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A star is born: the rising profile of the non-professional actor in recent Brazilian cinema

Charlotte Gleghorn

Introduction

In the history of world cinemas many directors have used non-professional actors in fictional feature films, notably Vittorio de Sica and Roberto Rossellini during the Italian neorealist movement of the 1940s and early 1950s. The New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, in particular the Brazilian *Cinema Novo*, remained committed to the central tenets of Italian neorealism in its attempts to convey the region's social injustices. In recent decades, internationally acclaimed films such as *Pixote: a lei do mais fraco* (*Pixote: The Law of the Weakest*, Hector Babenco, 1980), *Central do Brasil* (*Central Station*, Walter Salles, 1998), *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*, Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002) and *Linha de passe* (Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 2008) have all juxtaposed performances by non-professional children and adolescents with those of professional adult actors. These interventions from non-actors have received a great deal of media attention, framing the reception of the films and their relationship to the real. Review articles and interviews with directors and actors alike refer to young 'discoveries' as the 'stars' of the films they inhabit, thus signalling the ways in which single performances and their related media hype intersect with notions of celebrity.

This chapter will discuss how the non-professional, or 'natural' actor may be constructed as a star in diverse and unpredictable ways. Taking as its principal points of reference the roles of Fernando Ramos da Silva and Vinícius de Oliveira, renowned respectively for their performances of the characters of Pixote and Josué in *Pixote* and *Central do Brasil*, I examine how the non-actor is discursively presented as a star in his/her own right. Although obviously different from traditional and self-conscious constructions of

stardom during the studio era in Hollywood, non-professional performers are also implicated in complex mediatic processes that propel them to fame.

Pixote and *Central do Brasil* are emblematic cinematic texts in depicting issues of child poverty and marginality in Brazilian film. Separated by almost twenty years, they vary in tone and are borne from different socio-historical moments, yet they employ some of the same strategies to replicate reality on screen, notably in their use of child non-actors. The films' investment in the extra-diegetic lives of child actors underscores the significance of social class in the construction of authenticity, and harnesses the symbolic power of the child to generate empathetic responses.¹ Filmed in 1979 and released during the period of 'opening up' (*abertura*) of the military dictatorship (1964-1985), *Pixote* offers a damning portrait of a society which refuses to take responsibility for abandoned children, of which Fernando Ramos da Silva/*Pixote* is an exemplary case. By contrast, *Central do Brasil* addresses the problem of the abandoned child by embarking on a spiritual road trip to the heart of the nation, where a revitalised sense of the heteronormative traditional family unit provides an escape route from an otherwise tragic end. Although the style and ideology of these two films are markedly different, the casting and subsequent media coverage of Fernando Ramos da Silva and Vinícius de Oliveira provide interesting correspondences between the construction of the classical star text and the trajectory of the non-professional actor. By presenting the case of Fernando Ramos da Silva and the '*Pixote* phenomenon' as a springboard to discuss the career of Vinícius de Oliveira, this chapter will explore the widespread use of child non-professional actors in recent Brazilian cinema, arguing that the socially-committed praxis of much filmmaking of the *retomada* – the post-1995 renaissance of the film industry in Brazil – has in turn created a new brand of stardom, which reflects the need for greater social responsibility in relation to the deprived and marginalised citizens of the country.

The immortalisation of Pixote and the cinematic afterlife

Often regarded as the most successful Brazilian film of the 1980s, *Pixote* depicts the institutionalisation and widespread neglect of Brazil's homeless children.² The film's indictment of state 'care' can be inscribed within a longer and international cinematic tradition that aims to effect social critique through an engagement with the 'institutional lives of children', as seen in productions such as *Los olvidados* (*The Young and the Damned*, Luis Buñuel, 1950), *Crónica de un niño solo* (*Chronicle of a Boy Alone*, Leonardo Favio, 1965) and the Brazilian *Vera* (Sérgio Toledo, 1987).³ Fernando Ramos da Silva, as the eleven-year old, eponymous lead character of *Pixote*, anchors the narrative as he negotiates the violence of a state-run juvenile detention centre and the streets. His centrality is clearly marked from the outset of the film through the use of close-ups and zooms on his elfin face. The film begins with a police round-up of children following the murder of a judge, and the group of boys are subsequently incarcerated in a reform home. The home does nothing to rehabilitate the children, however, but merely abuses and exploits them, and, following unrest in the centre after the dishonest scapegoating of one of the children for the murder of another, a group of boys, including Pixote, escapes and turns to a life of delinquency on the streets of São Paulo. The film ends tragically as the group become increasingly involved with serious crime. Sueli (Marília Pêra), the prostitute with whom they collaborate, leads an unsuspecting client to their home, in order to ambush and rob him. Taken by surprise, Pixote mistakenly shoots Dito (Gilberto Moura), the leader of the group of boys. The film ends with Pixote facing an uncertain future, as he walks down a train track toward the horizon, alone and with few prospects.

Following his starring role, and the national and international success of *Pixote*, Ramos da Silva had a short-lived acting career, which was stunted by his insufficient literacy skills.⁴ After he was dismissed by TV Globo, where he was contracted for a bit-part in a

telenovela (soap opera), the mayor of the town of Duque de Caxias, who had become familiar with the boy's story, offered to fund Fernando's studies at acting school.⁵ But Fernando did not complete the course, and returned to his old neighbourhood, Diadema, in the industrial *periferia* (poor outskirts) of São Paulo, where, like his on-screen counterpart in *Pixote*, he eventually became involved in petty crime. He was frequently stopped by the police and twice arrested for minor offences, which he attributed to the public's inability to differentiate between *Pixote* and Fernando. Indeed, society's failure to distinguish between fiction and reality was apparently the source of personal anguish as he felt both frustrated at the limited acting roles he was offered and distressed that the authorities mistook him for the street urchin he had immortalised on screen.⁶ In his own words, 'they created a *Pixote*, but they didn't know how to prepare him for life'.⁷ Even the film's director, Hector Babenco, seemed to conflate actor and character, although he nonetheless recognised that Fernando experienced his role in a different way:

The background Fernando came from was the same as that of the character he played in the film. But for him it was different. After the film opened in Rio, a journalist asked Fernando if he wasn't afraid to live through the same situations as were shown in the film. He said, 'Sorry, but in the film that was *Pixote*, my name is Fernando'. He could not accept the idea that the two are the same; and I'm telling you it is one and the same, because at ten o'clock Fernando is in the street and the police ask him where he's going. And he answers, 'I don't know'. They say, 'Come with us'. And the film begins again. The reality of Fernando's life is the same as *Pixote's* ... But he didn't accept that idea, because for him it's so different ... being an actor.⁸

Such was Fernando's dissatisfaction at this 'almost seamless coincidence of actor/persona and character'⁹ that he apparently begged José Louzeiro – the author of the book *Infância dos mortos* (*Childhood of the Dead*, 1977), on which the film was originally based – to pen a sequel which would restore the integrity of his legendary alter ego and, by extension, redeem the life of the actor.¹⁰ Unfortunately, there was no such salvation for Pixote or da Silva, and the one-time star of Babenco's film became a victim of a police raid when in 1987 he was shot dead at the age of nineteen.

His death created a furore in the media and his fate became widely known in Brazil.¹¹ Subsequent to his death at least one book – *Pixote, nunca mais! A vida verdadeira de Fernando Ramos da Silva* (*Pixote, Never Again! The Real Life of Fernando Ramos da Silva*), written by Cida Venâncio Silva, Fernando's widow – has been published, and two films have been made – *Quem matou Pixote?* (*Who Killed Pixote?*, José Joffily, 1996) and *Pixote in memoriam* (Felipe Brisso and Gilberto Topczewski, 2005) – which recount da Silva's involvement in *Pixote* and the unjust treatment he subsequently received. In November 2009 a number of talks and screenings took place in Fernando's hometown of Diadema to commemorate the film's thirty-year anniversary, including a special debate with Hector Babenco.¹² The genesis of the production, its domestic and international success, the death of the protagonist, and the debates the film has spawned have, in Piers Armstrong's account of *retomada* cinema, created an urban mythology: 'These "mythologies" are [...] productive cycles mediating through different arenas of social, critical and creative domains. It is apt that *Pixote*, a remarkable synthesis of social documentation, psychological pathos and artistic execution, presents the most extraordinary mirroring between life and art'.¹³ The various re-fashionings of the story, and the ongoing discussions that Fernando's incarnation of Pixote generates, point to the multiple ways in which the actor has belatedly become a star.

Hailed as one of the best child actors of all time, Fernando Ramos da Silva's performance has in turn fetishised the film as the epitome of disaffected youth and institutionalised violence. As Susan Hayward remarks, 'a film itself can obtain fetish status when, for example, a star has died young and/or in tragic circumstances'.¹⁴ This fetishisation, I suggest, relates to the ways in which the film continues to monitor the shifting socio-political climate in Brazil with regard to street children. In other words, the enduring fascination with the Fernando/Pixote story reflects how performance, narrative, and the fate of the actor map onto the contemporary climate. This is suggested in a recent article that compares the experiences of several former street children in 2010 with conditions experienced in the early 1980s. Writing about one of the success stories, the authors remark, 'it's worth remembering that if she had been born in the past, her fate would have been, let's say, somewhat *pixoteesque*'.¹⁵ Thus, Ramos da Silva's performance stands as a potent signifier of doomed youth and a virtual index of the status of Brazil's street children today.

Pixote resurrected

The continuing relevance of *Pixote* to contemporary Brazil is illuminated by the way Fernando's onscreen character and Vinícius de Oliveira's Josué in *Central do Brasil* are so frequently compared, since the fate of the latter in some way offers an antidote to Fernando's tragic end, proving that it is indeed possible to overcome and transcend social disadvantage. Ismail Xavier, in his account of Brazilian cinema in the 1990s, remarks:

We should note how Josué appears as a new Pixote, who this time succeeds in finding his substitute mother figure, contrasting his own story with the disgraceful experience of the original Pixote, who searched for the nursing mother in the figure of the prostitute, but

found a character who followed the codes of realism, not the codes of the moral parable.¹⁶

Deborah Shaw, in her discussion of *Pixote* and *Central do Brasil*, has also contrasted the lives of the two non-actors: ‘Even in the biographical lives of the actors who play the children, the contrast between Fernando Ramos da Silva (*Pixote*) and Vinícius de Oliveira could not be greater; as has been seen, Fernando was murdered by police at the age of nineteen, after a life of petty crime’.¹⁷ Stephanie Dennison and Lisa Shaw compare the two boys in the following way: ‘Just like the ill-fated young star of Hector Babenco’s film *Pixote* [...], Vinícius de Oliveira was not an actor before joining the cast of *Central do Brasil*’.¹⁸ Scholars and critics frequently remark on Vinícius’s performance and charming portrayal of Josué, juxtaposing the romanticised story that surrounds his selection for the role with the very different circumstances of da Silva’s past. The anecdote repeatedly surfaced in promotional interviews at the time of the release of *Central do Brasil*, and has subsequently continued to circulate as a piece of extra-cinematic folklore. The story goes that Salles had already auditioned 1500 young boys for the part of Josué when he stumbled over his future protagonist working as a shoeshine boy in Santos Dumont airport in Rio de Janeiro.¹⁹ To add to the romantic dimension of the story, it transpired that Vinícius had never even seen a film. As both Deborah Shaw and Stephanie Dennison have noted astutely, this story is not without commercial appeal, as those who become familiar with it are not only intrigued by his performance but also feel warmed by the role that the film has played in his life.²⁰ This folklore both endorses de Oliveira as a representative of the marginalised classes and celebrates his ultimate triumph over adversity. Indeed, as Walter Salles explains, ‘for many Brazilians he’s the boy who managed to escape that deterministic future’.²¹ As a condition of his participation in the film, a clause was built into his contract stipulating that the production

company, Vídeo Filmes, should provide for his education. Alongside his studies, he has appeared in several theatre productions and in Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas's film, *Linha de passe*, in which he plays the part of an aspiring footballer, Dario.

Despite the contrasting cinematic depictions and biographical outcomes, however, *Pixote* and *Central do Brasil* used similar processes to select and prepare their casts. In fact, both films credit acting coach Fátima Toledo, who has since gone on to train the non-professional cast for *Cidade de Deus*, *O Céu de Suely* (*Suely in the Sky*, Karim Aïnouz, 2006), *Tropa de elite* (*Elite Squad*, José Padilha, 2007), *Mutum* (Sandra Kogut, 2007) and *Linha de passe*. *Pixote* was the first film Toledo worked on, but it is worthy of note that she has since contributed to many of the most successful Brazilian films of recent years, and, moreover, those which have generated much discussion regarding realism, performance and the status of the non-actor.

In interviews, Babenco and Salles have justified their use of non-professional actors in terms of them bringing something to the projects that professional child actors could not. Babenco states, 'the children are from the poor neighbourhoods of São Paulo, because in Brazil child actors are very bad. They work in soap operas in television and they are very stereotyped children. I would never have gotten the same results from actors as from the children from the poor districts of São Paulo'.²² For his own part, Salles reports that 'I [...] wanted to use non-actors, mainly because they can reach into themselves without pretension and let their experiences show on screen'.²³ He was also reportedly touched by Vinícius's response to his invitation to audition for the part, when he insisted that the other shoeshine boys should also be given an opportunity to test for the role: 'Ultimately, the film is about solidarity and discovering compassion, and he had those qualities ingrained in him'.²⁴

Integral to the realism of the two films in question, the use of non-professional actors imbues the representations with a claim to authenticity. This is particularly striking in the

circumstances surrounding the release of *Pixote* in North America, where the feature was prefaced with a two-minute introduction by the director, establishing the socio-political context and ‘facts’ about street children in Brazil for foreign audiences. This prologue, as Randal Johnson notes, ‘clearly attempts to convince the spectator of the veracity of the events the film represents’ and serves to accentuate Fernando’s biography in relation to the character of Pixote, as the camera zooms in on the actor in his home environment and the director’s voice recounts his family situation.²⁵ Thus, although both films are fiction features, with undeniably constructed narratives, they have a discernible documentary quality, which is intimately related to the relationship between the actors’ on- and off-screen lives. The depth and range of language and embodied repertoires that these non-actors bring to the films attests to their knowledge of the social worlds to which their characters pertain.²⁶ In this way, the directors authenticate their versions of reality and simultaneously make these films credible as instances of social critique. Casting is a crucial concern in this dynamic.

Stardom and typage

In many ways, and as the case of Fernando Ramos da Silva illustrates, non-professional actors awkwardly occupy the position of star that the media affords them. My analysis of the two case studies above demonstrates how extra-diegetic anecdotes surrounding actors’ lives at the moment of the release of their films inform their participation and their character development, in addition to the spectator’s response to the presumed realism of the representation. As is the case with more traditional stars, ‘the image on screen is already contextualised by the circulation of biographical and personal anecdotal materials that frame their appearances on and off-screen’.²⁷ In this way, the spectator is bound into a pact with the non-actor, which resembles the relationship established between a star and his/her fans. The star offers a kind of reciprocal contract with the spectator, since the constitution of a star is

not only built on the mediatised construction of an off-screen persona but also on the spectator's expectations of their on-screen performances. Any deviation from these expectations in this respect breaks the contract of the star text, which relies as heavily on the spectator's recognition of their characteristic traits as it does on the institutional machinery that creates the idealised image in the first place.²⁸ Thus, given that it is through repetition that the audience comes to recognise and appreciate certain aspects that correspond to the actor, stardom is habitually consolidated following a series of performances. As Wojcik reminds us:

Typification – and, indeed, stardom – occurs *through the actor's recurrence across a number of films* in different roles. Recognition of the actor in a series of films creates a double identification in which we see not only the character but also the star. This recognition is crucial both to the star's function in the text and his or her extratextual success.²⁹ [my emphasis]

Since I have been discussing two actors who have had interrupted acting trajectories, this process of contract and expectation is certainly less obvious. One might assume that the relative anonymity of these non-professional actors in the public realm, and their scarce film appearances, contradict the doctrine of cinematic stardom, which supposes a sustained career whereby the aura and characteristic traits of the star on and off screen are consolidated through multiple performances. However, in his survey of the specificities of acting for the screen, Siegfried Kracauer once suggested that there are more affinities between the Hollywood star and the non-actor than one would imagine. Integral to his comparison is the role of casting and 'typage', a concept intrinsic to Soviet montage cinema and fundamentally related to cinematic realism.³⁰ Kracauer writes, 'the typical Hollywood actor resembles the

non-actor in that he acts out a standing character identical with his own or at least developed from it, frequently with the aid of make-up and publicity experts. As with any real-life figure on the screen, his presence in a film points beyond the film'.³¹ Different aspects of 'type' feed into the concept of typage but primary to our discussion here is the idea that both stars and non-actors are chosen for roles based on physical appearance, and the social milieu their bodies are seen to represent.³² According to Kracauer, 'non-actors are chosen because of their authentic looks and behaviour. Their major virtue is to figure in a narrative which explores the reality they help constitute but does not culminate in their lives themselves'.³³ In this way, the presumed authenticity of the non-actor comes to stand in for a social group, as they are regarded as 'part and parcel of that reality'.³⁴ The 'look' of the non-actor is fundamental in achieving the desired effect. Thus, Ramos da Silva's face was highlighted in *Pixote* through multiple close-ups and lighting (insert screen shot of *Pixote*). The significance of his face is reflected in the comments made by one reviewer, who writes that he 'has one of the most eloquent faces ever seen on the screen. It's not actually bruised, but it looks battered. The eyes don't match, as if one eye were attending to immediate events and the other were considering escape routes. It's a face full of life and expression and one that hardly ever smiles'.³⁵ The role of the close-up in creating a continuum between the on- and off-screen persona has been widely discussed, perhaps most notably by Béla Balázs, who wrote in 'The Face of Man' that 'the language of the face cannot be suppressed or controlled'.³⁶ Indeed, the common assumption that 'the close-up reveals the unmediated personality of the individual, and this belief in the "capturing" of the "unique" "person" of a performer' is central to the star text, as articulated by Richard Dyer.³⁷

Nevertheless, whilst these parallels between stars and non-actors attest to their similar framing in terms of extra-cinematic discourse, wherein 'both the non-actor in typage and the Hollywood star create a role homologous with themselves', it should be noted that the

consequences of typecasting are different for stars and non-actors in accordance with their narrative drives.³⁸ Indeed, as Robertson Wojcik argues:

The non-actor in tpage differs markedly from the Hollywood star because the two models of type are based on competing notions of identity and the role of the individual. In tpage, the non-actor represents a social type, characterized by social class and social role [...] Thus, a person may be cast as something he is not, since the role is based on physical appearance [...] and is not meant to reflect his real identity.³⁹

This, in turn, is related to the difference between the demands of the bourgeois psychological drama and the requirements of social critique. Yet, in the cases of the non-actors explored here, we have seen how biographical anecdotes circulate in the press to consolidate the idea that the filmic characters appear as true resemblances of the actors' personalities. To offer a more recent example, *Cidade de Deus* clearly illuminates the continuity of social milieu between the *favela* off screen and that represented in the fiction:

The acting talents of these unknown children and adolescents became a source of constant praise and generalized consensus but the dividing line between fact and fiction was further blurred by the social origins of these actors who escaped the fate of their fictional characters, yet lived in direct contact with the contradictions of the *favelas*. The film itself insists on the ambiguity between the 'real' and the fictional by pairing off at the end of the narration the pictures of the actors with the photographs of the real drug dealers that they had been embodying.⁴⁰

In other words, elements of the film's form serve to underline the significance of the actors' lives to the realism of the films, and validate their involvement as emblematic of their social groups. Whilst Robertson Wojcik suggests that for non-actors the most important aspect of typage is physical appearance – and it is important to remember that early theories of typage arose in the era of silent film, thus removing the importance of the voice (and therefore accent) in relation to the actor – I would argue that extra-diegetic storylines significantly impact upon the non-actor's reception in the public sphere, pre-determining their reception, the coverage they receive in the media, and, most importantly, any future roles the actor may play. Although it may be true that a non-actor can 'be cast as something he is not', the press coverage of their personal lives means that they are still deemed to be more representative of their perceived social milieu than someone from another sector.

An interesting example to consider in this context is the actor Leandro Firmino, who played Zé Pequeno (Li'l Zé), the most dangerous and feared gangster of the *favela*, in *Cidade de Deus*. As Fátima Toledo has noted, 'he [Leandro] is gentle and sweet [...] At first, he wasn't sure about playing a character so different from himself, but I think that in the end the difference helped'.⁴¹ Much like Fernando Ramos da Silva, however, Leandro Firmino would like to be given other kinds of roles, ones that do not necessarily reinforce his iconicity as a violent gangster.⁴² Stereotyping is a common concern among non-professional actors who would like to further their film careers through exploring other roles. Whilst, as Lúcia Nagib has argued, 'it is clearly inadequate to attribute the film's realist aspect simply to the physical appearance and origins of the cast',⁴³ the case of *Cidade de Deus* nonetheless reveals how non-professional actors who are being applauded for their visceral performances of drug dealers and villains, struggle in acquiring roles which move beyond the topography of the *favela*. Vinícius de Oliveira's recent casting as Dario in *Linha de passe* serves to reify the actor's face as a symbol of marginalised yet aspiring youth on the urban fringes (insert close

ups of Josué and Dario here). In the film, Dario's struggle to become a professional footballer serves as a locus of hope for the entire family, a not uncommon dream in Brazil, where hundreds of young men audition for professional positions, as the coach reminds us towards the beginning of the film. The world of football not only provides the title of the film but also a circular structure to the story's denouement, with the character of Dario showing most signs of achieving his dreams, as he scores a penalty in the game at the close of the film.⁴⁴ One reviewer attributed a 'ravaged magnetism' to the performance of Vinícius de Oliveira, claiming that 'one face stands out, the kind of face that owns a film and haunts you long after you've seen it', and recalling the actor's earlier success in *Central do Brasil* ten years earlier.⁴⁵

Conclusion

The non-professional actors discussed in this chapter in many ways embody the political charge that the star's body, performance, aura and public persona offer. Both Vinícius de Oliveira and Fernando Ramos da Silva imbue the films they appear in with a reality effect and in so doing create ideological repercussions which echo Dyer's conception of the political work of the star in the national imaginary. As Dyer writes, 'stars have a privileged position in the definition of social roles and types, and this must have real consequences in terms of how people believe they can and should behave'.⁴⁶ The actors in question were not amateurs who dreamed of being stars, but rather individuals who were chosen, among other factors, for their linguistic vernacular and knowledge of social worlds with which the director and screenwriter were less familiar. By way of their celebrated performances, however, they have become stars by default, creating an interface between the 'official' culture and the marginalised world of the streets and *favelas*. Journalistic accounts of their lives and newfound status at once celebrate their successes and paradoxically reinforce their socio-

economic marginalisation, typecasting them in roles that are deemed to be emblematic of their social origins. Moreover, as we have seen, the involvement of non-professional actors in recent Brazilian film does not necessarily herald improved conditions for them in real life.

By delineating some of the parallels between the construction and mediation of the star and the non-actor, I hope to have shown how these bodies are ‘always already an ideological construction’.⁴⁷ The circulation of anecdotal material that emphasises the Brazilian non-actor’s social status presents an interesting parallel with the consolidation of a star’s roles through their off-screen persona. This process acts like acoustic feedback; the biographical information reverberates both within and without the cinematic representation, influencing the public’s perception of the non-actor’s ‘real’ character and the roles they will be permitted to play in other films. This complex circuitry, which binds biography to representation and back again, mediated by attendant public discourses, unmasks the potent symbolism of the non-actor to the new realism of Brazilian cinema. Filmmakers such as Babenco, Salles, Meirelles and Lund choose the non-professional route not merely as an aesthetic option but also because of their perception of the social function of cinema in Brazilian society.⁴⁸ These filmic ciphers of social class provide unique windows onto the interlaced realities of different sectors of Brazilian society, whilst at the same time facilitating the emergence of stars in a non-classical sense.

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¹ As Deborah Martin recently reminded me, the non-professional child actors who feature in *La ciénaga* (Lucrecia Martel, 2001, Argentina) received little media attention for their portrayal of middle-class children. Personal communication, 22 August 2013. I would like to thank her and the editors for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

² D. Shaw. 2003. *Contemporary Cinema of Latin America: Ten Key Films*, London and New York: Continuum, 142; P. Armstrong. 2009. 'Essaying the Real: Brazil's Cinematic *Retomada* and the New Commonwealth', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 15(2), 87.

³ Deborah Martin. Personal communication, 22 August 2013.

⁴ The present paragraph draws heavily on Robert Levine's thorough account of Fernando Ramos da Silva's life. See R. Levine. 1997. 'Pixote: Fiction and Reality in Brazilian Life', in D. F. Stevens (ed.), *Based on a True Story: Latin American History at the Movies*, Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 201-39.

⁵ Levine, 'Pixote', 208-9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁷ Fernando Ramos da Silva cited in Levine, 'Pixote', 209.

⁸ G. Csicsery and H. Babenco. 1982. 'Individual Solutions: An Interview with Hector Babenco', *Film Quarterly*, 36(1), 5-6.

⁹ A. Higson. 1986. 'Film Acting and Independent Cinema', *Screen*, 27(3-4), 124.

¹⁰ Levine, 'Pixote', 209. For an in-depth analysis of the *romance-reportagem* (reportage-novel) and Babenco's first two films see R. Johnson. 1987. 'The *Romance-Reportagem* and the Cinema: Babenco's *Lúcio Flavio* and *Pixote*', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 24(2), 35-48.

¹¹ Armstrong, 'Essaying the Real', 99.

¹² L. Mindrisz. 2009. 'Babenco discute *Pixote* em Diadema', *ABCD Maior*, 14 November.

Retrieved 16 July 2010 from

<http://www.abcdmaior.com.br/noticia_exibir.php?noticia=17324>.

¹³ Armstrong, 'Essaying the Real', 99.

¹⁴ S. Hayward. 2000. *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*. London and New York: Routledge, 335.

¹⁵ 'Não é demais lembrar que se tivesse nascido em tempos idos, provavelmente seu destino seria, digamos, pixotesco'. P. Carriel and J. C. Fernandes. 2010. 'Vitória no País dos

Pixotes', *Gazeta do Povo*, 12 July. Retrieved 16 July 2010 from

<<http://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/vidaecidadania/conteudo.phtml?id=1024029&ch=>>.

¹⁶ I. Xavier. 2003. 'Brazilian Cinema in the 1990s: The Unexpected Encounter and the Resentful Character', in L. Nagib (ed.), *The New Brazilian Cinema*, London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 60.

¹⁷ Shaw, *Contemporary Cinema of Latin America*, 164.

¹⁸ S. Dennison and L. Shaw. 2004. *Popular Cinema in Brazil, 1930-2001*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 211.

¹⁹ Shaw, *Contemporary Cinema of Latin America*, 163. Serendipity placed the director and Vinícius de Oliveira in the same place at the same time, thus making an irresistible wink to that early proponent of Italian neorealism, Vittorio de Sica's *Scuscià* (*Shoeshine*, 1946). In this film, the innocence of the child shoeshine protagonists is compromised when the two boys are unwittingly involved in the world of crime. When they are separated in a juvenile detention centre, their relationship unravels and their friendship meets with a tragic end.

²⁰ Ibid.; S. Dennison. 2000. 'A Meeting of Two Worlds: Recent Trends in Brazilian Cinema', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 6(2), 142.

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- ²¹ Salles cited in N. James. 1999. 'Heartbreak and Miracles', *Sight and Sound*, 9(3), 15.
- ²² Csicsery and Babenco, 'Individual Solutions', 4.
- ²³ B. Flynn. 1998. 'Shoe-shine Star', *The Guardian*, 24 August. Retrieved 16 July from <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/1998/aug/24/awardsandprizes>>.
- ²⁴ Salles cited in Flynn, 'Shoe-shine Star'.
- ²⁵ Johnson, 'The *Romance-Reportagem* and the Cinema', 44.
- ²⁶ Levine estimates that approximately forty per cent of *Pixote*'s original script was modified as a result of the collaboration of the street boys who made up the cast. Levine, 'Pixote', 203.
- ²⁷ B. King. 1985. 'Articulating Stardom', *Screen*, 26(5), 40.
- ²⁸ P. Robertson Wojcik. 2003. 'Typecasting', *Criticism*, 45(2), 233.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 233.
- ³⁰ S. Kracauer. 1997 [1960]. *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 93-101.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 99.
- ³² As Robertson Wojcik acknowledges, face casting is but one aspect. In 1940s Hindi cinema, for example, voice casting became a crucial pattern in filmmaking. See Robertson Wojcik, 'Typecasting', for more detailed information.
- ³³ Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 99.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.
- ³⁵ V. Canby. 1981. 'Babenco's *Pixote* Shows the Boys of Brazil', *The New York Times*, 5 May. Retrieved 16 July 2010 from <<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9C0CE5DC103BF936A35756C0A967948260>>.

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- ³⁶ B. Balázs. 1952. *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*, London: Denis Dobson, 63.
- ³⁷ R. Dyer. 1998 [1979]. *Stars*, London: BFI, 15.
- ³⁸ Robertson Wojcik, 'Typecasting', 231.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 232.
- ⁴⁰ B. Jaguaribe. 2004. 'Favelas and the Aesthetics of Realism: Representations in Film and Literature', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 13(3), 335.
- ⁴¹ 'ele é meigo e doce [...] No início, ficou inseguro por interpretar um personagem tão diferente do que ele é, mas acho que a diferença acabou ajudando'. N. Fernandes. 2002. 'Leandro Firmino da Hora – A Redenção pelo Cinema', *Revista Quem*. Retrieved 16 July 2010 from <<http://revistaquem.globo.com/Revista/Quem/0,,EMI34434-9531,00-LEANDRO+FIRMINO+DA+HORA+A+REDENCAO+PELO+CINEMA.html>>.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ L. Nagib. 2007. *Brazil On Screen: Cinema Novo, New Cinema, Utopia*, London: I. B. Tauris, 108.
- ⁴⁴ This penalty is, of course, bitter-sweet as his mother was not able to attend the match to pay the scout the bribe required to seal the deal.
- ⁴⁵ T. Robey. 2008. 'Film review: *Linha de passe*', *The Telegraph*, 19 September. Retrieved 27 November 2013 from <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/tim-robey/3560869/Film-review-Linha-de-Passe.html>>.
- ⁴⁶ Dyer, *Stars*, 8.
- ⁴⁷ Higson, 'Film Acting and Independent Cinema', 124.
- ⁴⁸ Further research could be carried out in the area of non-professional stardom, not least with respect to the overlapping discourses of cinematic and musical fame. As demonstrated by the

cases of *O Invasor* (*The Trespasser*, Beto Brant, 2002) and *Antônia* (Tata Amaral, 2006), hip hop artists are increasingly involved in the replication of the *favela* imaginary and their participation in films such as these both attracts people to the films and provides fertile ground for the elaboration of a hybrid form of stardom. Following his appearance in *Cidade de Deus*, the singer-songwriter Seu Jorge has featured in a number of films and his music now has greater international reach. See Katia Augusta Maciel's chapter in this volume.