

Television and the Transformation of the Star System in Brazil

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Relatively little scholarly work has been done on the star system in Brazil, and much of it deals with the silent and early sound periods. The first reasonably comprehensive encyclopedia of film actors and actresses was published only in 1998 (Silva Neto), and to date relatively few Brazilian stars have received significant critical attention, although numerous biographies, autobiographies, and various kinds of testimonials by or about other stars – and of widely varying quality – have been published over the years.¹ The study of the Brazilian star system thus remains an incipient field, at best.

In a 1998 article on Mexican actress Dolores del Río, Ana López observed that most discussions of stardom take place through “a hegemonic and often unconscious national prism which assumes that Hollywood stardom is stardom in and of itself” and which “barely acknowledge[s] the troubling presence of other star systems, other bodies and other nationalities” (1998, 6). Nevertheless, given relations of economic and symbolic power and exchange in the film world, one wonders if there actually exists a place, at least in the Western hemisphere, beyond the Hollywood firmament, or if, when we use the preposition “beyond,” we are actually referring to places at the margins or in the shadows of that firmament, places where stars do in fact shine, but frequently based on models shaped by Hollywood, or in constellations that even the national audience itself may consider to be minor in relation to Hollywood’s model. Distinctions and hierarchies of stardom exist, whether in Hollywood, “beyond,” or somewhere between the two.

Brazil is certainly not beyond Hollywood’s firmament, given the latter’s domination of the country’s film market and Brazil’s long tradition of attempting to emulate Hollywood production models and aesthetics, but Brazil just as certainly has its own star system with its own mechanisms of legitimation. Few Brazilian stars have replicated – and to greatly varying degrees – their celebrity status in the U.S.: Raoul Roulien (1905–2000), Carmen Miranda (1909–1955), Sônia Braga (b. 1950), Rodrigo Santoro (b. 1975), Alice Braga (b. 1983), Wagner Moura (b. 1976), and perhaps a few lesser-known others. In a broad sense, therefore, the ability to transfer talent, or symbolic capital, to what is sometimes called the “hegemonic cinema” is neither widespread nor particularly important for understanding stardom in Brazil, although the relationship between local conceptions of stardom and Hollywood certainly is significant.

This chapter will trace the development of Brazil’s star system, briefly examining the significance of early film magazines, the short-lived studio system, and television, before discussing, as case studies, the trajectories of two contemporary stars: Regina Casé (b. 1954), who is featured in

Anna Muylaert's award-winning *Que Horas Ela Volta?*/*The Second Mother* (2015), and Wagner Moura, who won a Golden Globe nomination for his portrayal of Pablo Escobar in Netflix's 10-part series, *Narcos* (2015). From the outset it is important to keep in mind that crossover between film, theater, and television is very common. For reasons of personal inclination or financial necessity, those actors who are able to do so often perform in all three areas, each of which serves as a potential source of professional legitimation and both symbolic and economic capital. Brazilian cinema has long drawn its actors from other media and forms of entertainment, ranging from the circus, radio, and vaudeville, or *teatro de revista*, in earlier periods to theater, the recording industry, and, particularly since the 1970s, television. A complete analysis would probably need to include all of these areas, although that is well beyond the scope of the current essay. In short, more often than not, the symbolic capital involved in stardom in Brazil derives, often unevenly, from two or more fields of activity rather than just the cinema.

Early Aspirations

A cinematic culture began to develop in Brazil in the first two decades of the twentieth century, coinciding with processes of urbanization and modernization in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. It was at that time that the first specialized film magazines began to appear.² Brazilian film scholars point to the mid-1920s and the founding of the film magazine *Cinearte* (1926–1942) as a key initial contribution toward the idea of a star system in Brazil (Bicalho 1989; Gomes 1974; Vieira 1991; Xavier 1978). Edited by Mário Behring and Adhemar Gonzaga, and modeled after the American magazine *Photoplay*, *Cinearte* was based on a fascination with Hollywood, the Hollywood star, and Hollywoodian notions of photogeneity (Xavier 1978). It could not have been otherwise, since Brazilian film production was sporadic at the time, and it was certainly problematic even to think of a star system when the would-be stars appearing in the few films that existed were virtually unknown and largely unseen. Brazilian stars at the time shone in the theater, not the cinema (Augusto 1970). In other words, the *idea* of a star system emerged in the country before it possessed a film industry that could sustain such a system. It thus represented an aspiration, not a reality.

Nonetheless, *Cinearte* was important in that it was the first publication that actively disseminated information about film stars, primarily foreign, but with some space dedicated to would-be Brazilian stars as well. In its subservience to Hollywood's model and promotional needs, Ismail Xavier suggests that *Cinearte* was "a manifestação integral e contraditória da indústria triunfante e da colonização cultural" ("an integral and contradictory manifestation of the triumphant industry and the process of cultural colonization") (1978, 173).

Despite its affinities with Hollywood, *Cinearte* eventually became the first film magazine with an increased focus on Brazil, undertaking a systematic campaign in support of the development of the national film industry. *Cinearte's* inclusion of news items about Brazilian film production and such actors and potential stars as Eva Nil (1909–1990), Eva Schnoor (1900–1962), and Gilda de Abreu (1904–1979), among others, was an important part of their broader campaign (see Ramos and Miranda 2000, 130–132).

Adhemar Gonzaga, who had spent some time in Hollywood in the 1920s, was certainly aware of the potential importance of a star system, as evidenced by his attempts to transform Eva Schnoor and Carlos Modesto, actors in his 1929 film *Barro Humano*, into the first "great names" of Brazilian cinematic stardom (Fonseca 1968, 6). Gonzaga could not have been clearer in his intentions when he wrote, in 1925, "Lembrem-se de que precisamos fazer nomes. Elles, depois, serão a garantia do sucesso de nossos filmes" ("Remember that we have to create names. They

will then guarantee the success of our films”) (cited in Gomes 1974, 336). However, given the fact that the films that were in fact produced had very limited circulation at that time, the star system consisted of little more than the publication of photographs that would result in letters from the magazine’s readers (Gomes 1974, 336). Gonzaga would later attempt, perhaps in a haphazard fashion, to put his ideas into practice with the Cinédia Studios, which will be discussed briefly in the next section.

The Studio Years, 1930–1954

The broader development of a national cinematic star system coincided with attempts at industrialization based on a studio model, particularly in the period between 1930, when Adhemar Gonzaga founded the Cinédia studios in Rio de Janeiro, and 1954, when São Paulo’s Vera Cruz studios went bankrupt.³ Valério Andrade has suggested that a star system in Brazil was never really strategically planned in industrial terms, but rather emerged by chance or through the extraordinary communicability of actors like Grande Otelo and Oscarito, or, on a regional level, Amácio Mazzaropi, who, starting in the 1950s, produced, directed, and acted in a long series of films in which he played a country-bumpkin type. Only accidentally, Andrade suggests, did the industry successfully use such stars to open the keys to the box office. “A triste verdade,” Andrade writes, “é que o grande público não levava a sério o nosso cinema sério” (“The sad truth is that the broad public did not take our serious cinema seriously”) (1973, 17).

Andrade is correct in saying that a broad public has not always taken *serious* Brazilian films seriously, but it has in fact been attracted to films that are *less serious*, such as the popular comedies (*chanchadas*) of the 1940s and 1950s or the Globo-inspired comedies that dominate today’s film market in the country.

Such popularity was made possible by the advent of sound in the late 1920s, which brought renewed optimism to those committed to developing a film industry in Brazil. Producers felt that foreign talkies would be unintelligible to Brazilian audiences and that local production would finally be able to take hold of the market without serious foreign competition. As a critic of the period wrote: “O ‘Movietone’ foi, pois, o Waterloo da cinematografia norte-americana [...]. A intuição comercial do norte-americano falhou, lançando o ‘Movietone’. O Brasil vai ter cinema” (“Movietone was the Waterloo of the American film industry [...] the North Americans’ commercial intuition has failed. Brazil will now have its own cinema”) (cited in Bernardet and Galvão 1983, 46). Based in part on his previous campaign in favor of Brazilian cinema and this naïve optimism, Adhemar Gonzaga founded the Cinédia Studios in Rio de Janeiro in 1930.

Cinédia was the first attempt at concentrated industrialization in the history of Brazilian cinema. It was equipped with four sets of sound equipment, a studio large enough to accommodate several simultaneous productions, and two laboratories (Usabel 1975, 146). Between 1930 and 1945 Cinédia averaged two films per year, with a high of five in 1936. After producing several dramas, Cinédia saw the commercial potential of films featuring the most popular Carnival songs of the year. In 1933 it released *A Voz do Carnaval/The Voice of Carnival* (Adhemar Gonzaga and Humberto Mauro), followed by such films as *Alô, Alô Brasil/Hello, Hello Brazil* (Adhemar Gonzaga, 1935), *Estudantes/Students* (Wallace Downey, 1935), *Noites Cariocas/Carioca Nights* (Henrique Cadicamo, 1936), *Alô, Alô, Carnaval/Hello, Hello, Carnaval* (Adhemar Gonzaga, 1936), and *Samba da Vida/Samba of Life* (Luiz de Barros, 1937), among many others, thus stabilizing one of the most popular cinematic genres in the history of Brazilian cinema: the *chanchada* (popular musical comedy).

Such films were cinematic launching pads for performers coming from other areas of activity, particularly radio and *teatro de revista*: Carmen Miranda, already a popular singer, first appeared briefly as herself in *A Voz do Carnaval*. She would subsequently appear in five more feature-length films in Brazil before departing for the United States, where she became a major Hollywood star.⁴ The films were *Alô, Alô Brasil*, *Estudantes, Alô, Alô Carnaval*, *Banana-da-Terra/Plantain* (Ruy Costa, 1939), and *Laranja-da-China/Sweet Orange* (Ruy Castro, 1940).⁵ The most successful Brazilian star in the U.S. to date, Miranda's American film career includes such films as *Down Argentine Way* (1940), *That Night in Rio* (1941), *Weekend in Havana* (1942), *The Gang's All Here* (1943), and *Copacabana* (1947), among numerous others.

Cinédia launched the cinematic careers of numerous other stars, but the most significant are undoubtedly Grande Otelo (1915–1993) and Oscarito (1906–1970), who appeared together in the studio's *Noites Cariocas*, although their careers tend to be most closely associated with the Atlântida Studios, which were founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1941.

Grande Otelo (Sebastião Bernardes de Souza Prata) was born in 1915 in the state of Minas Gerais. A precocious and multi-talented performer, he started working in *teatro de revista* and Brazilian music halls at a very early age, earning the nickname "Pequeno Otelo" (Little Othello). The "Pequeno" later changed to "Grande," and it was as Grande Otelo (Great Othello) that he became one of Brazil's most popular actors. He performed in Rio's casinos and nightclubs, and he made his film debut in Cinédia's *Noites Cariocas*. In 1943, he starred in Atlântida's debut film, *O Moleque Tião*, a fictionalized account of his own life. He appeared in more than 100 films, including *chanchadas* such as *Samba em Berlim/Samba in Berlin* (1943), *Este Mundo É um Pandeiro/The World is a Tambourine* (1947), and *Carnaval Atlântida/Atlântida's Carnival* (1952), as well as such dramas as *Rio Zona Norte/Rio Northern Zone* (Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1957) and *Assalto ao Trem Pagador/Assault on the Pay Train* (Roberto Farias, 1962). In 1969 Joaquim Pedro de Andrade chose him – at the age of 54 – to play the child Macunaíma in his film of the same name. He died in Paris in 1993 (Ramos and Miranda 2000, 409–411).

In some of his most memorable films, Grande Otelo co-starred with Oscarito (Oscar Lorenzo Jacinto de la Imaculada Concepción Teresa Dias), who was born in Málaga, Spain, in 1906. His family moved to Brazil when he was still a child. His father, Oscar Teresa, was a well-known circus performer. Following in his father's footsteps, Oscarito began his career in the circus before moving on to Rio's *teatro de revista*, where he was a huge success. The highly popular comic duo of Oscarito and Grande Otelo appeared in such films as *Carnaval no Fogo/Carnival in Flames* (1949), *A Dupla do Barulho/Double Trouble* (1953), and *Matar ou Correr/Kill or Run* (1954). One of their anthological performances is their parody of *Romeo and Juliet's* balcony scene (with Grande Otelo playing Juliet) in *Carnaval no Fogo* (Silva Neto; Ramos and Miranda 2000).

Atlântida, which produced 67 films in 20 years, was more successful than Cinédia in establishing a star system, in part because of the greater audience appeal of its films. The studios' founders recognized that to be successful, their films would have to derive from popular values and practices, including music, Carnival, and the Carioca's well-known sense of humor. To make the public laugh, they contracted such comic actors as Mesquitinha, Oscarito, and Grande Otelo, popular radio and recording stars such as Linda Batista, Emilinha Borba, and Ângela Maria, and other performers from the *teatro de revista* and from Rio de Janeiro casinos. The star system associated with Atlântida was quite unlike that of the Hollywood model favored by *Cinearte*. Its stars did not always conform to Hollywood's standards of beauty, and they often played roles such as street vendors, maids and janitors, con artists, cooks, and so forth (Souza 1998, 106–108). Although Atlântida's films certainly included actors and actresses who were more "Hollywoodian" in terms of their physical appearance (e.g., Anselmo Duarte and Eliana Macedo), their success and national projection was made possible by actors like Grande Otelo and Oscarito.

As scholars such as João Luiz Vieira, Sérgio Augusto, and Lisa Shaw have demonstrated, the *chanchada* frequently parodied Hollywood productions, thus playing on the tensions between metropolis and periphery, model and imitation, high and low culture, urban and rural, rich and poor, and so forth. The Atlântida *chanchada* constitutes the first moment in the history of Brazilian cinema in which national films, with their popular stars, truly resonated with a significant public, although it began to lose appeal after the advent of television in the 1950s.

The last major attempt at industrialization following a studio model occurred in São Paulo, with the Vera Cruz Studios, founded by elements of São Paulo's industrial bourgeoisie, which had created the Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia (Brazilian Comedy Theater) several years earlier. The idea was to create a "quality" cinema that would be recognized as such in Europe. In Vera Cruz's productions, the "actors, the décor, the costumes, and the music often were chosen to evoke a European ambience" (Johnson 1987, 62). For many reasons, including its inability to connect with the Brazilian public, Vera Cruz went bankrupt in 1954, thus destroying the dream of creating a Brazilian film industry based on a studio model. It produced only one truly successful film, Lima Barreto's award-winning *O Cangaceiro/The Bandit* (1953).⁶

Given the fact that Vera Cruz productions tended to have more culturally serious objectives than the Carioca *chanchada*, its star system was somewhat less effusive than that of Atlântida. They did, however, launch the short career of Eliane Lage (b. 1928), who appeared in five feature-length films in the 1950s,⁷ and intensify those of Tônia Carreiro (b. 1922), Ilka Soares (b. 1932), and Alberto Ruschel (1918–1996), who starred in *O Cangaceiro* and went on to a successful career in both film and television. Vera Cruz also launched at least one major star, Amácio Mazzaropi (1912–1981), who was able to transfer symbolic capital from radio to the cinema, appearing in more than 30 films between 1952, when he made his debut in *Sai da Frente/Get out of the Way* (Tom Payne and Abílio Pereira de Almeida), and 1980, when he released his final film, *O Jeca e a Égua Milagrosa/Jeca and the Miraculous Mare* (Amácio Mazzaropi and Pio Zamuner). He himself produced and directed many of those films (Ramos and Miranda 2000, 366–367; Souza 1998, 115–116).

Television and the Star System

The most stable and long-lasting star system in Brazil has developed since the late 1960s and it is associated not with the film industry, but rather with television, and particularly with the Globo television network (TV Globo) and its major cultural product, the *telenovela*. Given its national reach and economic power, television has been able to achieve what the film industry never could, that is, create the myth of stardom with such actors as Tarcísio Meira, Glória Menezes (Figure 1.1), Regina Duarte, Francisco Cuoco, Marília Pera, Jardel Filho, and Paulo Gracindo, whom Andrade describes as "filhos ilustres do estrelismo que a televisão vem cultivando em escala industrial, segundo o modelo testado e aprovado pelos estúdios americanos do passado" ("the illustrious children of stardom that television has been cultivating on an industrial scale in accordance with the tried-and-true model of American studios of the past") (1973, 17).

Television was inaugurated in São Paulo in 1950, about the same time that other entrepreneurs in this industrial city were engaged in the creation of the Vera Cruz Studios. Since the cinema had not yet been able to establish itself with the country's potential audience as a strong audiovisual tradition – with the obvious exception of the *chanchada* – television had to depend largely on its own resources and on certain forms of narrative that it initially borrowed less from the cinema than from radio, and more specifically from the popular *radionovela*, or



Figure 1.1 Glória Menezes and Tarcísio Meira. Reproduced with permission of Globo Universidade, a division of the Globo Television Network.

narrative serials in the *feuilleton* or *folhetim* tradition that were broadcast starting in the early 1940s. The *radionovela* began to fade out with the consolidation of television – and the shift of advertising expenditures – in the 1960s.

Because of the rise of television, the popular *chanchada* tradition began to decline, although it would soon be revived in numerous television comedy programs. As television expanded in the 1960s, Brazilian cinema, led ideologically by Cinema Novo, did not take the medium particularly seriously and made no serious attempt to reach a *modus vivendi* that would allow for more integration between the two media; in fact, there has been little until fairly recently (see Hamburger's Chapter 22 in this volume for further details). Cinema Novo was always *auteur*-driven, and at least initially it made no concerted effort to take full advantage of the possible drawing power of established stars, although many of their films did in fact feature such stars (e.g., José Lewgoy, the prototypical villain of the *chanchada* tradition, has a significant role in Glauber Rocha's 1967 *Terra em Transe/Land in Anguish*). Such a strategy would become more deliberate later in the decade, with such films as Joaquim Pedro de Andrade's *Macunaíma* (1969), which draws from the *chanchada* tradition by using such stars as Grande Otelo, Zezé Macedo, and Wilza Carla.

A number of well-known actors – or stars – did in fact become associated with Cinema Novo, even if their film careers may have preceded the movement, including such people as Othon Bastos, Norma Bengell, Hugo Carvana, Geraldo del Rey, Léa Garcia, Milton Gonçalves, Helena Ignez, Paulo José, Paulo César Pereio, Antônio Pitanga, Anecy Rocha, Jofre Soares, Maurício do Valle, and Nelson Xavier, among others. Most of these actors would subsequently work in some combination of film, television, and theater.

The Brazilian *telenovela* began to develop in the 1950s, drawing initially from radio melodramas, the adaptation of foreign narratives or plays, and the visual composition of American cinema. By broadcasting numerous adaptations of well-known plays – the so-called *teleteatro*, which was in fact the dominant narrative genre on Brazilian television throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s – television was able to establish ties with some of the country's leading stage actors, such as Maria Della Costa, Cacilda Becker, and Fernanda Montenegro, although of these only Montenegro would go on to have an extensive career in both television and film.

As the *telenovela* developed, it was able to expand those ties and increase its artistic legitimacy by attracting leading dramatists as writers, many of whom had a level of social and political involvement and concern that is not always expected in the mass media. The most notable example of this is perhaps Alfredo Dias Gomes (1922–1999), whose play *O Pagador de Promessas/The Given Word* (1960) was filmed by Anselmo Duarte in 1962. A long-time member of the Brazilian Communist Party, Gomes always felt that television does not have to be an alienating medium – although he recognized that it often is – and that there is space on the small screen for both creativity and for discussing important issues before a huge national audience. An initial attempt to broadcast a version of his *telenovela*, *Roque Santeiro* – which, among other things, is a satire of authoritarianism – was banned by the military government in 1975. In 1985–1986, an updated version, starring Lima Duarte, Regina Duarte, and José Wilker, became one of the most popular Brazilian *telenovelas* ever made (Johnson 1988).

By the 1970s, TV Globo had developed its own star system, supported by its own publicity machine as well as numerous fan magazines such as *Capricho*, *Caras*, and *Ti-Ti-Ti*. Because of its economic power, it was able to contract the very best talent in Brazil. In his book *O Circo Eletrônico/The Electronic Circus*, long-time Globo producer and director Daniel Filho (João Carlos Daniel, b. 1937) writes that when Globo was solidifying its structure for the production of *telenovelas*, he deliberately used a Hollywood-style star system, but without the excesses of the original, in which studios would fabricate stories about stars' personal lives in order to make them more glamorous and attractive. He soon discovered that the network's authors enjoyed writing within such a scheme, frequently saying that they were thinking of a specific star when they created a certain character (2003, 268). Daniel Filho also notes the precarious and short-lived nature of the television careers of many young actors, in which Warhol's 15 minutes of fame may extend to four or five months, which is the typical duration of a *telenovela*, but not go much beyond that due to limited artistic ability (2003, 270).

Daniel Filho, who may himself be considered a star in Brazil's audiovisual universe,⁸ sees the star system functioning in terms of charisma or star quality, “que a pessoa simplesmente tem ou não tem. Isso independe de o camarada ser bom ou mau ator. Independe também da beleza. Existem homens e mulheres assustadoramente belos que, no entanto, não possuem *star quality*” (“which a person simply has or does not have. This is independent of the person being a good or bad actor. It is also independent of beauty. There are stunningly attractive men and women who do not have star quality”) (2003, 267).

Joe Wallach, who served as executive superintendent of TV Globo between 1965 and 1981, sees the network's star system from a somewhat different angle, noting that after Globo hired its initial major stars, such as Tarcísio Meira and Glória Menezes,⁹ who had both been working with television networks in São Paulo, they decided to create their own star system for reasons of both economics and control. Wallach explains that they felt that their *telenovelas* could create stars out of previously unknown actors by having them appear nightly on their network, rather than hire established stars away from other networks. The actors would start at a relatively low salary, which would increase along with their success. But, Wallach writes, “Caso tal sucesso lhes subisse à cabeça, tínhamos sempre como substituí-los” (“If that success went to their head, we could always replace them”) (2011, 125–126).

The model Globo adopted involved employing a relatively small number of stars on open-ended, full-time contracts, which involved paying them a salary whether or not they were actually working. This kind of contract was reserved largely for established actors and actresses who have either been with the network for a long time – including some who are older and often inactive – or who have clearly proven to be favorites with Globo's audience. As Joe Wallach puts it, “Depois de populares, caso desajassem continuar trabalhando conosco, jamais os despedíamos. Quando

envelheciam, adaptávamos os papéis que podiam desempenhar, às vezes menos importantes, mas ficávamos com eles” (“After they became popular, if they wanted to continue working with us, we never fired them. As they grew older, we adapted the kind of roles they could play, sometimes less important ones, but we kept them on”) (2011, 126).

Among the more established stars in this category are actors such as Francisco Cuoco (b. 1933), Regina Duarte (b. 1947), Antônio Fagundes (b. 1949), Tarcísio Meira (b. 1935), Glória Menezes (b. 1934), and Fernanda Montenegro (b. 1929). Some younger actors, such as Adriana Esteves (b. 1969), Bruno Gagliasso (b.1982), Glória Pires (b. 1963), Camila Pitanga (b. 1977), and Mariana Ximenes (b. 1981), among others, also have open-ended contracts. Some of these actors – Cuoco, Gagliasso, Meira, Menezes, Esteves, Pitanga – have built their careers largely in television, with occasional film appearances, while others have tended to appear in both media more assiduously (Batista).

In addition to these open-ended contracts, Globo has also traditionally offered long-term contracts that may be for two, three, four, or even more years, depending on the individual case, but always with an end date. These contracts are for actors whom the network wants to maintain in its regular cast, but not necessarily on a permanent basis. Actors are paid a certain amount per month to work exclusively for Globo whether or not they are actually working. When they are in fact working, they receive an additional percentage of the fixed amount. A short-term contract is for participation in a specific work (e.g., a *telenovela* or a miniseries) and no more. At the end of the contract, the actor has to find other employment.¹⁰

A Globo contract would typically state that the company has the exclusive rights to the actors' image. The exclusivity clause meant not only that they could not work with another television network, but also that they could not work in a play or a film without Globo's authorization, since it would always have priority, even when a contracted actor was not actually involved in a Globo production. When TV Globo created its own film production sector in 1998, Globo apparently attempted to include a clause in the contract that would have forced actors to work in the company's film productions, but this was not accepted by the actors.

Economic pressures have caused Globo to reduce the number of stars on fixed or long-term contracts and to shift to per-program contracts. On the one hand, this strategy has allowed Globo to reduce costs; on the other, it has given actors the flexibility to work at other networks or in other fields of artistic activity.

Film and Television

Starting in the 1970s, not long after TV Globo emerged as the most powerful national network in Brazil, numerous film producers began to make concerted attempts to hang on to television's coattails – and use its stars – in their quest for commercial success in a long-occupied film market. One might think, in this regard, of Bruno Barreto's *Dona Flor e Seus Dois Maridos / Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* (1976), which featured Sônia Braga immediately after her highly successful starring role in the *telenovela Gabriela*, which aired on TV Globo from April to October of 1975. The film's advertising campaign included TV commercials for Flor margarine featuring Braga as Dona Flor (Ramos 2004, 37). The film was seen by around 12 million people in its first 10 years of theatrical distribution. More than twice that number saw the film in a single screening on TV Globo in 1985.

Sônia Braga began her television career in 1967, at the age of 16, on TV Record's program, *O Mundo Encantado de Ronnie Von / The Enchanted World of Ronnie Von*. Her first film role came the

following year, in Rogério Sganzerla's *Bandido da Luz Vermelha/Red Light Bandit*. From then on, she alternated between film and television, appearing in such telenovelas as *Irmãos Coragem/Brothers Courage* (1970), *Fogo sobre a Terra/Fire on the Land* (1974), *Gabriela* (1975), and *Dancin' Days* (1978). During that same period, she appeared in a number of films, including *A Moreninha/The Little Brunette* (Glaucio Mirko Laurelli, 1971), *Mestiça, A Escrava Indomável/Mestiza, The Invincible Slave* (Lenita Perroy, 1973), *O Casal/The Couple* (Daniel Filho, 1975), *Dona Flor e Seus Dois Maridos* (1976), and *Dama do Lotação/Lady on the Bus* (Neville d'Almeida, 1978), among others. In the 1980s, she starred in *Gabriela* (Bruno Barreto, 1983) alongside Marcelo Mastroianni before beginning an international career with *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Hector Babenco, 1984). Often cast as a Latina, she has since appeared in many Hollywood films, including *Moon over Parador* (Paul Mazursky, 1988), and the *Milagro Beanfield War* (Robert Redford, 1998), as well as U.S. and Brazilian television series, including *Tales from the Crypt*, *Family Law*, *Sex and the City*, *Páginas da Vida/Pages of Life*, and *Tapas & Beijos/Slaps & Kisses*. In the U.S. she was one of the founders of the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, and she continues to work in both Brazil and the United States. In 2015 Kleber Mendonça Filho, director of *O Som ao Redor/Neighboring Sounds* (2012) selected Braga for a lead role in his second feature, *Aquarius* (2016).¹¹

But *Dona Flor e Seus Dois Maridos* is not the only example. Nine out of the 10 most successful Brazilian films of the 1970s featured television stars: seven featured the Trapalhões comedy team and two starred Sônia Braga. The same is true, generally speaking, for the 1980s, and the most successful films since the reemergence of film production in the mid-1990s also feature stars whose success derives largely from television (Johnson 1984, 88). Given its significantly larger audience, television in Brazil has the power of consecration vis-à-vis stardom that the film industry has in the United States.

More recently, with the creation of Globo Filmes (1998), television – or television aesthetics – has occupied much of the domestic film market that is potentially available for Brazilian films, much to the dismay of independent producers. In 2014, for example, 115 Brazilian films were released theatrically, attracting 16,006,527 spectators. The top 10 films accounted for 12,342,443, or 77 percent of those spectators. Six of the top 10 were co-produced by Globo Filmes. Five of the six were comedies, and all featured television actors.¹² TV Globo has dominated Brazil's television industry since the late 1960s or early 1970s, and, through Globo Filmes, it now dominates the film market as well, creating more space for its stars.

Stellar Trajectories

As a conclusion, I will briefly trace the artistic trajectories of two contemporary Brazilian stars, both of whom have worked in multiple media: Regina Casé, who is closely identified with TV Globo and has received international recognition for film roles, and Wagner Moura, who is clearly more associated with the cinema, although he too has appeared on television and in the theater.

Regina Casé

Regina Casé (Rio de Janeiro, 1954; Figure 1.2) initiated her artistic career at the age of 20 when she and several other young actors created the avant-garde theater group Aadrúbal Trouxe o Trombone (Asdrúbal Brought the Trombone). In the words of Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda, Asdrúbal Trouxe o Trombone “marcou a cena cultural dos anos 70 por sua audácia e rebeldia em



Figure 1.2 Regina Casé. Reproduced with permission of Globo Universidade, a division of the Globo Television Network.

relação aos cânones e padrões teatrais da época” (“marked the cultural scene of the 1970s with its audacity and rebelliousness toward the period’s theatrical canons and standards”) (2004, 9). The group’s first production, Gogol’s *The Inspector General*, opened in September 1974. For her performance Casé received the State of Rio’s Theater Award for Best Actress. The following year the group staged Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu*, and in 1977 group member Hamilton Vaz Pereira’s *Trata-me Leão/Deal with Me Leão*, for which Casé won Rio de Janeiro’s Molière Award for Best Actress. The group remained in activity until 1984.

Casé’s theatrical activity led to invitations to appear in a number of cinematic productions, initially in minor or secondary roles, such as *Chuvas de Verão/Summer Showers* (Carlos Diegues, 1978), *Eu te Amo/I Love You* (Arnaldo Jabor, 1981), and *Moon over Parador* (Paul Mazursky, 1988), which was partially shot in Brazil. Her initial leading film role was in the comedy *Eu, Tu, Eles/Me, You, Them* (Andrucha Waddington, 2000), which was released to largely positive reviews in the United States and numerous other countries. For her performance in this film, she garnered best actress awards at film festivals in Cartagena, Havana, Karlovy Vary, Lima, and Rio de Janeiro.

By the time she appeared in *Eu, Tu, Eles*, however, she was already a highly successful television actor and personality. Her first appearance on television came in 1983 in the final chapter of the *telenovela*, *Guerra dos Sexos/War of the Sexes*. The following year, she appeared in the *telenovela*, *Vereda Tropical/Tropical Path* and two children’s programs, one of which, *Sítio do Picapau Amarelo/Yellow Woodpecker Farm*, was directed by her father, Geraldo Casé.¹³

In the 1980s, she also became part of the cast of the popular comedy program known as the *Chico Anysio Show*, before appearing, in her first truly successful TV role, as the character Tina Pepper in the *telenovela*, *Cambalacho/Scam* (1986). After that, she starred in or had a prominent role in a series of TV Globo comedy programs: *TV Pirata/Pirate TV* (1988), *Programa Legal/Cool Program* (1991), *Brasil Legal/Cool Brazil* (1995), and *Muvuca/Pandemonium* (1998). In 2001, she once again acted in a Globo *telenovela*, *As Filhas da Mãe/The Mother’s Daughters*, and the following year she debuted as a writer and director in the series *Cidade dos Homens/City of Men* (2002–2005), which grew out of Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund’s *Cidade de Deus/City of God* (2002). She has also acted in the miniseries *Amazônia – de Galvez a Chico Mendes/Amazonia: From Galvez to*

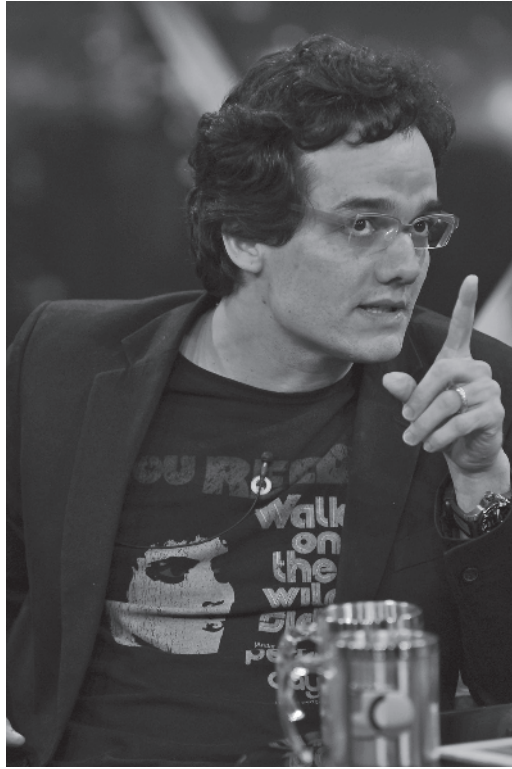


Figure 1.3 Wagner Moura. Reproduced with permission of Globo Universidade, a division of the Globo Television Network.

Chico Mendes (2006) and *Som & Fúria/Sound and Fury* (2009), Fernando Meirelles' adaptation of the Canadian series *Slings & Arrows* (2003–2006). Recognized as a major personality among TV Globo's stars, Regina Casé has more recently been the headliner in such popular programs as *Central da Periferia/Center of the Periphery* (2006) and *Esquenta!/Heat It Up!* (2011).

Casé again gained international recognition when she appeared as the maid Val in Anna Muylaert's *Que Horas Ela Volta?* Her performance was widely praised by film critics throughout Brazil and the United States. She and Camila Márdila shared a Special Jury Prize for acting at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, and she herself won the Best Actress Award from the São Paulo Association of Art Critics. Regina Casé, in short, has been able to accumulate symbolic capital through initial work in the theater, which she was able to transfer to the cinema, then to television, where she became recognized as a star. That stardom has subsequently led her back to the cinema and to increased international recognition, although she has shown no signs of wanting to pursue a career outside of Brazil.

Wagner Moura

Actor Wagner Moura (Figure 1.3) has followed a different, yet equally versatile, trajectory to stardom, but he too has developed symbolic capital in at least three fields of activity: film, theater, and television (also music, though to a much lesser extent). Unlike Regina Casé, he has begun to

transcend Brazil's borders and develop an international career, having appeared in South African director Neill Blomkamp's *Elysium* (USA, 2013) and starred as Pablo Escobar in the 10-episode Netflix series, *Narcos*, which netted him a Golden Globe nomination.

Born in Salvador, Bahia, in 1976, Moura began to participate in theatrical productions while still in high school. He continued working in amateur productions while studying journalism at the Universidade Federal da Bahia (Federal University of Bahia), and he eventually began acting in professional productions in his native city. In 1996 he appeared in two plays, *Cuida Bem de Mim/ Take Good Care of Me* (Filinto Coelho and Luiz Marfuz, 1996) and *A Casa de Eros/ The House of Eros* (Cleise Furtado Mendes, 1996), but the turning point in his theatrical career came in 2000 with the play *A Máquina/ The Machine* (João Falcão, 2000), in which he appeared alongside fellow Bahian actors Lázaro Ramos and Vladimir Brichta.¹⁴ The play was staged in numerous Brazilian cities and had successful runs in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, which resulted in invitations to all three actors to work in other media.¹⁵

Moura, who had already appeared a couple of short films, made his feature film debut in 2000 in an American film, playing a small role in Fina Torres' *Woman on Top*, starring Penélope Cruz and Murilo Benício, which was shot partially in Salvador. The following year he appeared, again in a secondary role, in Walter Salles' *Abril Despedaçado/ Behind the Sun*, a Franco-Brazilian co-production. The pace of Moura's cinematic activity increased in 2003, when he appeared in four films: *O Caminho das Nuvens/ The Middle of the World* (male lead; dir. Vicente Amorim), *O Homem do Ano/ The Man of the Year* (José Henrique Fonseca), *Carandiru* (Hector Babenco), and *Deus É Brasileiro/ God Is Brazilian* (major supporting role; dir. Carlos Diegues).

Deus É Brasileiro was particularly important in the development of Moura's career. Because of his comic performance in the role of Taoca, lead actor Antônio Fagundes (b. 1949) invited Moura to participate in the Globo television series *Carga Pesada/ Heavy Load* during the 2003–2004 season, which was his first appearance on the small screen. He would subsequently appear in other series, TV movies, a miniseries, and two *telenovelas* (*A Lua me Disse/ The Moon Told Me So*, 2005, and *Paraíso Tropical/ Tropical Paradise*, 2007), which gave him exposure to a larger national audience and numerous best actor awards. Nonetheless, his symbolic capital continued to derive more from the cinema than from television.

Moura's next big step forward came in 2007, when he played Captain Nascimento in José Padilha's controversial *Tropa de Elite/ Elite Squad*, which was awarded the Golden Bear at the Berlinale. That same year, he also appeared in *Saneamento Básico, O Filme/ Basic Sanitation, The Film* (Jorge Furtado), and *Ó Paí, Ó/ Look At This, Look* (Monique Gardenberg). Two years later, Moura starred in *Tropa de Elite 2/ Elite Squad: The Enemy Within*. Between the two *Tropa de Elite* films, Moura returned to the theater in a highly successful staging, in São Paulo, of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2008), directed by Aderbal Freire Filho, for which he won several best actor awards.

After several more films in Brazil, Moura was given a role in Neill Blomkamp's *Elysium*, an American production filmed in Canada. That same year, director José Padilha approached him about the possibility of playing Pablo Escobar in the Netflix production of *Narcos*, whose production was just getting underway. Although skeptical, since he would have to gain 40 pounds and learn Spanish, Moura accepted, resulting in what *Rolling Stone*'s Alex Morris calls "a masterpiece of charismatic ambiguity." Although, like Casé, Moura's symbolic capital derives from diverse areas of activity, in his case the cinema is predominant. With *Elysium* and *Narcos*, he has joined a small number of Brazilian stars with access to an international career.

Although Regina Casé and Wagner Moura have followed different professional trajectories, the things they have in common tell us much about stardom in Brazil today. They have both shown a great level of versatility, working in theater, film, and television, albeit with different

emphases in each case. They have also both worked with TV Globo, which has provided them with greater national exposure than they might otherwise have been able to attain. With its importance in Brazil's cultural life and its ability to attract much of the best acting talent in the country and to develop its own talent, Globo continues to play a central role in the nation's star system.

Notes

- 1 On Carmen Miranda, for example, see Barsante (1985), Castro (2005), Consiglio (1986), Gil-Monteiro (1989), and Shaw (2013). On Grande Otelo, Moura (1996) and Cabral (2007). Other examples include Anísio (1992), Fajardo (1990), Montenegro (1983), and Singh Jr. (1993).
- 2 Fernanda Bicalho (1989, 3) cites such publications as *Selecta* (1915), *Palcos e Telas* (1918), *Paratodos* (1918), *A Tela* (1919), *Cine-Revista* (1919), *A Scena Muda* (1921), *Cinearte* (1926), *O Fan* (1928), *Cine* (1929), and *Cine-Teatro* (1930). She also notes that such magazines as *Careta* and *Fon-Fon* had film columns, and newspapers such as the *Correio da Manhã* in Rio de Janeiro and *O Estado de São Paulo* regularly published film-related columns, often written by noted intellectuals and writers (e.g. Guilherme de Almeida and Paulo Duarte).
- 3 Star systems of a sort can of course exist independently of studio production when there occurs the production in series of specific cinematic genres. One might think, in this regard, of the *pornoanchada* of the 1970s, which had, among its many actresses, its own firmament of stars such as Helena Ramos and Aldine Muller, neither of whom was able to significantly reinvest her limited symbolic capital in more legitimate areas of audiovisual production (see Silva Neto 1998, 236–237, 276).
- 4 Numerous English-language books on Carmen Miranda have been published. Lisa Shaw's *Carmen Miranda* offers a good introduction.
- 5 IMDbPro lists a previous appearance: *Degraus da Vida/Steps of Life* (1930). According to Miranda's biographer Ruy Castro, however, the film was never completed, and Miranda was never actually filmed, although she did pose for photographs related to it (2005, 47). Castro also mentions a 40-minute documentary titled *O Carnaval Cantado de 1932/The Carnival Sung in 1932* (Vital Ramos de Castro, 1932), which included Miranda singing "Bambaleô." Unfortunately this film was lost, and no copies or negatives remain (2005, 78).
- 6 Despite its efforts to imitate European or Hollywood models in its choice of actors, Vera Cruz did give Afro-Brazilian actress Ruth de Souza one of her most important roles in Tom Payne and Oswaldo Sampaio's abolition drama, *Sinhá Moça/The Landowner's Daughter* (1953). For an extensive discussion of the film, see Stam (1997, 138–149). For brief overviews of Souza's career, see Ramos and Miranda (2000, 524–525) and Silva Neto (1998, 314). For a thorough discussion of Vera Cruz, see Galvão (1981).
- 7 Lage is the subject of an excellent study by Ana Carolina de Moura Delfim Maciel (2008).
- 8 In addition to producing and directing many films and television programs, Daniel Filho has also appeared as an actor in around 35 theatrical films.
- 9 José Bonifácio de Oliveira Sobrinho, or "Boni," as he is known, mentions the following stars as the initial group of actors who allowed TV Globo to "give weight" to its dramaturgy: Tarcísio Meira, Glória Menezes, Paulo Gracindo, Sérgio Cardoso, Dina Sfat, and Regina Duarte (Oliveira Sobrinho 2011, 257).
- 10 Information about Globo contracts provided by an actor with a long-term, but not lifetime, Globo contract on the condition that his name not be used.
- 11 Information on Sônia Braga taken from IMDbPro and Memória Globo: <http://memoriaglobo.globo.com/perfis/talentos/sonia-braga.htm>.
- 12 Data is from the Observatório Brasileiro do Cinema e do Audiovisual (Brazilian Observatory of Cinema and Audiovisual Productions) on the website of ANCINE, the Agência Nacional do Cinema (National Film Agency). http://oca.ancine.gov.br/filmes_bilheterias.htm.
- 13 Information about Casé's television career has been taken from Memória Globo: <http://memoriaglobo.globo.com/perfis/talentos/regina-case.htm>.

- 14 Brichta was born in the state of Minas Gerais, but his family moved to Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia, when he was 4 years old. His acting career began in Salvador.
- 15 Much information on Moura has been taken from Memória Globo: <http://memoriaglobo.globo.com/perfis/talentos/wagner-moura/trajetoria.htm>.

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