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Ricardo Borrman
**Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes' transnational network -
an interrelational approach to film history**



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Ricardo Borrman studied Social Sciences at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and took his Master's Degree in Politics and History at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), both in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). In 2018, he was Visiting Research Fellow at the ZeMKI, Centre for Media, Communication and Information Research, University of Bremen. Between 2012 and 2017 he did his PhD research in Latin American Cultural History at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich (LMU-München) with a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). In his PhD Thesis (2017) he researched on the Reception of Rudolf von Jhering's and Ernst Haeckel's ideas by the Brazilian legal field in the 19th Century and focused on the intellectuals Tobias Barreto de Menezes and Sílvio Romero. In his postdoc research project "Film history, Latin America and transatlantic knowledge circulation: Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes international Network (1935-1977)" Ricardo Borrman researches on Brazilian film critic Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes (1916-1977), founder of the "Brazilian Cinematheque" (*Cinematheca Brasileira*) and father of the academic film studies in Brazil. The research aims at reconstructing Salles Gomes' international and Latin-American intellectual Network. The project is settled in the Chair of Latin American History (AG Geschichte Lateinamerikas), at the Faculty of History (FB 8) of the University of Bremen. It is also docked at the transdisciplinary research lab "Audio-visual Media and Historiography", coordinated by Prof. Dr. Delia González de Reufels, at the Center for Media, Communication and Information Research (ZeMKI). Ricardo Borrman is a member of the research lab "City and Power" (*Laboratório Cidade e Poder*) at the History Institute of the Universidade Federal Fluminense (LCP/UFF) and is also a member of the Editorial Board of *Passagens - International Review of Political History and Legal Culture* and of *Revista Direito em Movimento*.

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Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes' transnational network - an interrelational approach to film history

1 Epilogue: "Center" vs. "periphery" in film history

Where is the "center" and where is the "periphery" in film history? This question will guide the following paper on film critic Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes (1916-1977) and his intellectual network, from a post-colonial perspective, and using an interrelational approach to history (Said, 1994; Stam, 1997; Werner & Zimmermann, 2002).



1. Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes (1916-1977)

2 Introduction: The cases of Cavalcanti and Welles

What does an "interrelational approach" mean? In the first place, it focuses more on processes of circulation and on the transnational intellectual networks behind them—both central to fostering cultural and technical exchanges—rather than on a national-centered perspective within fixed state borders, that ends up reproducing old economic prejudices such as "center" and "periphery" (Gregor & Patalas, 1962; Idem, 1973; Gregor, 1978; Sadoul, 1982). By its nature, film history is intertwined and global.



2. Alberto Cavalcanti (1897-1982)

A good example of interconnected trajectories that challenges old national(istic) views is that of filmmaker Alberto Cavalcanti (1897-1982). He was an avant-garde artist in the 1920s and 1930s that developed an international career and built up a vast network of contacts in his field. Cavalcanti was born in Rio de Janeiro and moved to Paris at the early age of 18 to study architecture (Sadoul, 1982: 411). Film historian Ian

Aitken states the following about the growing intellectual film culture in France during the first decades of the 20th Century:

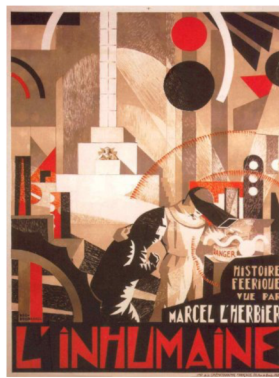
In 1920 [Ricciotto] Canudo founded the journal *Le Gazette de sept arts*, in which he published essays by painters such as Fernand Leger, writers such as Jean Cocteau, and film-makers such as Jean Epstein. Canudo also founded what may have been the world's first film club in 1920: the Club des amis du septieme art. The Club (...) held informal gatherings attended by writers and film-makers such as Alberto Cavalcanti, Marcel L'Herbier, Epstein and Cocteau, and played an important role within the film culture of the period (Aitken, 2001: 75).

As highlighted above, Cavalcanti was part of the early history of film clubs. It was probably in one of those meetings organized by Canudo that the young artist first came into contact with Marcel L'Herbier (1888-1979), who then hired him to work as a set designer in his groundbreaking pictures *L'Inhumaine* and *Feu Mathias Pascal*, from 1924 and 1925 respectively.¹

¹ L'Herbier was later the founder and first president of the "mother" of all film schools, the *Institut des hautes études cinématographiques* (IDHEC), from 1944 until 1969.



3. Marcel L'Herbier (1888-1979), 1924



4. Orig. poster of L'Inhumaine, 1924



5. Orig. poster of Feu Mathias Pascal, 1925

After this experience with L'Herbier, Cavalcanti soon “began producing and directing films on his own account, among them the pioneering ‘city symphony’ *Rien que les heures* (France, 1926)” (Murphy, 2006: 94). With this work, Cavalcanti reputedly inspired Dziga Vertov’s authorial masterpiece *Man with a Movie Camera* (USSR, 1929). Specialists suggest that Cavalcanti drew his early influences from the French realist tradition and from surrealism (Idem).

Cavalcanti’s experimental documentary caught the attention of the critics at the time, leading him to work closely with another filmmaker on a similar ‘city symphony project’: Walter Ruttmann’s famous *Berlin—Symphony of a Great City* (*Berlin—Symphonie einer Großstadt*), from 1927. Cavalcanti’s experimental work also influenced other filmmakers and played a central role in the early years of the so-called “Documentary Film Movement” (Aitken, 1998: 187). Major film historians classify Cavalcanti’s work as the “first manifestation of the avant-garde documentary trend” (Sadoul, 1982: 198).

Although Cavalcanti received international acclaim, why do most non-European names in film history remain unknown to the general public, and even to many film specialists? Is it because Cavalcanti was originally from the so-called “periphery” of the world, in spite of being a “citizen of the world” with vast connections in his field? Why does film history remain Eurocentric and Hollywood-dominated? Those remain open questions...

It was under the influence of Cavalcanti that filmmakers Rudolph Rex Lustig (1901-1970) and Adalberto Kemeny (1901-1969) shot *São Paulo: Sinfonia da Metrópole* (1929), the Brazilian version of Ruttmann’s classic. The case of Cavalcanti highlights that a Brazilian-born filmmaker took part in Ruttmann’s seminal project and even preceded his film with *Rien que les heures*. Therefore, Lustig and Kemeny were not simply imitating a European work of art, but also had non-European influence to be inspired with, instead of simply copying or importing Ruttmann’s idea. Although Lustig and Kemeny were following themselves (and were also connected to) the international tendencies of their field, they were more intensely reacting to local questions: During the 1920s and 1930s, Brazil was going through an intense process of nation building, with nationalistic features, and wanted to present itself as a modern country with a living city such as São Paulo—the heart of the Brazilian industrial development. And at the time, cinema was considered the new medium to spread such an image. Furthermore, Rex and Kemeny were both immigrants from the Habsburg Empire who had previously worked for Pathé and UFA in Europe, before migrating to Brazil to make a living filming for the independence centenary in the 1920s. They would later become film pioneers in the South American country (Noronha, 2015: 50-51).



6. Orig. poster of São Paulo - A Symphonia da Metropole, 1929

Another example of circulation processes and mutual influences in film history is that of Orson Welles' (1915-1985) relationship with Brazil. The US filmmaker came to the country in 1942 under the umbrella of the Good Neighbor policy, financed by the Rockefeller Foundation through the Office of Interamerican Affairs (Benamou, 2012). He then broke with the production company RKO, which had abandoned the project because of several delays in production and running over budget. Apparently, Welles dove deep into Brazilian culture, especially the black African roots of carnival traditions and popular music. That was one of the reasons for the constant delays in production. Welles even started learning Portuguese and wanted to depict the origins of the popular feast in the black neighborhoods. Welles' critical views went too far for the country's ruling white elite and government censorship, that wanted to spread the image of a modern, European-style society in the tropics through its fancy high society balls (Stam, 1997; Callow, 2006). Welles even hired a black actor to play one of his main characters—

Sebastião Prata (1915-1993), better known as Grande Otelo—with whom he became friends:

In 1942 Orson Welles went to Brazil to film two episodes of the never-to-be-finished *It's All True*, a semi-documentary aimed at fostering the Good Neighbor policy and countering Nazi propaganda in Latin America. Welles, a jazzlover who had produced an all-black *Macbeth* for the Federal Theatre, was introduced to the *favelas* and to the samba by Vinicius de Moraes, a poet and film critic later to become famous as a composer-singer and the author of the source play for *Black Orpheus*. Welles became a samba and carnival enthusiast and organized the Rio episodes around two central characters, a five-year old boy and a samba school leader desperate over the destruction of the Praça Onze, the Rio square through which the samba of the *morros* traditionally entered the city.

It's All True was to feature the brilliant black actor Sebastião Prata (Grande Otelo), whom Welles reportedly characterized as one of the finest comic actors of the twentieth century. Grande Otelo has acted in over a hundred feature films—from Burle's *Moleque Tião* (1943) to Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* (1982)—and has figured prominently in all the crucial phases of Brazilian cinema since the forties” (Stam, 1982: 18).

At a private screening organized by musician Vinicius de Moraes (1913-1980), who would go on to compose the Bossa Nova classic “Girl from Ipanema”, Welles was introduced to *Limite*, a 1931 motion picture by Mário Peixoto (1908-1992) (Avellar, 2008: 34), which became a legend in Brazilian filmography (Korfmann, 2006). Apparently, Welles was impressed by cinematographer Edgard Brazil's (1902-1954) external shoots.²

² Edgard Brazil is today considered the patron of Brazilian cinematography and was actually called Edgar Hauschildt. He was born in Hamburg by a German mother and a Brazilian father, grew up in Rio de Janeiro and participated in more than 150 motion pictures with a regular career in film between 1928 and 1954. More on Brazil in: <http://abcine.org.br/artigos/?id=1285&/edgar-brasil-o-patrono-dos-diretores-de-fotografia-brasileiros>. Access: Oct 24, 2018.

After breaking with RKO, Welles sought out Brazilian producer Adhemar Gonzaga (1901-1978) from the production company *Cinédia*, who produced Peixoto's film, and presented him to the director of photography George Fanto (1911-2000) (Noronha, 2015: 39). Fanto was a Hungarian immigrant who came to Brazil in 1939 and developed his career there. He worked in several Brazilian pictures during the 40s and 50s. Later on, Fanto worked with Welles as cameraman in the legendary film *Othello*—which took 10 years to be completed (Idem: 52/215)—and maintained a long-lasting friendship with Welles afterwards (Callow, 2006: 133). The influence of Welles' Brazilian cultural and cinematographic experiences in his work after *Citizen Kane* is yet to be fully explored by film research. His unfinished documentary *It's All True* became a legend. Glauber Rocha, one of Cinema Novo's main figures, was influenced by the camerawork in the episode of the four fishermen from *It's All True*—which was actually made by the “Brazilian” (of Hungarian Austrian background) cinematographer George Fanto, in his first movie *Barravento* (1962)—about a fishing colony that develops class conscious after being exploited by masters.



7. Welles filming with cameramen Fanto on a beach in Fortaleza, Brazil, 1942

This example alone draws our attention to the technical circulation and cross-over influences and to the importance of intellectual networks in film history. Players from the so-called “periphery” were actively participating in movements from the European “center,” while “central” actors were being influenced by “peripheric” culture. The cases of Cavalcanti and Welles/Fanto show how “peripheric” characters actually played a central role in the seminal works of famous films directors such as Walther Ruttmann and Welles himself, and therefore were influential in the international avant-garde scene, actively interacting with it.

3 Cavalcanti and Paulo Emílio: Entangled intellectual networks

One cannot think about John Grierson’s (1898-1972) documentary film school without considering Cavalcanti’s contribution to it (Aitken, 1990). The Brazilian filmmaker built an international reputation for himself as a set designer, producer, and film director. He worked with Grierson in London in the 1930s. Later he also worked in Austria and collaborated on many pictures worldwide (Gregor & Patalas, 1965: 83). In Brazil, he played a key role in the foundation of the famous Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC) in the 1950s, to foster state subvention of film productions. He also worked closely on building up the Companhia Cinematográfica Vera Cruz, the first major attempt at creating an industrial scale production company in Brazil. Cavalcanti had a strong influence on Brazilian film culture and was frequent subject of the film critique in Brazil, especially by Paulo Emílio in the end of the 1950s, when he wrote several articles on the British film documentary school (Gomes, 2015). Paulo Emílio also had with Cavalcanti an intense exchange and some conflicts regarding the project of the Cinemateca Brasileira (Souza, 2002). But where did Paulo Emílio first come into contact with Cavalcanti’s work? To answer this question, one has to widen the scope of the analysis and go international.



8. Henri Langlois and Georges Franju

Cavalcanti’s name stands alongside other prominent members such as Marcel L’Herbier and Jean Renoir as one of the early members of the administration counsel of the Cinémathèque Française, founded in 1936 (Mannoni, 2006: 47). The Cinémathèque was created by Henri Langlois (1914-1977) and George Franju (1912-1987) and its origins draw back to the previous Cercle du Cinema (Idem: 54). The programs from that period show that Cavalcanti’s works were frequently being screened (Paini, 2014: 57/107) in the “mother of all Cinémathèques”.

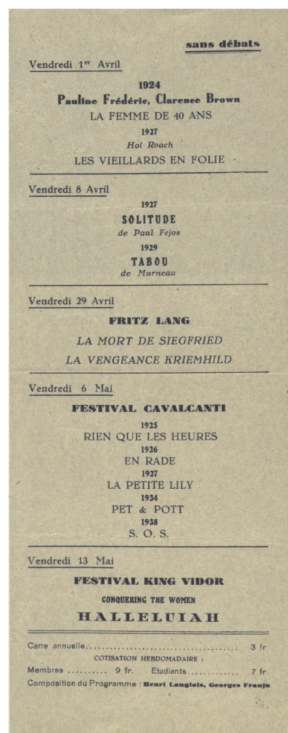
3 Mercredi FÉVRIER Jeudi 4		5 Vendredi FÉVRIER Samedi 6	
Si Blaise		Si Dorothee	
1919	La fête Espagnole	1919	La fête Espagnole
1920	L'Homme du large	1920	L'Homme du large
1922	Les Femmes d'Alger	1922	Les Femmes d'Alger
1924	Ballet Mécanique	1924	Ballet Mécanique
Jean Renoir	1917 Nana	Jean Renoir	1917 Nana
Alberto Cavalcanti	1927 Le petit Sely	Alberto Cavalcanti	1927 Le petit Sely
Luis Buñuel	1929 L'Age d'Or	Luis Buñuel	1929 L'Age d'Or
Jean Renoir	1929 Hys et Argelès	Jean Renoir	1929 Hys et Argelès
J. et P. Prévert	1931 L'affaire est dans le sac	J. et P. Prévert	1931 L'affaire est dans le sac
Jean Vigo	1933 Zéro de Conduite	Jean Vigo	1933 Zéro de Conduite
Alexeïeff	1935 Nuit sur le Mt Olympe	Alexeïeff	1935 Nuit sur le Mt Olympe
J. B. Brunius	1937 Records 33	J. B. Brunius	1937 Records 33
Marcel Carné	1939 Diabolé de Drame	Marcel Carné	1939 Diabolé de Drame
Grimalt	1939 La loi de l'Homme		

MÉNAGEZ VOTRE VUE EN VOUS ÉCLAIRANT CONVENABLEMENT.

LUMIÈRE, SANTÉ, CONFORT. — Aménager la lumière, c'est ménager ses yeux et sa santé, facteur du moral... Mais ce n'est pas tout. Un bon éclairage ne satisfait pas seulement à cette double nécessité d'être habitable et de loger, et de santé. Il répond aussi à des besoins plus élevés, de confort, d'agrément, d'art. L'éclairage permet de faire le foyer habitable, sans plus. Celui d'aujourd'hui le fait, en outre, confortable et attrayant. A qui aime sentir le home, l'empreinte d'un cachet personnel, en rendre l'intimité plus douce, plus prenante, il offre des ressources et des satisfactions infinies. Il le peut grâce à l'électricité, dont c'est la nouvelle contribution à un art que nous considérons justement comme un art d'agrément. Et qui se peut-être. L'agencement de la demeure n'est-il pas un élément du bonheur de l'homme? Connaissions donc la lumière, sachons tout ce que nous pouvons attendre d'elle, et qui se résume ainsi: S'éclairer mieux, c'est vivre mieux.

CABLES ÉLECTRIQUES — MULLER & C^o — TOUS MODELES —
— CUIRASSES — 45, rue Carnot — SURENER (Seine) — 47 — LONDRES 11-17 — Voir page 31

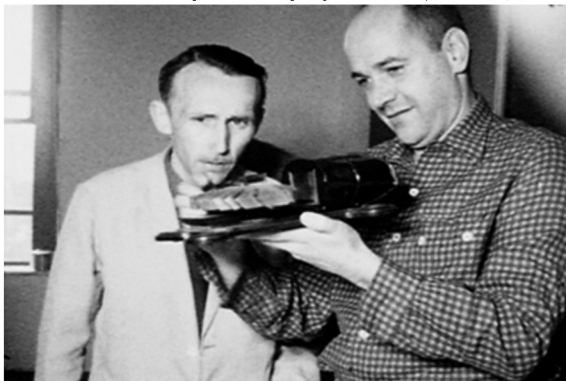
9. Programm draft for the Cinémathèque Française by Henri Langlois, 1937



10. Screening programm of the Cinémathèque Française, 1938

Exiled from Brazil by the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas (1937-1945), Paulo Emílio had been living in Paris since 1937, and frequently went to screenings at the Cinémathèque together with other famous critics, such as Siegfried Kracauer (1889-1966), Lotte Eisner (1896-1983) and André Bazin (1918-1958) (Später, 2016), who were also living in Paris at that time. Paulo Emílio would develop a long-lasting friendship with both Bazin and Eisner.

Paulo Emílio came from a bourgeoisie family from São Paulo. His father was a respected physician (Souza, 2002: 18). Because of his family background, he learned how to run in the aristocratic, conservative circles of São Paulo's elite. Those contacts were his social capital and allowed him to sustain and construct a diverse network that helped him develop his institutional projects.³



11. Paulo Emílio with André Bazin at the Cinemateca do MAM in 1954

As an adolescent, Paulo Emílio quickly embraced political activism and managed, with his strong oratory skills, to captivate and mobilize the young activists (Idem: 49). In 1935, Paulo Emílio was arrested because of his political views and accused of communism in a wave of political persecution lead by the Vargas government. He was then sent to the Paraíso (Paradise) detention house for political prisoners, from which he fled in 1937, and then went into exile in France (Idem: 108).

At that same time in Paris, Plínio Sussekind Rocha (1911-1972), a fellow compatriot who was preparing his PhD in Physics, became a major influence on Paulo Emílio (Idem: 127).⁴ Together with others, such as Octávio de Faria (1908-1980) and Adhemar Gonzaga, he founded an influential film club in the 1920s, the Chaplin Club, that had a big impact on film culture, influencing younger generations (Idem). There was also a film magazine called *O Fan*, that strongly defended silent films against the so called “talkies”. The Chaplin Club also served as a model for later film clubs in the country (Correa Jr., 2010: 43).⁵ The existence of this film club and of the film magazine *Cinearte*, founded by Mário Behring (1876-1933) and Gonzaga, that circulated between 1926 and 1942, demonstrate that there was already a strong film culture in Brazil basically since the early decades of the 20th century (Noronha, 2015: 28-30).⁶

³ Despite that, Paulo Emílio's familiar background and infancy are mostly ignored by his major biographical accounts.

⁴ More on Sussekind Rocha in: <http://biblioteca.if.ufrj.br/sobre/plinio-sussekind-rocha/>. Access: Oct 25, 2018.

⁵ For more information on the Chaplin Club, *O Fan* and their importance to Brazilian film culture, see Xavier, 2017.

⁶ Apparently the first film footages in Brazil dates back to the end of the 19th century (Noronha, 2015: 27).



12. Paulo Emílio with Lotte Eisner in São Paulo, 1960

It was Sussekind Rocha, whom Paulo Emílio considered a mentor, who introduced the young activist to film culture and took him to sessions at the Cinémathèque for the first time (Souza, 2002: 127). A question that still remains open is what was Paulo Emílio's actual role in those early days of the Cinémathèque and what did he bring back home from his experiences abroad to the future Cinemateca Brasileira (Correa Jr., 2010: 43).

4 Paulo Emílio's ties to France and his influence on the Nouvelle Vague



13. Paulo Emílio as a jungster with hammer and sickle

Just before the war, Paulo Emílio came back to Brazil. In 1940, along with other college friends, he founded the *Revista Clima*, which changed the nature of criticism in the country. Despite its short existence, *Clima* is still considered a milestone in the history of criticism in Brazil (Pontes, 1998; Miceli, 2001; Souza, 2002; Paranaguá 2014). For the first time, film critiques were not merely descriptive or laudatory, but

contained a detailed theoretical analysis of films, sometimes frame by frame. Paulo Emílio's writings were more extensive than was common at the time, almost like essays, and contained theoretical considerations (Pontes, 1998: 104; Souza, 2002: 166; Paranaguá, 2014: 88). In 1940, the young critic played a major role in the foundation of the first film club in São Paulo, inspired by the Langlois' Cercle du Cinema. The club would lay the foundations for the later Cinemateca Brasileira.

In 1946, Paulo Emílio moved back to Paris, this time for a longer period—he would live in the city for several years, only coming back to Brazil in 1954. During this period, he established vast intellectual connections in the film world network that would go on to serve him with the future Cinemateca Brasileira. Then he clearly strengthened his connections with the group of Henri Langlois, Lotte Eisner and André Bazin in the Cinémathèque and established close ties with the newly founded International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP), where he had an active engagement in those early years, and was even Vice President on more than one occasion during the 1950s (FIAP, 1958: 14-16). In 1946, another film club was founded in São Paulo—the so-called “second film club”, and since he was living in France, Paulo Emílio was elected as its international correspondent. The international connections of the film club, which would soon become the network behind the Cinemateca of the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo (MAM), which was the first step towards the founding of the Cinemateca Brasileira as an independent institution in the 1950s. Its early affiliation to

THE CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF FILM ARCHIVES was held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, Tuesday, July 25th, 1939, at 11:00 A.M. with the following present:

Miss Olwen Vaughan	-	England, National Film Library
Mr. Frank Hensel	-	Germany - Reichsfilmarchiv
Mr. Henri Langlois	-	France - Cinematheque Francaise
Mr. Alberto Garabelli	-	Italy - Italian Library of Information
Mr. Tamon Mayeda	-	Japan - Director of Japan Institute representing Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai (Society for International Cultural Relations)
Mr. Shigeyoshi Sakaba	-	Japan - Japan Institute
Mr. Conrado Traverso	-	Argentina, Consul General
Mr. Armando Vidal	-	Brazil, Commissioner General to World's Fair
Mr. Anibal Jara	-	Chile - Consul General
Count Hugo Hamilton	-	Sweden, Assistant Commissioner General to the World's Fair
Mr. Victor Nef	-	Switzerland, Commissioner General to the World's Fair
Mr. Horace Poleman	-	Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Miss Irene Wright	-	Division of Cultural Relations, State Dept., Washington, D.C.
Mr. H. C. Stockholm	-	Denmark, Assistant Commissioner General to the World's Fair
Mr. Allen Haden	-	Secretary of U. S. Embassy in Buenos Aires
Mrs. Margaret Summers	-	Secretary of the Joint Committee on the International Exchange of Films
Mrs. Frances Flynn Paine	-	Hostess for Latin American Countries - National Advisory Committees of the N. Y. World's Fair
John E. Abbott Miss Iris Barry Mr. Douglas L. Baxter)))	- United States - Museum of Modern Art Film Library

14. List of participants, I FIAF-Congress in New York, 1949

avant-garde French filmmaker from the 1930s. Paulo Emílio's Monography was described by François Truffaut (1932-1984) in the pages of the *Cahiers du Cinema* in 1954 as "the most beautiful book on cinema that ever passed through my hands" (Souza, 2002: 332). Paulo Emílio's writing was also praised by film critic André Bazin, who fought to see the manuscript published (Idem). Truffaut's statement in one of the most prestigious film magazines stresses the influence the work had on the Nouvelle Vague generation. On Paulo Emílio's importance for the perception of Vigo's work, film researcher Richard Peña underlines that:

One of our greatest experts on Vigo is a wonderful Brazilian writer, Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes, who published a biography of Vigo in the late fifties that was a sensation because nobody had done that caliber of work on him in France. It helped bring Vigo back to everybody's consciousness. I was talking to him one time, and he said, using somewhat Latin American terms, 'Jean Vigo was the underdeveloped French cinema.' He was obviously thinking of Brazil or Argentina, all those cinemas that seemed to have a marginal nature. Vigo was marginal French cinema. It explained a lot to me about why Paulo Emílio was so attracted to him! (Sragow, 2017)

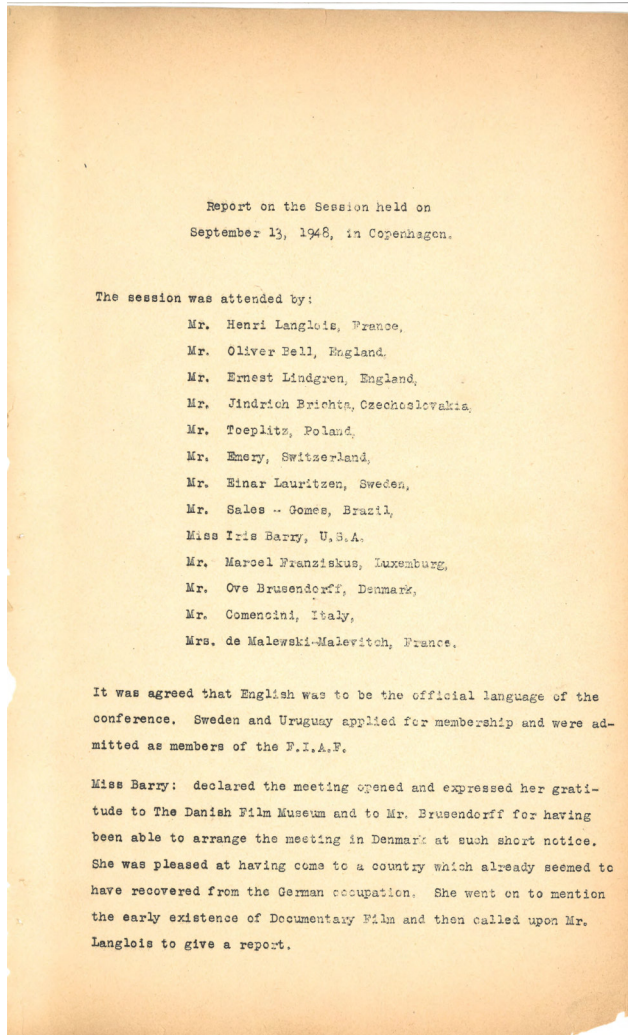
The current reconstruction of the Vigo masterpiece from 1934, *L'Atalante*, is mainly based on Paulo Emílio's detailed reconstruction research (Souza, 2002: 334-335).

the FIAF in 1948 was largely due to Paulo Emílio's personal engagement and contacts (Souza, 2002: 299-301).

The experience in France was a watershed in the life of the Brazilian critic. It was also during this period that he published his acclaimed research on French filmmaker Jean Vigo (1905-1934) and established himself as a renowned film historian, who would later foster the institutional development of university film studies in Brazil. It would not be wrong to consider him as one of the main developers of modern historical film research in the South American country, which was by then still dominated by the history of ideas perspective, grounded in Brazil's positivistic tradition. Despite its international importance, there wouldn't be a Brazilian version of Paulo Emílio's publication on Vigo until 1984 (Tavares, 2009: 230), after his death.

The book *Jean Vigo* was published in Paris in 1957 and influenced the young generation of Nouvelle Vague filmmakers, who were by then seeking to forge a tradition of their own, and helped (re)discover the

5 How Eurocentric is film research history?



15. Report on III FIAF-Congress in Copenhagen, 1948: Sweden and Uruguay's appliance for membership

63n.). It is true though that neither Paulo Emílio nor the Cinemateca Brasileira are among the founding members of the FIAF, created in a Paris meeting in 1938. Nevertheless, the



16. Austria's Filmmuseum appliance for membership at the IV FIAF-Congress in Rome, 1949

Despite belonging to Langlois' closest circle and maintaining a close friendship with both Eisner and Bazin, who were in Brazil (together with Langlois) by his invitation, Paulo Emílio was described in the most famous and recent history of the Cinématèque as "his [Langlois'] close friend, the Argentinian Sales Gomes" (son ami proche, l'Argentin Sales Gomes) (Mannoni, 2006: 297). He is mentioned only three times in the book, and other Latin American names are completely ignored. This despite the fact that the Cinemateca in São Paulo was an early member of the FIAF, like other Latin American institutions, and that Latin Americans actively participated in the debates that lead to the consolidation of the FIAF after the Second World War, as the documents of the institution's first congress, held in New York in 1939, show.⁷

Another history of the Cinémathèque takes its Eurocentric vision as far as stating that "thanks to those remote cinémathèques and on some occasions even without any real existence, Langlois could dispose of enforcement power in the assemblies of the FIAF" (Barbin, 2005: 63n.). It is true though that neither Paulo Emílio nor the Cinemateca Brasileira are among the founding members of the FIAF, created in a Paris meeting in 1938. Nevertheless, the Uruguayan Cinemateca applied for a membership along with Sweden in the IV Congress of the FIAF 1948 in Copenhagen— even before the Austrian Film museum, in 1949 in Rome.⁸

⁷ See FIAF Congresses, 1939, New York, 25-26 July 1939, Minutes of Day 1: <https://www.fiafnet.org/pages/History/Digitised-Documents.html>. Access: Nov 7, 2018.

⁸ See FIAF Congresses 1948, Copenhagen, 13-15 September 1948, Congress Report (English) and FIAF Congresses, 1949, Rome, 23-26 November 1949, Congress Report (French): <https://www.fiafnet.org/pages/History/Digitised-Documents.html>. Access: Nov 8, 2018.

Furthermore, Paulo Emílio occupied several leading positions in the FIAF from 1948 on, such as treasurer and Vice President (more than once) during the 1950s. He was the only Latin American to occupy such high administrative positions in those years. But what was the real extent of his influence and contacts and, most of all, what did he bring from this experience abroad to the later foundation of the Cinemateca Brasileira in 1956 as an independent institution (it was previously linked to the Museum of Modern Art)? Those remain unanswered questions by film historiography. This paper wishes to point out some promising leads for historical research in film. Yet Paulo Emilio was not the only influential Latin American in film history. Others were actively participating in the debates that lead to the consolidation of film culture and film museums after World War II. They also engaged newly formed institutions and, most of all, exchanged between themselves. As was happening in Europe and in the USA, many Latin-Americans also founded film institutions, collected and archived film material as a source of historical and collective memory.⁹



17. Paulo Emílio (in the middle, with a cigarette in his mouth) together with the 'elite' of filmarchives at the III FIAF-Congress in Denmark, 1948: Iris Barry (1895-1969, MoMA, in the middle of the picture), Henry Langlois (Cinémathèque Française, at the left side, with a hand on his shoulder) and Ernest Lindgren (1910-1973, British Film Institute, far behind, in front of the post)



18. Paulo Emílio (in the middle, without tie) together with (from far right to left) Rolando Fustiñana, Almeida Salles, Eugenio Hintz (in front of the carbage can), Antonio Gromponi (Cinemateca Uruguaya), Ms. Fustiñana and Julio Arteaga during the II Congress of the Latin American Session of the FIAF in São Paulo, 1956

There was even a standing Latin American session of the FIAF that held two important meetings for the region's film conservation culture: in Buenos Aires in 1955, and in São Paulo in 1956. Present at those meetings were André J. Rolando Fustiñana (1918-1999),¹⁰ founder of the Cinemateca Argentina in 1949, Jorge Angel Arteaga (1926-2017)¹¹ and Eugenio Hintz (1923-2005),¹² both of the Cinemateca Uruguay, and also Germán Puig (1928-), founder of the Cinemateca de Cuba. Other important figures of the film archival scene in Latin America are Luis Vicens (1904-1983), of the Filmoteca

⁹ It is interesting to note here that the current and most complete copy of Fritz Lang's classic *M* is based on a copy found in Argentina, and that the most prominent actor of Brazil's Vera Cruz Studios, Thomas Payne (1914-1996), was of Argentinian background, and was brought to Brazil by Cavalcanti, from his London years working with Grierson.

¹⁰ See <http://blogs.monografias.com/el-buenos-aires-que-se-fue/2014/12/19/andres-j-rolando-fustiñana-roland/> and <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/124543-roland-fue-un-destacado-critico-de-cine>. Access: Nov 8, 2018.

¹¹ See <https://www.tvshow.com.uy/musica/jorge-angel-arteaga-pilar-genero-chico.html> and <https://autores.uy/autor/13796>. Access: Nov 8, 2018.

¹² See <https://autores.uy/autor/2727>. Access: Nov 8, 2018.

Colombiana in Bogotá, the Argentinian-born Brazilian film critic Caio Scheiby - main organizer of the First Retrospective of Brazilian Cinema, in 1952, and former director of the São Paulo's MAM film collection, as well as Ruy Pereira da Silva and Antonio Moniz Vianna (1924-2009),¹³ directors of the Cinemateca for the MAM in Rio de Janeiro. Many of them were also present in the various FIAF congresses, such as the one held in Antibes, in 1957. The documents from the 1957 Congress of the Bureau International de la Recherche Historique Cinématographique (BIRHC), held in Paris, stands as an important example of how Latin Americans actively participated in historical film studies. Paulo Emílio, for instance, opened and hosted as Vice President of the FIAF and of the BIRHC this important film research history meeting, which included conferences of Rossellini (1906-1977) and of L'Herbier, as well as the presence of Siegfried Kracauer as part of the USA delegation.¹⁴



19. From left to right: future filmmaker and Cinemateca-member Gustavo Dahl (1938-2011), Caio Scheiby, Henri Langlois and Paulo Emílio at the Praça da República in São Paulo, 1962

Film historiography must stop reading Latin American film history as a mere result of European influence, and should instead approach it with a more interrelational awareness. Furthermore, Latin American intellectuals, film experts and critics were not only exchanging ideas among themselves, but also influencing film history worldwide, as the example of Paulo Emílio and his network shows. Latin American film experts were not just passive observers or importers of international developments, they were also active participants, making their own demands and (inter)acting at an international level.

6 Conclusion: Two myths in Brazilian film history

In closing, this paper would like to address the Latin American side of the cinema historiography and question in particular two myths regarding Brazilian film history.

Firstly, there is a widespread notion that a “genuine” Brazilian film culture with “national” motives dates back to the 1930s when filmmakers such as Humberto Mauro (1897-1983)¹⁵ started to depict local and rural realities.¹⁶ This was a myth that Paulo Emílio himself helped to create with his research on film maker Humberto Mauro (Salles Gomes, 1974), which was then receptioned and spread by avant-garde Cinema Novo filmmakers such as Glauber Rocha (Rocha, 2003), who were—like their European counterparts—looking to forge a tradition of their own, to be inspired within their quest for a politically engaged “third world cinema”.

¹³ For more information on Vianna, see <https://www.companhiadasletras.com.br/autor.php?codigo=02064> and <https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/caderno-g/morre-critico-de-cinema-antonio-moniz-vianna-behpuemk8x7zx2uk7l26o2atq/>. Access: Nov 11, 2018.

¹⁴ See FIAF Congresses 1957, Paris, October-7 November 1957 (part II, B.I.R.H.C. Congress), Decisions of the Congress (French), pp. 1-3 and 8: <https://www.fiafnet.org/pages/History/Digitised-Documents.html>. Access: Nov 8, 2018.

¹⁵ For more information on Humberto Mauro, see Schwarzman, 2004.

¹⁶ For more details on this aspect of Mauro's film making, see Morettin, 2013.

Contrary to this view, this work argued that so-called “Brazilian” cinema has always been internationally connected and was also following worldwide trends and esthetical developments, especially in Europe and the USA. Furthermore, there was an intense exchange of ideas inside Latin America, which has not been properly analyzed by film historiography.

The example of Cavalcanti’s trajectory, as well as that of Edgard Brazil, Mario Peixoto and Orson Welles, together with the scope of Paulo Emílio’s intellectual film network and his relevance to transnational institutions such as the FIAF shows that Brazilian filmmakers and film specialists were, from the very beginning of film culture, participating in the debates, in the technical and esthetic developments of film history. They also acted through various transatlantic networks that lay behind circulation of technical know-how and of film culture itself.

Secondly, there is a sort of idealization regarding the figure of Paulo Emílio in the Brazilian film critique scene/film history, which is reproduced in filmic literature, as if he played a solar role in film research in Brazil. This specialized bibliography frequently ignores that there was a whole ambience and film culture in Brazil and Latin America that enabled the existence of Paulo Emílio and the development of his efforts. The film bibliography is too São Paulo centered, and mainly written by ex-students of Paulo Emílio. There is a lack of approaches that investigate film history in a more intellectual and cultural historical approach, stressing contact and exchange networks. Documents show that other cities in Brazil and Latin America also had a vivid film culture and were also engaged in vast exchange processes. Nevertheless, Paulo Emílio’s pioneering role, and especially his network, are paradigmatic examples of this global circulation and intertwined history of film. It is important, though, not to idealize his importance and to grasp his connections worldwide.

On the European side, the problem regarding Latin American cultural and film history in general is clear: it is still too Eurocentric and much focused on notions of ‘influence’, ‘transfer’ and ‘import’. At the same time, little is said about interrelations, exchanges, multiple influences, and entangled trajectories. Although there were asymmetric relations, specifically regarding (the distribution of) technical capacities and resources, with several local/national (political) particularities that have to be considered in every historical analysis. Those differences are especially visible from the standpoint of transnational circulations in film culture.

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