

STUDY GUIDE



A BRUDDAH'S MIND (CABEÇA DE NÊGO)

A film by DEO CARDOSO

Brazil / 2020 / 86 min
Portuguese with English subtitles



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BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before watching a film, it is important to know the current events and history of the country that film comes from. Learning about the filmmaker is also a relevant way to gain insight on the context in which the film was produced. You can learn more about Deo Cardoso at <https://pragda.com/film/a-bruddahs-mind/>.

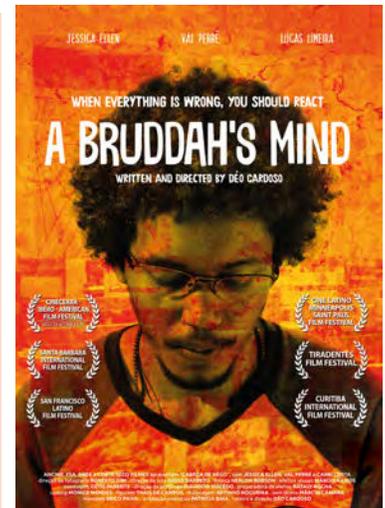
INTRODUCING THE FILM

A **film synopsis** is a piece of text designed to summarize the film's narrative, genre, style, and key participants in a way that appeals to a wide audience. The synopsis is part of the film's marketing process and tends to follow a traditional format. Read this synopsis for *A Bruddah's Mind*:

Based on real events, this political drama fuses Brazilian history with international anti-racist movements. Saulo, a black introvert student and fan of the Black Panther Movement, challenges his school in the largely white city of Fortaleza.

After Saulo's reaction to a racial insult from a classmate, his teachers describe him as a young delinquent and swiftly attempt to expel him ignoring his usually calm and articulate demeanor. Outraged, Saulo refuses to leave the school until justice is done. His solitary sit-in ends up challenging the school's board and mobilizes the entire community. The students did not anticipate, however, the principal's extreme reaction.

Echoing events from around the world, *A Bruddah's Mind* effectively calls out racism, misogyny, and militarism. It reminds us about the importance of activism, political engagement, and the sacrifices that come with it.



- From the film synopsis, can you imagine the genre and tone of the film? From this same text, try to identify the main events of the film's plot and the socio-political context of the film.
- Do you think that the film will have a political message? Cite specific language from the synopsis to support your answer.
- How do the trailer, poster, and still images encourage you to watch the film?
- Viewing the marketing materials alone (i.e. trailer, poster, and still images) without the aid of the synopsis available at <https://pragda.com/film/a-bruddahs-mind/>, can you make any assumptions regarding what the film is about?

AFTER WATCHING THE FILM:

NARRATIVE

- How is youth culture and the issues youth struggle with depicted in the film? What are the visual cues of rebellion the film uses? Reflect on costumes and other props.
- What is Saulo's support system like in terms of its gender dynamics and political struggles?
- What are the different roles women play in the film, and how do these depictions relate to broader discussions of gender and women's participation in political movements?

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NARRATIVE *(continued)*

- ❑ What are the different forms of resistance Saulo uses? What strategies do he and the students use to defend themselves and demand their rights? Relate these strategies to those of historical political movements around the world.
- ❑ What tactics do the school authorities use to silence dissent?
- ❑ How are mobile phones used in the film? Relate their purpose to the tools used in contemporary people's movements across the world. What does this comparison reveal about new technologies?
- ❑ How does the representation of Saulo differ from the representation of other black characters that are part of the institution or collaborative with the school? Given that the filmmakers are not judgmental about these other characters, why do you think they included them?
- ❑ In the film, there is a moment where the authorities vote on whether Saulo should be expelled or transferred. What does this moment convey about voting and democracy in general?
- ❑ What do you think about the film's ending? Does Saulo die or not? Where do we go from here as spectators? How does this ending differ from the endings of other political films?

CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES

- ❑ Describe the film's cinematography referencing specific choices in color, lighting, camera lenses, and angles, etc.
- ❑ How would you describe the color palette of the film? How does the film use color to reflect the film's themes?
- ❑ Think about the scene in which Saulo remains silent when he refuses to leave the classroom. Explain how the use of sound and silence supports the film's characters and narrative.
- ❑ Think about the limited use of locations in the film and explain how this artistic choice relates to the film's narrative and theme.
- ❑ The film relies on footage shot on mobile phones. Reflect on what does this film technique mean and how does it relate to the film's genre.
- ❑ In one scene, Saulo reads about the Black Panthers while a series of photographs of great leaders from history are projected on the wall behind him. What aesthetic choices were made in this scene and how do they contribute to the film as a whole?
- ❑ Reflect on the way the ending of the film is shot almost entirely on mobile phones. How does this footage differ from the mobile phone footage used elsewhere in the film?
- ❑ The school in the film is prison-like. Describe the ways in which the filmmakers use lighting, props, costumes, and other filmmaking devices to create this atmosphere.



THEMES

- ❑ Student politics has played an important role in political movements around the world. Relate the film's narrative to political struggles throughout history and in contemporary times.
- ❑ What is non-violent resistance and non-cooperation? How do elements of these political methods manifest in the film and relate to non-violent movements in history?
- ❑ How does the film inspire us to think about the different elements required for movement building? What are the factors the film suggests break movements?
- ❑ Reflect on how a peaceful student movement turned violent. How did this happen? What are the consequences of violence for political movements?
- ❑ How is the student movement represented by the media and authorities in the film? Can you compare it to a real-life movement and representation?
- ❑ What is the role of the police in the film? How does it compare to the role of the police in similar real-life situations?
- ❑ Reflect on the nature of the demands made by the student body. Why are these demands difficult for authorities to fulfill? How do these demands relate to the demands of global movements today?
- ❑ Reflect on the power of information. How is information manipulated in the film to subvert authorities? How do authorities use information to suppress dissent? What is the role of journalists in the film.
- ❑ Saulo is alone, isolated, almost imprisoned. Yet, he connects to the outside world by reading and through his phone. Discuss the film's binary themes such as interior/exterior, alone/together, micro/macro, and local/global.

