

# Introduction

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## **The proliferating histories of screen stardom**

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Stars and film industries centred on stars have been an important strand in the study and criticism of cinema. As early as the 1920s, theorists including Rudolf Arnheim, Béla Balázs, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin discussed the significance of personae, images and iconic stars such as Charles Chaplin and Greta Garbo, and their integral function within the interconnecting aesthetic, social and affective systems that the new mass medium of cinema represented.<sup>1</sup> Following the consolidation of Hollywood as an industry and as a popular art form in the 1930s and 1940s, the seemingly universal appeal of stars caught the attention of, among others, anthropologists such as Hortense Powdermaker,<sup>2</sup> sociologists such as Edgar Morin<sup>3</sup> and semioticians such as Roland Barthes.<sup>4</sup> Within the nascent academic discipline of film studies in the 1970s, Richard Dyer's groundbreaking book *Stars* (first published in 1979) mapped a field and methodology – or rather a set of methodologies – for the analysis of stars as a simultaneously aesthetic and social phenomenon of modern culture.<sup>5</sup> Dyer's text inaugurated a rich seam of scholarship that has gone from strength to strength in the last few decades and that shows no sign of abating today if the sheer number of publications is anything to go by.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, while many of Dyer's original observations and definitions still hold true today, there have been a number of developments in the field and in the actual cultural presence and social function of stars in the decades since the late 1970s that have taken star studies in new directions, with new priorities, new contexts and new parameters.

Early star studies tended to assume a homology between the terms 'star' and Hollywood. Stars were seen as a key feature of the Hollywood system

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that distinguished it from other film cultures, which were seen to place greater emphasis on the notion of the director as *auteur*, or which championed ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ protagonists over and above ‘artificial’ star creations. Moreover, Hollywood, aided by the industry’s economic might, has often been perceived as the only truly popular cinema with a near-universal reach during the twentieth century. By contrast, most other cinemas have been seen to exist in a precarious state where the ‘authentic’ national culture is by definition an endangered, repressed niche, and the indigenous market is under perpetual threat of colonization by Hollywood. With such a dualistic perspective on Hollywood and the rest of world cinema, the investigation or even acknowledgement of stars outside Hollywood remained off the agenda for a long time.

From the late 1980s onwards, however, the notion that stars were by and large a Hollywood phenomenon was increasingly challenged as part of a new trend in national film histories, which were keen to rediscover and re-evaluate home-grown popular genres, traditions and performers. In previous accounts, these domestic popular cinemas had been dismissed at best as irrelevant and marginal, at worst as inauthentic copies of Hollywood that needed to be overcome by a more enlightened and politically committed form of *auteurist* art cinema. In the new national film histories, by contrast, popular genres and stars are reassessed as legitimate and indeed typical expressions of a particular film culture, and a fertile ground for studying local identities. As a result of these interventions, the field of star studies has expanded considerably, and has led to a rich stream of publications on stars from a variety of contexts.<sup>7</sup>

While the last few decades have seen an increasing move away from the hegemony of Hollywood stardom towards a more global and international understanding of the phenomenon, there has also been a shift from a focus on stardom that is exclusively associated with cinema towards an acknowledgement that stars regularly cross media boundaries between film and television, the music industry, sports and other entertainment fields, and sometimes exist as ‘celebrities’ autonomous from any presence in a specific medium or from traditional notions of performative ability or ‘talent’. Of course, this phenomenon is not new; throughout the twentieth century many star performers traversed media boundaries, especially (but not exclusively) between the cinema, the stage, the music industry and, from the middle of the century onwards, television. Nevertheless, in an era of heightened media convergence since the 2000s,<sup>8</sup> the idea of the star as a ‘brand’ and ‘franchise’ that can travel and translates easily across national as

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well as media boundaries has gained renewed currency. Addressing this trend, Paul McDonald has noted that in the wake of Dyer's *Stars*, many analyses were invested primarily in uncovering the symbolic function of stars within a particular cultural and social regime. But while McDonald concedes that 'stars are texts, meaning, images and culture', they are also at the same time economic and commercial entities, and this function has, if anything, gained in importance and priority over the past decades.<sup>9</sup>

In this edited volume, our aim is to trace the history of stardom in Brazilian cinema along the parameters of star studies as a discipline that we have mapped above. Many of the issues that have concerned scholars of stardom elsewhere we find replicated in the Brazilian case study: the uneasy and often unequal relationship between home-grown forms of popular cinematic culture versus the economic might of Hollywood distribution and the appeal of North American stars; the balance between genuinely original domestic stars and genres on the one hand and strategies of cultural appropriation and imitation on the other; the way in which cinema, especially in the early decades of the twentieth century, became a motor for modernity itself; the multiple forms by which popular cinematic stardom becomes a vector for prevailing and changing attitudes concerning gender, class, race, sexuality and national self-definition; and finally the cross- and inter-medial connections within star trajectories that relate back to the permeability of media industries and art forms throughout film history. However, before we detail the specific structure of the book and the content of individual chapters, let us first trace the development of stardom in Brazil in broad outlines.

### **Early film stardom in Brazil**

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Following Robert Stam's groundbreaking study *Tropical Multiculturalism*,<sup>10</sup> as with everything else in Brazilian cinema and culture more widely, the notion of stardom cannot be extricated from the question of race relations. The evolution of dominant discourses concerning the country's racial self-definition can be traced – literally – in the faces of its film stars. It is important to remember that the beginnings of cinema in Brazil occurred less than a decade after the abolition of slavery in 1888, and thus local film production took shape in a post-abolition climate in which deep-rooted prejudice and discrimination against Afro-Brazilians persisted. Forced labour was replaced by the employment of white immigrants

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from Europe, and the ruling elite saw this shift as a means of modernizing as well as ‘whitening’ the population. Former slaves and their black and mixed-race descendants were deemed unsuitable to contribute to the construction of a civilized and forward-looking First Republic (1889–1930). A domestic film industry and a national audience of consumers were seen as central aspirations in the construction of modernity in Brazil, and the new republic used cinema to promote an ideal of Brazil that was cosmopolitan, urban and white.

During the so-called *belle époque* of Brazilian cinema, which began in 1906 and came to an abrupt halt in 1912 as Hollywood asserted its might and flooded the Brazilian market, fiction films superseded the short non-fiction films that had been representative of the earliest attempts at domestic production. Nationally specific genres began to emerge, such as *filmes policiais* (‘police films’), based on real-life crimes; *filmes cantados* (‘sung films’) – musical comedies which involved performers singing live behind the screen in the cinema theatre; and *filmes de revista* – musical revues related to Brazil’s vaudeville tradition known as the *teatro de revista*. The period between 1911 and 1926 saw a spate of film adaptations of Brazilian literary texts, such as the novels of José de Alencar (1829–77). The stars of these various genres were largely drawn from other forms of popular entertainment, such as the circus, popular music and the *teatro de revista*. The comedy *Nhô Anastácio chegou de viagem* (Mr. Anastácio Returned from a Trip, 1908), for example, starred singer and acrobat José Gonçalves Leonardo in the lead role, and one of the most successful *filmes cantados*, the light-hearted political satire *Paz e Amor* (Peace and Love, 1910), starred well-known singer Antonio Cataldi. It was the *teatro de revista*, in particular, that provided a training ground for the first stars of the silent and early sound eras, including the actor and singer Augusto Aníbal (1887–1965), director-actor Procópio Ferreira (1898–1979), the Portuguese-born comic Mesquitinha (1902–56), singer Barbosa Júnior (1910–65), the Spanish-born comedian Oscarito (1906–70), Afro-Brazilian comic Grande Otelo (1917–93) and the diminutive comedienne Dercy Gonçalves (1907–2008).

European immigrants were prominent on both sides of the camera in the silent era. Italian-born Vittorio Capellaro (1877–1943), for example, directed and starred in six literary adaptations between 1915 and 1926. A European physiognomy provided a passport to screen stardom, whereas Afro-Brazilian faces were conspicuous by their absence.<sup>11</sup> One notable exception was Benjamin de Oliveira (1870–1954), a clown in the Spinelli circus who belonged to a tradition called *circo-teatro*.<sup>12</sup> He starred as an Amerindian character in *Os guaranis* (The Guarani

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Indians, 1908),<sup>13</sup> a film he also directed and which was based on a circus show he had starred in.<sup>14</sup> Credited as being the first black film actor in Brazilian cinema, tellingly, Oliveira's career was brief, and he appeared in just two more films in minor roles in the sound era.<sup>15</sup> Until the 1960s, the one exception that proved the rule regarding the hegemony of white stars within Brazilian cinema, and the concomitant exclusion of Afro-Brazilian faces, was *Grande Otelo* (literally 'Big Othello', the stage name of Sebastião Bernardes de Souza Prata; see Chapter 6 in this volume). In spite of the racism that implicitly underpinned official discourse, and which in turn impacted on the cinema, the myth of Brazil as a racial democracy was paradoxically perpetuated by the white elite, largely as an either explicit or implicit strategy to downplay the country's traumatic legacy of slavery. The best-known defence of Brazil's history as characterized by essentially harmonious race relations was anthropologist Gilberto Freyre's pseudo-sociological study *Casa grande e senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves, 1933), but even earlier than that the abolitionist politician Joaquim Nabuco had compared Brazil to other slave economies in favourable terms. Beneath such rhetorical veneer, however, a racist press regularly whipped up anxieties over a black polluting menace throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, and the structuring absence of black characters and actors in Brazilian films during the silent era is an obvious reflection of such discourse.

Sound technology arrived in Brazilian cinema at a time of dramatic political and social change. The first commercially successful talkie, *Coisas nossas* (Our Things, 1931), produced and directed by US record company executive Wallace Downey, consolidated the interaction between film and popular music in Brazil, with the recording industry and radio providing the film industry with ready-made stars throughout the 1930s. Under the regime of President Getúlio Vargas (1930–45), nationalism was placed firmly at the top of the political agenda, and in spite of the involvement of North American expertise and capital, *Coisas nossas* was heralded in the press as a patriotic triumph. Vargas sought to create a sense of national belonging through the seemingly inclusive ideology of *brasildade* or 'Brazilianness', which eschewed any acknowledgement of the country's racial, ethnic and class differences. Popular culture played a key role in fostering *brasildade*, particularly popular music, many of whose stars crossed over into cinema. The Afro-Brazilian origins of popular cultural forms such as samba were deliberately downplayed, leading to the emergence and promotion of white performers, such as the highly successful Carmen Miranda (1909–55), whose image could be

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applauded equally by the upper, middle and lower classes,<sup>16</sup> and who effortlessly made the transition from the recording studios and radio to the film industry (see Chapter 4). Coinciding with the rise of white stars during the Vargas era, Grande Otelo, in contrast, became Brazil's single acceptable black face, chosen to represent Afro-Brazilians at official functions attended by the president as 'evidence' of the mythical racial democracy that was taking shape within nationalist rhetoric. Otelo's face stands out from the crowd in official photos of such events, and it is revealing that he was afforded little coverage in Brazilian film magazines, his racial origins evidently rendering him unsuitable as star material within the overall vision such publications disseminated of the national star system.

Most of the early sound films were musicals that drew on the tradition of documentary films about the Rio de Janeiro carnival that dated from the silent era, but also on the template of the Hollywood 'backstage' musical. If the first generation of film stars in Brazil were 'crossover' performers from the *teatro de revista*, the circus, the record industry and the radio, this changed in the 1940s with the foundation of the Atlântida studios in Rio de Janeiro, which was explicitly modelled on the Hollywood studio system. Like its North American counterparts, Atlântida had a roster of stars under exclusive contract. Some of these performers, such as Oscarito and Grande Otelo, emerged from other sectors of popular entertainment. However, the majority had no prior show business experience and made their debut on screen, such as Eliana Macedo (1926–90; see Chapter 5), the 'girl next door' of countless Atlântida productions who personified the Hollywood-inspired ideal of pale-skinned beauty. Emulating the narrative of Hollywood's star 'discoveries', Macedo's talent was apparently first spotted by her uncle, the filmmaker Watson Macedo. Atlântida dominated film production in Brazil in the 1940s and 1950s, and constituted the most overt attempt to adopt a North American model of a star system in Brazil. Nevertheless, previous initiatives had already borrowed strategies from Hollywood in promoting home-grown stars since the 1920s, very often with the aid of the Brazilian press.

### **The creation of the Brazilian star system in the popular press**

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As we have noted above, Hollywood occupied a dominant position in the Brazilian film market since the early decades of the twentieth century, and its hegemony extended not only to the kinds of films in exhibition, but also to the popular

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appeal that Hollywood productions and stars enjoyed among Brazilian audiences. It is therefore not surprising that from the 1920s onwards, Hollywood provided the blueprint for Brazil's nascent star system. A host of copycat film magazines emerged that were instrumental in fostering a sense of a fledgling film industry to which the creation of domestic stars was central. Ironically, at a time when the ubiquity of Hollywood products meant that Brazilian stars rarely appeared on screen, publications like *Para Todos* (1918–26), *A Cena Muda* (1921–55) and *Cinearte* (1926–42) set out to give the impression of a thriving vernacular film culture. It has been estimated that in its heyday the magazine *Cinearte* was read by 100,000 people from across Brazil and therefore played an unprecedented role in shaping the public's perceptions and expectations in relation to screen icons.<sup>17</sup> These popular publications, in line both with the template provided by US magazines such as *Photoplay* or *The Moving Picture World* and with hegemonic discourses of racial identity in Brazil, promoted ideals of white 'European' beauty and photogeneity for both male and female stars. In the silent era Brazil's first screen actresses were fashioned in the style of their Hollywood counterparts, with whom they were directly compared. Tellingly, English terms were adopted by Brazilian journalists for classifying acceptable types of screen actress, who had 'it', 'sex appeal' or 'spleen', for example, and who covered the gamut of roles from 'vamp' to 'ingénue'.<sup>18</sup> Concessions were made to Brazil's patriarchal traditions and Catholic conservatism, however, with the press attenuating the risqué connotations of the 'star texts' of actresses who played vamps on screen. The tacit tenets of Brazil's racial hierarchy, historically underpinned by the 'whitening' ideal, were central to the aesthetics of the country's star system, and it was no coincidence that an article in *Cinearte* in 1929 stated:

*Making quality films in Brazil must involve purifying our reality, by selecting aspects that deserve to be shown on screen: progress, works of modern engineering, our beautiful white people, our natural wonders. No documentaries, since you cannot totally control what is shown and undesirable elements can infiltrate them; we need a studio-made cinema, like the North American model, with well-decorated interiors featuring agreeable people.*<sup>19</sup>

The role of film magazines in the creation and maintenance of a local star system endured into the 1950s, when magazines dedicated to the world of film (*Cinelândia*; *Filmelândia*), as well as those of the radio and popular music

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(*Radiolândia; Revista do Rádio*), continued to appeal to a wide readership. Like its predecessors, *Cinelândia* targeted female readers, as is revealed by the predominance of adverts for beauty products and articles on the beauty tips of Hollywood stars. The magazine encouraged its readers to 'buy into' the star system through various means of participation, such as by sending fan letters to the magazine (which were prominently published in its pages) or even becoming film stars themselves by entering the 'Miss Cinelândia' beauty contest. As early as 1928, a 'Contest for Female and Male Photogenic Beauty' was held in Brazil, which enticed would-be stars with the first prize of a contract with Fox studios in Hollywood.<sup>20</sup> Modelling itself on the 'search for a star' competitions organized by major Hollywood studios, and emulated throughout the world, the 'Miss Cinelândia' contest offered readers the opportunity to win a contract with the Atlântida studios to appear in at least one feature film. Entry coupons were printed in the magazine, and it was clear that the judges were looking for a pale-skinned brand of 'Hollywood' beauty, with the coupon requiring that entrants described their 'tez' or complexion, as well as sending in two photographs.

### **Stardom since the 1960s**

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The left-wing, avant-garde *Cinema Novo* movement that emerged in the early 1960s constituted a backlash against the very idea of stardom. With its links to Italian neo-realism and the French *Nouvelle Vague*, the movement emerged as a reaction to and critique of Hollywood production methods, and explicitly condemned the efforts of Brazilian studios, such as Vera Cruz in São Paulo and Atlântida in Rio de Janeiro, in attempting to emulate the Hollywood star system. In its first phase (1961–64) in particular, *Cinema Novo* championed the use of hand-held cameras, location shooting and the casting of non-professional actors as an aesthetic strategy that aimed to develop a cinematic language better suited to the realities of life in Brazil. *Cinema Novo* was not a film culture centred on stars, but a cinema of *auteurs*, and it was the filmmakers themselves – young, politically committed and controversial – who became the icons of the movement, particularly Glauber Rocha, the creator of the classic *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (Black God, White Devil, 1964). Yet despite the pre-eminence of the director within the ethos of *Cinema Novo*, the movement did foster the career of some iconic performers, for example Othon Bastos, the lead in several films

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directed by Rocha and Ruy Guerra. After a military coup in 1964, and even more so following the ‘coup within the coup’ of 1968, which introduced strict censorship and persecuted left-wing intellectuals, some *Cinema Novo* auteurs began to move away from the so-called ‘aesthetics of hunger’ in search of reaching a wider public. As a result, later productions made use of recognizable performers, not least one of the veterans from the popular cinema of the 1940s and 1950s, Grande Otelo, who became the indisputable ‘star’ of Joaquim Pedro de Andrade’s 1969 film *Macunaíma* (see Chapter 6) – not coincidentally one of the few examples of *Cinema Novo* to have made a significant impact at the box office.

In the 1960s a more commercially oriented cinema adapted the work of two of Brazil’s most successful playwrights, Nelson Rodrigues and Dias Gomes, creating films that featured well-known stars in their casts. These included Jeca Valadão (1930–2006; see Chapter 9), who played the eponymous hero of Nelson Pereira dos Santos’s film *Boca de Ouro* (Gold Mouth, 1963), and Anselmo Duarte (1920–2009), the leading man of many of the Atlântida *chanchadas* of the 1950s, who took the lead role in the highly acclaimed adaptation of Dias Gomes’s hit play *O pagador de promessas* (The Given Word, 1962), which also featured an appearance by Othon Bastos. The prominent use of stars continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s, most notably in showcases for the comedian Amácio Mazzaropi (1912–81) and the comedy quartet Os Trapalhães.<sup>21</sup> Before establishing his own production company in 1958, Mazzaropi had been a well-known radio star, and had worked in television from its inception in the early 1950s.<sup>22</sup> His film stardom drew on his acute understanding of the expectations of his audience, who were invited to identify with his character Jeca, the comic *caipira* or country bumpkin that he embodied in countless films. Television exposure was also an important factor in the success of the Trapalhães – a comedy foursome that made twenty-one films from the 1970s until the death of two of its members in the early 1990s.<sup>23</sup> They debuted on the TV Excelsior channel in São Paulo in 1966, and subsequently had a show on TV Record, before making a highly lucrative move to TV Globo in 1977, which led to saturation advertising of the biannual release of their films – primarily aimed at children and teenagers – and the production of comic books, toys and a children’s clothing line.<sup>24</sup>

Crossover stardom between television and the cinema has been a defining feature of audiovisual culture in Brazil since the 1970s, and is perhaps best exemplified by the popular children’s entertainer, Xuxa (born 1963; see Chapter 11), who has enjoyed outstanding box office success since the 1990s. Since its creation

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in 1997, Globo Filmes, the film production wing of Brazil's most powerful media conglomerate, has adopted a highly effective strategy of using casts with an established track record in TV Globo programmes, not least the all-pervasive *telenovelas* or soap operas. As Ben Hoff documents in Chapter 13 in relation to Lázaro Ramos (born 1978), contemporary actors move freely between films and popular television, and their recognizability and popularity among a wide audience undoubtedly contributes to the success of the films in which they appear. For example, in 2013 the ten highest-grossing Brazilian films were co-productions involving Globo Filmes and featuring stars who are well known to television audiences. Thanks to his visibility in *telenovelas* and recent Globo Filmes productions, as well as in international breakthrough hits, Lázaro Ramos is probably the most easily identifiable Afro-Brazilian actor today, rivalled only by the crossover popular music star Seu Jorge (born 1970; discussed in Chapter 14), who played the character of Mané Galinha/Knockout Ned in the film *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*, 2002), and who also wrote and performed songs for the film's soundtrack. However, in a country where an estimated 50% of the population have African ancestry, Afro-Brazilian stars are still overwhelmingly outnumbered by their white counterparts.

This being said, with the so-called *retomada* or renaissance of Brazilian cinema from the mid 1990s onwards, stimulated by tax incentives for film producers, a growing trend for films that depict life in Brazil's urban margins has given increased exposure to Afro-Brazilian characters and performers, and has given rise to a new generation of black and mixed-race stars. The internationally successful *City of God*, in particular, famously recruited the majority of its cast from among the real-life inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* or shantytowns, to endow the film with a heightened sense of verisimilitude but also out of necessity, since as the film's director Fernando Meirelles explained, there were simply not enough professional actors of Afro-Brazilian origin in Brazil. This use of 'natural' or non-professional actors in combination with more established performers has been a defining characteristic of recent film production in Brazil, and this leads to further interrogations of the phenomenon of stardom in domestic cinema (see Chapter 12).

### **Star studies in the Brazilian context**

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As we have noted at the beginning of this introduction, national film histories have often focused more on the achievements of artistic movements and

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outstanding *auteurs* (such as *Cinema Novo* and Glauber Rocha, respectively, in the Brazilian case) than on the popular appeal of local genres and stars. Indeed, until recently, the study of stardom in Brazil tended to take the form of biographical accounts of a small number of iconic popular performers, such as Carmen Miranda and Grande Otelo, and these comprise publications that typically combine popular appeal with varying degrees of academic rigour. In recent years, more serious scholarship has appeared on figures such as Mazzaropi, Zé do Caixão/Coffin Joe, Grande Otelo and Oscarito,<sup>25</sup> filling gaps in an otherwise patchy bibliography.<sup>26</sup> However, apart from the work on Coffin Joe (see Chapter 10 in this volume), one area that has been relatively ignored, both in Brazil and elsewhere (and is also an acknowledged gap in this volume), relates to the Brazilian exploitation cinema of the 1970s, often dismissed under the term *pornochanchada*. In his pioneering study *Boca do lixo*, Nuno Cesar Abreu has demonstrated how crucially this popular and for a while dominant genre depended on the appeal of female star performers, some of whom are remembered and recognized to this very day.<sup>27</sup> Yet in terms of scholarly investigation, many of these stars and indeed the whole period of the *pornochanchada* await closer investigation. By contrast, the female stars of early cinema have fared comparatively well in terms of scholarly attention, with Carmen Santos (1904–52) being the subject of a book-length study,<sup>28</sup> and the publication of an edited volume dedicated to the muses of the silent screen, *Quase catálogo 3: Estrelas do cinema mudo Brasil, 1908–1930*.<sup>29</sup>

The area of Brazilian stardom that has received the most sustained and rigorous critical attention has been the role played by the film press in fostering a star system in the 1930s, most notably Ismail Xavier's groundbreaking analysis of the magazine *Cinearte*.<sup>30</sup> However, texts that adopt a thematic rather than biographical approach are still relatively few in number, although they include the important study of black actors in Brazilian cinema by João Carlos Rodrigues, *O negro brasileiro e o cinema*, first published in 1988.<sup>31</sup> A useful source of biographical information on Brazilian film stars from all periods in the nation's film history can be found in a range of well-researched encyclopaedic and reference works, particularly the *Enciclopédia do cinema brasileiro* published in 2000.<sup>32</sup> In addition, an extensively illustrated three-volume series, from the São Paulo-based Fraiha publishing house, is dedicated to the major names of the history of Brazilian cinema, both behind and in front of the cameras, between 1930 and the end of the 1970s.<sup>33</sup>

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### ***Stars and Stardom in Brazilian Cinema***

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The chapters in this volume are organized chronologically, so that through individual case studies a progressive trajectory and history of the phenomenon of stardom in Brazilian cinema can emerge. Maite Conde's chapter examines Brazilian stardom of the 1920s, focusing on a young generation of female stars that emerged during this decade. Conde traces the elaboration of this early star system in the context of a vibrant urban consumer culture, one that depended on women as workers and as consumers. Her chapter is centred on two intersecting lines of enquiry. Firstly, it explores the ways in which the development of female star texts was inextricably and complexly related to an urban mass culture that emerged in early twentieth-century Brazil, placing it in the context of the country's reorientation to a new context of global capitalism that emerged post-World War One. Conde highlights stardom's dialogue with the figure of the *melindrosa*, Brazil's version of the 'New Woman'. Secondly, the chapter locates the complex and contradictory embodiment of female stars within discussions concerning the development of Brazilian cinema itself, more specifically the postwar desire to construct a national film industry.

Luciana Corrêa de Araújo's chapter considers the star system in relation to the cinema made in the city of Recife, in the state of Pernambuco in the northeast of Brazil, in the 1920s, a period of significant local film production. Her chapter focuses on the role of the press in the construction of a local star system, but also analyses the latter in relation to its creators (actors, directors, technical crew), the majority of whom embarked on filmmaking as a result of being dazzled by North American films and their stars.

Carmen Santos, the subject of Ana Pessoa's chapter, was one of the biggest stars of Brazilian cinema in the 1920s, but also an influential producer, raising questions about the relationship between stardom and authorship, and about the role of women's active contribution to the national film canon. Pessoa draws attention to Santos's deliberate strategies at the beginning of her career to establish a star persona and indeed a 'brand' for herself at a time when she had barely made any inroad into the film world; in this respect Santos's emerging star image was more a virtual one fostered by the press than based on actual screen performances. As other chapters in this volume demonstrate, the sometimes significant discrepancy between star aspiration and actual cinematic presence became a recurring feature in the history of Brazilian stardom.

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Ana Rita Mendonça and Lisa Shaw's chapter discusses Brazilian cinema's most prominent star export, Carmen Miranda, whose career in Brazil and later in Hollywood made her arguably the most famous Brazilian across the globe during the twentieth century, apart from sporting heroes such as Pelé, or a handful of internationally acclaimed musicians. In addition to mapping Miranda's transnational career, this chapter also discusses how her almost mythical persona and image could serve very different ideological functions, from the *brasilidade* of the Vargas regime, to the 'Good Neighbour Policy' adopted by the United States towards its Latin American neighbours, and including the aesthetically syncretic and politically progressive ethos of the 'Tropicália' movement of the 1960s.

Lisa Shaw's chapter notes the importance of the magazine *Cinelândia* in fostering a national debate about stardom in the 1950s. Through borrowing the techniques and features of US templates in constructing star discourse, the magazine included reviews of Brazilian and Hollywood films, film stills and publicity shots of stars. Although Hollywood provided most of the material for *Cinelândia* magazine, as with earlier Brazilian publications of this type, the stars of the Brazilian *chanchada* (a commercially successful tradition of musical comedies) were afforded equal status to their Hollywood counterparts, and imported star discourses were modified to suit local sensibilities. Shaw examines a number of specific campaigns, such as the organizing and promoting of a beauty contest designed to 'discover' and launch the careers of future screen stars.

If Carmen Miranda is the quintessential representative of Brazilian cinema in the wider world, then within Brazil itself, the double act of Oscarito and Grande Otelo, discussed in the chapter by João Luiz Vieira and Leonardo Côrtes Macario, occupies perhaps the most central role. As outlined above, Grande Otelo's position within the industry and on screen was both unique and remarkable, as was his shift from the popular cinema of his early career to the *auteur* productions in which he starred in his final decades. Both Otelo and Oscarito, however, also epitomize Brazilian cinema's indebtedness to other cultural forms and media, including the circus and radio.

Ana Carolina de Moura Delfim Maciel's chapter recalls the career of Eliane Lage, the biggest star associated with the Vera Cruz film studio during its short-lived history from the late 1940s to the mid 1950s. Drawing on a number of definitions of stardom (by Morin, Maurois and Barthes), Maciel documents how

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Lage's image was moulded by the studio's press department, fostering a persona that denied the importance of cinema and preferred a life in the countryside to the glamour of the spotlight, leading to comparisons with Greta Garbo and Ingrid Bergman, in particular. However, unlike Hollywood actresses who remained in the audience's imagination for decades, without the continued support of a dedicated means of star promotion, Lage's legacy has been largely forgotten and today consists of faint signs and traces that highlight absence, the passage of time and broken dreams.

Luís Alberto Rocha Melo's chapter adopts a somewhat different approach to most of the other contributors in that his case study concerns a screenwriter, Alinor Azevedo (1913–74), and the latter's script for the musical comedy *Tudo azul* (It's All Right, 1952). Azevedo was one of the founders of the Atlântida studios in 1941 and one of the most active professionals within Brazilian cinema between 1940 and 1950. However, what makes this chapter relevant to the concerns of this book is the way in which *Tudo azul* represents a critique of the star system in terms of plot and formal structure. In this respect it sheds an important light on the perception and understanding of the phenomenon of stardom at this particular point in time.

Rafael de Luna Freire's chapter concerns Jece Valadão, one of the leading actors in Brazilian cinema during the 1960s and 1970s. It investigates Valadão's image as the small-time crook or *cafajeste* (from the title of one of his most celebrated and controversial films) and tracks his highly successful career from his beginnings as a radio actor in the late 1940s through to his appearance in acknowledged classics such as Nelson Pereira dos Santos's *Rio, 40 graus* (Rio, 40 Degrees, 1954).

Whereas many of the stars discussed in the previous chapters are associated with either the mainstream Brazilian film industry and established popular genres, such as the *chanchada*, or alternatively the avant-garde *auteur* cinema of *Cinema Novo*, the career of José Mojica Marins or Coffin Joe, the subject of Laura Loguercio Cánepa's chapter, is more idiosyncratic and occupies the margins of official film culture in Brazil on various levels. As the lead actor, director, writer and producer of his own films, Mojica Marins is both star and *auteur*, while his horror films have challenged over various decades the borderlines of respectability and social norms. Nevertheless, the unique persona of Coffin Joe represents in interesting ways how a seemingly foreign genre, horror, becomes rearticulated and transformed according to a typically Brazilian perspective.

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Stephanie Dennison's chapter analyses the preference within Brazilian cinema and television for blonde performers with a European phenotype, and how such stars are represented in contrast to more ethnically mixed or dark-skinned actresses. Concentrating on successful blonde stars Xuxa and Vera Fischer, and bringing in Sônia Braga as a comparison, Dennison illustrates how much the question of race continues to haunt contemporary Brazilian media, and how this also inflects representations of gender.

Charlotte Gleghorn's chapter problematizes traditional definitions of stardom by looking at the way Brazilian cinema has used non-professional actors, who in the wake of their on-screen success have experienced rather mixed destinies. Films such as *Pixote: a lei do mais fraco* (*Pixote, the Law of the Weakest*, Babenco, 1980), *Central do Brasil* (*Central Station*, Salles, 1998), *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*, Meirelles and Lund, 2002) and *Linha de passe* (Salles and Thomas, 2008) have juxtaposed performances by non-professional children with those of established adult actors. Drawing on press articles, interviews and the films themselves, Gleghorn suggests how the on-screen and off-screen personas of non-professional actors contribute to broader debates regarding authenticity and realism.

Ben Hoff's chapter discusses Lázaro Ramos, one of the most successful black actors of the last two decades, and a star who effortlessly crosses the boundaries between the media of television and cinema, and between popular genres and edgy art-house cinema. The focus of Hoff's analysis is in particular how the films in which Ramos appears negotiate the contentious subject of interracial love (both homosexual and heterosexual), and also how Ramos's star persona is primarily defined through his physical attributes.

Katia Augusta Maciel's chapter analyses the cross-media stardom of Seu Jorge, who since the 2000s has become an internationally acclaimed singer, and has also carved out a niche for himself as an actor in films such as *City of God* and Wes Anderson's *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004). For Maciel, Seu Jorge represents the quintessential case study of a star marked by a new era of media convergence, where the star's fame and connection with his fans is negotiated through a variety of different channels.

In the final chapter of this volume, Daniel O'Brien brings the trajectory of Brazilian stars and stardom up to the present day with a study of the career (to date) of Rodrigo Santoro. Arguably the most prominent Brazilian actor to make his name in Hollywood since Carmen Miranda's heyday in the 1940s, Santoro

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has not managed to transform his on-screen persona into the kind of iconic representation of ‘Brazilianness’ that Miranda achieved (albeit at the expense of becoming something of a caricature). Instead he seems to have taken on the image of a more undefined foreigner, demonstrating that even today Hollywood stardom finds it difficult to accommodate non-Anglo-Saxon stars.

To conclude, then, this volume aims to contribute to ongoing debates surrounding the phenomenon of stardom and its ever-shifting characteristics, as well as to the increasingly nuanced global scholarship on this subject, by exploring from a wide variety of angles a specific national context over the span of a century. Our aim is to break fresh ground by foregrounding the centrality of stardom to Brazilian film culture and to extend the hitherto scant bibliography on this aspect of the nation’s cinema. While we acknowledge the extent to which Hollywood has provided an enduring model, we seek to illustrate the importance of cultural specificity and diachronic shifts in the understanding of star texts and how they are created.

## Notes

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1. See Sabine Hake, *The Cinema’s Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany, 1907–1933* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
  2. Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950).
  3. Edgar Morin, *Les Stars* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957).
  4. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957).
  5. Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute [BFI], 1979).
  6. A comprehensive bibliography would be impossible here; indicative titles include: Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: BFI/Macmillan, 1987); Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1991); Jeremy Butler, *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991); Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London: Routledge, 1994); Paul McDonald, *The Star System: Hollywood’s Production of Popular Identities* (London: Wallflower Press, 2000); Thomas Austin and Martin Barker, *Contemporary Hollywood Stardom* (London: Arnold, 2003); Lucy Fisher and Marcia Landy (eds), *Stars: The Film Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004); Andy Willis (ed.), *Film Stars: Hollywood and Beyond* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Martin Shingler, *Star Studies: A Critical Guide* (London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
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7. Indicative titles include Joanne Hershfield, *Mexican Cinema, Mexican Women* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996); Bruce Babington, *British Stars and Stardom* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire* (London: Routledge, 2002); Chris Perriam, *Stars and Masculinities in Spanish Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Guy Austin, *Stars in Modern French Film* (London: Arnold, 2005); Tytti Soila (ed.), *Stellar Encounters: Stardom in Popular European Cinema* (New Barnet, Herts: John Libbey, 2009); Mary Farquhar and Yingzhing Zhang (eds), *Chinese Film Stars* (London: Routledge, 2010); Carolina Rocha, *Masculinities in Contemporary Argentine Popular Cinema* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Russell Meeuf and Raphael Raphael (eds), *Transnational Stardom: International Celebrity in Film and Popular Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Leung Wing-Fai and Andy Willis (eds), *East Asian Film Stars* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
8. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).
9. Paul McDonald, *Hollywood Stardom* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 4–5.
10. Robert Stam, *Tropical Multiculturalism: A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).
11. See Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (London: Routledge, 1997).
12. The *circo-teatro* combined sketch shows and short plays with musical performances and more conventional circus acts. For more details on this tradition and its links with cinema in Brazil, see Stephanie Dennison and Lisa Shaw, *Popular Cinema in Brazil, 1930–2001* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 13–16.
13. Based on a novel by José de Alencar.
14. Oliveira and fellow Afro-Brazilian Eduardo das Neves are the two most famous examples of the so-called *palhaço-ator* ('actor-clown') tradition from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which is seen as being a uniquely Brazilian phenomenon. Neves moved from the circus into the nascent recording industry and the *teatro de revista*.
15. *Alma do Brasil* (Soul of Brazil, 1931) and *Inconfidência Mineira* (Conspiracy in Minas Gerais, 1948).
16. Darién J. Davis, 'Racial Parity and National Humor: Exploring Brazilian Samba from Noel Rosa to Carmen Miranda, 1930–1939', in W.H. Beezley and L.A. Curcio-Nagy (eds), *Latin American Popular Culture: An Introduction* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 183–200 (188).
17. Fernanda Bicalho, *Cinearte 1926–1930: A política do estrelismo* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro Interdisciplinar de Estudos Contemporâneos, UFRJ, 1989), *Papéis Avulsos*, no. 21, p. 6.
18. *Ibid.*, 7 and 11.
19. *Cinearte*, 11 December 1929, no. 198, p. 28.
20. Ana Pessoa, *Carmen Santos: O cinema dos anos 20* (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2002), 18.

21. For an in-depth analysis of the films of Mazzaropi and the Trapalhões, see Dennison and Shaw, *Popular Cinema in Brazil*, 150–57.
  22. *Ibid.*, 150.
  23. *Ibid.*, 154. No fewer than fourteen of the twenty-five highest-grossing films released between 1970 and 1984 in Brazil were from the Trapalhões series.
  24. Dennison and Shaw, *Popular Cinema in Brazil*, 157.
  25. Glaucio Barsalini, *Mazzaropi: O Jeca do Brasil* (São Paulo: Atomo, 2002); André Barcinski and Ivan Finotti, *Maldito: A vida e o cinema de José Mojica Marins, o Zé do Caixão* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1998); Sérgio Cabral, *Grande Otelo: uma biografia* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2007); and Flávio Marinho, *Oscarito: O riso e o siso* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2007). The star texts of Grande Otelo and Oscarito, along with Carmen Miranda, Eliana Macedo, Xuxa, Sônia Braga and Vera Fischer, among others, are examined in Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison, *Brazilian National Cinema* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).
  26. Works on Carmen Miranda's life and career include: Cassio Emmanuel Barsante, *Carmen Miranda* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Europa, 1985); Martha Gil-Montero, *A Pequena Notável: uma biografia não autorizada de Carmen Miranda* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1989); and Ruy Castro, *Carmen: uma biografia* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2005). Books on Miranda with a more academic approach include: Ana Rita Mendonça, *Carmen Miranda foi a Washington* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1999); Tânia da Costa Garcia, *O 'it verde e amarelo' de Carmen Miranda* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2004); Zeca Ligério, *Carmen Miranda: uma performance afro-brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Publit, 2006); and Lisa Shaw, *Carmen Miranda* (London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). The star's film career in Hollywood has also been the focus of a number of important academic articles written in English by US scholars, including: Ana M. López, 'Are All Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography and Cultural Colonialism', in John King, Ana M. López and Manuel Alvarado (eds), *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas* (London: BFI, 1993), 67–80; and Shari Roberts, 'The Lady in the Tutti-frutti Hat: Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity', *Cinema Journal* 32(3) (1993), 3–23. Prior to the publication of Cabral's biography of Grande Otelo in 2007, a collection of reminiscences about the actor by famous contemporaries and extensive photographs were published in Marly Serafin and Mário Franco (eds), *Grande Otelo em preto e branco* (Rio de Janeiro: Ultra-Set, 1987), in addition to Robert Moura's short biography and overview of his career: Roberto Moura, *Grande Otelo: um artista genial* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará, 1996).
  27. Nuno Cesar Pereira de Abreu, *Boca do lixo: cinema e classes populares* (Campinas: UniCamp, 2006).
  28. Pessoa, *Carmen Santos*.
  29. Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda (ed.), *Quase Catálogo 3: Estrelas do cinema mudo Brasil, 1908–1930* (Rio de Janeiro: CIEC-Escola de Comunicação/UFRJ and Museu da Imagem e do Som, 1991).
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30. Ismail Xavier, 'O sonho da indústria: a criação da imagem em *Cinearte*', in Ismail Xavier, *Sétima arte, um culto moderno: o idealismo estético e o cinema* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1978), 167–97.
  31. This study was republished in 2001 by Rio de Janeiro-based Editora Globo.
  32. Fernão Ramos and Luiz Felipe Miranda (eds), *Enciclopédia do cinema brasileiro* (São Paulo: SENAC, 2000).
  33. Eduardo Giffoni Flórido (ed.), *As grandes personagens da história do cinema brasileiro, 1930–1959* (São Paulo: Fraiha, 1999); Eduardo Giffoni Flórido (ed.), *As grandes personagens da história do cinema brasileiro, 1960–1969* (São Paulo: Fraiha, 2002); and Flávio Leandro de Souza and Eduardo Giffoni Flórido (eds), *As grandes personagens da história do cinema brasileiro, 1970–79* (São Paulo: Fraiha, 2006).

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