

HISTORY OF CINEMA, AN OPEN ARCHIVE

HISTÓRIA DO CINEMA, UM ARQUIVO ABERTO

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Assuming culture is an open archive, this perspective presupposes a constant reinterpretation of what has been deposited in that archive, encompassing both what has persisted and what has been forgotten. Still, the fact that it is an open archive also suggests that both permanences and absences are not definitive. Hence, Stuart Hall (2003/2006) argued that culture should be viewed as a production rather than archaeology. He emphasised that culture draws its resources from productive work. There is where the real value of knowledge arises, which only persists if it is permanently re-updated.

The revised and expanded second edition of *História do Cinema: Dos Primórdios ao Cinema Contemporâneo* (History of Cinema: From the Early Days to Contemporary Cinema; 2023), coordinated by Nelson Araújo, exemplifies the significance of constantly updating knowledge. In addition to the authors' revisions to the original texts, the new version of the work includes two new chapters that were not part of the first edition and a preface by João Mário Grilo. Thus, we can see that this history of cinema is not a closed narrative.

Nelson Araújo's *Preface* and *Introduction* highlight the methodological and epistemological diversity of the texts, reflecting a desire to foster ongoing scientific work in the field of film studies in Portugal and to disseminate the knowledge produced beyond the boundaries of academia. According to João Mário Grilo, this work represents the collective efforts of "a scientific community tasked with the challenging mission of shaping the future of cinema research and theoretical and historical instruction in Portugal" (p. 13). Nelson Araújo (2013) further emphasises that the work is characterised by the "researchers' power of synthesis, aiming to make knowledge accessible to a wider audience while maintaining a commitment to rigour and objectivity" (p. 16).

Such words prioritise the commitment between scientific production and civil society. By offering updated interpretations of cinematic landscapes, the project aims to unveil them, not solely to meet the expectations of researchers well-versed in their respective fields of study but also to cater to the broader community — a community characterised by its pluralism, which is open to diverse sources of knowledge production.

The work is motivated by the aspiration to uncover diverse cinematographies, their histories, and key moments. It also aims to delve into the issues that shape the trajectory of cinematic language. This endeavour proposes a universal perspective, where cinema emerges as the primordial geography. As Serge Daney (1994/2022) eloquently expressed, cinema was a country, the country that was missing on his map. As the title suggests, mapping the global filmic imaginary covers the period from its origins to contemporary cinema, encompassing widely known and extensively studied contexts and exploring the realm of counter-hegemonic discourses. In Nelson Araújo's view, the focal point lies in establishing "a discursive flow that aims to integrate fresh perspectives, highlight emerging lines of research, and systematise key figures, moments, and artistic movements that have enriched and advanced the language of cinema" (p. 16). Consequently, this overview of cinema history is defined by its emphasis on geographies, movements, and themes that converge through the urgent confluence of concepts, epistemologies, and methodologies.

Most chapters focus either on a specific context within one cinematography (often revisiting and expanding upon previous theoretical discussions) or on the general context of one cinematography. In the first case, the work includes the chapters "Cinema Clássico Americano" (Classic American Cinema) and "O Neorealismo Italiano" (Italian Neo-realism) by Carlos Melo Ferreira, "A Nouvelle Vague – As Origens da Nouvelle Vague" (The Nouvelle Vague – The Origins of the Nouvelle Vague), by José Bértolo, "Novo Cinema Alemão" (New German Cinema) by Liliana Rosa, "Itália no Pós-Neorealismo – Antonioni, Bertolucci, Fellini, Pasolini, Rossellini, Scola e Visconti" (Italy in Post-Neorealism - Antonioni, Bertolucci, Fellini, Pasolini, Rossellini, Scola and Visconti), by Anabela Dinis Branco de Oliveira, "O Novo Cinema Americano" (The New American Cinema), by Ana Bela Morais and José Duarte and "Nova Hollywood: Pontos de Fuga do Cinema Americano dos Anos 60 e 70" (New Hollywood: One-Point Perspectives in the American Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s), by Luís Mendonça. In the second case, it includes the chapters "Cinema da(s) Rússia(s)" (Cinema of Russia(s)) by André Rui Graça and "Cinema Britânico" (British Cinema) by Nelson Araújo.

However, providing a comprehensive description of the mapping is crucial, as some authors have worked from broader geographies, aiming to elucidate the multiple affinities that connect different countries (and cinematographies) through shared territorial and filmic imaginaries. This is evident in chapters such as "O Cinema Nórdico" (Nordic Cinema) by Daniel Ribas, "A Renovação na Europa de Leste" (Renewal in Eastern Europe) by Sérgio Dias Branco, "Ásia, um Vasto Histórico Cinematográfico" (Asia, a Vast Cinematographic History) by António Costa Valente, and "Cinemas Africanos Contemporâneos: Demandas e Reflexões" (Contemporary African Cinemas: Demands and Reflections) by Jusciele C. A. de Oliveira.

Despite the weaknesses and challenges the authors acknowledge, this comprehensive mapping reflects an appropriate interpretation of territorial dynamics that cannot be separated from the historical, social, and cultural contexts. In "O Cinema Nórdico", Daniel Ribas lays out the rationale behind the choice of terminology, focusing on the historical, political, and administrative peculiarities shared by Denmark, Finland, Iceland,

Norway, and Sweden throughout the 20th century; In “A Renovação na Europa de Leste”, Sérgio Dias Branco explores the political and cultural changes in the Soviet Union after the death of Josef Stalin in 1953 up until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. By doing so, he synthesises the cinematographic realities within the socialist bloc, highlighting significant movements such as the Polish School, the New Czech Wave, the Budapest School, and the Yugoslavian Black Wave. António Costa Valente, in his work “Ásia, um Vasto Histórico Cinematográfico”, recognises the ambitious proposal to write about Asian cinema and acknowledges his Western perspective. Rather than omitting this perspective, he embraces it as he undertakes to map the “stories of a cinematographic history through the lens of two significant Western events, namely the Oscars and the Cannes Festival” (Valente, 2023, p. 280). Finally, in her text “Cinemas Africanos Contemporâneos: Demandas e Reflexões”, Jusciele C. A. de Oliveira explores the cinemas of Africa, highlighting the shared image of the struggle for decolonisation and self-determination among its people. She emphasises that this struggle is ongoing and continues to shape African cinemas to this day.

Indeed, prioritising geographical references, whether focused on specific cinematographies or a collection of them, inevitably raises terminological and classification questions for the authors. It is important to recognise that this prioritisation can also perpetuate absences and result in the marginalisation or under-representation of certain geographies and their respective cinematographies.

However, the second edition of *História do Cinema: Dos Primórdios ao Cinema Contemporâneo* aims to repair some absences and limitations. It is important to acknowledge the contributions of Paulo Cunha’s text “Tercer Cine ou a Descolonização do Cinema” (Third Cinema or the Decolonization of Cinema) and Nelson Araújo and Liliana Rosa’s text “Cinema Independente” (Independent Cinema) which delved into concepts, cinematographies, and peripheral geographies. In these two texts, however, the primary focus is not on geographical references. Instead, these authors are more committed to discussing the movements of aesthetic and narrative forms and their interconnections at a global level.

Cunha’s text takes a comprehensive approach by examining the dynamics of subversion and dissent that contributed to the consolidation of the third cinema movement, extending the analysis beyond Latin America. In line with this approach, the author proposes a concluding dialogue with later manifestations, such as feminist cinema theories in the 1970s and queer theories in the 1980s, and examines the prevailing “norms and stereotypes rooted in Eurocentric perspectives, patriarchal power structures, and heteronormativity” (Cunha, 2023, p. 161). Araújo and Rosa’s text starts by contemplating the impact of globalisation in blurring borders, the encouragement of people and goods mobility and the rise of a new order characterised by the proliferation of global economic corporations. Hence, this chapter does not focus on a single geography but uses geographical references to structure its content (European cinema, Latin American cinema and Middle Eastern cinema).

The chapters added to this edition aim to stimulate the debate on invisibilities, the places of speech and the urgency of intersectionality. Two such examples are “Cinemas

Africanos Contemporâneos: Demandas e Reflexões” by Jusciele C. A. de Oliveira and “Cinemas Feministas, Queer e Decoloniais” by Michelle Sales. Aligning with the mapping proposed by Paulo Cunha (“Terceiro Cine ou a Descolonização do Cinema”) and Nelson Araújo and Liliana Rosa (“Cinema Independente”), Michelle Sales’ chapter demonstrates a desire to revitalise debates on the interconnections between cinema, discourse and power. It follows a trajectory that overcomes the geographical specificities when the theme requires.

Addressing the remaining gaps and continuing to expand the scope of the work in future editions presents a significant challenge. One potential approach is to undertake a more focused exploration of generic mappings. This can be exemplified by the texts above «Ásia, um Vasto Histórico Cinematográfico» by António Costa Valente or “Cinemas Africanos Contemporâneos: Demandas e Reflexões” by Jusciele C. A. de Oliveira. These chapters’ object of study could unfold from specific works on certain cinematographies of the respective continents.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that this concern is not overlooked. In António Costa Valente’s text, the author explicitly acknowledges the potential pitfalls of cutting the map of the continent (Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea and India), building “a different Asia, rather anchored in a cinematographic geography than a political and cultural one” (p. 280). Meanwhile, when focusing on African cinemas, Jusciele C. A. de Oliveira takes a critical stance towards the terminology in her comprehensive analysis. The author argues it is “a paradoxical term of inclusion and exclusion” (p. 416). Building on this thought-provoking premise, de Oliveira delves into the complex trajectories of African cinemas over time. She explores the reverberations of Pan-Africanism, the pivotal role of cinema during decolonisation, and the quest to construct new representations of Africa. Moreover, the author sheds light on the ongoing struggle against subjugation, confronting the Eurocentric gaze and the dominance of Hollywood.

Within the interstices of the geographical referential, which, as demonstrated, may inspire multiple approaches to study, another dimension is unveiled which attests to the methodological diversity of the work. As such, it is important to acknowledge some chapters which specifically focus on the language of cinema in its universal sense: “Os Primórdios do Cinema (1895-1920)” (The Beginnings of Cinema [1895-192]), by Elena Cordero-Hoyo, “Cinema e Vanguardas – Entre o Encantamento e o Desencanto” (Cinema and Vanguardas – Between Enchantment and Disenchantment), by Mirian Tavares, “Os Géneros na História do Cinema” (Genres in the History of Cinema), by Luís Nogueira, “(R)Evoluções Digitais” (Digital (R)Evolution), by José Alberto Pinheiro, “Percurso Pelo Documentário: Evolução Histórica em Geral e os Filmes Portugueses dos Anos 90 em Particular” (Journey Through Documentary: Historical Evolution in General and Portuguese Films of the 90s in Particular), by Manuela Penafria and “O Audiovisual Contemporâneo – Novos Cinemas” (The Contemporary Audiovisual – New Cinemas), by Antonio Fatorelli.

Elena Cordero-Hoyo’s text, “Os Primórdios do Cinema (1895-1920)”, delves into the ontology of the cinematographic image and directs our attention to the extensively debated theses put forth by scholars such as Georges Sadoul in his work *Histoire*

Générale du Cinéma (General History of Cinema), published in six volumes from 1946 to 1954, and André Bazin in his *Ontologie de l'Image Photographique* (Ontology of the Photographic Image; 1945/1958). Cordero-Hoyo emphasises the enduring significance of these discussions, highlighting their perennial relevance. Based on this discussion, the author explores other topics that complement her diachronic look over this period of cinema. She focuses on describing the historical context (without limiting this cinema to an embryonic condition, but rather emphasising its creative phase of experimentation, according to her words). Furthermore, the author expresses particular concern regarding the challenges surrounding the conservation and preservation of films.

The text “Cinema e Vanguardas – Entre o Encantamento e o Desencanto”, authored by Mirian Tavares, delves into the cinematic experimentations of the European avant-gardes during the silent era. The author maps out this territory by exploring various topics: the social and cultural transformations that marked Europe in the aftermath of World War I, the differences between the experimentations of the early days of cinema and the experimentations of the artistic avant-garde, the evolving relationship with the public and the beginning of solid theoretical frameworks about cinema. Mirian Tavares concludes her text by linking the “disenchantment” mentioned in the title to cinema’s transition towards a more “programmatically realist-naturalist trend” (p. 68). She refers to the well-known conflict between cinema’s artistic and industrial affiliations, in which the latter ultimately prevailed.

“Os Géneros na História do Cinema”, by Luís Nogueira, proposes, as the title suggests, a theoretical study on the evolution of cinematographic genres. In stating his goal — to address “among other aspects, the definition, the genesis, the dynamics, the canonicity, or the limits of genres in cinema” (Nogueira, 2023, p. 364) — Nogueira delves into the paradoxes raised by categorisations. He questions their limitations, arguing, from multiple topics, the undeniable role of genres in the evolution of cinematic language and the production of cultural meanings.

Like Elena Cordero-Hoyo, José Alberto Pinheiro, in “(R)Evoluções Digitais”, also explores theses regarding the ontology of the cinematographic image. While occasionally referencing the early days of cinema (see the occasional references to the films of George Méliès), the author’s main focus is discussing technological innovation and its impact on the history of cinema. Specifically, Pinheiro examines the “convergence of computing and moving images on the big screen” (p. 389). Indeed, throughout the text, the author alludes to enduring challenges in Cinema theory — such as the notion of the myth of total cinema (Bazin, 1946/1991) and the ongoing dichotomy between non-realism and realism — highlighting the diverse and complex expressions of the technological development phenomenon.

In Manuela Penafria’s text titled “Percurso Pelo Documentário: Evolução Histórica em Geral e os Filmes Portugueses dos Anos 90 em Particular”, we can observe a geographical focus. However, Portuguese cinema serves as the primary object of study, illustrating the author’s broader concerns addressed in the first part of the text. Through exploring Portuguese cinema, the author maps out documentary historical and cultural context, delving into theoretical discussions concerning terminology and concurrent

dichotomies. These dichotomies are closely intertwined with the increasingly blurred boundaries between genres and narrative systems

Lastly, Antonio Fatorelli authors the text “O Audiovisual Contemporâneo – Novos Cinemas”, where he engages in a discussion revolving around propositions influenced by Henri Bergson’s thesis (drawing upon the works of Serge Daney, 1994/2022, and Gilles Deleuze, 1985/2006a, 1985/2006b). The author delves into the context of technological transformation and dissemination, exploring the implications of digital culture and the emerging configurations and intersections within the audiovisual landscape. Are we facing a revolution in aesthetic regimes and, thus, a paradigm shift? Raising this question, Fatorelli addresses the concept of hybridity, which plays a significant role in the new configurations of the filmic language, closely related to “the ongoing transitory nature of images and the interplay, assimilation, overlap, and convergence between photography, cinema, video, and digital image” (p. 528).

At this stage, it is impossible to delve into each chapter of this *História do Cinema* in exhaustive detail. As previously mentioned, the ambitious scope of the work raises numerous concerns while also opening new doors and possibilities for study. By embracing the ultimate challenge of attempting to address the vastness of the subject matter without providing a definitive diagnosis, the work reflects the intentions of its various authors. It aims to present a continuously updated history, always open to new perspectives that constantly reinscribe it.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Tiago Vieira da Silva graduated in cinema and audiovisual (Escola Superior Artística do Porto; ESAP) and is a PhD student in communication sciences (University of Minho), with the thesis “O Debate da Identidade Nacional Desde a Revolução de Abril Até ao Presente, Através do Cinema Português” (The Debate of National Identity Since the April Revolution Until the Present, Through Portuguese Cinema), funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia. He is a researcher at the Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo/ESAP and the Communication and Society Research Centre/University of Minho and a guest lecturer in the cinema and audiovisual course (ESAP). He was part of the international project *Memories, Cultures and Identities: How the Past Weights on the Present Day Intercultural Relations Between Mozambique and Portugal* and the national project *Mapeamento e Sentidos Críticos do Arquivo Fotográfico da Empresa Companhia de Diamantes de Angola (Diamang)*, in 2020. He is currently part of the project *MigraMediaActs: Migrations, Media and Activisms in Portuguese Language: Decolonizing Media Landscapes and Imagining Alternative Futures*. He is a content manager of the Virtual Museum of Lusophony, a University of Minho cultural unit.

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