

# Film, Media, and Museum Reviews

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## Surfing in the Movies and Brazilian Society in the Transition from the 1970s to the 1980s

*Nas Ondas do Surf* (1978). Directed by Lívio Bruni Júnior. Surf Filmes do Brasil. 80 min.

*Nos Embalos de Ipanema* (1978). Directed by Antonio Calmon. Screenplay by Armando Costa, Silvan Paezzo, Leopoldo Serran, Pedro Carlos Rovai, and Antonio Calmon. Sincrocine Produções Cinematográficas. 100 min.

*Menino do Rio* (1981). Directed by Antonio Calmon. Screenplay by Antonio Calmon and Bruno Barreto. Produções Cinematográficas L.C. Barreto. 96 min.

*Garota Dourada* (1983). Directed by Antonio Calmon. Screenplay by Antonio Calmon and Flávio R. Tambellini. ni, Flávio R. Produções Cinematográficas L. C. Barreto. 102 min.

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Silvinha, Carol, and Melissa, three teenage friends who study at the Colégio São Jorge, a middle-class school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, talk about their dreams. The conversation takes place in Melissa's bedroom. Carol, who recently arrived with her parents from exile, dreams of being a movie director and films their chat on a Super-8 camera. Asked about the future, the hostess smiles and says she wants to marry the "menino do Rio" (the boy from Rio). As she speaks, she turns to the wall, where she glances at a poster of the film with the same name.

The scene described above is from the film *Podecrer! [Right On!]*, by Arthur Fontes, which was shown in Brazilian theaters in the last months of 2007. The setting is the city of Rio de Janeiro, the year is 1981—the same year that Antônio Calmon's film *Menino do Rio* was produced. The background of the place and epoch features surfing and the beach as references for the leading characters, both the female ones, who constantly frequent that place, and the male ones: Tavico, João, P.P., and Marquinhos are surfers.

In fact, between the late 1970s and early 1980s, surfing, which began to be part of Brazilian popular culture from the 1950s, played a leading role in a number of feature films.<sup>1</sup> Prior to this, *Garota de Ipanema [Girl from Ipanema]* (1967) was the only Brazilian film of which we are aware that featured surfing. The film portrayed the middle class in 1960s Rio de Janeiro in an attempt to demystify the notion of the "carioca golden youth."<sup>2</sup> In *Garota de Ipanema's* plot, Márcia (played by Márcia Rodrigues), the protagonist, dates the surfing champion Pedro Paulo (Arduíno Colassanti).<sup>3</sup> At that time, surfing was part of middle-class teenage culture. This is not surprising considering the influence of the *bossa nova* on the film.<sup>4</sup>

For the next ten years surfing did not appear in either feature or short films produced in Brazil.<sup>5</sup> Then four films were released in which surfing was a central theme: *Nas Ondas do Surf [On the Waves of Surfing]* (1978), by Lívio Bruni Júnior; *Nos Embalos de Ipanema [Ipanema's Fever]* (1978), *Menino do Rio [Boy from Rio]* (1981), and *Garota Dourada [Bronzed Girl]* (1983), all by Antônio Calmon. Those films' box offices were impressive. According to Ramos, *Menino do Rio* was seen by over two million people, *Nos Embalos de Ipanema* by over 500,000 people, and *Garota Dourada*, by over 600,000. According to Bueno, *Nas Ondas do Surf* achieved the second largest box office in 1978.<sup>6</sup> In addition, surfing assumed a minor presence in other films throughout the 1980s, including *Vai Vem à Brasileira [Coming and Going the Brazilian Way]* (1983), by Manuel Carlos Semião da Silva; *Fulaninha* (1986), by David Neves; and *A Menina do Lado* (1987) [*The Girl Next Door*], by Alberto Salvá.<sup>7</sup>

What boosted the presence of surfing in Brazilian film production? How can this help us to think not only about the different configurations in the sports field but also about the social and cultural context of the country at that time? Against these questions, this article analyzes the four films produced between 1978 and 1983 in which surfing has played a major role.

Surf movies have been studied by some authors. Joan Ormrod discusses the myths around surfing and the wave in *Big Wednesday*, including that of "surfers as hedonistic layabouts or rebellious middle-class youth."<sup>8</sup> The author links the films to U.S. culture and society in the 1960s. Elsewhere, Ormrod highlights film in relation to "wider American society in the early sixties," as well as with gender.<sup>9</sup> She argues that in *Muscle Beach Party*, surfers are presented as an ideal of masculinity in the U.S. of the 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

R.L. Rutsky discusses the teen surfing films shown in America “from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s,” criticizing authors who see only conformity in the surf movies of the period, arguing convincingly that there is more in those films than meets the eye.<sup>11</sup> Surf films, therefore, constitute sources that enable us to better understand certain representations and are useful to increase our understanding both of surfing and the society portrayed on them. In a work on the state of surf studies published in English, Nick Ford and David Brown have argued that further research on developing countries could be relevant for understanding the impacts of surfing and its culture (with Hawaiian, Californian, and Australian traces), as well as how local cultures deal with it.<sup>12</sup>

Here we will first discuss some aspects relative to the field built around surfing, seeking to collect elements that help us understand the presence of this sport in Brazilian movies during the period studied.<sup>13</sup> Later, when we analyze the films in greater detail, we will return to some of the discussions mentioned above.

### Configurations of Surfing

An important aspect to be considered is the idea of counterculture—a social, cultural, and political phenomenon of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Forged in a complex and specific social, political, and economic context, it canvassed followers and motivated diverse practices in different countries, always interacting with local peculiarities. Despite those specificities, it is possible to list a few general characteristics: the accentuated denial of prior generation's values; the presence of middle-class youngsters among its main agents, especially university students; the contestation and the demand for changes to overcome capitalism and technocracy; the approximation with mysticism and the magic visions of people who, rather than the conquest of nature, privilege integration and union with it; and the use of drugs in the sense of self-knowledge and self-perception.<sup>14</sup>

For some, siding with the idea of counterculture meant leaving home and renouncing traditional values. The adoption of a “nomad and libertarian life” articulated with a certain representation of surfing, something strongly present in many of the films where that sport was inserted, relative to such ideas as being unattached to material things, the choice of a simple life in close contact with nature and traveling with friends.<sup>15</sup>

Such ideas, however, have never been consensual. In one of the centers of counterculture, California, a “new hedonistic surfing culture” was born and “rapidly diffused around the Pacific rim, initially on the back of a Hollywood genre of beach movies.”<sup>16</sup> Douglas Booth suggests that the “surf culture” and the media have been associated since the beginning, a relationship that has become clear and has as its milestone a specific movie, a great success at the time: “Hollywood producers recognized the commercial potential of the new culture early and Columbia Pictures launched the Hollywood genre in 1959 with *Gidget*, a film based on a book by Frederick Kohner.”<sup>17</sup> In fact, several films, whose settings were the beach and in which surfing was the highlight, were shot in the first half of the sixties.<sup>18</sup> According to Booth, “Hollywood's beach stories were musical adventures and helped to popularize *surf music*.”<sup>19</sup> Music and movies, with surfing as a theme, generated great commercial successes. However, many surfers complained of the commonplace image publicized by Hollywood and began to make their own productions, at first with very rudimentary characteristics but soon more “professional,” especially because they enabled

those who wanted to dedicate themselves completely to that sport to make something of a living.

Thus, two kinds of films were established: “Hollywoodian” ones (focused on “beach life”) and specialized ones (focused on camaraderie in surfing, images of big and perfect waves, and an emphasis on exotic and “secret” places and on the most intrinsic elements for the practice of surfing, such as the design of the boards and excellence of the maneuvers). Thus film became not only an important factor in the promotion of surfing but also a conflicted space that reproduced disputes over the representations of the sport.

Unlike the Hollywood genre that portrayed surfing as a conformist pastime, the young men and women in specialist surf films, who rode waves and traveled endlessly and who never worked or worried, carried the potentially subversive message that surfers were less predictable, less trustworthy, and not so ready to fall in line.<sup>20</sup> The specialized films were a channel for the promotion of rebelliousness and non-conformism that were characteristic of surfing culture in California. Those films, shown outside major theaters’ circuit, were avidly received by their fans: “[B]y the end of that decade thousands of enthusiasts and devotees would congregate in private clubs and public halls to watch specialist movies.”<sup>21</sup> Thus cinema played a central role in expanding the hedonistic view of surfing beyond California, reaching an audience of youngsters from several countries and contributing to shaping life styles. We should remember that, already at that time, mass culture provided the “dominant reference models” to teenagers—occupying a place that used to be the family’s and the school’s.<sup>22</sup> Movies, magazines, radio, television all became integrated, with the audiovisual production always playing a major role.

In Brazil, according to both Zuleika P. Bueno and Cléber Dias, this process began to emerge in the 1960s but it was not until the late 1970s that it became clearer, anticipating the boom of the 1980s.<sup>23</sup> Politically in Brazil this was a moment this was marked by the transition from dictatorship to democracy: Brazil was ruled by a military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. On the one hand, important advances could be perceived, like the structuring of the students’ and laborers’ movements, the revocation of arbitrary acts, and the amnesty and return of exiled people, but, on the other, the torture centers and espionage services had not yet been deactivated, the artistic productions were still subjected to censorship and sectors among the military were opposed to the political developments. The winds of freedom began to blow, but black clouds still floated over Brazilian skies. Its cultural production expressed those tensions.

As to surfing, the organization of competitions and of professionalism was still in its infant stages. Championships were still sporadic (even if competitions like the Saquarema and Arpoador beaches’ were already recognized) and most surfers were amateurs; few could count on sponsorships. However, the increase in the number of people who practiced surfing was already apparent, something made even clearer by the establishment of several local and state associations, which sought to organize athletes and promote the circuits.

Media surfing productions abounded in Brazil, reflecting a growing public interest and the fact that the market and communication media were increasingly targeting teenagers. This was undoubtedly related to a new feeling of hope and joviality following the end of the dictatorship. As well as appearing on film, surfing began to feature in magazines, on the radio and on television.

*Fluir*, the most sold and long-lived Brazilian magazine dedicated to surfing, was created in 1983, continuing and improving some earlier publications such as *Brasil Surf*, begun in 1975.<sup>24</sup> In 1986, the country had eight dedicated surfing publications.<sup>25</sup> Radio stations, like “Maldita” Fluminense FM, created in 1982, focused on youth audiences who listened to rock and played an important role in the promotion of surfing championships.<sup>26</sup> Speaking on *Fluir*’s twentieth anniversary, Ricardo Bocão highlighted the articulation of politics and popular culture in the early 1980s:

I remember three great explosions. The end of dictatorship, Brazilian rock going full blast with the Titãs, Blitz, Legião Urbana, Paralamas do Sucesso, Barão Vermelho, Kid Abelha, Capital Inicial, Ultraje a Rigor, and Brazilian surfing booming for the second time.<sup>27</sup>

On Rede Globo television, which attracts the biggest audience in Brazil, in 1980, Gilberto Braga’s soap opera *Água viva [Live Water]* featured a new beach culture on primetime topless bathing (a new fad on Rio de Janeiro’s beaches) and marijuana. In its opening, windsurf sails “danced” to the sound of the song *Menino do Rio*, by Caetano Veloso, sung by Baby Consuelo: “Hawaii is here.” In 1983, *Realce*, the first action sports show on Brazilian television, premiered on Rede Record from Rio de Janeiro, hosted by two surfers, Ricardo Bocão and Antonio Ricardo.

Surf films called the attention of the public to the theme and inspired a narrative that materialized in the television series *Armação ilimitada [Mischief Unlimited]* (1985-1988). The artistic coordinator and one of the screenwriters was Antônio Calmon, hired by Rede Globo “because he knew how to speak to the young audience.” He directed three of the four films in which, at that time, surfing played a major role; one of the central characters was played by André de Biase, the same leading character of those films. The series was characterized by an “innovation in the language” and “myriad references to pop culture,” including “cartoons, cinema, television shows, comic books, rock, surfing, etc.”<sup>28</sup> For Mira, it was the media feature that definitely made surfing fashionable in Brazil.<sup>29</sup>

To consolidate those initiatives, it became necessary to create not only a captive audience but also to attract advertisers to fund the production. In the case of magazines, for instance, the sales price barely covered the printing and distribution costs. To ensure financial viability, *Fluir* covered several sports (surfing, hang-gliding, BMX, and skateboarding) and was published every two months. After a few editions, the surfing specific advertisements (clothes, equipment, and accessories manufacturers) allowed the editors to exclude non-surfing sports and to publish monthly. Many Brazilian youngsters, even those who did not practice surfing and did not go to the beach, wore clothes and accessories from such surfwear brands as Pier, Company, Rico, and K&K, which could be bought at stores or from street peddlers, who proliferated around town. As Bueno aptly explains:

One of the most significant changes relative to cultural teenage production in the 1980s, in relation to the prior decades, was its scope. If in the 1950s and 1960s this production was concentrated on urban middle-class youngsters, starting in the 1970s the working class got more direct access to juvenile experiences and products. This occurred thanks to the ingress of low-income youngsters in the formal job market, bringing about changes in consumption patterns.<sup>30</sup>

While it promoted surfing and its lifestyle, *Fluir* also helped consolidate the surfing market in Brazil, as well as the construction of new symbolic references in our society in which youth prevailed. In fact, there was a very specific model of youth: white; middle or high class; politically alienated to some degree; and where men continued to dominate the action, while women basically looked on.

### *Nas Ondas do Surf*

*Nas Ondas do Surf* is the only documentary among the four films we analyze here and is quite different to the other three. It is the one that could most adequately be called a surf movie, close to the characteristics of the alternative film type. Actually, by trying to capture the climate around a sport that was becoming organized, the film shows a series of representations that in the future would be incorporated into fiction films where surfing plays an important role (closer to the “Hollywoodian” kind).

This, incidentally is the most significant aspect of *Nas Ondas do Surf*: promoting in a pioneering way a lifestyle that was being built around surfing—living in close contact with nature, the desire to take risks, the pleasure of travel, and the beauty of beaches and of the new “golden” (beautiful and bronzed) bodies.

Likewise, the film outlines a profile of the surfer as a controversial character, who has problems with the police and/or with those who do not understand his style, mistakenly considered deviant by some and spaced-out by others.<sup>31</sup> In an attempt to challenge this stereotyped point of view, the film shows that there is a large economic chain forming around surfing: the message is that there are “serious things” behind this apparent play.

The film depicts both the Brazilian context, specifically the first big boom of surfing, and also the arrival of North American films, which at the time started to be shown in Brazil in alternative movie theaters. These films typically attracted surfing aficionados. The narrative is very similar to the more famous surfing films at the time: many of the scenes showing athletes “riding the waves,” spontaneously or in some championship (in this case, *Nas Ondas do Surf* shows a phase of the First World Circuit held on Arpoador Beach and the National Saquarema Festival held on Itaúna Beach, both in 1976); instrumental background music (soundtrack directed by the group A Cor do Som, who, at the time, sought an alternative sound and later would embark on the pop wave); the exhibition of images highlighting the man-nature integration and the thrill of emotion. These aesthetic options were later reproduced and were very common on television shows about surfing.

The technical information, narrated by television anchorman Sérgio Chapelin, from a rather didactic text by Alberto Pecegueiro, at the time editor of the pioneer *Brasil Surf*, strengthens the impression that the purpose of the film was actually to teach surfing lessons to the general public.

The film includes a few short interviews with some of the main Brazilian surfers of the time (Ricardo Bocão, Otávio Pacheco, Daniel Friedman, and Pepê), presented as individuals attuned to nature, lovers of a simple lifestyle, and stripped of the technological apparatus of the city. We also see skateboarding and hang-gliding scenes, presented as sports that are developments from surfing.<sup>32</sup>

Ricardo Bocão helps us to know more about the behind-the-scenes of the film. First, he comments on the showing of the first scenes shot in Rio de Janeiro:

Two months later, the people from *Brasil Surf* magazine and the major surfers from Rio de Janeiro went to look at the raw shooting material in one of the best movie theaters in town, the Bruni Ipanema. I sat in the row where Lívio was and when the lights went on, he asked me whether I had enjoyed it and if it wouldn't make a film. He even had a name for it—"Brasil no Surf". I answered that the material was excellent, but thought that one subject only (the championship) wouldn't sustain an entire feature film and would result in a boring picture. And that a surf movie had to have Hawaii in it.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, a production team was sent to Hawai'i to shoot scenes of Brazilians in action and of a championship in which some of the greatest world surfers of the time participated.

As to the shooting of the film in Hawai'i, Bocão says that the unprofessional scheme caused several problems:

At first, shooting part of the film showing actors surfing high waves was the only thing that mattered to everyone. After one month, being almost daily with very different people began to take its toll and the price became increasingly higher. . . . I thought: "I've been in this for almost three months and I haven't made any money with it. I committed myself to the project in the heat of the moment and now I'll see it through, but as soon as the last roll of film is over, I'm going to the other islands of the archipelago all by myself, without telling anyone about it."<sup>34</sup>

It sounds strange that this statement should come from one of the pioneers of surfing on Brazilian television, but at that time surfing had not yet established itself as a professional sport: romanticism was not only a discourse, but a concrete life alternative. Bocão himself recalls how he came to live in Saquarema, which was known as the Maracaná<sup>35</sup> of surfing:

I called Betão, my good friend at the time and said: "Let's go and live in Saquarema, we'll open a surfboard business and ride high waves." Financially, there wasn't much pressure. We charged 1.800 cruzeiros for a board. The rental of the small house where we lived to the left of Itaúna, cost 500 cruzeiros. Our shop, to the right (Lagoinha), cost another 500 cruzeiros. And working, there were only the three of us—the two owners and a third person. Food? Very cheap. Fuel? We only used the bicycle to go from the left corner of the beach to the right corner and sometimes into town. And the profit margin? It may sound exaggerated, but it was 100%. In short, we only needed two orders a month for our survival. One board paid for the material of the two and the second one paid our personal costs and the shop's. We lived simply, with good food, a lot of bonfires and a guitar, and almost no expenses.<sup>36</sup>

Actually, the surfer repeated an experience he had had when he lived in Hawai'i.<sup>37</sup>

I charged US\$ 65 to laminate an eight feet board. I paid the sander US\$ 10 and about US\$ 5 for a wooden keel with fiberglass. I spent about US\$ 30 on material and the US\$ 20 profit lasted us for two weeks' worth of groceries. Eating cooked oats with banana for breakfast, whole wheat sandwiches with vegetables and some cheese for lunch, and for dinner having almost every night whole rice, lentils and legumes, US\$ 10 a week in 1974 was enough. The waves were free.<sup>38</sup>

With this kind of bonding, his nostalgic reflections a few years later are not surprising:

We were very pure. In all aspects. Boards without leash and without logotypes. Everyone swam long distances to catch them and nobody complained of the

lack of a sponsor, because there was none. Creatively, everyone did their best in search of the best waves or to participate in that pioneering, exotic, and mystic championship away from their country. The only rewards were the joy of surfing waves that you knew only from a photo or the personal achievement of participating in championships that had their stories told by word of mouth from seasoned travelers.<sup>39</sup>

The huge box office achieved by *Nas Ondas do Surf*, with all the limitations of its making, indicates the already significant presence of this sport among youngsters and anticipates by a few years the space it would occupy in the imagination of the population in the 1980s. However, prior to the success of the films of that decade, in the 1970s there was another feature film in which surfing played a major role: *Nos Embalos de Ipanema*.

### *Nos Embalos de Ipanema*

As we see it, *Nos Embalos de Ipanema* cannot be really called a surf film although it flirted with, sought a bonding with, and wished to attract a specific audience. Calmon, who had already directed a few “*pornochanchadas*” (sexploitation films), seems to have made an aesthetically hybrid film in the late 1970s and early 1980s, already visualizing a possible juvenile audience but still retaining many elements of his former cinematographic experiences (it should be remembered that, as opposed to his next films, for this one the age rating was eighteen years).

Actually, the director always sought to account for his involvement with this kind of film:

it is necessary to explain it again: it is much easier to simply talk about me as a maker of porn films, or, let's be direct, sexploitation films, than to recognize the incapacity of the critics to cope with what is new. Sexploitation films were always conformist and my films are corrosive. Sexploitation films are moralistic while my films are totally amoral. Sexploitation films hate sex and women, two of the most important references in my films. In short, the “*pornochanchada*”, is a *symptom of a primitive stage of sexuality*, which isn't exactly my case. The fact that an author takes ownership of a mass phenomenon is not the same thing as blindly manufacturing a product to gain the market. I couldn't make a “pure” sexploitation film, even if I wanted to. I believe that the artist, regardless of his program or of intellectual justifications, always reflects his own internal world in his work and the interaction of this world with the social reality. I know that I make aggressive and irreverent movies, that I don't rely on the so-called artistic respectability which is so important in our cultural province and that I don't keep myself in an avant-gardism that may be fascinating here, but is ridiculous in New York and Paris. My films are dirty and coarse like the country and not an immaculate and “artistic” transposition of reality.<sup>40</sup>

Despite those remarks, part of his work has become associated with this kind of film and there is no denying its reflection in *Nos Embalos de Ipanema*, especially the articulation of a strong element of eroticism and comedy.

It is no coincidence that the relationship between surfing and Ipanema has been established in the film, something that had already been brought up in *Garota de Ipanema*, by Hirszman. In the years 1950 to 1970, a large number of the surfing pioneers from Rio

de Janeiro lived in that neighborhood and surfed that beach; the legendary Arpoador is practically a continuation of Ipanema.

In the 1970s, the installation of a pier for the construction of a submarine dock ended up improving wave conditions. Additionally the “dunes” formed by the revolved sand were “occupied” by youngsters and artists using drugs. Surfing was established in that context. Not surprisingly Magno, the first store in Brazil to specialize in surfing, opened in that neighborhood.

The film tells the story of Toquinho, played by André de Biase (in the first of many partnerships with Calmon), a *bon vivant* living in Marechal Hermes and whose greatest dream is to go to Hawai‘i and spend his life “catching waves,” without having to work.<sup>41</sup> To accomplish his dream, in search of an easy life and of finding money in order to date Patrícia (Zaira Zambeli), daughter of a *bourgeois* couple from Ipanema who oppose his unconventional customs, Toquinho establishes a homosexual relationship with André (Paulo Villaça) and dates older women. In both cases, his “boss” is Das Bocas (Roberto Bonfim), the typical pimp. The depiction of the beaches is less glamorous and idealized than those one usually sees in surf films.

The use of drugs is presented in a manner that is somewhat removed from the alternative idea within the realms of counterculture. The leading surfer comes from the suburb, and he must take a train or a bus to go to the beach. He is always asking people for money to be able to eat or even to go home. His surfboard is old; to buy a new one, he does not think twice about getting involved in immoral activities. The distant Barra da Tijuca beach is presented not as a bucolic place but as a transient neighborhood. In the end it seems that Toquinho has not fared so well, which causes everybody to deny that they have ever met him or that they have had any kind of relationship with him.

In this film, surfing is depicted as a contraposition to work. It is not about an alternative lifestyle but rather a possibility of getting away from the absence of options that characterizes the suburb, from the director’s point of view, something that will constantly be stressed in a stereotyped way, especially in the representation of the surfer’s mother (played by Yara Amaral) and his girlfriend Verinha (Angelina Muniz), from Marechal Hermes. Surfing here is presented only as a mediation/desire of identification in the scope of conflicts between the people from the North Zone and South Zone. It is not surprising that Patrícia’s mother (Jacqueline Laurence), at a particular moment, says that since the tunnels (Rebouças and Santa Bárbara)<sup>42</sup> were built, the beaches have become infested with suburban people, picnickers, and *paus-de-arara* (migrant workers from Northeast Brazil); she suggests charging an entrance fee to the beaches. Even Verinha, who is not in awe of the South Zone as is Toquinho, ends up being deceived by Maurício (Stepan Nercesian), her rich boss. Ultimately, both characters from Marechal Hermes, each in their own way, end up disillusioned about the possibility of being respected in this other world within the same city.

Even if the construction of the surfer characters is quite stereotyped and even biased, the film makes important references to key elements of a surf culture that will later become highly visible and dominant: surfing magazines, specialty stores, slang, clothes. This picture will be clearer in *Menino do Rio* and *Garota Dourada*.

## *Menino do Rio and Garota Dourada*

*Menino do Rio* was the first 1980s Brazilian film made for the young public. In the wake of its success, a sequel was released two years later, *Garota Dourada*. A proposed third film, *Menina Veneno*, was never shot.

In the two films, the central character is Valente (André de Biase), who practices surfing and hang-gliding. He is a member of a group who favors a life where simplicity and close contact with nature are highly valued. As opposed to Toquinho, the surfer in *Nos Embalos de Ipanema*, Valente is a hero without moral ambiguities. Rather than being concerned with social projects, the new hero is absorbed in his own issues.

In *Menino do Rio*, the story of Valente's crush on Patrícia (Cláudia Magno), a frivolous high-society girl, has as a background some themes that romanticize and idealize the 1980s. Nonetheless, the film captures, strengthens, and even anticipates a few of the new dimensions that characterize the Brazilian society of that decade.

The film reflects a certain tediousness with the oppressive climate of the 1970s, the result of the exceptional political and economic situation that had endured since the 1950s. The acceleration of the industrialization process brought about the rapid growth of cities and the dissemination of new technological products. On the other hand, the environmental movement fuelled an interest in nature and new sports. In the words of Victor Melo and Cléber Dias:

The emergence and/or consolidation of leisure habits are directly related to the "mental effects" elicited by the organization of the metropolises. As the demographic rates increase, the initial euphoria gives place to the disapproval of this urbanized environment. Cities began to be depicted as a "nightmare of crowds," with their "day-to-day surrounded by distress." Urban life is evaluated as unhealthy, infected, and endangered by filthy and polluted air. . . . In this context, we notice the increasing concern with "the body and soul", and physical exercise becomes even more popular as a way to fill free time. The need and desire to "get the rust off the body" become increasingly noticeable. . . . The idea of giving greater value to nature also grows. The sun, the sea, and the mountain, all begin to be increasingly worshiped. This "cult" can also be noticed in the emergence of new fads, like gardening as a hobby, the greater importance given to natural/macrobiotic foods and the popularization of certain activities carried out in contact with the natural environment. . . . Sports practiced in contact with nature become increasingly popular. Surfing, which in less than a decade was disseminated among middle-class youngsters from the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro, is a clear example.<sup>43</sup>

*Menino do Rio* presents a dialogue with nature sports influenced by developments in California. Mentions of surfing can already be perceived in the film's logo brand, broadly advertised in the huge marketing scheme that surrounded its release and promotion. It is also not surprising that the central song is *De Repente Califórnia*, by Lulu Santos and Néelson Motta: "Girl, I'm going to California and live life riding the waves, I'm going to be a movie actor, my destiny is to be a star. . . . In California it's different, brother, it's much more than a dream."

The casual style that distinguishes the central characters seems to be a local remake of a beach culture that has in Hawai'i (and in its symbols, like the printed outfits, the luaus,

the food) both a reference and a perspective, an ideal: this is Valente's greatest desire, to travel there together with his friend Paulinho (Evandro Mesquita), who had already lived there as a sportsman and professional diver. This was the dream and a rite of passage for many Brazilian surfers of that time and even today.

Engaged in the configuration of a youth culture, it is not surprising that the film is connected to a form of pop culture, which is clear even in the choice of the musicians involved with the production (where the names of Néelson Motta and Lulu Santos stand out), precursors of this proposal in the early 1980s.<sup>44</sup> The political developments, and a certain air of greater freedom that began to blow, boosted the possibilities of cultural production in several artistic enterprises (manifestations), especially in music, with the arrival of the famous BRock (Brazilian Rock) generation.<sup>45</sup>

There is also a local dialogue with the city of Rio de Janeiro, itself an important "character" in the plot. Its natural beauty stands out in places that today are almost unrecognizable on account of the fast urbanization process, especially in the Barra da Tijuca and Recreio dos Bandeirantes regions where, not by coincidence, a major part of the plot takes place.

As shown by Dias, this is a key region in the construction of new meanings for the city of Rio de Janeiro, a main locus of development of the new nature-related sports in the period after 1960 when the Brazilian capital was transferred to Brasília. Locations in the movie symbolize the *carioca* and Brazilian surfing: Saquarema, where the first festivals were held from 1975 on; São Conrado, more characterized by the practice of hang-gliding, and Arpoador, the beach where surf culture consolidated itself in the country and a place, incidentally where the Circo Voador (Flying Circus) was built and which was vital for the emergence and consolidation of Brazilian musical groups in the 1980s.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, it is not surprising that the title makes reference to Caetano Veloso's music, which paid homage to a typical *carioca*: the film exalts an ideal type of "South Zone *carioca*," which is stressed even by the choice of the actors, people who are the "face of Rio" (such as Evandro Mesquita, Sérgio Mallandro, Cláudia Magno). Indeed Mesquita, Biase, and Mallandro were amateur surfers.

In *Menino do Rio*, the narrative and the aesthetic options were still distant from the actual ones. The actors' and actresses' bodies, for instance, were quite different from today's exuberant exhibition of hypertrophied and well-defined muscles; Calmon's own way of filming, calm and paused, was far from the "clips" that defined productions featuring youngsters throughout the 1980s.<sup>47</sup>

In this sense, *Garota Dourada* seems to occupy an intermediary space between *Menino do Rio* and *Armação Ilimitada*. Even if maintaining the slow and paused shots, Calmon already seeks a broader dialogue with the video clips, videogames, and comics. The idea of speed already timidly presents itself in the inclusion of ultralight aircraft and the motor-bike driven by the angel Gabriel (played by the singer Marina), although what predominates is the ideal of exiting the city, the ideal of an isolated community, the pursuit of pleasure in the simple things of life.<sup>48</sup> It is not surprising that the new heroine is called Diana (Bianca Byington), in Greek mythology the goddess of animals and the hunt.

In *Garota Dourada*, these new life conditions are presented as a fresh beginning, both for Valente, who, at the start of the plot, had been abandoned with his daughter by Patrícia

(Cláudia Magno), unhappy with the marriage that marked off the end of the first film, and for Zeca (Sérgio Mallandro), who is now a rock star, tired with his hectic schedule and pestering from fans. The two practically flee to Encantado, a magical place by the shore of Santa Catarina.

As for *Menino do Rio*, it deals with the original conditions that bring out the conflicts in the plot. In both, sports, especially surfing, set the frame of images and representations, being central to the configuration of the characters. Calmon, together with Biase, an actor who was the symbol of those achievements, seem to have captured well the dimensions that characterized that period.

*Menino do Rio* has an air of rereading the counterculture. There is the valuation of simple life, the contact with nature, the disposing of excessive material assets. There is the valuation of friendship and of camaraderie with strong references to a hippie culture. There are innuendos about the use of marijuana, somewhat weakened because one of the scenes was excluded by the censors as some of the characters were smoking “a non-conventional cigarette.” The surfing interacts with these representations, even if its professionalization process was already underway.<sup>49</sup> There are references to sexual freedom, explicit both in the behavior of the central characters and in secondary scenes, such as the fact that Ciça (played by Nina de Pádua), Patrícia’s friend, is shown reading the *Hite Report on Female Sexuality* (1976), a best seller at the time.

In *Garota Dourada* another discussion is prompted with reference to Diana’s character: female independence. If Patrícia, at the beginning of the film, already showed indifference when leaving her husband and daughter to pursue her happiness, informing Valente of her choice by simply leaving him a note, Diana plays the role of the female that chooses. In the presence of Valente and Betinho (Roberto Bataglin), it is she who decides with whom she is going to stay.

The central conflict, clearer in *Menino do Rio*, is actually between a traditional, conservative, and affluent lifestyle and another that is young, free, and simple, in which surfing and nature sports play an important role. Valente, even having been born to a rich family, abandons his father’s business to live as a surfer. Patrícia is annoyed with her family’s structure and abandons the “playboy” Adolfo (played by Ricardo Zambelli) to become involved with Valente.

The film ends with a memorable scene: Patrícia and Adolfo’s wedding at the traditional Gávea Golf and Country Club is interrupted by Valente, who arrives by hang-glider and takes the bride with him. The same Patrícia, at the end of *Garota Dourada*, will lose Valente to Diana: she pays for having abandoned her family and simplicity and for desiring to return to her former lifestyle.

In this new way of life, the dream of working no longer relates to the possibility of amassing money or acquiring expensive items but to the opportunity of living without withdrawing from surfing’s life style. In *Menino do Rio*, the central characters work in sports photography (Zeca), with activities related to nature (Paulinho) or manufacturing surfboards, which is the case of Valente, who even teaches the craft to Pepeu (played by Ricardo Graça Mello). Pepeu is a central character in this sense: he leaves behind a wrecked family to pursue his dream of being famous. His meeting with Valente, who teaches him to surf and shape boards, enables him to pursue an alternative way of life that he hopes will

make him happy. He is the character in the plot who writes and sings repeatedly the song *De repente Califórnia*.

Here, we go back to the singular apparent paradox of the development of surfing culture. The maintenance of a romantic view of the sport in fact ends up promoting, not without some debate, its professionalization: it is a way for surfing aficionados to make a living without having to give it up. In that same scenario, several commercial initiatives take place. It does not mean letting go of the romantic discourse: quite the contrary, it is central in the marketing strategies.<sup>50</sup> Both films are typical examples of this concern.

These contradictions will always be apparent. On the wall of Valente's shop one reads: "My board is my tool; surfing, my expression." The surfboards are handcrafted, but they are also heirs of the huge technological development and of the discovery of new products, like fiberglass and polyurethane.<sup>51</sup>

It is important to say that only a very small number of *cariocas*, not even the majority of the South Zone youngsters, experienced something similar to what was shown in those two films. Rather than considering the movies as an expression of reality, we are interested in looking at them as representations that were, in some ways, founded on concrete elements, from which models of youth were built, based on perspectives of society. In this scenario, a new sport was depicted as exemplary, a new sports practice that would frequent the screens of movie theaters as a synonym of freedom, health, and challenge: surfing.

## Conclusion

In the 1970s, the only chance to write a thought on, raise a polemic on, or report a fact to the surf community in Brazil was in the pioneering magazine *Brasil Surf*. Thirty years later, besides the specialized magazines and shows on radio and television, there are several sites on the Internet that report surfing on a day-to-day basis through texts, photos, and videos.<sup>52</sup>

Articulated within the Brazilian context and in dialogue with the international scene, the four movies analyzed here, although quite distinct, contributed to forging new symbolic dimensions for Brazilian society in the transition of the 1970s/1980s, when surfing started to appear in several places. Such films enable us to capture an important moment in the configuration of the field built around this practice, contributing to the promotion, to a wider public, of its lifestyle and culture. Surfing, hang-gliding, and windsurfing are presented as conjoining a new healthy youth with nature, a certain counterpoint to the logic of work and to a feeling of the oppressive environment of the cities: it is an alternative.

On the one hand, cinema has incorporated the universe of surfing, which counted on significant support from youngsters. Children and adolescents formed a major part of the public that filled movie theaters and many became thrilled at the new lifestyle shown in those productions. Moreover by disseminating surfing's several dimensions, they helped to increase not only the number of followers but also the consumption of products by athletes and/or admirers (boards, boardshorts, sunglasses, tee-shirts, stickers, caps, backpacks, etc.) and such habits as natural foods, the luau, and certain music styles (rock, reggae, and even a specific one, surf music).

Actually, few sports are as cinematographic as surfing, especially on account of the spectacular athleticism and the “adrenaline” and emotion brought forth by the scenes in the sea. It is not surprising that in movie history, especially in the U.S., it is one of the most filmed sports.<sup>53</sup> Ricardo Bocão goes directly to the point:

And there’s nothing cooler than to see quality surfing, with perfect waves projected on a huge screen and with an awesome soundtrack recorded in 5.1 Dolby surround. Only the actual thing is more thrilling than that and, even then, at some peaks the waves break far from the sand and you have to climb a dune, far from the water, to watch the surfers.<sup>54</sup>

In the following decades, surfing continued to mark its presence in Brazilian movies. The following is a short list of films in which surfing has been represented to a greater or lesser degree: *Manobra Radical [Radical Steps]* (1991) by Elisa Tolomell; *Surf Adventures* (2001) by Arthur Fontes; *Fábio Fabuloso [Fabulous Fabio]* (2004) by Pedro Cezar, Ricardo Bocão, and Antônio Ricardo; *O Diabo a Quatro [Great Mess]* (2004) by Alice de Andrade; *1972* (2005) by José Rondeau, *Tow in Surfing* (2006) by Jorge Guimarães and Rosaldo Cavalcanti; *Podecrer! [Right On!]* (2007) by Arthur Fontes; and *Meu Nome não é Johnny [My Name Isn't Johnny]* (2008) by Mauro Lima.

These films can tell us about society as well as about the practice of surfing itself. The professionalization process and the increase in the number of followers expressed another scenario and brought concerns to the people involved, something that often caused yearning discourses and the use of history as a form of building a legitimacy so that some propose the maintenance of certain values. This is quite well denoted in Ricardo Bocão’s position:

Surfing, as we know it, stems from Hawaii. And the Hawaiian traditions of the surf universe in the first half of the last century, before the championships, magazines and all the commercialization of products, was the result of values like purity, authenticity, and romanticism. Here in Brazil, these values were worshipped especially in the 1960s and in the early 1970s. Now, in the first decade of the new century, a sudden increase in the number of people in the water is threatening surfing’s original values such as purity, authenticity and romanticism.<sup>55</sup>

But this is another story. 

<sup>1</sup>According to some sources, surfing was practiced in Brazil from the 1930s in the city of Santos. However, it was really in Rio de Janeiro in the 1950s that a surf culture began. For more information see Cléber Dias, *Urbanidades da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Apicuri, 2008).

<sup>2</sup>That is, the idea that youth from Rio de Janeiro (called “carioca”) means beautiful faces and well-built and sun-tanned bodies.

<sup>3</sup>Colassanti participated, either as an actor or technical advisor, in over thirty feature films, having also been one of the surfing and underwater fishing pioneers in Brazil. Since he lived in Ipanema, one of the most fashionable beaches in town, he was the perfect incorporation of a surf movie character.

<sup>4</sup>*Bossa nova* is a musical product that clearly catered for the taste of this stratum of the population. For more information on the relationship between the *bossa nova* and youth, see Rita Morelli, *Indústria fonográfica* (Campinas, Braz.: Editora da Unicamp, 1991), and Zuleika P. Bueno, “Leia o livro, veja o filme, compre o disco: a produção cinematográfica juvenil brasileira na década de 1980” (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2005). It is not in the realm of this study to discuss this film in

depth. For more information, please refer to Helena Salem, *Leon Hirszman: o navegador das estrelas* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1997).

<sup>5</sup>In the years 1966-1967 one finds surfing scenes in newsreels. After this period, only in 1977 does surfing return to those programs, such as in *Brasil Hoje*, issue 210, where one finds images of the Brazilian leg of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Surfing Tour held in 1976 in Arpoador beach, Rio de Janeiro. Database of the Cinemateca Brasileira, <<http://www.cinemateca.com.br>> [7 October 2009].

<sup>6</sup>José Mario Ortiz Ramos, *Televisão, publicidade e cultura de massa* (Petrópolis, Braz.: Vozes, 1995); Bueno, “Leia o livro.” For more information, see the site of the Agência Nacional de Cinema (Brazilian Film Agency), <<http://www.ancine.gov.br>> [7 October 2009].

<sup>7</sup>More information and the complete list of films in which surfing has been present can be obtained at <http://www.anima.eefd.ufrj.br/esportarte>.

<sup>8</sup>Joan Ormrod, “Just the lemon next to the pie’: Apocalypse, History and the Limits of Myth in *Big Wednesday* (1978),” *Scope*, 1 February 2005, . <<http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/article.php?issue=1&id=6&section=article&q=ormrod>>, pp. 1-17 [12 July 2008].

<sup>9</sup>Joan Ormrod, “Issues of Gender in *Muscle Beach Party* (1964),” *Scope*, December 2002, <<http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/article.php?issue=dec2002&id=270&section=article>> [12 July 2008].

<sup>10</sup>See also, Joan Ormrod, “Endless Summer: Consuming Waves and Surfing the Frontier,” in *All-stars and Movie Stars: Sports in Film and History*, eds. Ron Briley, Michael Schoenecke, and Deborah Carmichael (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

<sup>11</sup>R.L. Rutsky, “Surfing the Other: Ideology on the Beach,” *Film Quarterly* 52 (1999):12-23.

<sup>12</sup>Nick Ford and David Brown. *Surfing and Social Theory: Experience, Embodiment and Narrative of the Dream Glide* (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>13</sup>We are working with the concept of field as developed by Pierre Bourdieu. See “Como é possível ser esportivo?” in *Questões de sociologia*, ed. Pierre Bourdieu (Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero, 1983), 136-163.

<sup>14</sup>Douglas Booth, *Australian Beach Cultures: The History of Sun, Sand and Surf* (London: Frank Cass, 2001); Clarke, John *et al.*, “Subcultures, Cultures and Class,” in *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain*, eds. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1976); Theodore Roszak, *A contracultura: reflexões sobre a sociedade tecnocrática e a oposição juvenil* (Petrópolis, Braz.: Vozes, 1972).

<sup>15</sup>Paulo Sérgio do Carmo, *Culturas da rebeldia: a juventude em questão* (São Paulo: Senac, 2001); Roszak, *A contracultura*.

<sup>16</sup>Booth, *Australian Beach Cultures*, 8. According to Booth, the fact that many important American film studios are located in California contributed to the dissemination of the surf culture.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>18</sup>Some early scenes with surfers had already been shown in *Waikiki Surfers*, filmed by R.K. Bonine, Thomas Edison Company, 1906.

<sup>19</sup>Booth, *Australian Beach Cultures*, 93.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>22</sup>Edgar Morin, *Cultura de Massas no Século XX. Volume 1: Neurose* (Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1997).

<sup>23</sup>Bueno, “Leia o livro”; Dias, “Urbanidades da natureza.”

<sup>24</sup>*Surfer* was imported and sold in newsstands in Rio de Janeiro from the early 1960s. Other international magazines followed. At that time, not only magazines, but also boards, clothing, and other products related to surfing were imported.

<sup>25</sup>Maria Celeste Mira, *O leitor e a banca de revistas: a segmentação da cultura no século XX* (São Paulo: Olho d’Água/Fapesp, 2001).

<sup>26</sup>Luiz Antonio Mello, *A onda maldita: como nasceu a Fluminense FM* (Niterói, Braz.: Arte e Cultura, 1992).

<sup>27</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “Há 20 anos,” *Fluir*, October 2003. Ricardo Bocão was one of the most important surfers in Brazil in the 1970s. One of the pioneers in the structuring of Brazilian surfing, presenter and producer of television programs and films, organizer of the first surfing schools and several services related to surfing, today he is one of *Fluir*’s columnists.

<sup>28</sup>Ramos, *Televisão*, 77.

<sup>29</sup>Mira, *O leitor*.

<sup>30</sup>Bueno, “Leia o livro,” 77.

<sup>31</sup>As we have said, though the films already present a more active woman’s role, surfers are always men: surfing is shown as a male practice.

<sup>32</sup>In Brazil, at first, hang-gliding was called sky surfing and Pepê, one of the surfing pioneers, was also a hang-gliding world champion.

<sup>33</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “Odisséia cinematográfica,” *Fluir*, March 2005, <[http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/233\\_fala\\_bocao.shtml](http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/233_fala_bocao.shtml)> [6 January 2008].

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Maracanã is the most important soccer stadium in Brazil—perhaps in the world.

<sup>36</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “Os meus 21 anos,” *Fluir*, October 2004, <[http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/228\\_fala\\_bocao.shtml](http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/228_fala_bocao.shtml)> [6 January 2008].

<sup>37</sup>The dream of going to Hawaii to pursue the best waves was—and still is—quite common among Brazilian surfers.

<sup>38</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “Memoráveis lembranças,” *Fluir*, February 2004, <[http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/220\\_fala\\_bocao.shtml](http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/220_fala_bocao.shtml)> [6 January 2008].

<sup>39</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “A verdadeira história,” *Fluir*, April 2006, <[http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/246\\_fala\\_bocao.shtml](http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/246_fala_bocao.shtml)> [6 January 2008].

<sup>40</sup>Interview published in *O Globo*, 13 June 1978, <<http://www.guesaudiovisual.com/palavras/EntrevReport/AntonioCalmonAspornochanchadas.html>> [5 January 2008].

<sup>41</sup>Marechal Hermes is a middle/working-class neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro, located far from the beaches. In Rio, suburban areas (mainly North Zone and West Zone) are less valued than the neighborhoods in Zona Sul (Ipanema, Copacabana, São Conrado, etc.), which are close to the beaches.

<sup>42</sup>The two tunnels made it much easier to go by car or bus from North Zone to South Zone, and vice-versa.

<sup>43</sup>Victor Melo and Cléber Dias, *A saúde da nova cidade: urbanização e lazer no Brasil (décadas de 1950/1970)* (Rio de Janeiro: PPGHC, 2007), 8.

<sup>44</sup>The producer had already organized the show “Som, Sol e Surf,” at the time of one of the surfing festivals held in Saquarema in 1976.

<sup>45</sup>For more information see Arthur Dapieve, *BRock: o rock brasileiro dos anos 80* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34, 1995), and Bueno, “Leia o livro.”

<sup>46</sup>Circo Voador was a kind of cultural center and concert hall that congregated all artistic movements from Rio de Janeiro in the 1980s. Dias, “Urbanidades da natureza.”

<sup>47</sup>For a discussion on Calmon’s way of shooting, please refer to Ramos, *Televisão*.

<sup>48</sup>Other Brazilian singers participate in the film. According to Rutsky, this was common in 1950s and 1960s surf films shown in the U.S.: some leading actors in these were stars of pop music.

<sup>49</sup>It was not until 1987 that the first Brazilian professional surfing circuit was held. Anyway, as we have seen, the field was already becoming outlined and professionalized from the mid 1970s.

<sup>50</sup>An interesting discussion on that aspect can be found in Rafael Fortes, “Entre passado, presente e futuro: a memória nas edições comemorativas da revista *Fluir*,” *Esporte e Sociedade* 2 (2007), <<http://www.lazer.eefd.ufirj.br/espoc/pdf/es607.pdf>> [8 February 2008].

<sup>51</sup>For further information on the importance of technology to surfing, please refer to Dias, “Urbanidades da natureza.”

<sup>52</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “O começo do surf profissional,” *Fluir*, September 2006, <[http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/251\\_fala\\_bocao.shtml](http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/251_fala_bocao.shtml)> [6 January 2008].

<sup>53</sup>Only boxing, for several reasons, was filmed so much. For further information, please see Victor Andrade de Melo and Alexandre Fernandes Vaz, “Cinema, corpo, boxe: suas relações e a construção da masculinidade,” *Artcultura* 8 (2006):139-160.

<sup>54</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “A magia do cinema,” *Fluir*, November 2004, <[http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/229\\_fala\\_bocao.shtml](http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/229_fala_bocao.shtml)> [6 January 2008].

<sup>55</sup>Ricardo Bocão, “Respeitando nossa história,” *Fluir*, March 2003, <[http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/03\\_02\\_fala.shtml](http://fluir.ig.com.br/colunistas/03_02_fala.shtml)> [6 January 2008].