



PROJECT MUSE®

Old Corporate Films and Former Factory Workers: Film Reception as Social Memory

Emília Margarida Marques

Film History: An International Journal, Volume 31, Number 1, 2019, pp. 102-126
(Article)

Published by Indiana University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/726201>

Old Corporate Films and Former Factory Workers: Film Reception as Social Memory

ABSTRACT: This article explores the seemingly compliant reception of old corporate films by former workers in a deindustrialized Portuguese town. The analysis identifies a particular, memory-focused mode of film reception among those workers, prompting joint consideration of convergent acquisitions from memory studies and film reception theory. This sheds light on the ways in which these workers reshape corporate film as their own relevant memory tool, the specific features of corporate film that support its memory value from a worker's point of view, and the workers' crafting, even so, of a lucid, class-bound relationship to the films as (corporate) discourse.

KEYWORDS: corporate film, industrial film, manufacturing workers, film reception, social memory

A 1961 corporate film has just been screened to an audience of retired workers in Barreiro, a now largely commuter town lying across from Lisbon on the Tagus River. The screening place, a retired workers' club, sits a few hundred meters away from where the gigantic industrial compound depicted in the film once stood. A sunny November afternoon illuminates the room through large windows overlooking the river, as the ample space fizzes with passionate talk, everyone eagerly recalling their times in the factory. Suddenly, a man starts to distance himself radically from the general mood and from the corporate narrative on the screen. He seems to have been particularly struck by footage of a conveyor belt carrying large bags of chemical fertilizer, while the voiceover claimed that the belt greatly eased the workers' load. Having himself labored at this very conveyor's end, moving large, heavy fertilizer bags off the belt and stacking them on nearby rail wagons, this former worker has vivid remembrances of backbreaking, mechanically paced work, definitely at odds with the film's narrative (fig. 1). He recalls:

The bag, the fertilizer bag would come ... we were waiting for it to hit our backs. It was coming; we're just waiting for it to land on

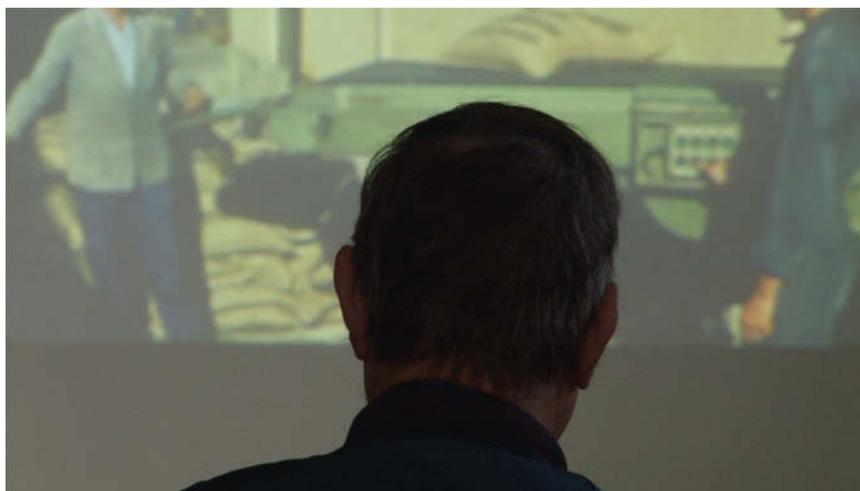


Fig. 1: Watching a conveyor belt as depicted on a corporate film. Footage of a Barreiro screening, November 2014. (Footage by João Rosas, frame selection by author)

our backs. Wham! Stack it on the wagon! The bags would come one after the other, in a long, endless stream . . . It looks nice in the picture, but there's no mention of the suffering!

This man's recollection amounts to a fairly predictable working-class reading of a corporate film: embodied memories of industrial labor lead a worker to confront a discourse that does not acknowledge, and even denies, his lived experience. Such a reading would arguably be all the more expected in Barreiro, a decidedly leftist working-class town that was the scene of relentless labor and political resistance during the right-wing dictatorship (1926–1974), with plenty of communist majorities in local elections since democracy was restored.

Against these odds, however, challenging and critical stances such as the one described were rarely observed in the Barreiro corporate film reception study that I will be discussing here.¹ Instead, people were quite enthusiastic about the films. They seemed ready to second the narrative on the screen about the grandiose, well-managed company, its gargantuan, up-to-date industrial premises, and the comprehensive welfare program it offered. Even while pointing out relevant dimensions in their working lives that were not depicted in the films, these old workers nonetheless endorsed them as faithful portrayals of “the reality” (their words).

How can we make sense of this seeming contradiction? Were those men and women, some of them old militants who once directly confronted political

and labor repression, now surrendering to corporate propaganda? Could these films' rhetoric be so overwhelming and enduring? Was the factory hierarchy still insidiously active? Was there a cultural inability among the workers to deconstruct the cinematic artefact—perhaps at odds with the cornerstone of reception theory about viewers as crucial comakers of the message? Or could this be simply one of those “cases [in which] reception lies beyond our reach”?²

Of course, the strong impact of memory and nostalgia in this particular instance of film reception was to be expected. These films were coming to the workers from a past that had been made even more meaningful to them by deindustrialization and precarity, not to mention aging itself. Their readings were arguably being mediated by time, specifically by their compound social and subjective memories of work, the workplace, and the company with which they crucially maintained and still maintain complex, contradictory relationships. Yet the question remains: How precisely were work and life memories being mobilized in this reception of corporate films? What in those memories was being (de)selected to assess the films, and why? Through what specific, entangled social memory and film reception processes did these films, which were narrowly intended as corporate image tools, come to be taken by former workers as standing for the “reality” of a complex, multifaceted, working-class past?

In this article, I build on a joint consideration of reception theory and social memory studies to examine present-day reception of old corporate films among former workers in a deindustrialized setting. I first provide some background on the research problems and possibilities in corporate film reception, subsequently discuss the convergence of memory studies and film reception theory around the notion of context, and then introduce the films and their main production and reception circumstances. After describing the research's pivotal methodology, I detail and analyze the precise ways in which the former workers in this study received the old corporate films by providing a description of one screening event and surveying some major topics and attitudes that surfaced during postscreening interviews.

In the final sections, I argue that these former workers developed their own mode of film reception, which appears to be memory-focused. Their reception of the old corporate films was a full-fledged social memory process, in which the films were, in a sense, ignored as such and used instead as flexible, multipurpose, subjective and collective memory tools. In this memory-focused framework, the workers' apparent acquiescence to the main discursive lines in the films fully meshes with their lucid, inherently critical signaling of those films as speaking on behalf of other, opposing social groups. Based on this approach, I also suggest that, while reception and context are key points to be dealt with

when researching the history of corporate and industrial film, the approach itself also calls for a focus on film content, rhetoric, and aesthetics.

CORPORATE FILMS AND THEIR RECEPTION

Out of a diversity of theoretical and methodological developments in social and cultural history, first, and then in film and media studies, films other than feature-length, theatrical pieces have nowadays become a solidly “gentrified,” respectable research focus.³ This includes the vast subset of film products commissioned by industrial corporations as part of their image and communications policies. The contexts of and motivations for sponsoring and producing these industrial, corporate, or business films, their intended uses, their contents, and their rhetorical tools have all received some degree of attention,⁴ including in Portugal’s case.⁵

Their reception, however, has been discussed much less. The very same postauteurist,⁶ context- and use-focused approaches that brought these films to the attention of scholars were crucially instrumental in highlighting issues of audience and reception within cinema history and cinema studies at large⁷ (with New Cinema History emerging from this focus on reception and cine-magoing⁸). Nonetheless, this has yet to be applied fully to corporate, industrial films—not least because sources about audiences and screenings of these many, usually short, often nontheatrical films tend to be scarce. A gap therefore remains between a conceptual focus on utility and use and a still fragmentary knowledge of actual reception and impact.⁹

Even less explored is today’s reception of such films, most of which, like those in this paper, were shot during the heyday of twentieth-century industrialization. Studying their present-day reception implies tackling people’s views of the past, hence demanding consideration not only of reception theory but also of memory studies. Since these films come from and depict a meaningful past, people will activate memories and memory processes while receiving them. These memory processes must therefore be taken into account when probing such film reception. As recently noted by Annette Kuhn, Daniel Biltereyst, and Philippe Meers, bridges have been built between the two fields as the use of oral sources for researching past cinema audiences and experiences has prompted an approach to recollections of these experiences as social and cultural memory.¹⁰ But more comprehensive links can be construed between film reception and social memory—understood as the process of building, reproducing, changing, appropriating, contesting, and using shared, significant narratives about the collective past. In fact, the “presentist,”¹¹ plastic, and social quality widely recognized in social memory is strongly mirrored by the largely context-bound, socially shaped, shared, and experienced quality found in film reception. Both processes

are strongly present- and context-bound and mobilize past experiences. The idea of viewers actively appropriating and coproducing the meaning of films,¹² which has become mainstream in cinema studies,¹³ closely connects with the crucial recognition of the “historical anchoring”¹⁴ and social contextual nature of these viewers and of the cinema experience itself.¹⁵ The reception and meaning of a given film can indeed radically change across historical and social contexts.¹⁶

It is a long-established idea that reading a film is to confront it from the inescapable point of view of one’s own existence.¹⁷ The concept of “interpretive communities,” proposed in literature studies¹⁸ and often applied to film reception,¹⁹ further highlights the role of time (i.e., of rich, accumulated, dense experience) in the dynamics of reception, while crucially stressing the fully social quality of the processes involved. The shared experiences and representations people acquire through their specific social positions and paths influence them to join different “interpretive *communities*” (my italics), understood as common reading frameworks or strategies that impact the way meaning is built out of a received text.²⁰ The reading lenses—and practices—through which film is perceived and appropriated are therefore social, shared, and situated. This was clearly put forward by Fabrice Montebello in a detailed analysis of feature-film reception among male industrial workers.²¹ Montebello observed, for instance, that embodied memories of hard, dangerous work often impacted the way violence on the screen was received. More generally, shared experiences of daily work and life strongly contributed to shaping the views and the ways of interpreting films.

THE FILMS IN THIS STUDY AND THEIR CONTEXTS

The corporate films in this study were commissioned by the largest industrial and business conglomerate in twentieth-century Portugal: CUF (Companhia União Fabril). Barreiro had been CUF’s flagship industrial site since 1907. It was a unique group of manufacturing, trade, transport, and financial businesses, with a steady colonial presence and considerable international connections. In 1970 it accounted for 5 percent of Portugal’s GDP.²² From its origins in 1865, CUF survived three political regimes and several shifts in public economic policy, while always nurturing a remarkable closeness to political power. Its development would have been incomprehensible otherwise, particularly during the long corporatist dictatorship period, when the state placed strict controls on all economic and industrial activity.

CUF developed an advanced communications policy aimed at business partners, final consumers, the state, and the general public. It commissioned at least nine motion pictures for public screening from 1931 to 1972 and was also featured regularly in state-sponsored newsreels and similar outlets (fig. 2).²³ CUF’s first and last “prestige documentaries,”²⁴ made in 1961 and 1972, have



Fig. 2: Watching boiler making on a CUF film. Footage of a Barreiro screening, November 2014. (Footage by João Rosas, frame selection by author)

been selected from its films for this study. They were both produced at important points in the company's development, and each had a very specific purpose from a corporate communications point of view.

In the early 1960s, the Portuguese economy and economic policies were being influenced by new players, circumstances, and perspectives, which were potentially unsettling for long-established actors. CUF selected a director and producer team with extensive experience in both state- and corporate-sponsored film and commissioned two documentaries proclaiming it as a leading economic force and highlighting its crucial, steady contribution to the national economy and development. *Criando fontes de trabalho* (Creating employment, 1961) was the first.²⁵ The film was released in 1961 and relied heavily on Barreiro factory footage. The camera tours the compound, highlighting technical details, low-angle shooting big machines and industrial structures (such as chimneys, towers, and furnaces), suggesting grandeur and power in very wide (including aerial) shots, and profusely displaying the company's welfare activities—all with voiceover conveying the usual deluge of grandiose statements, impressive figures, and cryptic technical jargon.

A decade later, *Um homem, uma obra* (A man and his life's work, 1972)²⁶ commemorated the centenary of CUF's early and most important CEO, Alfredo da Silva. A young director was chosen this time, and the film contains some formal novelty (compared to previous CUF films). The shop floor was shot in a more naturalistic way, with visibly less *mise-en-scène*. While in the 1960s

films, short scenes were staged so as to convey reliability and orderliness of operations, premises were made clean and neat before shooting, and workers were instructed not to look at the camera, none of this is visible in *Um homem, uma obra*. In this film a couple of interview excerpts were included, while in *Criando fontes de trabalho* only the voiceover (still present) would be heard. This, together with a focus not only on the Barreiro complex but also on CUF's huge shipyard (Lisnave, designed to cater to the largest vessels being built), portrays the company as a pioneering, international-level business partner at a time when international relations were critical both to CUF's business strategy and to the Portuguese government's policies.

As the footage was being shot, Barreiro was home to a several thousand-strong CUF workforce²⁷ employed at chemical, textile, metallurgy, and other plants, together with numerous support services and activities. Along with stable jobs, these employees could enjoy a range of company housing, health, retail, education, and leisure benefits that went hand in hand with close surveillance and repression of any labor organization or struggle. As Barreiro's economic and social backbone, CUF permeated people's labor and social reproduction trajectories.²⁸

In the wake of the 1974 Carnation Revolution, a wave of nationalizations dismantled the CUF group. While a number of public-sector undertakings were later established that kept up all manufacturing and welfare activities (Quimigal Barreiro chief among them), privatization and deindustrialization in the 1980s would eventually wipe out the long-standing Barreiro industrial complex. In spite of severance pay and other support measures,²⁹ the impact was huge economically, socially, and demographically (the municipality lost almost 7,000 inhabitants between 1991 and 2001³⁰). Former workers who had once enjoyed job stability and comprehensive welfare support were left to deal with precarity and "temporal dispossession."³¹

It comes as no surprise, then, that those who were interviewed during this study came up with rather complex, intricate representations of the local industrial past. A telling example is the way a former postnationalization CUF and Quimigal worker and labor and party militant confronts his own contradictory thoughts about Alfredo da Silva:

I think he [Silva] did a lot for Barreiro, even though he stood for big capital—no doubt about that.... This may be a bit at odds with my way of thinking..., and probably some of my friends and comrades would not agree with this. But that's it. I think it [Silva's mausoleum³²] should be there anyway, because it recalls a man, who did something for the people's sake. "For the people's sake" is too

strong a wording ... But he built something to create jobs for the people... But this is a contradiction, because he ended up creating the biggest monopoly in Portugal.

Another opinion on Silva, from a former office clerk who was not a labor or political activist but who kept close ties to the communist-led (at the time of the fieldwork) municipal council, instantiates two other relevant features of these narratives: their presentist quality and their roots in meaningful subjective experiences.

A tribute to him [Silva] was held a short time ago and some objected to it. This was foolish, to my mind, [as] he was a great industrialist. Are they [the protesters] better off now?! Nowadays, are they better off? Back in those days, the man had to protect himself. Someone spends millions upon millions and what do people want? Thousands of jobs. And the [sponsoring of] roller hockey, football ... People leaving the factories ... My wife—we were still dating—I can still see her coming through the gate. I can still see her. What about now? Now you don't see a thing! Give me a break

Many people at Barreiro tend to espouse conceptual and clear-cut narratives in which CUF represents either big exploitative capital or the virtues of private entrepreneurship. But the former workers interviewed for this study, in contrast, remember it through their own, deeply subjective and shared, social and embodied experience of labor and sociability on the shop floor and beyond. Their memories of labor exploitation intertwine with memories of subjective involvement with work that allow a crucial appreciation of occupational and life paths. Those memories also interact with recollections of a personal and family life supported by a stable job and wage, and punctuated by CUF's welfare (which the workers often linked to the company's solidity and grandeur). CUF therefore permeates some of these workers' farther-reaching, lived experiences. It belongs to a past that, when all is said and done, comprises a fundamental part of their lives.

They were all very skilled at the nursery ... There was a doctor, there were three nurses ... There was a swimming pool, they [the children] were given lunch, they were given breakfast, I have never paid a cent ... We had a hard time [working for CUF], but they would compensate us for our pains. (former CUF and Quimigal female worker)

CUF was a house we used to count on. (former CUF and Quimigal worker, labor and party militant)

RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND CONDITIONS OF RECEPTION

Michelle Lagny has called for a “wider and more sophisticated conception of ‘contexts’”³³ that attends to the very specific “conditions of reception,”³⁴ including the particular ways in which an audience gets in touch with a film. In this study, these conditions crucially include the methodology used for entering the fieldwork site and creating the reception situation in the first place.

This specific encounter between corporate film and former workers was primarily academia-mediated. It consisted of a series of public screenings in Barreiro, which were directly convened by the Work on Screen research project (see note 1) with the support of Barreiro’s municipal council (Câmara Municipal do Barreiro—CMB). Staff at the CMB’s office for local associations provided the research team with a list of organizations they considered suitable for our purposes, mediated our first contacts with them, and joined us at each screening. They were acquainted with people at all the different associations, which kept close links with the CMB—something that may have reinforced some left-wing bias in the audience. We arranged for screenings at six of the associations. The CMB then helped us advertise the screenings online, in the local press, and in leaflets handed out at the screening venues.

With one exception (not discussed here),³⁵ the screenings were scheduled for the afternoon. The first one was included in a previously planned event that attracted some 120 people. Two others were mostly attended by each association’s usual participants, who visit regularly to have a snack, play cards, watch TV together, or chat. Audiences for these averaged thirty people. In two other cases, the audience went mostly for the films, attracting around twelve people each.

The program was the same at all screenings. In order to provide the viewers with some contextualizing, comparative material, the CUF corporate films were sandwiched between two other films with different approaches to Barreiro. The opening piece was a 1933 state-sponsored newsreel featuring the president, prime minister (Salazar, the dictator), and others visiting Barreiro and the CUF premises: *A Visita Oficial ao Barreiro* (Official visit to Barreiro, 1933).³⁶ The closing picture was a 2014 cut of amateur footage shot at one of Quimigal’s factories in 1989, featuring groups of children visiting the premises, some of them interacting with their working parents: *Visita à fábrica—a Quimigal/DPEQ em 1989* (Visit to the factory—Quimigal/DPEQ in 1989, 2014).³⁷

All films were projected on a portable roll projection screen. Digitized copies provided by the Portuguese film archives (ANIM/Cinemateca Portuguesa) were used for the first three, while the last one was locally sourced, as explained above.

On arrival, viewers were handed a leaflet with minimal information on the research project and a list of the films to be screened. An introduction was made by a research team member (often myself) before the projection stating our academic interest in Barreiro people's views about the films and encouraging comment and debate on them. This encouragement was sometimes reinforced between films and after the last film. The ensuing conversations varied among sessions because the occasion, location, and audience size and composition differed. For instance, there was an all-male audience at one of the less attended ones. Other gender-related aspects were observed as well. Women were less likely than men to take the floor in a more formal way, as was the case in the session attended by 120 people, or at another association where women and men usually formed separate groups to watch TV as opposed to playing cards, for example. Here, the women still made their comments, albeit in small groups. They participated actively and even led the conversation in more informal and less gendered settings.

Steady attention to the films, an apparently compliant reception of the corporate ones, and a flow of comments *triggered by* the films but not *about* them were observed in all screening events and audience segments. Comments tended to focus not on the films themselves (e.g., on the films being good or bad, trustworthy or biased, boring or exciting, short or long, or whatever qualities they may have) but on the industrial past the films were bringing back to people's minds. These observations were later reinforced during postscreening interviews with former workers recruited from the audience during or just after the screenings.³⁸

FACE TO FACE WITH THE OLD CUF FILMS

In order to provide the necessary detail, I will now discuss a specific screening session. The selected one featured gender-balanced and very active participation from the audience, and it was also the session when the meaningful episode described in the introduction took place.

This screening was held at Associação Acção de Reformados do Barreiro (AARB), a retired workers' club in the city center, on the first floor above the indoor public swimming pool (which afforded a warm temperature much appreciated by participants). The session took place in a large lounge and TV room with a café (attracting many members in the afternoons) with some thirty people in attendance, including the female cafeteria staff, who were former CUF/Quimigal factory workers.

Just like at the other worker audience screenings, the 1933 film triggered some light comments on the recognizable places on the screen and how much they had changed since the film was made. Then, the imposing voiceover and

script that opens *Creating Employment* was met with silence. But soon the textile mills were on the screen, prompting an enthusiastic flow of remarks and reminiscences from former female textile workers that quickly extended to the whole room (figs. 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d).

The most immediate, emphatic response was one of recognition of work spaces and movements. Besides signaling a highly valued familiarity with the huge factory complex (more on this below), this recognition had a clearly emotional tone, forming a link between the corporate film and subjective work experience or memories of loved ones. Comments included:





Figs. 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d: Reacting to CUF films. Footage of a Barreiro screening, November 2014. (Footage by João Rosas, frame selection by author)

—That was my mum’s first job ...
 —And my auntie, she worked there too.
 —... the bagging. But the men used to walk around in their under-
 pants and she was still a kid so she refused to stay. She went home
 for lunch and told my grandfather she wouldn’t go back. Look,
 there it is, the men filled the [fertilizer] bags and they [girls and
 women] sewed them up. She was 10!

—And look, this was where I worked ... Just look; that was my job. See? I was a textile winding operator.

—[Me] Was that your job?

—I was a winding operator. And this was Eva's job. She was a spinner operator. These machines they would operate two of them [simultaneously], one this side [gesturing], the other this side.

—And I pulled the carts like a donkey [*laughs*], the [wheels of the] carts were clogged with fluff, they got stuck!

—My dad used to work there on the cranes. My dad worked there ...

During postscreening interviews the workers also activated this mode of relation toward the films: the films very directly triggered and interacted with each viewer's memory of lived experience and emotions.

—[Me] Did you enjoy the films? Had you seen them before?

—To remember is to live, they say ... I was an employee with CUF, I stayed there for thirty-nine years. So when I see all that, you know ...? Those people coming out of the spinning mills ... Thousands of people there. And all the factories, and the site where I used to work, the offices, everything is shown there. (former CUF and Quimigal office clerk)

For some viewers, the identification between the pictures on the screen and their workplace was at times so strong that their own absence from the pictures was difficult to understand.

—In the film [I] spotted two friends of mine—one of them lives down that way. But I myself don't know where I could be ... I don't know where I could be, or maybe I'd gone to the office to get some papers ... (former female CUF and Quimigal worker)

Empathy toward the films' content was also expressed in a range of positive appreciations of factory tasks and spaces, as well as of break times and places. Pictures of the canteen prompted particularly fond memories, and a close-up of a water pitcher drew special attention.

—This job is so nice.

—This is really pretty.

—That was so beautiful! ... That job was so beautiful ...

—This is the canteen [*laughs*]. Look at the canteen!

—Look, the water pitcher!

—The canteen!

—Look, the water pitcher! See, there's the water pitcher ...

At this and all the other worker audience screenings, there was usually silence as the ever-present voiceover spoke of obscure technical details and impressive figures on industrial premises and processes. The blatant praise of CUF and its founder, on the other hand, was frequently met with acceptance, sometimes full and emphatic, more often conditionally or hesitantly. There were counter-arguments but no outright criticism. This pattern applied not only to some particular points, such as CUF's welfare policies, but also to the merits of CUF and of its owners and managers in general.

- [film voiceover]: “Alfredo da Silva foi um homem excepcional [was an extraordinary man]”
- That's true! He set up the factory!
- So we could get our jobs.
- [prompted by the voiceover talking about wages] Yeah, a big wage [*sarcastically*] it was really huge!
- But there were plenty of jobs ...
- But that's all! But as we were so exploited ...
- But we had our jobs ... Look, gymnastics! [the film catches their attention again]

On the other hand, the highly emphasized topic of CUF's diversified, innovative technical capabilities met with particularly immediate support.

- Everything was produced there. That was a factory that could make everything.
- Everything!
- Everything! See? Copper sulfate ...
- CUF had everything there, everything! A great factory.

Just like at the other screenings, there were also instances of a sharper distancing from the corporate narrative on the screen here. The worker's words in the introduction are an example. This particular statement merits further mention, because it includes the only spontaneous opinion on the films themselves from these worker audiences. Formal issues were also mentioned by this worker, even suggesting links between the film's content and form (“it looks nice in the picture”).

- Slave-like working conditions ... Working at their jobs barefoot, without any protection. A lot could be said, we endured a lot ... It looks nice in the picture, but there's no mention of the suffering! The exploitation, the bosses ... the workers fighting for their rights and working conditions. That's not there, ma'am! [addressing me] It's not. No, it is not.

But even if these statements were at first listened to attentively, and even seconded by a couple of whispered “That’s true!,” no one followed suit with similar comments. While not everybody approved of every point in the film’s narrative, people were unwilling to translate this into criticism of the films themselves. Even though they often recalled meaningful life and work memories that were absent from or even at odds with the corporate discourse on the screen, the workers would nonetheless endorse the films as “reality” when prompted to comment on them. The following dialogue with a former labor and party militant at another screening session illustrates this point.

—[Me] This film was sponsored by CUF itself. You worked there; this was in 1961. Does this film truly depict what it was like to work at CUF?

—The one we’ve just watched?

—[Me] Yes.

—It does. We’ve got people here who worked in several sectors, and that [on the screen] is just like it was. And we get nostalgic watching it.

—And the film is very well done.

—It is very well done; it’s perfect.

Moreover, these workers’ memories of inequality and injustice on the shop floor, far from translating into a criticism of the films, translated instead into the idea that not having had access to them back in CUF’s times is in itself an example of inequality and oppression.

—[Me] Wouldn’t CUF show the workers these films?

—No.

—Are you serious?! No way!

—If you went into a screening you’d get jailed.

—We were not entitled to a thing!

—Our lot was just laboring, and getting our pay, which by the way ...

Furthermore, as they looked at the films from the perspective of a hard but nostalgia-tinged past, plus a present filled with experiences of dispossession and finality, the workers not only forgive or legitimize the difference between the films’ narrative and their own memories, but they seemed to construe this difference as a significant part of the films’ charm. In a way, the old corporate films are valued precisely because of their biases. They are welcomed as biased portraits of the past (fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Corporate films, workers' reminiscences. Footage of a Barreiro screening, November 2014. (Footage by João Rosas, frame selection by author)

- [Me] Maybe someone else would like to make a comment ...
- I just want to say thank you for all these memories of the good old days. Bad and good, good and bad.
- [Me] Bad and good times, right? But the films only talk about the good ones ...
- Ah, but I know about the others myself. We all know!
- But the bad [times] are ingrained in ourselves; we'll never forget them. I myself can't forget either the good or the bad.

A MEMORY-FOCUSED MODE OF FILM RECEPTION

In the above descriptions, socially and historically situated viewers create film meaning at the reception site, building on some of their most relevant subjective experiences and memories. While this corresponds well with the main lines of contemporary reception theory, the specific ways film meaning was construed in this case warrant further examination.

As mentioned, the former workers in this study did not spontaneously focus on the films as subjects of appraisal. With very few exceptions, only when directly prompted would they talk (briefly) *about* the films. Seldom did they engage in a film-focused reception mode, perhaps offering their working-class views on the films themselves. Most of the time, they sidestepped the films.³⁹

More than an “interpretive community,” they formed a “receiving community”: a particular mode of film reception.

In this reception mode, the films were appropriated as highly valued, powerful, flexible, subjective and collective memory tools. They were disregarded as films proper and instead turned into windows onto a significant past, prompting a flow of renewed remembrances and narratives. Mediated by time, centered on deeply personal experiences and affects⁴⁰ that crucially intermingled with collective dimensions rooted in the shared experience of factory work and working lives, impacted by current perceptions and experiences of decline and uncertainty, these workers’ film reception was a full-fledged social memory process: a reception of the past.

Noel King has noted that interpretation *sensu stricto* is not the main, or even the usual, type of relationship people have with films in general; instead, we tend to scan them for something that resonates with us.⁴¹ In this study, moreover, the fact that people were watching *films* was probably not so relevant to them. TV is by far the audiovisual form they are most familiar with, and it would probably be fair to say that, in spite of the bigger screen, most of them approached these films as they would regard a TV program. At the same time, the inclusion of noncorporate films alongside corporate ones may also have shifted the focus away from the corporate film quality of CUF’s pictures.

The memory-focused and seemingly compliant reception observed here was certainly shaped by all these circumstances. But the relational context in which people were shown the films likely had a much greater impact.

The following remarks may be helpful in clarifying this. When asked about any previous experience of CUF’s films, all interlocutors denied ever having watched them, even though at least some of the pictures (*Creating Employment* among them) had been repeatedly screened at the huge Cinema Ginásio built by CUF in Barreiro.⁴² This suggests that any possible CUF-era screening of these films was deemed meaningless by these former workers in contrast to today’s reception. Actually, it would have given them access to very different(ly experienced) films. In the framework of a hypothetical CUF-era screening, in which CUF would prefer the audience to focus on content and message rather than on the film itself, the film’s corporate-laden presence would likely be too conspicuous, resulting in a film-focused mode of reception. But in the noncorporate context of reception created by this study, people were able to almost forget about the films and their corporate origin, to overlook their corporate tone and message, and to engage them as valuable tools in a worker-led social memory process.

And yet these very films are alive and well again as corporate communications tools. Bondalti, the chemical company that partly succeeded

the old CUF (bearing the same name until very recently⁴³) sponsored their preservation and digitalization by the national film archives, regularly repurposes them for use in its corporate videos, and has full versions available on its website.⁴⁴ If the former workers at Barreiro were able to appropriate these films as their own memory props, it was not because the films' corporate tone faded away over time. It was actually the reception context in which people were involved.

CONTEXT AND CONTENT

This reception study highlights corporate films as multifunctional and contextual (albeit strongly intentional) objects. It meets the calls for a change in perspective from author to sponsor and from aesthetic qualities to functionality that accompanied the emergence of research on corporate, industrial film.⁴⁵ And it certainly stresses the importance of addressing reception, context, and memory when tackling corporate film. But the twin ideas of a memory-focused mode of film reception and of corporate film as a workers' memory tool also meet the converse concern that an overly context-focused approach may end up "tak[ing] films themselves out of the history of cinema."⁴⁶

In fact, it turns out that precisely the aesthetic and rhetorical features of some of these pictures as industrial and corporate films were instrumental in giving them memory value from the viewpoint of the former workers. In a memory-focused mode of reception, an industrial film's staples such as tours of premises and machinery resulted in a highly valued collective appropriation of the old industrial site.⁴⁷ At the same time, the daily sight of present-day industrial wreckage favored the workers' disposition to accept the films' praise of CUF's owners and managers, with the anticapitalist ideological weaponry one would expect to find in this leftist context being therefore fired at the "bandits" (governments and boards) who pursued deindustrialization, not at the capitalists themselves. Proclaiming CUF's grandeur, the films validated the workers' memories of their own participation in such grandiosity: the corporate rhetoric gratified the workers' subjectivity.

The fact that the aesthetics and rhetoric of industrial film can help make it suitable for appropriation by the workers certainly tells us something about industrial work and labor. It suggests, for instance, that a focus on the materiality of technology and production—so salient in these films—is shared (albeit diversely) across the plant's uneven social fabric.⁴⁸ But it also reminds us that the filmmakers themselves were entering this common ground when stepping onto the shop floor to shoot an industrial film, and that these films can therefore possibly bear the marks of diverse and partly overlapping ways of looking at and representing labor, industry, and the factory on and off the screen.

Approaching old corporate, industrial films with a focus on the social memory processes involved in their reception today may therefore allow a kind of retrospective insight into those films' content, form, intentionality, effectiveness, and use in addition to an understanding of the reception itself. This corroborates the notion that a focus on context and a focus on content require one another if we are to understand industrial films in their complexity as historical objects.

A COMPLIANT RECEPTION OR A DIVISION OF MEMORY LABOR?

The fact that corporate film can actually bolster the workers' class-bound, subjective, shared labor memories is, however, only part of the picture. These same memories and experiences also prompted former workers to maintain a critical distance and independence from the films—something that the notion of a memory-focused mode of reception highlights and that would perhaps be easily missed without it.

Montebello's study of feature film reception among industrial workers found that they adopted a pragmatic stance, a "minimal engagement" (*adhésion minimale*) with characters and scenarios, by means of which they were able to enjoy cinema as entertainment without losing sight of its fictional, illusory character.⁴⁹ In Barreiro, the former workers certainly developed a "maximal engagement" with numerous settings and contents in the corporate films, since these spoke to some key memories of industrial work and life.

It is crucial to note, however, that such an engagement at any time precluded their ability to actively build an autonomous stance toward the films. Within this memory-focused mode of film reception, which also unavoidably triggers work and labor memories in conflict with the films' narrative, the pragmatic engagement through which these films are appropriated as memory tools went hand in hand with a lucid recognition of the limits that this appropriation must deal with. On the one hand, people loved watching the films and eagerly took them as their own memory tools. Moreover, they accepted the films as depicting a "reality" they recognized. They did not criticize the films for being biased depictions. But, on the other hand, people talked about meaningful features of their labor experience that are absent from the films. They did not follow the films' (corporate) claim that the films represent the entire industrial work and life experience. While the film is central in the crafting of a workers' narrative, at no time is it mistaken for such discourse. That's why the films' omission of harsh working conditions and labor conflict is forgiven and actually deemed legitimate. Everyone knows it would be silly to expect otherwise.

When faced with the old corporate films, these former workers actually seem to lead a division of (memory) labor: "the bad [times] are ingrained in



Fig. 5: Footage of a Barreiro screening, November 2014. (Footage by João Rosas, frame selection by author)

ourselves; we'll never forget them," while the films' task is precisely to glorify the other side, the "good" and undeniable "reality" of the now-defunct factory complex. These are remembrances that each worker appropriates to make sense and value of their own work and struggle and to highlight the personal, family, and social path they were able to build on it.

Hence, even if these worker audiences did not take time to criticize the films, they still identified them as just films, obviously unable, with all their charm, to erase the "bad times." In this sense, they maintained a critical autonomy from the films, and this autonomy was work- and class-bound, for it originated in the material and symbolic experience of industrial labor. These former workers clearly recognized corporate film as a discourse that distinctly differed from the one "ingrained in ourselves": a discourse whose contents they could not control, which came from another social location and was aimed at other, more privileged recipients. Within a memory-focused mode of reception, corporate films could be pragmatically and emotionally (not compliantly) appropriated, taken over, and used as a subjective and shared memory tool by former workers—while they were realistically aware that those films were not (part of) their world (fig. 5).

Notes

1. Field data stem from the project *Work on Screen: A Study of Social Memories and Identities through Cinema* (PI Luísa Veloso with F. Vidal, FCT funded, ref. PTDC/IVC-SOC/3941/2012, hosted by CIES-IUL, CRIA-IUL, and CECL-NOVA FCSH). This was a collaborative, multidisciplinary study

on the representations of work within an extensive sample of mainly institutional and sponsored films shot in Portugal from the 1920s to the 1980s. The main results were published in Frédéric Vidal and Luísa Veloso, eds., *O trabalho no ecrã: Memórias e identidades sociais através do cinema* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2016). As part of the project's multidimensional approach, a reception case study was devised, aimed at triggering, observing, contextualizing and analyzing the ways in which some of the old films would be received today by former industrial workers. This study was my main responsibility within Work on Screen. I thank Luísa Veloso, Frédéric Vidal, and João Rosas for the great teamwork and debate. In this essay, I return to and develop part of the analysis in Emília Margarida Marques, "A segunda vida dos filmes CUF no Barreiro, ou a recepção fílmica enquanto processo de memória social," in Vidal and Veloso, *O trabalho no ecrã*, 249–82. I thank *Film History's* editorial board and an anonymous reviewer for their constructive suggestions; any remaining flaws are my own.

2. Pierre Sorlin, "Reception in Context: What Spectators Learned from the Newsreels during the Spanish Civil War," in *Film—Kino—Zuschauer: Film reception*, ed. Irmbert Schenk, Margrit Tröhler, and Yvonne Zimmermann (Marburg, Schüren, 2010), 420.
3. Rick Prelinger (with Patrick Vonderau), "Vernacular Archiving: An Interview with Rick Prelinger," in *Films That Work: Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media*, ed. Vinzenz Hediger and Patrick Vonderau (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 53.
4. See, among others, Bo Florin, Patrick Vonderau, and Nico de Klerk, eds., *Films That Sell: Moving Pictures and Advertising* (London: BFI/Palgrave, 2016); Nicolas Hatzfeld, Alain P. Michel, and Gwenaelle Rot, "Filmer le travail au nom de l'entreprise? Les films Renault sur les chaînes de production (1950–2005)," *Entreprises et Histoire* 44 (2006): 25–42; Vinzenz Hediger and Florian Hoof, "The Agency of the Agency, or: Why Do All Corporate Image Films Look Alike?," in *A History of Cinema without Names: A Research Project*, ed. Diego Cavalloti, Federico Giordano, and Leonardo Quaresima (Milano: Nimesis, 2016): 209–17; Hediger and Vonderau, *Films That Work*; Anthony Slide, *Before Video: A History of the Non-Theatrical Film* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992); Yvonne Zimmermann, ed., *Schaufenster Schweiz: Dokumentarische Gebrauchsfilme 1896–1964* (Zürich: Limmat, 2011); and Sara Sullivan, "Corporate Discourses of Sponsored Films of Steel Production in the United States, 1936–1956," *Velvet Light Trap* 72 (Fall 2013): 33–43.
5. Paulo Cunha, "Um cinema invisível: A produção de curtas documentais e o novo cinema português," in *Imagens Achadas: Documentário, política e processos sociais em Portugal*, ed. Patrícia Vieira and Pedro Serra (Lisboa: Colibri, 2014): 137–52; Paulo Martins, "O cinema em Portugal: Os documentários industriais de 1933 a 1985" (PhD diss., ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, 2010); and Vidal and Veloso, *O trabalho no ecrã*.
6. Cavalloti, Giordano, and Quaresima, *History of Cinema*.
7. See Schenk, Tröhler, and Zimmermann, *Film—Kino—Zuschauer*.
8. Richard Maltby, Daniel Biltereyst, and Philippe Meers, eds., *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
9. See also Yvonne Zimmermann, "'What Hollywood Is to America, the Corporate Film Is to Switzerland': Remarks on Industrial Film as Utility Film," in Hediger and Vonderau, *Films That Work*, 101–17.
10. Annette Kuhn, Daniel Biltereyst, and Philippe Meers, "Memories of Cinemagoing and Film Experience: An Introduction," *Memory Studies* 10, no. 1 (2017): 3–16.
11. Social memory is understood here as a process of building, reproducing, changing, appropriating, contesting, and using shared, significant narratives about the collective past. The idea of presentism is used to describe memory studies' focus on "the ways in which images of the past change over time, how groups use the past for present purposes, and that the past is a particularly useful resource for expressing interests." Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From

- 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 128.
12. Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).
 13. See also Christophe Gelly and David Roche, eds., *Approaches to Film and Reception Theories* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2012); and Kuhn, Biltereyst, and Meers, "Memories of Cinemagoing."
 14. Schenk, Tröhler, and Zimmermann, *Film—Kino—Zuschauer*, 23.
 15. Among many, see Frank Kessler, "Viewing Pleasures, Pleasuring Views: Forms of Spectatorship in Early Cinema," in Schenk, Tröhler, and Zimmermann, *Film—Kino—Zuschauer*, 61–73; Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers, *Explorations in New Cinema History*; Philippe Meers, Daniel Biltereyst, and Lies Van De Vijver, "Metropolitan vs. Rural Cinemagoing in Flanders, 1925–75," *Screen* 51, no. 3 (2010): 272–80; Staiger, *Interpreting Films*; and the pioneering research of Emilie Altenloh, "Zur Sociologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher" (PhD diss., Jena, 1914), <http://www.massenmedien.de/allg/altenloh/index.htm>.
 16. For example, Helmut Korte, "Wunschkonzert (D 1940): Reconstructing Historical Effects," in Schenk, Tröhler, and Zimmermann, *Film—Kino—Zuschauer*, 228–44; and Sylvie Lindeperg, "Nuit et Bruillard": *Un film dans l'histoire* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2007).
 17. Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 308; Kracauer pointed this out early, in spite of his emphasis on the imposing features of film as a "hypnotic" medium. Pierre Sorlin, in *Introduction à une sociologie du cinéma* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2015), talks about "experience" instead of "existence," thus bringing the past more clearly into the equation (58).
 18. Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).
 19. For example, Gelly and Roche, *Approaches to Film and Reception Theories*.
 20. These reading frameworks can be represented, among other constructs, by any a priori categorization of the received text. For instance, in the current case, labels such as "CUF's propaganda" or "pictures of old Barreiro."
 21. Fabrice Montebello, "Spectacle cinématographique et classe ouvrière: Longwy, 1944–1960" (PhD diss., Université Lumière-Lyon II, 1997).
 22. Jorge Morais, *Rua do Ácido Sulfúrico—Patrões e operários: Um olhar sobre o Barreiro* (Lisboa: Bizâncio, 2008).
 23. About CUF and its place in the Portuguese industry and industrial policies, see, among many, Maria Filomena Mónica, "Capitalistas e industriais (1870–1914)," *Análise Social* 99 (1987): 819–63; J. M. Fernandes Almeida, "História da informática em Portugal: O subsistema de informação da CUF/Quimigal," in *Memórias das tecnologias e dos sistemas de informação em Portugal*, ed. Eduardo Beira and Manuel Heitor (Braga, 2004), 253–72; José Félix Ribeiro, Lino Gomes Fernandes, and Maria Manuela Carreira Ramos, "Grande indústria, banca e grupos financeiros, 1953–1973," *Análise Social* 99 (1987): 945–1018; and José Miguel Leal da Silva, "Cronologia CUF," *Fabrica Sol* (blog), 2005, accessed March 1, 2018, <http://fabricasol.blogspot.com/2005/12/cronologia-iii.html>. About CUF's films, see Luísa Veloso and Emília Margarida Marques, "Cinema de empresa no quadro da política de comunicação da Companhia União Fabril," in Vidal and Veloso, *O trabalho no ecrã*, 221–48.
 24. "Documentário de prestígio" was a widely used category in the film and corporate milieus of the 1950s to 1970s. It denotes a film (usually a short) commissioned or sponsored by a company in order to boost its public image. In a screening event at Barreiro (not considered here), a former CUF senior staffer mentioned the use of these films in the framework of CUF's relationship with the state.

25. *Criando fontes de trabalho* (Creating employment, 1961), directed by João Mendes, produced by Felipe de Solms, 35mm, 24 min., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VY5bjduMs6c>. The other film in this pair was *A empresa e o Homem* (The Company and the Man, 1962), directed by João Mendes, produced by Felipe de Solms, 35mm, 19 min., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mOrgOuQfQc>.
26. *Um homem, uma obra* (A man and his life's work, 1973), directed by Alfredo Tropa with Eduardo Elyseu, produced by Fernando de Almeida, 35mm, 17 min., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZDVAYW-wBk>.
27. In 1970, there were about six thousand direct, permanent workers and employees. CUF, *Companhia União Fabril: Fábricas do Barreiro* (Lisboa: CUF, 1970). In 1958, a peak of ten thousand staff (casual workforce included) had been recorded. Eduardo Harrington Sena, ed., *50 anos da CUF no Barreiro* (Lisboa: CUF, 1958).
28. On working-class life and struggle at Barreiro, see Ana Nunes de Almeida, *A fábrica e a família: Famílias operárias no Barreiro* (Barreiro: CMB, 1993); Vanessa Almeida, "A Comissão Interna de Empresa: Ideologia, resistência e transformação," in *De pé sobre a terra: Estudos sobre a indústria, o trabalho e o movimento operário em Portugal*, ed. Bruno Monteiro and Joana Dias Pereira (Lisboa: IHC, 2013), 561–72, <http://hdl.handle.net/10362/11192>; Rosalina Carmona, *Do Barreiro ao Alto do Seixalinho: Um passado rural e operário* (Barreiro: CMB, 2005); António Camarão, António Sardinha Pereira, and José Miguel Leal da Silva, *A fábrica: 100 anos da CUF no Barreiro* (Lisboa: Bizâncio, 2008); Armando Sousa Teixeira, António José Ferreira, and Carlos Oliveira, "Carló," in *A CUF no Barreiro: Realidades, mitos e contradições* (Alhos Vedros: Página a Página, 2014); and António Ventura, Armando Sousa Teixeira, José Miguel Leal da Silva, Edmundo Pedro, and João Manuel Costa Feijão, eds., *60º aniversário da greve de 1943 no Barreiro: Comunicações* (Barreiro: CMB, 2005).
29. Fernando Sobral, Elisabete de Sá, and Agostinho Leite, *Alfredo da Silva, a CUF e o Barreiro, um século de Revolução Industrial em Portugal: Um país, dois sistemas* (Lisboa: Bnomics, 2008).
30. INE, *Censos 91: Resultados definitivos, Região de Lisboa e Vale do Tejo*, 2nd ed. (Lisboa: INE, 1993); and INE, *Censos 2001: Resultados definitivos, Lisboa* (Lisboa: INE, 2001).
31. Understood as "the inability to plan, predict, or build futures in an incremental way." James H. Smith, "Tantalus in the Digital Age: Coltan Ore, Temporal Dispossession, and 'Movement' in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo," *American Ethnologist* 38, no. 1 (2011): 17.
32. Silva asked to be buried in Barreiro, so a mausoleum was built in the local cemetery in 1944. While the cemetery was later moved to another location to make room for expansion of the industrial complex, the mausoleum remained inside the factory grounds.
33. Michelle Lagny, "Historicizing Film Reception: A 'Longue Durée' Perspective," in Schenk, Tröhler, and Zimmermann, *Film—Kino—Zuschauer*, 81.
34. Lagny, "Historicizing Film Reception," 76.
35. One session was held one evening at Cineclub do Barreiro, a society founded in 1958 and devoted to the dissemination of cinema as an art form and the education of audiences; see DBA/CMB, *Guia documental do arquivo do Cineclub do Barreiro* (Barreiro: CMB, 2011). As expected, the audience and mode of reception at the cineclub were completely different from those at the other screenings. See Marques, "A segunda vida."
36. *A visita oficial ao Barreiro* (Official visit to Barreiro), director unknown, photography directed by Manuel Luís Vieira, produced by Bloco H. da Costa, 1933, 35mm, 8 min., <http://www.cinemateca.pt/Cinemateca-Digital/Ficha.aspx?obraid=4332&type=Video>.
37. *Visita à fábrica—a Quimigal/DPEQ em 1989* (Visit to the factory—Quimigal/DPEQ in 1989, 2014), directed by Orlando Santos and António Ferreira, video, 14 min. The film features groups of workers'

children visiting the factory during the school holidays and interacting with their working parents. The research team found out about this footage when interviewing Orlando Santos, a former CUF/Quimigal worker, and the idea emerged of cutting a short to be screened in Barreiro as part of this study.

38. While all the screenings took place in November 2014, the Barreiro fieldwork spanned June to December. Interviews were held with people who stood out as agents in relevant local memory processes, or who had some contact with the CUF films' production or shooting. This included the municipality's president, people who led local associations in the fields of memory and heritage, people connected to the local industry museum, two local amateur historians (both of them once senior employees with CUF and/or Quimigal), and, outside of Barreiro, the communications director with Bondalti. At a second stage, a number of former workers who had attended the screenings were also interviewed on their views on the films and on their work and labor paths. A total of nineteen interviews were thus carried out, comprehending twenty-one interviewees. Screenings and interviews alike were filmed, transcribed, and analyzed. Research on Barreiro's local history and social memory processes was further pursued through on-site observation as well as bibliography and document analysis.
39. From the field journal, right after the first screening session: "I feel the films had fallen by the way-side in the workers' talk" (F. Vidal); "We should urge people to talk about the films, of course; but should such a discourse fail to arise in spite of our encouragement, this in itself will be an interesting observation regarding, precisely, the way people engage with these objects" (E. M. Marques).
40. Janet Staiger, "The Centrality of Affect in Reception Studies," in Schenk, Tröhler, and Zimmermann, *Film—Kino—Zuschauer*, 85–98. See also Vanessa Toulmin and Martin Loiperdinger, "Is It You? Recognition, Representation and Response in Relation to the Local Film," *Film History* 17, no. 1 (2005): 7–18.
41. Noel King, "Hermeneutics, Reception Aesthetics and Film Interpretation," in *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*, ed. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 201–21.
42. See, for example, *Informação Interna* (CUF's newsletter), September 1964.
43. The former CUF owners returned to business activity in Portugal in the late 1970s. Among their extended business areas, they regained control of part of the former CUF chemical industries and restored its old name.
44. In these videos, the old CUF films are quoted in their content and in their very existence as tokens of CUF/Bondalti's long-standing commitment to innovation and high standard outputs. See, for instance, Bondalti, "CUF Inovation," video, 5:54, March 4, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_al9y_ZOq0; and Bondalti, "Bondalti: O Filme," video, 3:45, May 29, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2RAmO2AKaA>.
45. See also, for instance, Zimmermann, "What Hollywood Is to America," 106.
46. James Chapman, review of *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies*, ed. Richard Maltby, Daniel Biltereyst, and Philippe Meers, *Screen* 54 (2013): 290. See also Richard Dyer, "Introduction to Film Studies," in Hill and Gibson, *Film Studies*, 1–8.
47. This was all the more valued as access used to be strictly hierarchy-bound during CUF times, with most workers not allowed to wander beyond their own workplaces. Interviewees whose jobs involved moving around the factory compound considered this mobility a very positive feature of their work. Female former workers recalled how, post-1974, they would use time slots allocated to workers' plenary meetings (usually two hours) to wander across the plant instead, keen to get to know the spaces and machinery firsthand. Watching the films finally gave everyone the same inside view.

48. For a case study, see Emília Margarida Marques, "Instituting, De-instituting and Under-instituting the Complexities of Production: Struggles on the Shop Floor," *Social Anthropology* 19, no. 4 (2011): 409–22.
49. Montebello, "Spectacle cinématographique," 411.

Emília Margarida Marques, an anthropologist and researcher with CRIA/ISCTE-IUL (Lisbon), approaches sponsored, industrial films in the context of her long-standing research interests on work, labor, class, and memory. She is the author or coauthor of several presentations and chapters on the sponsored, industrial films produced in Portugal during the 1926–1974 right-wing dictatorship, and on their reception.