

On Brazilian Cinema: A Portrait of Director and Producer Walter Salles

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Walter Salles is probably the most widely known Brazilian director and producer. This article offers a portrait of his work over the last two decades as part of the cinematic and cultural changes that took place in Brazil. It starts with a historical overview of Brazilian film history and will then take a closer look at the films directed by Salles and his activities as producer. By looking at the evolution of the Brazilian film industry in the last ten to fifteen years in terms of market structures as well as aesthetic qualities, two major references become apparent: the more (but not only) commercial oriented productions of Globo Filmes, which often meet public taste and rely on a well-proven television language; second, the movies of Walter Salles as well as the films produced by Videofilmes, a company run and founded in 1987 by him and his brother, the documentarist João Moreira Salles. Videofilmes not only fosters many of the somewhat marginal, smaller film projects, but also serves as support for more artistically orientated movies.

Keywords: Walter Salles; Brazil Cinema; Cultur.

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Walter Salles

From an international perspective, taking consolidated festivals and events such as Cannes, Berlin or the Oscars as well as the critics and audience responses in Europe and the United States as a (nevertheless questionable) reference, one may associate the contemporary Brazilian Cinema with basically two names: Fernando Meirelles who gained worldwide acclamation with *City of God* (2002), followed by

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the *The Constant Gardener* (2005) which gave Rachel Weisz an Oscar for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role. And second, Walter Waller, who started his international career with *Central Station* (1998). Film and leading actress Fernanda Montenegro won, among others, the Golden and Silver Bear for best movie and best actress at the Berlin Film Festival in 1998. *Central Station* was also elected as the best non-English movie at the British Academy Awards and the Golden Globes, without mentioning the numerous Latin-American awards. In 2005, Salles' film on young Guevara, *The Motorcycle Diaries*, was nominated for the best foreign movie by the Golden Globes and won an Oscar at the Academy Awards ceremony for the song *Al otro lado del rio* by the Uruguayan songwriter Jorge Drexler. The International Movie Database (IMDB) computes a total of 37 awards as well as another 16 nominations for director Walter Salles. In 2008, films of both Meirelles and Salles had been selected for the official program of the Cannes Film Festival: Fernando Meirelles' movie *Blindness*, based on a novel by Portuguese Nobel laureate Jose Saramago and starring Julianne Moore, opened the Festival; and Walter Salles was present with two films. The first, *Line of Passage* (a collaboration with Daniela Thomas) is the story about four brothers from a poor family and their struggle for social rise. One of the brothers is played by Vinicius de Oliveira, the boy from *Central Station*, who, in this film, is trying to escape his poorness by becoming a professional soccer player. Sandra Corveloni won the best actress prize at the Cannes Film Festival for her performance as his single mother in the Brazilian megalopolis São Paulo. Salles has been also present at Cannes through his production firm *Videofilmes* that co-produced *La Leonera* by Argentine director Pablo Trapero. It comes therefore as no surprise that both Salles and Meirelles appear in lists such as "Most influential figures in Brazil" (Veja magazine) or "Most important Latin film makers" (The Hollywood Reporter). Salles' next international project, a film based on cult-novel *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, produced by Francis Ford Coppola, will probably contribute more so to his worldwide recognition.

Walter Salles' background has certainly contributed to his frequent shifts between Brazilian related movies and international productions. He was born in 1956 in Rio de Janeiro, but due to his father's activities as a banker and diplomat, the family lived in Paris between 1962 and 1969. Back in Rio de Janeiro, Salles studied economics and later obtained his master degree in Audiovisual Communication from the University of California. Between 1983 and 1993 he was responsible for hundreds of commercials as well as a series of interviews in the TV program *Conexão Internacional* on the Brazilian Channel *Manchete*, which hosted guests like Federico Fellini, Vittorio Gassman and Marcello Mastroianni. He also filmed cultural studies of Japan and China, reportages on Brazilian artists like Tomie Ohtake and Rubens Gerchman, and documentaries for European TV channels like ARTE, France 3 and the BBC. In 1987, Salles made another documentary for television, which would be decisive for his future career as fiction film maker. It was the portrait of the polish artist Frans Krajcberg (*Krajcberg – Poet of the remains*). But let us let us first take a short look at the main tendencies in Brazilian cinema history.

Brazilian cinema history began around the same time as in Europe or the U.S. New media such as photography and film arrived in Brazil quite quickly, imported mainly by foreign immigrants. The first Daguerreotype had already been reported in 1840 and, in 1898, moving images were shot in the Bay of Guanabara, in Rio de

Janeiro. Films with elaborated plots were produced from 1908 onwards, ranging from adaptations of novels such as *O Guarani* by José de Alencar to police cases like *The Stranglers*. A more professional film and studio structure, however, was implemented only during the 1930s, within the context of the efforts towards industrialization made by the Vargas government. As to the insertion of Brazilian films into the global scenario and the basic historical phases of Brazilian cinema, I would like to draw out the following basic lines. From the silent area still echoes the experimental *Limite* (1931), a two hour long film-poem by Mário Peixoto. Its newly restored version was screened in 2007 at the Cannes Film Festival and was one of the selected films from the World Cinema Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by Martin Scorsese and others, among them Walter Salles, to provide financial assistance for the preservation, restoration and broadcasting of films from all over the world, in particular the cinema of Africa, Latin America, Asia and Central Europe. In 1962, *O Pagador de Promessas*, directed by Anselmo Duarte and known in the English-speaking world as either *Keeper of Promises*, *The Given Word* or *The Promise*, was awarded the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, becoming the first and so far only Brazilian film to achieve such a feat. The cinema novo and mainly Glauber Rocha's *Black God-White Devil* from 1963 with its mélange of elements ranging from the oral literature of northeastern Brazil, westerns, distancing elements borrowed from the theater of Bertolt Brecht, and ancient tragedy as well as the inclusion of historical and mystical figures has ever since stimulated debates among the international cinematic community. The foundation of the state-run agency *Embrafilme* in 1969, frequently criticized for its dubious selection criteria, bureaucracy, favoritism and bad use of tax-payers money, nevertheless enabled a varied and memorable filmography, including the most seen of all Brazilian films, *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* (1976) by Bruno Barreto (based on a book by Jorge Amado with an estimated public audience of 12 million), Cacá Diegues' *Bye Bye Brasil* (1979) and Hector Babenco's *Pixote* (1981), among others. In 1990, President Fernando Collor cut the central programs for film sponsorship like *Embrafilme* and fiscal privileges which led to a disruption of Brazilian film production. In 1991, only one national film came on the market: *High Art*, directed by Walter Salles based on a novel by Rubem Fonseca, an American-Brazilian co production with original audio in English. The film achieved a market share in Brazil of less than 1%.

Carla Camurati's film *Carlota Joaquina, Princess of Brazil* (1995) is regarded as an historical turning point in the revival of the Brazilian film industry, based on new laws of tax deductions for film financing. It was the first Brazilian movie since the 1980s that attracted more than one million viewers to the cinemas. Critics have analyzed this phenomenon initially under the term *retomada*, the resumption or renaissance of national cinema. In the numerous attempts to come to terms with this phase one may cite two basic tendencies: one that sees the films of this period under certain thematic and aesthetic points of views, as for instance in *Cinema Novo: Um balanço crítico da Retomada* (2003) by Luiz Zanin Oricchio. The author, a journalist and critic from the newspaper *Estado de São Paulo*, tries to establish a useful taxonomy by dividing thematically the movies in categories like "History and Film" or "Privacy and Publicity", or "Sertão and Favela". On the other hand critics like Pedro Butcher, author of *Cinema Brasileiro Hoje* (2005), have concluded that unlike the new cinema from the 1960s, the *retomada* films have no common ideological,

aesthetical or filmic base, but only share the intention to recapture a slice of the market share and, thereby, reestablish the Brazilian cinema as an economical factor.

In the new emerging film industry of the last decade, *Globo Filmes* play an important and controversial role. *Globo Filmes* was founded in 1998 and has so far produced more than 70 movies, with a total of more than 70 million viewers. In 1993, the audience of Brazilian movies was 0.1% of the total number of cinema spectators in Brazil, counting 45.5 thousand spectators. In 2003, this figure had grown to 21%, or more than 22 million spectators. This increase, which represents quite a remarkable percentage for national cinema production, has been mainly due to the commercially successful *Globo* productions. Many of their films come to the cinemas with approximately 200-300 prints which corresponds to the numbers of prints used to promote American blockbuster. Low-budget films and movies that are frequently successful in festivals, i.e. *Mango Yellow* of Cláudio Assis (2002), must settle for 14 copies and approximately 120,000 viewers. Three other movies from the last years (*Passing by*, *The Storytellers* and *Up Against Them All*), all of them awarded numerous prizes, only reached between 10,000 and 67,000 viewers, respectively.¹ *Globo Filmes* represent about 20% of all Brazilian productions, but due to its high success rate has reached a percentage of about 80% in revenues at the box office.² The following numbers show the concentration of Brazilian film production: in the first half of 2006, 83% of the Brazilian movies achieved a number of viewers below 50,000 and “from the 5,8 millions spectators of this period, 5,2 millions alone fall on three blockbuster Globo-movies”.³

By looking at the evolution of the Brazilian film industry in the last ten to fifteen years in terms of market structures and not as much in terms of thematic or aesthetic qualities, two major references become apparent: the more (but not only) commercial oriented productions of *Globo Filmes*, which often meet public taste and rely on a well-proven television language; second, the movies of Walter Salles as well as the films produced by *Videofilmes*, a company run and founded in 1987 by he and his brother, the documentarist João Moreira Salles. *Videofilmes* not only fosters many of the somewhat marginal, smaller film projects, but also serves as support for more artistically orientated movies like *Suely in the Sky* (Karim Ainouz 2006), *Lower City* (Sérgio Machado 2005), *Madame Satã* (Karim Ainouz 2002), *Behind the sun* (Walter Salles 2001), *To the Left of the Father* (Luiz Fernando Carvalho 2001) or *Central Station* (Walter Salles 1998), films that did well in many festivals worldwide. As a distributor, *Videofilmes* offers movies like the German production *The Edukators* (Hans Weingartner 2004) or classics of political engagement like *The Battle of Chile* (Patricio Guzmán 1979) and *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 1968; the DVD-version has a audio commentary by W. Salles).

Most spectators will link Walter Salles to his two main successes so far: *Central Station*, the story of the worldly-wise Dora and the suddenly motherless boy Josué, who go together on the quest for Josué’s father and also find each other on this journey from the metropolis of Rio de Janeiro into the northeast. And second, *The Motorcycle Diaries*, the journey of young Guevara and Alberto Granado. Like most road-movies, *Central Station* and *The Motorcycle Diaries* are all about the quest for a twofold identity, the one of the protagonists as individuals as well as their destiny in context of the Brazilian and Latin-American geopolitics. This aspect was surely decisive for an open-air screening of *The Motorcycle Diaries* during the *World Social Forum* – the antipole to the annual meeting of politicians and celebrities in

Davos – held in Porto Alegre, South-Brazil, in 2005. Salles himself participated in the forum by invitation of the *Landless Workers Movement (MST)*. *Videofilmes*, his production firm, was represented by two other movies: *Entreatos* (2004), a documentary film by his brother João Moreira Salles about the election campaign of the current president Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, as well as *Peões* by Eduardo Coutinho, about the time when Lula was still a militant unionist at the end of the 70s. In many interviews Walter Salles has stressed that the shootings for *The Motorcycle Diaries* resulted in an overwhelming experience of Latin American solidarity among the crew, which changed his hitherto meticulous working method giving more room for intuition, improvisation and cooperation between all those involved in the shootings – Argentines, Chileans, Peruvians, Mexicans and Brazilians. But it would be much too simple to see Salles work under a plain North-South perspective; *Central Station* and *The Motorcycle Diaries* were accomplished only through the cooperation of Robert Redford and the Sundance Festival. *Central Station* received the Sundance screenplay award and thus the financial coverage for the project’s execution; and the film adaptation of young Guevara’s diaries had been, over the years, a long time project of Robert Redford, who then chose Salles to direct.

Salles ability to combine regional landscapes, ambiences and faces with universally appealing stories and technical sophistication has attracted a worldwide audience for his films. Ironically, it is exactly these aspects that awake among many Brazilian reviewers, especially from the academic field, a rather skeptical reaction. A few years ago, critic Ivana Bentes came up with the slogan of “cosmetics of hunger” in relation to the movies by Salles and Fernando Meirelles. It was an allusion to new cinema director Glauber Rocha’s slogan of the “aesthetics of hunger”, one of the central programmatic manifestos of the cinema novo from the year 1965. What Bentes meant was that movies like *Central Station* or *Behind the sun* stage the dry, meager and poor north-east as a folkloristic spectacle of the masses and fall behind in the radical film visions of the cinema novo. Many Brazilian critics still seem to worship the cinema novo as the non plus ultra and remain therefore rather skeptical towards the quite large thematic and aesthetic diversity of the Brazilian movies of the last 5-10 years, particularly those produced by *Videofilmes*, because they frequently lack a clear ideological feature and do not offer such strong identity potentials as many of the films in the 1960s:

These classic films of the 60s created an aesthetics based on the dry cut, the nervous framing, the overexposure, the handheld camera, the fragmented narrative which mirrored the cruelty of the sertão. This is the Cinema Novo aesthetics, whose purpose was to avoid turning misery into folklore. Those films proposed an ethics and an aesthetics for the images of pain and revolt. However the idea rejected by those films of expressing the intolerable through beautiful landscapes, thus glamorizing poverty, emerges in some contemporary films, in which conventional language and cinematography turn the sertão into a garden or a museum of exoticism, thus ›rescuing‹ it through spectacle.⁴

As mentioned before, *Central Station* and *The Motorcycle Diaries* resulted from an international collaboration with the US and Japan. This oscillation between the regional and global, one of the specific elements in Salles work, also appears in his

movie *Behind the Sun* (2001), based on the novel by Albanian writer Ismail Kadaré. The novel was originally titled *Broken April* (1978) and includes one of the favorite themes of Kadaré: how the past affects the present, this time exemplified by the unwritten law of *Kanun*, the brutal blood feud traditions of the Albanian highlands. Salles transported the archaic history about the vendetta in Albania to the north-east of Brazil in the beginning of the 20th century, an adaptation regarded by Kadaré himself as very successful. After Salles had gained a reputation with filmic excursions into the Latin American history and the present, his work as director on the Hollywood remake (2005) of Hideo Nakata's *Dark Water*, originally released in 2002 and based on a short story by Koji Suzuki (*The Ring*), came as quite a surprise. Salles himself described his first American experience of being contracted merely as an executing director as "interesting" and he was able to finish a movie without the usual long-lasting preparation phase of his previous projects. The next project brought him back to a more personal work, participating on *Paris, je t'aime* (2006), in which twenty filmmakers, each in his own style and genre, present a five minute episode on one specific arrondissement which were then to be fused and weaved into an atmospherically more homogenate story. Salles also participated in a similar project a year later, which had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival 2007: *Chacun son cinéma*, a collective work about cinema from 33 renowned directors like Theodoros Angelopoulos, Bille August, Jane Campion, David Cronenberg, Lars von Trier and Wim Wenders.

Among the current works in progress we have already mentioned the adaptation of the 1957 cult novel *On the road* by Jack Kerouac, whose film rights have been owned by Francis Ford Coppola since 1979 and who recently engaged Salles as the director for this project. The screenplay is being written by José Rivera, who also wrote *The Motorcycle Diaries*. The fact that Salles chooses to look on the novel from a point of view that focuses on the immigration background of the protagonists is interesting. The beat-generation is thus not so much seen as a general rebellion against the ways of life of the 50s in the US, but first of all in the context of a conflict about the role assigned to them as a marginal immigrant generation. Kerouac himself was born into a Franco-Canadian family, Ginsberg came from an East-European background with communistic engagement and the beat poets Lawrence Ferlinguetti and Diane di Prima had Italian ancestry. In order to illuminate this background as extensively as possible, as well as to reflect eventual "relations to the present",⁵ Salles first shot a documentary on the protagonists of *On the road*, following their moves through the US and setting, so to speak, the main coordinates for the actual movie itself.

The complementation of fiction and documentary may be seen as another main characteristic in the work of Walter Salles. Two documentary films served in fact as a starting point for his international film career, specifically in regard to *Central Station*: a portrait of the sculptor Frans Krajcberg (*Krajcberg – Poet of remains*) from 1987, and an encounter between Krajcberg and a former prison inmate named *Socorro Nobre*, which resulted in the homonymous film portrait in 1995. Krajcberg, born 1921 into a Jewish-Polish family, fled to Russia after the murdering of his family by the Nazis. There he joined the Red Army and later on was drafted into the Second Polish army. By the end of the war, at the age of 24 and without any family, a "burned person", he went to Germany to study art with Willi Baumeister. He engaged there with the artistic modernity, the Bauhaus movement and abstract art. With a letter of recommendation of Baumeister he moved to Paris in 1947 and in

1948 arrived in Brazil. From the 1960s onwards, Krajberg's sculptures and installations have made him into one of the internationally best known eco-artist.⁶ A newspaper article on the artist and his transformation of burned wood into sculptures, thus giving them a new life, finds its way to Socorro Nobre, a woman condemned to 36 years of confinement. She decides to write a letter to the sculptor, telling him how impressed she was by his work and how it gave her new hopes for her own life. This story as well as a meeting between the two is the central theme of the short film *Socorro Nobre (Life somewhere else, 1995)*. The idea that something so prosaic as a letter could be capable of changing one's life, turns into the starting point for *Central Station*.

Two years ago I shot a documentary (*Socorro Nobre*) about the correspondence of a woman condemned to 36 years in confinement and the sculptor Frans Krajberg, who lives in Brazil. The movie narrates how one day the imprisoned woman discovered the article about the sculptor in the Amazon region, where whole areas were burned down. She learns that he transforms burned wood in sculptures, giving them a second birth. The woman wrote then a letter to the sculptor right away, telling that she was deeply moved by his artistic work and that she was able to create a new courage to face her own life. This has strongly impressed me as a very radical art form capable of changing a life and having a very emotional effect on someone. I think that art has generally lost this radicalness. Also I was really astonished that at the end of the 20th century, in the age of the computer and the virtual communication, something so prosaic as a letter is capable of changing one's life. This kept me occupied for a long time and a couple of months later I woke up with the idea for *Central Station* and wrote it all down, and the whole architecture was there.⁷

The finished script received then a screenplay award, offered by the Sundance Festival for cinema's 100th anniversary, and thus the project could start. It featured Socorro Nobre herself playing a minor role in the beginning of the film as one of Dora's customers.

Before the very successful *Central Station*, Salles had already shot his first movie in 1991, the homonymous film adaptation of the Brazilian novel *High Art*, written by Rubem Fonseca. The film was also released in Europe under the title *Exposure*. Despite some visually convincing scenes, the Brazilian-American co-production (with original English audio track) was not on a par with the dark detective story and its numerous cultural allusions and must be seen as a not quite successful beginner's work, an opinion shared by the director himself. A recovery from the somewhat disillusioning experience with *High Art* came in 1995 with the low-budget film *Foreign Land* (co-directed by Daniela Thomas), shot in black and white. Cutting between São Paulo and Lisbon at the outset of the film, it interweaves the personal stories of Paco and Alex and the political moment on March 15, 1990, when President Fernando Collor de Mello froze all bank accounts in Brazil. Both look for a new existence in former colonial Portugal but get involved in drug crimes. According to *The New York Times*, "recent political history in Brazil, expatriation, timeless human frailty and the inevitability of fate -- captured in the melancholy music of the Portuguese fado -- color *Foreign Land*," a small, taut drama⁸ and cameraman Walter Carvalho described it as a film that "relives on the screen in

other dimensions what those young people lived in reality: the bitter sensation of belonging to an unreliable country, of not having roots or identities, of living in their own country as if it was a foreign country, of being a foreigner without even living abroad".⁹

Foreign Land and more importantly the success of *Central Station* opened the doors for international projects like the invitation to participate in an episode of a TV production by the German-French broadcast station Arte about the new millennium: *2000, seen by...*. Arte invited ten filmmakers from ten countries to present their own personal view on the turn of the millennium. Salles, once again collaborating with Daniela Thomas, contributed with an episode entitled *Midnight* (1999). In a kaleidoscope form, it narrates and interweaves the stories of different characters: a man that leaves his wife – a pedagogue on the brink of suicide – shortly before New Year's Day, a criminal that must kill a good friend in order to escape from going to jail as well as an old man, who adjures the apocalypse.

The next cinematic project was *Behind the Sun* (2001), a film about an ongoing feud between a family of poor sugarcane farmers and one of wealth and property in the dry north-east region of Brazil. The shooting protracted for weeks while the actors had to simulate the hard living conditions of their characters. Since Salles intended to focus on a more visual than spoken narrative, screening and discussions on historical silent films were also part of the preparation stage. Along with works of Einstein and Pudovkin, the Brazilian silent movie *Limite* (1931) by Mário Peixoto was exhibited. Peixoto and his only film have achieved a legendary and cult status within Brazilian film history and, along with films by directors like Marin Scorsese, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Tomás Gutiérrez, Wim Wenders or Michelangelo Antonioni, *Limite* was one of the central sources of inspiration for the film career of Salles himself. He had met Peixoto (1908-1992) at the end of the 80s, assisted the financially impoverished director and writer and, after his death, founded the *Mário Peixoto Archive*, which is located in his company *Videofilmes*. In 2001, Sérgio Machado, the longtime assistant of Walter Salles, shot a documentary on Peixoto called *At the Edge of the Earth*, the working title of Peixoto's second unfinished work. *Behind the Sun* contains many hidden references to Peixoto; one of the main characters, for instance, is called "Breves" – Peixoto's complete name was Mário Rodrigues Breves Peixoto – and there is dialogue in the movie taken directly from one of Peixoto's novels.

In summary, the following patterns in the work of Salles as director and producer can be identified: first, the deliberate insertion of his work into the Brazilian film tradition, whether in regard to the cinema novo tradition or in a more experimental form such as *Limite*. This does not mean an imitation of certain stylistic elements – his own film aesthetics for instance show few, if any, parallels with Peixoto's filmic approach – but predominantly the wish to continue, explore and extend the Brazilian cinema in all of its multifariousness. This also includes the rejection of those critics that expect a primarily socio-critical-realistic cinema from Brazil or Latin America as an attitude of heteronomy and reduction. Related to this aspect we may understand his efforts to shoot and produce movies, which, in one way or the other, develop a creative, fresh and somewhat sensitive look on the world and do not degenerate into a worn-out television narration, films that emerge from the traditions of an international world cinema, but also incorporate regional stories, landscapes, faces, subjects and colors. As a third point, Salles has made documentary and fiction films. His documentaries often work as a preliminary scanning of themes and often

provide a framework for possible improvisations and variations during the shooting of the fiction films that follow.

One may of course diverge on the question of whether theoretical proposals and the actual filmic outcome do meet or if Salles' frequent bridging between world cinema and regional identity is always successful. Critics have frequently praised the opening scenes of movies like *Behind the sun* or *The Motorcycle Diaries* as dynamically and cinematographically outstanding, but have also pointed out that, in the course of the story, his films often condense into an exaggerated symbolic tone that outperforms cinematic qualities by moral or political messages in too clear a way. The gap between commonplace and artistic cinema, "totally personal and general questions about the world where we come from" (Dreyfus 2005) is narrow. At best, the desire for a cultural identity and its reflection as an artistic, unique form on the screen maintain a fragile balance. Salles himself once formulated it as such:

Cinema is predominantly the projection of a cultural identity which comes to life on the screen. It reflects this identity or at least it should. But that's not all. It should also "enchant" it. Or turn it into flesh and blood with all the contradictions implied. Unlike Europe we [Latin America] are societies in which the identity-question hasn't become crystallized yet. And maybe that's why we need the cinema so desperately, in order to be able to see ourselves in the many conflictive mirrors which reflect us.¹⁰

Salles' latest film, *Line of Passage*, entered the theaters in the fall of 2008; the documentary *Looking for On the Road* should come soon while the shooting of the fiction film *On the Road* is scheduled for 2011. Another project is also pending: the adaptation of *The stepson*, a novel from 1983 by Argentine writer Juan José Saer (1937 - 2005) which takes place in the 16th century and tells the story of a young survivor among cannibals at the Rio da Prata who after 10 years of living among the natives returns to Europe.¹¹

Hopefully this introduction to the films of Walter Salles can offer the reader a broader view on the cultural and cinematographic environments that have given birth to his movies thus fare. "You have today in Latin America," Salles once said in an interview, "a generation of directors and actors who grew up after the democratization of the continent. That makes a dramatic difference. They are not only talented but socially and politically conscious, and this combination is nurturing a different kind of cinema. The films have a desire for new stories, often stories of identity. We are a young continent, and the countries are in movement, in the process of defining ourselves, and this process creates extraordinary cinematic possibilities".¹²

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