centro. Rough boundaries of Cinelândia (as described by Inimá Simões) in yellow. Boundaries of Boca do Lixo (as described by “king of Boca” Hiroito Moraes de Joanides) in dark blue.

In his 1987 ethnography of *michês*, or male prostitutes who utilize markers of masculinity and cater to clients who want homosexual sex, Perlongher finds that the old cinemas of Cinelândia were used as meeting points for prostitution. The Palácio do Cinema, which he refers to as the “Palacete” (not the same as the Cine Art-Palácio on Avenida São João discussed at the beginning of this chapter), opened in 1953 as the Cine Normandie on Avenida Rio Branco in Cinelândia. He describes it as “an old building, decrepit, vestige of an era in which the Avenida Rio Branco maintained a certain chic aura.” Both the Palácio do Cinema and the Cine Art-Palácio were two of many cinemas

in the Centro that were “cinemas de *pegação*,” “where masses of men, more or less inclined to have homosexual relations, gather.”¹⁰² Some *cinemas de pegação*, like the *Ártico* or the cinema *Lira*, fostered “romantic” encounters in which clients and prostitutes only met in the cinema, and then have dinner and a date before sex. In contrast, the *Palácio do Cinema* was notorious for both explicit and visible sexual encounters and violence within the theater. According to one of Perlongher’s informants, the *Palácio* was:

really *marginal*, really hardcore, the people smoke pot and cocaine, the clients are thieves, guys who go in and out of jail, including those on parole... There are really dangerous transvestites and *michês*, one killed a guy, I don’t know where, one guy robbed another or something like that... the level of behavior is really crazy in the cinema. There are two rooms, the audiences watch, in the seats there’s one messing with or even having sex with another.

The informant continues to describe how fights erupt in the middle of the rooms, and how most of the people of the cinema are *negro*, or Afro-descendent.¹⁰³

In 1996, Francisco Romero Ripió Neto’s ethnography of cinemas in the Centro found the *Cine Art-Palácio* to still function as a space for *pegação*. Unlike Perlongher’s analysis of the *Palácio do Cinema*, which was based on informant interviews, Neto’s work was based on participant observation. In examining the building itself, Ripió noted the vestiges of a formerly elite space; he entered “an immense hall,” went upstairs to the second floor, and came into the theater through two “ample” doors. However, he also found the cinema to be partially flooded, with wet walls, broken chairs, holes in the floor

¹⁰² Perlongher, *O Negócio Do Michê*, 176.

¹⁰³ For an analysis of spontaneous fights, or *brigas*, as a social ritual in Brazilian culture, see Linger, *Dangerous Encounters: Meanings of Violence in a Brazilian City*.

(“traps that could kill someone”) and rotted pieces of the ceiling falling onto the floor.¹⁰⁴

A mixture of water and urine flowed out of the clogged pipes in the bathroom. Both Perlongher and Ripió analyze the various spaces within the cinema, and how different groups use them. In the bathroom, *travestis* (transgender individuals who use feminine markers of clothing and body modification) controlled the stalls while *michês* controlled the urinals.¹⁰⁵ Very open sexual contact characterized the rituals of *pegação* in the Cine Art-Palácio, with both fights and sexual acts occurring in spaces where they could be seen.

While the Palácio do Cinema was “very *marginal*,” according to Perlongher’s informant, in 1996, Ripió documented twelve “traditional” cinemas that featured mainstream non-erotic films and 22 cinemas that exhibited pornographic films. Among these cinemas, some are meeting spaces specifically for prostitutes, some are for sexual encounters that do not involve prostitution. Sexual orientation and habits vary as well, and are divided geographically; female prostitutes work close to Praça República; *michês* work closer to Largo do Arouche. In contrast to the Cine Art-Palacio, practices within many of these cinemas create a greater differentiation between public and semi-private spaces, and limit where sexual encounters occur. In addition to bathrooms, the back of the cinema became an area for sex. For example, the Cine Metr pole, inside of the Galeria Metr pole (a “galer a” is a type of open-air shopping mall), featured mainstream non-erotic films. Depending on the time of day, the audience included families and children who sit in the middle and on the sides of the theater; heterosexual couples sit toward the back. Behind these couples are empty rows, and in the last rows in the back,

¹⁰⁴ Francisco Romero Rip o Neto, “Pr ticas Homossexuais Masculinas Nos Cinemas Do Centro de S o Paulo” (Undergraduate Thesis, University of S o Paulo, 1996), 36.

¹⁰⁵ Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*.

men seeking rapid, homosexual encounters called “brincadeiras” or “games.” Leaving the next seat open functioned as an invitation; taking a seat next to another man signified an acceptance of this invitation, and the space behind the last row of chairs and the wall was used for sex.¹⁰⁶ As in the 1940s, the back of the cinema was associated with acts “hidden in the dark.” However, while informants claimed that “everyone” was going to the movies in the 1940s, this was a group fairly homogenous in terms of the middle-class background and consumption, which sanitized and contained any potential sexual transgressions. On the other hand, the men who sat in the back of the Cine Metr pole were physically and socially apart from the other people in the audience, and utilized the darkness in the back of the cinema not just to hide kisses, but to maintain anonymity.

Conclusion:

The architecture of cinemas created distinct movie-going experiences in the 1920s, the 1940s, and the 1980s. In the 1920s, Beaux-Arts styling made cinemas appear more elite and aristocratic. In the 1940s, modernist architecture like curved walls, marble columns, and innovative lights made cinemas “modern,” middle-class, and chic. In both time periods, physical divisions such as separate stairwells and private elevators created distinct social spaces within cinemas that segregated moviegoers according to the price of their tickets. Yet, moviegoers interpreted and interacted with these spaces in different ways, constructing spaces that were more elite, more romantic, or more respectable than others. Through the everyday practices of walking, sitting, and dating, and smoking, moviegoers produced meaning in these built spaces. The gendered propriety of women who “sit in the front [of private boxes] with their heads tilted, and men stand on foot

¹⁰⁶ Neto, “Pr ticas Homossexuais Masculinas Nos Cinemas Do Centro de S o Paulo,” 40.

behind them,”¹⁰⁷ characterized the Cine República in 1921 as a particularly elite space, but as outdated and old-fashioned by 1929. The Cine Ipiranga’s Pullman section and the Cine Art-Palácio’s side balconies were “the best places to *namorar*” in the 1940s when middle-class mores set limits on sexual encounters. These same balconies, however, became the place of dirty jokes, *marginais*, and perceived danger in the 1980s, when prostitutes used these spaces to seek sex. Junes’ story of sneaking into cinemas, Rita Lee’s song of *namoro* in the “darkness of the cinema,” and the prostitution that occurred in the Boca do Lixo may seem to have little direct connection. Yet, as “pedestrian street acts,” they are all examples of how, through movement, individuals can appropriate different spaces to create new meaning. Layered together, these cinemas underline the limits of sexual permissibility and class habit in São Paulo.

¹⁰⁷ Adhemar Gonzaga, “Impressões de New York,” *Cinearte*, August 24, 1927.

Chapter 3: Consuming and Exhibiting Cosmopolitan Modernity: Movie-going Women and Immigrant Film Exhibitors in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the 1920s

On April 31, 1925, a “select audience” of elite *cariocas*, residents of Rio de Janeiro, gathered at the inauguration of the Cine Capitólio in the downtown of Brazil’s capital. The façade of the cinema, with “CAPITOLIO” in large letters above the entrance, was decorated in garlands. A special “automatic appliance,” called the “Radiosan” (an amalgamation of “radio” and “sanitary”) spread waves of perfume through the cinema’s ventilation system. Along with the Radiosan, the Capitólio introduced another novelty: “female ushers located on the ground floor, the private boxes, and in the balconies.”¹



Figure 23: “Girl Ushers” at the Cine Capitólio. Source: “O Cinema Theatro Capitólio É o Início de Uma Nova Era na Cinematographia,” *Para Todos*, May 2, 1925, 333 RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo

¹ “meninas indicadoras de localidades, que estão na platêa, camarotes e balcões.” “O Cinema Theatro Capitólio É o Início de Uma Nova Era na Cinematographia,” *Para Todos*, May 2, 1925, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

The leisure magazine *Para Todos*, which printed film reviews, society news, and the latest fashions, praised the cinema as the “start of a new era in movie-going,” and credited its success “to the industriousness and deep knowledge of the tireless craftsman Mr. Francisco Serrador,”² one of Brazil’s most successful cinema entrepreneurs who only ten years prior, was a Spanish immigrant who peddled fruit and fish.

The Capitólio Cinema’s perfumed air distinctly counteracted the “unmistakable odor of confined spaces” that characterized the “unhygienic” cinemas discussed in chapter one.³ However, it was not just the Radiosan and the “select audience” that made the Capitólio Cinema a symbol of a “new era” in movie-going, it was also the novelty of the light-skinned female ushers in their neat, pressed uniforms, and the ownership of Francisco Serrador, a European immigrant whom *Para Todos* described as “industrious and tireless.”⁴ While the previous chapter focused on how the built space of cinemas shaped the movie-going experience, the inauguration of the Capitólio Cinema demonstrates how representations of women and European immigrants affected, and were affected by, their association with the movies. Both these groups maintained a mutually constitutive relationship with cinema. A movie theater’s reputation could be measured by the type of women it attracted, and going to a cinema with the “wrong” or “right” company had repercussions for a woman’s honor. Similarly, Euro-Brazilian entrepreneurs could symbolize the modernity or the degeneracy of the cinemas they owned, and the state of their cinemas spoke to their abilities as capitalists and artists. In

² On Serrador, who is discussed further below, see José Sousa, *Imagens do Passado: São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro nos Primórdios do Cinema* (São Paulo: Senac, 2003); Julio Lucchesi Moraes, “A Valencian Tycoon in Brazil: The Economic Trajectory of Francisco Serrador Carbonell (1887-1921),” *Filmhistoria Online*, no. 2 (2012).

³ Cunha, Cunha, and Pizarro, “Inspeção Hygienica dos Cinematographos. Os Cinematographicos e a Saude Publica.”

⁴ “O Cinema Theatro Capitolio É o Inicio de uma Nova Éra na Cinematographia”

the pages of leisure and film magazines, intellectuals, cartoonists, and writers represented movie-going women and cinema entrepreneurs in distinctly ethnic and racial terms that spoke to their ambivalence regarding these markers of modernity.

The quest for modernity has characterized Brazilian history for nearly two centuries. Rubem Oliven writes that it is “a question of knowing where we [Brazilians] stand in relation to the ‘advanced world’, first Europe and later the United States. In Brazil modernity is frequently seen as something which comes from outside, and which should be admired or adopted, or on the contrary, viewed with caution by both the elites and the people.”⁵ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, various technological innovations were supposed to construct modernity in Brazil, for example the automobile, the radio, the streetcar, the airplane, and the railroad.⁶ Sometimes modernity was less material: public health, whiteness, urbanization, or industrialization. Whatever its form, modernity was a concept based on what was imagined to be “advanced,” or “civilized,” and often linked to Europe or the United States.⁷

On cinema, historians and film scholars both inside and outside of Latin America have claimed that among many other technological and aesthetic innovations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, cinema was a uniquely modern medium. Leo

⁵ Ruben Oliven “Modernity in the Tropics” in Vivian Schelling, ed., *Through the Kaleidoscope: The Experience of Modernity in Latin America* (Verso, 2000), 53.

⁶ On automobiles and radios, see Wolfe, *Autos and Progress*; Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil : Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁷ For a broad introduction to the concept of modernity in Latin American Studies, see Vivian Schelling “Introduction” in Schelling, *Through the Kaleidoscope*. For a now “classic” examination of Latin American modernity from a Cultural Studies perspective, see Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid cultures: strategies for entering and leaving modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). Canclini argues that modernity in Latin America is the product of uneven, ongoing, and contradictory processes borne out of the hybridization of the modern and traditional, which has resulted in cultural modernity but not economic or political modernity. Brazilian sociologist Jose de Souza Martins engages with both Canclini’s notion of hybridism and Henri Lefebvre’s concept that multiple historical frameworks exist at the same time to characterize Brazilian modernity as “a conjunction of past and present...[arising out] of rationality, quantity, the transitory, and the fleeting as a permanent way of living and being.” See Martins “Hesitations and of the Modern in Brazil” in Schelling.

Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz declare that, “cinema, as it developed in the late nineteenth century, became the fullest expression and combination of modernity’s attributes.”⁸ Film scholars continue to debate the “modernity thesis,” the contention that cinema represents modernity in its aesthetics, technology, and experience.⁹ In the case of Brazil, Flora Süssekind analyzes how the growth of cinema, along with typewriters, print advertisements, and automobiles, was part of the rise of modern technique and technology. Tracing the effects of cinema on literature, Sussekind finds cinema’s greatest influence in the incorporation of stylistic montage and cuts in modernist prose.¹⁰ The modernity thesis assumes that “modernity” can be held to a stable set of aesthetics and to a specific time period. However, even in defining modernity as a malleable, imagined concept of western advancement, cinema was also a key tool in its creation. All over the world, including in Latin America, filmmakers and politicians utilized cinema to capture and project images of railroads, factories, and political events as proof of their nations’ modernity.

What was advanced in Europe or the United States, however much fetishized, was not always welcome in Brazil. The ambivalence towards European culture can be seen in tensions within the modernist art movement. In 1922, artists, writers, and intellectuals in São Paulo famously held the Week of Modern Art at the Municipal Theater. Rejecting the parroting of European arts and literature, modernists like writers Oswald de Andrade, Mario de Andrade (no relation), and artists Tarsila do Amaral and Anita

⁸ Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 1.

⁹ For an outline of this debate see Introduction by Murray Pomerance and Murray Pomerance, *Cinema and Modernity* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*.

¹⁰ Flora Süssekind, *Cinematograph of Words: Literature, Technique, and Modernization in Brazil*, trans. Paulo Henriques Britto, Writing Science (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1997).

Malfatti proclaimed the independence of Brazilian arts while still incorporating European avant-garde styles and ideologies in their own work.¹¹

The same tensions were also present within film intellectuals' perceptions of the values and dangers of cinema and cosmopolitanism. Cinemas were modern and therefore beneficial to Brazilian society because they incorporated the newest technologies, fashions, and culture of New York and Paris; cinemas were modern and therefore dangerous for almost the same reasons. Writers for the film magazine *Cinearte* boasted, as a mark of progress, that Brazil was one of the largest markets for cinema in the world (though even in Latin America, it was second to Argentina, a country with a smaller population, a point that upset writers interested in proving Brazil's cultural progress¹²), while they simultaneously declared that Brazilians needed to be "liberated from an alien product."¹³

This chapter focuses on representations of movie-going women and immigrant entrepreneurs in the leisure magazine *Para Todos* and the film magazine *Cinearte*. Founded in 1919, *Para Todos* featured short stories, society news, fashion spreads, and weekly columns on cinema. In 1926, two of the magazine's editors, Mario Behring and Adhemar Gonzaga, founded *Cinearte*, which ran until 1942. Pedro Lima, another Rio de Janeiro-based film intellectual, was a regular contributor and wrote the weekly column on

¹¹ Randal Johnson "Brazilian Modernism: An Idea Out of Place?" in Anthony L. Geist and Jose B. Monle-N, eds. *Modernism and Its Margins: Reinscribing Cultural Modernity from Spain and Latin America*, vol. 2133 (Taylor & Francis, 1999). For classic criticisms of Brazilian modernism and its disjuncture from social and political markers of modernity, see Renato Ortiz, *A Moderna Tradição Brasileira* (Brasiliense São Paulo, 1988); Schwarz, *Misplaced ideas*.

¹² See for example, the complaints that Argentine moviegoers were able to see Hollywood films before Brazilians. Operador, "Cinemas Novos" in *Para Todos* No. 136 7/23/1921

¹³ "libertar-nos do producto alienigena" in *Cinearte* Vol. 5, no. 211. March, 12, 1930. Pg. 3. On *Cinearte*'s proclamation on Brazil as largest market see, Xavier, *Sétima arte, um culto moderno*, 121. On data pointing to Argentina as the largest market in Latin America, see Vasey, *The World according to Hollywood, 1918-1939*.

“Brazilian Cinema” which until 1930. Although Behring was the co-founder, Gonzaga and Lima were the main intellectual contributors to the magazine, and other filmmakers and industrialists regularly wrote columns.¹⁴ Film scholars like Xmail Xavier, Robert Stam, and Stephanie Dennison and Lisa Shaw, refer to *Cinearte* as “a tropical version of Hollywood’s *Photoplay*,”¹⁵ a popular American fan magazine. “Catering mostly to a female audience,” *Cinearte* magazine featured collectible photos of both Hollywood and Brazilian cinema stars, synopses of Hollywood movies, and interviews with famous actors.¹⁶

In *Sétima Arte: um Culto Moderno*, Ismail Xavier wrote a seminal criticism of the magazine by establishing a dichotomy between an imperial Hollywood and a colonized Brazilian cinema. Xavier depicted *Cinearte* as part of the system of colonization; although it clamored for a Brazilian cinema industry, it also reviewed Hollywood films and ultimately increased the number of American films imported in Brazil. Although Xavier wrote *Sétima Arte* in 1978, his depiction of *Cinearte* has resonated in the literature on Brazilian cinema. In *Tropical Multiculturalism*, written in 1999, Robert Stam derisively described *Cinearte* as, “largely financed through advertisements for Hollywood films,” at best superficial and at worst, an example of neo-colonialism.¹⁷ Stephanie Dennison and Lisa Shaw, writing in 2004, are more generous to the magazine, pointing out that founder Adhemar Gonzaga “was fiercely patriotic and defended Brazilian cinema to a hilt.”¹⁸ Dennison and Shaw recognize, as Xavier did, that *Cinearte*

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Robert Stam. *Tropical Multiculturalism: A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 65. Stephanie Dennison and Lisa Shaw. *Popular Cinema in Brazil* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 68.

¹⁶ Dennison, 45

¹⁷ Stam, 65

¹⁸ Dennison, 46

had a distinct ideological project, including a nationalist call to create an independent Brazilian film industry and belief that cinema was a path to modernity. More recent historians of Brazilian cinema have nuanced Xavier's thesis. Taís Campelo Lucas, for example, sees *Cinearte* as a locus for a burgeoning urban community of intellectuals and artists. Lucas and other recent work on *Cinearte* have recognized the magazine as a site for intellectual production and the development of a national film culture.¹⁹

In focusing on cinema, *Para Todos* and *Cinearte* often commented on two groups associated with the growing industry: the women who consumed movies and the immigrants who brought them to Brazil. In their relationship to cinema, were female moviegoers and immigrant film exhibitors contributing to a cosmopolitan modernity that would prove Brazil's advancement? Or were they victims and purveyors of foreign and dangerous cultural fads? In weighing these questions, writers, artists, and film critics assessed the meanings of North Americanness, Europeanness, whiteness, and what their presence meant for modernity in Brazil.

Previous studies of Brazil have demonstrated how intellectuals, politicians, and medical professionals sought make the nation more modern and prosperous through the process of "whitening" or *branqueamento*. In keeping with the trends in the international medical community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as scientific racism and eugenics, these pseudo-scientists proposed that Brazil's mixed-race society could become whiter through both selective reproduction and education.²⁰ By the 1920s,

¹⁹ For an analysis of *Cinearte* as a locus for the development of regional cinemas outside of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, see Navitski, "Sensationalism, Cinema and the Popular Press in Mexico and Brazil, 1905-1930."

²⁰ For an overview of Brazilian intellectuals' theories on whitening, eugenics and race, see Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *O Espetáculo das Raças: Cientistas, Instituições e Questão Racial no Brasil, 1870-1930* (São Paulo, SP: Companhia das Letras, 1993); Gilberto Hochman, *A Era do Saneamento: As*

policy-makers, particularly working in education, approached whiteness and blackness as cultural categories, with whiteness signifying progress, modernity, and health, and blackness associated with vice, poverty, and disease. Although whiteness and blackness maintained clearly positive and negative associations, as cultural categories, they allowed for flexibility. Brazilians could become “whiter” or “blacker” depending upon their level of education, social class, morality, and physical health.²¹ There were definite limits to this flexibility; recent work has shown that despite their social mobility, middle-class black Brazilians continued to face racial discrimination, a factor in black intellectuals’ call for a cross-class Afro-Brazilian or *negro* identity.²²

Brazilian society was not just black and white, however. As the literature on the nearly four million immigrants who arrived after the abolition of slavery has shown, Southern European, Japanese, Jewish, and Middle Eastern immigrants confounded the black-white spectrum, creating ethnic categories that could be simultaneously non-black and non-white. One’s Jewishness, Japaneseness or other ethnic identities were in constant flux, shifting according to self-identification and innumerable cultural markers that included language, profession, political affiliation, and endogamy/exogamy.²³

Writers and artists for *Para Todos* and *Cinearte* examined where cosmopolitan women and immigrant film exhibitors fit into a racial and ethnic structure that was both

Bases da Política de Saúde Pública no Brasil, vol. 113 (Editora Hucitec, 1998); Nancy Stepan, “*The Hour of Eugenics*”: *Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996); Dain Borges, “‘Puffy, Ugly, Slothful and Inert’: Degeneration in Brazilian Social Thought, 1880–1940,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25, no. 02 (1993): 235–56. Julyan G. Peard, *Race, Place, and Medicine: The Idea of the Tropics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Duke University Press, 1999).

²¹ Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness*.

²² Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*.

²³ For an overview on the issues of immigrant ethnicity and national identity in Brazil, see Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).

flexible and hierarchical. If Brazilian movie-going women were just like their French or North American counterparts, were they also white? If immigrants from Europe could be both hardworking entrepreneurs and petty conmen, what was their racial status?

Francesas, Melindrosas, and Lituanas: Movie-going and Moral Status

In 1923, one of the most popular novels published in Brazil was Benjamin Costallat's *Mademoiselle Cinema*, a young woman's urban adventures in shopping, flirting, and romance. Despite the title, however, the main character Rosalina never goes to the movies. Maite Conde writes that, "What imbues Rosalina with a cinematic identity is not a practical engagement with film but rather her modern lifestyle. Smoking, dancing, and shopping her way through the novel, Rosalina signifies new modes of behavior in Rio [de Janeiro], all of which are explicitly and decidedly seen as feminine."²⁴ Previous historians have documented the visibility of new leisure activities that attracted women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Besides cinema, women flocked to tea rooms, dance halls, department stores, and engaged in activities like swimming and driving. Nevertheless, while working women had always been visible in the public markets, squares, and streets of Brazilian cities, the entrance of upper-class and middle-class women in new spaces of leisure was a distinct shift in social mores. Susan K. Besse argues that intellectuals and politicians perceived the growth and visibility of women's consumption and leisure in Brazil as a threat to patriarchal gender norms.²⁵ Sueann Caulfield also has addressed how police chiefs and medical professionals worried about whether "modern girls," with their love for drinking,

²⁴ Conde, *Consuming Visions*, 126–127.

²⁵ Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, 18–19.

dancing, and the movies, would be fit to be future mothers.²⁶ Maria Lúcia Mott and Marina Maluf demonstrate how women's magazines, as well as federal law and the church, impressed upon leisure-seeking women that their place was in the home.²⁷ Central to the significance of this shift was the dichotomous relationship between "house" and street" in Brazil. As formulated by Brazilian anthropologist Roberto da Matta, the home is the arena of family, safety, and morality, while the street represents danger, conflict, and dirt. A "woman of the street" (*mulher da rua*) is synonymous with prostitute, while a woman of the house enjoys the safety and status accorded to her place within a family unit.²⁸ Historians have pointed out that the house was only a safe space for elite women; for servants and slaves, the house was the space of danger and repression while the street offered comparative liberty.²⁹

Other representations of women at leisure were hardly so condemnatory. Leisure magazines like *Revista Feminina*, *Ilustração Brasileira*, *Para Todos*, *O Malho*, while lecturing women about the dangers of leisure, nevertheless glamorized the women who could be seen in chic urban spaces like cinemas, tea rooms, and upscale shops. The pages of these magazines featured promenades of women "on the way out of church" to emphasize their respectability. Recently, historians and literary scholars have written about the rituals of "footing," "smartismo," and other types of social promenade in which

²⁶ Caulfield, "Getting into Trouble."

²⁷ Maluf and Mott, "Recônditos do mundo feminino." in Fernando A. Novais and Nicolau Sevcenko, eds., *História da vida privada no Brasil: República: da Belle Époque à era do rádio* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998).

²⁸ Roberto da Matta, *Casa e a rua* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1997).

²⁹ Graham, *House and Street*. Dias, *Power and Everyday Life*. The concept of public as masculine and private as feminine is not a concept unique to Brazil, and histories of working women in Latin America have questioned the validity of such divisions from the colonial era to the twentieth century. For two very different examples, see Jane Mangan, *Trading Roles: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Urban Economy in Colonial Potosí* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2005); Susie S. Porter, "'And That It Is Custom Makes It Law': Class Conflict and Gender Ideology in the Public Sphere, Mexico City, 1880-1910," *Social Science History* 24, no. 1 (2000): 111-48.

middle and upper-class women appeared in public and represented modern, urban femininity.³⁰



Figure 24: “Afternoon on the Avenida on a Sunny Day” Photographs of women walking on Avenida Rio Branco, a central avenue in the center of Rio de Janeiro and location of the city’s elite cinemas. “A Avenida á Tarde em Dia de Sol” *Para Todos*, May 7, 1921, 125 RC *Para Todos*, CB

Although the main character of *Mademoiselle Cinema* never goes to the movies as the title suggests, movie-going became emblematic of women’s urban leisure in the

³⁰ Maria Claudia Bonadio, *Moda e Sociabilidade: Mulheres e Consumo na São Paulo dos Anos 1920* (São Paulo, SP: Editora SENAC São Paulo, 2007); Márcia Padilha Lotito, *A Cidade Como Espetáculo: Publicidade e Vida Urbana na São Paulo dos Anos 20* (Annablume, 2000); Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni, “Mulheres e Moda em São Paulo: das Vitruines Iluminadas Às Sombrias Salas de Costura,” *Cadernos Pagu*, no. 31 (December 2008): 565–72, doi:10.1590/S0104-83332008000200025. On the female body as a symbol of both cosmopolitan modernism and a threat to gendered standards of morality, see Ageeth Sluis, “Projecting Pornography and Mapping Modernity in Mexico City,” *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 3 (May 1, 2012): 467–87, doi:10.1177/0096144211428768. On the concept of the “chica moderna” in Mexico, see Hershfield, *Imagining la Chica Moderna: Women, Nation, and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917-1936*.

1920s. Sheila Schvarzman writes that in São Paulo in the 1920s, as in the U.S. in the 1910s, both cinematic spaces and films were directed to a female audience.³¹ Although quantitative data on the number of female moviegoers in the 1910s and 1920s is unavailable, a flourishing of literature, *crônicas* (a Brazilian literary genre of urban short stories or essays), advertisements, cartoons, photographs, and even songs, feature women going to the movies. José Inácio de Melo Souza describes how in the early 1910s “cinemas became smart,” and how elite women began to frequent the fashionable “soirees” and “matinees” of cinemas on the Avenida Rio Branco in Rio de Janeiro.³²



Figure 25: Women, children, and men at the “banquet” during the inauguration of Cine-teatro Central in São Paulo in 1924. As noted in chapter two, spaces within cinemas may have been “masculinized” or “feminized” according to built space and social habit. While the banquet appears to be filled with mostly women, a photo of the crowded lobby consists of mostly men. Source: “Inauguração Do Cine-Teatro Central Em São Paulo,” *Para Todos*, December 13, 1924, 313 RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

³¹ Sheila Schvarzman, “Ir ao Cinema em São Paulo nos Anos 20,” *Revista Brasileira de História* 25, no. 49 (2005): 156.

³² Souza, *Imagens do Passado: São Paulo E Rio de Janeiro nos Primórdios do Cinema*, 143.

The growing respectability of movie-going was in part due to the ascendance of Hollywood cinema after the 1910s. As Hillary Hallet argues in *Go West, Young Women!*, Hollywood studios celebrated female actresses, especially Mary Pickford, for perceived moral attributes like innocence, hard work, and respectability. Films and fan magazines featuring Pickford and similar actresses sought to elevate the social status of movie-going and attract middle-class women to cinemas. This campaign extended to its global audiences, in which Hollywood stars appeared not only on screens, but on the pages of leisure magazines like *Para Todos*.

While Conde, Besse, and Caulfield explore movie-going women as a perceived threat to patriarchal gender norms, the appearance of women in Brazil's cinemas was a symbol of cinema's increasing respectability as well. Like the Radiosan, the presence of women could elevate the movie-going experience. In the case of the inauguration of the Cine Capitólio, the "girl ushers" were an extreme example of how a cinema might represent its modernity and respectability through femininity. The strategic use of female figures in movie theater employment was not unique to the Cine Capitólio in 1925. Ina Rae Hark has pointed out the gendered roles of theater managers and female employees in the U.S. A 1938 manual for theater management advised theater managers in the U.S. to utilize female beauty to improve the overall appearance of their theaters: "In showhouses where the carpets, draperies, and furnishings are worn and some of the luster of the theater has faded, beautiful young usherettes, attractively costumed, help to keep the public's glances off the shabby spots."³³ Through the professional uniforms and the choice of ushers with obviously light skin, the cinema owner Francisco Serrador also

³³ Ricketson. *The Management of Motion Picture Theaters*. (New York: McGraw-Hill), 1938, 126. Quoted in Ina Rae Hark, "The 'Theater Man' and 'The Girl in the Box Office': Gender in the Discourse of Motion Picture Theatre Management," *Film History* 6, no. 2 (July 1, 1994): 178–87, doi:10.2307/3814964.

attempted to construct the Cine Capitolio as a space of white femininity.

In contrast, writers and intellectuals described female consumers of cinema in ethnic and racial terms that demonstrated the ambivalent meanings of Europeanness and cosmopolitanism in Brazil. In *Mademoiselle Cinema*, the term “mademoiselle” is a direct reference to cosmopolitan identity. As Conde points out, Rosalina is as at home on the streets of Paris as she is in Rio de Janeiro. However, Paris is not just a symbol of the advanced world, it is a symbol of moral degeneracy, as Rosalina’s father eventually dies in a Parisian brothel. Margareth Rago points out that while the Afro-Brazilian woman has been a symbol of sexuality throughout Brazilian history, at the turn of the twentieth-century, the foreign prostitute was “the principal signifier of sexual immorality.”³⁴ In particular, French prostitutes, or women who pretended to be “french” prostitutes, were particularly sought after as exotic and even “prestigious” symbols of sexuality. Rago writes that the “the charm of the *francesa*, [the Frenchwoman]... was her greater capacity of seduction and her dominance of the rules of civilized behavior.”³⁵ While the title *Mademoiselle Cinema* made the novel both scandalous and enticing, a *cronista* (essayist) with the pseudonym João Escreve (literally, “John writes;” *cronistas* often employed generic, anonymous pseudonyms like João do Rio and Jorge Americano) deplored the existence of the “the real-life mademoiselle cinema.” He described them as, “prostitutes of pain and shame, dragging the misery of her momentary weakness, crumbling, lifeless,

³⁴ Rago, *Prazeres da Noite: Prostituição e Códigos da Sexualidade Femenina em São Paulo (1890-1930)*, 48. For the “classic” interpretation of Afro-Brazilian women and sexuality, see Gilberto Freyre’s treatise on Brazilian society, which argues that Afro-Brazilian female slaves, as wetnurses and sexual partners for their masters, were foundational to a mixed-race Brazilian culture. Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*.

³⁵ Rago, *Prazeres da Noite: Prostituição e Códigos da Sexualidade Femenina em São Paulo (1890-1930)*, 50.

without will, defeated, contemplating death, without the courage to kill herself.”³⁶

Although a moralist organization, the League for Morality (*Liga Pró Moral*) publicly condemned Constellat’s novel, João Escreve dismissed their concern as trivial when so many “real-life Mademoiselle Cinemas” existed.³⁷

One Rio de Janeiro newspaper told the story of a Frenchwoman whose sexuality was not her downfall, but the downfall of the men she seduced. “A certain Charlotte Bessiere, a beautiful, intelligent lady,” was always present during the most stylish sessions at the Cinema Parisiense.³⁸ She possessed “the skill of enchantment” and the many men who competed for her attentions would “throw themselves at her without scruple.”³⁹ Appearing to be offended by their pleas, Charlotte would move her chair away, or even leave the cinema altogether after they approached her. In her hands however, were the “bills, watches, chains, and tie pins” of the men that had fallen for her charms.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, although Charlotte disappeared with the jewels she had stolen, “vestiges” of her personality remained in that now there were “innumerable” Charlottes, “hundreds” in Rio de Janeiro’s cinemas.⁴¹ Thus Charlotte Bessiere was not a singular problem but endemic of a larger problem of seductive women who, though not necessarily from France, were “French” in their ability to seduce men. Tellingly, the author of the article blamed not only these seductive women, but the men who fell for

³⁶ “prostituida de dôr e de vergonha a miseria da sua fraqueza de 1 minuto, tombando, exanime, sem vontade, vencida, pensando em morrer, sem coragem de matar-se; uma historia banal, sem interesse.” João Escreve, “Uma Mlle. Cinema” in *Para Todos*. January 31, 1925, 320. CB

³⁷ Chapter five will address female charitable and maternalist organizations, in particular the League of Catholic Women, and their role in defining gender roles in São Paulo.

³⁸ “... uma tal Charlotte Bessiere, rapariga muito linda e inteligente “Civilização e Cinemas” *Gazeta de Notícias*, July 29, 1913, n. 210, p. 1

³⁹ “encantadora habilidade!... muitos delles deixaram de parte certos escrupulos e jogavam-se, inconvenientes e pressurosos, para junto della.” *Ibid*.

⁴⁰ “*notas*, relógios, correntes e alfinetes de gravata.” *Ibid*.

⁴¹ “ha vestígios ainda da sua personalidade... “Hoje, no Rio, existem inumeras Charlottes” *Ibid*.

their charms, asking that the chief of police not only arrest these Charlottes, but also the men who approached them “so vulgarly” in the cinema.⁴² The author referred to these men as “bolinas,” an informal term specifically for men who groped women in cinemas,⁴³ revealing the extent to which the figure of Charlotte challenged the stereotype of predatory men at the movies. As Rago has analyzed, part of the charm of the “francesa” was her image of European civilization.⁴⁴ The story of Charlotte Bressiere suggests that not only were “francesas” dangerous, but that local men were neither civilized nor European enough to threaten or seduce them.

Yet, despite the rumored existence of “a gang” of Charlottes, *Para Todos*, the same leisure magazine that printed João Escreve’s condemnation of the “real-life mademoiselle cinema,” was filled with photos, cartoons, and literary references to mademoiselles at the cinema. “Mademoiselle,” in fact, was the default moniker for a sophisticated woman and a sign of a cinema’s high reputation among the local elite. For example, a reoccurring column in *Para Todos* called “Parlors and Lobbies” was written by a “Mademoiselle Écran” or “Miss Screen.” Concentrating on the people who occupied the “parlors and lobbies” of cinemas, the column was a mixture of society column and film review. Mademoiselle Écran emphasized how the appearance of elite women affirmed the reputation of the cinema as not only respectable, but “chic” and “select.” When the Parisense Cinema opened in 1907, Mademoiselle Écran wrote that it was “the premiere cinema of Rio de Janeiro... the *chic* cinema, preferred by the select set, where

⁴² “pleitassem tão vulgarmente” Ibid.

⁴³ Souza, *Imagens Do Passado: São Paulo E Rio de Janeiro Nos Primórdios Do Cinema*, 57.

⁴⁴ Rago, 48

the best of Rio [de Janeiro] gathered.”⁴⁵ It did not just attract the “best,” or simply the “people of choice,” but “women of elevated estimation and the prettiest girls of the time.”⁴⁶ Demonstrating the other side of female respectability at the movies, however, when the cinema Parisiense reopened in 1921, it screened the film *A Esposa de meu Filho* (*Below the Surface*, Paramount, 1920). The film was about a deep-sea diver who is blackmailed into diving for gold when a conman’s wife seduces his son. Though called *Below the Surface* in the U.S., it was translated as *A Esposa do meu Filho*, or “My Son’s Wife” in Brazil, which emphasized the role of the female seductress rather than the plot about diving for gold.⁴⁷ The (mis)translation of the title not only demonstrated how images of women at the movies could be both “of elevated estimation” and dangerously seductive, but also how Hollywood films could be adapted for Brazilian audiences.

Mademoiselle Écran also discussed the latest film at the Avenida Cinema, where lately, “the girls from the best of our society flocked.”⁴⁸ In contrast to *Below the Surface*, the feature film was *Menos que o Pó* (*Less than the Dust*, Pickford Film Corporation, 1916), starring the cosmopolitan image of female morality: Mary Pickford. At the Cinema Avenida in Rio de Janeiro, Mary Pickford was on screen, and mirroring her appearance as an admirable and respected woman were the “ladies of our best society.”⁴⁹ Mlle. Écran referred to them specifically as “mademoiselles:” “we saw *mademoiselles* Ywonne Masset, Gabriella Placido Barbosa, Mercedes Leal Murinho, Helena Lima e

⁴⁵ Foi o primeiro cinema do Rio de Janeiro... o cinema *chic*, preferido pela gente de escol. Ali se reuniu o que havia de melhor no Rio.” Écran, Mlle. “Salões e Salas de Espera.” *Para Todos*, July 23, 1921, 136. RC Para Todos. Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

⁴⁶ “senhoras de elevada representação e as mais lindas moças daquelle tempo.” Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Below the Surface,” *American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films*, 2014, <http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=15746>. Accessed 6/19/2014

⁴⁸ “affluíram... as mocinhas da nossa melhor sociedade” Écran, Mlle. “Salões e Salas de Espera.” *Para Todos*, July 23, 1921, 136.

⁴⁹ mocinhas da nossa melhor sociedade.” Ibid.

Silva, Castro Barbosa, and many others whom we must omit, all delightfully beautiful, fresh, giggling *coquettes!*”⁵⁰ Thus “mademoiselle” and “coquette,” which referenced an imagined construct of French femininity, were malleable terms that signified both cosmopolitan sexuality and continental refinement.

Another archetype that appeared at the movies in Brazil was the “modern girl.” The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (Lynn Weinbaum et. al.) defines the Modern Girl as a collection of numerous visual elements including “bobbed hair, painted lips, provocative clothing, elongated body, and open, easy smile.”⁵¹ The Modern Girl appeared across the globe in the 1920s and 1930s, as “flappers” in the U.S., “magos” in Japan, “neue Frau” in Germany, and the “kallege ladki (college girl) in India.⁵² In magazines, films, and popular culture, the Modern Girl was associated with “frivolous” pursuits of consumption, romance, and fashion.”⁵³ The Modern Girl also represented societal anxieties regarding modernization, globalization, consumer culture, and the liberation of women from the domestic sphere. Weinbaum et. al. write that, “for contemporaries, the Modern Girl was a harbinger of both the possibilities and dangers of modern life.”⁵⁴

The Modern Girl, as an image that appeared in various regional and national contexts, created new permutations of race and racialized femininity. In the United States and Germany, for example, the highly stylized image of the Modern Girl was sometimes “Asianized,” represented as somewhat racially ambiguous, exotic, or foreign through

⁵⁰ “vimos no cinema avenida Mlles Ywonne Masset, Gabriella Placido Barbosa, Mercedes Leal Murтинho, Helena Lima e Silva, Castro Barbosa, e muitas outras cujos nomes ignora, lindas, frescas, risonhas, e deliciosamente – *coquettes!*”Ibid.

⁵¹ The Modern Girl around the World Research Group et al., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Duke University Press, 2008), 2.

⁵² Ibid., 1

⁵³ Ibid., 9

⁵⁴ Ibid., 8

fashion and even through facial features (though Weinbaum et. al. admit the controversy of claiming slanted eyes to be “Asian”). This “cosmopolitan aesthetic” had different permutations in other countries. In the South African black press, for example, women who participated in photo beauty contests utilized the image of the Modern Girl, particularly hats, makeup, and smiles, to draw attention to facial beauty and to counter exoticizing, colonialist images of scantily clad African women. The use of makeup, and powder in particular, however, drew criticism that these women were imitating white standards of beauty.⁵⁵ Ageeth Sluis has written on what she calls the “deco body” in early twentieth-century Mexico, the tall, slender, and androgynous build of the *bataclana*, a variation on the Modern Girl. Although the “deco body” was usually portrayed as light-skinned, Sluis writes that, “shaping deco bodies was not a matter of color, of whitening in the strictest sense, but about engineering form,” that is, about shaping thin female bodies through health and fitness. Thus indigenous and mestiza women could also possess modern, “deco bodies.”⁵⁶

A variation of the Modern Girl also appeared in Brazil and was sometimes called *melindrosa*, or flapper. The verb “melindrar,” from which “melindrosa” derives, means to shock or offend, and hints at the dangers that this figure represented in popular culture. Beatriz Rezende writes that the *Mademoiselle Cinema* was a version of the *melindrosa*, and looked as if she came straight from the pen of J. Carlos, a cartoonist whose depictions of *melindrosas* appeared in a bevy of Rio de Janeiro-based leisure

⁵⁵ Lynn M. Thomas, “The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930S South Africa,” *The Journal of African History* 47, no. 03 (2006): 461–90, doi:10.1017/S0021853706002131.

⁵⁶ Sluis, “BATACLANISMO! Or, How Female Deco Bodies Transformed Postrevolutionary Mexico City.”

magazines.⁵⁷ Demonstrating how the *melindrosa* echoed international images of the Modern Girl, Rezende describes her in the following way: “with short hair, in the *garçon* style, lips in the shape of a heart, a curled bang falling on her forehead, thin and transparent clothes, short skirts and long necklines, sometimes with a small hat or *cloche*, sometimes without, always seductive.”⁵⁸

In a humorous (but misogynist) story, a writer using the pseudonym “Mme. [Mademoiselle] X” described the “origins of the *melindrosa*” in 1921. Tired of women’s constant complaints, God summons women from all the nationalities on earth to air their criticisms. A Frenchwoman, an Englishwoman, a German, a Spaniard, an Italian, a North American, and a Brazilian woman all meet St. Michael in heaven and perform stereotypes of their nationality. The Frenchwoman is charming, seductive, and loved by all, but complains that there are not more films, cigarettes, jewels, or cabarets on Earth. The Englishwoman is athletic and loves sports, but complains that having a heart gets in the way of her tennis game. The German loves to work, drink, and eat; the Spaniard likes to tango, and the North American shimmies to the pearly gates in a ragtime rhythm and says that she loves to dance, watch movies, and just wishes there were more men to marry and then divorce. St. Michael ends up rewarding the Brazilian woman, who wholesomely replies that she simply “loves,” by telling her to go to the other nations and take a bit from each to become “perfect,” and therefore able to find a man who loves her. The Brazilian woman, however, forgets to ask about exactly how much she should take

⁵⁷ Maite Conde, however, refers to *Mademoiselle Cinema* as a “New Woman,” and translates *melindrosa* as New Woman rather than Modern Girl. I would argue that this is a mis-translation. As the Modern Girl Around the World Research Group has written, the “New Woman” was a different archetype, referring to women “liberated” in the sense of education and politics rather than consumption and sexuality. While the “New Woman” might similarly challenge gender norms, this was through her participation in suffragist movements, and in male-dominated spaces like universities, bookstores, and sports, not necessarily through style or sex

⁵⁸ Beatriz Rezende “A volta de Mademoiselle Cinema” in Costallat, *Mademoiselle Cinema*. 18

from all of the nations, and, ends up “acquiring an excess dose of foreign products that were recommended in small portions, which in large quantity destroy the greatest treasure that a woman’s heart can possess – goodness and love. And so arose the ‘Melindrosa.’”⁵⁹

Mademoiselle X. depicts how variations the *melindrosa* was a combination of the best of “all” of the other nations, but this only included Europe and the United States, demonstrating how cosmopolitanism was limited to these regions. The “problem” with the *melindrosa*, however is her excessive consumption of goods, literally overdosing on foreign products until she is no longer good and loving, but an amalgamation of fashionable habits. Written before Oswaldo de Andrade’s 1928 “Cannibal Manifesto,” which called for Brazilian modernists to “cannibalize” European culture, regurgitate it, and produce art that was uniquely Brazilian, “The Origin of the Melindrosa” developed a similar theme of poaching from European fashions. Rather than produce a new identity, however, the author depicts the *melindrosa* as destroyed by her excessive consumption, insinuating that with her new habits of smoking, drinking, sports, and movie-going, she will no longer be worthy of honorable love. While Europe and the U.S. represented what was cosmopolitan and fashionable, Mme. X found these modern forms of leisure to be dangerous to Brazilian standards of gendered morality.

In cartoons, the *melindrosa* also appeared wearing and enjoying European and North American fashions and leisure. Her Europeanness or North Americanness, however, did not signify “whiteness.” Cartoon depictions of the *melindrosa* uniformly

⁵⁹ “adquirindo em excesso as doses dos productos estrangeiros recommendados em pequena porção, e que em quantidade se tornam os destruidores do maior tesouro que pode posuir um coração de mulher – a bondade e o amor. E assi... surgiu a ‘Melindrosa.’” Mme. X “A Origem da Melindrosa” in *Para Todos*, August 13, 1921, 139

depicted her with light-colored skin. Like the “deco bodies” of 1920s Mexico City, skin color was not a stable marker of race or ethnicity. Rather, the *melindrosa*’s identity fluctuated according to her moral and social status within the house and the street, and her movie-going habits. In the following cartoons, how the *melindrosa* pays for the movies and with whom she goes, indicate her social and moral status, with repercussions for her racial and ethnic identities.

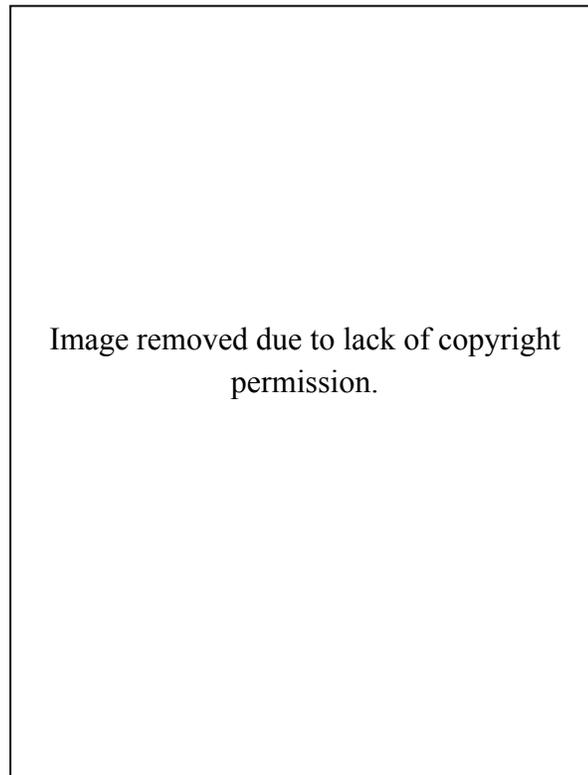


Figure 26: -We'll go to the movies first or after?
-After what? There is no after.
"Out on the town" *Para Todos* February 6, 1926, 373. P. 18

One of J. Carlos' cartoons demonstrates a relatively benign portrait of the *melindrosa*’s movie-going habits. The cartoon, entitled “Out on the town” satirizes the centrality of movie-going as an urban experience. “Going to the city” or “out on the town” was synonymous with movie-going, as one asks, “we’ll go to the movies before or

after?” and the response is “there is no after,” no other activity worth their time. The women in this cartoon feature the elongated figures, painted lips, and bobbed hair characteristic of the modern girl. However, they differ in one aspect, in that they are depicted within the morally safe space of the home. While the figures in the comic have bobbed hair, short skirts, high heels, and painted lips, their enthusiasm for the city and the cinema is contained within the domestic sphere. In this context, these modern girls also affirm their whiteness. While the figures above are drawn with light skin, their status within the house, not their cartoonish skin color, is what affirms their identities as white. While the title of the cartoon is “Going to the city” or “Going out on the town,” the cartoon itself represents a domesticated version of the *melindrosa* in the private, safe space of the home. The three women are in a homosocial environment without much suggestion of sex. There are other interpretations of the cartoon; what might be the activity that happens either before or after the cinema? Why is one figure’s face hidden in a red shadow? Although these might be hints at a more subversive or sexual meaning, the overall visual depiction is of a domesticated, non-threatening *melindrosa*.

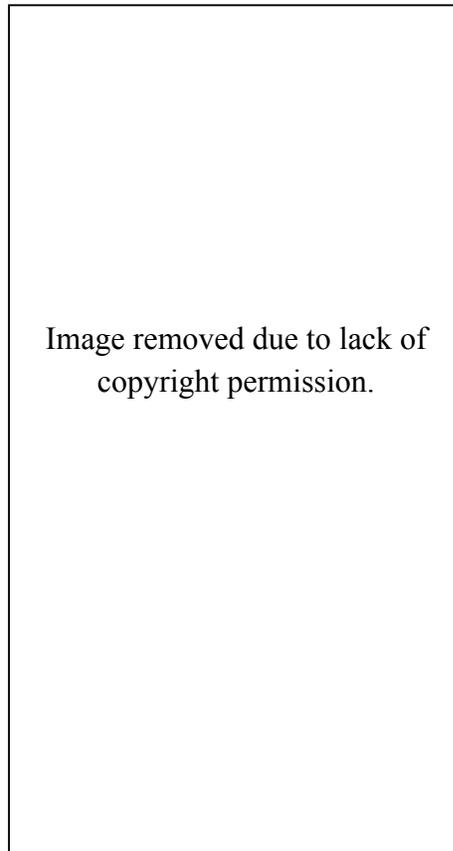


Figure 27:

He: Are you waiting for someone?

She: Yes, someone to pay for the movies, tea, a car

He: Keep waiting. He won't be long.

Source: "Alguem Que Pague o Cinema, o Chá, o Automovel...," *Para Todos*, December 27, 1924, 315, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo

In contrast to this morally benign depiction, another J. Carlos comic portrays the *melindrosa* in the street, and presents another perspective of her movie-going habits. In the cartoon, a man approaches a woman who is standing alone and asks, "Are you waiting for someone?" She responds, "Yes, someone to pay for the movies, tea, a car."⁶⁰ She has a similar stylized appearance as the domesticated *melindrosa* in the J. Carlos cartoon, but clearly has a different agenda. In addition to being outside of the home, this Modern Girl is not within a homosocial, feminine environment as the previous

⁶⁰ "Alguem Que Pague o Cinema, o Chá, o Automovel...," *Para Todos*, December 27, 1924, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

melindrosas were. She is by herself but waiting for a man. Although the man who approaches her declines her open invitation for a date, he remarks that she would probably not have to wait long for someone else to come along. Among multiple interpretations of this cartoon, the *melindrosa* is conscious of her appearance, her sexuality, and she strategically uses men to pay for her leisure habits. On the other hand, what Margareth Rago calls the “specter of prostitution” is quite apparent. Analyzing fashion and lifestyle advice in the Rio de Janeiro women’s magazine *Revista Feminina*, Rago argues that advice to wear skirts of reasonable length, or to wear less makeup, hinted at the “specter of prostitution,” and the constant danger of *melindrosas* being perceived as prostitutes.⁶¹ Waiting in the street for a man to approach her with money, the *melindrosa* in this comic closely mirrors the prostitute, the “woman of the street.” Like the “gang of Charlottes” who seduced and tricked men at the cinema, she consciously uses her sexuality. However, unlike the “beautiful, intelligent” Charlotte Bessiere, this *melindrosa* is a failed *francesa*, and is unable to properly seduce her target. Notably, this figure is also drawn with the “Asianized” eyes and more stylized features than the figures in “Out on the Town” and might therefore represent the exotic, racially ambiguous, “cosmopolitan aesthetic” of the Modern Girl. However, I would argue that her cartoonish facial features have less to do with her racialized identity than her moral status as a woman on the street.

While this *melindrosa* consciously attempts to attract male attention, another movie-going woman is represented as sexual prey rather than predator. In the cartoon below, a man again approaches a woman on her way to the cinema. He asks if her if the

⁶¹ Rago, *Prazeres Da Noite: Prostituição E Códigos Da Sexualidade Femenina Em São Paulo (1890-1930)*, 75.

young boy by her side is her little brother. When she replies yes, several of his “buddies” say, “alright! I’m there, I’m at the movies!”

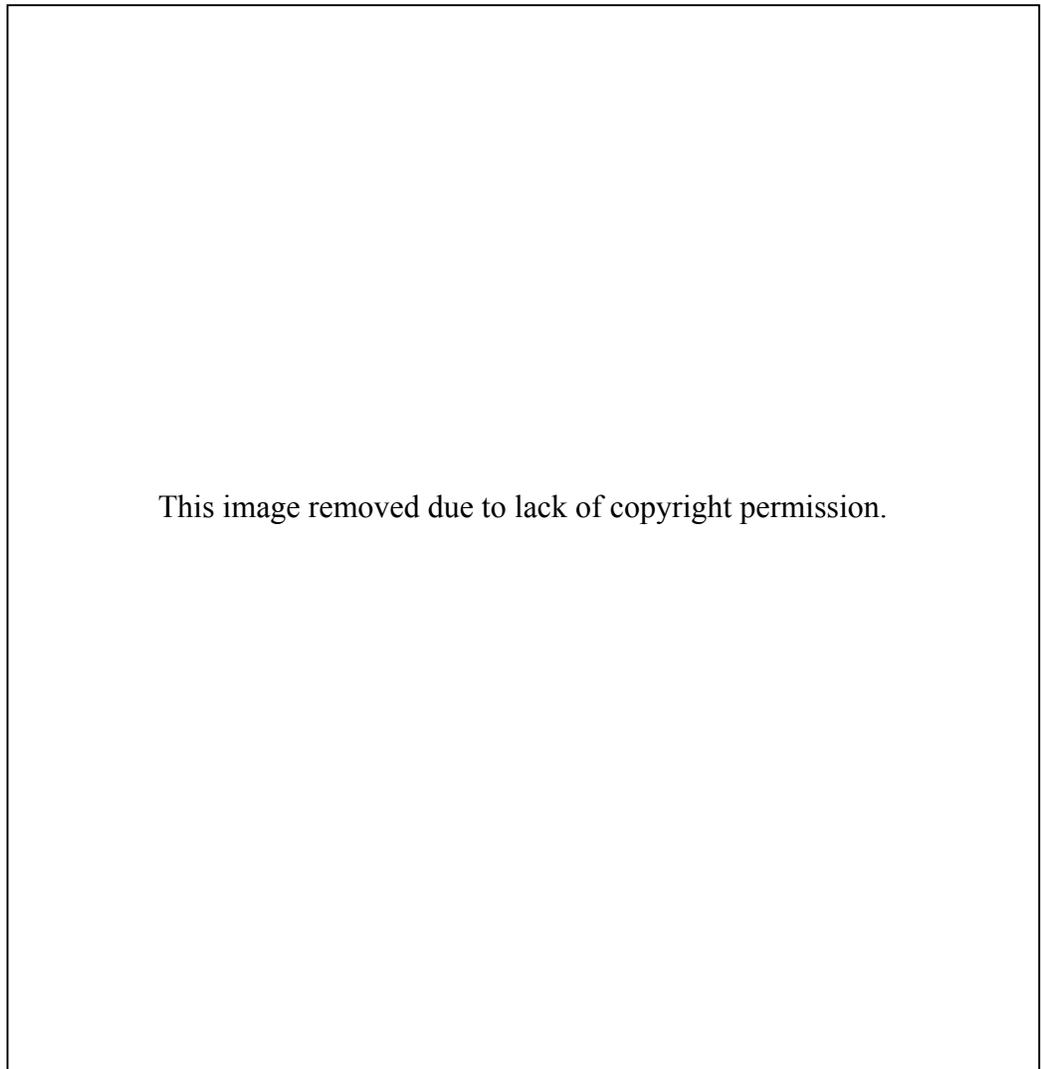


Figure 28:
He: Is this your little brother?
She: Yes, sir
The guy: (with his buddies) “Alright! I’m there, I’m at the movies!”
J. Carlos. “Guaranteed Business” *Para Todos*, September 12, 1925, 352 RC *Para Todos*. Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

Characteristics of the *melindrosa*, like bobbed hair, painted lips, and *cloche* hat, appear again in this J. Carlos cartoon. However, the situation is quite different. The woman’s body and clothing, the elongated figure and short skirts, which are significant markers of the *melindrosa*’s sexuality, are not shown in the comic. Instead, her figure is

obscured by her little brother, which foregrounds that this woman has a place within a family. Rather than the street-walking, solitary woman in the “Waiting for someone” comic, this woman has a chaperone, which affirms her moral status. The comic however, pokes fun at the idea that her chaperone is so young. Alternatively, one might interpret the man to be confirming whether the woman is with her own child (and therefore married or in some way sexually unavailable) or her little brother (and therefore single).

While the presence of the little brother signifies that this woman is not the street-walking, single *melindrosa*, the “specter of prostitution” is still present. The title of the comic is “Guaranteed Business,” insinuating that the men are “guaranteed” to find women (in whatever capacity) at the popular movie theaters. The title also has sexual connotations. The word for business, *negócio*, also means “transaction,” and “guaranteed business” could be read as a sexual transaction. Erin Graff Zivin, for example, uses the term “scene of the transaction” to denote “an ideologically charged, libidinally invested space in which everything – money, sex, identity – is subject to financial or cultural negotiation.”⁶² Graff Zivin uses this term to describe the intersection of prostitution, Jewishness, and national identity in early twentieth-century Brazilian literature. In this cartoon, the “scene of the transaction” is the movie theater, and the men are the consumers within this sexual, possibly financial, relationship.

The woman’s sexual vulnerability has implications for her ethnic identity. In the 1920s, the fanatic “movie-struck” girl became a recurring trope in Hollywood magazines, films, novels, and cautionary tales; she was an emotional young woman enchanted by Hollywood stars (both male and female) and her own dreams of stardom. Shelly Stamp

⁶²Erin Graff Zivin. “The Scene of the Transaction” in Jeffrey Lesser and Raanan Rein, *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008). Pg. 108

describes the image of “the movie-struck girl” as “caught between her fascination with stories on screen and a narcissistic absorption in her own image.”⁶³ Her love of the movies clouded her judgment and made her vulnerable to men who promised to make her a star, or who took sexual advantage of her in the darkness of the cinema. Cautionary and sensational “white slavery” films showed these Anglo-Saxon, “girl next door” moviegoers being kidnapped and forced into prostitution. In the U.S., white slavery films offered female moviegoers the titillating combination of sex and danger on screen, while sensationalist journalism and novels fed a “white slavery scare” that claimed that thousands of girls had been abducted and abused at the movies.

“White slavery” had a different permutation in Latin America, referring to the sexual traffic of Eastern European women to Latin America from the late nineteenth century to WWII. More specifically, it referred to the sexual traffic of Ashkenazi Jewish women, mostly to Buenos Aires, where prostitution was legal from 1865 to 1936. Escaping poverty or religious persecution, these women sometimes migrated under the false pretense of employment, familial pressure, or even coercion by pimp husbands. Although the majority of these migrants traveled to Buenos Aires, they were also present in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, and other South American cities.⁶⁴ These light-skinned sex workers were referred to as *polacas*, code words for both Jewish and prostitute; their Europeanness and foreignness created an image of both exotic and

⁶³ Shelley Stamp, *Movie-Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture after the Nickelodeon* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000). Pg. 8

⁶⁴ Donna Guy, “Argentina: Jewish White Slavery” in *Jewish Women’s Archive*, accessed August 13, 2013, <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/argentina-jewish-white-slavery>. For more on white slavery in Latin America, especially Argentina, see Guy, *Sex & Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina*. Nora Glickman, *The Jewish White Slave Trade and the Untold Story of Raquel Liberman* (Taylor & Francis, 1999); Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: A History of Argentine Jewish Women, 1880–1955* (Duke University Press, 2010).

desirable sexuality. Some prostitutes of neither Jewish nor Eastern European descent masqueraded as *polacas* in order to avail the popularity of this “type.”⁶⁵

Jewishness and prostitution were also associated with theaters in Latin America; in Buenos Aires, venues for Yiddish-language theaters were widely rumored to be dens of prostitution.⁶⁶ One case in Brazil shows that some Jewish women were targeted as prostitutes, and coerced with the promise of becoming actresses. On August 31st, 1928, the São Paulo newspaper *Folha* reported on “theatrical agencies that, with the apparent intention of employing youths in companies, in truth, they instead take these poor girls to the path of vice and perdition.”⁶⁷ One of these was operated by José Romano, who trafficked women between São Paulo and Belo Horizonte. These women, however, “instead of being sent to whatever theater, were instead sent to a cabaret in Belo Horizonte where, tormented by life’s opportunities and by the demands of the empresarios, ended up falling irredeemably into prostitution... This is the case of the following girls who have been returned to São Paulo: Vera Iacconis, Helena Jaconis, and Annita Wanagra, all of them *lituanas* [a term for Jewish women].”⁶⁸ The humorous J. Carlos cartoon stops short of such a dramatic narrative. The “specter of prostitution,” and in this case, more specifically of “white slavery,” is only a vague allusion. It is an

⁶⁵ Jeffrey Lesser “How the Jews Became Japanese and Other Stories” in Lesser and Rein, *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans*, 49.

⁶⁶ Mollie Lewis Nouwen, *Oy, My Buenos Aires Jewish Immigrants and the Creation of Argentine National Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 49.

⁶⁷ “agencias teatraes que, com o intuito aparente de empregar jovens em companhias, na verdade outra coisa não fazem senão encaminhar essas pobres moças para o caminho do vicio e da perdição.”

⁶⁸ “ao envez de serem enchaminhadas para qualquer teatro, eram enviados para um cabaret em Bello Horizonte de onde, atormentadas pelas aperturas da vida e pelas exigencias dos empresarios, acabavam irremediavelmente por se atirarem á prostituição... assim é que foram remetidas para esta capital as seguintes moças que lá estavam: Vera Iacconis, Helena Jaconis e Annita Wanagra, todas ellas lithuanas.” *Folha de São Paulo* 8/31/1928

allusion, however, borne from the depiction of a woman's movie-going habits and her status in the street.

The company that a woman kept at the movies could affect the moral reputation of real women as well, not just cartoons. Aurora Ferreira da Costa was “the ideal companion” to Antonio Ribeiro Teixeira, a sergeant in the Brazilian army, “but only in the early days.”⁶⁹ After a year and a half of marriage, Aurora failed to get along with her mother-in-law and eventually “abandoned” her husband and moved back in with her own mother. One night, Antonio went to the cinema and found Aurora “in the company of one of her brother-in-laws,”⁷⁰ Alexandre Jersey, also a sergeant in the army. Antonio followed them home and pleaded with Aurora to “find direction in her life” and to “find better company.”⁷¹ Jersey, according to Antonio, then insulted and pushed him. “In the heat of the argument, Antonio Ribeiro da Costa, offended by the attitude of his brother-in-law [*concunhado* his wife's sister's husband], took out his revolver and discharged all the bullets,” wounding both Aurora and Alexandre. With Aurora and Alexandre both in serious condition at the Santa Casa hospital, the article only presented Antonio's side of the story and all guilt was assigned to Aurora. Her first crime was failing to get along with her mother-in-law; her second was “abandoning” her husband to move back in with her mother. The incident that provoked gunshots however, was keeping “bad company” at the cinema. Although the article does not explicitly state whether Aurora was having an affair with her sister's husband, their presence together at the cinema provided the

⁶⁹ “A companhia ideal. Isso nos primeiros dias.” “Uma Pendencia em Familia e o seu desfecho com tiros de revólver” *Folha da Manhã*. Januay 7, 1929., 3

⁷⁰ “em companhia de um cunhado della” “Uma pendencia de familia e o seu desfecho com tiros de revólver” *Folha da Manhã*. Januay 7, 1929. Pg. 3

⁷¹ “tornasse á sua companhia” Ibid.

final, damning evidence for Antonio to try to dispense with his less than “ideal” wife.⁷²

The moral and social status of movie-going women and movie theaters were mutually constitutive. Although “mademoiselles” of the most “select” families in Rio de Janeiro were used as markers of a cinema’s prestige and respectability, many other types of “mademoiselles,” “francesas,” and “melindrosas” signified the cinema as a site of sexual deviance or predation. In turn, the way a woman went to the movies (and with whom), had implications for her social and moral status, but also for her perceived race or ethnicity as white, cosmopolitan, “European,” or “lituana.”

Projecting a Modern Brazil

Like the malleable identity of women in public spaces, the reputation of European immigrants also fluctuated according to their relation to the movies. Southern European immigrants dominated the film production and exhibition sectors in Brazil, but film intellectuals only accepted them as “Brazilians” if they made perceived advancements in the film industry. Because of their work with cinema, European immigrants were in a unique position to construct modernity and national identity in Brazil.

In 1926, Gilberto Rossi, head of the Rossi-Film production company, released a pamphlet calling for amateur filmmakers to submit documentaries and newsreels to his company. Rossi-Film was among the most successful examples of local filmmaking in São Paulo. In the 1920s and 1930s, a “cinema session” consisted of various short films, feature-length films, live acts and music. Within this varied program, Rossi News (*Rossi Atualidades*) were a constant fixture. In the 1926 brochure, Rossi emphasized the potential of hard-working immigrants to form a modern Brazilian nation through their contributions to national cinema. Using himself as an example, Rossi explained how he

⁷² Ibid.

“embarked from his native land [Italy] in 1911” and “labored and saved” while working for a photography company in Matto Grosso do Sul. Eventually, with his hard-earned savings, he moved to São Paulo and founded Empresa Rossi Film. He summed up his experiences by claiming, “After fifteen years of enormous effort, I have begun to see my precious dream come true: Brazilian cinema has become a reality.”⁷³

Rather than presenting himself as an exceptional individual who made unique contributions to Brazilian cinema, he presented his autobiography as part of a larger narrative of opportunity, enterprise, and modernization in Brazil, one that was national in scope. While Rossi touted the success of his company in producing films in and around São Paulo, the purpose of the brochure was to expand Rossi Film’s reach to the rest of the country. The filmmaker claimed that, “Wishing that cinema correspond to the evident and grandiose progress of Brazil, I have resolved to amplify and enlarge the scope of Rossi Film operations to include all of the Brazilian lands.”⁷⁴ His word choice in wanting to include, “all of the Brazilian lands” (*todo o território brasileiro*) echoes the language of imperialism and efforts to colonize, document, and map the reaches of national and imperial borders. Esther Gabara has commented on the relationship between photography and imperialism, pointing out that in the nineteenth century, landscape painting served the practical function of surveying new colonial possessions.⁷⁵ At the turn of the twentieth-century, photographer J.C. Hemment traveled to Cuba during the Spanish-

⁷³ “Após quinze annos de ingente esforços, vejo, em parte, realisado o meu sonho dourado: tornou-se um facto a cinematographia no Brasil” Gilberto Rossi, “Rossi Actualidades,” 1926, D516-5, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

⁷⁴ Desejando agora, que a cinematographia corresponda ao progresso geral patente e grandioso do Brasil, resolvi ampliar, alargar a todo o territorio brasileiro a esphera de acção dos operadores da Rossi Film...” Ibid.

⁷⁵ Esther Gabara, *Errant Modernism: The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2008), 36.

American War and likened the camera to a gun, a tool of imperialism and commercial expansion.⁷⁶

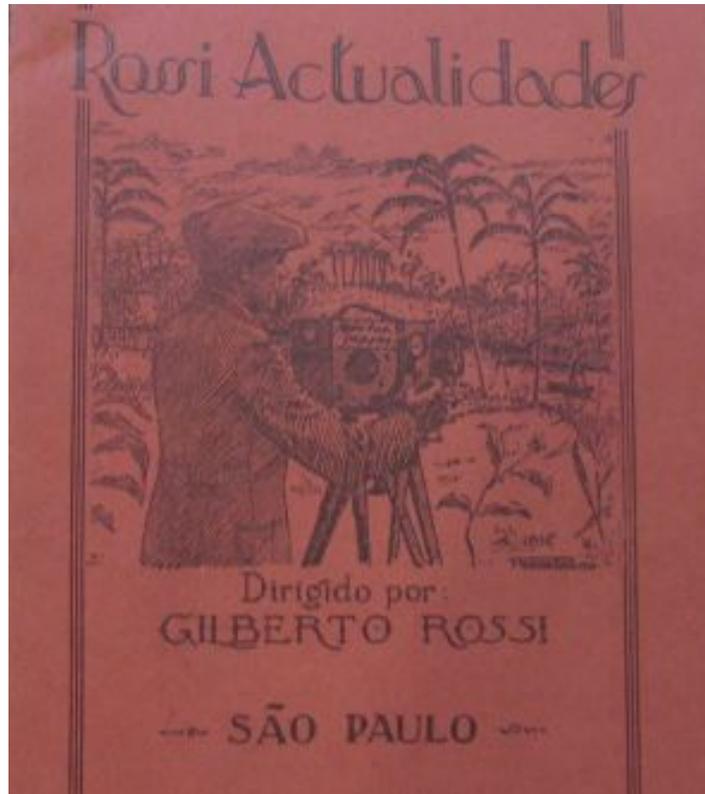


Figure 29: An image of Gilberto Rossi capturing “all of the Brazilian landscape.” “Rossi News. Directed by: Gilberto Rossi, São Paulo” Gilberto Rossi, “Rossi Actualidades,” 1926, D516-5, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo

Gabara connects the function of landscape art and colonization to the work of Mario de Andrade, one of the most prominent Brazilian writers of the modernist period. From 1927 to 1929, nearly the same time that Rossi printed his brochure, Andrade embarked on two journeys through Brazil, and like Rossi, he began in São Paulo. Chronicling his journey in two volumes that became the unpublished manuscript *O*

⁷⁶ Gabara, *Errant Modernism: The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil*, 4. Known as the Spanish-American War in the U.S., it was also the tail end of the war for Cuban independence. Although Cuba had been battling for independence from Spain for years, the U.S. intervened in the last stages of the war. In the end, Cuba became a protectorate of the U.S. under the Platt Amendment, and remained so until the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Thus the Spanish-American War is a strong symbol of U.S. imperialism in Cuba. For popular participation in the war for Cuban independence, see Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

turista aprendiz, he traveled through the Amazon and the Brazilian Northeast. With a Kodak camera in hand, Andrade documented his travels with photography, essays, drawings, and poetry. Gabara refers to *O Turista Aprendiz* as a form of “errant modernism,” “simultaneously reproducing and parodying the genre natural to colonizers, naturalist explorers, and even members of the international avant-garde who visited Brazil, such as Blaise Cendrars and Filippo Marinetti.”⁷⁷ Andrade’s depiction of Brazil is a type of modernism errant or deviant from the imagined European model. Photographs in which high-contrast light obscures the landscape, in which heads are decapitated outside of the frame, and which are rotated and turned around for no reason, are visible representations of this modernism (of which photography was one technological form) gone wrong. Through this use of modernist aesthetic, Gabara claims, Latin American photographers like Andrade also parodied modernity, not just modernism. By making viewers conscious of the aesthetic of photography, they challenged the concept that cameras were objective, scientific tools that truthfully represented the modern world.⁷⁸

Rossi’s call for newsreels, however, was an attempt to demonstrate modernity done right in Brazil. Rossi called for films of high quality that would faithfully capture images of Brazil’s most modern constructions: trains, planes, railroads, and other symbols of progress. Through filmic depictions of Brazilian cities and landscapes, Rossi Newsreels attempted to depict, and thus reify, an ideal of Brazilian modernization and natural bounty, found in “Brazilian capitals and cities, in the stretches where the hand of man as well as the work of God shines... feats of engineering, great farms and plantations, the inaugurations of charities, hospitals, railroads, highways, etc., in sum, of

⁷⁷ Gabara, *Errant Modernism: The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil*, 37.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 24

everything that can demonstrate the extraordinary progress of Brazil, in each and every branch of human activity.”⁷⁹ Rossi depicted the mix of rural and urban as harmonious, a blend in which “the hand of man as well as the work of God shines.”⁸⁰ Unlike Andrade’s depiction of errant modernism via intentional photographic “mistakes,” Rossi would only accept films that exhibited “perfect photography,” recommending techniques such as the use of a stable tripod, turning the camera lever at the speed of two revolutions per second, and frequently cleaning the camera pieces. In sum, the aim of Rossi Films was to demonstrate Brazil’s modernity, not just by capturing images symbolic of modernity (feats of engineering, railroads and highways), but also by “properly” utilizing the modern medium of filmmaking.

In making Rossi films national in scope, and in attempting to unify “all of the Brazilian lands” through cinema, Rossi’s nation-building project echoed the efforts of Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, the Brazilian army officer who led a campaign to unify Brazil through the development of a national telegraph service in the early twentieth-century. As Todd Diacon has demonstrated, Rondon’s policies included the technological “stringing together” of a nation through the telegraph, but also through cultural policies and events: parades, festivals, the teaching of myths, songs, and waving of flags.⁸¹ Rossi sought to reproduce these very same acts of nation-building in his films, calling for films featuring “religious, traditional, civic, popular and patriotic festivals; parades, military marches, and commemorations of national holidays, the inauguration of

⁷⁹ “Capitais e cidades brasileiras... empreendimentos de engenharia, grandes culturas e plantações, inauguração de casas de caridades, hospitais, de novas linhas de estrada de ferro, de estradas de rodagem, etc. Enfim de tudo que possa provar o extraordinário progresso do Brasil, em todo e qualquer ramo da atividade humana.” Rossi, 11

⁸⁰ “nos trechos em que brilhe tanto a mão do homem como a obra da Creação.” Ibid.

⁸¹ Todd A. Diacon, *Stringing Together a Nation: Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon and the Construction of a Modern Brazil, 1906-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

monuments to great Brazilian men.”⁸² By filming, distributing, and exhibiting these images of nation-building, Rossi Newsreels would expand the efforts of campaigns like Rondón’s to incorporate the margins of the Brazilian population and territory into a nation. Rossi’s list of possible newsreel topics strived for entertainment as well as patriotism, soliciting the filming of sporting events, “disasters and catastrophes,” and “exciting spectacles” (which included airplanes, trains, and dirigibles, all inventions that would again prove Brazil’s modernity). However, Rossi summed up this list with: “everything that, although impossible to predict, will nevertheless vividly interest the public of all the country.”⁸³ Rossi claimed that cinema would unify the nation by both capturing “all of the Brazilian lands” and entertaining “the public of all the country.”

In addition, Rossi emphasized the inclusiveness of the Brazilian film industry. The brochure claimed, “Anyone can be a Rossi Film cameraman and earn substantial profits.”⁸⁴ The only qualifications were to be adept at using a good camera, to know how to “take advantage of opportunities” that would yield interesting material, have an artistic eye in choosing subjects to film, and lastly, “to be active and not to ignore that Brazil is an immense land, and given the scarcity of communication, cameramen should submit their work immediately after being filmed.”⁸⁵ Here, Andrade’s errant modernity appears within Rossi’s narrative of Brazil’s forward progress. What a scenario of errant modernity, of a cameraman filming an opera house in Manaus or a new highway in the

⁸² “festas religiosas, tradicionaes, civicas, populares e patrioticas; desfiles, paradas militares e comemorações de datas nacionais; inauguração de monumentos de grandes homens brasileiros” Rossi, pg. 11

⁸³ “Tudo emfim que, nos sendo impossivel prever, possa, todavia, interessar vivamente o publico de todo o paiz” Rossi, pg. 12

⁸⁴ “Qualquer pessoa pode ser operador da Rossi Film e perceber com isso lucros nada despreziveis.” Rossi, 10

⁸⁵ “ser ativo e não ignorar que o Brasil possui um imenso territorio, e que, sendo os meios de comunicação relativamente escassos, deve inviar-nos o seu trabalho imediatamente depois de filmado.” Rossi, pg. 10

countryside and then being unable to send the film because of a faulty postal system! Ultimately, the brochure advocated the formation of a national cinema that would reproduce the image of Brazil as a modern, unified nation.

Rossi was neither the first nor the only filmmaker to imagine cinema as a nation-building project. Ana M. López points out that in addition to filmmakers, politicians and wealthy elites used cinema as a tool to represent and construct national identity. The very first films made in Mexico were not landscapes or street scenes as the first European films were, but shots of Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz.⁸⁶ The role of the state in funding and encouraging domestic film industries in Latin America has generated a substantial historiography on the region's "national cinemas," primarily those of Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Cuba. More recently, film scholars and historians have begun to study Latin American cinema as a regional, transnational, or cosmopolitan project that recognizes the diversity of production and reception, particularly in the early twentieth century when cinema was in many ways "transitional" in its aesthetics and industrial practices.⁸⁷ By focusing on regional filmmakers and transnational film trade, new scholarship explores diverse film cultures rather than monolithic national cinemas.

Re-examining Rossi's pamphlet as a product of transnational forces as well as a nation-building project reveals the many caveats within the overarching message of inclusion and nationalism. In particular, Rossi's pamphlet claimed that "anybody" could be a Rossi cameraman, but with the caveat that they demonstrate the work ethic and

⁸⁶ Ana M. López. "Early Cinema and Modernity" in Schelling, *Through the Kaleidoscope*.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Jessica Stites Mor and Daniel Alex Richter, "Immigrant Cosmopolitanism: The Political Culture of Argentine Early Sound Cinema of the 1930s," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2014): 65–88, doi:10.1080/17442222.2013.874645, which highlights the role of immigrant filmmakers in forging a cosmopolitan rather than a national identity and industry in Argentina. Also see Poppe, "Made in Joinville."

resolve that Rossi claimed he had employed to found the company. They would have to operate cameras with “exactitude, ability and haste,” to “know how to take advantage of opportunities...” “be artistic...” and “to be active...”⁸⁸ He himself “labored and saved” to make Rossi-Film successful. Rossi’s description of his own success and the terms he used to describe a good cameraman exemplified the narrative of the hard-working immigrant who came to “make it in America,” in this case Brazil.⁸⁹ However, the terms Rossi used were racially coded, linked to international intellectual currents in eugenics, and to imagined concepts of Europeaness. The traits of being “active,” “artistic,” and capable of utilizing industrial technology with “skill, aptitude, and haste” were all traits associated with an idealized concept of the European worker and what they might add to the Brazilian population.

Immigrant Film Exhibitors and National Identity

Although the majority of Italian immigrants first came to Brazil to replace agricultural labor after the abolition of slavery, Italian descendents who moved to urban centers quickly came to dominate the film production and exhibition industries.⁹⁰ Like Rossi, film intellectuals, critics, and historians in the 1920s emphasized the contribution of an idealized, hard-working, explicitly European immigrant to the creation of a national film industry. This imagined immigrant was the foundation of a burgeoning industry that would both construct and represent a whiter, more modern nation. Key to this concept

⁸⁸ “saber manejar-o [a camera] com exatidão, habilidade, e presteza,” “saber aproveitar todas as oportunidades...” “ter arte...” “ser ativo...” Rossi, 10.

⁸⁹ “fazer a América” or “hacer la América” in Spanish. For a similar story of an immigrant film producer who represented himself as one who “made it in America,” see the story of Max Glucksman of Argentina in Mollie Lewis Nouwen, *Oy, My Buenos Aires Jewish Immigrants and the Creation of Argentine National Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).

⁹⁰ For an overview of the Italian contract labor experience in São Paulo, see Thomas Holloway, *Immigrants on the Land : Coffee and Society in São Paulo, 1886-1934* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

was the association between cinema, industrial technology, and Europeanness. The assumption that European workers were uniquely qualified to work in industrial sectors was embedded in the racist ideologies and discriminatory practices that promoted the employment of European immigrants in factories in the early twentieth century.⁹¹ Not only was the production of cinema (through the manipulation of camera equipment and lighting) a technological feat, but the exhibition of cinema, with the newest projection mechanisms, architectural constructions, and ventilation systems, was a technological feat as well. Although there was a domestic film industry in the 1910s and 1920s (as evidenced by Rossi Film),⁹² many cinema entrepreneurs found easier profits in the distribution and exhibition of films from Hollywood and Europe.⁹³ Given the marginal status of Brazilian films, these critics assessed the rise of film culture as a whole, including the distribution and exhibition of films and the sophistication of audiences, rather than just film production, as a symbol of modernity. In looking beyond production, these critics also needed to assess the contribution of the European, primarily Italian, immigrants who worked in the film distribution and exhibition sectors.

Immigrants of European descent, however, had a more ambivalent status in Brazilian society than Rossi's pamphlet suggested. Images of European immigrants in the popular press and in diplomatic records have vacillated between desirable immigrants who would whiten the Brazilian race, to undesirable troublemakers with dangerous

⁹¹ Andrews, *Blacks & Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988*. Andrews documents discrimination against blacks in the hiring practices of the industrial sectors in Brazil. He also, however, revises sociologist Florestan Fernandes' thesis that Afro-Brazilians, crippled by the legacy of slavery, were completely shut out of the growing twentieth-century economy in Brazil. Rather, Andrews demonstrates how Afro-Brazilians entered both the agricultural and industrial workforce in the 1920s, though they faced challenges to their efforts at social mobility, particularly in the ascension to white-collar occupations.

⁹² Vicente de Paula Araujo has actually labeled the years of 1898 to 1912 as the "belle époque" of Brazilian cinema, when Brazil's fledgeling studios produced more films than in later decades, in part due to the absence of strong competition from Hollywood. Araujo, *Bela Época do Cinema Brasileiro*.

⁹³ Johnson, *The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and the State*.

political beliefs. As the number of immigrants who came to Brazil swelled to nearly four million from 1882 to 1929, native Brazilians began to perceive immigrants to be competition for jobs. In addition, European immigrants differentiated themselves as white to distance themselves from slavery and from Afro-Brazilians, causing racial tensions and episodes of violence.⁹⁴ The same elites who looked to European immigrants to “whiten” Brazil grew increasingly wary of immigrants’ political activity and efforts to organize against poor working conditions.⁹⁵ Film critics and intellectuals also wavered between applauding the immigrants who, like Rossi, contributed to Brazilian cinema and others who were perceived to hinder the industry’s progress.

As was the case with theater, immigrants involved in the film industry imported films directly from Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Germany to show to audiences from the same regions. Advertisements written in Yiddish claimed that Hollywood films about Jewish-Americans would speak to “the soul of all Jews.”⁹⁶ When the German movie *Variété* (UFA, 1925) opened in São Paulo, the Cine República produced a bilingual program in Portuguese and German, with advertisements for German-Brazilian establishments like the “Teutonia” Restaurant-Bar.⁹⁷ Although this chapter focuses on Southern European (in particular Italian and Spanish) immigrants who represented the majority of immigrants and the vast majority of film entrepreneurs, non-European (or those perceived to be non-European) immigrants also participated in the production and exhibition of cinema. From the 1940s to the 1960s, Japanese immigrants and their

⁹⁴ Karl Monsma, “Symbolic Conflicts, Deadly Consequences: Fights between Italians and Blacks in Western Sao Paulo, 1888-1914,” *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 4 (2006): 1123–52, doi:10.1353/jsh.2006.0049. For tensions between European immigrants and Afro-Brazilians in São Paulo city, also see Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 56–64.

⁹⁵ Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present*. 77-81.

⁹⁶ Translation by Ariel Svarch from Yiddish. Advertisement *A Rosa da Irlandesa O Estado de São Paulo*. June 8, 1929. Pg. 25

⁹⁷ “Variété” Cine República Program, n.d., Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo, 1481-31.

descendants operated cinemas in the Japanese neighborhood of Liberdade in São Paulo, where they imported and exhibited films from the growing Japanese film industry. The primarily Japanese-descendent audience in these Liberdade cinemas demonstrates how cinema could form diasporic and ethnic spaces.⁹⁸

However, cinemas were also a place for immigrants from different regions and nationalities to mix together. Essayist Jacob Penteadó, for example, described how Italian performers, Middle Eastern audience members, and native Brazilians all congregated in cinemas that played a mix of European and Brazilian music. This mixing even characterized one of the first films produced in São Paulo in 1909, *O Crime da Mala* (The Crime of the Suitcase), which was produced by a Spanish immigrant, directed by an Italian immigrant, and was based on the shocking true crime of a Middle Eastern immigrant who murdered his business partner (and then tried to dispose of the corpse in a suitcase) after falling in love with his partner's wife.⁹⁹ However, there was another foreign element that characterized the cinema industry in the 1920s: Hollywood. During this time period, Hollywood grew as both an industry and as an art form. With bigger budgets, a streamlined production system, and a sophisticated aesthetic, Hollywood films began to represent a new industrial standard and became increasingly dominant in exhibition circuits around the globe; Brazil was no exception.¹⁰⁰ Although European and Brazilian films remained popular (Mexican and Argentine films gained popularity later, in the 1940s), film critics and intellectuals who wished to see the best films on screen often judged the success of immigrant exhibitors on their access to Hollywood.

⁹⁸ Kishimoto, Alexandre. "A Experiencia do cinema japonês no bairro da Liberdade." São Paulo SP Brasil: Universidade de São Paulo, 2009.

⁹⁹ Araujo, *Bela Época do Cinema Brasileiro*; Johnson, *The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and the State*.

¹⁰⁰ On the rise of Hollywood standards for aesthetics and industrial practices, see David Bordwell, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge, 1988).

While *Cinearte* writers, especially Pedro Lima, praised these immigrant entrepreneurs as hard-working assets to Brazilian nationhood when they made perceived improvements to Brazilian cinema, they derided the same entrepreneurs as ignorant, materialistic, and even unpatriotic if they inhibited Brazilian cinema in any way. Rather than weigh ethnic or national origin, cultural markers of acculturation or assimilation, Gonzaga and Lima determined Brazilianness or foreignness based on the individuals' professional contributions to domestic film culture. For example, the distribution and exhibition of the Brazilian film *The Bachelor's Wife* (*Esposa do Solteiro*) in 1927 became a matter of national allegiance. *The Bachelor's Wife* was the work of Paulo Benedetti, who produced a number of films in the 1920s, though all of limited success.¹⁰¹ *The Bachelor's Wife* was supposedly Brazil's first foray into sound film, but "the results were somewhat less than favorable."¹⁰² The quality of the film was bad enough that local exhibition companies refused to screen it. This provoked a writer of *Cinearte* to accuse the manager of one of these companies, Empresas Reunidas, of disloyalty to the Brazilian nation: "Empresas Reunidas of São Paulo has persisted in not showing the film *A Esposa do Solteiro* in their theaters... We don't know for sure the general manager's [of Empresas Reunidas] nationality, but whatever it is, he lives here in Brazil, and Brazilian or not, he should cooperate with us."¹⁰³ Empresas Reunidas was the same company that coffee baron Joaquim Franco de Mello criticized for being overly concerned with money and for the "uncivilized" practice of renting private boxes, discussed in chapter one.

¹⁰¹ Randal Johnson, *Brazilian Cinema*. (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1982), 46

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ "... As Empresas Reunidas de S. Paulo têm persistido em se negar passar nos seus Cinemas o film brasileiro 'A Esposa do Solteiro'.... Não sabemos ao certo, qual a nacionalidade do seu dirigente, mas seja qual fôr, é aqui no Brasil que elle vive e, portanto, brasileiro ou não, elle deve collaborar comnosco.." "Porque ainda não exhibiram "Esposa do Solteiro" em São Paulo?" in *Cinearte*. March 16, 1927, 55

De Mello had accused the company owners of belonging in “Morocco” rather than in Brazil. Lima similarly attacked the manager of the company for not being Brazilian because he refused to exhibit a Brazilian film. His comment made clear the limits of Brazil’s inclusiveness; while some immigrants were assets to the construction of a Brazilian cinema (and thus to a modern nation), others who might inhibit the industry were not considered Brazilian at all, even if they had actually been born in Brazil. Although Lima’s accusation had clearly xenophobic undertones, it also demonstrated some flexibility in the definition of national identity. Ultimately, Lima contended that it did not matter whether the manager of the *Empresas Reunidas* “was Brazilian or not,” he should “cooperate” and exhibit the Brazilian film. By this logic, those who were “not Brazilian” could become so through their contributions to Brazilian cinema.

This logic extended to the individual who ultimately agreed to screen *The Bachelor’s Wife*, Al Szekler, the American representative of United Pictures in Brazil. A column in *Cinearte* wrote that, “it is gestures like those of Al Szekler that give motivation and give us the certainty of success.”¹⁰⁴ A few weeks later, the magazine featured Szekler among “a series of interviews that we are publishing with our cinematographers.”¹⁰⁵ The magazine’s recognition of Szekler as one of “our” cinematographers¹⁰⁶ demonstrates the extent to which they accepted and adopted an American into the world of Brazilian cinema. It also demonstrates that one did not have to actually produce films to be considered a cinematographer or producer; making any kind of film available to the

¹⁰⁴ Pedro Lima. “A Agencia Matarazzo Não Distribuiu Afinal, ‘A Esposa do Solteiro.’” *Cinearte* July, 27, 1927, 74, pg. 4

¹⁰⁵ “serie de entrevistas que estamos publicando com os nossos cinematographistas.” “Ouvindo Al. Szekler” in *Cinearte*. April 6, 1927, 58. Pg. 8.

¹⁰⁶ The term cinematographer, or “cinematographista” in contemporary usage refers to specific technical role in film production. In the 1920s Brazil, however, “cinema” and “cinematographia” were used interchangeably and “cinematographista” was a general term for producers, exhibitors, and other roles in the industry.

Brazilian public through distribution or exhibition constituted an important contribution to Brazilian film culture. In addition, the interview featuring Szekler emphasized how close he was with the staff at *Cinearte*. The writer of the article stated that, “we did not ask for an ‘appointment’ [using ‘apontamento,’ a Brazilianization of the English word appointment] over the telephone... he is one of our comrades and we treat him without the ceremonies of ‘mister’ or ‘senhor’... just ‘hello, Szekler.’”¹⁰⁷ This was in contrast to the explicit anonymity of the manager of Empresas Reunidas, expressed as “we do not know for sure the general manager’s nationality.” Thus, an American expat could be a Brazilian filmmaker while a Brazilian exhibition company could be accused of disloyalty to the nation – all based on their perceived contribution to Brazilian film culture.¹⁰⁸

Although both Gilberto Rossi and writers at *Cinearte* portrayed Brazilian nation-building to be a somewhat inclusive process, stressing that “anyone can be a Rossi Film cameraman” and that it did not matter whether one was “Brazilian or not,” there were clearly limits to this inclusion. Specifically, while the writers and critics at *Cinearte* praised immigrant filmmakers and exhibitors when they fulfilled the image of the hard-working, explicitly European immigrant, they criticized the same individuals for being overly materialistic, ignorant, and foreign when they did not adhere to *Cinearte*’s vision for Brazilian film culture. Part of this was based on the class and ethnic differences between the intellectuals at *Cinearte* and the entrepreneurs working in the cinema industry. Maria Rita Galvão and Ismail Xavier have discussed the social differences

¹⁰⁷ “Não pedimos um ‘apontamento’ pelo telephone, nem é preciso dizer aqui que o Al Szekler nos ‘recebeu com a gentileza que o caracteriza.’ Elle é um camarada nosso e o tratamos sem a cerimonia do ‘Mister’ ou do ‘Senhor.’ Somente, ‘Hello Szekler’ e está muito bem. Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Al Szekler may have been Jewish-American, as many Hollywood executives were in this time period. However, Szekler’s ethnicity was never discussed as the writers at *Cinearte* focused on how he fit into Brazilian film culture.

between film intellectuals and film producers. Galvão describes the São Paulo cinema scene as, “above all a Brás, Bexiga and Barra Funda (Liberdade, Belém, Lapa, etc.) cinema.”¹⁰⁹ *Brás, Bexiga e Barra Funda* was the name of a collection of short stories written in 1927 describing working-class and immigrant (particularly Italian) life in these neighborhoods; Galvão uses this reference to depict the social milieu of *paulistano* film producers and exhibitors.¹¹⁰

In contrast, Mario Behring, one of the co-founders of *Cinearte* (and other magazines like *Kosmos* and *Para Todos*) was a former director of Brazil’s National Library and a public intellectual.¹¹¹ While Behring was a generation older than the other editors of *Cinearte* and less involved in the publication, Gonzaga, Lima, and the other editors were also public intellectuals. Their primary affiliations with cinema were as critics and reviewers, not as businessmen. The roles of critic and producer were not mutually exclusive; Gonzaga founded the Cinédia film studios in 1930 and Lima also dabbled in film production as a director. However, at *Cinearte*, cinema was discussed first and foremost as a form of art, a means of nation-building, and a tool of modernization, and only secondarily as a lucrative business.

To many of cinema entrepreneurs, however, Brazil’s nascent film industry was just that -- a business. The Spanish immigrant Francisco Serrador arrived in Brazil in 1887 and established what came to be one of Brazil’s largest exhibition companies, the Brazilian Cinema Company (*Companhia Cinematográfica do Brasil*, CCB). As the exhibitor who founded the upscale cinemas that became the “movie-land” (*Cinelândia*) in

¹⁰⁹ Galvão, *Crônica Do Cinema Paulistano*, 54. Also see Xavier, *Sétima arte, um culto moderno*.

¹¹⁰ Alcântara Machado, *Brás, Bexiga E Barra Funda*. 1927. Reprint. (São Paulo: Editora Saraiva, 2009).

¹¹¹ Tais Campelo Lucas, “Cinearte, O Cinema Brasileiro Em Revista (1926-1942),” *Mnemocine*, 2008, <http://www.mnemocine.com.br/index.php/cinema-categoria/25-historia-no-cinema-historia-do-cinema/122-cinearte-o-cinema-brasileiro-em-revista-1926-1942>.

Rio de Janeiro, most depictions of Serrador, whether contemporary or historical, have lauded his accomplishments. Historian Julio Moraes claims that many histories of Serrador border on hagiography. Serrador, like many other immigrant entrepreneurs, operated a variety of businesses, some less respectable than others, like peddling fruit, staging bullfights, and running a gambling house, before investing in cinema. However, his contributions to film exhibition and production have made him a near legend in academic and popular film histories. A bust of him even sits in the main plaza of *Cinelândia* in Rio de Janeiro.¹¹²

In the 1925 *Para Todos* article on the inauguration of the Cine Capitolio in Rio de Janeiro, most of the article was actually flowery praise for Serrador, not the cinema itself. The article reported that the theater's success "was due to the industriousness and deep knowledge of the tireless craftsman Mr. Francisco Serrador."¹¹³ This language was racially coded to highlight Serrador as European and as white.¹¹⁴ As pointed out by Barbara Weinstein, politicians and intellectuals of São Paulo state used terms like these to characterize the racial superiority of their state over other parts of Brazil. Another film magazine, *A Scena Muda*, referred to Serrador as "the man of steel" in 1932, reinforcing his image as a hard-working individual with command over industrial technology. The article in *Para Todos* also referred to him as a "craftsman," alluding to the image of a pre-industrial artisan. This was another perceived reason for Serrador's success--that his work contributed to cinema as both an industry and an art.

¹¹² Moraes, "A Valencian Tycoon in Brazil: The Economic Trajectory of Francisco Serrador Carbonell (1887-1921)."

¹¹³ "O Cinema Theatro Capitolio É O Início de Uma Nova Era Na Cinematographia."

¹¹⁴ Barbara Weinstein, "'Racializing Regional Difference: São Paulo vs. Brazil, 1932,' in N. Appelbaum, A. Macpherson and K. Roseblatt, Eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2003), Pp. 237-262.

The São Paulo film critic Otavio Gabus Mendes presented Serrador in a different light when he criticized him for screening the best films in sub-par movie theaters in São Paulo in 1925, the same year Serrador opened the Cine Capitolio in Rio de Janeiro. Although Serrador imported the latest films from Hollywood studios like Universal, Paramount, and Metro Goldwyn Meyer, he refused to show them in the city's best cinemas, which were owned and operated by different companies. Instead, Serrador's imports were only shown in several cinemas in neighborhoods outside of the city center, including in the working-class neighborhoods of Bras, Cambuci, and Bom Retiro. Because of a feud between Serrador and the rival Empresas Reunidas exhibition company, Mendes complained that, "those who live in the center of the city or in good neighborhoods must take a less than comfortable trip, forty minutes long, in a streetcar. It is absurd!"¹¹⁵ Mendes differentiated himself from Serrador, emphasizing his own status as an intellectual and Serrador's as a materialistic businessman. He wrote that, "I am not interested in the reason for the disharmony [between Serrador and the rival cinema exhibition companies], without doubt it is about money." While he makes no outright criticism of Serrador's immigrant background, Mendes clearly saw the popularity of cinema in immigrant neighborhoods as a threat to movie-going culture.

Mendes made another hierarchical distinction in his characterizations of cinemas and moviegoers in the center of the city versus those in the peripheral neighborhoods of Bras, Bom Retiro and Cambucí. He complained that these cinemas were "deficient cinemas, maybe not in size, but in the public that is in attendance."¹¹⁶ He added that this

¹¹⁵ "[os] que moravam no centro da cidade ou em bons bairros darem uma nada confortavel *passada* á bonde, de uns 40 minutos no minimo. É um absurdo!" G. M., "O Que Se Exhibe No Rio, O Que Se Exhibe Em São Paulo," *Para Todos*, July 4, 1925, 342. RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

¹¹⁶ "cinemas deficientes, não em tamanho, talvez, mas em publico quo os frequenta" Ibid.

forced “the select crowd to travel and risk hearing jeers” to watch Serrador’s films” and lamented that, “it is ridiculous that such good films be exhibited in such improper neighborhoods.”¹¹⁷ Terms like “deficient” and “improper” referred directly to the type of racial degeneracy that would affect Brazilians that would affect Brazilians exposed to poverty, vice, and disease. These terms also had strong racial connotations, and alluded to the eugenic degeneracy that would affect Brazilians exposed to poverty, vice, and disease. Using neighborhoods as shorthand for immigrant and working-class, he described how the people of “Cambucy, Bom Retiro, Braz, e Barra Funda” did not even appreciate good films, but would be happy with any low-quality western or comedy film. Mendes’s article laid out clear geographical and social hierarchies within movie-going culture in São Paulo. The “select public” lived in the city center and had a true appreciation for good films while those in the “improper” neighborhoods of Cambuci, Bom Retiro, Bras, and Barra Funda could not even differentiate between “any far-west film and something as superior as ‘Cytherea’” (a 1924 silent film that pioneered “Technicolor” technology). For the film critic, good taste in film was the marker of racial superiority. Rather than complain about the stale air of crowded cinemas, nearby smoke of factories, or the concentration of workers living in the tenements of Bras – all of which did alarm Brazilian eugenicists, the primary marker of racial superiority in his mind was good taste in cinema.

Mendes added that the Serrador who refused to show his films in the proper cinemas could not be the same Serrador who inaugurated the Cine Capitolio in Rio de Janeiro. His article demonstrates how Serrador’s reputation and identity fluctuated

¹¹⁷ O público selecto precisando andar muito e arriscar os ouvidos á inconveniencias para assistir films do ditos Senhores” Ibid.

depending on his perceived contributions or hindrances to local film culture. While he was the “industrious” and “tireless” worker in Rio de Janeiro where he had established modern cinemas like the Cine Capitolio, he was too closely affiliated with the “deficient,” and “improper” working-class, immigrant audiences in São Paulo.

Another columnist for *Para Todos* expressed his derision of cinema entrepreneurs, stating that the poor state of some Rio theaters should be expected, since cinema empresários were ignorant of the artistic points of cinema; they were only businessmen who cared about ticket sales. In contrast, however, he claimed that, “In America, grandiose America, it seems that these men were born especially to work in this type of business. Here, bar-owners, dry goods storeowners, peddlers and shoeshiners and other men without business acumen or enterprise, comprise the majority of cinema owners.”¹¹⁸ The columnist Álvaro Rocha was erroneous in this assumption; many U.S. cinema owners, like Brazilian ones, were retailers and small businessmen who invested in a new sector. Anecdotes about cinema entrepreneurs like Samuel “Roxy” Rothafel, who worked as a traveling bookseller before setting up a makeshift cinema in the back of a bar, mirrored the experiences of Italian and Spanish immigrants who did the same in Brazil.¹¹⁹ These men, whom Rocha believed to “have been born” to work in cinema, were often immigrants or first-generation Americans of Eastern European, Jewish descent. Jewish descendents also led film industries outside of the U.S. Matthew Karush and

¹¹⁸ “Na America, na grandiosa America, ate parece que estes homens nascem especiaes para se dedicarem a este ramo de negocio. Aqui, os botequineiros, varegistas de seccos e molhados, mascates, engraxates e muito outros homens sem tino adminitrativo nem progressita, são na maioria, os proprietarios dos nossos cinemas. Álvaro Rocha “O que se exhibe no Rio.” 1925-09-12 pg. 56 Although the column was signed “A.R.,” Lucas points out that A.R. was Álvaro Rocha. Tais Campelo Lucas, *Cinearte: O Cinema Brasileiro Em Revista (1926-1942)* (Master's Thesis, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2005), 70, http://www1.capes.gov.br/teses/pt/2005_mest_uff_tais_campelo.pdf.

¹¹⁹ Ross Melnick, “Rethinking Rothafel: Roxy’s Forgotten Legacy,” *The Moving Image* 3, no. 2 (2003): 62–95, doi:10.1353/mov.2003.0034.

Mollie Lewis, for example, have both analyzed the film producer and exhibitor Max Gluckman, a Jewish immigrant in Buenos Aires who facilitated the popularity of tango music and films in 1930s Argentina.¹²⁰ Gluckman's rise from poverty to wealth through his work in the film industry mirrored similar histories of the Jewish-Americans who established, to even greater financial success and fame, the major Hollywood studios in the United States in the 1910s to 1930s.¹²¹ Judith Thiessen's work shows how this was not a simple rags-to-riches story. Jewish-American film exhibitors in the 1900s were scorned by their community and depicted in the ethnic press as uneducated, tasteless, and even un-Jewish jesters.¹²² Although the columnist A.R. did not make any explicit reference to the presence of immigrants in either the U.S. or the Brazilian exhibition industry, he racialized the criteria of appropriate businessmen by claiming that some men were "born especially" to work in cinema, and others were not. Whether A.R. believed it was their perceived Jewishness, whiteness, or North Americanness that destined Hollywood producers to work in the film industry, is unclear. However, whatever skill made them innately appropriate for cinema, Brazilian businessmen did not have it.¹²³

In fact, in direct opposition to the positive depictions of Gilberto Rossi and Francisco Serrador, the Europeaness of some cinema entrepreneurs sometimes made them particularly guilty members of the film community. Lima claimed that São Paulo

¹²⁰ Matthew B Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Mollie Lewis, *Con Men, Cooks, and Cinema Kings: Popular Culture and Jewish Identities in Buenos Aires, 1905-1930* (ProQuest, 2008).

¹²¹ Melnick, "Rethinking Rothafel"; Lary May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (University of Chicago Press, 2002); Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, 1st Anchor books ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

¹²² Judith Thissen "Next Year at the Moving Pictures: Cinema and Social Change in the Jewish Immigrant Community" in Maltby, *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema*.

¹²³ On the tenuous status of Jewish "whiteness" in Brazil, see Jeffrey Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). On Jewish whiteness in the U.S., see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Harvard University Press Cambridge, MA, 1998); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

had the most numerous fans of Brazilian cinema, and the largest number of people who wanted to participate in the industry. Yet, by “extraordinary contrast,” São Paulo was also the “preferred paradise for conmen and those with bad intentions” who sought to exploit the “good faith and ignorance” of these eager movie fans.¹²⁴ Posing as producers and acting coaches with false careers in European cinema, these conmen convinced movie fans to sign up for expensive acting classes. Lima complained that “foreign adventurers, without a penny to their name, who claimed to hail from famous foreign studios, generally German or Italian, where they were employees or where that they had actually never even stepped foot in...” were the perpetrators of such crimes.¹²⁵ Because of them, fake film schools “proliferated at a shocking rate.” Lima, alluding to the white slavery scare and the movie-struck girls who risked becoming prostitutes, added, “And if it is a young woman [who gets scammed by the fake school] we know the result that many have had when they are too trusting of the promises and lessons of these ‘teachers.’”¹²⁶

“The immigrant entrepreneurs thus presented a double-edged sword for the film intellectuals and critics at *Para Todos* and *Cinearte* who believed that cinema could represent and reproduce a more modern Brazil. While some like Serrador might be “industrious or tireless,” film critics and intellectuals made less successful film exhibitors the target of nativist and xenophobic scorn. The status of a European immigrant as either desirable or undesirable was deeply tied to the status of the cinemas they owned and the films they exhibited. The Europeanness of “desirable” immigrants like Gilberto Rossi

¹²⁴ “o paraíso preferido de todos os exploradores e de todos os mal intencionados...;” “a boa fé ou a ignorância” Pedro Lima “Cinema Brasileiro” in *Cinearte*, September 19, 1928, no. 134, pg. 6

¹²⁵ “... estrangeiros aventureiros sem eira nem beira, que aqui aportam procedidos de recomendações dos Studios europeus, geralmente germanicos ou italianos, onde foram carregadores ou nunca pisaram, e com as ques conseguem ludibriar aos incautos.” *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Então se for moça, nós sabemos o resultado que têm tido muitas, confiando demasiado nas promessas e nas lições destes ‘professores.’ *Ibid.*

contributed to an idealized view of an inclusive Brazilian nation constructed by hard-working immigrants. However, Pedro Lima blamed comen from Germany and Italy of scamming aspiring actors, demonstrating how Europeanness made these men undesirable immigrants. Based on their contributions to Brazilian film culture, immigrants like Francisco Serrador could be considered assets to modern Brazil, or as impediments to its forward progress.

Conclusion:

As the consumers and exhibitors of cinema in Brazil, movie-going women and immigrant film entrepreneurs were associated with a medium that was both attractively and dangerously modern. Film intellectuals', writers', and artists' interpretations of these moviegoers and movie-makers demonstrated their ambivalence regarding foreign influence, cosmopolitanism, and modernity in Brazil. They also expressed this ambivalence through a racialized discourse in which identity was flexible yet deeply tied to a rigid racial and moral hierarchy. Artists depicted *melindrosas* with light-colored skin, but the racial status of these cartoonish women fluctuated according to their behavior in the street. French "mademoiselles" could be the epitome of sophistication or moral decadence, depending upon their behavior at the movies. Similarly, European film exhibitors could be Brazil's best hope for progress, or foreign exploiters who were racially degenerate, contingent on their perceived contributions to the Brazilian film industry. Both women and immigrants were a screen on which to project the aspirations and concerns regarding the effects of cinema and modernity in Brazil.

Chapter 4: Hollywood Letters and Bodies: *Fotogenia* and the Production of Film Culture in 1920s Brazil

Rio de Janeiro.... de..... de 1921

Dear Sir, (Dear Madam)

As, on account of your admirable mastery of the dramatical art, you are one of the greatest idols of the Brazilian cinema public and I one of the most enthusiastic worshippers at your shrine. I should consider it a great honor and unsurpassable pleasure if you kindly sent me your autograph and photograph.
Anticipating you my heartiest thanks,

I am, dear Sir (Dear Madam).

Yours very truly

X.

*Name and address (nome e endereço)*¹

Para Todos, the leisure magazine discussed in chapter three, printed the above letter along with the Hollywood gossip, local society news, and short stories featured in the weekly publication. Written in English, the letter was a sample for Brazilian fans to send to their favorite Hollywood stars. One might interpret this letter as an example of cultural imperialism, of Hollywood's colonization of Brazilian hearts and even souls. Fans were "worshippers at [the] shrine" of Hollywood, parroting English phrases in praise of movies, revealing the limits of Brazilian arts instead of amplifying them. As discussed in the previous chapter, artists, writers, and film critics criticized female moviegoers, sometimes jokingly, sometimes acerbically, for their perceived overconsumption of foreign products, which had repercussions for their moral and racial statuses.

¹ Oswaldo Serpa, "Cartas Para Estrelas," *Para Todos*, April 9, 1921, 121. RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

Fans, however, did not only consume “foreign” media, they participated in and produced transnational film culture. *Para Todos* printed an article along with the letter explaining how within their letters, fans in the U.S. not only asked for autographs, but sent proposals of marriage, and requested employment, old clothing, money, and locks of hair. Actress Betty Blythe poked fun at these intrusive requests and “inconvenient questions” from fans, establishing rules such as, “Don’t propose marriage. She might accept and you will be disappointed.”²

Moralists around the world worried how Hollywood had conquered “movie-struck” fans, particularly women, who spent their days at the movies, dreaming of stardom and romance. Fan practices, however, were not only about consumption, but about the production of culture and identities. Early work on Hollywood fandom abroad include Jackie Stacey’s *Star Gazing* and Helen Taylor’s *Scarlett’s Women*, both which focus on how female spectators in post-World War II Britain interpreted and understood Hollywood films.³ Taylor finds, for example, that British women responded to *Gone with the Wind* (MGM, 1941) because they felt they could identify with Scarlett O’Hara’s experience in the post-Civil War United States. In Brazil, moviegoers made similar interpretations and connections. Additionally, the most enthusiastic fans wrote letters to actors, contributed to amateur film criticism in local film magazines, entered beauty contests, took acting lessons, and even starred in domestic films. When dreaming of the movies, they did not just “worship” at the Hollywood shrine, they also aspired to conquer Hollywood through “fotogenia,” an embodiment of cinematic aesthetics that would relocate the center of cultural production from Hollywood to Brazil. Through fan

² “Não lhe proponhas casamento. Ella pode aceitar e teres depois uma desillusão.” Ibid.

³ Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (Routledge, 1994); Helen Taylor, *Scarlett’s Women: Gone with the Wind and Its Female Fans* (Rutgers University Press, 1989).

practices, moviegoers were not just “movie-struck,” they participated in transnational film culture.

While the previous chapter focused on representations of moviegoers, this chapter uses fan letters, reader letters submitted to *Para Todos*, and film school applications, to examine how moviegoers interpreted the films they saw and the dreams they had. These sources provide fragments of how everyday moviegoers thought about the movies in Brazil and affirmed their place within global culture movie-going. In addition, the examination of personal letters and the cultural production of two of São Paulo’s most prominent female figures reveal how movie fandom could evolve over a lifespan. As a communist, the modernist writer Patricia Galvão became an outspoken critic of Hollywood cinema in Brazilian society, utilizing her own past as a “movie-struck” girl to satirize and criticize the effect of cinema on workers’ consciousness. Leonor Mendes de Barros, the first lady of São Paulo in the mid-twentieth century (husband Adhemar de Barros was one of the key figures of São Paulo politics) evolved from a movie-going housewife to a symbol of saintly motherhood in state-sponsored newsreels and propaganda. Though espousing opposite poles of the political spectrum, both demonstrated an extreme example of how movie fandom could evolve into intense cultural production, and how “movie-struck” fans could eventually become critics and moralizers of gendered leisure habits.

“Los Angeles is my Homeland”: Embodying *Fotogenia* and Interpreting Hollywood Whiteness

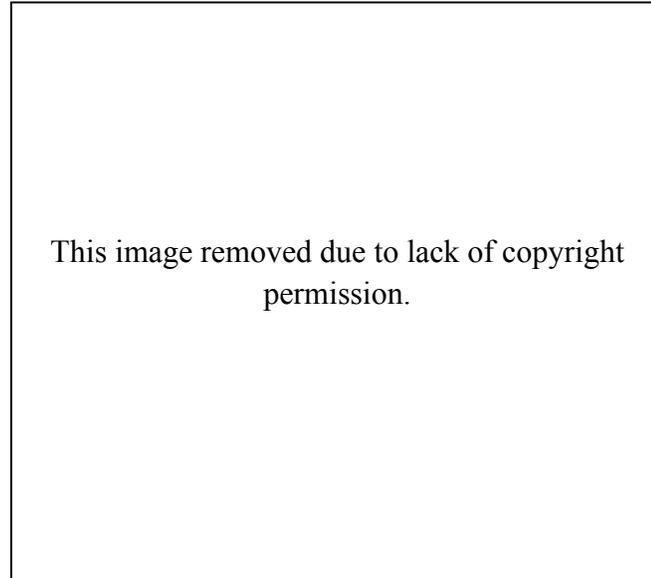


Figure 30:

-Want to know something? Marcolina has dedicated herself to the cinema.
 -And she has something going?
 -It seems like it. She got a position... in the box office
 “A Glory Outside the Norm”

Source: J. Carlos, “Uma Gloria Fora Da Norma,” *Para Todos*, October 25, 1925, No. 358, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

In the comic above, several figures, representing the *melindrosa*, or Brazilian Modern Girl, as discussed in chapter two, and the male equivalent, the *almofadinha*, discuss a friend’s dream of becoming a movie star.⁴ Marcolina “dedicates herself to cinema,” and finds a position in the industry, but only in the box office instead of on the screen. Entitled “A Glory Outside the Norm,” it pokes fun at the gap between one’s dreams of stardom and the reality of its elusiveness. Marcolina, though “dedicating herself” to cinema like a disciple follows a prophet, is the dupe of her own fantasies and the target of her friend’s jokes. The image of the “movie-struck girl” was one that

⁴ Although I have focused on the “melindrosa” and have been unable to discuss the “almofadinha,” more on both figures can be found in Beatriz Resende, “Melindrosa e Almofadinha. Cock-Tail e Aranha-Céo. Imagens de Uma Literatura Art-Déco.”, *Literatura Art-Déco*, n.d.

circulated both in Brazil and in the U.S. in magazines, films, novels, and cautionary tales: an emotional, nearly hysterical young woman enchanted by Hollywood actors (both male and female) and her own dreams of stardom. In the U.S. context, Shelly Stamp describes the caricature of “the movie-struck girl” as “caught between her fascination with stories on screen and a narcissistic absorption in her own image.”⁵ Stamp and Hillary Hallett have shown, however, that women’s dreams of Hollywood challenged patriarchal gender norms as they pursued their own desires in leisure and profession, often in defiance of their parents’ or other moralists’ wishes.⁶

Although the J. Carlos cartoon above makes fun of the “movie-struck” Marcolina as the deluded victim of her own desires, a short story by Maria Eugenia Celso, a twentieth-century writer from Minas Gerais, provides a more complex portrait of the movie-struck girl. Celso questions issues such as Hollywood and cultural imperialism, sexuality and relationships of power, and how movie fandom might challenge gender roles rather than confirm stereotypes of women’s perceived irrational obsession with movies. The title of Celso’s story is “Photogenic” (*Photogênica*), and it narrates an encounter with a woman whose goal is to “make rivers of money” and become a Hollywood star.⁷

In Celso’s crônica, “fotogenica” has multiple, ambiguous meanings that go beyond the body and extend to movement and habit: smiles, “looks,” a way of speaking, and above all, an ability to attract and arrest attention. Magazines like *Para Todos* popularized the concept of *fotogenia* as an ideal Hollywood aesthetic. In Celso’s story, an

⁵ Stamp, *Movie-Struck Girls : Women and Motion Picture Culture after the Nickelodeon*. Pg. 8

⁶ Stamp, Hallett, *Go West, Young Women!*.

⁷ “Conto ganhar rios de dinheiro.” Maria Eugenia Celso, “A Crayon: Photogenica,” *Para Todos*, October 25, 1925, No. 358, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

individual's *fotogenia* is simultaneously a performance and an embodiment of these aesthetic ideals. The story begins when the narrator stops in the middle of the street, "stunned from the elegance" of a woman's "irresistible smile" and "indescribable" clothes. The woman asks the narrator (whose gender is ambiguous) "do you think I'm photogenic? ... that is to say, with a way for the movies, capable of starring in a film, apt for the screen." She then describes how she has trained herself to become photogenic: "I have studied with infinite patience the physique, the aesthetics, the art of cinema artists... everybody thinks I go to the cinema to flirt... how childish! I am a pure student; I am taking a cinema course, studying the attitudes and expressions, becoming accustomed to the environment, practicing the life that will be mine someday." In her description of practicing and performing Hollywood mannerisms, the movie-struck woman highlights the performativity of *fotogenia* and the Hollywood aesthetic, emphasizing that being "photogenic" it is not a biological or natural state of beauty, but a collection of studied affectations.

In a study of contemporary beauty pageants in the Central American Chinese diasporic community, Lok Siu has found that contestants similarly study and imitate what they perceive as "Chinese" mannerisms. The 1995 "Queen of the Chinese Colony" reported that, to prepare for her own performances, she studied videos of women in Hong Kong beauty pageants and practiced how they moved and walked.⁸ Film scholars have also examined performances of ethnicity, race, and gender, utilizing Judith Butler's concept of gender "masquerade" to demonstrate how performance can destabilize these identities as "natural." Pamela Robertson, for example, studies Hollywood actress Mae

⁸ Lok C. D. Siu, "Queen of the Chinese Colony: Gender, Nation, and Belonging in Diaspora," *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (2005): 511–42, doi:10.1353/anq.2005.0041.

West and other female actresses whose hyperfeminized and hypersexualized bodies and costumes reveal the performativity of gendered identity.⁹ Michael Rogin studies blackface in 1920s films as a type of racial masquerade but finds that, by performing in blackface, Jewish-American actors like Al Jolson affirmed their “natural” identity as white.¹⁰ Rogin’s analysis emphasizes that while performance reveals gender/race/ethnicity as artificial or “unnatural,” these masquerades can also claim the “underlying” identity (i.e. the male underneath the drag, the whiteness underneath the blackface) as “natural” or real. Anne McClintock’s study of cross-dressing and sadomasochism in colonial Africa also stresses that it is overly derivative to assume that all forms of mimicry, such as transvestism and passing, are disruptive acts.¹¹

Although the “photogenic” woman in Celso’s story makes it clear that she has studied Hollywood mannerisms and that her “fotogenia” is a performance, she also claims that she embodies this Hollywood ideal. She asks, “Why wouldn’t I enjoy this *natural* photogenia?” (my emphasis) and declares, “Los Angeles is the fatherland of my dreams... life will only become meaningful once I enter a Hollywood studio.” She adds that, “whoever is born photogenic can come from a cradle in a pigsty or even no cradle at all. They bring fortune in their skin, as they say” and at the end of the story, she offers the narrator “the most *yankee* of *shake-hands*.”¹² In “studying” Hollywood mannerisms, she

⁹ Robertson, *Guilty Pleasures: Feminist Camp from Mae West to Madonna*. See pages 9-15 for Robertson’s reading of Judith Butler’s theories on gender performativity. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

¹⁰ Michael Rogin, “Making America Home: Racial Masquerade and Ethnic Assimilation in the Transition to Talking Pictures,” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 3 (1992): 1050–77.

¹¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Routledge, 2013). 66–69.

¹² “Porque não aproveitaria essa fotogenia natural?” “Los Angeles representa a patria de meus sonhos... só tendo verdadeira significação para mim a existencia quando me vir num studio de Hollywood.” “Quem nasce photogenica pode ter o berço numa pocilga ou mesmo não ter berço nenhum, traz a fortuna

not only performs fotogenia, she embodies it through gestures and habits. She exhibits that she is “naturally” photogenic; it does not matter where or how she was born; being photogenic is in her “skin.”

In a study of the *travesti* (persons who are sexed male, use body modification and dress to appear feminine) community in Salvador, Don Kulick argues that *travestis* interpret their body modification and feminine clothing not as a performance or masquerade of gender, but as an “embodiment” of homosexuality. Kulick’s informants interpret all males who experience same-sex desire but appear male to be disguising their true identity, whereas artfully employing markers of femininity on the body is the truest way to express male homosexuality, and makes *travestis* even more feminine than “real women.” “Travestis are asserting that the only true homosexuality is the one enacted and embodied by themselves,” Kulick writes.¹³ In contrast to Butler’s interpretation of drag performance as a masquerade, which reveals the artifice of gender or race, *travestis* describe their femininity as simultaneously constructed but natural, an expression of their true identity.

The photogenic woman in Celso’s story also affirms that her studied affectations are an expression of her “natural” identity as photogenic, a Hollywood ideal of what was modern and cosmopolitan. *Fotogenia* is not just expressed on the body, in the color of skin or in the precise measurements of height and weight; it includes aspects of movement, habit, and sexual appeal. To exemplify her *fotogenia*, the woman claims that she wants to play a “vamp” on screen. The “vamp” was an archetype in Hollywood cinema in the 1910s and 1920s, the overtly sexual woman who seduced her male victims,

na pelle por assim dizer. É uma favorita dos deuses.” “apertando-me a mão no mais yankee dos *shake-hands*.” Quotes not in this order in the story.

¹³ Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*, 225.

practically hypnotizing them with her allure. Janet Staiger writes that, “the character of the vamp seems almost to be merely a foil for an extensive examination of the power of sex, women’s rights in this new age...”¹⁴ In the U.S. context, vamps were often played by foreign or otherwise “exotic” actresses and thus played to North American social anxieties regarding racial mixing.¹⁵

The photogenic woman, showing off her skills as a vamp, then “smiled so enticingly at an unwary passerby that he, bewildered, stepped her way, stopping transfixed at the edge of the sidewalk a few feet away.” She then laughed, “Look at that fool eating me with his eyes” and added that if she failed to become a vamp on screen, she would take revenge by becoming a vamp in real life: “That might be even more fun!”¹⁶ The encounter with the “bewildered,” “transfixed” fool reverses Laura Mulvey’s famous paradigm of the “male gaze” in which women are the passive objects of desire and men are the active viewers and agents. In this scenario, the “desired object” invites and even laughs at the male gaze.¹⁷ The scene also suggests how the possession of *fotogenia* might destabilize the power dynamics between Hollywood and Brazil.

As discussed in previous chapters, Hollywood was an ascendant industry in the 1910s, and by the 1920s, dominated movie screens around the world, including Brazil.¹⁸

Intellectuals, politicians, and moralists, as they did in other countries, worried about the

¹⁴ Janet Staiger, *Bad Women: The Regulation of Female Sexuality in Early American Cinema* (U of Minnesota Press, 1995), 148.

¹⁵ For an examination of how the mixed-race identity of the vamp was translated abroad, in this case in 1920s Japanese literature, see Deborah Shamoan, “The Modern Girl and the Vamp: Hollywood Film in Tanizaki Jun’ichirô’s Early Novels,” *Positions* 20, no. 4 (September 21, 2012): 1067–93, doi:10.1215/10679847-1717672.

¹⁶ “Repare como aquela pateta me está comendo com os olhos... Nem suspeita que é uma futura Nita Naldi que se atreve a grelar... se eu não conseguir se vamp na tela, sabe qual tem de ser a minha vingança?.. Serei vamp na vida... Pensando bem, talvez seja até mais divertido!” Celso, “Photogenica.”

¹⁷ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, 1997, 438–48.

¹⁸ Vasey, *The World according to Hollywood, 1918-1939*.

effect that Hollywood films would have on the Brazilian population, from the dangers of introducing English to an under-educated, Portuguese-speaking population, to the psychological effects of violence in cowboy films, to the exposure of young children to the spectacle of kissing and romance.¹⁹ Was Celso's story of the "photogenic" woman another example of how Hollywood had colonized not only the minds, but also the bodies and habits of the Brazilian population?

While this is certainly one interpretation, another perspective is that the woman's *fotogenia* is, like the femininity of *travestis*, as real and natural as she understands it to be. Although the tone of Celso's story is slightly mocking ("have you really thought about this?" asks the narrator of the woman's plan to become a star), it also underscores the woman's ability to attract attention; even the narrator stops in the middle of the street to admire her.²⁰ With this *fotogenia*, her "irresistible smile" and how she "walks away vamp-iracally," she plans not to be colonized by Hollywood, but to conquer it.²¹ In emulating the vamp, an archetype that is recognizably foreign and exotic, she realigns Hollywood's infatuation with the exotic "other" to her advantage. Through *fotogenia*, men and women in Brazil could become even more modern and compelling than their Hollywood counterparts.

While ridiculing the "photogenic" woman for her delusions of stardom, Celso's story nevertheless presents an alternative perspective on the movie-struck girl. Rather

¹⁹ *Cinearte* addressed and criticized concerns that English-language talkies would corrupt Brazilian Portuguese; see *Cinearte* 12/04/1929 No. 198, pg. 3. For an analysis of "bad cinema" and how it might be counteracted by "good cinema," see Maria Saliba, *Cinema Contra Cinema: O Cinema Educativo de Canuto Mendes, 1922-1931*, 1a ed. (São Paulo SP Brasil: Annablume; FAPESP, 2003). For a short story on children scandalously imitating Hollywood scenes of kissing, see Lellis Vieira, "Os Noivinhos," *Correio Paulistano*, December 12, 1921, microfilm, CCSP. For the work of Jonathas Serrano on the moral dangers and benefits of cinema, see Jonathas Serrano and Francisco Venancio Filho, *Cinema e Educação* (São Paulo: Comp. Melhoramentos de S. Paulo, 1930).

²⁰ "Mas já pensou, já refletiu?" Celso, "Photogenica"

²¹ "lá se foi vampiricamente" Celso, "Photogenica"

than naïve and frivolous, she was determined, studious, and had passionate career aspirations. Far from the innocent victim of exploitive producers and agents, she was conscious of her own attractiveness and ability to seduce, even bewilder, men and women alike. The crônica demonstrates how movie fandom was an arena for young women to explore sexuality, ambition, and even nationality, reshaping their identity and their behavior to achieve a professional “calling.” Although she was a caricature, some of these aspects of the fictional “photogenic” beauty reverberated through the letters of actual men and women who maintained aspirations of becoming Hollywood stars.

Fotogenia, Color, and Race

According to Ismail Xavier, the magazine *Cinearte* popularized the idea of “fotogenia” as a type of beauty associated with luxury, hygiene, modernity and other values represented and celebrated in Hollywood films.²² “Fotogenia” established gendered standards of beauty, health, wealth, and morality; standards that were mostly limited to a small elite of white, upper-class Brazilians. Expanding upon Xavier’s analysis, film scholar Isabella Goulart has written a fascinating study of the concept of “fotogenia” through the lens of Hollywood and domestic movie studio beauty contests in Brazil. Goulart writes that, bound up in the concept of “fotogenia” was an “irrefutable quality,” or a “visible character” that, although alluding to a mysterious type of indefinable charm, was actually contained within specific class, ethnic, and racial categories.²³ Specifically, Goulart analyzes the language and visual representations of the “photogenic” body in an international beauty contest that Fox Film Studios held in Brazil,

²² Ismail Xavier, *Sétima arte, um culto moderno: o idealismo estético e o cinema* (Editora Perspectiva, 1978), 179

²³ Isabella Regina Oliveira Goulart, “A ilusão da imagem: o sonho do estrelismo brasileiro em Hollywood” (master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2013), 35, <http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/27/27161/tde-06052014-104345/>.

Argentina, and Chile in 1926. Goulart finds that in Brazil, although advertisements for the “Fox Film Feminine and Masculine Photogenic Beauty Contest” claimed that applicants could be from any class or regional background, they in fact had to be light-skinned, as well as a certain height, weight, and age; women should be young and thin; men should be “robust” and athletic-- all characteristics oriented towards a Hollywood aesthetic of modern beauty, and limited to white, elite and middle-class men and women in Brazil.²⁴

Explicit in advertisements for the contest was the requirement that men and women be “white, of Latin blood” (*branco, de sangue latino*).²⁵ The phrase sums up the contradictions inherent in the concept of white skin in Hollywood. Goulart and others point out the popularity of “latin” actors like Rudolph Valentino, Ramon Navarro, Dolores del Rio, and Lupe Velez during the era of silent cinema. Clara Rodriguez argues that the high contrast of black and white films allowed for “Latin” actors with darker skin to appear lighter.²⁶ However, Gwendolyn Foster points out that during the silent film era, all actors, including those who had light-colored skin, wore a thick slab of white face paint to appear “whiter than white” in black and white films. Foster argues that this “whiteface” constructed whiteness as a normative, sanitized identity devoid of ethnicity.²⁷ Despite Rodriguez’, Foster’s, and even Goulart’s emphasis on white skin tone as a signifier of racial whiteness, white powder was also used to convey ethnicity and exotic foreign identities in Hollywood. Even in his famous turn as a Middle Eastern sheik,

²⁴ Ibid., 36.

²⁵ “Quem Quer Ser Artista Do Fox?,” *Cinearte*, September 1, 1926, No. 27, pg. 5. Biblioteca Digital das Artes do Espetáculo. Museu Lasar Segall

²⁶ Clara E. Rodríguez, *Heroes, Lovers, and Others: The Story of Latinos in Hollywood* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

²⁷ Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, *Performing Whiteness: Postmodern Re/constructions in the Cinema* (SUNY Press, 2012).

Italian star Rudolph Valentino wore a thick pancake of white face makeup. In fact, the use of white face powder became a significant mark of not only his ethnic otherness, but of an exotic, feminized sexuality. An editorial in the Chicago Tribune famously called Valentino a “pink powder puff” and accused him of being too feminine because of the face powder and elaborate costumes he used to portray Middle Eastern, French, and Argentine characters.²⁸

One of the sponsors of the Fox Film Beauty contest, the Mendel Perfumery, pledged a thousand *milreis* to the female winner of the contest. In addition, the perfumery encouraged female applicants to use their products. “Before posing for this important contest, improve the attractiveness of your face using: “‘Revelations of the Harem’ Rice Face Powder” which will whiten your skin, beautifying it, without any trace of having used artifice.”²⁹ Goulart points out that the Mendel Perfumery emphasized that their makeup looked “natural,” hiding dark skin in a “natural” process of whitening (much like how eugenicists posited that the Brazilian population would “naturally” become whiter through eugenics).³⁰ However, Mendel Perfumery named their rice powder “Revelations of the Harem,” an illusion to an imagined Middle East that capitalized upon the popularity of orientalist films like Valentino’s *The Sheik*. The term “harem” also alluded to an image of Middle Eastern sexuality that Hollywood’s audiences perceived to be uninhibited and illicit. In *The Sheik*, Valentino’s character kidnaps and attempts to rape the female lead. Although he wins her over when he does not rape her (therefore proving his moral worthiness), Valentino vaulted to stardom by capitalizing on the image of the passionate “Latin lover.”

²⁸ Emily Wortis Leider, *Dark Lover: The Life and Death of Rudolph Valentino* (Macmillan, 2004).

²⁹ “Concurso da ‘Fox-Film’” *Cinearte*

³⁰ Goulart, “A ilusão da imagem.”

In the context of black and white Hollywood films, light-colored skin was an ambiguous marker of race and ethnicity in that “everyone” wore heavy white makeup. The 1930 Motion Picture Code prohibited representations of miscegenation in Hollywood films; thus any romantic lead had to be by default “white” in Hollywood films. Even allusions to miscegenation were represented by white actors in blackface, as even the visual depiction of racially black and white actors together was taboo. Thus Rudolph Valentino was a Middle Eastern sheik who was simultaneously foreign, exotic, primitive, overtly sexual (all characteristics associated with “non-white”), but also “white” and light-skinned. The Fox Film Beauty Contest sought the same contradictory identity in their call for actors who were “white, with Latin blood.” In this amplified definition of whiteness, however, there was a definite boundary: it did not include black or Afro-descendent individuals, who were excluded from the normative category of “everyone.”

Although the classic analyses of racial categorization in Brazil have emphasized phenotype over heredity, and culture, behavior, and education over phenotype, the concept of fotogenia emphasized body and movement as well: height, weight, hairstyles, “looks,” and gestures. Through modification of skin, body, and practiced movements, one could approximate a racially ambiguous Hollywood aesthetic and become naturally photogenic. As Celso describes, fotogenia was “in the skin” (and not in the “blood,” the word that Fox Films used) simultaneously emphasizing the mutability of the term and the hard boundary it drew to exclude those whose skin was deemed too dark.

Real Stars Embodying Fotogenia

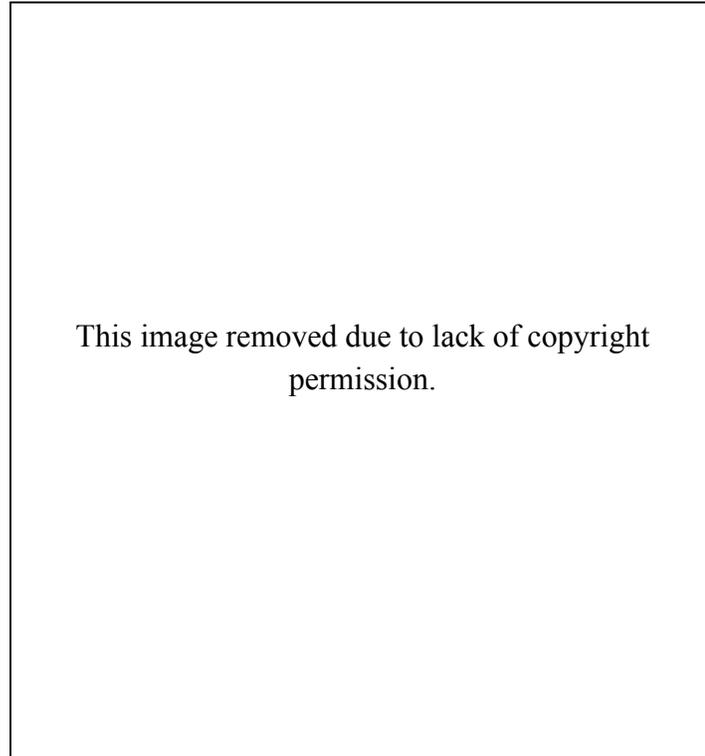


Figure 31: What's this, Juventino? Do you have something in your eyes? What's with the bicycle?
 -Hey dad, this is the style. Glasses like Harold Lloyd
 -And your shoes, my son, they are like Charlie Chaplin?
 Source: J. Carlos, "Untitled" in *Para Todos*, April 5, 1924, No. 277. RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo

Women were not the only ones to become “movie-struck.” As the J. Carlos cartoon above illustrates, young men also copied the fashions and styles of Hollywood actors. The young man wears glasses like Harold Lloyd, a comic actor who wore signature thick-framed glasses and a straw hat, and floppy shoes like Charlie Chaplin. The overall effect, as his father insinuates, is that in mimicking these famous comic actors, the young man looks like a clown.

Men, as well as women, dreamt of and pursued careers in acting. Goulart's study of the Fox Film Beauty contest reveals that applications from men far outnumbered applications from women. While the mainstream press reported conflicting numbers of

applicants, from 450 men and 150 women, to 1200 men and 840 women, most of the applicants were clearly men.³¹ Goulart reports that some advertisements for the beauty contest specified that youths should submit applications with their parents' consent, and married women, with their husband's consent; this suggests the social constraints surrounding women's participation in public activities like acting and beauty contests.³²

The ultimate winners of the contest were Lia Torá and Olympio Guilherme. Their grand prize was a trip to Hollywood and contract to appear in Fox films. Torá achieved very limited success, starring in the feature length film, *A Veiled Woman* (1929) before the growth of sound film ended her short-lived Hollywood career. She did, however, continue to act in Spanish-language films produced in the U.S. in the 1930s.³³ Guilherme, a film journalist and correspondent for *Cinearte*, returned to Brazil embittered by his experience, a disillusion he detailed in his fictionalized memoir *Hollywood* (1932).³⁴

Applications for the Fox Film beauty contest, as well as for other beauty pageants and film academies, provide a glimpse into the expressed motivations of the men and women who dreamt of Hollywood stardom. Some of the applicants for the Fox Film contest, including the ultimate winners, were already actors in the Brazilian film industry.³⁵ According to Maria Rita Galvão, the limited means and personnel of Brazilian cinema meant that actors were also producers, scriptwriters, critics, directors, or whatever role that needed to be filled in the course of production.³⁶ This meant however, that few

³¹ Goulart, 42.

³² Goulart, 38.

³³ Jason Borge, "Olympio Guilherme: Hollywood Actor, Auteur and Author," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 44, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 158–76, doi:10.2307/30219044.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Goulart, "A ilusão da imagem"

³⁶ Galvão, *Crônica do Cinema Paulistano*.

of the actors really fulfilled the U.S. image of the “movie-struck girl,” the irrational, moviegoer obsessed with stardom. Rather, personal letters and applications reveal actors who, while desiring stardom, had political and intellectual motivations for their involvement in the film industry. Even the winner of the Fox Film contest, Olimpio Guilherme, was a film critic and journalist for *Cinearte* when he entered the contest. As evidenced by their willingness to branch out into other roles of production, many were cinephiles first, and actors second.

The regional diversity of these aspiring actors demonstrates that Brazilians from urban and rural areas all claimed to possess *fotogenia*. Rielle Navitski’s recent work has shown that filmmaking in Brazil during this time period was not limited to the largest cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.³⁷ Regional filmmaking companies existed in all regions of Brazil, from Porto Alegre in the South to Recife in the North. These filmmakers were idealists who “undertook a utopian task,” to make their own films that would visualize how rural areas participated in Brazilian modernity, which they represented in film through “a thrilling kineticism, associated with virtuosic human bodies, modern transportation technologies, and the spectacle of cinematic special effects.”³⁸

Some of the people who applied for the Fox Film contest, like Olyria Salgado, an actress from Pernambuco who starred in the local film *The Lawyer’s Daughter (A Filha do Advogado)* in 1926, filled out only the standard form that appeared in *Cinearte*.

³⁷ See, for example, the work on Humberto Mauro, one of the most successful filmmakers of Brazilian early cinema, who lived and produced films in the countryside of Minas Gerais before moving to Rio de Janeiro in 1930. For a revisionist perspective of his reputation as a rural “pioneer” of filmmaking, see Sheila Schvarzman, *Humberto Mauro e as imagens do Brasil* (UNESP, 2004). On the nationalist themes in his work and collaboration with the Vargas regime after 1930, see Eduardo Morettin, *Humberto Mauro, Cinema, Historia* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2013).

³⁸ Navitski, “Sensationalism, Cinema and the Popular Press in Mexico and Brazil, 1905-1930,” 115.

Providing only her name, age, marital status, and measurements, she demonstrated the requirements for a “photogenic” body: one meter and 55 centimeters, 48 kilos. She also wrote that she had very dark brown eyes and black, “demigarconne” hair, the short bob cut distinctive to the figure of the *melindrosa*, or modern girl discussed in chapter three. The only other information she wrote, on a separate sheet of lined paper was, “I appeared for the first time in *A Filha do Advogado*” and “I await your due reply.”³⁹ With a modern hairstyle and reaching a certain height and weight, Salgado presented herself as a “photogenic” body, apt for the screen.

In contrast, Diogenes Leite Penteado, an actor who used the stage name “Diogenes Nioac,” wrote an eight-page letter addressed to Pedro Lima. He first described himself as having a white (*branco*) complexion (*tez*), with brown hair and brown eyes, 1.8 meters tall and weighing 80 kilos. His lengthy letter was a mini autobiography, explaining how he chose his stage name, his ideas about the necessity of creating a national cinema in Brazil, and funny anecdotes about his film career, including his experience acting in *Flash in the Pan* (*Fogo de Palha*, 1926), a film by Canuto Mendes, who later became a proponent of “educational cinema.”⁴⁰ In one scene of the film, the lead actress Georgette Ferret was supposed to slap Nioac’s character across the face. Mendes wanted the scene to look perfect, so he asked Ferret to slap Penteado repeatedly before filming. Nioac however, asked Mendes, “as we need to rehearse many slaps for just one to be approved, and as my face is not a punching bag, why don’t you take the

³⁹ “Olyria Salgado,” November 8, 1926, APL-C-107, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo. The application and her note are marked “207” in red crayon, possibly indicating that she was the 207th woman to submit her photo. The date 11/8/1926 is written at the top of her note, but appears to have been written by someone else, possibly the person who received the letter, and indicating the date of reception.

⁴⁰ Saliba, *Cinema Contra Cinema: O Cinema Educativo de Canuto Mendes, 1922-1931*.

slaps, and I'll just do the original.”⁴¹ Nioac related that, besides being an actor, he was currently secretary of the Nacional Film company and in 1924 was president of Record Film do Brazil⁴². Like other regional film studios, this studio appeared and disappeared almost overnight. It never even produced a film, as the studio and equipment were destroyed during the tenente uprisings, a military officer rebellion, which occurred in July of that year.⁴³ He then relayed another humorous story about how during one of the battles, he and his wife were playing a game of poker when they were interrupted by the explosion of grenades and bombs. The next morning, there was nothing to eat in the house, so he braved the battlefield, falling to the ground and ducking for cover at every explosion, all for a kilo of meat.⁴⁴

Why did Nioac include all of these anecdotes in his application? Far from an anonymous application, the letter reads like a polished interview that a movie star would give to a celebrity news magazine. That may have been exactly the point. Although Olyria Salgado's *fotogenia* was expressed through her body, in her measurements and her appearance, Nioac expressed *fotognia* as a broader concept that included his stature and skin color, but also charisma and funny anecdotes. He was photogenic because he not only looked, but behaved, like a Hollywood star. He concluded his letter by mentioning that he had trained in all sports, including boxing, and lately had been doing fifteen minutes of “Swiss exercises” (*gymnastica suéco*) morning and night. Nioac cultivated his

⁴¹ “Amigo Mendes... como muitas bofetadas são precisas de ensaio, para que só uma seja aproveitada, e como minha estanoja não é sacco de treinos, toma tú as [bofetadas] de amostra que com a original tenho de ficar eu.” Diogenes Leite Penteadó, “Diogenes Leite Penteadó a Pedro Lima,” January 22, 1927, 2, APL-C-125, 1-5, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

⁴² Nioac spelled Record Film do Brazil with the English spelling of Brazil with a “z,” demonstrating how he viewed the company as an international, rather than a national, endeavor.

⁴³ For an analysis of the tenente uprising as a middle class political movement, see Maria Cecília Spina Forjaz, *Tenentismo e Política: Tenentismo e Camadas Médias Urbanas na Crise da Primeira República* (Paz e Terra, 1977).

⁴⁴ Nioac

body and personality through modern exercises and practiced charm. With this *fotogenia*, he sought to conquer, not be conquered by, Hollywood.

“It doesn’t matter if one comes from a crib in a pigsty”: Searching for *fotogenia* in the periphery

Although the Fox Film Photogenic Beauty Contest was a large-scale, international contest with the ultimate prize of Hollywood fame, smaller beauty contests, film school academies, and start-up film companies offered men and women similar opportunities to participate in transnational film culture. Whereas Diogenes Nioac was, by local standards, an accomplished actor, men and women all over the country did not lack for the chance to enroll in film schools and beauty contests. Aspiring actors from peripheral areas of Brazil were able to pursue and embody cosmopolitan modernity through their possession of *fotogenia*. The popularity of acting was such that film critic Pedro Lima decried the “foreign adventurers” who established fake acting schools in São Paulo. As discussed in chapter three, these self-proclaimed “producers” exploited the dreams, wallets, and even the honor of would-be actors.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Pedro Lima “Cinema Brasileiro” in *Cinearte*, September, 19, 1928, No. 134, pg. 6



Figure 32: “Brasil Cinematographico - Matriculai-Vos Academia Cinematographica” August 1, 1927. Source: APL-R 99, Arquivo Pedro Lima, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo

The handbill above from 1927 is an example of one such film school; it urged, “Youths, register yourselves in the [Cinematographic] Academy. Seek to be an artist, put your efforts towards Brazilian cinema.”⁴⁶ William Rodrigues and Felipe Delphino, “two able professors, already well known in Brazilian cinema” would teach classes to “young men of good appearance, as well as boys and adults.”⁴⁷ Felipe Delphino was an actor in the films *Boca Torta* (Campinas, 1924), *A Carne* (Campinas, 1925), *Mocidade Louca*

⁴⁶ “Matriculai-vos Jovens na Academia, procurae ser artistas, esforçae-vos pois pela cinematographia Brasileira.” “Brasil Cinematographico - Matriculai-Vos Academia Cinematographica” (Brasil Cinematographico, August 1927), APL-R 99, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

⁴⁷ “dois habeis professores... já muito favoralmente conhecidos na cinematographia Brasileira,” would teach classes to “moços de bôa apparencia, bem como meninos e adultos.” Ibid.

(Campinas, 1927), and *Sangue do seu Sangue* (São Paulo 1928).⁴⁸ Delphino and Rodrigues also co-directed *Sangue do Seu Sangue* in 1928, one year after the above handbill was printed. Considering the scattered nature of the Brazilian film industry in the 1920s, and the fragmented history of the few films that survived the era, this is quite a prolific filmography. Delfino and Rodrigues were active in the Brazilian film industry, and *Sangue do seu Sangue* suggests that they may have offered the chance for an aspiring star to appear in their film. However, appearing or directing in films does not mean that Delfino and Rodrigues would have made enough money to resist scamming people willing to pay for acting classes.

In contrast to Delfino and Rodrigues, who were actually actors, a man named Jorge Afaich simply tried to pass himself off as another person in order to exploit film enthusiasts. Pretending to be an acting teacher for the Rio de Janeiro-based studio Benedetti Film, Afaich produced fake applications in which people would offer to work for the studio in exchange for free acting lessons. The only problem was that Afaich was not affiliated with Benedetti Film, and was just using the studio's name. It is not clear what Afaich's intentions were, or how he planned to benefit from whatever "work" his students would do, but he was clearly using false pretenses to take advantage of the popularity of cinema.⁴⁹

Maria Eugenia Celso's short story *Photogenica* suggested that movie-struck movie fans were not so easily duped by "producers" who promised to make them stars. The aspiring actress in the story remarks, "the only thing I am missing is an empresário

⁴⁸ "FILMOGRAFIA- Felipe Delfino," *Cinemateca Brasileira*, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.cinemateca.gov.br/cgi-bin/wxis.exe/iah/>.

⁴⁹ "Studio Benedetti-Film, Sob a direção do ensaiador Jorge Afaich" APL-R/101 Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo

[of cinema]. The ones we have are so cheap, so full of prejudice! But I am not disheartened.”⁵⁰ Pedro Lima criticized the fake film schools as exploiting the “good faith and ignorance” of its students, adding, “and if it is a young woman, we know the result that many have had when they are too trusting of the promises and lessons of these ‘teachers.’”⁵¹ In contrast, Celso suggested that some stars actively pursued an “empresário” in fulfillment of ambition, and with their eyes wide open.

The opportunity to join a film school (or be conned by one) was not confined to São Paulo. Almeida Films, based in the small town of Ouro Fino in the south of Minas Gerais, produced several films before its director, Francisco de Almeida Fleming, moved to Rio de Janeiro. While based in Ouro Fino, Fleming produced *In Hoc Signo Vincas* (1921), *Paulo e Virginia* (1924), and *O Vale dos Martírios* (1927).⁵² In 1927, four of the actors who starred in *O Vale dos Martírios* filled out brief questionnaires about their careers.⁵³ The purpose of these questionnaires is not clear; they could have been for publicity purposes or for screening these actors for future films. Of the four questionnaires, several were filled out by men and one by a woman, reflecting men’s greater participation in the local film industry. Although brief, the questionnaires provide a glimpse into the stated ambitions of actors in the regional film circuit.

Luiz Pimental, 32 years old, and Octavio da Paiva, 56 years old, had both worked in theater before appearing in Almeida’s *O Vale dos Martírios*. Both D. (first name illegible) Mosquera, 35 years old, and Hilda Webber, 27 years old, had no previous

⁵⁰ Celso, “A Crayon: Photogenica.”

⁵¹ Então se for moça, nós sabemos o resultado que têm tido muitas, confiando demasiado nas promessas e nas lições destes ‘professores.’” *Cinearte*, Vol. 19, 9/19/1928, pg. 6

⁵² *Enciclopédia Do Cinema Brasileiro*. Fleming later worked for Sonofilms in Rio de Janeiro, and then to São Paulo, to produce films for the DEIP, under interventor Adhemar de Barros

⁵³ The questionnaires are not dated, but they were most likely submitted in 1927 after the production of *O Vale dos Martírios*, as all of the applicants appeared in the film, and Almeida Films closed production soon after the film was made.

acting experience. Mosquera had gained a role in the film by entering and winning an Almeida-Film contest, while Webber, who claimed she was born in Estonia and had blue eyes and blond hair, answered that she became an actress, “simply by being photogenic.”⁵⁴ With the exception of Webber, all were born in the countryside of southern Minas Gerais. Mosquera and Webber’s responses to how they entered the film industry, one from a beauty contest, another “simply by being photogenic,” demonstrate how the concept of *fotogenia* permeated the aspirations of actors in the rural countryside. By using the specific term “photogenic” instead of “pretty” or “beautiful,” she suggested that *fotogenia* signified more than blue eyes and blond hair, or a certain height and weight. She listed her favorite sport as “driving” (*automobilismo*) and reported that she wanted to become “a star” in the future. *Fotogenia*, which included the modern activity of driving, was what would make her successful. Similarly, Luis Pimental wrote that his goal was to “continue to be an artist and to become the rival of Jack Holt and Von Stroheim [two Hollywood actors].”⁵⁵ Even in the most peripheral locations of Brazil, actors like Pimental believed that by possessing *fotogenia*, they were not the dupes of exploitive producers, nor the subjects of Hollywood imperialism, but the potential rivals of Hollywood’s biggest stars.

Maria Eneida Fachini Saliba argues that Canuto Mendes, the director of *Fogo de Palha*, which starred the actor Diogenes Nioac, discussed above, advanced the ideology that cinema could be an educational, reformist force in Brazilian society. Almeida-Film questionnaires show that such ideas were not limited to filmmakers like Mendes or the intellectual circle at *Cinearte*. One of the questions on the survey was, “what do you

⁵⁴ “Creio que unicamente por ser fotogenica.” “Questionario” Almeida & Comp. APL-R/100 Arquivo Pedro Lima. Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo. N.D., likely 1927

⁵⁵ Ibid.

think of Cinema?”⁵⁶ Pimental responded that cinema was “lucrative and instructive;” da Paiva called it “the most inspiring of arts.”⁵⁷ Webber thought cinema was “the most agreeable pastime invented by human ingenuity” and Mosquera responded that cinema was “the greatest form of propaganda.”⁵⁸ Men and women with little or no experience in cinema and theater, like Mosquera and Webber, still thought critically about cinema’s potential as propaganda, education, or art. In expressing their desires to become “stars,” and comparing themselves to Jack Holt and Eric Von Stronheim, the four Almeida Films actors contributed to transnational film culture in Brazil. They also showed how the concept of *fotogenia*, as well as ideologies regarding the role of cinema in society, permeated beyond the cultural centers of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Like the character in Celso’s story, those who went to the cinema did not just go to flirt, but potentially, to study a “course in cinema.” In addition, one could be born in “a cradle in a pigsty,” in São Paulo or in the countryside of Brazil; anyone could be “photogenic.”⁵⁹

Another startup São Paulo film company, Helios Film, sponsored a beauty contest for the state of São Paulo in October, 1923. Local newspapers in various municipalities participated in the contest, tallying readers’ votes for the “most beautiful woman of the state.” In their magazine, Helios-Film thanked the 33 newspapers that participated, all from small towns in the interior, from Altinópolis to Itajoby. On October 27, the magazine listed the name of each woman who won the seven contests that had already been completed. They chose to print the photograph of the woman from Baurú, Sra. D. Iracema Franco de Godoy.

⁵⁶ “Que pensa sobre Cinema?” Ibid.

⁵⁷ “Instrutivo e lucrative;” “a mais inspiradora das artes” Ibid.

⁵⁸ “o mais agradável passa-tempo inventado pelo engenho humano;” “o maior factor de propaganda.” Ibid.

⁵⁹ Celso, “Photogenica.”

CONCURSO DE BELLEZA
Helios Film

O Grande Concurso Cinematographico de Belleza da "HELIOS-FILM"

O Enorme successo do cartamen — As já astitas em varios municipios.

A Empresa Cinematographica "Helios-Film" está satisfeita com os resultados do grande concurso de belleza que organizou.

O maior entusiasmo existiu em todo o Estado, sendo que a imprensa em geral accellia com merecido cuidado a interessante idea. As commissões locais já puzeram mãos ao trabalho. Em breve teremos os resultados totaes dos concursos de varios municipios e a "Helios-Film" organizará uma estapenda cinto dessas

EL IRACEMA FRANCO DE GODOY
Senhora do concurso de belleza da Helios-Film em Baurá

Figure 33: “Helios Film Beauty Contest” Photo of “D. Iracema Franco de Godoy, winner of the Helios-Film beauty contest in Baurá. Source: “O Grande Concurso Cinematographico de Belleza Da ‘Helios Film,’” *Helios Revista Cinematographica*, October 27, 1923, 516-4, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

While the other contest winners from the small towns of Pereiras, Sapucaí, Indayatuba, Palmital, Pedreira, and Fatura used the title “srta,” the winner from Baurú was a *senhora*. Was she married? Or was she old enough to be considered a *senhora*? Perhaps she was of a high enough social standing that she should be a *senhora* or a *dona*. In any case, Sra. D. Iracema Francisco de Godoy, despite her status as a *senhora*, participated in a cinematographic beauty contest and had her photo printed in a magazine from the capital. The winners would participate in a final contest along with the other

municipal winners held in Helios-Film cinemas, in which the audiences would vote for the final winner. Not just limited to “girls,” beauty contests offered the opportunity for women, married or unmarried, elite or not, to actively take part in, and amplify, the parameters of movie-struck culture. As the photograph of Sra. Baurú demonstrates, she was light-skinned and well-dressed with a stylish haircut. She also had the opportunity to have her photograph taken, an activity not available to the poor. Clearly, those who won beauty contests adhered to constraints of skin color, body type, and economic status. *Fotogenia*, however, placed no constraints upon where one was born. By going to the movies, participating in beauty contests, and even acting in films, people far from Rio de Janeiro, far from São Paulo, and even further from Hollywood, participated and embodied cosmopolitan modernity.

Written Film Culture: Critiquing Male Beauty

As discussed in the previous chapter, leisure magazines like *Para Todos*, *Revista Feminina*, and *Selecta*, as well as film magazines like *Cinearte* and *A Scena Muda* greatly facilitated the link between Hollywood and Brazil by reporting Hollywood news, gossip, printing film reviews and photos. *Cinearte* even maintained foreign correspondents in Hollywood to report on star gossip and Hollywood lifestyles. In addition, Tais Campelo Lucas argues that *Cinearte* was the site of a vibrant, native intellectual film culture.⁶⁰ However, *Cinearte* also offered non-professional writers the opportunity to discuss and debate their views on cinema. As evidenced by letters written to the editors of *Cinearte* and *Para Todos*, fans were capable of constructing critical arguments as to why certain stars were more attractive, more talented, or more deserving of fame than others. These fans participated in lively debates, sometimes heated, in the

⁶⁰ Lucas, “Cinearte: O Cinema Brasileiro Em Revista (1926-1942).”

pages of these magazines, developing a body of amateur film criticism. Lisa Stead, in her examination of reader letters in the British film magazine *The Picturegoer* from 1918-1928, demonstrates that in addition to female intellectuals and novelists, young working-class women participated in a “female film culture” by writing their opinions on films, stars, and viewing practices.⁶¹ Similarly, Brazilian fans, both male and female, were able to participate in a burgeoning Brazilian film culture by writing letters to film magazines.

Writing under pseudonyms, men and women were both liberated to express desires, admiration, and opinions about film. Women who, following norms of propriety, might not voice love or desire in real life, did so with enthusiasm in letters about their favorite stars. In addition, fanatic, overly emotional “movie-struck girls” revealed themselves, like the fictional “photogenic beauty” to be serious students and acute observers of cinema.

Early feminist film theorists used psychoanalytic approaches to analyze film spectatorship and desire. Laura Mulvey’s seminal essay on visual pleasure and the “male gaze” argued that in Hollywood films, men were active viewers and women were the passive objects of desire.⁶² Miriam Hansen, however, analyzed the films of Rudolph Valentino to point out that men were also presented as objects of desire in Hollywood films. Hansen also analyzed female fans’ “fetishistic devotion” of Valentino, their requests that he kiss their clothing, or their attempts to collect the buttons off of his suit. In these acts, Hansen reads a “kind of rebellion, a desperate protest against the passivity and one-sidedness with which patriarchal cinema supports the subordinate position of

⁶¹ Lisa Rose Stead, “Women’s Writing and British Female Film Culture in the Silent Era” (PhD Diss, University of Exeter, 2011), <http://hdl.handle.net/10036/3138>.

⁶² Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”

women in the gender hierarchy.”⁶³ By openly expressing their desire for Rudolph Valentino, female fans subverted gendered norms of passive womanhood.

Rudolph Valentino, who induced fainting in the streets of New York, was also one of the most popular stars in Brazil. His ability to act and attract spurred a lively debate among readers of *Para Todos* in 1924. The principal writers in the debate were “Admirer of Corinne Griffith” and “Mrs. Moacyr,” pseudonyms used by two readers. Individuals who submitted letters to *Para Todos* and to *Cinearte* commonly used pseudonyms, and these pseudonyms are not reliable indicators of the gender of the writer. Before he became a professional journalist and film director, Adhemar Gonzaga used the pseudonym of his favorite actress, “Mary MacLaren,” when he wrote letters to the magazine *Palcos e Telas*.⁶⁴ Jackie Stacy’s work on British female fandom shows how female fans were as avid and loyal fans of actresses as they were of actors. Admiration of a star did not necessarily signify (hetero)sexual attraction, and is also not a reliable indicator of the writer’s gender or sexual identity.

Rudolph Valentino had a primarily female fan base, and it is likely that readers defending him were women. However, those writing to *Para Todos* to discuss Valentino primarily wrote to voice their opinions as objective film critics and intellectuals, not to express sexual desire. Like the “photogenic beauty” in Maria Eugenia Celso’s crônica, these fans wrote from the perspective of “serious students” who appreciated cinema and Valentino for artistic, informed reasons.

The debate that emerged was whether Rudolph Valentino or Ramon Navarro was the greater artist. Navarro was a Mexican-born actor and Valentino was of Italian

⁶³ Hansen, “Pleasure, Ambivalence, Identification.”

⁶⁴ “Gonzaga, Adhemar,” *Enciclopédia do Cinema Brasileiro*, 279

descent. Both actors represented the archetype of the “Latin Lover.” At the height of their popularity, they were the top stars in both the U.S. and in foreign markets like Brazil.⁶⁵

The readers who submitted letters were well-versed in Hollywood filmography and were able to construct arguments based on their analysis of film aesthetics. In the November, 22, 1924 issue of *Para Todos*, “Admirer of Corinne Griffith” dissected the various levels of “brilliance” that Valentino exhibited in his films. In some, like “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,” he was brilliant, while in other films, he was merely “the pretty face” in respect to the female leads.⁶⁶

On November 29, 1924, “Mrs. Moacyr,” argued that Valentino’s success was due more to the directors of his films, not his acting talent. “Mrs. Moacyr” argued, for example, that Valentino was not a talented enough actor to redeem the poor quality of a movie like *The Young Rajah* (*O Jovem Rajah* Paramount, 1922), while a more talented actor might have made the film better. Mrs. Moacyr also argued that a number of other actors, like Antonino Moreno, Charles La Roche, or Novarro (all actors who had the image of the exotic “Latin Lover”) would have been better suited for Valentino’s part in his most critically acclaimed film, *Blood and Sand* (*Sangue e Areia*, Paramount, 1922).⁶⁷ In another letter to the editor, “Miss Daisy” defended Valentino and countered Mrs. Moacyr’s contention that the talent of the director was the most important factor in producing a great film. She responded, “. . . directors have a great impact on the success of actors, but if these actors were not intelligent, sensitive, with artistic aptitude, the best

⁶⁵ Goulart addresses the popularity of “Latin” actors in Brazil, but there is still more research to be done on whether these stars were particularly popular in Brazil or other parts of Latin America specifically for their “Latinness”

⁶⁶ Admirer of Corinne Griffith, “Pagina dos Nossos Leitores,” *Para Todos*, November 22, 1924, No. 310, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

⁶⁷ Moacyr, “Pagina dos Nossos Leitores,” *Para Todos*, November 29, 1924, No. 311, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo.

director would not succeed... if it were only a question of good direction, anyone could act, feel, and translate all kinds of emotions....”⁶⁸ In 1924, when cinema was considered by most to be a “diversion” and an “amusement,” the level of sophistication in both their letters is remarkable. In arguing whether the director or the actors was more responsible for the content of a film, they debated the issue of film authorship, a theoretical concept that arose in the early twentieth century when film intellectuals strove to legitimate cinema as one of the “high arts.” By identifying a “great author,” intellectuals likened cinema to literature or painting instead of an assembled, industrial product.⁶⁹ This was in keeping with the larger goal of the editors at *Cinearte*, which was to promote cinemas as high art.⁷⁰ Miss Daisy and Mrs. Moacyr’s letters demonstrate that critical theories of authorship were not just the domain of U.S., European, or Brazilian intellectuals. Moviegoers and fans in Brazil discussed these issues in their letters to fan magazines.

In addition to debating the issue of authorship, “Miss Daisy” defended Valentino with a critical assessment of male beauty. Miss Daisy argued that Ramon Novarro, a Mexican born Hollywood actor whose popularity as a “Latin lover” was beginning to eclipse Valentino’s, “is too short to be considered a beautiful man. In a man, a pretty face does not stand out if he is not well made in body, strong, tall! Valentino is admirably proportioned, elegant, very distinguished, in sum, truly a modern Apollo!”⁷¹ Miss Daisy also added that Valentino had an “irresistible charm,” asking, “who can deny the seduction of his enigmatic smile? Or the intelligence and grace of his feline eye?” In

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger, ed. *Authorship and Film* (Routledge, 2013), 5.

⁷⁰ Xavier, *Sétima Arte*, 194

⁷¹ “é muito baixo para ser apontado como um bellissimo homem. Num homem, um bonito rosto não realça se elle não for bem feito de corpor, forte, alto! Valentino é admiravelmente proporcionado, elegante, tem muita distincção, enfim, verdadeiro Apollo moderno!” Miss Daisy, “Cartas Para O Operador,” *Para Todos*, March 7, 1925, No. 325, RC Para Todos, Cinemateca Brasileira São Paulo

assessing exactly why Valentino was more attractive than Ramon Navarro, Miss Daisy demonstrated how Hollywood standards for gendered beauty were both interpreted and reproduced in Brazil. Miss Daisy's emphasis on the health and strength of Valentino's body, as opposed to the face, reflects larger trends that valorized athleticism, sport, and health in the making of modern beauty.⁷² Previous film scholars have viewed female fandom of Rudolph Valentino as potentially transgressive because of how these expressions of female desire upset gendered norms of sexually repressed, chaste behavior. "Miss Daisy's" letter can be read as an expression of subversive desire, but it is also a testament to how fandom was an intellectual pursuit that incorporated transnational debates on the meanings of beauty. Like Celso's "photogenic beauty," Miss Daisy could claim that she "had studied with infinite patience the physique, the aesthetics, the art of cinema artists."⁷³ In doing so, she assessed Valentino's and Navarro's, physical health, and its meanings for male beauty, as well as aspects of fotogenia, the "indefinable" movements and habits in Valentino's "enigmatic smile" and "feline eye."

The debate as to whether Valentino or Ramon Navarro was the most attractive or talented star of Hollywood continued through various issues of *Cinearte*. In addition to Miss Daisy, "senhorita Natacha," "Trencavel," "senhorita Adelaide," and "Pierrot" all wrote letters arguing which actor was superior, with "Mrs. Moacyr" writing multiple times to defend Navarro. The readers also explored gender and sexuality in these letters. For example, "senhorita Natacha" masculinized "Mrs. Moacyr," for not being a fan of Valentino and for preferring Navarro. Whether consciously or not, Natacha referred to "Mrs. Moacyr" as "Mr. Moacyr" in letters to the editor. Although the readers argued who

⁷² Goulart, Mônica Raisa Schpun, *Beleza Em Jogo: Cultura Física e Comportamento em São Paulo nos Anos 20* (Editora SENAC São Paulo, 1999).

⁷³ Celso

had the more “enigmatic smile” and whether Navarro was tall enough to be an ideal form of male beauty, they also consistently debated issues of film authorship and offered their opinions of films, actors, and directors. In addition to their acts as consumers, of buying film magazines and going to the movies, these fans were producers of film culture, writing amateur film criticism and contributing to transnational debates on beauty, cinema, and art.

From Movie-struck to Moralists: Patricia Galvão and Leonor Mendes de Barros

Two young women who were enthusiastic moviegoers in this era made unique impacts on Brazilian film culture: one as an intellectual, and another as a star in her own right. The most famous contestant of the Fox Films Beauty Contest was not Lia Torá or Olympio Guilherme, but a young woman who was among the many who did not win: Patricia Galvão.⁷⁴ Although she might have dreamt of Hollywood stardom when she was sixteen years old in 1926, by 1931, “Pagú” was a member of São Paulo’s modernist vanguard and an active communist who railed against Hollywood’s dangerous influence upon young women. Galvão became a feminist who pushed for women’s political and sexual liberation, but her anti-capitalist criticism of Hollywood developed into a moralistic condemnation of women’s “frivolous” leisure habits. Leonor Mendes de Barros, the first lady of São Paulo state in the mid-twentieth century, was another avid moviegoer as a young housewife, but like Galvão, became a voice of political and moral authority to the next generation of movie-going women. Known as “Dona Leonor,” Mendes, like contemporaries Darcy Vargas, the first lady of Brazil, and Eva Perón, first lady of Argentina, was active in state-sponsored media and public causes for social

⁷⁴ Galvão actually maintained a sexual relationship with Guilherme at the time they entered the contest, a relationship they hid due to Galvão’s youth and her parents’ disapproval. See Lúcia Maria Teixeira Furlani and Geraldo Galvão Ferraz, *Viva Pagu: Fotobiografia de Patricia Galvão* (Editorial Unisanta, 2010).

welfare. Through film newsreels, public commemorations, and televised speeches, Mendes projected a media image of saintly motherhood and reinforced patriarchal gender roles that emphasized women's maternal duties. Although from opposite ends of the political spectrum, both Galvão and Mendes, one as an intellectual and the other as a politician, moralized how women should spend their time.

Galvão published her most famous novel *Industrial Park* in 1933. A searing criticism of capitalist culture, the novel depicts the oppressed lives of female factory workers in the working-class neighborhood of Brás, where she grew up. Even among the modernist avant-garde and the Brazilian communist party, she was an outsider. When she began reciting poetry at modernist gatherings in 1929, she was a middle-class teenager from Brás, decades younger and less educated than the mostly elite writers and artists who had traveled and studied in Europe. Writer Oswald de Andrade and painter Tarsila do Amaral (a couple at the time) “adopted” her, dressed her, and brought her to modernist gatherings. In fulfillment of the Pygmalion effect, Andrade and Galvão began an affair and married in an elaborate farce in which she pretended to marry someone else. She was the first female political prisoner in Brazil, jailed for communist activity in 1931. Yet, the Brazilian Communist Party ostracized her for her middle-class background. Galvão explored the tensions and contradictions surrounding her identity in her work, including how to reconcile her past fandom of Hollywood films with her communist politics.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Multiple scholars have explored the biography of Patricia Galvão and her role in the modernist art movement. Poet Augusto de Campos published a major analysis of her life and work in Augusto de Campos, *Patrícia Galvão, Pagu: Vida, Obra* (Brasiliense, 1982). In 1993, Kenneth Jackson and Elizabeth Jackson published the first English translation of *Parque Industrial*, which increased Galvão's exposure as a writer in her own right, rather than the muse of Oswald de Andrade. See Patrícia Galvão, Elizabeth Jackson, and K. David Jackson, *Parque Industrial: Romance Proletario = Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993). Also see Jacksons' afterward for a brief biography of Galvão. In 2005, Galvão's son with journalist Geraldo Ferraz, Geraldo Ferraz Jr., edited and published an autobiography she had written in the 1940s. Recently, Teresa Lúcia Maria Furlani, in collaboration with

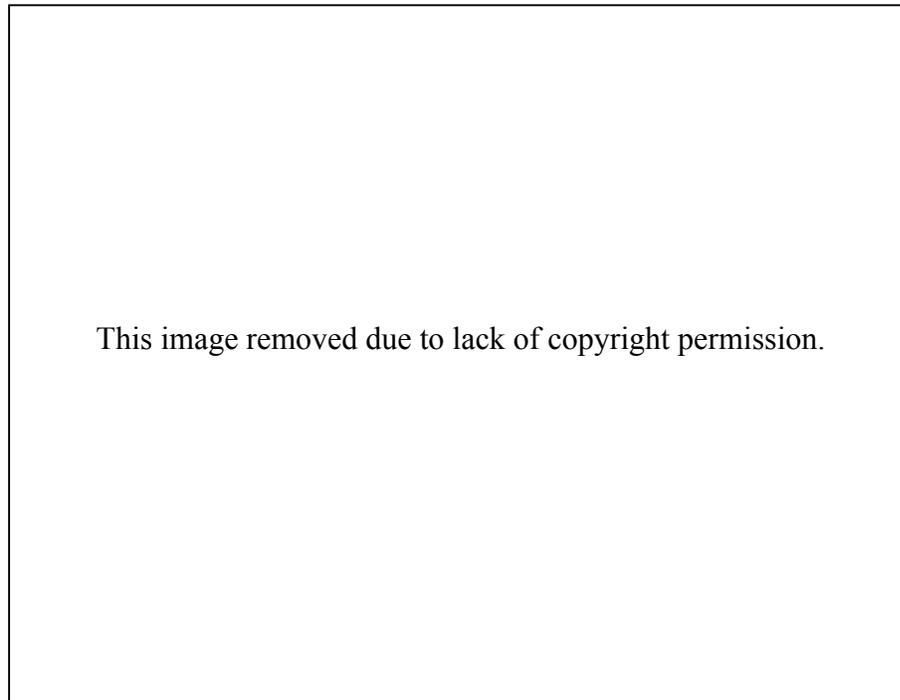


Figure 34: Photo submitted by Patricia Galvão for the Fox Film Beauty Contest. Source: Lúcia Maria Teixeira Furlani and Geraldo Galvão Ferraz, *Viva Pagu: Fotobiografia de Patrícia Galvão* (Editorial Unisanta, 2010), 39

While she and Oswald de Andrade were married, they started a political newspaper *O Homem do Povo* (The Man of the People) in 1931. Though extremely limited in distribution (they only produced a handful of issues in a two month period, and it was never read by “o povo,” or “the people”), the newspaper contains both Galvão’s early work in film criticism, and the satirization of her own movie-going past. In the newspaper, Galvão wrote a column called “Stages and Screens” (*Palcos e Telas*) that, in the guise of film reviews, offered scathing criticisms of the Hollywood industry. In her “review” of Joan Crawford’s *Garotas Modernas* (Our Modern Maidens, MGM, 1929),

Geraldo Ferraz Jr., has published a “photo-biography” of Galvão’s life that reconstructs her life through private photographs, letters, and journals. See Furlani and Ferraz, *Viva Pagu: Fotobiografia de Patrícia Galvão*. Anthropologist Heloisa Pontes has also examined Galvão role as a female intellectual in mid-twentieth century São Paulo in Heloisa Pontes, *Intérpretes da Metrópole: História Social e Relações de Gênero no Teatro e no Campo Intelectual, 1940-1968* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo / FAPESP, 2010).

Galvão accused Crawford of “filling the empty heads of Brazilian girls with fairy tales.”⁷⁶ Crawford represented a “rags to riches myth” in both her public persona and in the films she made. From a working class background, Crawford started out as a chorus girl in vaudeville shows until she signed a contract with MGM. When she married Douglas Fairbanks Jr., a Hollywood prince (son of superstars Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford), she cemented her Cinderella story. In *Our Modern Maidens* and similar films like *Our Dancing Daughters* (MGM, 1928), Crawford starred as a spirited, impoverished heroine who eventually marries a rich hero.⁷⁷ Galvão singled Crawford out for criticism in her *Palcos e Telas* column, as well as in her novel *Parque Industrial*. As a Marxist and communist, Galvão believed that worker consciousness and collective class struggle was the key to end worker poverty, and criticized the Cinderella fantasy that Crawford’s films and biography promoted. Yet, she obviously watched Crawford’s films, even if only to condemn them. Galvão even mentioned in *Palcos e Telas* that Crawford “conquered the silly heart of the son of Douglas Fairbanks,” revealing that she followed enough Hollywood gossip to know about Crawford’s romance.⁷⁸

In fact, Galvão did not hide her fascination with Hollywood, or her past as a “movie-struck” girl. Rather, she incorporated her past and present interest in Hollywood in her work. She wrote a comic strip for *Homem de Povo* entitled, “Malakabeça, Fanika e Kbelluda,” signed under the pseudonym “P.” The title of the comic referred to the names of the characters, a family of three, a father named “Dummy,” (*Malakabeça*, a funny spelling of “bad-head”), a mother named Fanika, and their adopted daughter “Long

⁷⁶ Patricia Galvão, “Garotas Modernas” Oswald de Andrade and Patricia Galvão, *O homem do povo: coleção completa e fac-similar do jornal criado e dirigido por Oswald de Andrade e Patricia Galvão (Pagu) : março/abril 1931*. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2009).

⁷⁷ Allen and Gomery, *Film History*.

⁷⁸ Patricia Galvão, “Garotas Modernas” *O Homem do Povo*

Hair,” (*Kabelluda* an intentional misspelling of *cabeluda*, meaning hair). The character of Kabelluda is a doppelganger for Galvão, even sporting the same curls and beret that she wore at the time. In the comic, Kabelluda, just like Galvão, starts a newspaper, is arrested by the police, causes a scandal by espousing leftist ideals, and in the end, “runs off with the Homem do Povo,” the pseudonym of Oswald de Andrade. One of the pseudonyms Galvão used in the newspaper was KBLuda, confirming the overlap between the writer and her comic strip character. One of the comics, which recurred in the paper several times featured Kabelluda holding a newspaper reading “Paramount, o Cinema das Garotas,” while being dragged away by her mother Fanika. The caption of the comic reads “If I don’t go to the Paramount, I’ll run away from home.” The comic satirizes the female fan of the cinema, the “movie-struck girl” who obsesses over Hollywood films.

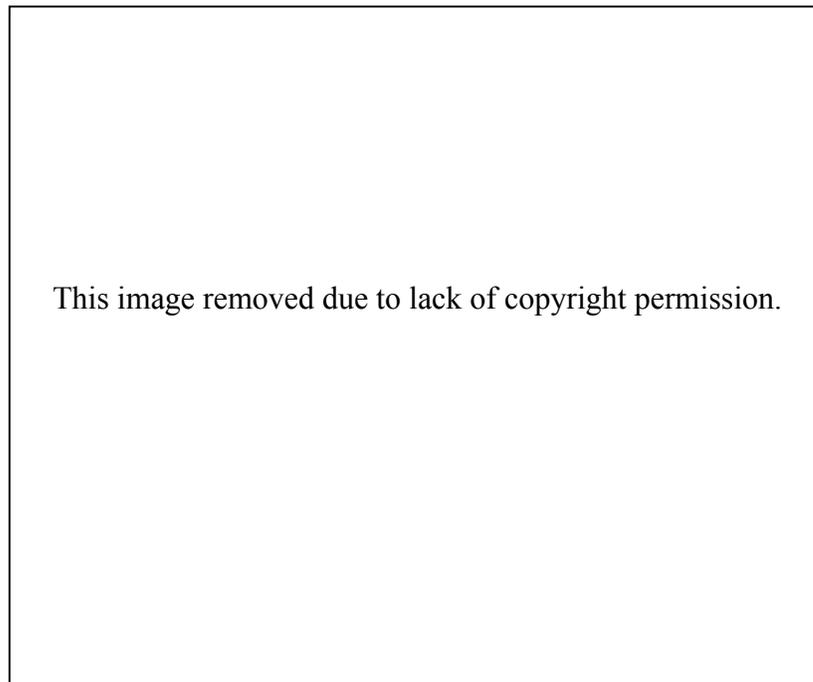


Figure 35: Patricia Galvão, “Paramount, o Cinema das Garotas” in Oswald de Andrade and Patrícia Galvão, *O homem do povo: coleção completa e fac-similar do jornal criado e dirigido por Oswald de Andrade e Patrícia Galvão (Pagu): março/abril 1931.* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo : Editora Globo : Museu Lasar Segall, 2009)

Galvão's ability to satirize and fictionalize her own life and persona recurs in *Parque Industrial*. For example, the character Eleanor attends the Brás Normal School and recites poetry at high-society soirees, just as Galvão did in her real life.⁷⁹ Yet, Eleanor is one of the most criticized characters in the novel; the reformed Marxist Alfredo refers to her as a “the crumbling of intelligence itself. How mediocre she had become!” and accuses her, “You sank into the mud of this shameless bourgeoisie!”⁸⁰

The combination of her Marxist ideals, love for cinema, and her occupation as a writer/artist/intellectual, gave Galvão an ambivalent philosophy on the role of leisure and consumption in women's lives. This contradiction emerges in the novel's multiple references to cinema. In one, Otavia, the novel's idealized proletariat and heroine, attends a Soviet film at the Cine Mafalda in Brás. Galvão criticizes the young women who fail to understand the Soviet film. “A group of young women go out lamenting loudly the ten cents wasted on a film without love... Fed on the imperialist opium of American films. Slaves tied to capitalist deception.”⁸¹ Galvão's criticism is extreme and clear: Hollywood films are a capitalist, imperialist opiate of the people. She especially derides the women who are subject to this opiate, who only want to watch films about consumption and love. Yet, in the same scene, Otavia does not just watch the Soviet film, she has a romanticized, sexualized experience in the cinema. Sitting next to Alfredo, “Otavia notices his fleshy lower lip. His half-open shirt reveals a muscular, hairy chest.”⁸² In the

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Jackson, and K. David Jackson, "Afterward" in *Parque Industrial: Romance Proletario = Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

⁸⁰ Patrícia Galvão, *Parque Industrial: Romance Proletario = Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 70–71.

⁸¹ Galvão, *Parque Industrial: Romance Proletario = Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel*, 100.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 99.

darkness of the cinema, she not only wants to “wrench from each still spectator’s head... an allegiance to the emotional spasms that envelop her. She squeezes Alfredo’s hand.”

Although Galvão criticizes the women who want to see love on screen, she also romanticizes Otavia’s experience in the cinema and rewards her by fulfilling her desires. This constructs a meritocracy in which the conscious proletariat is not only more enlightened, but more deserving and appreciative of love and desire. The same meritocracy echoes throughout the novel as Otavia and Alfredo are the only couple to experience a consensual, romanticized sexual relationship — one that conforms more or less to standards of heteronormativity and monogamy. Regarding her own tumultuous married life, she condemned marriage as a bourgeois institution, yet believed that monogamy should be preserved in marriages of mutual affection; she was thus subsequently offended by Oswaldo Andrade’s many affairs.⁸³ The other, apolitical female characters in the *Parque Industrial* experience “depraved” sexual relationships, ranging from homosexuality to prostitution. Corina follows the trajectory of the “fallen woman” when she becomes pregnant and is abandoned by her rich lover. She ultimately becomes a prostitute, gets sick from venereal disease, and in the novel’s most shocking scene, gives birth to a deformed, skinless baby — the result of prostituting herself in order to satisfy her bourgeois dreams of buying a crib. Galvão, despite her feminist and Marxist ideals, condemns women (notably Corina is singled out as “mulata” and is continually abused for sex and labor) for sexual impropriety. In the final scene of the novel, Corina has sexual relations with another marginalized, exploited character, Pedro, who is raped earlier in the novel during carnival festivities. The two eat “salted popcorn” in bed, a sign

⁸³ Furlani and Ferraz, *Viva Pagu: Fotobiografia de Patrícia Galvão*.

of their shared exploitation in a capitalist culture best represented by the symbols of Hollywood.

Galvão, although she was a leftist, a communist, and a feminist, espoused some of the same ideals that conservative authorities held regarding the danger of cinema. Like the Catholic intellectual Jonathas Serrano, she worried about the effect of Hollywood films “conquering” the minds of young Brazilians. Though Serrano focused on children and Galvão on workers, both came to the same conclusion that Hollywood films were culturally imperialist and psychologically damaging.⁸⁴ Galvão, however, incorporated her own past as a “movie-struck girl” into her work, criticizing herself as a frivolous fanatic of the cinema. Although the Pagu who submitted her photo to the Fox Films Photogenic Beauty contest in 1926 was the political opposite of the Pagu who wrote for *Homem do Povo* in 1931, both participated in cosmopolitan modernity. As a movie-struck girl who applied for the Fox Film Beauty Contest, she contributed to a transnational film culture that celebrated the Hollywood aesthetic of *fotogenia*. As a modernist writer, she continued to write about Hollywood films, even as she criticized them as opiates of the masses. Eventually, Galvão gained fame for both her polemic writing and for the *fotogenia* she exhibited in photographs. Poet Augusto de Campos’ 1982 volume about her life and work popularized the image of “Pagú” as a muse and icon of the modernist movement. Her image as a young, attractive, rebellious woman was subsequently featured in television miniseries, films, book stores and boutiques.⁸⁵ In recent years, revisionist scholars have emphasized her intellectual production rather than her image as

⁸⁴ See note 19.

⁸⁵ Pontes “Intérpretes do Metrópole,” 110.

a “muse” for other writers. In both fields, however, Galvão work and image demonstrates how movie fandom could develop into prolific cultural production.

Another movie-going woman in the 1920s became a media star in her own right. Leonor Mendes de Barros was the first lady of São Paulo state, married to Adhemar de Barros who was the federal interventor from 1937 to 1941, and later, the elected governor of São Paulo from 1947 to 1951 and again from 1963-1966. During “Adhemarismo,” the São Paulo state government made greater use of media tools and propaganda. Although the newsreel *The Pioneer of the Screen (A Bandeirante da Tela)*⁸⁶ was not officially produced by the state government, it was more or less sponsored by Adhemar de Barros’ political party. As Rodrigo Archangelo has analyzed, newsreels helped produce a cult of personality surrounding Adhemar de Barros, depicting him as a passionate politician, a man of the people, a humble doctor, and a faithful Catholic. A number of newsreels also featured Leonor Mendes de Barros as the image of saintly motherhood and charity.⁸⁷

Before she became “Dona Leonor” on screen however, Leonor Mendes de Barros was “Nonosinha,” another “movie-struck” fan who went to the cinema almost daily. As a young married couple, both Leonor Mendes de Barros and Adhemar Barros were avid fans of the movies. In 1932, Adhemar de Barros lived in self-imposed exile in Paraguay after participating in São Paulo’s failed revolt against Getúlio Vargas.⁸⁸ While in Paraguay, he wrote the following letter to Leonor:

My dear Nonosinha. Much health and happiness for you and the children... Go to the cinema everyday and have a bit of fun for yourself and for me. I’ve read the

⁸⁶ *Bandeirante* can be translated to “pioneer,” a reference to the “bandeirantes” who expanded the frontier in São Paulo in the seventeenth century and a nickname for São Paulo

⁸⁷ Rodrigo Archangelo, “Um Bandeirante nas Telas de São Paulo: O Discurso Adhemarista em Cinejornais, 1947-1956” (Universidade de São Paulo, 2007).

⁸⁸ The Constitutionalist Revolution was an attempt to re-center federal power in São Paulo, which, with Minas Gerais had dominated national politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century until Getúlio Vargas, from Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil, took the presidency in a 1930 coup.

cinema program from the *Estado* [*Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper]; I feel pissed [*bem amolado*] to miss so many good films.⁸⁹

Personal letters like these appeared whenever the couple was apart; Barros lived abroad in exile several times, and Mendes occasionally took the children to spend time with her family in the São Paulo countryside. In letters from the early period of their marriage around 1930, just before Barros became a politician, cinema was a frequent, nearly daily pleasure. Although the mention of cinema in Adhemar's letter above was brief, it does show that he was more than a casual observer. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the intellectuals at *Cinearte* were pioneers in advocating the appreciation of cinema as an art form. For a man of Adhemar de Barros' age and social stature to have enjoyed cinema so much in 1932, that he felt the loss of "missing great films," he must have been more aligned with the intellectuals of *Cinearte*, viewing cinema as the "seventh art" rather than the moralists who worried that cinema was a dangerous diversion that would corrupt women and children.

Mendes also mentioned cinema in her letters to Barros, hinting, even when she wrote "I'm not going to the movies today," that she usually did go every day.⁹⁰ Other letters mentioned that while "Yesterday I didn't go to the movies, I plan to go to the Paraiso [cinema] today."⁹¹ After a marital spat, she asked Barros, "if you forgive me, you

⁸⁹ "Minha querida Nonosinha: Muita saude e felicidades para voce e as crianças... Vá ao cinema todas as noites e trate de se divertir um pouco por V. E por mim; tenho lido os programmas de cinema do Estado e ando bem amolado por perder fitas tão boas." Adhemar de Barros to Leonor Mendes de Barros, "Muita Saude E Felicidades," December 6, 1932, AP 630, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

⁹⁰ Leonor Mendes de Barros, "Não Vou Ao Cinema Hoje," n.d., AP 630, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo

⁹¹ Leonor Mendes de Barros to Adhemar de Barros, "Hontem Não Fui Ao Cinema, Pretendo Ir Hoje Ao Paraiso," August 8, 1934, AP 630, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

have to give me ten tasty kisses and take me to the movies today.”⁹² Mention of the movies appeared alongside other quotidian news such as their children’s illnesses and family outings. Movie-going was a way for Mendes to have fun “for herself” and a way to enjoy time as a couple or to mediate their relationship after a fight. They were consumers of movies in the same way that so many Brazilians were.

The relationship between the couple and cinema however, evolved as Barros entered politics. Rather than a couple who went to the movies for “fun,” they became the subjects of state-sponsored newsreels, political pamphlets, and other public events. Through various forms of media in the mid-twentieth century, the couple enacted and performed their role as a loving couple. Rodrigo Archaengelo’s comprehensive analysis in *The Pioneer of the Screen* has demonstrated how both Adhemar and Leonor cultivated populist images. A third of the episodes of *Bandeirantes da Tela* featured Adhemar de Barros in public events and ceremonies; and many featured Leonor as well. Adhemar, who was trained as a doctor, visited hospitals and attended to sick children; he gave rousing speeches surrounded by enthusiastic crowds. In these newsreels, “Dona Leonor” was depicted with her husband and amongst other statesmen at meetings, political events, and formal visits. Together, the couple inaugurated hospitals, roads, and buildings, met with other government officials, and waved to crowds. However, newsreels also depicted Dona Leonor without her husband, distributing gifts to children for Christmas and foodstuffs to poor families. Dona Leonor’s image was one of saintly mother and also a humble housewife who personally handed presents to the poor. In addition to newsreels, Dona Leonor gave radio and television addresses, further cultivating a media identity of

⁹²“se me perdoaes, tens que me dar 10 beijos gostosas e me levar ao cinema hoje.” Leonor Mendes de Barros, “Fique Muito Triste E Arrependida,” April 11, 1929, AP 630, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

pious, patriotic motherhood. The image of Dona Leonor echoed the image of other wives of populist leaders like Darcy Vargas and Eva Perón.

In the postcard below, released in 1957 when Adhemar was elected mayor of São Paulo, the banner at the top reads, “The people have elected Dr. Adhemar as mayor and Dona Leonor as his partner [*cooperadora*].”⁹³ The caption refers to the couple as “the most loved couple in Brazil.” The overall message is that the two were a pair, and that voting for Adhemar was not just voting for him, but for the couple.

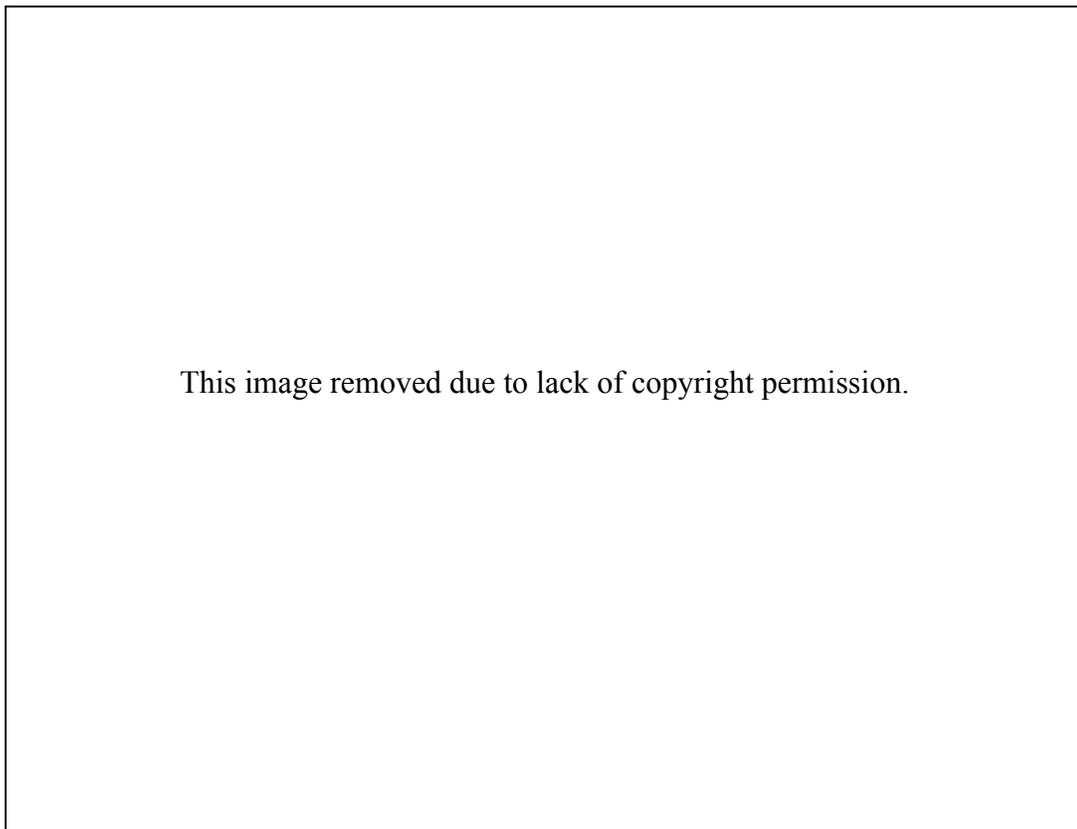


Figure 36: “The people have elected Dr. Adhemar as mayor Dona Leonor as “O casal mais querido do Brasil – Adhemar e dona Leonor as his cooperador” The most loved couple of Brazil – Adhemar and Dona Leonor – devote themselves now with all their enthusiasm and spirit of accomplishment, to the greatness of the bandeirante metropolis.” Source: “O Casal Mais Querido Do Brasil,” 1957, AP TXT AB 631, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

Dona Leonor’s Christmas television address in 1960 demonstrates how the Adhemarista government utilized her image as a mother to propagate traditional gender

⁹³ “O Casal Mais Querido Do Brasil,” 1957, AP TXT AB 631, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

roles in which women, even those who worked outside of the home, should be prioritize their duties as wife and mother first. In the television address, Barros spoke directly to women viewers, from the perspective of a fellow wife and mother rather than a political figure. Barros addressed her television audiences through their family statuses: “Mrs. Housewife, Mr. Head of family, youths and children of São Paulo,” rather than as citizens of workers of São Paulo. She emphasized how the technology of television allowed her to enter viewers’ homes, and made the humble request, “I ask permission to your home, my friend, so that I may wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.”⁹⁴ She specifically addressed female viewers, using the feminine version of the noun, “amiga.”

Her speech made lengthy references to the image of the Virgin Mary as a model of maternal virtue to uphold and asked viewers to think a little less about presents and festivities, and a little more about social inequality and about those who “suffer in the beds of hospitals, in cellars, and in slums, without any help.”⁹⁵ She encouraged all women to fulfill their duties inside the home: educating children, inspiring husbands, supporting the Christian faith. She then specifically addressed the duties of women according to their and their husband’s class and occupation.

Worker (*operária*), when your husband comes frustrated (*revoltado*), give him a little bit of calm understanding, appeasing his embittered heart. We, Brazilian women, are a reserve of peace and understanding for those that earn their daily bread, at the cost of such suffering and so many disappointments....

Society lady, when your husband comes home disillusioned by things and men, lift his spirit, take care to make him forget his personal problems because it is essential that women be the balm, the solace, the calm.

And you, whose husband has the responsibility of public office, the charge of politics or civic excellence, you have the greatest portion of responsibility for

⁹⁴ “pedindo da licença para entrar pela sua casa, minha amiga, no desejo de augurar-lhe um feliz natal e um próspero ano novo.” “Sra. Dna. de Casa,,” Transcript, December 24, 1960, AP 630, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

⁹⁵ “sofrem nos leitos dos hospitais ou nos porões e nas favelas, sem qualquer assistência.” “Sra. Dna. De Casa,,” 4.

the destiny of our people. The way that you influence the spirit of your husband will be born the force that will materialize your ideal, the direction that he takes to influence your leaders, and many times, even changing the destiny of the people....

Brazilian women of São Paulo: *Paulistas, Paulistanas*, or foreigners that have here found more than a refuge for their dreams, but a profoundly Christian home. I embrace all of you with happiness directly in your homes, with the ability given to me, through TV, and ask baby Jesus that he look to our people and offer a truly peaceful and happy night.⁹⁶

Not only did Mendes' television address advance an ideology that gendered solidarity was more important than class solidarity, she asked that wives to placate their husbands, and in the case of women workers, calm their husbands from being frustrated. While Mendes' address was clearly an example of government propaganda that stressed both traditional gender norms between husband and wife, as well as repressing potential labor activism, it was an example of how Mendes was part of a larger media culture.

Whereas Patricia Galvão went from "movie-struck girl" to leftist intellectual who criticized the Hollywood film industry, Leonor Mendes de Barros went from a moviegoer to a movie "star" with a carefully crafted image of saintly motherhood. Although completely divergent in politics and profession, both participated in negotiations of identity at the movies, in the audience and on screen. Galvão ruminated on her past as a "movie-struck girl" in order to advance a critical ideology about the role of cinema in worker consciousness, the role of Hollywood in Brazilian society, and the role of love

⁹⁶ quando o seu marido, operária, chegar revoltando em seu lar, ofereça-lhe um pouco de calma compreensão, apaziguando-lhe o coração amargurado. Sejamós nós, as mulheres brasileiras, uma reserva de paz e entendimento para aqueles que ganham o pão de cada dia, a custa de tantos sofrimentos e tantas desesperanças... quando o seu marido, dama da sociedade, chegar ao lar desliudido das coisas e dos homens, alevantai o seu espírito, cuidai dele esqueida dos seus problemas pessoais porque é da essência da mulher ser o bálsamo, o pefrigério, a calma. A você cujo marido tem a responsabilidade dos cargos públicos, os escassos da política ou do ideal cívico, a você cabe a maior parcela de responsabilidade pelos destinos do noss povo. Da forma como você souber influir no espírito de seu marido, nascerá a força que ele imprimirá ao seu ideal, a direção que tomará influenciando os seus liderados e, muitas vezes, modificando até os destinos um povo... Brasileiras de São Paulo: paulistas, paulistanas ou estrangeiras que aqui encontraram mais do que um refúgio para as suas esperanças, um lar profundamente cristão. Eu abraço a todas na felicidade de poder dirigio ao menino jesus que olhe pelo nosso povo e ofereça a todos uma noite verdadeiramente de paz e de alegria." Ibid.

and desire among women workers. Barros utilized her identity as a wife and mother to help shape a populist image of Adhemarismo in newsreels that were shown in cinemas all over São Paulo state. As a viewer, “nonosinha” enjoyed cinema; she brought cinema into the domestic sphere of her home and used it to amuse herself, her husband, and likely her children. As a politician, however, Leonor used cinema as a tool of propaganda. Rather than bring cinema into the domestic sphere, she used cinema to project an externalized version of her domestic duties

Conclusion:

Whether by embodying *fotogenia* or starring in state propaganda, men and women participated in transnational film culture. Even in rural locations far away from Hollywood, Brazilians dreamt of becoming actors, studying and practicing the mannerisms of Hollywood stars. Through *fotogenia*, these aspiring actors were not just the dupes of the imperialist Hollywood, they consciously expressed cosmopolitan modernity in the exercising of their bodies and in the allure of their smiles. In their youths, Patricia Galvão and Leonor Mendes de Barros were part of the same movie-struck culture that read *Cinearte* and went to the movies almost daily. While completely divergent in politics, they nevertheless overlapped in their conservative approach to cinema in later years. Galvão condemned Hollywood as an opiate of the masses and censured the appearance of love and romance in films. Mendes, as the first lady of São Paulo, utilized cinema as a tool of propaganda, and to reinforce gendered hierarchies. Although these individuals were peripheral to Hollywood, and in some cases, even to the large cities of Brazil, they all were able to be active contributors to a cosmopolitan film culture.

Chapter 5: Productive Leisure: The League of Catholic Women and Middle-class Morality

When Maria was growing up in early 1940s São Paulo, she “adored the cinema,” but her strict aunt never permitted her to go to the movies.¹ One day, the school priest visited Maria’s home, asking that her aunt allow Maria to attend a Sunday matinee showing of *The Song of Bernadette*, a Hollywood film about Saint Bernadette Soubirous. Besides showing his support for the film’s religious message, the priest told her aunt that Maria was a good student and deserved to attend. Maria’s aunt gave her consent to the priest but, “Father Antonio was barely out of the door when she came in and said, ‘If you think that I’ll let you go to the movies to see a shameless – she said a four-letter word – act in the role of the Virgin Mary, you are quite mistaken.’”² The four letter word was “puta,” which means prostitute, or alternatively, another four-letter word-- slut. Maria explained, “She [my aunt] thought it was sacrilege that an actress, who in her opinion had a very dubious reputation, play the role of a saint, of a priestess.”³ Maria’s aunt did not contradict or argue with the priest in his presence, but she clearly had her own ideas about the morality of films and of going to the cinema. She exercised her right to police her niece’s leisure habits, and enforced her own standards of morality, religion, and

¹ “adorava o cinema” Maria Leopoldina, interview with Heloisa Buarque de Almeida, transcript, March 22, 1991. Pg. 3

² “Mal o padre Antônio saiu de casa, ela entrou, veio para mim e falou ‘Se você pensa que eu vou deixar você ir ao cinema para ver uma sem-vergonha - ela disse outro nome, de quatro letrinhas - fazer papel de Nossa Senhora, você está muito enganada.’” Ibid.

³ “Ela achava que era um sacrilégio uma atriz de reputação duvidosa, na opinião dela nem um pouco duvidosa, fazer papel de santo, de mãe de santo.” Leopoldina, Maria Leopoldina, 3. Maria Leopoldina used the term “mãe de santo,” the word for “priestess” in the Afro-Brazilian religions of Candomblé and Umbanda, which are syncretic religions that combine Catholic and Yoruba influences. While my translation of “mãe de santo” assumes that Maria (or her aunt), whether consciously or not, mixed popular concepts of female saints and priestesses, the term “mãe de santo” might also be a reference to the Virgin Mary (though not technically a mother of a “saint” in Catholicism), an image that also appeared in the movie. Either translation, however, demonstrates that it was not strict religious doctrine, but social standards of morality that were at the root of the aunt’s objections.

behavior. In her house, the moral authority was not the male, ordained priest, but a strict aunt who did not mind using four letter words.

This story is just one example of how women could adapt the expectations of school and church to exercise moral authority. Other women might have respected the priest's advice and allowed Maria to go to the movies; others might have even allowed Maria to see a Hollywood film with lots of kissing that the local priest would not have approved. In these situations, women assumed positions of social power as mothers, elites, and religious leaders, to regulate the behavior of themselves and other women. In Brazil, as in other parts of Latin America, women played an important role in policing female morality, from the colonial era to the present day. As early as the mid-nineteenth-century, female intellectuals promoted the importance of mothers in protecting the social welfare of children and women.⁴ In the 1920s, women's magazines, health educators, and medical professionals extolled the role mothers in creating a physically and morally healthy nation.⁵ While leisure was an arena for movie-going women to express and perform identity, it also presented an opportunity for mothers and maternal figures to enforce their moral authority and shape São Paulo society in the early twentieth century. While addressing the issues of female morality, middle-class leisure habits, and images of modern femininity, this chapter will depart from earlier chapters by examining forms of leisure outside of movie-going, including theater and public dining.

This chapter focuses on one of twentieth-century São Paulo's most prominent women's organizations: the *Liga das Senhoras Católicas*, or the League of Catholic Women. Members of São Paulo's wealthiest families formally established the

⁴ Maria Lúcia Mott, "Maternalismo, Políticas Públicas e Benemerência no Brasil," *Cadernos Pagu* 16 (2001): 199–234.

⁵ Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, 90–104.

organization in 1921 (first under the name League of Catholic Mothers) as a “private, civil association with philanthropic goals of a beneficent, educational, and cultural nature, as well as providing social assistance.”⁶ Initially, the League functioned primarily as a social club, holding a variety of parties and conferences to raise funds, attract members, and establish member services such as a library, a tea room, and even a salon. Social assistance was confined to donating the profits from parties and the sale of handmade wares. Quite quickly however, the League established several institutions intended to benefit working women. In 1924, the League established a Training School, which functioned until 1950, to train women to work as tailors, teachers, and secretaries. In the same year, the League founded the Domestic School to instruct women (both future housewives and servants) on culinary and domestic skills.⁷ In 1926, the League established a women-only restaurant for white-collar working women, which is discussed in this chapter. Beginning in 1930, the League experienced an enormous expansion in activity when the São Paulo state government contracted the organization to place the state’s abandoned children in asylums, which eventually led the League to establish its own orphanages and schools. In addition to these institutions, the League operated boarding houses, nurseries, and initiatives for religious and professional education. By the end of the 1930s, the League boasted “5 sanctuaries, 12 departments of assistance functioning in ten establishments, \$7.657:140\$449 worth of real estate, 2084 individuals

⁶ “associação cívica de direito privado e fins filantrópicos, de caráter beneficente, educativo, cultural e de assistência social “Nossa História,” *Liga Solidária*, accessed June 30, 2013, <http://www.ligasolidaria.org.br/a-liga/Nossa-Historia.aspx>.

⁷ In the 1930s, the Domestic School also taught courses on child-rearing and puericulture. On the puericulture movement and its ramifications for national identity in Brazil, see Cari Williams Maes, “Progeny of Progress: Child-Centered Policymaking and National Identity Construction in Brazil, 1922–1954” (PhD Diss, Emory University, 2012), <http://gradworks.umi.com/35/40/3540100.html>. The Escola Doméstica eventually became an institution of elementary and secondary education that still operates today under the name Instituto Santa Amália.

directly assisted by 21 religious clergy, 202 employees, 58 directors, and 1022 associates”⁸ The League still exists today under the name League of Solidarity (*Liga Solidária*) and operates various schools, daycares, professional training programs for adults, and retirement homes.

As a long-standing organization that built, owned, and administered institutions throughout the city of São Paulo, from the Women’s Restaurant in the city center to an orphanage for boys in the São Paulo countryside, the League of Catholic Women made a visible and symbolic impact on the city. In the early and mid-twentieth century, the mainstream press documented the inauguration of its buildings, reported on its many fundraisers and parties, and featured news of its elite members in the society pages. The League organized performances and events that were held at the Municipal Theater, broadcast on the radio, and rented cinemas to host movie premieres. The League even produced its own film *Fides Intrepida* in 1941, spreading its message over decades to a wide audience. Prominent religious leaders and politicians supported and lauded the League’s actions, while leftists and other critics questioned their lavish parties and fundraisers. The League today still maintains a distinct reputation among *paulistanos*, residents of São Paulo city.⁹ São Paulo historian Roney Cytrynowicz has remarked in casual conversation that, “when we (left-leaning *paulistanos*) want to say that a middle-class person is right-wing, moralist, and old-fashioned, we say that they belong to the League of Catholic Women or the Dames of Santana [another women’s philanthropic

⁸ “Relatorio 1938-1939,” 1939, Liga das Senhoras Católicas.

⁹ For a history of the organization that includes interviews with members and photographs from the League’s archives, see Margarida Cintra Gordinho, *Liga Das Senhoras Católicas de São Paulo - Memórias* (São Paulo: Editora Marca D’agua, 2007).

organization].”¹⁰

Cytrynowicz’s depiction of the League as simultaneously “middle-class,” “right-wing,” and “old-fashioned” highlights an important paradox in the League’s class positioning. As discussed in chapters one and two, the evolution of the middle class in Brazil, as elsewhere, was bound up with concept of modernity. Modernization theorists proposed that the appearance of a Brazilian middle class ushered in other signifiers of modernity, such as egalitarianism and citizenship. Brian Owensby argues, however, that the middle class in Brazil was simultaneously “modern” in professional and consumptive habits and “traditional” in the support of social hierarchies.¹¹ As the self-stated arbiters of middle-class morality, members of the League saw their organization at both the forefront of modernity and at the base of the “traditional” family values upheld by the Catholic Church.

In the 1920s, the most visible members of the League were from the richest families in São Paulo; the designation of the organization as “middle class” applies to the values that they enforced, primarily within the arena of female morality. Although in the 1930s, the League’s philanthropic projects moved towards women’s and children’s health, exhibiting a greater concern with domestic and reproductive habits, in the 1920s, many of the League’s early initiatives focused on how women behaved in public spaces. Public and domestic behaviors were intertwined, as moralists worried that women’s public transgressions would adversely affect their ability to become adequate mothers.¹²

¹⁰ aqui (paulistanos mais à esquerda), quando queremos dizer que alguém ou grupo de classe média é *direitista+moralista+antiquado*, falamos que parece a “liga da senhoras católicas” ou “as damas da santana.” Roney Cytrynowicz, e-mail message to author, February 3, 2012

¹¹ Brian Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹² Maluf and Mott, “Recônditos do mundo feminino.”

However, the League in its early years stands out among other maternalist organizations across the globe because of its distinct emphasis on women's public identities as workers and middle-class consumers rather than as mothers. For the League, women were modern because they worked white-collar jobs, wore a certain type of clothing, and even dined in a particular way. By shaping middle class women's leisure habits, the League sought to shape modernity in São Paulo.

Leisure played another significant role in the organization as members frequently organized festivals, musical recitals, and even plays to generate funds. These often lavish events were visual displays of the members' wealth and social capital. Leisure thus constructed class difference in two ways. Fundraising galas reified the members' class status as elites, while institutions like the Women's Restaurant regulated and further defined the leisure habits of middle-class women.

Like the cinemas that became intertwined with the image of modern femininity, the League's institutions similarly mediated women's interaction with public space and shaped São Paulo as a modern city. In *A Women's Berlin: Building the Modern City*, Despina Stratigakos discusses how female architects, designers, and entrepreneurs constructed an "alternative metropolis" that not only changed the urban landscape of Berlin, but linked the city to the image of the modern woman. Influenced by feminist geographers' resistance against the male-dominated fields of architecture and urban planning, Stratigakos' work seeks to emphasize the contribution of women in shaping the built environment.¹³ While the women of the League were not architects or designers,

¹³ For another an architectural history of gendered spaces in London, see Jane Rendell, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space & Architecture in Regency London* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002). For an introduction to the issues and practice of feminist geography, see Linda McDowell, "Space, Place and Gender Relations: Part I. Feminist Empiricism and the Geography of Social Relations," *Progress*

they impacted São Paulo's built and cultural environment by establishing gendered institutions specifically for women: boarding houses, training schools, clinics, clubs, and hospitals. In so doing, they shaped São Paulo by affecting the behavior of middle-class women in public space.

In 1958, Amalia Matarazzo, one of the founding members of the League, described the establishment of the organization in 1920s São Paulo, which she depicts as a tumultuous decade:

[In order to understand the motivations for founding the League,] it is necessary to evoke the mood of the post-war era, with the profound moral, material, and spiritual transformations that it brought... the unleashing of passions, the ebullience or fermentation of bad feelings (*maus sentimentos*), repressed during the war and resurfacing in an unrestrained frenzy of enjoyment and momentary pleasures... and emerging innovations, the dismantling of stereotypes and taboos... This is the general panorama most accepted in the provincial and calm São Paulo of the time, in whose close-minded and cliquish society, stereotypes abounded. One of these [stereotypes], of working women, was quickly dismantled, and women emerged victoriously in offices, in public departments, in liberal professions. However, this was only in paid work, due to the necessity of contributing financially to their households. What was never imagined was that society ladies would come together, with the aim of self-sacrificing work for the social good.¹⁴

According to Matarazzo, the “dismantling of stereotypes and taboos” in the 1920s was represented principally by the growing number of women in the work force. She

in Human Geography 17, no. 2 (1993): 157–79; Linda McDowell, “Space, Place and Gender Relations: Part II. Identity, Difference, Feminist Geometries and Geographies,” *Progress in Human Geography* 17, no. 3 (1993): 305–18; Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*.

¹⁴ Necessitaremos de evocar o ambiente de após-guerra, com as profundas transformações morais, materiais, e espirituais que trouxe. Relembraremos o desendadeamento das paixões, a ebulição ou fermentação dos maus sentimentos, represados durante a guerra e emergindo à tona, ao seu término, numa ânsia incontida de prazeres e gozos momentâneos... e as inovações surgidas, os preconceitos e tabus derrubados... êsse o panorama geral mais acceptudado na provinciana e calma São Paulo de então, em cuja sociedade, muito fechada e adstrita aos seu clan, sobravam preconceitos. Um dêles, o do trabalho feminino, foi logo derrubado; e a mulher surgiu vitoriosamente nos escritórios, nas Reparições Públicas, nas profissões liberais. Porém sempre no trabalho remunerado [sic], desde que cessitasse de cooperar financeiramente no orçamento doméstic. Mas, o que ainda não podia ser imaginado era que senhoras da sociedade se constituíssem em equipe, com o fito de tralhar abnegadamente para o bem social.” Condessa Amalia Ferreira Matarazzo, “Comentários Sobre A Liga Das Senhoras Catolicas - Terceira Cópia, Ultima Forma,” January 1958, 6, Liga das Senhoras Católicas.

viewed the League at the vanguard of this change, an extension of the women who “emerged victoriously in offices, in public departments, in liberal professions.” However, Matarazzo drew a dividing line between working “women” (*mulheres*) and society “ladies” (*senhoras*); even the terms she used, *mulher* and *senhora*, signified distinct social statuses.¹⁵ While women who worked did so out of “financial necessity,” society ladies had higher, altruistic motives to support the greater social good. Although Matarazzo included the League in the “profound... transformations” of the 1920s, she depicted an unchanged social and moral hierarchy in which society ladies were at the top. In omitting the factory or domestic service workers from her vision of social change, Matarazzo emphasized the importance of elite and middle-class behaviors in constructing modernity in São Paulo.

This chapter will first discuss the establishment of the League in the context of similar maternalist organizations that appeared in the Americas and Europe in the early twentieth century, and assess how founding members envisioned the organization’s relationship to the Catholic Church and to the modernization of São Paulo. I will then analyze two of the League’s initiatives and their significance for the construction of modern femininity: League’s production of “A Soiree in the Palace,” a lavish play intended to generate funds to establish the Domestic School, and the Women’s Restaurant, a women-only restaurant for workers in the city center. Both projects demonstrated the League’s visibility in São Paulo, on its largest stage and in its downtown streets. Both projects also reveal the importance of leisure activities as a way

¹⁵ Because of the self-designation of “senhoras,” I refer to members of the League as “ladies” instead of as “women.”

to raise funds, a means to gain publicity, and a tool to influence the habits of middle-class women.

The League of Catholic Women: Proto-feminists or Paternalists?

Matarazzo's comments on working women reflect a larger debate regarding women's beneficent societies across the globe. Do these voluntary organizations provide services and spaces that support women's rights? Or do they reinforce patriarchal gender norms upon both members and the lower-class women they seek to help? Much of the literature on women's voluntary organizations has focused on maternalism, which Lynn Weiner describes as "a kind of empowered motherhood or public expression of those domestic values associated in some way with motherhood."¹⁶ Organizations like the General Federation of Women's Clubs in the U.S., the Ligue Patriotique in France, and the League of German Women's Association in Germany, which all arose at the turn of the twentieth century, advocated policies such as post-partum maternal leave for women workers, periodic health examinations for children, and material assistance for poor mothers.¹⁷ In their influential study on maternalist organization in the U.S., Great Britain, Germany and France, While Koven and Michel view maternalism as a way for women in the U.S. and in Great Britain to participate in the public sphere, paving the way for suffragism and women's rights movements. On the other hand, historians focusing on

¹⁶ L. Y. Weiner, "Maternalism as a Paradigm: Defining the Issues," *Journal of Women's History* 5, no. 2 (1993): 96. For a comprehensive analysis of the historiography on maternalism, see Rebecca Jo Plant and Marian van der Klein "Introduction" in Marian van der Klein et al., *Maternalism Reconsidered: Motherhood, Welfare and Social Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Berghahn Books, 2012). For a historiographical essays on the literature that emerged in the 1990s on maternalism in Europe and the U.S., see Lisa D. Brush, "Love, Toil, and Trouble: Motherhood and Feminist Politics," *SIGNS-CHICAGO* 21 (1996): 429–54; Lynne A. Haney, "Engendering the Welfare State. A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 04 (1998): 748–67.

¹⁷ Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920," *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (October 1, 1990): 1076–1108, doi:10.2307/2163479.

domestic workers outside of Europe and the Americas have depicted maternalism as a strategy for elite women to maintain class and racial hierarchies by manipulating the women they purported to help.¹⁸

Historians of Latin America have come down on both sides of the debate. Like Seth and Koven, Donna Guy highlights the work of women in voluntary associations in expanding women's rights, valorizing women's social work, and influencing welfare policies under Peronism.¹⁹ Karen Meade provides an ambivalent assessment, demonstrating that while the Beneficent Society of Argentina did not contest patriarchal definitions of a male-headed Argentine family (in fact, they strengthened it), the organization still assisted women who were excluded from this system, such as single mothers.²⁰ Suffragists in 1940s Mexico even utilized the rhetoric of maternalism to argue for women's right to vote.²¹

In Brazil, Maria Luisa Mott has examined in-depth the São Paulo Pro-Infancy Crusade (*Cruzada Pro-Infância*) and has argued that although the organization advocated women's subordinate position within a patriarchal family, it also supported programs that helped all types of mothers, including single mothers, domestic servants, rural mothers and other women who were ignored by state protection. She writes that, "The education proposed by the *Cruzada* extended beyond teaching women about their maternal duties

¹⁸ Alison Jill King, *Domestic Service in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Deference and Disdain* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007); Nayla Moukarbel, *Sri Lankan Housemaids in Lebanon: A Case Of symbolic Violence and everyday Forms of Resistance* (Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Donna J. Guy, *Women Build the Welfare State: Performing Charity and Creating Rights in Argentina, 1880-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

²⁰ K. Mead, "Beneficent Maternalism: Argentine Motherhood in Comparative Perspective, 1880-1920," *Journal of Women's History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 120–45.

²¹ Nichole Sanders, "Mothering Mexico: The Historiography of Mothers and Motherhood in 20th-Century Mexico," *History Compass* 7, no. 6 (November 1, 2009): 1542–53, doi:10.1111/j.1478-0542.2009.00650.x. See S. Buck, 'The Meaning of Women's Vote in Mexico, 1917–1953', in S. Mitchell and P. A. Schell (eds.), *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910–1953* (New York, NY: Rowman Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 73–98

so that they could keep their babies alive and thereby provide more workers for the state: it also focused on educating mothers about their rights as citizens.”²² Ivana Simili has taken a cultural studies approach to maternalism, demonstrating that the Brazilian Legion of Assistance, the organization established by first lady Darcy Vargas to assist the families of Brazil’s World War II soldiers, influenced fashion and developed new representations of modern femininity through their charitable efforts.²³

In contrast to the historians who find the potential for cross-class feminism in maternalist organizations, Susan K. Besse and Christine Ehrick both emphasize how elite women in Brazil and Uruguay used maternalism to reinforce patriarchal gender roles and uphold existing class hierarchies. For Besse, organizations like the League of Catholic Women, the Brazilian Red Cross, Pro-Mother, the Pro-Infancy Crusade, and the Women’s Alliance offered upper-class women a chance to work and gain social prominence outside of their home, but only as altruistic mothers who aimed to preserve patriarchal “Christian values” and moralize about the behavior of lower-class women. These organizations “functioned as a mechanism of social control both of the benefactors and of the recipients.”²⁴ Christine Ehrick goes so far as to discard the use of “maternal” in her assessment of the *Bonne Garde* in Uruguay. Instead, she argues that in its reproduction of social hierarchies, the organization was not maternal but “paternal;” their benevolence maintained a social hierarchy based on mutual obligation.²⁵

²² Maria Luisa Mott “Maternal and Child Welfare, State Policy and Women’s Philanthropic Activities in Brazil, 1930-45” in Klein et al., *Maternalism Reconsidered*, 183. See also Maria Lúcia Mott, Maria Elisa Botelho Byington, and Olga Sofia Fabergé Alves, *O Gesto que Salva: Pérola Byington e a Cruzada Pró-Infância* (São Paulo: Grifo Projetos Históricos, 2005).

²³ Ivana Guilherme Simili, “Educação e Produção de Moda na Segunda Guerra Mundial: As Voluntárias da Legião Brasileira de Assistência,” *Cadernos Pagu*, 2008, 439–69.

²⁴ Besse, 155

²⁵ C. Ehrick, “Beneficent Cinema: State Formation, Elite Reproduction, and Silent Film in Uruguay, 1910s-1920s,” *The Americas* 63, no. 2 (2006): 205–24.

While “paternalism” is often gendered, the “dominant” person does not need to be male. Bianca Premo has provided a similar definition of patriarchy in her assessment of legal and familial authority in colonial Peru. Although various actors wielded authority or power over others, “patriarchal” is useful as a term that demonstrates that there was a system, a set of “colonial practices based on the belief that multiple individuals — male and female, young and old — were naturally subordinate to an authority figure, usually a male, who held superiority based on the hierarchical model of the Western family.”²⁶ Although colonial Peruvian society was structured under this “hierarchical model of the Western family,” power relations often shifted to upset gender or age-related hierarchies.

The historiography on maternalist organizations thus provides divergent perspectives on how maternalist organizations could both reinforce patriarchal definitions of nation and family, and, by bringing women into positions of social power or by assisting other women, increasing women’s access to political and social rights.²⁷ All of the discussed literature similarly emphasizes, however, the role of these organizations in developing a new social order, whether by preceding the rhetoric of a paternalist welfare state, or by forming a vocabulary for expanded women’s rights in the public sphere.²⁸ At different moments, and through various representations of its own history, the League claimed to shift between these categories. In pamphlets and other marketing tools, the League assumed a position within a patriarchal and paternal hierarchy. The organization justified its social authority by emphasizing its subservience to the guidance of the

²⁶ Bianca Premo, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, & Legal Minority in Colonial Lima* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

²⁷ For a review of this debate in an international context outside of Latin America, see Brush, “Love, Toil, and Trouble: Motherhood and Feminist Politics.”

²⁸ For a review of the role of maternalism in the creation of the western welfare state, see Haney, “Engendering the Welfare State. A Review Article.”

Catholic Church, especially to the Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom Duarte Leopoldo da Silva. Yet, in meeting minutes and personal memoirs, leaders of the organization also claimed to be vanguards that supported a broadly conceived definition of women's rights.

The seeming contradiction can be summed up in a speech that one of the priests of the organization gave in 1923, shortly after the organization was founded. The priest urged members of the League to “practice piety, go forth to instruct and educate women so that she follows her duties to family and to society.... The League does not oppose the female vote, does not condemn the women that take on public duties, and in sum, is not against women's rights. On the contrary, the League will defend and support these rights as the church has always done, since time immemorial.”²⁹ These two goals, of urging women to follow family duties, and supporting women's rights outside of the home, seemed at odds, but the priest believed them to be compatible and to be equally important to the organization.

The Apple of His Eye: The Relationship between the Liga das Senhoras Catolicas and the Catholic Church

“The church is filled with half a dozen discordant fashions and malicious glances as they sing about love and boys who got away under the open legs of a muscular Christ... Idiot mothers who want to give up control of their lives in exchange for the guitars and dark, little corners of the church.”

--Patricia Galvão “Liga das Trompas Católicas”³⁰

The elite background of the League's members, their public displays of wealth, including lavish fundraisers and offices, and their emphasis on protecting “Christian values” has made the organization a subject of criticism among leftists and feminists. As

²⁹ “Acta 19” 2/8/1923 in *Livro de Actas 1 1920-1928. Liga das Senhoras Católicas*

³⁰ A Curia se enche de meia dúzia de desafinações da moda e olharinhos maliciosos quando cantam coisas de amor e filhinhos escapulidos, sob as pernas abertas de um Cristo muscular... Mães idiotas que querem dar a uma vida de controle a compensação de violões e cantinhos da Curia.” Patricia Galvão “Liga das Trompas Católicas” April 4, 1931, pg. 2 in Oswald de Andrade and Patrícia Galvão, *O homem do povo: coleção completa e fac-similar do jornal criado e dirigido por Oswald de Andrade e Patrícia Galvão (Pagu) : março/abril 1931*. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2009). ,

discussed in chapter four, the communist writer Patricia Galvão was an early twentieth-century Brazilian writer who, although a fan of cinema in her youth, later became an outspoken critic of Hollywood as a symbol of capitalist oppression. Galvão targeted the League of Catholic Women as an institution that, similar to the culture of movie-going, filled women's heads with romance and bourgeois values. Alongside the film reviews she wrote in the independent newspaper she co-founded, *O Homem do Povo* (Man of the People), Galvão wrote a scathing criticism of the organization.³¹ Referring to the League of Catholic Women as “The League of Catholic Trumpets,” Galvão likened them to noisy instruments rather than autonomous individuals. Galvão referred to the members of the League as “disillusioned beasts” and “idiotic mothers” who “live petty, crumbling lives.” In dense prose, Galvão criticized the League as subservient to a masculinized Catholic church, hypocrites who disguised social gatherings as philanthropy, and bourgeois moralizers of female sexuality. Galvão insinuated that the League's relationship with the church was not just subservient, but sexually submissive, writing, “they sing about love and boys who got away under the open legs of a muscular Christ” and that they exchanged control of their lives for “the guitars and dark little corners of the church.”³² In a Marxist-feminist interpretation of marriage and dependence, Galvão alluded to sex as an expression of how the women of the League had given away their independence to the follow the prerogatives of the Catholic Church.

While allusions to “the open legs of a muscular Christ” were certainly absent from the League's own narratives of its history, the image a masculinized Church was a

³¹ *O Homem do Povo* was by no means actually read by the *povo*, or “the people;” its circulation was limited to the young vanguard of São Paulo modernism, an artistic and literary movement of which Galvão and Andrade were members.

³² Galvão, “Liga das Trompas Católicas.”

prominent theme in the organization's marketing materials. Pamphlets, memoirs, and the current website have emphasized the League's relationship with Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, Archbishop of São Paulo from 1908 to 1938. The centrality of the archbishop was clearly embedded in the Liga's first official statute, defining the organization as a "civil association... under the religious orientation of the Metropolitan Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo, who will act as the organization's General Director."³³

The Countess Amalia Matarazzo, a founding member and the League's first secretary, provided an alternative narrative of the organization's establishment. Matarazzo was the daughter-in-law of Francisco Matarazzo, an Italian immigrant who became one of the leading industrialists of twentieth-century Brazil.³⁴ As such, Amalia Matarazzo was a member of one of the richest families of São Paulo and held a variety of influential positions within the League.³⁵ She was the organization's first secretary and wrote all of the organization's annual reports from 1923 to 1927.³⁶ She founded one of its longest-lasting institutions, the Domestic School, and was its director until 1942, after which she became the president of the League from 1942 to 1949. In 1958, Matarazzo wrote "Commentaries about the League of Catholic Women," a type of memoir about the

³³ "associação cível de direito privado e fins filantrópicos, de caráter beneficente, educativo, cultural e de assistência social com orientação religiosa do Cardeal Arcebispo Metropolitano da Arquidiocese de São Paulo, que será o Diretor Geral da entidade." "Nossas Histórias," *Liga Solidária*, accessed March 21, 2014, <http://www.ligasolidaria.org.br/a-liga/nossas-historias/>.

³⁴ For a biography on Francisco Matarazzo, see Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880-1945*.

³⁵ Francisco Matarazzo was very financially successful, but was viewed as a nouveau riche outsider by some wealthy non-immigrant families in São Paulo. For an analysis of how immigrant industrialist families like the Matarazzos attempted to gain greater social and cultural capital through the foundation of cultural institutions like the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art, see Maria Arminda do Nascimento Arruda, "Empreendedores Culturais Imigrantes Em São Paulo de 1950," *Tempo Social, Revista de Sociologia Da USP* 17, no. 1 (2005): 136.

³⁶ While it is possible that she only signed her name to the annual reports, the multiple drafts she wrote for her "Comentários" suggests that she was active in producing written material for the organization. In addition, throughout the 1920s when the League was a relatively small organization, the secretaries of the League all wrote very detailed meeting minutes, and officers seemed to be directly involved with the daily tasks of the organization.

history of the organization. Although it was not published, this document still informs the language of the organization's marketing materials today.³⁷ In her memoirs and in the annual reports that she wrote, she authored a vision for the League's purpose and accomplishments.

In the "Commentaries," Matarazzo claimed although she could not have acted without the Archbishop's urging and support, it was her idea to start the League. In a conversation with the Monsenhor Emilio Teixeira, then Vicar General (an administrative deputy) of the Archbishop, she expressed the need for an association that had "broader aims" than the already existent Association of Christian Women.³⁸ Matarazzo explained that The Association of Christian Women had a goal of "spreading, through action and example, Christian morals that preserve family life."³⁹ However, Matarazzo wrote that she thought São Paulo society needed an organization that "extended to other social sectors, working towards the benefit of the community, arming and protecting women and children wherever they may be, and developing action in all areas of society. Above all, an organization that would incite the Christian spirit and avoid the evils that have been on the rise."⁴⁰

Matarazzo emphasized the social outreach of the League and the assistance it aimed to provide to "all women and children." The stated goal was to not only to be a

³⁷ For example, a group of volunteers in charge of organizing and documenting the Liga's private archive have used Matarazzo's document as the guiding narrative in the creation of their own timeline. The influence of Matarazzo's history can be seen in the small inconsistencies between it and meeting minutes, for example, the date of the first meeting.

³⁸ "fins mais amplos" Matarazzo, "Comentários Sobre A Liga Das Senhoras Catolicas - Terceira Cópia, Ultima Forma," 2.

³⁹ "difundir, pela sua ação e pelo exemplo, a moral cristã preservando a vida familiar." Ibid.

⁴⁰ "abrangesse também outros setores da social, agindo em beneficio da coletividade, amparando e protegendo a mulher e a criança onde quer que estivessem, e desenvolvendo sua ação em todas as modalidades da vida social. E sobretudo, que fosse agir... procurando incentivar o espírito cristão e evitar... males que já se prenunciavam bem graves." Ibid.

force of morality, but to initiate social assistance projects that reached a wider sector of society. Matarazzo used words like “act,” “arm,” and “incite,” to demonstrate how the organization aimed to be actively involved in society. Yet, she de-emphasized the input of the founding female members in the development of the organization. Instead, she highlighted the support of male clergy members like the archbishop and the vicar general.

The result is a narrative that explains her own contributions to the organization while consistently emphasizing obedience and subservience to the archbishop. For example, Matarazzo claimed that it was her idea to form the League, but that she only acted on her ideas because of the archbishop’s support. The archbishop, “a great friend of the family, accustomed to stopping by from time to time,” came to her house, after her meeting with the Vicar General. With obsequious language, Matarazzo described how the “imminent prelate” urged her to realize the idea for the League in “the serious tone of one who has a deep conviction in his mature reflections... destroying objections and concluding by ordering me to organize the society.”⁴¹ Matarazzo, though intimidated by the responsibility, especially as she had young children, “exposed my plan to the illustrious Archbishop, asking him for advice and strong guidance.”⁴² Matarazzo’s version of events both confirms and rejects Galvão’s accusation that members of the League “give up control of their lives” to be led by the church. While Matarazzo portrayed herself as a passive and obedient woman following a clergyman’s commands, she nevertheless claimed that she herself developed the overall vision for the organization and authored its initial statutes.

⁴¹ Porém D. Duarte, em tom grave de quem se achasse plenamente convicto do que maduramente refletira, a tudo retrucou, destruindo objeções e finalizando por ordenar-me que organizasse a sociedade” Matarazzo, 2

⁴² Matarazzo, 3.

The final page of Matarazzo's memoir is a tribute to the archbishop, characterizing him as, "the respected elder of tall, slim build, the archbishop whose upright character/stature reflected lofty sensibilities and acts full of unction and impeccable judgment."⁴³ Aside from words of praise, Matarazzo represented the Archbishop's relationship with the League as paternal and even intimate. She wrote that the archbishop was "not just the founder, but also its father and master" and asked in his memory that "heaven continue to bless the daughter that was the apple of his eye – The League of Catholic Women."⁴⁴ Like Galvão, Matarazzo cast the League's relationship to the church as one between submissive women and a dominant man, embodied in the archbishop Dom Duarte. However, while Galvão claimed that League members gave up control of their lives, Matarazzo highlighted how she played a key role in the establishment of the organization, venturing away from her role as a mother of small children, to exercise autonomy and ambition outside of the home.

Putting Leisure to Work: Fundraising, Morality, and Class Positioning

"Women who spit on prostitution but live suffering, hidden under a veil of dirt and hypocritical, tiresome parties, where they organize a hymn of coronets for pleasure, in a sterile, noisy chorus."

-Patricia Galvão "Liga das Trompas Católicas"⁴⁵

The Vicar General Monsenhor Teixeira, who lectured at League meetings, emphasized that the primary role of mothers was to protect and instill Christian values in their families and in society. In the very first meeting of the organization, the vicar referred to the "calamitous times" that confronted the church and that the Liga must

⁴³ "esse ancião respeitável, de porte esguio, estrutura alongada, venerado Arcebispo, traduzia em seu caráter reto sentimentos elevados, atos cheios de unção e de impecável decisão." *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Patricia Galvão "Liga das Trompas Católicas" in *Homem do Povo*

combat.⁴⁶ The speech pointed to the Liga as a stalwart against, not a champion of, social change. During the lecture,

He also spoke of the necessity of social life and of our duty to Christianize society. As family is the base of society... we should seek to implement Christian principles in it. This is why the League of Mothers was founded: so that its members would work, not just to infuse within it the spirit of faith, but also to correct the abuses and the bad habits that, unfortunately, are being introduced into the bosom of families due to [illegible] pernicious amusements, to unhealthy books, and above all, to bad company.⁴⁷

Words like “intact” “preserve,” and “correct” show that the women were expected to be a bulwark against contemporary times, against the “introduction” (another word that signals change) of “pernicious amusements” and “bad company.” This language might confirm leftist criticisms of the League of Catholic Women as a conservative organization that served mainly to enforce Catholic standards of female morality. An examination of the Liga’s involvement with leisure, however – whether creating their own leisure activities or policing the leisure of others – demonstrates that the Liga maintained its own vision for its role in São Paulo society. In shaping this vision, the Liga members’ roles as elites were more salient than their role as mothers or as Catholics. Although Monsenhor Teixeira lectured League members on the dangers of “pernicious amusements,” and their duty to protect their families from the influence of worldly diversions, leisure activities were a major part of the organization. The parties, plays, soirees, music and speech festivals made the League open to criticisms of hypocrisy, as demonstrated by Galvão’s scathing quote above. Fundraisers, however, were more than a

⁴⁶ “tempos calamitosos” Elisa M. de Barros Cavalcanti, “Acta I,” October 10, 1920, 1, Livro de Atas 1, Liga das Senhoras Católicas.

⁴⁷ “Falou-nos tambem da necessidade da vida social e do nosso dever de christianizar a sociedade tendo a familia a base da sociedade, deve-se disse I Rvma. Procurar implanta n’ella os principios christãos; para esse fim é que foi fundada a Liga das Mães Catholicas; devem os seus membros trabalharem para não só incutir-lhe o espirito de fé, como tambem corregir os abusos e os maus costumes que, infelizmente setão sendo introduzidos no seio das familias relativamente ao modo inconveniente de desfrajarem.” Ibid.

way to pass time, they were a significant source of revenue for the organization. In 1924, the gross from the annual festival was 102:645\$900, nearly half of the annual budget.⁴⁸ In 1925, the League received its first grant from the municipal government in the amount of 10:00\$00, still far less than the 45:830\$00 generated from that year's festival.⁴⁹ Although after 1925, the League continued to receive subsidies from the municipal government, monthly dues and fundraisers generated the most revenue. The League during the 1920s borrowed from banks and occasionally from the diocese, but according to their balance sheets, these loans were duly repaid within the same year. In a financial sense, before the League's expansion into children's orphanages and schools, the state had only a minor stake in the League, and the church even less. The League's members and their ability to raise funds from the local elite drove the organization's finances.⁵⁰

Studying elite women's beneficent organizations in Uruguay, Christine Ehrick states that aside from raising revenue, these organizations had additional motives for their charity fundraisers. These often lavish events were a demonstration of social power, exhibiting the ladies' ability to draw together wealthy people and resources. Similarly, the League's high-profile soirees, concerts and festivals cemented the status of its members as economic and social elites. These parties also legitimized activities that would otherwise be condemned as frivolous or immoral.

⁴⁸ Amalia Ferreira Matarazzo, ed. Liga das Senhoras Católicas da Cidade de São Paulo. *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1924* (São Paulo: Casa Duprat, 1925), 26-27, LSC

⁴⁹ Liga das Senhoras Católicas da Cidade de São Paulo. *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1925* (São Paulo: Casa Duprat, 1926), 26, LSC

⁵⁰ See budget sheets (*balançetes*) published in each annual report (*relatório*), including those cited above in note 47 and note 48, as well as Liga das Senhoras Católicas da Cidade de São Paulo. *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1927* (São Paulo: Instituto D. Ana Rosa, 1928), Liga das Senhoras Católicas da Cidade de São Paulo. *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1928* (São Paulo, 1929), *Liga das Senhoras Católicas da Cidade de São Paulo Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1929* (São Paulo, no date), *Liga das Senhoras Católicas da Cidade de São Paulo Relatório da Administração, 1930-1932* (São Paulo, no date), LSC

Matarazzo explicitly condemned leisure time in her “Commentaries,” cautioning women that, “all of us have hours of leisure, that many of us spend on diversions, some that are harmful to our health; others spend all day and night in games losing, not only grand sums of money, but their precious health. To some extent this is admissible, but one can reserve part of this time to do some good for our neighbor and for our country.”⁵¹ Primarily for their own health (Matarazzo emphasized this even before the well-being of others), elite women should stop spending their “hours of leisure” on diversions and games, and instead work to help society. However, much of the League’s “work” actually took the form of leisure activities involving theater, fashion, and automobiles. Members, ironically, were supposed to keep themselves away from unhealthy diversions by planning and participating in fundraising events like parties and soirees. Although these events opened the organization up to Galvão’s criticisms of hypocrisy, public events were the League’s way of participating in their concept of modernity, of engaging with public spaces and “working” outside of the home.

The League was not the only philanthropic organization to cross these boundaries. For example, the Midnight Café (Café Concerto *Meia Noite*), which operated from 1926 to 1929 near the center of São Paulo was not only a dance salon, its name suggested all of the pleasures and social dangers associated with “midnight.” In addition to movie screenings and ice cream, the café also featured a jazz band and it was built on the former site of a brothel.⁵² Yet, on September 12, 1925, the Sanctuary of the Heart of Maria

⁵¹ “todos nós temos as horas de lazer, que muitas empregam em diversões às vezes até nocivas à saúde; outras gastam todos os dias e noites em jogos perdendo, além de grande soma, sua preciosa saúde. Tudo isso se admite, em termos, mas pode-se reservar parte desse tempo para realizar algum bem a nosso próximo e a nossa Pátria.” Matarazzo, “Comentários”

⁵² José Inácio de Melo Souza “Meia-Noite” in *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo, 1895-1929*. Available <http://www.arquiamicos.org.br/bases/cine3p/historico/00404.pdf>. Accessed 4/14/2014

(*Santuário da Coração de Maria*) petitioned the municipal government to waive taxes for a fundraiser planned at the café. The fundraiser would include a “show, dance and auction.”⁵³ Despite its associations with midnight, dancing, and jazz, the members of a Catholic organization still rented the Midnight Café, used it for a fundraiser, and enjoyed diversions like dancing, which the church might otherwise consider to be frivolous.

One of the highest-profile fundraisers that the League organized was a play entitled “A Soiree in the Palace of São Cristovão.” Held at the city’s most elite venue, the Municipal Theater, the play was about the palace life of the Empress Leopoldina of Brazil, the wife of the first Brazilian emperor Pedro I.⁵⁴ In the 1910s and 1920s, it was fashionable for members of local high society to organize amateur theatrical productions of plays written by local playwrights. These all occurred at the Municipal Theater; elite *paulistanos* did not appear on the same stages as the working-class and immigrant theater troupes that performed in São Paulo’s neighborhoods. In one of these elite amateur productions, “The Buyer of Diamonds” in 1919, one of the actresses joked that so many members of *paulistano* high society participated, that there was no one left to attend.⁵⁵

In “A Soiree in the Palace,” the women of the League and their friends performed their class status and wealth on stage. Dona Antonietta Penteadó da Silva Prado, a member of one of São Paulo’s most “traditional” families and mother of Caio Prado Junior (a prominent Brazilian intellectual), played the Empress Leopoldina. An account of the play in *Folha da Noite* described Silva Prado, who was listed as a council member

⁵³ “Cine Meia-Noite (Salão) – Assoc Católica S L de Gonzaga” September, 12, 1925. Cinemas, AHSP Cine Caixa 23, Cinemas 47, Processo 2009-0-242.734-9

⁵⁴ From 1822 to 1889, Brazil was an independent empire; the Portuguese royal family was also the Brazilian imperial family.

⁵⁵ David José Lessa Mattos, *O Espetáculo da Cultura Paulista: Teatro e TV Em São Paulo, 1940-1950* (Conex, 2002), 131–133.

of the Liga in the 1925 and 1927 annual reports, in the following terms: “she conducted herself during the soiree with great majesty, with the severe air of nobility and dignity.”⁵⁶ Was her noble and dignified air due to her role as an empress, or her identity as a *paulistana* elite? As the women of the League utilized their class status to project “nobility,” they blurred the boundaries between actress and character.

According to the theater program, an upscale clothing store “La Saison” fashioned the women’s gowns based on nineteenth-century French artist Jean Baptiste Debret’s *Pictorial Voyage of Brazil*, a compendium of sketches and paintings of Brazilian court and street life. *Casa Excelsior*, a local department store, sewed the men’s outfits, which were modeled from stamps of the imperial era. The jewels that the actresses wore were “all antique family jewels.” The furniture and props, including “chandeliers, curtains, dressers, tapestries” were “old, legitimate, original imperial” pieces that “were provided by old/traditional families of São Paulo.”⁵⁷ With the donas of São Paulo society dressed up in fancy clothes and acting like empresses and marquezas, “A Soiree in the Palace” was quite literally, a show of wealth and power.

Printed in the society pages, the *Folha* article gushed that, “the dresses were simply marvelous... marvels of elegance, of art, of luxury, of richness!”⁵⁸ Whereas the playwright was mentioned just once, and the synopsis was only a paragraph long, fourteen paragraphs described the actresses’ dresses, which comprised the majority of the quarter-page article. For example, Cleonice Seroa da Motta who played the princess Maria da Gloria, wore, “bracelets, a necklace, a tiara, all with precious stones.” Noemia

⁵⁶ “portou-se durante todo o sarau, com grande majestade, com um ar severo de nobreza e dignidade” “Um sarau no paço de S. Christovam” in *Folha*, December, 12, 1926, pg. 4.

⁵⁷ “todas antigas joias de familia.... candelabras, reposteiros, tapeçarias, tudo velho, legitimo primeiro imperio... fornecidos por velhas familias de S. Paulo” “Um Saráu no Paço” Theater Program, 1927. AESP

⁵⁸ “os vestidos eram simplesmente maravilhas. Maravilhas de elgancia, de arte, de luxo, de riqueza!” Ibid.

Nascimento Gama, maid in waiting, wore “a distinguished dress of gray velvet, embroidered in silver, with an emerald belt, necklace, and earrings; a large feather in her hair, a fan of gray feathers, and gloves with a dozen buttons.”⁵⁹ Both these women, however, had greater claim to fame than wealth or family background. Noemia Nascimento de Gama was a famous reciter of poetry and a local patron of the arts. The fashionable leisure magazine *Para Todos*, which reported society news, film reviews, and the latest fads, printed her photograph and praised her ability to “evoke the intelligent seductions of that corner [São Paulo] of Brazil,” which referenced the city’s growing reputation as a center for artistic production.⁶⁰ Cleonice Serôa da Motta [Bernadelli] was a student of Noemia Nascimento Gama and also skillful in reciting poems. Currently, she is a prominent scholar of Portuguese poetry and a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters.⁶¹ Despite their well-known skills of recitation and their presumed intellect, they appeared only as well-dressed, wealthy women in the *Folha* article, which divulged only what they wore and not what they said.

Although amateur performances like “A Soiree at the Palace” were limited to a small circle of fashionable and wealthy *paulistanos*, images of the play circulated beyond the Municipal Theater. Rossi Films, discussed in chapter three, was a major São Paulo film company that produced newsreels and short “natural films,” images of landscapes, cities, political ceremonies, and society events like weddings and baptisms. Played before feature films, these newsreels were ubiquitous in São Paulo cinemas. Rossi Films

⁵⁹ D. Noemia Nascimento Gama, camareira-mor, trajava um distinto vestido de velludo gris, bordado a prata, com cintura, collar e bichas de esmeraldas; Grande pluma no cabelo, leque de plumas gris, luva de doze botões.” Ibid.

⁶⁰ “A.M.” “Terra do Café” in *Para Todos* July 18, 1925, no. 344, pg. 19

⁶¹ Cleonice Berardinelli. Interview with Alberto da Costa e Silva, Luciano Figueiredo, and Marcello Scarrone, “Cleonice Berardinelli: Ensinar é Preciso,” *Revista de História*, n.d., accessed June 10, 2014, <http://www.revistadehistoria.com.br/secao/entrevista/cleonice-berardinelli>.

produced one about “A Soiree in the Palace,” prominently featuring the members of the League who acted in it. The film did not just include scenes from the play, but opened with close-up shots of the main actors. Intertitles prominently announced the name of each of these actors, including Silva Prado and Motta. Within Rossi’s film, the identities of the women in the play were as compelling as the play itself. As discussed in chapter three, Rossi Films attempted to depict modernity through images of progress like railroads and highways. In filming the play, Rossi included elite women’s interaction with public space in this vision of Brazilian modernity.⁶²

The play, which celebrated the life of an empress, was certainly not a political drama. São Paulo playwright Alfredo Mesquita commented that the producers inserted so many recitations, songs, and musical numbers, that there was little room for the play itself.⁶³ Act one consisted of courtiers praising the empress; act two was a soiree of songs and recitals of poetry; act three was a series of dances. In the third act, the Rossi documentary showed that young men and women paired together to perform an imperial-era dance. Although it was not the samba or maxixe that was causing an uproar in Rio de Janeiro, the choreographed dance was still an opportunity for young men and women not only to dance in public, but, like famous Hollywood actors, to dance on screen.⁶⁴

⁶² Rossi *Atualidades No. 126* (Rossi Film, 1926) VHS (Cinematca Brasileira, n.d.) CB, VV01967N, CB, also on DVD “Uma Sessão do Cinema nos Anos 20” (Cinematca Brasileira, n.d.) CB 31845-10. In addition to “A Soiree in the Palace,” other society events such as baptisms and marriages of the local elite, were a recurring theme in Rossi Film’s newsreels.

⁶³ Mattos, *O Espetáculo da Cultura Paulista: Teatro e TV em São Paulo, 1940-1950*. Mattos quotes from Alfredo Mesquita, “Origens do teatro paulista” in *Dionysos*, no. 25, “Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia”, MEC-Funart, set. 1980

⁶⁴ On the African influence on forms of popular Brazilian dance, see John Chasteen, *National Rhythms, African Roots: The Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance* (Albuquerque (N.M.): University of New Mexico press, 2004).

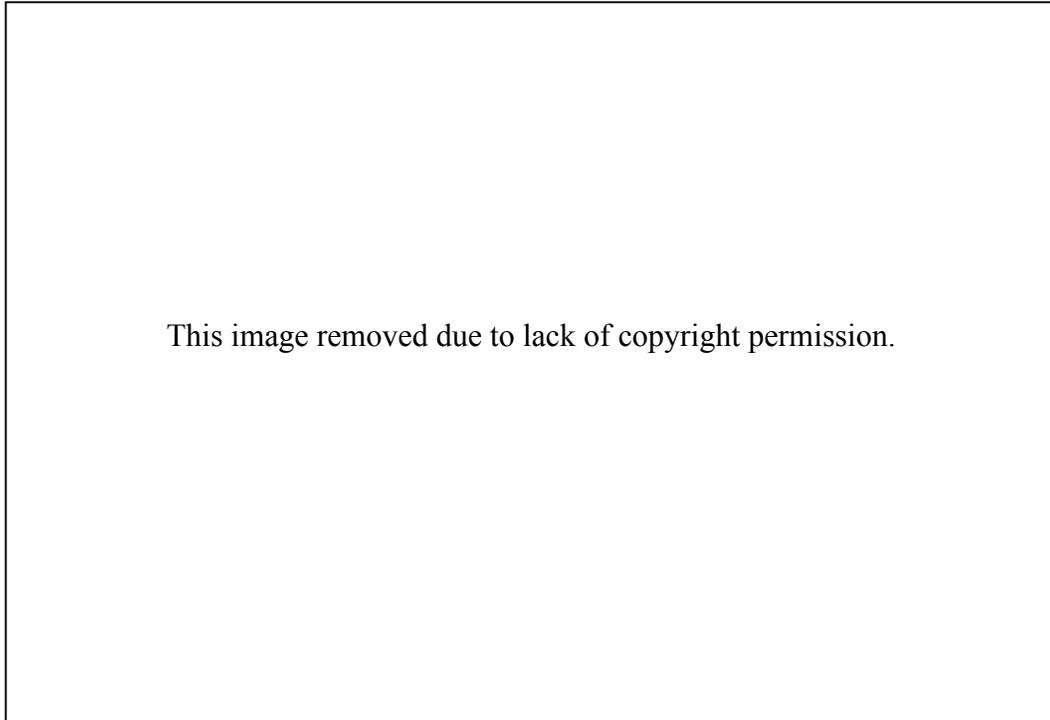


Figure 37: Grupo de dansarinos da 'Gavota e da Giga' Source: "Um Saráu no Paço" Theater Program, 1926. IHGSP 015 Fundo Alfredo Mesquita Programas (Teatro Municipal). AESP

For the men and women who acted in the play, there may have been equal enjoyment in pretending to be actors as there was in pretending to be royalty. The 26-page theater program featured sixteen headshots of the society men and women who acted in the play. The younger participants in particular used artfully arranged headshots that mimicked the photo spreads in glossy cinema magazines of the time period. As discussed in chapter four, “movie-struck” men and women who wished to become actors aspired to embody *fotogenia*, a collection of idealized Hollywood aesthetics. While *fotogenia* was strongly oriented towards an aesthetic of racial whiteness, it also included “indefinable” qualities like gestures, movements, and smiles. Writers and artists lightly ridiculed these “movie-struck” fans for their delusions of stardom, but, through headshots and photographs, elite women on São Paulo’s most famous stage projected *fotogenia* as well. In participating in the production of the play, elite women were not just working for

philanthropic causes, but like other movie-going women, participating in a transnational culture that included Hollywood standards of beauty.

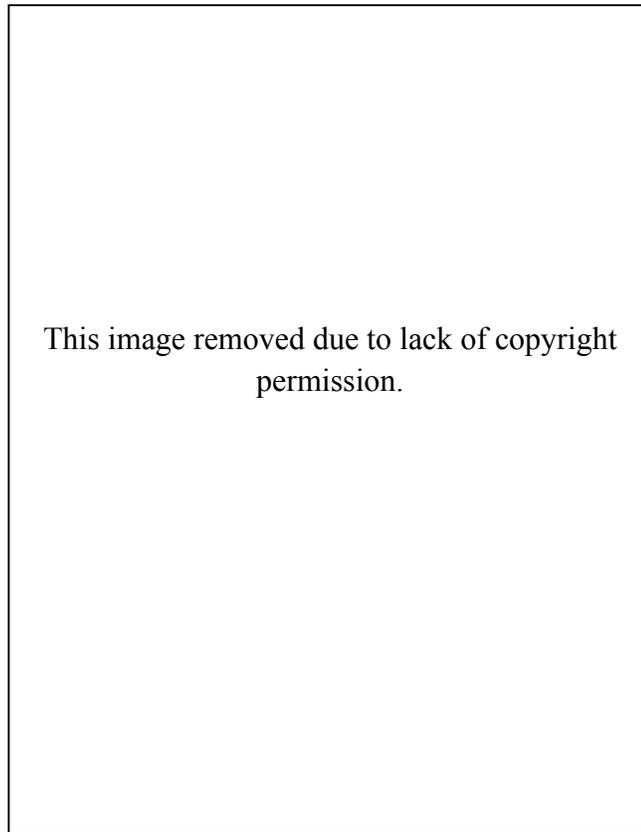


Figure 38: Cleonice Serôa da Motta as Princezinha D. Maria da Gloria: Source: “Um Saráu no Paço” Theater Program, 1926. IHGSP 015 Fundo Alfredo Mesquita Programas (Teatro Municipal). AESP

Although performing in the play might have been an opportunity for elite women to be actresses and participate in “movie-struck” culture, it also reinforced their class status and their difference from working or middle-class women. The proceeds of the event were destined for the construction of the League’s Domestic School, to train both future housewives and domestic servants in skills such as cooking, nutrition, cleaning, childcare, and etiquette. While the “future housewives” paid for the courses they took, a section of students were admitted with subsidized tuition. The Domestic School would then help these students find employment by placing them as domestic workers in local households, presumably among members of the League. While the Domestic School,

which operated for several decades, imparted professional, employable skills to its students, it also promoted a narrow definition of women's paid and unpaid labor. Moreover, in establishing a school to train their own servants, the ladies of the League, whether intentionally or not, served their own class interests and strengthened their position as the employers and mistresses of the women they aimed to assist.

Events like "A Soiree in the Palace" were visual displays of wealth that affirmed members' status in society. Fundraisers allowed society ladies to make their leisure "productive," and in so doing, transformed leisure from potentially "unhealthy" to moral and even admirable. The sheen of philanthropy also permitted proper ladies to appear on stage, to be actresses, to dance with men in public, to participate in the same semi-licit activities that other movie-going women enjoyed. The Liga utilized maternalist rhetoric to justify their authority, claiming to be mothers who would protect families from the negative influences of "calamitous times." Yet within this rhetoric, there was space for these women to test the boundaries of good behavior by developing their own leisure activities and indulging in their own "pernicious amusements." By making their leisure "work" outside of the home in highly public fundraisers, the ladies of the League participated in a modernity defined by women's engagement with public spaces.

Building a Feminine, Christian, Modern City, One Lunch at a Time: The Women's Restaurant

In addition to holding fundraisers, the League policed the leisure habits of the women who attended their training schools. Women in the Domestic School, for example, chafed against rules that limited when they could make phone calls.⁶⁵ With the establishment of the Women's Restaurant, the League regulated how working women

⁶⁵ "September 23, 1929" *Diario Particular da "Escola da Economia Domestica,"* 1930. LSC

spent their lunch hour. The restaurant was designed “especially for teachers and girls (*moças*) who work in the commercial sector and are forced to have lunch in the city.”⁶⁶

The restaurant offered a discounted lunch exclusively for these women; men were not allowed. A pamphlet released on the restaurant’s fiftieth anniversary stated that, if not for the restaurant, these women would be “obligated to eat in inadequate bars and restaurants. This anguished the heart of the zealous archbishop of São Paulo.”⁶⁷

The archbishop was “anguished” because of social mores that defined the home as the center of safety and feminine morality, and the public spaces of the city as “inadequate” and morally dangerous. In describing how working women spent their lunch hour, the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *O Jornal*, reported that “While their male colleagues, enjoying their lunch hour, fly to the streetcars and quickly gulp down a lunch in their neighborhoods, the women were resigned to chew, right there at work, stale beef sandwiches.... Since traveling in crowded streetcars at such an hour would be tiresome and imprudent for girls.”⁶⁸ Yet the moral crisis was not the “imprudent” and busy public transportation, it was that eating such a small lunch left them too much free time, resulting in their desire to “go footing” during lunch.⁶⁹ “Footing,” or strolling around, socializing, or hanging out, exposed these women to the temptations of city life. The newspaper remarked that women workers were not just socializing among themselves but

⁶⁶ “especialmente para fornecer as professoras e moças que trabalham no commercio e que são forçados a tomar o seu almoço na cidade” *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1927*, 23.

⁶⁷ obrigadas a tomar refeições em bares e restaurantes inadequados, agustiava o coração do zeloso Arcebispo de São Paulo” *Historia do Restaurante Feminino* (Papeleta, Jornal do Departamento de Cultura, 1976), 5.

⁶⁸ “Enqunato os seus collegas homens, soando a hora, voavam aos bondes e iam engulir apressadamente o almoço no bairro longiquo de sua residencia, ellas se contentavam com mascar, allí mesmo no lograr do trabalho, o meio pão recheado de bife dormido... pois a viagem em vehiculos accumulados, a tal hora, seria fastidiosa e imprudente para moças “Em prol das ‘midinettes”” *O Jornal*, January 6, 1927. Reprinted in *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1927*, 47

⁶⁹ “se iam fazer o `footing.” Ibid.

with men: “girls that yesterday walked around in groups of three or four, today are not together. Instead of the groups, there are couples, formed by the girls and by three or four boys (*rapazes*) who follow them and throw temptations their way.”⁷⁰

According to *O Jornal*, it was imprudent for women to take the streetcar to their homes, but it was even worse to stay in the city center with too much time on their hands, flirting with men. Substituting for the home, the Women’s Restaurant would provide a moral haven, a sanctuary for these women in the city. Yet, despite the characterization of the city center as full of temptation, it was also a marker of social and economic status. These shopgirls and office workers were working in fancy new department stores and offices in the Centro, not in the factories of nearby Brás. The restaurant was located in Anhagabaú underneath the Viaduto do Chá. Built from German steel and connecting prominent buildings like the Municipal Theater and the São Paulo Tramway Light and Power Company, the viaduct itself was a symbol of modern architecture and engineering. Most of the women who ate in the restaurant were those working in the retail sectors, in the high end “commercial houses” in the famous Triângulo, bordered by Rua Direita, Rua 15 de Novembro, and Rua São Bento. In these few hundred square meters, there were numerous high-end shops such as the Casa Allemã, Casa Kósmos, O Mundo Elegante, a Casa Espíndola, Livraria Civilização, Casa Fuchs, Casa Hamburguesa, Casa Geni, etc.⁷¹

The location of the Women’s Restaurant was analogous to the women who ate there. The restaurant was a part of the Centro, just minutes away from the high-end Triângulo, but at the same time, it was just outside of it. The restaurant was underneath

⁷⁰ moças que hontem se viam a tres e quatro... já hoje não aparecem juntas; em vez do grupo de tres ou quatro casaes, formados por ellas e pelos tres ou quatro rapazes que as seguiam, crivando-as de tentações.” Ibid, 48.

⁷¹ Bonadio, *Moda E Sociabilidade*, 66–67.

the Viaduto do Chá, not on top of it. The women who ate at the restaurant were a part of the lifestyle in the Centro, surrounded by elite venues, but without the means to enjoy them. As George Reid Andrews points out, despite the boom of the industrial revolution, most working women were still engaged in domestic service, in the homes of their employers. Among women who entered the workforce outside the domestic environment, factory workers were the majority. Yet, the League was very specific in excluding factory workers and domestic servants from the restaurant, instead singling out the minority of women in middle-class occupations: teachers, office workers, and in particular, women who worked in the upscale shops of the Centro. These were the women that Amalia Matarazzo said, “emerged victoriously in offices, in public departments, in liberal professions.”⁷²

Matarazzo’s exclusion of female domestic servants and factory workers demonstrates how she considered that women in these occupations were somehow meant for work, that poverty or race made service and blue-collar work “natural” to them. In contrast, women in middle-class occupations were revolutionary women who were not “supposed” to, but entered the workforce as part of the sea change of social turmoil. This was because Matarazzo viewed middle-class working women first as women, not as workers. In the League’s eyes, they merited gendered habits that blue-collar workers did not: to eat a proper lunch, to not walk on streets with men, to sit at a table instead of at a counter. In Matarazzo’s eyes, the concept of a middle-class woman worker was an anomaly. Barbara Weinstein makes a similar assessment in her analysis of the Industrial Social Service in late 1940s São Paulo. Whereas the SESI, unlike the League, included blue-collar rather than white-collar women workers in its services, through courses in

⁷² Matarazzo, “Comentários Sobre A Liga Das Senhoras Catolicas - Terceira Cópia, Ultima Forma,” 6

cooking, child care, and marriage preparation, the SESI trained these women workers in gendered middle-class habits. By developing an idealized image of the bourgeois, feminine housewife, the SESI made the idea of a “woman worker” an “oxymoron.”⁷³

While the SESI de-emphasized women’s class status as workers and concentrated upon their future as wives and mothers, the League sought to reconcile these identities within an image of a feminized middle-class worker. Carla Freeman and other scholars have utilized the term “pink collar” to refer to occupations that have been both dominated by women and distinctly feminized. Although maids, strippers, and prostitutes fit into this category, the scholarly focus on pink-collar workers has focused on both the production and consumption associated with middle-class occupations like typists, teachers, receptionists, and shop assistants. In 1990s Barbados, female informatics workers not only worked with technology, they wore highly professional, feminine clothing such as skirt suits and high heels, which were important components in the construction of pink-collar identity.⁷⁴ In the case of department store workers in turn-of-the-century New York, saleswomen developed highly feminized habits in both work and dress. They took pride in confectioning elaborate product displays or in guessing a customer’s dress size without a measuring tape, skills that managers praised as an extension of “innate” feminine and domestic abilities. They also protested the requirement of black uniforms, which denoted servile status, and requested the right to wear their own clothing, to dress as middle-class women rather than as workers.⁷⁵

⁷³ Barbara Weinstein, “‘They Don’t Even Look like Women Workers’: Femininity and Class in Twentieth-Century Latin America,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69, no. 01 (2006): 161–76, 167 doi:10.1017/S0147547906000093.

⁷⁴ Carla Freeman, *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy: Women, Work, and Pink-Collar Identities in the Caribbean* (Duke University Press, 2000).

⁷⁵ Susan Porter Benson, “The Customers Ain’t God: The Work Culture of Department Store Saleswomen, 1890–1940,” *Working Class America: Essays on Labor, Community and American Society*, 1983. Benson’s

In São Paulo, women who worked in department stores and high-end shops similarly had the advantage of being associated with luxury goods and the glamour of the retail experience, even if they were the workers rather than the consumers.⁷⁶ One brochure for a League fundraiser held at the Municipal Theater mentioned that the Women's Restaurant was intended not only for women who worked, but also for women who shopped in the center.⁷⁷ This demonstrates the blurring between working women and shopping women. As middle-class women, the League held them to the similar standards of feminized consumption and habit, including the atmosphere in which they ate.

The League did not just establish a restaurant, but a bounded space of middle-class femininity. By giving these women a specific, exclusive space and style of eating, the League made a spatial division between pink-collar women and work in general. In fact, although the restaurant was designed to be an affordable option, it was quickly apparent that the 2\$000 reis meal was still too expensive for many of those who worked in the Centro. After just one year of operation, the League established an adjacent, separate room for an "affordable soup" (*sopa econômica*) that cost just 600 réis, which consisted of a bowl of soup, coffee or tea, and a piece of bread. A photograph of women in the restaurant lunchroom in 1927 reveals most of the patrons to be young, to have their hair done or wearing hats, seated at small tables.⁷⁸ A photograph of the affordable soup shows that patrons were clearly younger, and that the room was emptier and less heavily

work on department store culture does not use the term "pink-collar," but the term is appropriate to describe her analysis of the middle-class femininity of saleswomen.

⁷⁶ For more on the significance of upscale clothing shops on São Paulo urban life and elite women's leisure habits, see Bonadio, *Moda e Sociabilidade*. On the Mappin department store as a symbol of modernity, see Woodard, "Marketing Modernity: The J. Walter Thompson Company and North American Advertising in Brazil, 1929-1939."

⁷⁷ "Grande Festival em Benefício das Instituições de Caridade Mantidas pela Liga das Senhoras Catholicas," November 20, 1925, IHGSP 015, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

⁷⁸ *Relatório da Administração no Anno 1927*, 35

frequented. Even if these photographs were staged, they still demonstrated how the League represented these rooms as distinct from each other.

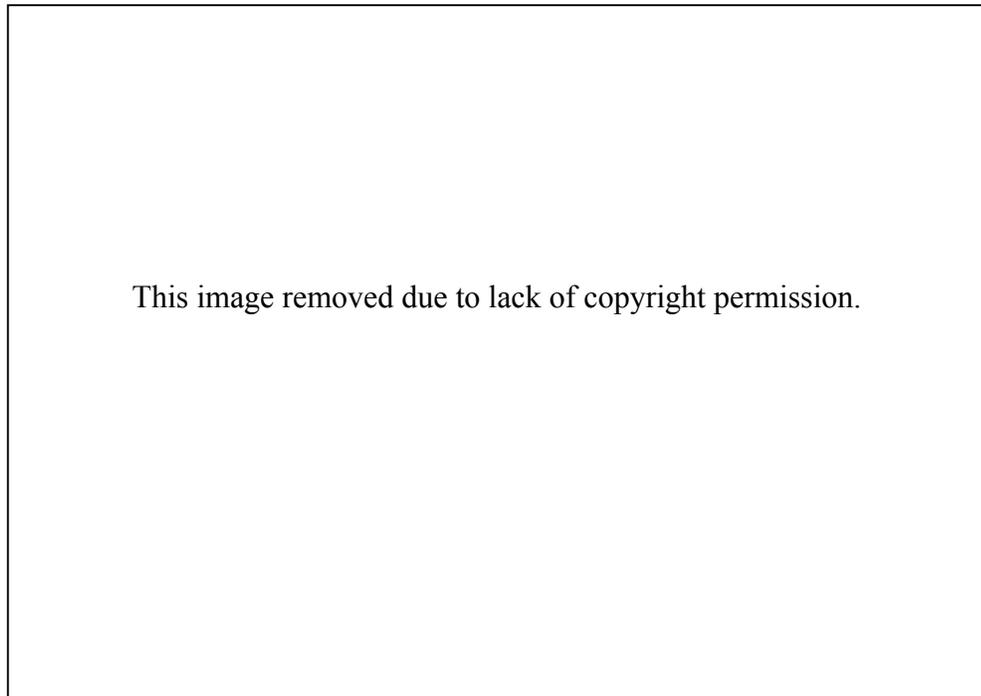


Figure 39: Restaurante Feminino - (Parque Anhagabahú) (ponto baixo do Viaducto do Chá) Source: *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1927* (São Paulo: Instituto D. Ana Rosa, 1928), 35. LSC

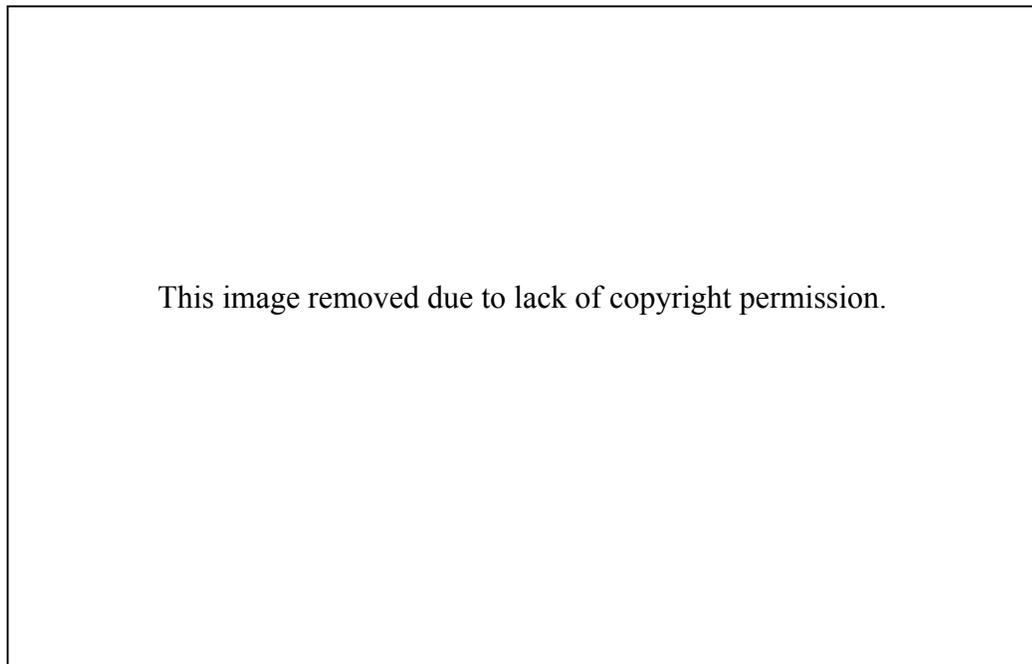


Figure 40: "Sala de Sopa Economica - Rua Formosa" Source: *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1927* (São Paulo: Instituto D. Ana Rosa, 1928), 31. LSC

The contrast between the women most prominently featured in both photographs, seated at the front table, demonstrates the distinction between the two rooms. In the standard room, the two women in the front have three markers of the “modern girl,” the image of a fashionable, often sexualized woman that circulated around the world in the 1920s. They have their hair in pressed curls *à la garçonne*, a *cloche* hat, and lipstick. As discussed in chapter three, the modern girl, or *melindrosa*, represented both the cosmopolitan appeal and the moral dangers of modernity in Brazil. The purpose of the Women’s Restaurant was to capitalize on modern girls’ association with cosmopolitanism but to eliminate the dangers associated with her sexuality by confining her to a homosocial environment.

The two women sitting at the front table of the other room for soup, however, do not use any of the clothing of the “modern girl,” nor any other distinctive markers of middle-class consumption. Without the hairdo, hat, or lipstick, they lack the consumptive habits of the pink-collar worker. That the League chose these photographs to represent the distinction between the regular lunch and the cheaper soup, proves how rigidly they bounded the limits of middle-class femininity; the women who ate only soup instead of the full meal stood spatially and socially apart. They were, however, like the women in the more expensive lunchroom, light-skinned and not wearing uniforms, showing how, even when just outside of the restaurant’s inner circle, they were still not in the same class as factory workers or domestic servants.



Figure 41, Figure 42: Details from “Restaurante Feminino - (Parque Anhagabahú) (ponto baixo do Viaducto do Chá)” and “Sala da Sopa Económica – Rua Formosa” Source: *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1927*, 35, 31

When the Restaurant opened in 1926, journalists described the restaurant in glowing terms as a symbol of social advancement. The creation of this women-only space not only shaped a distinct class of working woman, it altered the image of São Paulo’s city center. *O Jornal* romantically referred to the fashionable women seated at the dining tables as “midinettes,” a term used for early twentieth-century Parisian shopgirls who did not have time to go home for lunch and could be seen strolling around the city around noon (*midi* meaning noon).

The *midinette* was an archetype of French history and culture, referring to women who worked in the couture industries, including skilled seamstresses but also to flower-makers, milliners, and department-store clerks. As a cultural type, the *midinette* was represented in fiction by Alfred Musset's "Mimi Pinson" character who was "associated with labor, bourgeois male desire, feminine self-sacrifice, and innate fashion sense."⁷⁹ Though Musset's Mimi Pinson was from the mid-nineteenth century, the character reemerged in the WWI era as the ideal woman in France: hard-working, feminine, patriotic, and an object of male desire. When hundreds of thousands of workers, mostly female, went on strike in 1917 Paris for improved working hours and wages, the image of the *midinette* generated public support for the movement by giving it a "feminine, not feminist" edge.⁸⁰

Characterized as innately fashionable, named for their appearance at the noon lunch hour, Parisian *midinettes* were defined by their visibility. Plays, magazines, and paintings showed them modeling stylish clothes and walking together arm and arm. During their lunch hour, they were an integral part of the city. The notion that these iconic figures characterized the landscape of Paris enhanced the image of São Paulo as a sophisticated city. The *O Jornal* article claimed that working *paulistanas* were more like their Parisian colleagues than *cariocas*, residents of the capital city Rio de Janeiro.⁸¹ By referring to *paulistana* working women as "midinettes" rather than a more general term like *moças*, the *O Jornal* writer was arguing that they made a similar, visible impact upon São Paulo's urban landscape. Moreover, the writer portrayed São Paulo as modern and as

⁷⁹ Patricia Tilburg, "Mimi Pinson Goes to War: Taste, Class and Gender in France, 1900–18," *Gender & History* 23, no. 1 (2011): 92–110, doi:10.1111/j.1468-0424.2010.01625.x.

⁸⁰ Maude Bass-Krueger, "From the 'union Parfaite' to the 'union Brisé': The French Couture Industry and the *Midinettes* during the Great War," *Costume* 47, no. 1 (2013): pg.30.

⁸¹ "aproximam-se mais das colegas parisienses do que as *cariocas*." "Em prol das 'midinettes'"

sophisticated as he imagined Paris to be. The *midinette* was similar to the figure of the *melindrosa*, or Brazilian “flapper” discussed in chapter three; they were both images of modern femininity characterized by their stylishness and visibility in urban space. However, the *melindrosa* was defined solely by her habits of consumption, whereas the *midinette* was defined first by her productive labor in fashion and retail. Thus while the cosmopolitan *melindrosa* was racially and ethnically ambiguous, vacillating between images of whiteness, Europeanness, and foreignness, depending upon her leisure habits, the *midinette* was tied to her middle-class profession, and through this, to a racial status of whiteness.

Rio de Janeiro’s *Diario Nacional* provided a slightly different perspective on the women workers. The article referred to the midinettes of Paris as something to aspire to, not something that already existed in São Paulo. Rather, the article claimed that working *paulistanas* were “a legion of poor, pale little creatures with dark circles under their eyes, thin and stooped under the weight of enormous fatigue.”⁸² They were this way from skipping a proper mid-day meal (*almoço*) at home and eating a simple “lunch” at work. While ridiculing the American/new world concept of “lunch,” the article praised the European/Old World tradition of *almoço*. Although the journalist from *O Jornal* pointed out that the Association of Brazilian Women founded a similar restaurant in Rio de Janeiro, both he and the *Diario Nacional* pointed to Paris, not Rio de Janeiro, as the point of comparison.

[In Paris] at the chime of the lunch hour, these [restaurants] are packed with busy damsels, talking, laughing, and happily conversing. It is a

⁸² “uma legião de pobres criaturinhas pallidas, de grandes olheiras, magras e como que curvas ao peso de uma fadiga enorme” “Uma instituição de grande benemerencia – As refeições economicas para moças empregadas no centro – O proximo desdobramento dessa instituição de alto interesse social” *Diario Nacional*, January 29, 1928, reprinted in *Relatório da Administração no Ano de 1927*, pg. 44.

murmuring, swirling, happy multitude that, while eating an appetizing pea or oat soup, enthusiastically discusses the newest hat style, the delights of a dress now in vogue, or the latest race at long-champs. The fact is that with this new resource of eating, the “midinette” is no longer the pale, wasted creature.⁸³

Parisian midinettes were no longer defined by their lack of time, their fatigue, or by the type of work they did. Rather, they were defined by their ability to discuss fashion and sports, in sum, by their habits of consumption and leisure.

When replicated in São Paulo, the Women’s Restaurant would not only provide working women with nourishment, but with a similar access to middle-class habits. By giving them enough time and space to dine properly, the restaurant aimed to free working women to be women instead of workers. By protecting them from “inadequate bars” and the dangers of “footing,” the restaurant would also allow these working women to be moral, Christian women. In turn, the women who dined in the restaurant, as visible markers of urban sophistication, would transform São Paulo’s city center into a chic, Parisian, yet moral, hub. The image of women in front of the restaurant in 1932 captures this sentiment: a group of women outside, talking, smiling, wearing fashionable clothing. These working women on their lunch break appear as well-dressed and stylish as the women who were featured in glossy magazines, some even posing with their hands on hips like clothing models.

⁸³ chegada a hora do almoço, enchem-se esses locais de raparigas apressadas, falando, rindo e discutindo alegremente. É uma multidão rede-moinhante, rumurosa, alegre que, enquanto come a apetitosa sopa de ervilhas ou de aveia, discute com entusiasmo as vantagens de um novo modelo de chapéu, a graça de um vestido em voga, ou ainda a última corrida de long-champs.” “Uma instituição da grande benemerencia,” 45

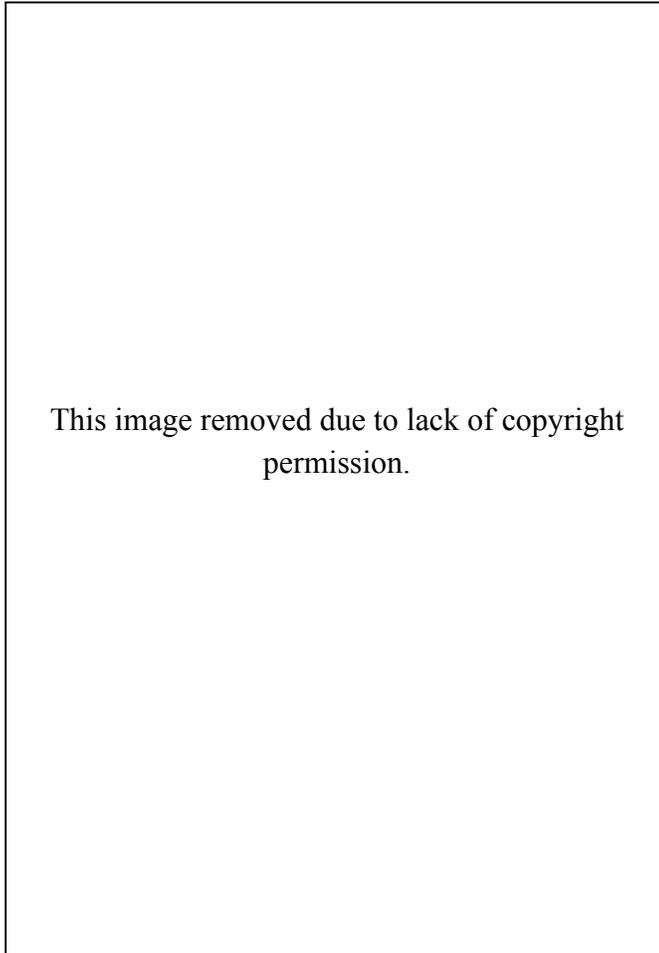


Figure 43: "The door of the restaurant at 1:00pm, the end of lunch. Source: Liga das Senhoras Católicas. *Relatório da Administração, 1932-1933* (n.d.), 48. LSC

Figure 44: Design for women's fashions in *A Cigarra*. November 1932, 31

Given the relatively high income that saleswomen made in comparison to factory workers, these women were likely never the “legion of poor, pallid creatures, stooped under the weight of enormous fatigue.”⁸⁴ The restaurant, in these early years, however, gave them a forum to exhibit the identity of *paulistana midinette*: modern, healthy, moral, urban sophisticate, imbuing the city center with the same qualities. Note how both the pictures above are situated in public: one outside of the Women’s Restaurant, one on the

⁸⁴ Molly Catherine Ball, “Inequality in São Paulo’s Old Republic: A Wage Perspective, 1891-1930” (University of California, Los Angeles, 2013).

street with automobiles passing by. As the League and local journalists sought to define middle-class femininity through pink-collar women's dining habits, they were also constructing a middle-class city center.

Although the League and journalists at the time imagined how the restaurant would alter the behavior of women and thus the city itself, the women who actually ate in the restaurant brought their own influence upon the establishment. The 1927 photograph of women demurely seated at tables spaced out on a tiled floor quickly changed. In 1937, as the Viadúto do Chá was to be demolished and rebuilt, the restaurant relocated to “a subpar, wooden shack” underneath the Viadúto Boa Vista, also in the Centro.⁸⁵ The number of women who ate daily in the restaurant nearly quadrupled, from 105 in 1927 to 300-400 by 1939.⁸⁶ A photograph from the Relatório of 1936-1937, displays a distinctly different atmosphere: there are no more vases of flowers on each table, and the lunch room is more crowded, with rows of tightly packed tables. Women appear to be eating, talking, laughing, standing, looking at the camera and milling about the room. Whether posed or impromptu, the photograph demonstrates how the women in the restaurant visibly altered the appearance of the restaurant.

⁸⁵ “velho barracão inadequado” in *História do Restaurante Feminino*, 10.

⁸⁶ *Relatório da Administração 1938-1939*. Liga das Senhoras Católicas, 1939, pg. 100. LSC

This image removed due to lack of copyright permission.

Figure 45: "Restaurante Feminino" in *Relatorio da Administração 1936-1937*, pg. 37. LSC.

Throughout the years, minutes from League meetings reveal how restaurant patrons challenged the image of bourgeois dining that the League had envisioned. On June 28, 1939, the League held a meeting in which the Director of the restaurant discussed the “lack of manners” that some of the restaurant patrons, including a group of “nazi girls,” exhibited.⁸⁷ The Director complained that managers sat at each table to ensure good behavior, but that the restaurant was so crowded that this was sometimes impossible. She also remarked that, “unfortunately, there was a high degree of intrigue among some frequenters of the restaurant.”⁸⁸ No other information was provided as to whether the

⁸⁷ “moças nazistas” “Acta 252” 6/28/1939 *Livro de Actas 3* pp.41-42

⁸⁸ haver, infelizmente, um acentuado espírito de intriga entre algumas frequentadoras do Restaurante.” Ibid. The incident was not the only mention of political subversion; the following week, the League debated whether a communist activist, who had just been released from prison, should be allowed to stay in one of the League’s boarding houses. The directors of the League decided to allow her, but after their decision, the attending priest reminded them that nationalism and love for one’s country was part of the fourth commandment. As such, they should be vigilant against both communism and Nazism; he himself had seen “an incredible” amount of communist and Nazi propaganda from Spain and Germany when he visited

“nazi girls” were politically affiliated with Nazism or whether the Director of the Restaurant was utilizing “nazi” as a pejorative label for their bad behavior. In any case, the Director condemned their “lack of manners” to be equal to political subversion.

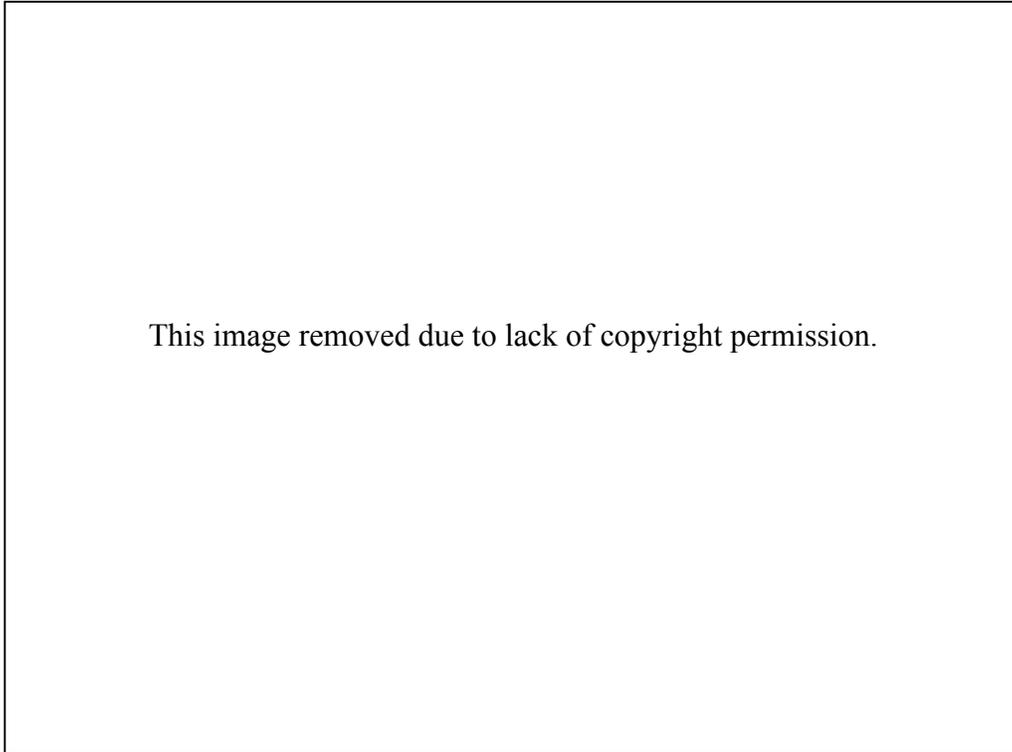


Figure 46: Women’s Restaurant, Largo do Riachuelo. *Relatório da Administração, 1937-1938*. Liga das Senhoras Católicas, 1938. Pg. 59, LSC.

The incident was not the only mention of women’s politicization; the following week, the League debated whether a communist activist, who had just been released from prison, should be allowed to stay in one of the League’s boarding houses. The directors of the League decided to allow her, but after their decision, the attending priest cautioned them that they should be vigilant against both communism and Nazism; he himself had seen “an incredible” amount of communist and Nazi propaganda from Spain and Germany when he visited the Post Office’s Department of Censorship. The Women’s Restaurant and other League institutions may have offered space for women workers to

discuss politics rather than the latest fashions, and been a place for politicization as well as socialization.

The incident also demonstrates the ambivalent position that the League held within Brazilian politics. In 1937, Getúlio Vargas had declared the Estado Novo, a dictatorship that repressed oppositional political parties, even the conservative, anti-communist Integralista party that had formerly been part of his political base. Cardinal Leme, a cardinal of the Brazilian Catholic church, issued an anti-communist letter supporting Vargas and the Estado Novo.⁸⁹ The priest of the League clearly toed this line, even claiming somewhat dubiously that they had a duty to “promote respect for civil authority and cultivate nationalism, for love of country was part of the fourth commandment [in Catholicism, ‘keep the Sabbath day holy’].”⁹⁰ Although the Estado Novo and the Catholic Church were vocally and violently repressing oppositional politics, the League still accepted political dissidents (or imagined political dissidents) into their institutions. The presence of “nazi girls” in the Women’s Restaurant was an instance of how women who deviated from the government’s and the church’s standards of politics and morality might still find a place within the League’s institutions.

In later years, the restaurant continued to be a site to test the limits of acceptable behavior, especially after the League opened the restaurant to youth workers as well as women. The São Paulo state police records reported that in 1955, a group of “delinquents” were refused service because they did not wait in line, and they then retaliated by throwing things off of the Viaduto do Chá and onto the restaurant

⁸⁹ Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las Derechas : The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 303.

⁹⁰ “como difusão do respeito ás autoridades civis e cultivo do nacionalismo pois o amor á Patria faz parte do 4º mandamento do Lei de Deus.” “Ata CCLIII 7/5/1939” in *Livro de Atas #3*, 43. LSC

managers.⁹¹ The managers closed the restaurant temporarily, announcing that they would only serve “well-behaved patrons” in the future. In 1959, another group of youths started a brawl when the Directors announced a dramatic increase in lunch prices, more than a 50% increase from 9 to 15 cruzeiros for youths, and from 15 to 25 cruzeiros for women.⁹²

The comic below also demonstrates how pink-collar women’s public identities might also represent a political force. Professional and feminine (as signaled by their skirt suits, high heels, and hairdos), the women who dined in the restaurant had the potential to organize and take to the streets. Although the comic is undated, it was most likely from the late 1930s or 1940s when the Restaurant was located underneath the Viaduto Boa Vista instead of the Viaduto do Chá. The comic artist utilized the image of the pink-collar worker to protest the current location of the Women’s Restaurant, suggesting that the “subpar, old shack” was not appropriate for visibly middle-class women.⁹³

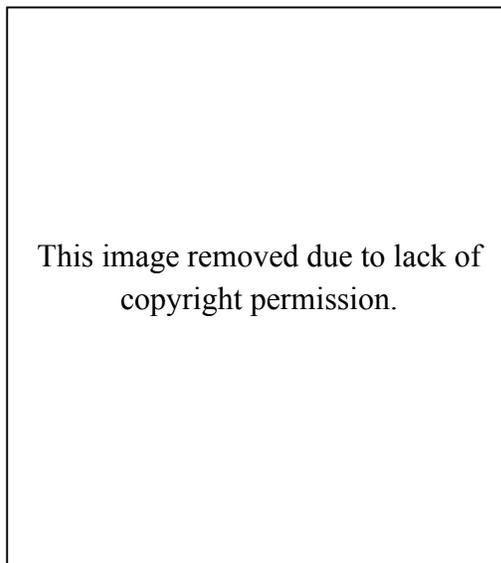


Figure 47: “‘Mr.’ Mayor! We want our restaurant at the Viaduto do Chá!!!” Source: “História do Restaurante Feminino” 1976. LSC

⁹¹ “mal-educados” in “Liga das Senhoras Católicas” DEOPS “Liga Das Senhoras Católicas,” 1940-59, DEOPS 35742, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ *História do Restaurante Feminino*, 10

The Women's Restaurant was thus a space for the League to construct its vision of a modern, feminine, Christian São Paulo through the women who ate in it. However, by excluding factory workers and domestic servants from the restaurant, the League narrowed the definition of modern femininity to include only white-collar workers. While the League authored a vision of a Parisian, moral, feminine place in the center of the city, the women who dined in the restaurant transformed the space through their behavior and habits.

Geographic and Social Mobility: The Association of the Women's Restaurant

The League of Catholic Women established the Women's Restaurant to implement their vision of a modern, Christian city through their education of paulistana middle-class working women. The women who ate in the restaurant, however, made their own imprint upon the institution, both through the daily practice of eating there, and through forming their own association in 1935, the Association of the Women's Restaurant (*Associação do Restaurante Feminino*, ARF). A pamphlet claimed that the goal of the ARF was to "promote... the religious, intellectual, and physical development of its associates, and for the better cohesiveness of the youths that frequented the Restaurant."⁹⁴ Like the early activities of the Liga, the ARF's activities revolved around members' class-positioning. In some respect, the ARF reproduced the Liga's original vision, a coalescing of pink-collar women with an interest in self-improvement. Meetings were filled with priests' lectures on the proper path to matrimony and motherhood. However, the ARF was also a vehicle for restaurant patrons to implement their own vision for what middle-class, working womanhood meant to them. The ARF established

⁹⁴ "Fundada para favorecer... o desenvolvimento religioso, intelectual e físico de suas associadas, e também para a maior aproximação das jovens que frequentavam o Restaurante." "Historia do Restaurante Feminino," 7

its own initiatives in charity, education, and leisure. On one particular point, the ARF adapted the League's original vision of middle class working womanhood. To the ARF, the status of shopgirl was a highly mobile one – it enabled both social and geographic mobility.

The structure of the ARF was similar to the League in that members comprised the offices of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Like other Catholic youth groups in this time period, the ARF also had an “ecclesiastical guide” (*assistente ecclesiastico*), a priest who served as the spiritual and moral leader, as well as a director, an older woman who counseled the group on activities and member responsibilities. The director of the ARF was a member of the Liga, Benedita Mendes Vieira de Souza, who also represented the ARF at Liga meetings. The ARF was not a mini version of the Liga, however. The association, although participating in some philanthropic activities, was more focused on the moral and physical well-being of its own members, both of which assured their middle classness.

Whereas the women of the League focused on developing and building their own institutions, the women of the ARF were more mobile in their philanthropic activities. For example, the ARF visited the state penitentiary on January 19th, 1941 to, “bring a little bit of moral comfort to the unfortunate prisoners, and at the same time admire their handiwork, including the already famous nativity scene.”⁹⁵ What was remarkable about this project was the geographical boundaries that it crossed, going into a male-dominated space associated with crime and violence. The League had its own building for members; they built nurseries, orphanages, pensions, schools, and restaurants, into which they

⁹⁵ “levarem aos infelizes presos, um pouco de conforto moral, e ao mesmo tempo admirarem os seus trabalhos, entre os quaes, o já famoso presepio de Natal.” Acta 1, 1/12/1941 Associação do Restaurante Feminino

allowed the needy to enter. They also *received* requests for help and gave donations. Creating their own structures allowed the Liga to monitor who came into their organization, who received help, who merited help, with whom their association might come into contact. Even fundraising events included the process of renting out theaters, cinemas and concerts, again giving them power and ownership over specific spaces.

Another activity that demonstrates the ARF's geographic mobility was their work in cinema censorship. The ARF's statutes stated that, "in order to give girls a good understanding of cinema, we will have censorship of films."⁹⁶ The ARF planned to adhere to a list created by the Association of Catholic Journalists and that "these lists would be fixed not only here in the restaurant, but also in various shops of São Paulo."⁹⁷ A duly appointed commission of members would visit these shops and areas, speak to the managers, and post the list of censored films. Like the act of going to the penitentiary, this work highlighted the ARF women's geographic mobility. Rather than remaining in the confines of their own institutions – a privilege the League had--the ARF women would walk around the city, engaging with local businesses. The efforts in cinema censorship also demonstrate how the ARF women assumed authority over the leisure habits of other women. By posting the list of censored films in the shops, the ARF sought to educate both the women who worked, and the upper-class women who shopped in them.

Philanthropic activities were secondary however, both to the ARF's other initiatives, and to their middle-class positioning. The primary concern of the organization was to cultivate moral and physical health through initiatives such as "religious

⁹⁶ "para dar á moça uma bôa orientação no cinema, teremos a Censura dos filmes" Ibid.

⁹⁷ E as respectivas listas, deverão ser afixadas não só aqui no Restaurante, como nas diversas comerciaes catholicas de S. Paulo." Ibid.

orientation, promote sports, outings, and excursions.... Offer discounts in shops, making available medical and clinical assistance.⁹⁸ All of these activities, which revolved around leisure, had implications for the health, morality, and reproductive duties of young women. Whereas the Liga justified its leisure activities under the guise of philanthropy, claiming members' leisure to be *productive*, the ARF engaged in leisure activities that served to promote their *reproductive* health.

The duality of leisure was in part due to cultural perceptions of women as simultaneously morally superior and morally inferior to men. As discussed, maternalist rhetoric stressed the “natural” instincts, responsibilities, and moral compass of mothers and future mothers. However, doctors, scientists, and moralists in Brazil, as elsewhere, had long characterized women as both morally and physically weaker than men, guided by petty emotions rather than rational thought. Public health intellectuals in the nineteenth century utilized the guise of science to blame women's perceived weaknesses on deficient organs and enlarged posterior lobes.⁹⁹ Police chiefs in 1920s Rio de Janeiro worried that by smoking, drinking, and dancing, modern girls would become “useless for motherhood,” with negative consequences for the future of the nation.¹⁰⁰

For the women of the ARF, improper forms of leisure were distinctly urban: cinemas, theaters, and dance halls. Non-urban forms of leisure included excursions, sports, and picnics, as healthy activities that would actually enhance working women's health and morality. Leisure was thus a double-edged sword: depending on the activity, it

⁹⁸ “orientação religiosa, promover jogos esportivos, passeios e excursões... Oferecia vantagens pecuniárias nas casa comerciais, dispondo também de assistência médica, hospitalar...” *Historia do Restaurante Feminino*, Papeleta: Jornal do Departamento da Cultura, 1976 pg. 7. (IMG_8186).

⁹⁹ Chalhoub, *Trabalho, Lar E Botequim : O Cotidiano Dos Trabalhadores No Rio de Janeiro Da Belle Époque*, 176.

¹⁰⁰ Caulfield, “Getting into Trouble.”

could make women less feminine, ruining them for motherhood, or it could make them physically and spiritually healthier, preparing them for motherhood. In March 1941, Father Eduardo Roberto gave a series of lectures about the sacrament of marriage, its sanctity and how these young women should prepare for it. Rather than speaking on the religious preparation for marriage, for example, prayer, religious classes, or proper courtship, the priest emphasized physical health, advising that women “breathe fresh air at least once a week; on Sundays take a hike in the country. Do not shut yourselves up in cinemas or theaters where the air is unhealthy (*viciado*), but seek contact with nature, which will yield much more for your health and for your spirit. God is in nature, but it is difficult to find God in a reel of film.”¹⁰¹

As discussed in chapter one, in the 1920s, doctors, public health officials, and even film critics criticized the “unhealthy air” (*ar viciado*) of cinemas they perceived to be frequented by the working classes. By the 1940s, however, the best cinemas in Centro boasted air conditioning and other technical innovations to combat the stereotype of cinemas as closed, cramped spaces. For Father Roberto however, cinemas continued to have “unhealthy air” because of the threat they posed to female morality.

In addition to breathing fresh air, Father Roberto lectured on the proper and moral way to dress, stating, “And in respect to fashion, do not exaggerate with lipstick and high heels... because all of this excess will be reflected in your bodily health; health that is life; life that is a precious jewel that God has given us to keep, and of which we have to

¹⁰¹ “Respirar ar puro ao menos uma vez por semana, aos domingos sairem a passear para o campo, não se fecharem nos cinemas nem nos teatros, onde o ar é viciado, mas procuram o contato com a natureza, que lucrarão muito mais para a saúde e até para o espírito... Deus está na natureza... mas dificilmente se encontrará Deus numa fita de cinema...” Acta do 4 reunião. 5/1/1941. “Actas da Associação do Restaurante Feminino,” 5.

return some day.”¹⁰² In subsequent lectures, Father Roberto continued to lecture about marriage and how best to prepare for it, touching on subjects such as eating and sleeping at the right time.¹⁰³ He constantly emphasized that dating was not preparation for marriage, but that being healthy was. Leisure spent outdoors in fresh air was holy and preserved women’s “health” for marriage. Leisure spent indoors, in cinemas, theaters and other urban diversions were frivolous, “unhealthy” and exposed women to premature dating. Wearing high heels might cause foot and back problems, but Father Roberto was likely less concerned about the effect on physical health than the effect on moral health. He even cautioned women to be “prudent in choosing [a partner], listening to reason instead of the heart... do not be guided by the good looks of a boy, but above all, seek to find out if he is as beautiful in his personality as he is in his body.”¹⁰⁴ Here, Father Roberto echoed the “scientists” and lawyers who claimed that women were irrational and morally weak because of their strong emotions.

Women’s “health” as a catch-all term for physical and moral well-being, restraint in dressing, cautious dating, and path to proper motherhood, was the primary topic of discussion in the meetings of the ARF. And although urban forms of leisure and entertainment were harmful to women’s health, the right kinds of leisure, sports, excursions, and picnics, were considered beneficial. Thus if leisure was “productive” for the Liga, generating funds for the organization, leisure was “reproductive” for working women, promoting the spiritual and physical health they needed in order to become good

¹⁰² “E a respeito de modas não exagerar em batons e saltos altos... porque todo esse exagero se reflectirá na saúde corporal, saúde que é vida, vida que é joia preciosa que Deus nos deu para guardar, e da qual teremos que prestar contas um dia...”

¹⁰³ “Acta da 8 reunião” 7/12/1941, “Acta da 10 reunião” 8/24/1941

¹⁰⁴ “prudente na escolha ouvindo a razão, e não o coração... não se deixará guiar pela bela aparência do moço, mas procurará antes de tudo saber se ele é tão belo no seu carácter e na sua alma, como no seu físico.” “Acta 4 reunião” 3/1/2014 Livro de Atas Associação do Restaurante Feminino.

mothers.

The League established the Women's Restaurant in order to implement their vision of a modern, feminine São Paulo, dotted with young, healthy women at leisure rather than sickly, fatigued women at work. In so doing, the League attempted to carve out a distinct class of young, white-collar working women. The women of the Association of the Women's Restaurant, however, formed an association that addressed class concerns while simultaneously encouraging them to leave this class of women for the path of matrimony and motherhood. As Molly Ball points out, the occupation of sales clerk was a transient one; with exceptions, most female employees at the Mappin department store quit their jobs when they married. The women of the ARF therefore, had rightful expectations that they were on the path to matrimony and to motherhood. For the Liga, saleswomen were a fixture of the São Paulo urban scene, one that they sought to improve. For the saleswomen themselves, however, it was a temporary status, an occupation that enabled social mobility via matrimony.

Counterpoint and Conclusion: The Juventude Operária Católica

Elite and white collar working women were not the only ones to regulate their own or other women's leisure habits. The Catholic Working Youth (*Juventude Operária Católica*, JOC) provides a counterpoint to the Liga das Senhoras Católicas. Begun first in Belgium in 1923, the JOC movement grew internationally, establishing national and regional branches in Brazil in the 1940s. The JOC of Brazil was a religious organization for working-class men and women, intended to "teach the young worker how to live a

complete, humane life” as well as defending the rights of workers.¹⁰⁵ Although the following anecdotes are from 1958, a later time period than previous sections, they present an interesting counterpoint by demonstrating how non-elite women were empowered by their role as Catholics and “jocistas” to regulate the leisure habits of other women.

In a 1958 survey of how members impacted society through “actions not words,” a division of the JOCF in São Paulo reported the trials, social problems, and perceived solutions for working-class women’s leisure habits. One story reported that, “One militant [term used for member of the JOC] had a friend who told her mom that she was going to pray or to work late, but went to the movies with friends or dancing with her boyfriend. Our militant entered into action, at first she had to go to her [the friend’s] house to bring her to meetings because her mom didn’t trust her, but now [the friend] is a militant and goes to other’s houses to bring them to meetings.”¹⁰⁶ In another story, a jocista had a friend who was dating a man for two and a half years. This boyfriend never met her on the weekend, only after work on weekdays. He also never introduced her to his family. “The militant found it to be a little strange and became intrigued by the case. She helped the other and they found out that the guy was married. If it were not for the help of the militant, she [the girl with the boyfriend] would have always been duped

¹⁰⁵ Yara Aun Khoury, ed. *Inventários dos Fundos: Juventude Agrária Católica do Brasil, Juventude Estudantil Católica do Brasil, Juventude Independente Católica do Brasil/CEDIC/PUC* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1998), 5

¹⁰⁶ “Uma militante tem uma colega que dizia a mãe que ia a resar ou que estava tralanhando até mais tarde e ia ao cinema com as colegas ou mesmo com o namorado dançar. A nossa militante entrou em ação, no principio tinha que ir busca-la para as reuniões pois a mãe não acreditava no que ela disia, mas agora é militante e vai nas casas das novas busca-las para a reunião.” “Informe de Pesquisa Série,” Informe da Fed da JOCF de 'CEP Roberto' Cidade 'S. Paulo' Estado 'S Paulo'. January 18, 1958 CEDIC PUC, Bra Reg Sul Loc 11 Fem Adm Inf Pes D1 a 5 Rolo no. 41.

because she was very innocent to think of such evilness.”¹⁰⁷ As indicated by these stories, “militants” had little hesitation in actively policing their peers’ leisure habits, from reporting the lies of a peer to her own mother, or investigating a friend’s boyfriend. Though not older or wealthier than the women they assisted, jocistas were empowered by their role as members of a Catholic organization to exercise their moral authority. While this may be interpreted as the church’s cooptation of working-class women into service of the church’s bourgeois moral values, the stories also demonstrate how power and moral authority circulated beyond elite and middle-class women. Within families and among their peers, working-class women actively participated in the policing of other women’s leisure habits.¹⁰⁸

Whether empowered by their status as mothers, elites, workers, or Catholics, women assumed authority over themselves and over other women. Popular and intellectual criticisms of the League of Catholic Women have ranged from accusations of subservience to the Catholic Church, hypocrisy regarding their many activities and festivals, and an inability to challenge patriarchy because of their narrow definition of gender roles. However, the question of whether League members were feminist activists or paternalists is anachronistic because it ignores the goals of the League in the time period. For the founding members of the League, the organization was a way to

¹⁰⁷ “A militante achou um pouco estranho e se interessou pelo caso ajudou a outra e descobriram que o rapaz é casado, esta disse se não fosse a ajuda da militante ela iria ficar sempre enganada, pq era muito ingenua para pensar em tal malvadesa.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ As suggested by the liberation theology movement, in which Catholic priests and parishioners utilized Christian doctrine to agitate for social justice and civil rights, Catholic organizations could provide an arena for progressive politics. This is evidenced in other anecdotes in the JOC survey in which militants claimed to have helped fellow workers to be paid due wages. Eventually, the military dictatorship in Brazil disbanded the JOC, along with its governing organization, Catholic Action (Ação Católica) for the perceived threat of leftist organization. On Catholic student involvement (Juventude Universitária Católica, JUC), a partner organization of the JOC, see José Oscar Beozzo, *Cristãos na Universidade e na Política: História da JUC e da AP*, vol. 9 (Vozes, 1984).

participate in the modernization of São Paulo, which they perceived as middle-class women's growing visibility in public spaces. They participated in this modernization through fundraisers that put their members on São Paulo's largest stage, and institutions like the Women's Restaurant, which regulated middle-class leisure habits in the streets. Fundraisers offered members of the League an opportunity to solidify their class position as elites, while indulging in some of the same "pernicious amusements" that many other women enjoyed. Despite their assertions of class-based and moral difference, League members who acted in plays were like other "movie-struck" men and women who pursued acting and approximated Hollywood aesthetics. In addition, elite women were not the only ones to enforce middle-class habits. The working women who established the Association of the Women's Restaurant, as well as members of the Catholic Working Youth, also exercised moral authority to police the leisure habits of their peers, reproducing middle-class values of female morality.

Conclusion

Since 2005, the São Paulo municipal government has sponsored the *Virada Cultural*, or “Cultural Turn.” Inspired by the *Nuit Blanche* or “all-nighter” held annually in Paris, the event features free exhibitions of music, ballet, theater, and art performances for 24 consecutive hours. Events occur all over the city, but are concentrated in the Centro neighborhood in order to “promote the inhabitation of public space, inviting the populace to appropriate the center of the city through art, music, dance, and popular manifestations.”¹ The *Virada Cultural* is a kind of *paulistano* response to Brazil’s most famous party, *Carnaval*. In addition to samba, music ranging from classical music to Brazilian funk reverberates from open-air stages; along with dancing in the streets, attendees watch ballet troupes perform underneath the Viaduto do Chá; instead of the mainstream, glossy popular taste represented in telenovelas, *paulistanos* exhibit their “nerd” credentials in science fiction and *Star Wars* exhibitions. In contrast to the “national rhythms” so heavily associated with Rio de Janeiro, the *Virada Cultural* is yet another event in which the municipal government represents the city as a cosmopolitan metropolis.²

The various porn cinemas of the Centro are included in this cultural experience. The tinted glass doors that usually divide the cinemas from the street are propped open. Marathoning zombie films, *pornoanchadas* (Brazilian soft-core porn comedies popular in the 1970s), and other “cult classics,” the cinemas attract a mix of film enthusiasts,

¹ “A Virada,” *Virada Cultural 2014*, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://viradacultural.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/2014/a-virada/>.

² For criticisms against the denomination of São Paulo as a “global city,” (as defined by Saskia Sassen, cities with the infrastructure capable of attracting transnational companies and financial investment) mostly due to the extreme social and economic inequality, see Ferreira, João Sette Whitaker. *O Mito da Cidade-Global: O Papel da Ideologia na Produção do Espaço Urbano*. (São Paulo: Vozes, 2007).

“regulars,” and the simply curious. The year I did my research in São Paulo in 2011, one moviegoer reported on an online website that he was unable to watch any films at the Palácio do Cinema (described by Nestor Perlongher in chapter two), because of the “smell of disinfectant mixed with urine.”³ One of the online commentators responded that, “The virada cultural was a great idea copied from France, but unfortunately each year in São Paulo, it gets worse in organization, structure, and safety, as more people attend. The movie theaters are trash... unfortunately in Brazil our governments never keep their promises.”⁴ This particular commentator viewed the smelly, dilapidated porn cinemas of the Centro as an example of Brazil’s “failed” modernity, its inability to reproduce Paris in Brazil.⁵ However, other moviegoers gushed about the “opportunity” of viewing “classics” on the big screen.⁶ For these moviegoers, watching *Cannibal Holocaust* in a porn cinema was a transnational cultural event, a chance to watch an obscure foreign film in the kitschiest part of the city center. Within the fluctuating standards of “good taste,” the cinemas of São Paulo’s Centro, as they had been for a hundred years prior, were sites to construct and interpret modernity, spaces that expressed what was advanced and backwards, cosmopolitan and local.

³ Roberto Guerra, “Público Lota Salas de Cinema Durante Virada Cultural - Notícias - Cineclick,” *Cineclick - Tudo Sobre Cinema*, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.cineclick.com.br/falando-em-filmes/noticias/publico-lota-salas-de-cinema-durante-virada-cultural>.

⁴ “a virada cultural foi uma ótima idéia copiada da França, mas infelizmente em SP a cada ano que passa está piorando na parte de organização, estrutura e segurança, pois está aumentando o fluxo de pessoas. as salas de cinema estavam um lixo, assim como a praça Julio Prestes sem condições de ter shows. infelizmente [sic] no Brasil nossos governos não tem compromisso com nada.” “donisette,” 2011, Ibid.

⁵ For the classic analysis of Brazilian elites’ interpretation and adaptation of European culture and notions of modernity, see Needell, *A Tropical Belle Epoque: Elite Culture and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Rio de Janeiro*, 1st edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁶ “não poderia perder essa oportunidade de apresentar esse clássico para ele” Renata Bulgueroni, quoted in “Público Lota Salas de Cinema.” Jeffrey Sconce has argued that among cult film enthusiasts, zombie films and “b” films of formerly low cultural capital are now markers of good taste. Jeffrey Sconce, “‘Trashing’ the Academy: Taste and an Emerging Politics of Cinematic Style,” *Screen* 4, no. 36 (1995): 371–93.

Focusing on the visual and physical aspects of modernity in Brazil, this dissertation has explored the built spaces of cinemas through time, as well as the image and body of the “modern girl” who was present in movie audiences and streets in the 1920s. Just as the *Virada Cultural* was an interpretation of the Parisian *Nuit Blanche* in 2011, cinemas in the early and mid-twentieth century were built with imported U.S. technologies, while women in the audiences watched Hollywood movies and wore the latest French fashions. Through cinemas and bodies, individuals who were otherwise outside of the normative political sphere were able to construct modernity in Brazil. Film exhibitors, moviegoers, and modern girls not only interpreted and adapted the images and products that were associated with European and North American progress, they developed new means for *how* modernity could be expressed. São Paulo’s place within an imagined “advanced” world was not simply determined by Hausmannian city planning, but through the seemingly petty negotiations of film exhibitors who exercised civic rights as entrepreneurs and citizens while constructing cinemas. Women were not just modern when they went to the movies, but when they stood a certain way, sat in a specific seat, or exhibited a type of smile. Through the construction and navigation of built spaces, through movements and habits, movie-entrepreneurs and moviegoers constructed physical and affective forms of modernity from the ground up.

This dissertation began with protests to re-open the Cine Belas Artes in 2011 as a site of cultural patrimony. Protestors imagined how the concept of *cinema da rua*, or street cinema, would provide spatial and material access to art cinema, making a “chaotic city livable” and “build[ing] the city that we want.” In the 1920s, municipal legislators also envisioned how cinemas would form part of an idealized city that was safe and

hygienic. In 1948, municipal politicians' attempts to fix ticket prices and declare movie-going a "basic necessity" of the populace were intertwined with an idealized vision of an egalitarian, middle-class São Paulo. As evidenced by the Virada Cultural, the municipal government continues to incorporate cinemas in their vision of a modern city, encouraging middle-class occupation of the Centro, and challenging stereotypes of the city's danger and social and economic stratification.

However, when the moviegoer Rafael complained that he was unable to stand the "smell of disinfectant and urine" in the Palácio do Cinema, he pointed out how layers of movie-going practices were subject to the municipal government's plans for modernization. Like so many of the politicians, hygienists, and film critics who described movie theaters throughout the twentieth century, Rafael's response was distinctly affective. Public health officials cautioned against the "bad odor characteristic of confined spaces" of cinemas in 1916. Film critics praised the "Radiosan" that spread "perfumed air" in the latest chic cinema in 1926. Advertisements boasted "perfect air conditioning" in the 1944 Cine Metro. Ethnographers and moviegoers observed the "stale smell of urine" of porn cinemas in the 1980s, a smell that, according to Rafael, still characterizes cinemas of the Centro today. Through built space and practice, cinemas were constantly changing and shifting with standards of class, taste, and hygiene. Affective descriptions and characteristic smells indicated levels of propriety that were deeply tied to moviegoers' decisions to attend or avoid certain cinemas, of sitting here and not there, of deeming cinemas as modern or marginal.

The quotidian habits of moviegoers provide a window into how people from diverse social backgrounds came together and interacted (or avoided each other) at the

movies. Class divisions were apparent in the built spaces of theaters, in which moviegoers with the cheapest tickets entered through a side door instead of the main entrance in the 1920s, and moviegoers with the most expensive tickets used a private elevator in the 1940s. Even when moviegoers of different class and racial backgrounds sat next to each other and shared the same space, social divisions remained. Women with dark skin might be interpreted as maids no matter where they sat. Conversely, women who paid extra to sit in the main area of a cinema instead of in the cheaper gallery could become a “senhora” for a night.

Women’s habits inside and around cinemas did not just have implications for their individual identities, they were a litmus test for the respectability and social status of movie-going. Politicians, intellectuals, and moral authorities imagined how the visibility of women would construct São Paulo as a modern city and Brazil as a modern nation. Social programs like maternity hospitals and nurseries emphasized how women might contribute to the modernity of a nation through their labor, both in the factory and in the home. Comics, newsreels, literature, fan practices, and oral histories reveal, however, how this contribution could also be made through everyday practices of consumption and leisure. Intellectuals interpreted even the way women sat, mixed in alongside men in audiences, rather than isolated in private boxes, as a symbol of the city’s changing mores. The presence of “modern girls” at cinemas simultaneously signaled that movie-going had become respectable enough for women, and that perhaps women had become less respectable.

However, there was no single modern girl, but various permutations that reflected aspirations and anxieties of what modernity meant in Brazil. Modern girls were

sexualized “melindrosas,” Brazilian flappers who consumed foreign products and seduced (or were seduced by) men at the movies. They were “mademoiselles,” the default moniker for sophisticated women from elite families. They were also “francesas,” prostitutes and thieves with civilized manners but dangerous goals. Although the modern girl was defined primarily through her habits of leisure and consumption, modern working women, described as “midinettes” were “pink-collar” workers who exhibited middle-class femininity in both their professional and consumptive habits, even in the way that they spent their lunch hour.

Beyond images and representations of modern femininity, women found myriad ways to participate in and construct modernity through cultural consumption and production. Although stereotypes of “movie-struck” girls popularized images of women deluded by dreams of stardom and Hollywood, movie fans (both men and women) were amateur film critics and aspiring actors. They made films, participated in beauty contests, and embodied modernity through the cultivation of *fotogenia*, a “photogenic-ness” that they would allow them to conquer Hollywood as active agents rather than as passive receptors. Even the elite members of the League of Catholic Women, who cautioned women against the dangers of leisure and free time, nevertheless participated in the public culture of modern consumption. Taking to the stage and even to the screen, women of the League became actresses and performers, projecting images reminiscent of the *fotogenia* to which many other movie-going women, from Rio de Janeiro to the countryside of Minas Gerais, aspired.

One of the challenges of this dissertation has been to write this history assuming that leisure and consumption had to “mean more” according to patriarchal standards that

validate women only as much as they contribute to the good of society. Is consumption only significant if it is politicized, if it consolidates working-class identity and organization? Is leisure only important if it is deemed productive, like the League's fundraisers with maternalist, philanthropic goals? What this dissertation has argued is that even when leisure was done explicitly for leisure and fun had for fun's sake, this was still socially important. Women who went to the movies, shopped in stores, and walked in streets, explored the boundaries of propriety, participated in transnational popular culture, and affected the spaces around them.

Through the focus on cinema, this dissertation has also analyzed the construction of middle-class identity in Brazil. In addition to consumption, Brazilians approximated and embodied middle classness through spatial practices and physical encounters. Going to "Cinelândia" was not just about watching the newest Hollywood films; it was about circulating in the center of the city and establishing geographic boundaries of collective good taste. Middle classness was embedded in the social and physical rituals of dating, in holding hands and kissing, but maintaining these sexual acts within certain limits of permissible behaviors that were constantly enforced by ushers, chaperones, and class habitus. These spatial and physical acts were important for the concept of modernity, as film critics and politicians held up movie-going as proof that São Paulo was a civilized city. Euphemisms for whiteness and middle classness, like "fine people" and "everybody" were ways to normalize middle class habits and represent the city as a cultural capital.

In studying the topics of cinema, femininity, and the middle-class, this dissertation has focused not on social boundaries that have been transgressed, but that

have been upheld. I have focused on what is licit, rather than illicit, the churn of everyday pleasures rather than revolutions or resistance. Even cinema managers, who skirted building codes and constructed cinemas slightly out of step with the law, still participated in the legal circumscription of built spaces. The dating and kisses that occurred in cinemas were fond memories of youthful romance, not encroachments of honor or challenges to the legal status of one's morality. A moviegoer's decision to sneak into a section of the movie theater she could not afford was, if not exactly sanctioned, neither illegal nor dangerous. Yet, these were all actions that not only revealed the limits of propriety, but the choices and autonomy that were possible within them.

Examining the program of cult classics during the Virada Cultural, there is a definite retro characteristic that portrays the movie-going experience as belonging to a nostalgic past rather than to an idealized future. What is the place of movie-going in a digital age? While protestors in São Paulo effectively organized so that the Cine Caixa Belas Artes would reopen this year, one story in the Bronx, New York in 2014 demonstrates a more typical narrative. The last movie theater in working-class borough closes; community leaders recognize the cinema as a space of sociability and local history. They rally, "we should protest!" A brief online petition fails to gain muster, and just as has happened before in São Paulo, the Bronx gets another evangelical church, furniture store, or warehouse.⁷

A variety of technologies have signaled the death of movie-going: television in the 1950s, video in the 1980s, internet video streaming in the 2000s. Just like years past, the film industry has responded to new technology with technologies of its own:

⁷ Stuart Miller, "Options Dwindle for Bronx Residents Trying to Escape to the Movies," *The New York Times*, May 25, 2014, accessed August 1, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/26/nyregion/options-dwindle-for-bronx-residents-trying-to-escape-to-the-movies.html>.

widescreen, cine-vision, and at multiple points, 3D. Although industry professionals continually predict the decline of movie-going, Hollywood remains an intensely profitable industry, mostly due to the elevated ticket prices of 3D films and the clout of foreign markets like China.⁸ The use of 3D technology, however, has begun another debate on the gendering of movie-going audiences. The recent trend in Hollywood is to produce blockbuster superhero films that use 3D technology and cater to adolescent, male audiences. Comedies are less successful abroad than action films, and romantic comedies with female leads ostensibly catering to a female audience are made with less and less frequency.⁹ The “problem” of women at the movies has now shifted to their perceived absence, blamed in part on an aggressively masculine Hollywood industry.¹⁰ Recent film criticism in the U.S. has created the impression that production and movie-going today is in a reverse process of movie-going in the previous century. Whereas there was a “feminization” of the spectacle in the 1910s and 1920s, characterized by the rise of female movie stars and images of female respectability, there is a current masculinization of movie-going culture, with fewer women either on screen or in the audiences. It should be noted, however, that although they attracted a fraction of the movie-going public in

⁸ David Lieberman, “2014 Box Office Will Be Hurt By Diminishing Popularity Of 3D Movies: Analyst,” *Deadline*, February 3, 2014, accessed August 16, 2014, <http://deadline.com/2014/02/2014-box-office-will-be-hurt-by-diminishing-popularity-of-3d-movies-analyst-676253/>; Patrick Frater, “U.S. Majors Recover Box Office Ground in China in a Year of Solid Growth,” *Variety*, July 25, 2014, accessed August 15, 2014, <http://variety.com/2014/film/news/us-studios-gain-ground-in-china-1201268399/>; Brent Lang, “Box Office: 3D Stages a Revival (Again),” *Variety*, June 17, 2014, accessed August 14, 2014, <http://variety.com/2014/film/news/box-office-3d-stages-a-revival-again-1201220911/>.

⁹ Amy Nicholson, “Who Killed the Romantic Comedy?,” *LA Weekly*, February 14, 2014, accessed July 31, 2014 <http://www.laweekly.com/2014-02-27/news/who-killed-the-romantic-comedy/>. Martha M. Lauzen, “It’s a Man’s (Celluloid) World: On-Screen Representations of Female Characters in the Top 100 Films of 2013.” *Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film Research*, 2014, http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2013_It%27s_a_Man%27s_World_Report.pdf.

¹⁰ Ann Hornaday, “In a Final Videotaped Message, a Sad Reflection of the Sexist Stories We So Often See On Screen,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 2014, accessed August 14, 2014 http://www.washingtonpost.com/posttv/national/ann-hornaday-responds-to-rogen-apatow/2014/05/27/a0b53b02-e5c4-11e3-a70e-ea1863229397_video.html.

comparison to Hollywood blockbusters, the top three grossing domestic films in Brazil in 2014 were all romantic comedies featuring female leads.¹¹

Yet, in Brazil, scholars of media and gender have long proclaimed the primacy of daytime talk shows and evening *telenovelas* to women's daily lives, while movie-going has become a less quotidian practice.¹² Cinemas are no longer the respite for tired housewives or the location of one's first date. The nearly all-male cinemas of São Paulo's Centro are an extreme example of the re-masculinization of movie theaters. Women are not absent from these spaces; female prostitution is visible in the Centro and expected in some of these cinemas. However, in a 2001 national survey of over 2,000 women from all regions of Brazil, movie-going was not even ranked as a "typical" leisure activity. Indicative of women's relationship with public spaces of leisure was the statistic that from Monday to Friday, 73% of women typically stayed at home during their free time, with 53% specifically indicating they watched television, while only 14% spent their time out of the house. On weekends, 63% stayed in and 58% went out (respondents could indicate more than one activity), but television was by far the most popular activity, with 43% indicating it as their typical way to pass the time. The leisure activity most common outside of the home was still domestic: 22% went to visit relatives.¹³

While movie-going in the twenty-first century does not have the same popular reach as it did in the twentieth, it nevertheless remains an important symbol of São Paulo's identity as a cosmopolitan city. How women participated in movie-going and

¹¹ "Os Dez Filmes Nacionais de Maior Bilheteria Em 2014," *Veja*, July 28, 2014, accessed August, 15, 2014, <http://veja.abril.com.br/noticia/celebridades/os-10-filmes-nacionais-de-maior-bilheteria-em-2014>.

¹² On telenovelas, see Thomas Tufte, *Living with the Rubbish Queen: Telenovelas, Culture and Modernity in Brazil* (Luton, Bedfordshire, UK: University of Luton Press, 2000).

¹³ Gustavo Venturi et al., *A Mulher Brasileira Nos Espaços Público E Privado* (Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo São Paulo, 2004).

film culture in the twentieth-century reveals how they encountered and interpreted imagined concepts of Parisian culture, urban space, and middle-class behavior, concepts that continue to characterize modernity today. In another example of how the media validates women's contributions to the health of the nation, recent studies of the "new middle class" in Brazil have emphasized how women, through their increased spending and earning power, will buoy the Brazilian economy.¹⁴ A historical examination of movie-going women offers a perspective into a time period when women's occupation of public space through leisure was potentially liberated from their duties to family, nation, and industry. It explores how their gestures, movements, and embodiments, as moviegoers, fans, and consumers, shaped modernity and public space in Brazil.

¹⁴ See, for example, Thereza Venturoli, "A Nova Mulher Da Nova Classe C," *Veja Edição Especial Mulher*, May 2010, accessed August 15, 2014, <http://veja.abril.com.br/especiais/mulher/nova-mulher-nova-classe-c-p-076.html>; Darlan Alvarenga, "Classe Média Brasileira É O 18º Maior 'País' Do Mundo Em Consumo," *Globo GI*, February 18, 2014, accessed August 15, 2014, <http://g1.globo.com/economia/noticia/2014/02/classe-media-brasileira-e-o-18-maior-pais-do-mundo-em-consumo.html>.

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