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Adapting Mozambique:
Representations of Violence and Trauma in Mozambican Cinema and Literature

Douglas Mulliken

MLLDOU004

Supervisor: Associate Professor Dr. Martin Botha

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Faculty of the Humanities

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I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Film Studies at the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the ways in which violence and trauma are represented in two novels — Lídia Jorge's *A Costa dos Murmúrios* (1988) and Mia Couto's *Terra Sonâmbula* (1992) — and the cinematic adaptations of those novels — Margarida Cardoso's *A Costa dos Murmúrios* (2004) and Teresa Prata's *Terra Sonâmbula* (2007). All four works take place in Mozambique and actively engage with the two primary conflicts that occurred in that country — the Mozambican War of Independence (also known as the Anti-Colonial War), fought between 1964 and 1974, and the Mozambican Civil War, fought between 1977 and 1992.

In order to provide suitable context for the textual and theoretical analysis found in the body of the dissertation, the study begins by providing a brief review of the history of cinema in Mozambique, focussing primarily on the period stretching from the start of the Anti-Colonial War in 1964 to the present day. It also examines the concept of national cinema, and whether such an idea is justifiable in a Mozambican context. The study continues by considering, in Chapter 2, the concept of adaptation and its limits. This chapter also provides an historical background for some of the atrocities committed during the Mozambican Civil War.

Chapter 3 consists of close textual analysis of the two versions of *A Costa dos Murmúrios*. The chapter identifies two main themes running through both works — the question of subjectivity and a postmodern presentation of history, and the tense, erotic relationship that exists between the two main female protagonists of the narrative, both of whom end up the victims of severe trauma.

Chapter 4 looks at the literary and cinematic incarnations of *Terra Sonâmbula*, with special attention paid to the function of magical realism in both works. This chapter argues that Couto uses magical realism as a sort of coping mechanism which allows his characters to remain hopeful, while the relative absence of magical realism in Prata's film results in an entirely different representation of both the Mozambican Civil War and the experience of those who lived through it.

This work concludes by arguing against too essentialist an understanding of how we define and categorise works of art, regardless of medium. Finally, it calls for further English-language scholarship in the field of Lusophone African cinema.

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INTRODUCTION

In his study *Postcolonial African Cinema* (2007), Kenneth W. Harrow defines African cinema as beginning, “with the first films by African directors, including [Paulin Soumanou] Vieyra, [Ousmane] Sembène, and [Oumarou] Ganda. The time was the late 50s and early 60s, the time of the struggle for the end of colonialism and for independence” (22). Harrow’s view is somewhat limited — Africans (albeit not *black* Africans) had been making films in (to give but one example) South Africa for far longer, and that country’s film industry has been described as amongst the oldest in the world (Botha “History” 20, Armes 1). Additionally, Harrow places too narrow a definition on the idea of African cinema, because, “[some] African filmmakers have rejected the term ‘African Cinema’ because of the bias implied... in the word *African*” (Dovey 2). Indeed Egypt, geographically an African country, had a local film industry by the 1920s. Nevertheless, Harrow’s point is an important one since, at present, the bulk of African Cinema studies focus on three main geographical areas — West Africa, with a particular emphasis placed on the cinemas of various francophone countries (especially Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Mali); North Africa, especially (but not limited to) the cinema of Egypt; and Southern Africa, which almost exclusively focuses on the cinema of South Africa. In the last decade, Nigeria’s “Nollywood” industry has also begun to be considered in an academic context. All of this is, perhaps, understandable.

Due to its position geographically, Northern Africa has always had a considerable interaction with Europe and, by extension, the rest of the West. This has allowed European directors to make films in Africa — the Italian director Gillo

Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) is perhaps the best-known example — and it has also allowed Northern African cineastes to draw from the West for education, funding, and subject matter, as exemplified by Egyptian director Youssef Chahine's having studied at the Pasadena Playhouse, or Moroccan Yasmine Kassari receiving funding from the Belgian government to produce her 2004 film *L'enfant endormi*. Likewise, as the countries of West Africa gained their independence in the 1950s (Ghana leading the way in 1957), they began to place an importance on cinema as a cultural mode of expression. By the late 1960s, the festival that would become the *Festival Panafricain du Cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou* (FESPACO) had been started. FESPACO is now, “the largest and longest-running African film festival in the world” (Dovey 1). The French colonial legacy of many West African countries was also very important in the establishment of film industries in those countries — Senegalese Ousmane Sembène's *La noire de...* (1966), often mentioned as one of the first internationally-known feature films by a black African director, was filmed largely in France, received funding from French production company *Les Actualités Françaises*, and was subject to regulation by the French *Centre National du Cinéma* (Hennebelle). Finally, South Africa, both because of its historic cultural ties to the West and its dominant economic stature within the region, has been an important centre for film production for over a century. The censorship laws imposed on South African cinema during the Apartheid era, when compared and contrasted to the freedom of expression experienced once that regime fell, allows for a great deal of analysis and examination of not only the differences between Apartheid era and Post-Apartheid era cinema, but also the changing relationship between South African filmmakers and their counterparts elsewhere on the continent, as illustrated by Martin Botha's recent book *South African Cinema: 1896-2010* (2012). A result of these

three great poles attracting the majority of academic interest, however, is that smaller regional and national cinemas of Africa can be easily overlooked. Such, it seems, is the case with Lusophone African cinema.

Considering the literary heritage of colonising power Portugal it is perhaps unsurprising that the *Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa* (literally African Countries of Official Portuguese Language, commonly referred to as the PALOPs) have considerable literary heritages of their own. From the political writings of Amílcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau to Cape Verdean singer Cesária Évora's lilting, romantic *mornas*, from the armed struggle-based fiction of Angolan author and former MPLA soldier Pepetela to the Négritude-inspired poetry of Mozambican José Craveirinha, the literature of Lusophone Africa is well-documented and well-respected¹. The cinema of Lusophone Africa, however, is less prolific. In his 2008 compendium *Dictionary of African Filmmakers*, Roy Armes lists Mozambique as having seven filmmakers active, and the country having produced only nine feature films since 1979 (225). Angola, similarly, has seven active filmmakers, and has produced only ten feature films since 1974 (144). While these numbers are steadily increasing — Armes' book, for example, does not include either *A Costa dos Murmúrios* or *Terra Sonâmbula* in its list of Mozambican films — they pale in significance when compared to the amount of films emerging from countries like Senegal, Burkina Faso, Egypt, or South Africa. It is unsurprising, then, that Lusophone African cinema might be overlooked. Although the five nations that form

¹ To provide a few examples, the Patrick Chabal-edited volume *The Post-Colonial Literature of Lusophone Africa* (1996) offers a broad review of Lusophone African literature up to 1996, while Fernando Arenas' *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence* (2011) covers several aspects of contemporary cultural production in Lusophone Africa, from Cape Verdean music to Angolan literature and beyond. More specialised, Hilary Owen's *Mother Africa, Father Marx* (2007) examines several different female Mozambican writers of both poetry and prose, while Fernando Noa's Portuguese-language study *Império, Mito, e Miopia* (2003) looks at colonial-era Mozambican literature.

the PALOPs share a language and common colonising European power, it would be unfair to group them together in any category beyond those two. As such this study will not attempt to examine the cultural output of all of Lusophone Africa; rather it will focus on Mozambique, Lusophone Africa's most populous nation.

Numerous books and articles examine the broad category of Lusophone African cultural production, yet the number of pieces in English that focus solely (or at least primarily) on Mozambican film are limited. For several years, the main (if not only) article that looked at Mozambican film was Claire Andrade-Watkins' article "Portuguese African Cinema: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives: 1969 to 1993". As the title suggests, the article, published in the *Research in African Literatures* journal in 1995, looks at all of Portuguese Africa but focuses predominantly on Mozambique. To this was added in 2004 Marcus Power's article "Post-colonial Cinema and the Reconfiguration of *Moçambicanidade*", published in the journal *Lusotopie*. These two articles remain the primary source of English-language information about the history of cinema in Mozambique, although recently they have been supplemented by books, films, and websites — for the last few years Martin Botha has written a section on Mozambican cinema for the annual *International Film Guide*, Fernando Arenas devotes a chapter to Lusophone African film in his 2011 book *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence*, for example, and Margarida Cardoso's 2003 documentary *Kuxa Kanema* is an invaluable collection of interviews and classic footage from the early days of independence, while the Mozambique History website (www.mozambiquehistory.net), run by Colin Darch at the University of Cape Town, has a useful section on Mozambican cinema.

Perhaps the most significant piece of literature on the history of Mozambican film, however, has yet to be translated to English. Guido Convents is the author of

the first comprehensive examination of the history of Mozambican cinema, entitled *Imagens & Realidade: Moçambicanos perante o cinema e o audiovisual. Uma historia político-cultural do Moçambique colonial até a República de Moçambique (1896-2010)*.² The title alone suggests the scale of the work, and it is certainly an invaluable addition to the field. Published in Portuguese in 2011, until the work is translated to English it will, unfortunately, remain inaccessible to large segments of the academic world.

This study will examine two works that take place in Mozambique in both their literary and cinematic manifestations — *Terra Sonâmbula (Sleepwalking Land)*, novel by Mia Couto (1992) and film by Teresa Prata (2007); and *A Costa dos Murmúrios (The Murmuring Coast)*, novel by Lídia Jorge (1988) and film by Margarida Cardoso (2004). By considering works created by artists from different nations, in terms of both the original source novels and their cinematic adaptations, this study echoes and references the plurality of voices and viewpoints that have contributed to Mozambican society, especially since the advent of film. All four works deal with one of the central aspects of recent Mozambican history — how the population of the country was affected by and adapted to the nearly three decades of warfare that engulfed the country, from the beginning of the anti-colonial struggle against the Portuguese in the 1960s to the signing of the Rome General Peace Accords in 1992 that finally ended the 15-year long civil war. The study will seek to answer several questions — how do we define adaptation, and how do we define its limits? How do the four works in question represent the conflict that engulfed Mozambique for nearly three decades? And how are trauma and violence represented in each work?

² Translated *Images and Reality: Mozambicans facing cinema and the audiovisual. A politico-cultural history of Mozambique from colony to republic (1896-2010)*.

In her introduction to the collection *Adaptation in Contemporary Culture* (2009), Rachel Carroll writes, “[all] adaptations express or address a desire to return to an ‘original’ textual encounter; as such, adaptations are perhaps symptomatic of a cultural compulsion to repeat” (1). She continues by stating that adaption “is inevitably an *interpretation*,” (emphasis original) and a “cultural practice which exemplifies key trends in postmodern culture” (1). In his essay “Translation: Literature and Letters” (1971), Octavio Paz begins by claiming, “[when] we learn to speak, we are learning to translate; the child who asks his mother the meaning of a word is really asking her to translate the unfamiliar term into the simple words he already knows” (152). This suggests, then, that the world is the ultimate source text — in order to understand reality humans must continually process what is presented to us and alter it, whether through translation, adaptation, or some other means, to fit within our frame of reference. In the case of a country like Mozambique an examination of adaptation seems particularly relevant. It is my hope that this dissertation will serve as an encouragement for further English-language study of Lusophone African cinema in the future.

This work is broken down into four individual chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the historical background and theoretical framework upon which the textual analysis of Chapters 3 and 4 is based. The first chapter of this study will examine the history of Mozambican cinema, paying special attention to how film was used by the Frelimo government during the anti-colonial war and in the immediate aftermath of independence. Using that history as a basis for further examination, this chapter will also attempt to define the controversial notions of National Cinema and, more broadly, African Cinema. Considering the collaborative nature of Mozambican cinema since its emergence in the 1960s — *Venceremos* (1966), one of the earliest

films to emerge from the liberation movement, was directed by the Yugoslavian Dragutin Popovic, establishing a global inclusivity that has remained to this day — this chapter examines whether such general, essentialist concepts are valid in a discussion of the films upon which this study focuses.

The reality of what occurred in Mozambique over the course of its thirty years of conflict, as well as how that reality functions as a source text for the works examined in this study is looked at in the second chapter of this dissertation.

Adaptation as it is traditionally understood in a Film Studies context (that is, literature to film) will be considered in this chapter, but so will more expansive definitions of the word. How, for example, does an artist, indeed a society in general, adapt reality to fit their understanding? In a country that experienced as much violence and inconceivable brutality as Mozambique, how does a population go about explaining, and coming to terms with, those horrors? Is it even possible? As part of the examination of adaptation, this chapter also looks at non-fiction accounts of what occurred in Mozambique, especially during the civil war period of 1977-1992. Without a foregrounding in the reality of the horrors that occurred in Mozambique, any analysis of society's attempts at processing those events would be incomplete and lacking proper context.

Continuing on from Chapter 2, the first section of Chapter 3 examines the critical role of subjectivity in both the literary and cinematic incarnations of *A Costa dos Murmúrios*. Linda Hutcheon's studies of postmodernism (1988, 1989) function as an anchor for an in-depth analysis of both Lídia Jorge's novel and Margarida Cardoso's film, recognising that the multiple narratives encountered in each work serve to reflect the paradoxical, confused nature of the war in which Portugal was fighting. The second section of the chapter provides a close reading of several key

scenes in both the novel and film, analysing the different ways in which trauma and violence are represented in each respective medium. Using as a theoretical base Cathy Caruth's examinations of trauma (1995, 1996), Michel Foucault's studies on repression in the French prison system (1965, 1977), and Georges Bataille's ruminations on eroticism (1957), this chapter finishes by looking at the abusive, highly erotic, sexually-charged relationships in which the two main female protagonists of the narrative find themselves.

Continuing chronologically, Chapter 4 considers Mia Couto's novel *Terra Sonâmbula* and Teresa Prata's similarly titled film adaptation. First, the concept of magical realism and its limits is discussed, and a definition of the notoriously tricky concept is attempted. This is followed by an analysis of Couto's work, with close attention paid to the function of magical realism as a sort of coping mechanism, which allows the protagonists of the novel to remain hopeful despite the violence and devastation that surrounds them. More comparative in nature than the previous chapter, Chapter 4 then examines the changes made in Prata's film. The chapter finishes with an analysis of how those changes alter the message of the narrative, and why the social and cultural changes in Mozambique over the previous twenty years may have required an altered message.

SYNOPSIS OF PRIMARY WORKS

This study focuses on the novel and film versions of two works. In each case, a novel functions as the source text for a later film adaptation. As such, while a strong relationship exists between each pairing, there are differences between the works, sometimes minor and sometimes significant. Nevertheless, in each case the films are similar enough to their source texts that a general description of the novel is sufficient to provide a reader unfamiliar with either version a general understanding of the material.

A Costa dos Murmúrios (The Murmuring Coast)

Written by Portuguese author Lídia Jorge, published in 1988, and somewhat inspired by Jorge's own experience in the country, *A Costa dos Murmúrios* is made up of two parts — the first 30 pages consist of a short story entitled *Os Gafanhotos (The Locusts)* which tells the story of a young woman, Evita Lopo, arriving in colonial-era Mozambique in order to marry her soldier fiancé. The festive atmosphere is broken when, the next morning, a swarm of locusts descends upon the city, followed shortly by the discovery of large numbers of corpses floating in the ocean. The already grisly short story ends violently, with Evita's husband appearing to commit suicide. The second, much longer, section of the novel consists of an extended monologue by Eva Lopo, set twenty years after the events of the short story. Instead of the condensed, clearly defined tale presented in *Os Gafanhotos*, Eva Lopo's monologue is a tangential, often unfocused memoir, in which the narrative's main figures — her fiancé Luís Alex, his commanding officer Jaime Forza Leal, Forza Leal's abused wife

Helena, and the local journalist Álvaro Sabino — are all introduced and ruminated on at length. Eva Lopo's monologue is framed as a response both to the author of *Os Gafanhotos* and the story itself, and expands on the episodes presented in the short story, clarifying and obfuscating the facts of what Eva Lopo actually experienced, while simultaneously problematising the concepts of truth, reality, and history.

The plot of the 2004 film adaptation, directed by Portuguese director Margarida Cardoso, does not differ drastically from the source text, but it does include some alterations (many of which are analysed in this dissertation) which result in a slightly different understanding of the film's narrative. The most notable difference between the two works is the virtual elimination, in the film, of the beginning short story — although Eva Lopo references having read the story in a voiceover, the film presents a single, uninterrupted narrative which incorporates some aspects of *Os Gafanhotos* into its larger narrative.

Terra Sonâmbula (Sleepwalking Land)

Written by Mozambican author Mia Couto and published in 1992, *Terra Sonâmbula* is a dual narrative, telling two related but not connected stories at once. The first narrative tells the story of Tuahir and Muidinga, an old man and young boy who, as a result of the war, have lost everything — their land, their families, even (in Muidinga's case) their identities. Though unrelated, Tuahir encountered Muidinga near death in a refugee camp and nursed him back to health, renaming him (since the boy is suffering from amnesia) after his own son. Having left the refugee camp, the two seek shelter from marauding gangs in a burnt out bus and discover, amidst the corpses, the personal journals of man named Kindzu. Muidinga begins to read the journals to the illiterate Tuahir as a way to pass the time, providing the work with its

dual narrative structure. The second narrative consists of segments from Kindzu's journals, which describe how his family is murdered by a gang of roving bandits and how he decides, as a result, to travel to the north of the country in an effort to be trained as a soldier and avenge his loss. As he travels north along the coast, he encounters an abandoned ship with a woman, Farida, living inside. Farida explains to Kindzu why she is living in the ship, and tells him about her son, Gaspar, from whom she was separated in a refugee camp. Kindzu eventually promises to find Gaspar and reunite him with Farida, and the rest of Kindzu's journals consist of the trials and tribulations he experiences in his efforts to track down the missing child. Muidinga, reading these journals to Tuahir, becomes convinced that he is Farida's son, and as a result the two head towards the ocean, in search of the abandoned ship on which Farida is supposedly living.

The film adaptation was directed by Portuguese-born Teresa Prata and released in 2007. The general narrative structure is not altered significantly — as in the novel two separate narrative strands occur at the same time — but in other respects major differences emerge. Both of the storylines (Muidinga and Tuahir on the one hand, Kindzu on the other) have been noticeably simplified, and, as will be examined later in this work, the magical realism present in Couto's novel has been reduced appreciably.

NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND STYLE

It is necessary to include a note about the use of Portuguese in this study. This work relies on primary and secondary sources written both in English and Portuguese. Because the vast majority of scholarship focussing on Lusophone African cinema is written in Portuguese and has not been translated into English, I have provided my own translations of in-text quotations whenever necessary. Additionally, when quoting either of the two source texts, I have chosen to include the original quotation in Portuguese, followed by my own translation of the passage, rather than copy and paste from the English-language translations of both works. This was done partly out of accessibility issues — David Brookshaw’s translation of *Sleepwalking Land* is relatively easy to find, but Natália Costa and Ronald W. Sousa’s translation of *The Murmuring Coast* is, to my knowledge, only available in an out-of-print 1995 hardback edition — but primarily due to the fact that, as I read both works in the original, I felt this study should reflect my understanding of the texts, rather than someone else’s. The subjective nature of language means that translation, as with any adaptive process, is an imperfect art. Some may disagree with how I choose to translate a specific phrase or sentence, but it is my belief that the translations I provide capture both the spirit and the meaning of the original.

In the case of the two films I have chosen to use the English-language subtitles that come standard with each film. The primary motivation behind this decision is the fact that, while the Atalanta Filmes-distributed *A Costa dos Murmúrios* DVD includes optional English and French subtitles, the HB Films-distributed *Terra Sonâmbula* DVD does not provide the option of removing the English-language subtitles which

are included in the disc. As such, it is nearly impossible to ignore the subtitles of that film, and in an attempt to simplify matters I have chosen to use the provided subtitles for both films, instead of my own translation of the dialogue. Additionally, I have been unable to encounter a published screenplay of either film, in Portuguese or English.

Throughout this dissertation I have used the MLA referencing style for in-text quotations and bibliographic citation. As such, I do not include dates when citing my in-text quotations, and do not include page numbers when unavailable, as is the case with some of the web-only articles I reference. Per MLA guidelines for a filmography, where a film has received widespread distribution via DVD I have listed the original year of the film's production, followed by the distributor and year of release of the DVD. Where a film has not received DVD distribution, I have listed the original production company and year of production.

CINEMA AS WEAPON, CINEMA AS TOOL:

A Brief History of Mozambican Cinema

The four works examined in this study focus on topics which have influenced, consciously or not, Mozambican society and culture for centuries. Issues such as the impact of colonialism, post-colonialism, and globalism; the concepts of the nation and national identity; and how a society and individuals within that society come to terms with violence are all things that the people inhabiting Mozambique have been faced with since long before these subjects were intellectualized and given primacy in the twentieth century. No work of literature or cinema is created in a vacuum, free of any influence whatsoever — even the most escapist of films or novels reflects, in one manner or another, the preoccupations and interests of the society in which it is created. The four works this dissertation considers are all very much concerned with matters such as historical and societal context, the ways in which the characters come to terms with violence and move beyond it (or don't), and the concept of identity in both the national and individual senses. This is especially true in the case of the two films upon which this work centres.

Few governments have recognised film's potential for nation building and identity-creation better than the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Mozambique Liberation Front; more commonly referred to, both in Portuguese and English, as Frelimo), the former liberation movement turned political party which assumed power in Mozambique in 1975. While many colonial governments, including the National

Party in neighbouring South Africa and the Portuguese colonial power in Mozambique itself, recognised the threat to their authority posed by the moving image, the newly independent Mozambique set about ensuring that film could be exploited to its full potential in the nascent country. As this chapter explains, in their attempts to create a Mozambican cinema throughout the late-1970s and 1980s the Mozambican government unwittingly undermined the very concept of a national cinema by incorporating voices from all over the globe. This chapter will consider the presentation of the two films examined in this work, asking whether they should be considered as examples of Mozambican cinema, African cinema, or neither, and whether the distinctions truly matter. In order to do so, first this chapter will present a brief summary of the history of the country's film industry, a cultural institution that was fundamental to the liberation cause both before and after independence. Primary attention will be paid to how the actions of the Frelimo government, through its *Instituto Nacional de Cinema* (National Institute of Cinema), challenged the essentialist concepts of both national and the broader African cinema. To begin, however, it is important to look at how cinema developed within the country before independence. Although this section will not examine specific details of the anti-colonial guerrilla war waged from 1963 until 1975, nor the civil war fought between Frelimo and Renamo forces from 1977 to 1992, some events from those two conflicts will be considered in later chapters, in as much as they concern the works in question.

While the colonial-era Portuguese were never quite as vicious to the indigenous population of Mozambique as, for example, the Belgians were in the Congo, very little effort was made to improve the "moral and material well-being" of the colony's inhabitants, in spite of the stipulations of the General Act of the Berlin Conference. The Portuguese themselves established very few schools anywhere in

Mozambique, and those that did exist (usually run by Swiss missionaries) were found in the main urban centres of Lourenço Marques (renamed Maputo post-independence) and Beira. Additionally, what industry there was in the country (which was not particularly significant when compared to its neighbours) was centred in those same cities. For the most part the Portuguese preferred to engage as little as possible with the country's population. Radio was, generally, the dominant medium of mass communication, with cinema only taking hold towards the end of the colonial era; television was not introduced at all by the Portuguese (Power 262).

Even though film did gain in importance in the 1960s, in keeping with their policy of engaging as little as possible with Mozambique (or any of its African colonies), the Portuguese established almost no cinematic infrastructure in the country whatsoever, "and neither established production facilities in the colonies nor trained Africans in production" (Moorman 103). Power writes, "[colonial] Mozambican cinema... exhibited many of the principal features of Portuguese colonial rule more generally in that it was dominated by a limited number of (white male) private capitalist interests" (263). The few films that did come out of Mozambique were almost invariably either pro-Portuguese, pro-colonial propaganda pieces, used by the colonial power to "liquidate the cultural heritage of the indigenous population who rarely appeared in colonial films except as 'terrorists', as mythologised ethnographic subjects or as passive recipients of colonial development" (263). Additionally, the films had to be sent either to South Africa or back to Portugal for post-production, as there were no facilities for that in Mozambique itself (Taylor). While many films were made in the country during the late-colonial period, the majority of the country's population did not see them in theatres, due largely to the fact that around 1000 films a year were imported from all over the world, ranging from Hong Kong action films

to Spaghetti Westerns (Taylor). This situation was mirrored throughout the continent, in Francophone and Anglophone colonies as well as Lusophone ones.

Two films made during this period stand out as examples of the repressive atmosphere cultivated by the Portuguese government in colonial-era Mozambique. The 1965 film *Catembe – 7 dias em Lourenço Marques*, by the Mozambican-born, European-educated Manuel Faria de Almeida, was a “*documentário de ficção*” (fictional documentary) that purported to show daily life in Lourenço Marques and Catembe, the village directly across the bay from the capital (Piçarra, “Catembe”). Faria de Almeida was one of the founders of the Lourenço Marques Film Society, and had received a grant from the Portuguese government to study film at the London Film School. It is difficult to say quite how critical of the Portuguese the first cut of *Catembe* was, for the original was heavily censored by the government, with over 100 shots removed and the negatives destroyed. Despite this, the Portuguese authorities banned the second version of the film, with the result that the film (or, rather, what was left of it after the cuts) was never screened during the colonial period and has only been screened a few times since the fall of the Salazar dictatorship (“Catembe”). Nevertheless, the film has left a mark on history, as Maria do Carmo Piçarra explains — “[only] half of its 2400 original metres survived, which led to a reference in the Guinness Book of Records as the film with most censored cuts in the history of cinema” (“Catembe”).

Another film to suffer a similar fate was the 1972 work *Deixem-me ao Menos Subir às Palmeiras... (At Least let me Climb the Palm Trees...)* by Joaquim Lopes Barbosa. Lopes Barbosa was born in Portugal and did not arrive in Mozambique until 1970, at the age of 26. Unlike *Catembe*, a film whose subversive elements (in the mind of the censors, at least) were couched in the terms of an examination of daily

life, *Deixem-me* is much more explicit with its political message. Based on the short story *Dina* (1964) by Mozambican author Luis Bernardo Honwana, the film focuses on the abuse of power by a black plantation foreman against the workers (slaves) he is responsible for. When he rapes a young girl the anger amongst the labourers eventually leads to an uprising against the foreman, who is only saved from death when the white owners of the plantation arrive. The majority of the dialogue is spoken in the Ronga language of the plantation workers, while the white owners are English-speaking, a commentary on the highly interdependent relationship that existed between Rhodesia (as it was then known), South Africa, and Mozambique at the time. (And, perhaps, a failed attempt to avoid being seen to criticise the Portuguese government.) Although dismissed by some as being too intellectual a film to make any sort of impact — Mozambican academic José Luís Cabaço found the film to be incomprehensible to the average viewer (Convents 344) — the director felt threatened enough by the colonial administration that he chose to leave Mozambique and return to Lisbon (Piçarra, “Deixem-me”).

A result of Portugal’s almost complete dominance of visual media and mass communication in Mozambique during the anti-colonial war period is that there is very little footage of the war itself aside from the propaganda pieces produced by the Portuguese government. All of the images recorded by Portuguese sources were strictly censored, so as to present the image of Mozambique, and Portugal’s actions there, in the best possible light. Guido Convents writes,

...entre 1964 e 1972, o cinema... é para as autoridades coloniais e, sobretudo, para o exército, um instrumento importante na estratégia global de justificação da política e guerra coloniais... As produções apresentam Moçambique, e os seus centros urbanos, na sua modernidade de matriz europeia. (338)

...between 1964 and 1972, film... is, for the colonial authorities and, above all, for the army, an important instrument in the global strategy of justification of colonial policies and war... The productions present Mozambique, and its urban centres, in their modern European matrix.

What few subversive films that did exist were almost invariably produced by foreign journalists and filmmakers, most notably the African-American Robert van Lierop, who produced two very well-received documentaries, one dealing with the armed struggle against the Portuguese (*A Luta Continua*, 1971) and the other with the nation-building efforts post-independence (*O Povo Organizado*, 1976). Van Lierop was invited to Mozambique by Eduardo Mondlane prior to the Frelimo founder's death but did not arrive in the country until 1971 (Convents 350). His short *A Luta Continua* was screened in New York and copies of it were distributed to sympathetic organisations across the world, from Jamaica to Pakistan (351). Convents summarises the importance of Van Lierop's work by explaining,

Van Lierop critica fortemente o poder colonial português e os países que o ajudam na sua guerra contra a Frelimo. Em suma, fora dos órgãos de comunicação social estabelecidos, os quais pouco ou nunca mostram imagens do movimento de resistência, *A Luta Continua* dá um rosto à Frelimo. (351)

Van Lierop strongly criticises Portuguese colonial power and the countries that help it in its war against Frelimo. In sum, outside of the socially established means of communication, which rarely, if ever, show images of the resistance movement, *A Luta Continua* gives a face to Frelimo.

Another notable film from this era, and one that would foreshadow future international collaboration between Mozambique and its allies, was the 1966 film *Venceremos*, directed by the Yugoslavian Dragutin Popovic. Like Frelimo itself, these films had much more success and notoriety outside of Mozambique than within the country, and were considered very important in gaining international recognition and awareness for Frelimo's cause (Power 271). This, in many ways, reflected Frelimo's early existence — before the revolutionary organisation achieved any measurable military or political success within Mozambique itself, it had already gained relatively broad international support, especially from other African countries.

The history and development of a so-called national cinema in Mozambique post-independence is, somewhat paradoxically, similar to that of the traditional cinematic powers of West Africa, while also differing significantly from the development of the film industry in those countries. Although the francophone countries of Senegal, Mali, and Burkina Faso have produced more well-known (and, arguably, more historically important) figures such as Djibril Diop Mambety, Gaston Kaboré, and the great Ousmane Sembène, perhaps no country in Sub-Saharan Africa understood both how important and how useful film could be in the construction of a unified national identity as did newly-independent Mozambique. Botha states that, “[in] both the 1975 Algiers Charter on African Cinema and the Niamey Manifesto of 1982, the need was stressed to... use films in the development of African nations” (“History”10). Through its *Instituto Nacional de Cinema* Mozambique actively engaged with this need, placing the moving image at the centre of its efforts to create a sense of national identity and pride throughout the nascent country. While individual filmmakers and government cultural agencies in francophone countries were able to rely, at least theoretically, on the assistance of France-based

organisations such as the *Consortium Audiovisuel International* and the *Bureau du Cinéma* (Botha “History” 14), the Frelimo government that assumed control in 1975 did not enjoy a similar relationship with its former coloniser. This was, perhaps, partly due to the fact that the decolonisation of francophone Africa was a much less violent process when compared to Mozambique, where, as with Portugal’s other African colonies, an anti-colonial force engaged in a long and draining military struggle against the colonising power. Additionally, Portugal itself was possibly more focussed on domestic matters, as the Carnation Revolution’s overthrow of the forty-year *Estado Novo* dictatorship had introduced dramatic and sudden changes in both government and society generally.

In opposition to francophone African nations, where directors “found it difficult... because film production was regarded as an unnecessary enterprise” (Botha “History” 15), the Frelimo government immediately recognised the important role film could play in the development of the nation. One of the first acts of the Frelimo government, post-independence, was to establish in 1975 what Andrade-Watkins describes as “the crowning moment of cinematic endeavour in lusophone Africa” — the *Instituto Nacional de Cinema* (137). The most significant product of the INC was, surely, the weekly *kuxa kanema* newsreel that was screened throughout the country for nearly a decade. Large outdoor screenings of the *kuxa kanema* newsreels were offered in all of the country’s major cities, while, in order to allow both urban and rural Mozambicans the opportunity to partake in what the new government viewed as fundamental nation building, “mobile cinema units” were distributed throughout the interior, calling to mind the actions of the Portuguese Thomaz Vieira who established a “roving cinema” that travelled throughout rural Mozambique in the 1930s and ’40s (Convents 184). Ros Gray describes the *kuxa*

kanema newsreels as a tool used by the new government to, “weave a cohesive image of national identity that would cut across ethnic and linguistic differences” (Gray 4). The new government invited Mozambican-born filmmaker Ruy Guerra to head the INC; Andrade-Watkins describes Guerra’s presence as, “a major factor in the cultural ascendance of Mozambique in southern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and the lusophone diaspora” (138). Guerra, born and raised in Lourenço Marques, left Mozambique in 1951 and finally settled in Brazil in the late-1950s, where he became one of the central figures of that country’s *cinema novo* movement of the 1960s. Upon being invited by Frelimo to head the INC, Guerra brought with him a group of film technicians from Brazil with the intention of training Mozambicans in film production and camera operation. Guerra’s time at the INC was short — he left at the end of the 1970s as a result of clashes with the government concerning the creative and ideological direction of the institute (Convents 465) — but relatively fruitful. Aside from the first documentary to be produced in the new country — *Festival Nacional de Canto e Dança* in 1976 — Guerra also directed the first feature-length film, 1979’s *Mueda, Memória e Massacre*. Additionally, it was during Guerra’s time at the INC that the first plans for “mobile cinema units” were devised, something that would become central to Frelimo in the following decade (464). Perhaps most important, however, was the technical training provided by Guerra’s companions; as a result of their mentorship, Mozambican technicians at the INC were able to record and edit films entirely domestically. Significantly, by the end of the decade the INC had managed to acquire the necessary mechanisms to process film in-house, a vital step towards the creation of the *kuxa kanema* newsreels.

In addition to Ruy Guerra, the INC invited French filmmakers Jean Rouch and Jean-Luc Godard to the country as well — Rouch with the intention of experimenting

with Super8 film and Godard to explore the uses of television (Andrade-Watkins 138). Rouch had limited success filming a series of shorts that were broadcast, with much consternation over the picture quality, as some of the first attempts at television in the new country (Convents 458). The Super8 film which both Godard and Rouch encouraged was ultimately rejected by the INC, however Guerra's use of 35mm film resulted in *Mueda, Memória e Massacre*. That film was screened internationally along with Van Lierop's *O Povo Organizado* and a 1978 documentary produced by the INC titled *Estas São as Armas (These are the Weapons)*, notably at the University of California, Berkeley in 1981. In an interview given to the journal *Jump Cut* in 1983, Pedro Pimenta, one of the central figures in the founding and running of the INC, states that the first goal of the Institute was "to transform the situation by making sure the films distributed in Mozambique were in accord with the political, cultural, and human values of Mozambique... [We] started our activity distributing revolutionary films" (Taylor). This mentality created within Mozambique a tradition of documentary filmmaking that continues to this day, as exhibited by the Dockanema documentary film festival, founded by Pimenta in 2006 and held every September in Maputo.

Although the INC's lasting legacy was to be found in documentary filmmaking, in the 1980s the Institute attempted to produce fiction films, as well. Continuing the (necessary) trend of international collaboration that began even before independence, the INC joined with Yugoslavian Zdravko Velimrovic to produce the 1985 feature film *O Tempo dos Leopardos (The Time of the Leopards)*. The film was a co-production between Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Yugoslavia and was star-crossed almost from the start — "[the] experience of Mozambican filmmakers involved in the project... gave the lie to the 'Socialist friendship' between Yugoslavia

and Mozambique” (Gray 4). Margarida Cardoso’s documentary about the INC, *Kuxa Kanema* (2003), includes interviews with some of the people involved in the production and explains how the European and African filmmakers clashed on virtually every element of the film. Another feature, *O Vento Sopra do Norte* (*The Wind Blows From the North*), was shot in 1987 on 16mm black and white film, in order to allow for processing and post-production at the INC itself, which did not have the necessary resources to process colour film stock (Gray 4). *O Tempo* concerns the civil war that was then occurring, while *O Vento* examines colonial oppression pre-liberation, and both films deal with the predominant themes of the time — the driving ideological forces behind the struggle for independence, the continued memory of the liberation struggle, and the violence being wrought across the country as a result of the civil war. Although not as intellectually challenging as previous films (usually documentaries) produced by the INC, the films were popular within Mozambique. Instead of signalling the start of a golden period of cinematic production, however, the films seemed to mark the high-water point for the Institute and its work.

A number of factors contributed to the collapse of the INC — President Samora Machel’s death in 1986 was perhaps the most important factor, as he had always been a supporter of the Institute and recognised its importance. His death led to a power struggle within Frelimo that diverted attention away from cultural endeavours such as the INC. Additionally, by the late 1980s the country was feeling the effects of a decade-long civil war that was costly both in economic and human terms. This, perhaps, cannot be overstated — by the first years of the 1990s, Mozambique was one of the poorest nations in the world, and over 1 million people had been killed or displaced as a result of the fighting between Frelimo and apartheid

South Africa-supported Renamo (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* — Mozambican National Resistance). Virtually every study of this period in Mozambican cinema history, however, places the ultimate blame on a fire that occurred in the INC offices in February 1991. There seem to be suggestions that the fire was perhaps not accidental — Cardoso, in *Kuxa Kanema*, certainly implies as much, and Marcus Power describes it as, “a mysterious electrical fire” in his article about the Institute — however, regardless of sabotage or not, the fire essentially gutted the Institute and destroyed its production capabilities. Finally, the decision by Frelimo to shift away from a Socialist government and towards a free-market economy meant that there was less government funding to rebuild the INC, perhaps with the expectation that private enterprise would fill the void.

An examination of different aspects of the history of cinema in Mozambique, especially the development of the nation’s film industry post-civil war, generates several questions about that popular yet controversial concept “African Cinema.” That phrase (or variations thereof) appears time and again in the titles of critical studies of the continent’s cinema, from Pfaff’s 1984 book *The Cinema of Ousmane Sembene, a Pioneer of African Film* to Dovey’s 2009 study *African Film and Literature*, to name but two examples. Where many Western nations divide their cinema into ever more specific categories — Italian Neo-Realism, French New Wave, New German Cinema, big-budget Hollywood versus American independent cinema — films from much of the Third World were, for a significant period, given no more than a broad geographical descriptor — African cinema, Latin American cinema. Sugnet suggests that this phenomenon may arise from ignorance — “[t]he notion of ‘African’ cinema comforts the West’s ignorant assumption that the continent... is somehow one big undifferentiated whole” (68). This echoes Nagib who, in her article

“Towards a positive definition of World Cinema” (2006), laments that “[t]he hardest aspect of developing new theoretical models is the necessary knowledge of the cultures generating the works of art in focus... there is not only a lack of translations of fundamental foreign works... but also a need on the part of scholars and students to learn foreign languages” (36). While Sugnet’s and Nagib’s arguments may be true in the general sense, it does nothing to explain why the term is so popular in critical, academic studies of the subject; there is no doubt that Kenneth Harrow is well aware of just how diverse the African continent is, yet his 2007 book nevertheless carries the title *Postcolonial African Cinema*.

It is important to note here, as well, that this naming convention is not unique to the film world; examining “African literature” Huggan writes,

...the deceptively simple question: what is African literature?... immediately begs another: African literature *from which region?* ‘African literature’, after all, already conveys a fiction of homogeneity that smacks of ‘sanctioned ignorance’; as if the vast literary and cultural diversity of one of the world’s largest continents could be arrogantly reduced to a single classificatory term.

And another: African literature *in which language?* (34, emphasis original)

Although writing about literature, the questions posed by Huggan are all relevant in any analysis of “African Cinema”; in fact, they are complicated even further when it comes to film, for where the production of a piece of literature is quite often (but, of course, not always) a solitary process, film production is necessarily collaborative.

As a result of this collaboration a new set of questions emerges, questions that have no clear answer. Can a special effects-laden, Hollywood studio-funded science fiction action film be considered “African” if the film functions, at least in part, as a metaphor for Apartheid and the director of the film was born in South Africa, as was

the case with *District 9* (2009)? What about a film shot predominantly in an African country and staffed by an African film crew, but with a Chilean-Swedish director and a predominantly Western cast, as in *Safe House* (2012)? Why is Sembène's *La noire de...* (1966) considered an African film, despite featuring a predominantly French cast and the majority of the film being shot in France, while Uys's *The Gods Must be Crazy* (1980), despite being filmed entirely in Africa and with a predominantly African cast and crew, is traditionally not? Djibril-Diop Mambety's *Hyènes* (1992) reflects the collaborative nature of film production in the contemporary world and how that complicates categorisation — “deciding where a film is ‘from’ and to whom it is addressed has become increasingly problematic: a film by a Senegalese director may be coproduced with German and Swiss money, edited in Zurich, and play to larger audiences... in New York than in Dakar” (Roberts 63).

Answers to these questions are not easily forthcoming, and are quite often extremely limiting in their definition of the concept, even when attempting to be broadly inclusive. Sugnet, for example, writes, “‘African cinema’ is not simply a geographical designation, but an ideological formation arising from the decolonization struggle” (69). This definition, though presented as an expansive term that allows for the incorporation of films such as Med Hondo's 1967 work *Soleil Ô* (filmed entirely in France) or the works of non-African directors such as Sarah Maldoror and Raoul Peck, is in fact just as limiting as a geographical definition of the concept. While a geographical definition of the term is, for obvious reasons, unacceptable, an ideological definition can pose its own unique problems, primarily by dictating that, in order to be considered an authentically “African” work, a film must deal with specific, delineated philosophical ideas. Not only does such a limitation severely limit the range of genres and themes that can be examined,

filmmakers throughout the continent would be ensuring stagnation of the art form by adhering to this definition. Zacks summarises the fundamental flaw in this definition when he writes, “the misleading issues of authenticity and appropriation limit the ideological power of African cinema” (5). It is safe to say that no other national or regional cinema would be defined in such qualified terms.

As well as acknowledging the apprehension with which many filmmakers on the continent approach the phrase, Dovey attempts to provide a less restrictive definition to the concept —

What many African films share, rather than a particular mode, is, first, an engagement with local, contemporary realities in Africa and a desire to respond to those realities. Second, many African filmmakers make creative use of the past for the sake of contemporary audiences. (9)

While this explanation may allow for a broader understanding of the concept, it does not explicitly explain what an “African” film is and how one can be identified. This question, in turn, leads one to the related, and similarly controversial, concept of “National Cinema.” The concept of nation is, by itself, a highly complicated one, indeed one that is too complicated to fully examine in this study. Walsh, however, provides a succinct summation of the term —

The term ‘nation’ refers to a set of meanings that can be shared among a community, with nationalism entailing the view of oneself as a member of a common group bound by some set of shared cultural or historical experiences and traits which will ideally, but not always, coincide with origin or residence within the physical boundaries of a state. (5)

In an African context, and especially in a country like Mozambique, the concept of the nation is a difficult one. In his book *Imagined Communities* (1983), Anderson

suggests that the concept of nationhood arose in the Americas. One of the factors he highlights is the fact that, “all [the nations of the Americas], including the USA, were creole states, formed and led by people who shared a common language and common descent with those against whom they fought” (47). The colonisation processes throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, however, were drastically different — where the Americas experienced devastating population decline followed by the influx of a new dominant culture, Africa’s indigenous population was never decimated in a similar way. In the present day, as a result, “[a]rbitrary boundaries inherited from the colonial era divide some communities into two, while elsewhere artificially yoking together totally divergent groups into newly defined nation-states” (Armes 1). This means that the ethnicities (or, perhaps, nations) that existed in the pre-colonial era continue to exist today, although now often across international borders — a person of Tsonga ethnicity remains Tsonga whether born in South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, or Mozambique. If one considers Susan Hayward’s conception of the nation — she describes it as “an oppositional concept... based *in* an assumption of difference (because its different-ness is its starting point) and based *upon* the assumption of difference” (3, emphasis original) — one sees that nation-building in Sub-Saharan Africa presents a particular challenge. Many of the vital aspects of that process — the “shared cultural or historical experiences and traits” which Walsh highlights — are often absent or, when present, are found within ethnic communities which may be scattered across two or three (or more) different nations. An especially notable example of this is the role of the Portuguese language in Mozambique. Despite its obvious associations with the former coloniser, when Mozambique achieved independence the Frelimo government determined that Portuguese, as the only language spoken throughout the country, would serve as a tool for national unity,

despite the fact that less than a quarter of the nation's population spoke it as a first or second language (Firmino 70).

The concept of a national cinema is equally challenging. Ezra describes national cinema as, “a relational, conceptual category, constructed in response to the domination of American cinema... more than anything else, though, the concept of national cinema is driven by economic factors — domestically by state-funding criteria, and externally by distribution and marketing strategies” (168-70). In the case of Mozambique, once the INC collapsed the possibility of state funding collapsed with it. The hoped-for private enterprise did fill the void, but that private enterprise was primarily from outside of Mozambique. Andrade-Watkins highlights in her article that two of the first films produced after the INC fire were co-productions between the Mozambican Ebano Multimedia and English and German television stations. Andrade-Watkins writes that the films, “modify the... earlier didactic/revolutionary films of the region, to stories that appeal to non-African television audiences... International financing and marketing have resulted in shifts in content and form” (144). Similarly, Marcus Power, writing almost a decade after Andrade-Watkins, focuses on the increased control displayed by the Portuguese media conglomerate *Lusomundo* over film distribution within Mozambique — “[the] objective of increasing national production which reflected ‘national’ cultural priorities and historical identities have (sic) given way to a promotion of foreign private sector involvement and investment” (Power 278).

Despite the legitimate concerns of external influence that Power mentions, what is clear is that Mozambican cinema, much like Mozambique itself, has always existed in a multi-national, multi-cultural space. The nation itself is a coming together of different, often disparate cultures (Bantu, Muslim, Indian, European,

Asian) and ethnicities (Shangaan, Ronga, Macua, Shona, Portuguese, Goan, to name but a few), and the nation's film industry has always reflected that diversity. And, just as Mozambique has made a gradual but noticeable recovery, both economically and socially, since the signing of the Rome General Peace Accords in 1992, so too has the country's film industry made significant strides. Two directors stand out in this regard, not only for their work but also in the way that the two represent Mozambican cinema's past, present, and future. The first, Brazilian-born filmmaker Licínio Azevedo, has been living and working in Mozambique since independence. An early participant at the INC, he also co-founded Ebanco Multimedia. His 1988 film *A Colheita do Diabo (The Devil's Harvest)* signalled both a beginning and a conclusion in Mozambican cinema — one of the last major films to be produced by the INC before the Institute's decline, it was also one of the first films to receive international funding from a capitalist country, a move that signalled a significant shift for the country's film industry. Whereas previously the INC had, in keeping with Frelimo's Marxist-Leninist policies, worked with Socialist countries (Yugoslavia, especially, but also the Soviet Union and Cuba), Azevedo's film was a co-production between the INC and Britain's channel 4 films. Since 1988, Azevedo has produced numerous well-received feature films and documentaries examining a range of social issues that affect the country, including the 2007 documentary *Hóspedes da Noite (Night Lodgers)* and the 2012 feature *Virgem Margarida (Virgin Margarida)*. *Hóspedes da Noite* examines the squatter community that has taken up residence in Beira's now-abandoned Grande Hotel, an edifice which had been the most luxurious resort in the country during the colonial era, while *Virgem Margarida* is a work of fiction based on the “Centros de Reeducação” (Re-education Centres), labour camps where the Frelimo government sent dissidents and others they considered undesirable in the

immediate aftermath of independence. Another significant figure in the industry at the moment is producer and director João Ribeiro. Having been involved with the INC since his early teens, he studied at Cuba's International School of Cinema and Television, graduating in 1992. A colleague of Azevedo's at Ebano Multimedia, Ribeiro has been involved with several domestic and international productions — he is credited as a producer or production manager on both big-budget Hollywood films shot in Mozambique such as *Blood Diamond* (2006) and *Ali* (2001) — and wrote and directed the 2009 film *O Último Voo do Flamingo* (*The Last Flight of the Flamingo*), an adaptation of Mia Couto's novel of the same name.

Of the two films analysed in this study, Margarida Cardoso's film is, perhaps, the more challenging of the two to classify. Funding for the production came from several different Portuguese groups — production company *Filmes do Tejo*, as well as government organisations such as the *Instituto do Cinema Audiovisual e Multimédia* (ICAM); state broadcaster RTP; and the *Instituto Camões*, the Portuguese government's cultural institute governed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs — and, as a result, the film is typically classified as a Portuguese production. However, the German company ZDF-arte and its subsidiary Network Movie as well as the French company *Les Filmes de l'Après-Midi* both provided funding and received co-producer credits on the film. Following Ezra's definition of a national cinema, then, it would be difficult to label *A Costa dos Murmúrios* as strictly a Portuguese film, since it received funding from organisations in at least three countries. To further complicate matters, Margarida Cardoso herself is the daughter of a Portuguese soldier, and though born in Portugal, spent twelve years in Mozambique as a child, coincidentally living in the same hotel as Lídia Jorge during the author's time in the country. Additionally, much of Cardoso's professional life has been centred on

Mozambique, rather than the country of her birth. Prior to *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, her first fiction film, Cardoso had made two documentaries about Mozambique — *Natal 71*, produced in 1999 and focussing on the experience of Portuguese soldiers in the war, and 2003's *Kuxa Kanema*, examining the impact and legacy of the INC.

The fact that Cardoso's film is classified as a Portuguese (or, perhaps, European) film is especially curious when one compares it to Teresa Prata's *Terra Sonâmbula*. Like Cardoso, Prata was born in Portugal and moved to Mozambique at a young age; she spent her youth in Mozambique before moving to Brazil and was living in Berlin when she came across a copy of Mia Couto's novel in 1995. It took her a full seven years to acquire the necessary funding and shoot the film before it was released in 2007 (Prata, "Fotograma"). Like Cardoso's work, Prata's production received funding from both private (*Filmes de Fundo*) and government-backed institutions (ICAM and RTP) within Portugal. Mirroring *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, Prata also received funding from the German production company ZDF-arte. Where Prata's film differs, however, is in the fact that it additionally received funding from Azevedo's Mozambique-based company Ebano Multimedia.

Using the criterion of funding as a determinant for what can be considered authentically Mozambican or authentically African cinema and what cannot, however, feels outdated and, in a sense, ridiculous, considering the transnational nature of film production in the 21st century. So too does the idea that the birthplace, or the location of professional formation, of the director has any real significance. Although both women lived in Mozambique at different points in their lives, neither Prata nor Cardoso were trained or educated in film studies in the country; in fact, both women were formally educated in Europe, Cardoso in Portugal and Prata in Germany. Yet, numerous filmmakers from all across Africa have left the continent to receive training

and education in cinema — Mauritanian Med Hondo was trained in France, Egyptian Youssef Chahine in the United States, while Bissau-Guinean Flora Gomes studied at ICAIC in Cuba. The fact that these directors studied, and in the case of Hondo lived, in non-African countries is almost never used as an argument against their authenticity as African filmmakers.

Returning to Dovey's conception of what defines African cinema, it might be possible to argue that Prata's film, which deals with Africans and their experiences, is more authentically African (or Mozambican) than Cardoso's film, which focuses primarily on Portuguese colonialists. However, if, as Dovey claims, one of the primary characteristics of African films is their engagement with contemporary realities, Cardoso's film seems prescient. *A Costa dos Murmúrios* is a film about Europeans, but it touches on an issue which is becoming more and more relevant in Mozambican society — the relationship between Mozambique and its former coloniser. This relationship has been brought into special focus over the last decade, since hundreds (if not thousands) of Portuguese nationals have been moving to Mozambique yearly since the mid-2000s (Tay). In this context, Cardoso's film — a film funded with European money, acted by European actors, and directed by a European director — is just as engaged with contemporary African reality as any authentically African film.

What all of this proves is that any attempt to classify or label a film as being authentically African or representative of the cinema of a specific nation is, ultimately, a futile endeavour, and one that serves no real purpose beyond its use as a “modestly effective promotional tool” (Ezra 170). Mozambican national cinema, as with African cinema generally, has always been one heavily influenced by external factors — some of the fundamental figures in Mozambican cinematic history are

either foreign nationals or, as in the case of Ruy Guerra, more closely aligned with movements from other regions. The first fiction films to emerge from Mozambique were international co-productions, and that reality (a necessity for local film industries in most African nations) has not changed in the 21st century, despite Mozambique's improving economy. This makes the task of labelling a film as being "Mozambican" or "from Mozambique" difficult — with such a nebulous definition, how can the parameters of Mozambican film possibly be clearly defined? It is within this context that the two films examined in this study will be analysed. Each film (indeed, each source novel, as well) poses different questions with regard to provenance. The sum of Mozambican films, however, suggests that these are questions which could be asked of virtually every film to come out of the country.

University of Cape Town

THE LIMITS OF UNDERSTANDING:

History, Adaptation, and the Horrors of Civil War.

In his essay “On Language and Words” (1800), Arthur Schopenhauer examines the difficulty of learning a foreign language and the shortcomings of pure word-for-word translation between one language and another. He states, “[not] every word in one language has an exact equivalent in another. Thus, not all concepts that are expressed through the words of one language are exactly the same as the ones that are expressed through the words of another” (32). Schopenhauer, writing at the turn of the 18th century, does not focus solely on the difficulties of literary translation (although these are mentioned), but rather on the difficulties of truly understanding something other, and the transformation that understanding that other brings about. He writes, “complete mastery of another language has taken place when one is capable of translating not books but *oneself* into the other language” (34, emphasis added). For Schopenhauer, then, the final products of translations are not so much new books or poems, which he dismisses as resembling “reproductions of paintings;” instead, the final products of translations are new people, capable of understanding “new concepts... [which] give meaning to new signs” (33-34).

Schopenhauer is writing about language, literature, and translation, and while the process of adapting a piece of literature into film generally requires a more significant alteration than the process of translating a text from one language to another, his ideas and the concepts he introduces can be useful when framed within

the context of adaptation studies. Indeed, translation studies and adaptation studies share many similarities and, it might be argued, are in fact two branches of the same discipline. Later in his essay, Schopenhauer describes the difficulty of translating from the Latin, something he believes arises because,

[expressions] totally different from the original have to be used... the ideas to be translated into Latin have to be totally reconstituted and remoulded; the idea has to be dissolved into its most basic components and then reconstructed in the new language. (33)

When describing this complicated process, he could just as easily be describing the difficulty of adapting a 300-page novel into a 2-hour long film. Schopenhauer's idea perhaps fits even better when the boundaries of adaptation are abstracted even further. Adaptation has traditionally been defined, in the cultural context, as "an altered or amended version of a text, musical composition, etc.... adapted for filming, broadcasting, or production on the stage from a novel or similar literary source" (*OED*), but that places too great a limit on the true nature of the concept. Adaptation does not begin once a source text has been selected. It begins much earlier — even before the explicit creative process commences — when humans begin to process the world around them and recreate it within themselves, in a way that fits with their philosophies and understanding. In this vein, perhaps the more scientific definition of adaptation — "the action or process of adapting one thing to fit with another, or suit specific conditions, esp. a new or changed environment" (*OED*) — is more suitable to a true understanding of the cultural conception.

This can be seen all over the world, from the ancient historical origins of the Trojan War that formed the basis for Homer's great epics of the Western tradition to the very real dilemma of internecine warfare between family members presented in

the fictional *Bhagavad Gita*; humans have consistently crafted their sculpted fictions from the clay of reality. As Hayden White elegantly states, “[s]o natural is the impulse to narrate, so inevitable is the form of narrative for any report on the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in a culture in which it was absent” (1). This is especially true in African cultures where the tradition of the *griot*, or storyteller, has survived for centuries. As Mbye Cham points out, such is the prevalence of the *griot* in many African societies, and such is the nature of much analysis of African culture, that it is easy to assume a lack of pre-colonisation literary tradition (Cham 295). This is unfair, but it does highlight the importance of the oral tradition in sub-Saharan Africa. Cham offers a good example of this when describing the Dani Kouyaté film *Keita: Heritage of the Griot* (1995) —

[the film] takes on the Mande oral tradition of Sundiata Keita, founder of the thirteenth-century Mali empire in West Africa. A master narrative that is known and revered by most Mande griots and the general population at large, the epic legend of Sundiata occupies a special place in the Mande history, narrative traditions, and definitions of self and other... Also, the legend has inspired artists, writers, musicians, and dramatists who have produced works based on the story. (302)

We can see with this example, then, a fact-based legend that has served as the root for artistic tradition for over seven hundred years, and continues to influence and impact culture in the present day. Cham refers to these stories as “thrice-told tales, films whose point of creative departure can be traced... to the oral traditions, as well as films that are adapted from original literary texts” (297). In order to create a tale told three times, however, the primal adaptation must first occur — the process of translating real events into fiction. Hutcheon refers to this alteration as transposition,

a process which results in “a shift in ontology from the real to the fictional, from a historical account or biography to a fictionalized narrative or drama” (*A Theory* 8).

If we return to Schopenhauer and his troubles with Latin, we can begin to understand the difficulties posed by creating fiction out of real, historical events. We can also begin to understand why it is fair to consider that process as a valid example of adaptation. What a *griot* (or any storyteller from any culture) does when he or she tells the story of the past is an act both of translation and adaptation. As Octavio Paz claims, “[w]hen we learn to speak, we are learning to translate; the child who asks his mother the meaning of a word is really asking her to translate the unfamiliar term into... words he already knows” (152). In the case of the storyteller, the audience assumes the role of the child and awaits as the *griot*-parent translates the past into the present, into terms the audience understands. Although translation and adaptation are two distinct things, they share so many similarities that it is difficult not to relate the two actions, with the boundary lines between the two disciplines often difficult to decipher. Adaptation and translation are, after all, closely related fields. Hutcheon succinctly summarises the close relation, describing both as “openly acknowledged and extended reworkings of particular other texts” (*A Theory* 16).

The adaptation of historical events into fictional works is a facet of adaptation studies which, while not necessarily ignored, is often under-examined. Hutcheon touches briefly on the subject in her book *A Theory of Adaptation* when she writes, “[p]araphrase and translation analogies can also be useful in considering... the ontological shift that can happen in adaptations of an historical event or an actual person’s life into a reimagined, fictional form” (*A Theory* 17). Verrone expands on this idea in his study *Adaptation and the Avant-Garde* (2011), writing,

The interpretation of history by a filmmaker can prove profitable if it is accepted on its own terms as a film... the rhetorical possibilities such a film offers can also make it a historical document itself, a text to be studied, analyzed, or reinterpreted by others. (133)

Verrone's assertion that a historically-based fiction film can become, in itself, a historical document complicates the idea of adaptation even further, implying the post-modern contention that history (in both its lower-case and capitalised forms) is as much a construction as any overt piece of fiction. Robert Stam provides a good example of this in his analysis of one of the first modern novels, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Stam refers to Defoe's book as a "mimetic novel based on 'real life' and written so as to generate a strong impression of reality" (*Literature Through Film* 65). In writing *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe was inspired by historical events, specifically the experiences of British sailor Alexander Selkirk; however, while Defoe based his novel on Selkirk's basic story — a man stuck on a deserted island for a lengthy period of time — almost everything about Defoe's novel, from the location of the island and how long the protagonist is stranded there to the presence of the fictional character Friday, is different from the actual event. As Verrone postulates, *Robinson Crusoe*, the fictional version of Alexander Selkirk's life, has become an historical document in and of itself, so that no account of Selkirk can possibly be given without mentioning Defoe's novel.

So it is with the two source texts examined in this study. Both of the novels take place during one or other of the two conflicts which ravaged Mozambique almost continually from the 1960s to the 1990s. *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, by Lídia Jorge, takes place in the late-1960s, during the anti-colonial war fought between Portugal and the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) from 1964 to 1975. Like

Robinson Crusoe, Jorge's novel is directly inspired by historical events; in this case, the author has used her own life as the source. Jorge has admitted in interviews that the work is partially inspired by her own experience of living in a hotel in Beira, Mozambique in the late-60s while married to a Portuguese soldier. Mia Couto's novel, *Terra Sonâmbula*, occurs during the civil war fought between the Frelimo government and the Apartheid South Africa-backed Renamo insurgency from 1976 to 1992. Although no specific timeframe is given in Couto's novel, it is strongly suggested that the bulk of the action takes place in the late 1980s or, more likely, early 1990s. Of the two, Couto's novel is the less mimetic, in that it is not explicitly based on any specific, historical figures. Rather, the mimesis in Couto's work emerges from the broad experiences of those who suffered the atrocities of the Mozambican Civil War. The two narrative strands found in *Terra Sonâmbula* each involve true-to-life circumstances. The first strand concerns Tuahir and Muidinga, two refugees who have chosen to leave their refugee camp. Muidinga is an adolescent who has lost his family and just barely survived a grave illness brought about by eating a rotten manioc root. Tuahir is an elderly man who lost his railway job once the civil war caused the trains to stop running and whose only mention of family is his son who works in the South African mines.

While Tuahir and Muidinga may be fictional characters, there are millions of Mozambicans who could have served as a factual model for them; at the same time as the country was experiencing a ruinous civil war, nature conspired to further compound the misery — Mozambique suffered (at least) four major droughts during the 15 years of the civil war, droughts which affected millions and millions of people (Global Horticulture Initiative). It is estimated that over a million people (some place the number closer to two million) died over the course of the civil war alone through a

combination of warfare, terrorism, and natural disaster, to say nothing of the casualties suffered during the anti-colonial war against Portugal. William Finnegan, in his book *A Complicated War* (1992), states that by 1990 “more than 8,000,000 [Mozambicans] faced starvation or severe food shortages” (4). Additionally, some five million people were displaced, fleeing the countryside in an attempt to escape both manmade and natural disasters. Practically, this meant huge swathes of the population leaving rural areas, where they were especially vulnerable, and moving towards the larger cities of central and southern Mozambique. This placed an increasing stress on the resources and infrastructure of those cities, with the end result that while the *deslocados* (displaced people) were perhaps safe from armed bandits, they were still at risk of death through malnutrition or illness.

The second narrative strand presented in Couto’s work — the personal journals of a young man named Kindzu — also closely parallel reality, without being about one historical individual specifically. Kindzu’s village, like so many Mozambican villages during the civil war, is attacked by a group of roving bandits. Although it is never stated explicitly, the actions of the gang — they not only burn down the village but also kill everyone they encounter — strongly imply they are Renamo soldiers. As a result, Kindzu vows to take vengeance and so heads north, towards the lands controlled by a group of soldiers specifically referenced as the *naparamas*. The *naparamas* were an actual army, allies of Frelimo, who fought against Renamo in the northern provinces of Mozambique. They were founded in the late-1980s, and, despite wearing nothing in battle but a red headband, were so feared by the insurgency forces that, as described in a 1990 story for the *Chicago Tribune*, “[a]fter six months in existence, they have brought peace to more than 100,000 beleaguered peasants” (Witt). What is clear, in both these narrative strands, is that

while the experiences described in the book may be completely fictional, they are based in just as much reality as Lídia Jorge's novel is. The difference is that while Jorge fictionalises her own experience and uses that as the basis for her novel, Couto fictionalises the experience of the millions of Mozambicans whose lives were permanently altered by the violence wrought upon that country.

This study, therefore, does not focus solely on the film adaptations of literary works. It also examines the literary adaptations of historical events. The obvious challenges one faces when attempting to adapt a piece of literature into a film are, perhaps, put into perspective by the challenges faced by those who attempt to recreate an historical event in fiction. It is important, here, to explain the scale of devastation that occurred in Mozambique during the three decades of conflict the country experienced, in order to understand just how difficult a task the authors and directors of these works were presented with.

Both of the wars fought on Mozambican soil from 1964 to 1992 were unconventional. Far from the traditional concept of two armies facing off against one another on a broad, open field as immortalised in Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1854), both of the wars in Mozambique were fought using guerrilla methods. During the anti-colonial war, Portugal received support from its European allies, as well as Rhodesia and the Apartheid government in South Africa. Frelimo, conversely, received logistical support from various independent African nations (especially Tanzania, where Frelimo was founded, and Algeria, from whose government many Frelimo members received false identifications in order to allow them to travel) as well as military support from the Soviet Union. Following independence in 1975, a group of former Portuguese collaborators and other enemies of the state formed Renamo, first with the help of Rhodesia and later, following the

defeat of the Smith government, South Africa. The conflict that waged between the Frelimo government and Renamo must certainly qualify as one of the most horrific episodes in world history. While not matching the scale of devastation of an event like the Holocaust, accounts of the suffering experienced by the Mozambican population during the country's fifteen-year long civil war were often just as horrific as those given by Holocaust survivors. The subtitle of journalist William Finnegan's book *A Complicated War*, about his experiences covering the civil war for Western newspapers, is *The Harrowing of Mozambique*. Both meanings of the word harrow would be accurate in this case — not only did the war metaphorically (and literally, in the case of the thousands of landmines planted throughout the country) dig into and overturn the land and its people, as in the farming tool, it also ruined the country economically and socially, to such an extent that in the late 1980s and early 1990s Mozambique was considered a failed state.

Finnegan's *A Complicated War* also includes incredible stories of torture and violence. He tells of an encounter with a man named Orlando Passanjezi Galave in a refugee camp for Mozambicans in Malawi: "his left hand, his right ear, his lips, and his nose had been hacked off" and he carried a "ten-inch long scar" from where his throat had been slit (20-21). The attack, Galave explained, had occurred when he was approached by a group of Renamo bandits who believed him to be a Frelimo spy, simply for owning a bicycle. Although Finnegan draws comparisons between some of the horror tactics used by Renamo and those used by American soldiers during the Vietnam War, he does make it clear that Renamo took terrorism to a level that had previously been inconceivable to many observers of the war. Many of the most shocking anecdotes he includes in his book seem absolutely beyond the realm of plausibility, let alone reality —

According to the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, Renamo had boiled children alive in front of their parents and had used the decapitated heads of old people as seats. ...An American psychologist... described a six-year-old boy who had been forced to light the match with which Renamo burned down his family's hut, and who was then forced to watch while his family ran outside, were hacked to death, and burned. He described a ten-year-old boy who had seen his best friend decapitated by Renamo, and who was then forced to carry his friend's head on top of his own head back to the Renamo camp. (25)

Another man Finnegan met could barely speak, and when he did it was with a "tiny, hoarse voice," the result of when "the *bandidos* had caught him near Palmeira and had slit his throat... [The scars] went from ear to ear, and were at least an inch wide. It was hard to see how he had survived" (219-220).

Elísio Macamo's paper "Accounting for Disaster: Memories of War in Mozambique" (2006) includes the first-hand accounts of those who had suffered the true horrors of the war, and it provides a terrifying yet valuable insight into the true nature of how the conflict was experienced by civilians in Mozambique. Macamo states, "[the] war is not the fighting between Renamo and Frelimo; it is [encounters] with Renamo fighters, the looting, the kidnapping and the exemplary killings. It is a war without any frontline and clear rules of engagement" (206). Macamo's article incorporates the memories of violence experienced by survivors transcribed in their own words; these narratives, though brief and frequently disjointed, often defy belief. One survivor remembered watching a woman and her child executed in cold blood — "she has a child on her back well they asked her whatever they asked her (sic) and

then they took the child on her back and hit it against the tree and the child died right there and afterwards they killed her and they left” (qtd. in Macamo 208).

These types of stories are frequent, and go some way to allowing those who did not experience the war, who have never experienced anything so traumatic, to comprehend the terrible reality of what many Mozambicans had to live through. One of the most striking aspects of how the war impacted Mozambican society is exemplified by the way in which village society collapsed, due primarily out of fear. The refugees interviewed by Macamo relate how, quite often, the only people in a village who could be trusted were family members. Everyone else in the village was a potential threat to each person’s survival —

Women with small children must find a place to hide away from the rest of the villagers, lest the crying of the children gives them away to the rebels.

Anyone who coughs must also find a place away from the rest... A somewhat strange aspect of the refugee accounts is the total absence of references to membership categories related to the wider community. In fact, there is no community in the accounts... Most references to the neighbour are about denunciation. The standard story reports the arrival of Renamo fighters who are tipped by a ‘neighbour’ about the material possessions of those living next door. (Macamo 207-211)

Macamo succinctly underscores the true extent of the breakdown of society when he states, “There is almost no reference to the ‘neighbour’ in connection with solidarity and assistance” (211).

This becomes, then, one of the central questions of this study — how does a society react to such a traumatic, violent reality? How can *anything* fictional possibly remain faithful the reality of what Mozambicans experienced? Surely fidelity, for so

long a fundamental aspect of adaptation studies, becomes impossible. The concept of “equivalency theory” is, perhaps, particularly relevant in this circumstance. One of the fundamental issues found in adaptation theory is the concept of fidelity. Fidelity is a relatively contentious issue within adaptation studies for several reasons, perhaps due to a natural instinct to draw comparisons between two completely different mediums. Robert Stam explains why, for those within the field, the idea of fidelity is essentially a non-issue — “fidelity in adaptation is literally impossible. A filmic adaptation is **automatically** different and original due to the change of medium” (*Literature and Film* 17, emphasis original). Nevertheless, every time a popular or significant novel is adapted to film it is normal to find comparisons and critiques in newspapers, movie review sites, or film blogs, which form their entire response to the film around the concept of fidelity. While the concept of “staying true to the book” may not have importance in adaptation theory, it is still very much a part of the public’s movie-going experience. Indeed, even within adaptation theory Stam claims there is a residual obsession with fidelity —

[fidelity] theory does not always name itself as such. It sometimes takes the disguised form of respect for the “spirit” but not the “letter” of the text... Or it can take the form of “equivalency” theory, the idea that the filmmaker finds the “equivalents” in a new medium for the novelist’s style or techniques. But, in fact, there can be no **real** equivalence between source novel and adaptation.

(*Literature and Film* 18, emphasis original)

Writers and filmmakers are often praised for their ability to satisfactorily relay the array of emotions experienced during warfare; in a generally negative review of the film *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), Karen Jaehne claims that Steven Spielberg “exploits

every possible cinematic trick to recreate the emotional reality of a soldier dumped onto an alien beach and into an onslaught of enemy mortar” (41).

Likewise, one of the pullout quotes (from Roger Wilkins of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund) on the back cover of Finnegan’s *A Complicated War* states, “[for] the first time I gained a real sense of what it feels like in that Renamo-ravaged country.” The idea offered by these statements, then, is that these works are able, in some way, to recreate for the audience the experiences of those that actually lived the event. When it comes to fictional adaptations of historical situations, this is often a particularly important point. It is a point emphasised by James Welsh, in his critique of the artistic licence taken in the 2004 film *The Alamo*, when he writes,

[d]id screenwriters Leslie Bohem and Stephen Gaghan and director John Lee Hancock get the story right? Does it matter? Isn’t it “only a movie,” as Alfred Hitchcock once advised a disturbed actress? Well, yes, not to put too fine a point on it. Historical accuracy (which is to say, historical truth) *does* matter, or it should... A good film translation doesn’t necessarily have to be exactly “by the book,” but many will expect it to be close to the book, rather than an utter betrayal. (5)

While the sentiment of these statements is understandable, the content of them borders on the absurd. It is absolutely inconceivable that a piece of literature or a film would ever be able to provide the reader or viewer with a “real sense of what it feels like” to experience a traumatic event on the scale of the Mozambican Civil War or “recreate the emotional reality” of the men involved in the D-Day invasion. To which “historical truth” must a film adaptation of an historical event remain faithful? Similarly, another quote of praise for Finnegan’s book (from Bill Cameron of the *Toronto Star*) claims, “[as] cool and clear an account of this monstrous history as

could be written.” While meant as a compliment, it raises a fundamental question about the ways in which traumatic events are remembered and recounted. Traumatic events are quite often violent, disjointed, even partial events in the minds of those who experience them, a product of the fact that, “the [traumatic] event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it” (Caruth “Introduction” 4, emphasis original). The idea, then, that a traumatic event can possibly be remembered in a “cool and clear” manner is contradictory — the conflicts fought in Mozambique were neither cool nor clear, and as such to recount them in that manner undermines the idea of fidelity which is being praised in the first instance.

This study, therefore, examines the ways in which these traumatic, chaotic events are represented and remembered, and how they are adapted into fiction, that they might continue to be remembered in the future. The works considered in this study deal with personal traumas, but they also concern themselves with, as can be seen by the accounts of Finnegan and Macamo, cultural trauma. The personal traumas experienced by the characters in these works — the violence on a personal scale they experience over the course of the narrative — are just a part of something much larger. Eyerman describes cultural trauma as, “a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion” (160). Violence, more personal in nature, is defined by Jackman as “actions that inflict, threaten, or cause injury,” while clarifying that the actions can be “corporal, written, or verbal” and the injuries “corporal, psychological, material, or social” in nature (405.) The works examined in this study are the first steps in attempting to understand the broad cultural trauma lived by Mozambique for over thirty years (or, perhaps, centuries, if we consider the trauma of colonialism).

They are the first steps in translating history into memory and, in so doing, rebuilding Mozambican society — “memory in the form of history and tradition is central to what we mean by society and to all social interaction” (Eyerman 161). These many layers of adaptation are vitally important, for each time an adaptation appears, the source is fundamentally altered in some slight manner. This is emphasised by Walter Benjamin, in his essay “The Task of the Translator,” (1923) when he writes,

...no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife — which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living — the original undergoes a change. (74)

To translate the historical reality of warfare and violence into imagined realities, to adapt a series of non-fictional facts into a collection of fictional stories, is to begin to change how all societies remember the trauma that occurred in Mozambique. Our concept of Portuguese colonialism in Africa is altered when we read Lídia Jorge’s novel, and it is altered yet again when we watch Margarida Cardoso’s film. Similarly, our understanding of the effects of the Mozambican Civil War is influenced by Mia Couto’s book, and our understanding of its legacy is further modified by Teresa Prata’s film.

Hayden White claims that the “value attached to narrativity in the representation of real events arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary” (24). As we shall see, the works examined in this study, all of which must ultimately be considered adaptations of historical events, reject any attempts at displaying the finality of fictional literature. Unlike White’s views on narrativity, all four of the fictional works examined in this study remain faithful to their source

material — Mozambique’s violent, traumatic history — by rejecting neat conclusions and happy endings. Upon reading the novels, upon watching the films, what we are left with is not so much a satisfying sensation of closure, but rather a more profound and nuanced understanding of the events upon which the works are based.

University of Cape Town

OPPRESSED PRIVILEGE:
Trauma Within Portuguese Colonial Society

“Aqui não se lê, decifra-se.”

“Here one does not read, one deciphers.”

— Álvaro Sabino

In a 2003 speech given upon receiving the *Friedenspreis* Peace Prize, Susan Sontag, speaking on the place of literature in modern society, said, “[one] task of literature is to formulate questions and construct counter-statements to the reigning pieties” (182). Although Sontag was not referring to any one piece in particular, she could easily have been speaking directly about Lídia Jorge’s 1988 novel *A Costa dos Murmúrios*. A complex, complicated work, as the reader delves further into *A Costa dos Murmúrios* the facts become both more clear and more clouded, so that while past memories are changed and (possibly) renewed, both the unstable relationship between memory, fact, and reality and the difficulty with which those things are translated into fiction are laid bare.

In this chapter Lídia Jorge’s novel and Margarida Cardoso’s 2004 film adaptation of the book will be analysed. Special attention will be paid to the postmodern representation of the past and how historical events are remembered and recorded. Further, the chapter will examine the concepts of gender, eroticism, and how trauma and violence are represented in the different interpersonal relationships that exist in each work. The concept of gender, especially, plays a fundamental role

in *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, in whichever medium it is presented. Indeed, it is difficult to separate the gender relations that are found in the work from the narrative of the work itself — although it runs the risk of being too much of an over-simplification, in many ways it could be argued that gender and power relations are what the story is really about. The two terms — gender and power — are inextricably linked in *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, and they manage to find their way into almost every interaction that occurs in the work, from the traditional, hetero-normative relationships between the soldiers and their wives to the more complicated homosocial and homoerotic relationships that exist between Luís Álex and Forza Leal and Evita and Helena, to the symbolic relationship described in the poetry of the journalist Álvaro Sabino (with whom Evita engages in her own subversive relationship) between Portugal and Mozambique (or, alternatively, Europe and Africa). The primary relationship this chapter focuses on, however, is the most important and significant relationship in the work — that of Evita and Helena. In spite of its central importance, the way in which that relationship is presented is heavily influenced by the subjective nature of the overall narrative, and an analysis of that postmodern subjectivity is where this chapter begins.

Questioning History

The novel is broken up into two sections, the first thirty pages forming a short story entitled *Os Gafanhotos* (*The Locusts*), and the rest of the book consisting of a one-sided correspondence between the protagonist of *Os Gafanhotos*, Eva (formerly Evita) Lopo, and the unnamed, unseen author of the story. There are, at least, three levels of narrative occurring at the same time in *A Costa dos Murmúrios* — the first,

and most basic, level is *Os Gafanhotos* which, in a relatively straight-forward manner, relates the story of Evita Lopo's wedding and the subsequent death, the following day, of Evita's newly-wedded husband. The next level, more complicated, is the feedback regarding *Os Gafanhotos* that Eva (having matured out of the diminutive Evita) gives to the unknown (to the reader, at least) author of the story. The third layer is Eva's own recollection of the events surrounding her husband's death. This narrative, which broadens both the scope and timeframe (from one single day to several months) of what is presented in *Os Gafanhotos*, is further complicated by a consistent thread of doubt which emerges from Eva herself, questioning the relationship between truth and reality, and probing the reliability of her own recollection of events. The complicated interweaving of these different narrative levels is perhaps best summarised by Kaufman —

A dialogue is established... not between the author of *Os Gafanhotos* and Evita Lopo but between the two texts, two discourses corresponding to the two parts of the novel. The dual structure sustains a polemic view of History dependent on the subject who constructs it, the prevalent ideology, and the type of narration. (Kaufman 41)

In order to understand the dialogue described by Kaufman, it is important to first examine each of the different narrative levels encountered in the book.

Os Gafanhotos begins *in medias res*, with a somewhat omniscient narrator — somewhat omniscient, as Kaufman points out, “because [the narration] is deliberately restricted to the perspective of the group of white Portuguese from the hotel Stella Maris” (42) — describing the wedding between Evita and her soldier husband.

Kaufman highlights the contrast between the short story and the longer section which follows it when she states, “while Evita Lopo openly explores the possibilities of her

own subjectivity, the narrator in *Os Gafanhotos* uses literary discourse to make his version more ‘objective’” (43). This literary discourse is emphasised by the narrator’s omniscience which, while quite literally partial (in that it is both limited and biased), signifies a certain literary and fictional quality to the story. Reflecting this partiality, as well as the fact that Evita has only arrived in the country the night before, no character other than the bride is mentioned by name until well into the story, and by the end of the piece only three other characters — Evita’s husband Luís Álex, his mentor Jaime Forza Leal, and Forza Leal’s wife Helena (nicknamed Helen of Troy) — have been named explicitly. This functions as a means of distancing the narrator (and, by extension, his story) from the actual events. It also functions as a means of establishing a sort of unquestionable authorial omniscience — the reader is never given any indication as to how, exactly, the author of *Os Gafanhotos* is made aware of the events he recounts in his story and this, combined with references to characters primarily through their social or work roles — General, lieutenant’s wife, groom, paratrooper — means that a certain amount of authority on behalf of the narrator is implied, as if he had invented the story himself. Eva Lopo, in the second part of the novel, breaks down this objectivity entirely, through her constant acknowledgement of the subjectivity of her (and, by extension everyone’s) memories. Though eventually shown to be little more than a predominantly fictional gloss over the events, through its specific presentation *Os Gafanhotos* suggests a confidence that Eva Lopo’s monologue in the second part of the book does not, indeed cannot.

To a certain extent, *A Costa dos Murmúrios* defies categorisation — it is the multi-layered fictional account (even this description is problematic — is it a memoir? An overheard conversation? A correspondence?) of an equally fictional woman, yet it also draws heavily on the author’s own real-life experiences; it tells the

story of an un-named war in an un-named country, yet also functions as a damning critique not only of the effect of the Portuguese military's colonial domination of Mozambique, but also Portuguese colonial society in the country generally (Ferreira 269). The two sections of the novel are highly dependent upon one another — *Os Gafanhotos*, though clearly delimited through the use of a separate title page and “FIM” in capital letters at the end of the story, does not entirely make sense without the second section of the book to explain the events of the story in more (if not entirely better) detail. Conversely, Eva Lopo's recollections of her time in Mozambique only gain importance and meaning when using *Os Gafanhotos* as a road map of sorts. On the relationship between the two parts, Helena Kaufman writes,

[the] interdependence between *Os Gafanhotos* and the account of Eva Lopo does not manifest itself exclusively at the level of the plot with its parallels and contrasts... [Since] Eva Lopo comments on the manner in which the short story has been written, the dialogue between the two parts also brings up the question of representation and writing, in both Literature and History. (44)

History, with a capital “H”, plays a central role in Eva Lopo's long monologue that comprises the majority of the book. The axis around which *A Costa dos Murmúrios* revolves is expressed by Eva Lopo at the start of the third chapter —

Definitivamente, a verdade não é o real, ainda que gémeos, e n' *Os Gafanhotos* só a verdade interessa... A verdade deve estar unida e ser infragmentada, enquanto o real pode ser — tem de ser porque senão explodiria — disperso e irrelevante, escorregando, como sabe, literalmente para local nenhum. (Jorge 85)

Definitely, truth is not reality, even if they are twins, and in *Os Gafanhotos* only the truth matters... The truth must be unified and unfragmented, while reality can be — has to be, for if not it would explode — dispersed and irrelevant, literally slipping, as you know, towards nowhere.

Many of the articles written about *A Costa dos Murmúrios* focus on the complicated relationship between History and Literature that Kaufman describes. Paula Jordão, in her article “A Costa dos Murmúrios: Uma Ambiguidade Inesperada”, writes,

Não é, todavia, só a Verdade ou a História que fazem parte desta tentativa de desmistificação em *CM*. Também à Escrita é concedido um lugar na estratégia metaficcional de Lídia Jorge. (49)

And still, it is not solely Truth and History that make up this attempted demystification in *CM*. Writing, as well, is conceded a place in Lídia Jorge’s meta-fictional strategy.

Similarly, Ana Paula Ferreira states, “[from] the beginning of her comments, Eva Lopo denounces the ruse and the power play involved in the pretention to History” (272). These articles, and others like it, focus on the power relationship between the author of *Os Gafanhotos* and Eva Lopo, with each representing different facets of History and Literature at different moments in the story.

It is the simultaneous clash and interaction between History and Literature that situates Jorge’s novel in the postmodern. Linda Hutcheon defines the postmodern as that which,

...takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement. It is rather like saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said... [P]ostmodernism ultimately

manages to install and reinforce as much as undermine and subvert the conventions and presuppositions it appears to challenge. (*The Politics* 1-2)

Through this definition of the concept (although, considering the myriad definitions of postmodernism listed by Hutcheon in her work, perhaps description is a more suitable word), we can understand clearly what Lídia Jorge is doing with *A Costa dos Murmúrios*. The two sections of the novel can be understood to represent the two actions Hutcheon states to be imperative to the postmodern work — *Os Gafanhotos* functions as the “saying something”, and Eva Lopo’s long monologue, both in its response to *Os Gafanhotos* and her own self-doubt, functions as the “inverted commas around what is being said.” The clash between truth (or History) and reality is a constant presence in Eva Lopo’s narrative. The separation she makes between the two is a significant one, especially in relation to how they both function as different aspects of memory, both on the personal, individual level — what Teshome Gabriel describes as “retrospective or recollective memory” (Gabriel) — as well as on the broad, collective or popular level, what Schwartz defines as “a representation of the past embodied in *both* historical evidence and commemorative symbolism” (9). Early in her monologue, Eva Lopo tells the author of *Os Gafanhotos*,

Aconselho-o, porém, a que não se preocupe com a verdade que não se reconstitui, nem com a verosimilhança que é uma ilusão dos sentidos.

Preocupe-se com a correspondência. Ou acredita noutra verdade que não seja a que se consegue a partir da correspondência? (Jorge 42)

I advise you, therefore, to not preoccupy yourself with the truth which cannot be reconstituted, nor with verisimilitude which is an illusion of the senses.

Preoccupy yourself with correspondence. Or do you believe in another truth that is not the one achieved through correspondence?

This is, essentially, what *Os Gafanhotos* does — it corresponds to (and perhaps with) truth and history, without ever actually portraying the events as they occurred. Eva Lopo's approach to history (and its formalised version History) and how it is represented situates the novel firmly within the framework of the postmodern which tends to question the process of historiography —

Among the consequences of the postmodern desire to denaturalize history is a new self-consciousness about the distinction between the brute *events* of the past and the historical *facts* we construct out of them. Facts are events to which we have given meaning. Different historical perspectives therefore derive different facts from the same events. (Hutcheon, *The Politics* 57, emphasis original).

The book's postmodernism is exemplified most clearly by the fact that, within the context of the novel, both segments of the book relay fictional stories. The paradox is emphasised by *Os Gafanhotos*, which is presented with all of the trappings that typically accompany fiction — a title, a narrator, an easily managed timeframe of events, and a declared ending (the "FIM" that appears on page 39) — and yet presents a more stable version of events than those presented by Eva Lopo, who is supposed to have experienced those events firsthand. Where the narrator of *Os Gafanhotos* describes an event and moves on, Eva Lopo, in the second section of the novel, ruminates over those same events, questioning their veracity. The dance on the balcony of the *Stella Maris* hotel is described succinctly and completely in *Os Gafanhotos* —

O Comandante da Região Aérea, de passagem para Mueda, abandonou a mulher das espátulas e tomou a noiva... e seguiram-se os pares rodando à volta da mesa imensa. (Jorge 11)

The Regional Air Commander, passing through to Mueda, left the woman with the spatulas and took the hand of the bride... and the couples continued spinning around the immense table.

In Eva Lopo's memory, however, the dance is not quite so clearly remembered:

Também não foi o Comandante da Região Aérea quem dançou com Evita no terraço, e no entanto nenhuma outra pessoa poderia ter dançado com ela tão intensamente. (55)

It was not the Regional Air Commander who danced with Evita on the balcony, and yet no other person could have danced with her so intensely.

The language used by Eva Lopo leaves the reader unsure — is she questioning the narrator's version of events before finally deciding they must be correct, or is she refuting them entirely? As with much of Eva Lopo's recollection, details are left unsaid, or perhaps half-said. Although the second part of the novel ostensibly clarifies or corrects the inaccuracies of the first part, at the end of the book the reader is still unable to decipher what is truth and what is not. Kaufman states, "Lídia Jorge seems to reject the idea that historical reality can be represented objectively and/or truthfully in literature. [She] questions moreover the function of History as a representation of reality" (Kaufman 44).

It is illustrative, here, to compare the differing ways in which the wedding scene is presented in the novel with how it is presented in Margarida Cardoso's film

adaptation, also titled *A Costa dos Murmúrios*. Whereas the novel begins with an uncomplicated short story which establishes most, but not all, of the major plot points of the work, and then presents an entirely new narrative that questions every aspect of that initial tale, the film appears to follow a more traditional narrative structure, one that appears to avoid the twists and turns of postmodern self-reflection.

Demonstrating the “automatic difference” described by Robert Stam in his introduction to *Literature and Film* (2005), the parameters of film narrative compared with those of literary narrative mean that an exact replication of the novel would have been difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Indeed, as examined elsewhere in this study, it is questionable if an exact cinematic copy of the novel would have been a desirable outcome. The film does, in a sense, follow the overall construction of the novel, but it also, as might be expected, makes certain dramatic changes that set it apart and serve to identify the film as independent from the novel. The title sequence plays out over grainy images, perhaps actual footage from the 1960s, of soldiers and their families disembarking a jet, followed by a series of images which might be found in the 8mm home videos of a colonial-era Portuguese family on vacation in Mozambique — a black child climbing a palm tree, a large African family with a woman balancing a basket on her head, a white woman purchasing trinkets on the side of the road. The grainy footage ends with a deliberate recreation, featuring actress Beatriz Batarda (in the role of Evita Lopo) sitting on the bus, the camera placed behind her to allow the audience to see out the window she looks through, showing a group of white soldiers stopping the bus in order to get on. This combination of original and reproduced images is a significant nod to the amalgamation of fact and fiction that occurs throughout both the novel and the film.

The first scene after the title sequence shows Evita in her hotel room, dressed in her bridal dress, slowly unpacking her suitcase. This scene is intercut with an intertitle which features white text on a black background, paraphrasing a line from *Os Gafanhotos*. In the book the sentence reads:

Então a noiva que tinha chegado apenas na noite anterior, mas a quem todos já chamavam simplesmente Evita, abriu os olhos, e mais do que a quantidade dos convidados, surpreendeu-se com o tamanho exemplar da mesa. (Jorge 10)

Then the bride who had only arrived the night before, but whom everyone already called simply Evita, opened her eyes, and rather than by the number of people, she was surprised by the enormous size of the table.

In the film, however, the line is shortened so that it reads “Então a noiva que tinha chegado apenas na noite anterior mas a quem todos já chamavam Evita, abriu os olhos,” which translates to “Then the bride who had only arrived the night before but whom everyone already called Evita, opened her eyes.” The sentence is not placed in quotation marks, nor it is attributed to anyone (or anything). Those who have read the book will, of course, recognise the quote, but for those who have not there is no indication given as to how the line functions within the film, aside from the obvious setting of the scene. The film returns to a shot of the ocean, and as the camera slowly pans from the panorama of the sea we are shown a close-up of Evita’s face, covered by her veil, her lips bright red, her eyes closed. As she opens them a pair of hands, revealed to be those of her fiancé, lift the veil and, after a moment’s hesitation, the two kiss briefly before the crowd begins to clap. As the camera focuses on the crowd, an unidentified voice (which we is shown to be Evita’s not long after) states in voiceover:

I enjoyed reading your story, and I concluded that many things are exact.

What you meant to clarify you clarified, and what you meant to hide remained immersed. You were right not to worry about the truth. Of him, of me, of who we were. Of where we were. A modest correspondence is enough. Simple things.

The voiceover continues over images of the Stella Maris hotel, of Evita on the beach, of an empty hotel room with a bowl of fresh fruit sitting on the table as Evita recalls her memories of the smells and tastes of the time. The monologue ends with Evita saying a vitally important line — “Evita era eu.” This “I was Evita” not only identifies the speaker, it also locates her (somewhat) temporally — the use of the past tense tells the audience she is looking back on the events in question, even if we are unsure how far back. It also serves as a sort of reminder to whomever she is speaking (be that the author of the text on the intertitle, the viewer of the film, or even possibly herself) of her agency over the course of her remembrance of things past.

Indeed, the changes made between the novel and the film are significant yet manage, perhaps to a lesser extent, to reference the dual-narrative structure of the novel. The intertitle at the beginning of the film establishes a narrative external from the action presented to the viewer on screen; this external narrative is reinforced by Evita’s voiceovers, which occur at various points throughout the film. Just as the intertitle, containing impersonal text written in the third person, draws from *Os Gafanhotos* without using the text of the short story verbatim, so Evita’s voiceovers similarly reference the second part of the novel. The text spoken during all of these voiceovers paraphrases text from the novel — rather than quote directly from Lídia Jorge’s writing, lines taken from different segments of the book are combined to

create a new text, inspired by the novel (perhaps even indebted to it) without attempting to merely reproduce the novel on screen.

What we are presented with in the film, therefore, is a narrative consisting of three layers — the first layer is the intertitle which, through the use of text and the third person, hints at the existence of something like *Os Gafanhotos*: a literary, possibly fictional record of the events. The second layer consists of Evita's voiceover narration. This narration, as in the novel directed at someone else, suggests that she is commenting on something she has read (or, perhaps, on a film she has viewed). The audience of her monologue is less obvious in the film, however — is she speaking with the author of the text presented on the intertitle? Is the text seen on the intertitle taken from whatever it is that Evita is commenting on? Nothing is made clear; there is only one intertitle presented in the entire film, while Evita's narration runs consistently throughout. Finally, there is a final level of narration that must be considered — the film itself. How does the film exist within the world of the film itself? Are we to understand that when Evita states "I remember most of all the water, the animals, the smell of the fruit" she is doing so because she is being prompted by the images on screen? A viewer of the film familiar with the novel will recognise the passages being read, but those passages are not taken verbatim from the novel, which could lead to confusion. Additionally, the events portrayed on screen do not suggest an exact parallel with either of the two other narrative strands presented in the film. We see the action of Evita opening her eyes during the wedding immediately after the intertitle states it, which suggests that the action in the film corresponds to *Os Gafanhotos*, with Evita's voiceovers functioning as the aged Eva's recollections. But then again, the events of the film parallel Eva Lopo's in-depth, conflicted narrative of

the second part of the book. We are left, then, with several possibilities and no clear answers.

This, of course, parallels the situation in Jorge's novel. It is, therefore, perhaps useful to consider the *action* of the film (as opposed to the intertitle or the voiceover) within the context of the postmodern. This is not to suggest that the film, as whole, is not postmodern in nature, merely that in this particular instance it is worthwhile to examine the on-screen events, independent from the voiceover or intertitle. Margarida Cardoso's film takes the novel's construction even further — while both works present three layers of narrative, the film presents three different texts to consider, as compared to the two encountered in the novel. Like the novel, it is easy to differentiate between the explicitly literary third person narrative, presented as text in the intertitle at the beginning of the film, and Eva Lopo's personal reflections, presented as first person voiceovers throughout the film. What is more difficult to decipher, however, is how the actual events on screen are to be understood. Hutcheon writes, "the confrontation that I shall be calling postmodernist [is] where documentary historical actuality meets formalist self-reflexivity and parody" (*The Politics* 7). What we *see* when we watch Cardoso's *A Costa dos Murmúrios* is the postmodernist confrontation that Hutcheon describes; the site of postmodernism created by the interaction of the conflicting narratives that we *read* (through the use of text on the intertitle) and *hear* (through the use of voiceover) while watching the film. Indeed the entire film, all three narratives included, can be understood as this location of confrontation — in the film real events (the Portuguese colonial occupation of Mozambique, the colonial war itself) are made fictional (episodic, stylised, especially dramatic) while fictional events (the book upon which the film is based, the game of Russian roulette between the journalist and Luís Alex)

are made real, or at least brought to life on screen and given a semblance of verisimilitude. Cardoso's film, then, fits with Hutcheon's assertion that "[p]ostmodern texts paradoxically point to the opaque nature of their representational strategies and at the same time to their complicity with the notion of the transparency of representation" (*The Politics* 18).

The conflict that exists in Jorge's novel between the short story and the long monologue is characterised by what Hutcheon would describe as "the urge to foreground, by means of contradiction, the paradox of the desire for and the suspicion of narrative mastery – and master narratives" (*The Politics* 64). *Os Gafanhotos* functions as *A Costa dos Murmúrios*'s master narrative, its "totalizing" narrative —

The function of the term totalizing... is to point to the *process* (hence the awkward 'ing' form) by which writers... render their materials coherent, continuous, unified – but always with an eye to the control and mastery of those materials, even at the risk of doing violence to them. It is a link to power, as well as process, that the adjective "totalizing" is meant to suggest... (*The Politics* 62, emphasis original)

The "correspondence" to truth (as opposed to any sort of commitment to it) that Eva Lopo urges the author of *Os Gafanhotos* to follow is reflected in the story's totalizing narrative, where events are (re-)presented in a straight-forward and chronological manner and offered as truth, irrespective of their factuality. Eva Lopo's narrative, however, serves as the contradiction that Hutcheon describes — she acknowledges that any sense of mastery of the events is a false one, that any attempt to accurately (re-)present the past has failed before it has even begun. Indeed, even after she relays the details of a specific past event to the author of the short story, she suggests that he deliberately leave it out of his tale in order to make it appear more authentic —

E assim, quando *Os Gafanhotos* chegarem, alguns pares deverão estar ausentes para que a cena seja verosímil e até real. (Jorge 157)

Therefore, when the locusts arrive, some of the couples should be absent so that the scene might be more believable, or even real.

This passage emphasises Jorge's postmodern sensibilities, for Eva Lopo is not merely suggesting that a certain aspect of the past be ignored, she is actively encouraging that it be altered. This calls into question the truthfulness of not only Eva Lopo's narrative, but every historical narrative ever composed — “[t]he narrativisation of past events is not hidden; the events no longer seem to speak for themselves, but are shown to be consciously composed into a narrative, whose constructed – not found – order is imposed upon them, often overtly by the narrating figure” (Hutcheon, *The Politics* 66). Jorge's novel is relatively unique in presenting the conflict (and memories of the conflict) with a postmodern viewpoint — “Lídia Jorge's novel contests then those narratives... which are written as though the real is knowable, as though language is transparent, and as though they can contribute towards man's emancipatory project in History” (Ferreira 269).

While Cardoso's film similarly presents the past through a postmodern lens, it does so less obviously than Jorge's novel. Although a questioning of the totalizing narrative that so defines postmodern fiction appears more often in literature, it is not completely unknown in film — it is a somewhat consistent motif in the films of certain directors such as Terry Gilliam and Christopher Nolan, for example. Despite this, however, films, especially commercial films (which Cardoso's film certainly is), tend to make use of the totalizing narrative as their primary mode of storytelling — (hi)stories are presented with a beginning, middle, and end, and the problem presented

in the first act of the film is, quite often, resolved by the final act. Cardoso's film, superficially, is constructed in a similar manner. The things acted out on screen do not, in any way, engage in any sort of postmodern questioning. The story begins with Evita Lopo arriving in Mozambique and then proceeds almost entirely chronologically — her husband is deployed and goes on patrol for several weeks, during which time we follow Evita's movements around the city, her interactions with various people in the hotel, and her complicated relationships with Helena and the journalist with whom she eventually has an affair. Luís returns from his deployment, learns about the affair, kidnaps the journalist and forces him to play Russian roulette while Evita watches. After Luís's death, Evita looks for the journalist, discovers he has left the country, and the film ends. In many ways, this functions as the "totalizing narrative" of the film — events are presented in a "continuous, unified" manner and with the authority characteristic of traditional narrative structures. The narrative portrayed on-screen, however, is not the only narrative presented in the film, as has been previously explained. In fact, it is these other narratives presented in the film, whether the brief text of the intertitle or Evita's voiceover narration, that serve the same function as Eva Lopo's monologue in the novel. Whereas the events portrayed on screen are never contradicted by other on-screen events, they *are* contradicted, or at least called into question, by the voiceovers that the audience hears. The final voiceover of the film, presented over the action of the journalist being accosted by soldiers and forced to play Russian roulette with Luís Alex while a crying Evita acts as a witness to the scene, is indicative of this. It begins and ends with Evita questioning the author's intentions and doubting her own credibility —

I don't know if you did the right thing coming down from the terrace to finish your narrative. But at this distance, who am I to affirm that it wasn't like that?

.... You can finish like that, it doesn't matter to me. But there was, in fact, a slight difference.

After she says this, we see her visit the offices of the newspaper in search of the journalist who we have just seen forced to play Russian roulette. At the office she is told that the journalist has left, fearing for his life after several armed men showed up in search of him. This casts doubt over everything we have just seen and forces us to question what, exactly, has really happened. The voiceover has already stated, by this point, that “there was a slight difference,” but does not make clear what that difference was. The viewer is unable to decipher whether or not the passage being read during the voiceover directly relates to the action presented on screen or whether it refers to separate events. This is different from most of the voiceovers in the film because those, generally, are clearly related to what we are seeing — when Evita is being taken on a tour of the city with the journalist, for example, the voiceover asks “why shouldn't I have gone with him?” Yet in this final instance, nothing is clear, nothing is obvious. Has the journalist fled the city *after* the Russian roulette, or before it? Were the men who appeared at the newspaper office with guns the same men we see throw the journalist onto a chair opposite Luís Álex in the previous scene? Does this final visit to the newspaper offices represent the “slight difference” that Evita mentions in her voiceover? Perhaps the entire sequence, from the game of Russian roulette to Evita's visit to the offices to her identifying Luís Álex's body on the beach, is the “slight difference” that Evita is referring to. This is, of course, exactly what Eva Lopo is referring to in the novel when she mentions the same thing. However, unlike in the novel, in the film the audience is never given a contrasting narrative with which to compare. The action on screen dominates the narrative in a way that Eva Lopo's monologue does not, cannot. Indeed, this is perhaps the key

fundamental difference that marks Lídia Jorge's *A Costa dos Murmúrios* as a different entity to Margarida Cardoso's *A Costa dos Murmúrios*. In Jorge's work Eva Lopo, though ostensibly a truthful source, functions as a means of casting doubt on the events of the past, stemming at least partly from the twenty years of distance that separate her from those events. In Cardoso's work, however, this distance is not suggested — the voice the audience hears when a voiceover is being spoken, for example, is the same voice we hear when Evita speaks during the film; the action we see does not contradict the passages being spoken by Evita in voiceover but rather reaffirms those passages. Although an exterior, unseen narrative is suggested by the intertitle at the beginning of the film, it is a mere suggestion, and not a recurring motif throughout the film. Where Eva Lopo's monologue in the novel directly contradicts some of the action presented in *Os Gafanhotos*, there is no real contradiction that occurs in the film, primarily because there cannot be, for there is nothing to contradict. Despite this, however, the viewer is still left unsure of what is true and what is not at the end of the film.

Haec Helena, the Cause of Conflict

One of the most dramatic and significant differences between the novel and the film is the presentation of one of the key scenes of the narrative — the moment when, after months of unspoken but barely concealed sexual tension between the two, Helena attempts to initiate a physical relationship with Evita. This scene is important for several reasons — not only is it a central, defining moment in helping us to understand the problematic, almost adversarial love-hate relationship between Helena and Forza Leal, it also serves as a focal point for understanding the complicated

gender roles that emerge throughout both works. Indeed, the convoluted nature of gender roles in *A Costa dos Murmúrios* emerges long before this pivotal scene. Of all the power plays (to borrow Ferreira's phrase) that occur in the narrative (whether the novel or cinematic version of that narrative), none is so complicated as that of gender dynamics. Although Eva Lopo never directly states the name or gender of the author of *Os Gafanhotos*, through her use of the masculine pronoun she identifies the author as a man. The non-gendered personal pronouns used in English mean that this subtle identification is lost in the English translation of the novel (the masculine "o" of Portuguese becomes the neutral "you" of English), however the function of gender roles is not significantly diminished by this change. This is partly a result of what Ronald W. Sousa, in his essay "'I was Evita,' or *Ecce Femina*," refers to as the "analytic paradigm" of the gaze — "the terms come gender-typed: the object of the gaze is female, while the first subject is male, the second, female" ("I Was" 172-73). Since Evita Lopo is the "object" of the "gaze" in *Os Gafanhotos*, the subject must, by reduction, be male. Although Sousa's paradigm does persist throughout the novel, it is also challenged and altered at certain key points in the narrative, even within the context of *Os Gafanhotos* itself. Although Evita is the object of the author's gaze, with the author rarely taking his metaphorical eyes off her, within the story itself Evita is found gazing upon Helena, astonished (along with everyone else) by her beauty. This becomes intensified during Eva Lopo's monologue, in which the sexual tension that exists between the two women builds to a crescendo, most significantly when Helena attempts to seduce Evita by asking "Vamos vingar-nos deles?" ("Shall we take revenge on them?")

The relationship that exists between Evita and Helena is a complicated, often confusing one — Helena seems to view Evita as both a friend and confidant, but

Evita, while fascinated by Helena's beauty, seems to interact with Helena with a certain amount of distance and separation, perhaps even a slight scepticism. Sexuality is at the foundation of their interaction, as one suspects is the case with all of Helena's associations. The first significant description of Helena presented in the novel is found in *Os Gafanhotos*, and it is a description that introduces many of her defining characteristics. Of course her beauty is emphasised —

A mulher mais linda do terraço concitava a vista dos homens sem mulher... e até de alguns com a mulher ali, diante da testa... porque a mulher do capitão Jaime Forza Leal atraía a vista e o suor como um farol atraí, quando visto o facho a partir do mar. (Jorge 29)

The most beautiful woman on the terrace attracted the looks of those men without a wife... and even of some men with a wife there, in front of their face... because the wife of captain Jaime Forza Leal attracted looks and sweat like a lighthouse seen from the sea.

However, in the same instant the violent nature of her relationship with Forza Leal is also displayed —

Naturalmente que o capitão reparou nos olhares que choviam como dardos. Naturalmente o capitão esbofeteou a mulher... Naturalmente o marido se aproximou dela, e a puxou para si, e ela entregou a cara, a lágrima e o cabelo, encostando tudo isso ao ombro dele, naturalmente. (29)

Naturally the captain fixed on the looks that rained down like darts. Naturally the captain slapped the woman... Naturally the husband got close to her, and

pulled her towards him, and she presented her face, her tear and her hair,
resting all of it on his shoulder, naturally.

Many studies of sexuality and eroticism draw attention to the correspondence of sex and violence. In his book *Eroticism* (1957), George Bataille asks, “[w]hat does physical eroticism signify if not a violation of the very being of its practitioners? — a violation bordering on death, bordering on murder?” (17) Helena and Forza Leal’s relationship is rooted in this very notion. Theirs is not a relationship based on equality and mutual love and respect but, rather, on power, fear, and the very real threat of violence. Neither Helena nor Forza Leal’s names are coincidental — Forza Leal exhibits loyal force in his role as a military captain in his professional capacity, and demands loyalty from his wife through the use of force in his private life, while Helena, whose nickname (let us not forget) is Helen of Troy, is the catalyst for terrible tragedy. This is even referenced by Eva at an early point in her monologue —

Por entre o barulho que fazia dentro e fora, perguntei-lhe — “Sabe o que significa o seu nome?”

Helena de Tróia começou a rir — “Não, não sei.”

“Nunca lhe disseram *Haec Helena*?”

“Não, nunca” — disse ela com pestanas inocentes a baterem ao longo dos olhos... Quis que Helena soubesse.

“Dizer *Haec Helena* é o mesmo que dizer *eis a causa do conflito* — gosta?”

(Jorge 72)

Amidst the noise of inside and out, I asked her — “Do you know what your name means?”

Helen of Troy started to laugh — “No, I don’t.”

“Nobody’s ever said *Haec Helena* to you?”

“No, never” — she said with innocent lashes fluttering on the end of her eyes... I wanted Helena to know.

“Saying *Haec Helena* is the same as saying *there’s the cause of conflict* — do you like that?”

When Evita has this conversation with Helena, she has no idea what has transpired between Helena and Forza Leal (nor, it must be remembered, what will transpire between herself and Luís Alex); indeed, she does not come to understand the prescience of her off-hand comment until much later in the work. Nevertheless, this conversation establishes an environment around Helena that will persist throughout the narrative — fairly or not she is the cause, and often the site, of conflict.

That she is a cause of conflict is a reflection of the intimately connected relationship between sex, violence, and, fundamentally, power. De Lauretis writes, “violence between intimates must be seen in the wider context of social power relations,” (33) and this is certainly true in the case of Helena and Forza Leal — the strict, violent relationship the soldier maintains with his wife functions as a symbol of his machismo and masculinity. Forza Leal views himself as a European alpha male sent to Africa to maintain order and he uses his wife to demonstrate that belief. When Forza Leal is deployed on patrol, Helena promises him she will not leave the house, in what appears to be an act of sacrificial service similar to Forza Leal’s own. While this would, on the surface, appear to be a performance of sacrifice undertaken by Helena willingly, the action becomes more complicated when Helena reveals that the impetus for her cloistering comes from the repercussions of an illicit affair Helena had engaged in previously. Helena’s seclusion, then, is not so much a sacrifice on her part, but rather a repression imposed upon her by Forza Leal. Of repression, Michel

Foucault writes, “repression [operates] as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence, and, by implication, an admission that there [is] nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know” (*History* 4). By forcing Helena to remain locked inside her house Forza Leal is attempting to silence Helena and, by extension, her sexuality, hoping that it will disappear. (At least for the duration of his deployment.) Failing that, perhaps it is his hope that people will forget her, and believe the idea that there is “nothing to see, and nothing to know.” Helena has not sacrificed herself; rather she is being sacrificed to soothe Forza Leal’s ego. That Helena is widely considered the most beautiful woman amongst the Portuguese community only heightens the traumatic nature of the relationship — “[b]eauty is desired in order that it may be befouled; not for its own sake, but for the joy brought by the certainty of profaning it” (Bataille 144).

The house in which Helena is sequestered away, then, becomes no longer a safe haven from the outside world, as a home would traditionally be understood, but rather a place of confinement, similar in nature to the *hospitiaux généraux* which Foucault examines in his work *Madness and Civilisation* (1965). Indeed, Helena’s house and the *hospitiaux* which form the centre of Foucault’s study serve much the same purpose — both are “a sort of semi-judicial structure, an administrative entity which, along with the already constituted powers, and outside of the courts, decides, judges, and executes” (“The Great Confinement” 125). Forza Leal, a representative of the state in his role as military captain but with limited power, functions as the all-powerful state itself when exerting control over his own wife. Foucault writes,

[Confinement’s] repressive function was combined with a new use. It was no longer merely a question of confining those out of work, but of giving work to

those who had been confined and thus making them contribute to the prosperity of all (“The Great Confinement” 132).

To the outside world (specifically to Luís Álex and Evita) Forza Leal attempts to depict Helena’s confinement, her imprisonment, in just this light. Rather than a detention or form of punishment, Forza Leal presents the situation as a sort of participation — by remaining in the house Helena is doing her part to contribute to the war effort. Helena herself even suggests as much at the beginning of her friendship with Evita, claiming that by confining herself to the house she is spiritually accompanying her husband —

Desta vez quero acompanhar o Jaime até às últimas consequências. Desta vez não quero sair daqui enquanto o Jaime não voltar... Quero ser solidária com o Jaime até ao fim, partilhar com ele o empreendimento dele, as habilidades dele e o comando dele. A minha alma, eu aprisiono-a aqui, embora não esteja aqui, esteja lá. (Jorge 97)

This time I want to accompany Jaime to the final consequences. This time I don’t want to leave here until Jaime returns... I want to show solidarity with Jaime until the end, share with him his endeavour, his abilities and his command. My soul, I imprison it here, however it’s not really here, it’s there.

Helena is very convincing in these early exchanges with Evita — both Evita and the reader believe that Helena is sacrificing her freedom in order to show solidarity with her husband and ensure his success. That this explanation comes not long after Evita has rejected Luís Álex’s request for her to do the same thing (albeit within the even more restrictive confines of her room in the *Stella Maris*) suggests that Helena is fully

committed to her husband, in a way that Evita, exemplified by her refusal of Luís Álex, is not. Indeed, Helena even claims,

...agora estava encerrada em casa por livre vontade, mas infelizmente, insistia, tinha havido tempo em que o Jaime precisava indicar-lhe o caminho dessa forma tão explícita, e ela, cega, não via nada. (Jorge 99)

...now she was confined in the house by her own free will, but unfortunately, she insisted, there had been a time when Jaime was forced to indicate to her the route in that explicit manner, and she, blind, had not seen anything.

Evita, then, is portrayed as a subversive, while Helena is portrayed as a committed partner to Forza Leal and a devoted participant in the European politico-cultural system he represents. This apparent commitment to the cause is strengthened by the focus of Helena's worry — seemingly fearful of Jaime's death, she continually speaks of the number of expected casualties, the number of expected deaths, and the success and failure percentages of the operation.

By confining herself to the house, by constantly calculating and recalculating the number of casualties, Helena, if Forza Leal and her own early claims are to be believed, is working in support of her society, despite her physical separation from it. Foucault, writing about the French prison system in the nineteenth century, describes how at the Mettray youth penitentiary inmates were not only separated from society, but also taught a skill or trade of some sort. The French authorities found this to be especially useful in controlling inmates, citing a study which claims that, "in 1848, at a moment when 'the fever of revolution fired the imagination of all, when the schools at Angers, La Flèche, Alfort, even the boarding schools, rose up in rebellion, the inmates of Mettray were calmer than ever'" (Foucault, "The Carceral" 236). The

system at Mettray, therefore, had completely suppressed and subjugated its inmates to such an extent that the prison itself did not require physical walls. The youth detainees were not merely held captive by the prison, rather they were entirely dependent upon the prison for their future livelihood. With this in mind, a new understanding of Helena begins to emerge. Even before she reveals her true history, Helena shows herself to be both repressed and abused by Forza Leal. She has been reduced to the status of a youth inmate at a prison labour camp, infantilised by Forza Leal's threats and manipulations.

Violent Eroticism

When Helena does finally reveal the true reason for why she remains hidden inside for the entire duration of her husband's deployment, we realise that far from fearing that her husband will never return, she is fearful that he *will* return. Having forced Helena's lover to play Russian roulette with him and having survived, Forza Leal has come to dominate Helena's life through violence. The love of her life ("*o grande amor da sua vida*") was murdered (for, regardless of who pulled the trigger, it was certainly a murder) in front of her very eyes, and as a result Helena has become completely conquered by her husband. We begin to understand that Helena does not sequester herself out of some vague sense of loyalty or participation, but rather out of fear that if she does not she will suffer the same fate as her murdered lover. Foucault writes, "[i]n feudal societies, power functioned essentially through signs and levies. Signs of loyalty to the feudal lords, rituals, ceremonies, and so forth, and levies in the form of taxes, pillage, hunting, war, etc." ("Truth and Power" 66). Helena's relationship with Forza Leal, then, can be understood as feudal, where Forza Leal is

the lord and Helena the subject. Helena's confinement is both a ritualistic display of loyalty and a tax that Forza Leal levies against her for her previous liaison. If she refuses the levy, she runs the risk of losing her life. Foucault's statement that "between [the prisoner] and society, an implicit system of obligation was established: he had the right to be fed, but he must accept the physical and moral constraint of confinement" ("The Great Confinement" 130) becomes the defining characteristic of Helena and Forza Leal's relationship — she has the right to be fed (to remain alive), but she must accept physical and moral confinement. While Helena's "vamos vingar-nos deles?" is somewhat surprising, considering the nature of her oppression, it is also completely understandable why she would want to get a measure of revenge.

The scene when Helena poses this question to Evita is the crescendo of a subtext of erotic tension that builds throughout the narrative between the two primary female protagonists, from the moment Evita first sees Helena on the balcony. Indeed, of the four (potential) sexual partners Evita has in the story — her husband Luís Álex, the journalist Álvaro Sabino, the fat journalist with whom she has a one night stand, and Helena — it is with Helena (significantly, the only one of the four with whom Evita does not actually engage in the sex act) that a true erotic relationship is established. It is important here to differentiate between sexuality and eroticism. Bataille differentiates the two concepts fairly simply —

[s]exual reproductive activity is common to sexual animals and men, but only men appear to have turned their sexual activity in erotic activity. Eroticism, unlike simple sexual activity, is a psychological quest independent of the natural goal: reproduction and the desire for children. (Bataille 11)

It is this psychological aspect, closely related to violence, danger, and death, which signifies the difference between sexuality and eroticism. And it is this combination of the psychological and the physical which defines Evita and Helena's relationship.

Passages of Evita describing Helena's body, her movements, her dress abound in the narrative. These descriptions, it might be argued, fall within Eva's general pattern of observation that characterises her monologue. Dias Martins writes,

Extending the argument that interprets the women [of the *Stella Maris*] as simultaneously accomplices and victims of the dominant (colonial) patriarchal power, ...Eva reproduces the dominant symbolic system through an exoticised representation of the women at the hotel that is self-empowering (inasmuch as the wives are not supposed to look back)... (Dias Martins 10)

Where Eva's descriptions of the women in the hotel show her to be separate and distant, even disdainful of the group, her descriptions of Helena reveal something else entirely. Although she remains somewhat distant from her, Evita also displays a certain fascination with Helena, a fascination that borders on lust. This fascination with Helena's body, this lust, is made obvious in the moments immediately before Helena's attempted seduction. Evita has just arrived at Helena's house and finds her exercising —

É aí que está Helena sobre uma bicicleta pedaleira, metendo a barriga para dentro, o peito para fora, a cintura apertada por um lenço. Um maillot preto. Não pára de pedalar. Pergunta-me se engordou. Só dois centímetros, está perfeita. A anca redonda mas lisa, a perna forte mas magra. (Jorge 200)

There is Helena on top of a stationary bicycle, pulling her stomach in, sticking her chest out, her waist hugged by a towel. A black leotard. She doesn't stop

pedalling. She asks me if she's gained weight. Only two centimetres, she's perfect. Her hips round but smooth, her legs strong but thin.

Here Eva (looking back, we must remind ourselves, from a distance of twenty years) displays a level of attention to the details of Helena's body that she does not exhibit even with her own husband. The conflicting attraction and separation that characterises the two women's relationship is made clear once Helena has finished exercising —

Fico a ver Helena duchar-se, falando. Sob a água que está correndo, Helena é só corpo e voz. Parece não ter espírito nem memória sob o sabão. Se não tivesse, se não manchasse a imagem do seu corpo com a conspurcação da sua fala, eu iria ajoelhar-me e passar um dedo pela pele nua de Helena que acena como o velo dum pombo. Mas fala... (Jorge 201)

I stay there watching Helena shower, talking. Beneath the running water, Helena is only a body and a voice. She doesn't appear to have a spirit or memory beneath the soap. If she had not, if she did not stain the image of her body with the ugliness of her words, I would go and kneel beside her and run a finger over her naked skin which waves like a dove's feathers. But she talks...

The tension between Evita and Helena, indeed between the contrasting emotions Helena inspires within Evita, are palpable in this scene. The sight of Helena's nude body obviously arouses Evita — not only does she describe Helena as perfect, remembering every curve of her body, but Evita desires to touch her, perhaps as a way of inspiring in Helena the same arousal that Helena generates in Evita. However, the things Helena is saying, the focus of her conversation, perhaps even her voice

itself, repulse Evita to such an extent that her desire is subdued, possibly even extinguished. This duality of feeling, this clash of sentiment, characterises most of Evita's sexual interactions — she is in love with Luís Alex but does not recognise the man he has become since joining the army; she is intrigued by Álvaro Sabino's charm and care-free attitude while also exasperated by what she views as his cowardice; she finds the eyes of the fat journalist beautiful but the rest of his physique unattractive; and she finds Helena's beauty to be highly erotic, while considering her personality to be unappealing.

That unappealing personality, however, begins to become slightly more sympathetic when Helena finally tells Evita the story of her murdered lover. This scene takes place the morning after Evita has watched Helena in the shower, and reinforces the erotic/violent nature of the two women's relationship even further. Instigated by Evita mentioning she had heard the sound of a revolver being fired, Helena proceeds to explain the difference between a revolver and a pistol, and then, seemingly entirely unprompted, explains how she came to learn the difference. Eva Lopo, in her narration, plays the moment for tension, knowingly making the reader wait just as she had to —

Fico a ver — a sua curiosidade é igual à minha. Ela volta, receio que não fale, que se arrependa, que se tranque no último instante. Trancar-se-á? A sua curiosidade é igual à minha, só que você está longe, não pode passar-lhe a mão pela testa, nem beijar-lhe o cabelo. Eu pude. Evita pôde. (Jorge 204)

I am watching — your curiosity is equal to mine. She returns, I'm afraid the she won't speak, that she will repent, that she will lock herself away at the last moment. Will she? Your curiosity is equal to mine, except that you are far

away, you can't pass your hand over her forehead, nor kiss her hair. I could.

Evita could.

Finally, then, Evita has been able to fulfil her desire of caressing Helena, but the situation dictates that it is in very different circumstances to how she might have imagined the night before. The caresses, the kisses, are not those of erotic desire but rather of soothing and comfort. Despite the outward signifiers of sympathy, however, Eva Lopo's narration of the scene continues with a similar indifference as the shower scene —

Depois Helena, que se mantinha renovando o choro para cima da cama, falava de intensas banalidades... Essa era a arqueologia que Helena poderia omitir. Não omitia, mas logo lhe pus a questão relevante. (Jorge 205)

Later Helena, who kept bursting out in tears on the bed, spoke of intense banalities... That was the archaeology that Helena could have omitted. She did not, but I then put to her the relevant question.

Eva (and Evita perhaps, although it cannot be certain, for the two, it is worth remembering, are not the same) is unconcerned with Helena's story, she simply wants to know whatever secret it is that she has been hiding. Helena seems completely unaware of this, a fact which adds to the traumatic, violent nature of the situation.

The two women's relationship becomes even more antagonistic, erotic, and sexually charged a few days later — Helena has finally admitted that all of the preoccupation about the number of dead soldiers and officers that she had displayed when the military operation first began was not out of fear that Forza Leal might die, but rather out of the *hope* that he would. Upon discovering that he has survived, Helena threatens to kill herself. Evita, perhaps hoping that Helena has actually

committed suicide, goes to Helena's house and discovers her there lying in bed. Upon entering the bedroom, Evita is instructed to lock the door, and Helena then removes her underwear and presents her nude body to Evita —

Vista da porta, Helena assemelha-se a um narciso com uma mosca no meio. A mosca tem a cor dos cabelos da cabeça de Helena, senão mais arruivada ainda. É a primeira vez na vida que vejo uma mulher sem slip, no meio dum lençol. Não me surpreende contudo a mulher de que conheço o ser, mas a beleza que é seu acidente. (Jorge 223)

Seen from the door, Helena resembles a narcissus with a fly in the middle.

The fly is the colour of the hair on Helena's head, if not even more red. It's the first time in my life I've seen a woman without a slip, in the middle of a sheet. The woman surprises me not so much by the fact I know her being, but rather because of the beauty which is her accident.

Immediately, Evita's thoughts (and Eva Lopo's narration) turn to Jaime Forza Leal, the act of penetration and, by extension, death. Ultimately, in response to Helena's question, Evita rejects her, simultaneously rejecting all erotic desire she may have harboured towards her at previous points.

It is unsurprising that, in a moment of extreme sexual and erotic tension, when for the first time ever she is presented with a naked female body in a sexual situation, Evita's thoughts would turn to death. For, as Bataille makes clear —

[s]tripping naked is the decisive action. Nakedness offers a contrast to self-possession, to discontinuous existence, in other words... The self is dispossessed, and so completely that most creatures in a state of nakedness, for nakedness is symbolic of this dispossession and heralds it, will hide.

Stripping naked is seen in civilizations where the act has full significance if not as a simulacrum of the act of killing, at least as an equivalent shorn of gravity. (17-18)

Evita's thoughts of death and murder, of Forza Leal with his *bala follicular* (follicle bullet, with follicle referencing the botanical seed-dispensing fruit) or a hypothetical butcher who has taken Forza Leal's place and penetrates Helena with his *faca de carne* (meat knife), should not be taken to mean that she has not been sexually aroused by the situation. Indeed, exactly the opposite has occurred. While she cannot, does not want to, bring herself to engage in a sexual act with Helena, she has certainly engaged in an erotic one; the inevitable sexual arousal that follows erotic arousal is sated soon after when, immediately after rejecting Helena, Evita goes to Álvaro Sabino's house and initiates sex with him, despite his apparent reluctance. Evita's final rejection of Helena also signifies the rejection of their friendship, if that is indeed what their relationship could be called.

The entire scenario, from Helena's recalling the death of her lover to Evita's eventual rejection of Helena's sexual advances, is presented very differently in Margarida Cardoso's film. In a sense, the film's version of events is inspired by the streamlined narrative encountered in *Os Gafanhotos* — instead of stretching the scene out over the course of several days, with unrelated interruptions occurring as in the book, the order of events has been altered so as to move the plot along more quickly. Additionally, and most noticeably, the personalities of the two characters, and as a result the nature of their interaction and relationship, are substantially different. Where Evita, in the novel, comes across as somewhat superior to those around her, choosing to distance herself from and pass judgement on others (especially the women she encounters, be they Helena or the women in the *Stella Maris*), in the film

her distance is portrayed not necessarily as a product of a self-perception of superiority but, rather, because of a constant questioning of the situation she witnesses in the country and the society into which she has entered. At times that questioning *does* manifest itself as a sense of superiority (again, especially when it involves the women of the *Stella Maris*), but, perhaps due to the reduced role of the twenty-years-later Eva Lopo voiceover, it is less prevalent. While in the novel the Eva Lopo narrator character is the primary source of both description and explication, the film prefers to rely on the use of long shots taken from Evita's point of view or, alternately, shots focussing on Evita's face as she contemplates the unfamiliar natural environment and the actions of others as a means of explaining Evita's mental and emotional state. Generally, these shots establish a tone of solitude — Evita finds herself in an unfamiliar space, unable (or perhaps unwilling) to make friends with most of the people she meets, and the more she learns about the place the less she seems to enjoy it. This loneliness, perhaps, partially explains why her relationship with Helena is significantly more cordial than it is in the book — whereas in the novel the elder Eva Lopo can pick and choose what aspects of her life to include in her memoir, the film is much more present in Evita's life. While Eva Lopo may have wanted to present her relationship with Helena in a very specific manner, her (relative) absence in Cardoso's film means that the relationship is displayed more neutrally, with less of Eva Lopo's bias.

In Cardoso's film, Evita arrives at Helena's house in the evening, after having spent the afternoon consummating her previously platonic affair with the journalist Álvaro Sabino. Immediately a tone is established that contrasts with the other times Evita has visited Helena. Normally there is a palpable sexual tension between the two, perhaps most exemplified by the first time Evita visits — during that first visit

Helena wears a flowing dressing gown with a high side-cut which allows Helena to show off her thighs as she sits on the couch, while Evita wears a tight-fitting sundress made of fabric so light that her nipples are clearly visible through it. Although in that first meeting the conversation is entirely superficial, Helena's actions — the way she smokes her cigarette, the casualness with which she exposes her thigh from under her dressing gown — suggest that she is attempting to seduce Evita. In the scene where Helena actually *does* attempt to seduce Evita, the mood is significantly different. Helena's body language is much more guarded; instead of nonchalantly touching Evita as she does in their first private encounter, Helena keeps her distance, finally revealing a gun hidden inside a drawer which she says she keeps for protection. After claiming that she was taught to shoot by her husband, Helena points the gun, a revolver, at her head momentarily, asks Evita if she has ever considered suicide, and then places the gun down and sits on the floor at the foot of her bed. Evita, sitting across the room with her legs crossed and her arms wrapped around her body, says she has, "like everybody." As the conversation progresses, Evita finally builds up the courage to ask Helena why she refuses to leave the house —

Tell me the truth, just once. Is the only reason you don't leave because you're afraid of Jaime?

Are you thinking of leaving?

If I have to, I'll go.

You know I also had a lover once.

I don't have a lover.

This final comment from Evita, spoken with apparent conviction, provokes a bemused smirk from Helena, as if she knows Evita's reality better than Evita herself. Helena then tells Evita the story of her lover's death at the hands of her husband, over a series

of flashbacks which give life to Helena's words. (This aspect of the scene, which is of vital importance to the film, shall be analysed in greater detail later in this work.) As Helena finishes her story, describing how her lover's corpse was dumped in the ocean, the camera returns to the present, where both she and Evita are lying on Helena's bed facing each other. Evita reaches her hand out and places it on Helena's forehead, before gently caressing her hair. Helena takes Evita's hands in her own and the two women lie facing one another for a moment, until Helena suddenly rolls onto her stomach and elbows, almost on top of Evita. Instead of move away from Helena, however, Evita takes Helena's face in her hand, as if preparing to kiss her. Finally, Helena admits that she does not want Jaime to return, and that she has promised to lock herself in her house until she receives news of his death. After finally admitting what had been, to this point, a secret she kept to herself, Helena leans forward and kisses Evita on the lips, as the camera slowly tracks backward. The two women hold the kiss for a moment until Evita, awkwardly, pulls her head back. It is at this moment that Helena says the line "Shall we take revenge on them?" Instead of the long internal monologue describing all of the thoughts that Helena's question inspires in Evita's mind, however, the audience does not have to wait to see Evita's reaction at all, as she sits up and says "No" immediately. Helena asks her why, asks her if she is afraid, to which Evita says "Yes, very." With that, Helena throws her out of the house and begins calling for her maid Odilia. Instead of showing Evita going directly from Helena's house to Álvaro Sabino's, however, the film cuts to landscape shots of bonfires on the beach, everything green from a swarm of locusts. We are then presented with a group of women playing on the balcony of the *Stella Maris*, umbrellas protecting them from the storm of insects, with Evita standing off to the side watching them. Over this scene, a voiceover states, "That night there was indeed

a cloud of locusts that passed through the city. You were right to resume all that moment to the so happy image of the women at the *Stella Maris* high up on the terrace. Don't worry about the truth now." As we hear this final line, the scene cuts to Evita, wearing the same dress as at Helena's house earlier, looking outside the window of Álvaro Sabino's apartment, watching the locust storm. The journalist is also visible, barely, his back turned to the camera, working at his desk, a single desk lamp the only thing giving away his presence.

While the added scene of the women frolicking through the swarm of locusts breaks up the sexual tension of the scene generally, the real divergence between the novel and the film arises from the changes made by Cardoso and her co-screenwriter Cédric Basso. Those decisions have resulted in a relationship between the two women that has had its very nature altered. The film reduces two separate moments into one, fundamentally transforming the essence of the scene — by combining the story of the death of Helena's lover with her attempts to seduce Evita, Cardoso and Basso have changed the scene from an erotic one tinged with trauma to a traumatic one tinged with eroticism. Where Helena's "Shall we take revenge on them?" in the book is the culmination of an increasingly sexually charged build up, in the film, because the line is delivered immediately after remembering a highly traumatic moment, it comes across as the last, desperate attempt at self-defence by someone who has been continually and repeatedly traumatised by her partner. Although there is a clear erotic aspect to their relationship, in the film the association between Evita and Helena is far more one based on sharing a mutual experience, namely that of trauma. Almost immediately upon arriving in Africa, Evita notices that Luís Alex has changed — their interactions are tense, and even in ostensibly tender moments (such as when they are lying naked in bed together) there is a certain anxiousness about

them. This is similar to the way in which Helena and Forza Leal interact and, perhaps, functions as one of the aspects of Helena's depiction that makes her a far more sympathetic character than in the novel. Indeed, where the literary and cinematic depictions of Evita are subtly different but still similar, Helena is portrayed entirely differently in the film when compared to in the novel.

Traumatic Memories

In the film, Helena's fear of Forza Leal comes across more readily, especially early on. Although several scenes in the film correspond closely to their counterparts in the novel, Cardoso and Basso alter the interaction between Helena and Forza Leal fundamentally in one of the most important early moments of the narrative. Shortly after meeting each other for the first time, the two couples attempt to go for a lunch but discover the bar to be closed. At a loss for how to occupy themselves, the two men (instigated by Luís Álex) decide to drive to the beach and take target practice, using flamingos as their targets. Upon arriving at the beach, Forza Leal demands that Helena search through the cache of guns in the trunk of the automobile and identify which weapons are stored there. In the book this scene is portrayed almost farcically, the absolute seriousness of the guns contrasting with Helena and Forza Leal's nonchalant attitude towards them. Although Helena "pretends" to be scared at the sight of the weapons, playfully falling to the ground and running away from the car, she is also very familiar with them, able to differentiate each rifle through touch alone. As the scene progresses a certain amount of trepidation does seem to emerge

in Helena's actions, however even that is difficult to decipher since the tone of the scene, combined with Helena's reactions to Forza Leal's commands, is ambiguous —

“E agora, quantas faltam aqui?”

“Não sei!”

“Não sabes? Sabes!”

“Não sei não!”

“Sabes!” — disse ele levantando-se. Ela simulou atirar-se ao chão. “Sabes ou não sabes?” Helena baixou a cabeça até às armas.

“Sei, falta só uma!”

“Diz mais alto, diz para eles ouvirem!”

“Falta uma” — gritou ela. “Falta o revólver” — Helena de Tróia fugiu pela areia que se levantava sob as suas passadas e caía longe. (Jorge 51)

“And now, how many are missing?”

“I don't know!”

“You don't know? Of course you know!”

“No, I don't!”

“You know!” — he said, lifting himself. She simulated throwing herself to the ground. “Do you or do you not know?” Helena lowered her head towards the guns.

“I know, there's one missing!”

“Say it louder, so that they can hear!”

“There's one missing” — she yelled. “The revolver is missing” — Helen of Troy fled, kicking up sand and sending it flying far.

Although there is a hint of menace in the interaction, the scene can also relatively easily be read as playful. In the film, however, this scene is presented far more seriously, and the antagonistic, dominant-subordinate nature of Helena's relationship becomes much more obvious. Although the scene does retain some of the initial teasing found in the novel, it quickly changes to a much more tense, even traumatic moment. As Forza Leal pulls a burlap bundle out of the trunk of his car he demands that Helena, who has already begun walking away, guess what is inside. She responds by guessing, first, a piece of a boat's engine, and secondly a collapsible picnic table. When Forza Leal unwraps the parcel and shows off a pistol, Helena responds with genuine emotion — he seems to be enjoying himself, imagining the damage the pistol would inflict on a victim, while she becomes suddenly melancholy and says "I don't want to see. You know I'm afraid." There is no pretending happening in this scene; Helena does not casually feel around the trunk, identifying the guns based on their designs. Rather she is genuinely afraid of the weapons and, it is obvious, of the man holding them. The scene culminates with an overt confrontation between Helena and Forza Leal. Even though the dialogue parallels that of the book closely, its delivery is far more hostile. As in the book Forza Leal asks Helena which weapon is missing and, as in the book, Helena attempts to evade replying to him directly. However, as Forza Leal says "You don't know? Of course you know!" Helena walks away from him, an act which enrages him, causing him to scream out "SAY IT!" When she does finally, quietly, say that the revolver is missing, he responds by screaming "say it louder so they can hear it!" at her in a threatening tone, his face clenched in rage, the veins in his neck straining. Helena finally cracks, screaming back at him "The revolver! The revolver is missing!" before breaking down in tears. Throughout, Forza Leal's dominance over Helena is apparent

— he commands her as if she were his pet rather than his lover; he points a pistol at her while describing the damage it could do; even the characters' clothes seem to emphasise their respective personalities, with Forza Leal's khaki shirt and pants suggesting a military uniform while the green and brown of Helena's dress blend in with the grass and trees behind her, minimising her to such an extent that only her red hair really stands out. Helena's isolation (and perhaps Evita's future isolation) is implied by the final shot of the scene, a long shot of the four — Forza Leal and Luís Álex stand in the middle distance near the automobile, Luís holding an AK-47 as if on patrol, while Evita stands near the camera, her back turned to it, unsure of how to react to the events she has just witnessed. Helena, meanwhile, stands away from the group, her head bowed in grief, the wind whipping her hair and scarf, mimicking the fronds of the palm trees behind her.

This scene emphasises Helena's victimhood early in the film and colours how the audience views her for the duration of the film's narrative. Whereas in the novel the scene can be somewhat easily dismissed (although it does, of course, foreshadow something vital), in the film the scene plays an important role in establishing who Helena is and how she should be understood. Perhaps because of this, Evita's relationship with Helena is not nearly as antagonistic as it is portrayed in the novel — the disdain which the older Eva Lopo continually includes in her narrative descriptions of Helena are, for the most part (although not entirely), left out of the film. In her place, the camera often functions as a tool which allows the viewer to make judgments on Helena independent of how Evita views her. As a result of this, Helena comes across as especially traumatised. The scene at the beginning of the film with the guns is a mere precursor to the much more traumatic moment when Helena tells Evita about the death of her lover.

As described, Helena and Evita sit across from each other in Helena's darkened room, a single light coming from behind Evita which illuminates Helena's face and casts Evita's into darkness. The contrast between the two is stark — Helena's dark clothing means that only her face can be seen, emphasising her eyes and mouth, while Evita's face is almost completely obscured but her bare shoulders and arms are clearly visible, so that the viewer depends on Evita's body language to read her emotions. Throughout the scene, the camera focuses primarily on Helena, slowly rotating around her from the side so that, as her story progresses, the audience gradually sees more and more of her face. As Helena explains what happened, the effects of the trauma are visible in her expressions, the sadness obvious as she says,

He was a very sweet boy. He enjoyed seeing me. He kept staring at me. Just staring. He used to tell me the same thing: "Go away, you must leave Jaime." One day he almost managed to persuade me. I went home and could only think of that. I took a bath, when I got out of the bathroom I couldn't find my clothes... I searched all over and then I saw Jaime, leaning there against the wardrobe, with a gun in his hand. I tried to lock myself in the bathroom, but he grabbed me by the hair. He pointed the gun against my head, he asked my lover's name, he beat me up, he stood over me with the gun. He told me he wasn't joking, that he would kill me. I was afraid and told him his name.

Then Jaime opened up all the doors and windows and said, "you can go out, if you wish."

It is here that the scene cuts to a flashback of the episode. The first shot shows Helena lying on the floor, naked, the window curtains billowing in the wind. We then see a close-up of Helena, her face bloodied and both eyes bruised, walking down stairs and looking through the bars of the staircase as her lover is thrown to the

ground in front of her. As he looks up and makes eye contact with Helena, we see that his face and shirt are covered in blood. Returning to Helena, we see a suggestion of regret emerging from her glassy eyes, a hint of emotion breaking through a wall of numbness. As Helena looks away, a military fatigue-clad Forza Leal approaches her and states, “You’ll be the witness. Come on!” As Helena follows her husband and lover into a room, her entire body is momentarily silhouetted by the sunlight behind her, the horror of the situation contrasting noticeably with the beauty of the bougainvillea and ocean vistas in the distance. As Forza Leal slams a revolver down on the table, in a voice-over Helena says to Evita, “He looked at me, and that hurt me more than anything else. Then Jaime said he was an honourable man, and that chance would choose who would have me.” Finally, returning to the present, with the two women now lying across from one another on the bed, Helena says, “I didn’t watch him die, but I heard the shot... Then they took him out in our boat and dumped him, far out at sea.”

In her book *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), noted trauma theorist Cathy Caruth examines some of the ways in which humans adapt traumatic events into narrative, and the challenges posed by the representation of those events. Traumatic events, by their very nature, are often not immediately understood as such by those who experience them. Indeed, it is only later, once the victim has had time to go over the event several times in his or her head, that the trauma truly sets in —

...the wound of the mind — the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world — is not, like the wound of the body, a simply and healable event, but rather an event that... is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes

itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. (*Unclaimed* 4)

This concept, originally suggested by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), is readily apparent in the narratives of both Eva Lopo (in both works but, especially, the novel) and Helena (in the film, primarily). Any physical trauma that the aged Eva, in her previous incarnation as Evita, or Helena might have suffered has, by the time we encounter them, long since healed and been downplayed (if not forgotten). The emotional and mental trauma suffered by each woman, however, can be neither healed nor understated, and, in fact, can be understood to be the defining characteristic of their lives. Both Eva Lopo and Helena have a story to tell. What begins as a simple critique of another work becomes, for Eva Lopo, the opportunity to confront the past and, through her critique, truly begin to understand not only the trauma she suffered in her youth, but also the trauma suffered by all those who experienced the Portuguese Colonial War first hand (regardless of nationality or ethnicity). For, as Ronald W. Sousa explains, *A Costa dos Murmúrios* is not merely the fictional memoir of Eva Lopo, it is also, indeed primarily, about Portugal and the Portuguese's relationship with Africa, generally, and Mozambique specifically —

Jorge's novel... parades the arguments in justification of the last old-style European colonial empire and, through various tactics, progressively destroys them. Moreover, in Portugal in this century the discourse of colonialism and the discourse of nationality, both articulated in relation to a peculiar view of national history, have been so powerfully intertwined that one literally cannot be thought without the other. ("Translator's Preface" v)

Helena's trauma, meanwhile, is much more personal and visceral. If the story of Eva Lopo can be understood as a parable for the nation (albeit a parable which includes a

significant amount of personal trauma), Helena's story must be understood as a parable for the individual. While both women suffer through similar experiences — being forced to watch their husbands and lovers participate in Russian roulette — the manner in which Helena's recollection of the event is portrayed in the film, with its moving use of flashback, coupled with the immediate rejection she receives from Evita, is in itself traumatic, so that the initial trauma is only heightened.

The different ways in which each woman copes (or is unable to cope) with her traumatic experience serve to highlight both the immediate, often catastrophic, effect that trauma can have on an individual, as well as the insidious, long-lasting damage it can do. We do not know what becomes of Helena after Evita returns to Portugal; we do not even know how long Helena has been in Africa, or how many years have passed between the death of Helena's lover and the beginning of her interaction with Evita. Yet, at the moment that Helena tells Evita the story of what happened, the memory remains exceptionally clear. So clear, in fact, that the event is recreated for the viewer in full detail, through the use of flashback. This is, of course, at least partially in fulfilment of our expectation as audience members, since most people understand that traumatic events are often "re-experienced — through intrusive flashbacks, recurring dreams, or later situations that repeat or echo the original," (Luckhurst 1) and, it might be suggested, we have come to expect that in fiction. There is never any doubt in Helena's voice, nor is the veracity of her account questioned by Evita or (for it must be considered in a work such as this) by Helena herself. However, in this case something interesting and, perhaps, paradoxical occurs. Throughout the work, Helena comes across, or is presented as such by Eva, as being someone who is emotionally and mentally unstable — her relationship with Forza Leal is exceptionally volatile, swinging from intense verbal abuse to drunken

euphoria over the course of a single day, while her mental state is called into question by her decision to imprison herself inside her home. However, as Helena tells Evita why it is, exactly, that she does this, we begin to understand both her mental state and her emotional one. In that moment, she comes across as lucid, aware, and completely coherent. Her memory of the traumatic event is clear and understandable, and suffers from none of the self-doubt and questioning which abounds in Eva Lopo's memory. It is, perhaps, significant that Helena does not actually witness the moment of her lover's death; she only hears the shot that kills him. As traumatic as the entire episode undoubtedly is, the fact that Helena does not witness the death itself allows her to maintain a fairly accurate memory (we suppose) of what happened. Caruth explains this, somewhat, in her explanation of what she refers to as, "the betrayal of sight" — "the act of seeing, in the very establishing of a bodily referent, erases, like an empty grammar, the reality of an event. Within the insistent grammar of sight... the body erases the event of its own death" (*Unclaimed* 29). Indeed, it is possibly useful, here, to compare *A Costa dos Murmúrios* with the film Caruth examines, Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959). Writing about the French woman (only identified as *Elle*, literally "She") in Resnais's film, Caruth states,

[r]ecalling her insistent seeing of Hiroshima, the insistence of her seeing in this story, as the inevitable movement from literal to figurative sight or understanding, subsumes the event of death in the continuous history of life. Seeing thus inaugurates the forgetting of the singularity of her lover by forgetting the referential specificity of his death. (*Unclaimed* 32)

In contrast Helena, though "the witness" (in Forza Leal's words) to her lover's death, does not actually see the death occur, rather she only hears the shot go off and understands what that sound signifies. And whereas *Elle* in *Hiroshima mon amour*

repeatedly claims to have seen the devastation of the city, and uses that as a means of forgetting not only the death of her German lover but also the atrocities she herself has experienced, Helena locks herself in her house, thereby ensuring that she will never run the risk of seeing anything ever again, while simultaneously denying her the opportunity to “inaugurate the forgetting” of her dead lover. The details of Helena’s story about the game of Russian roulette are so specific precisely because, in Helena’s memory, there is nothing to take their place and allow her to move on. And, where *Elle* moves to Japan to literally leave her past, Helena is constantly surrounded by the site of her trauma — the same city, the same house, and most importantly, in Forza Leal the man primarily responsible for everything. As Caruth points out,

[i]n modern trauma theory as well, there is an emphatic tendency to focus on the destructive repetition of the trauma that governs a person’s life. As modern neurobiologists point out, the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be retraumatizing; if not life threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration. (*Unclaimed* 63)

It might be argued, therefore, that Helena is constantly experiencing a state of trauma, one from which she believes the only escape is the death of Forza Leal. While Helena certainly displays several fundamental symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, we should also consider that she is constantly returning to a “retraumatized” state, and is, consequently, displaying the symptoms and behaviour characteristics of someone actively suffering from trauma on a regular basis.

This contrasts with the other traumatized female in the work, the narrator Eva Lopo. *A Costa dos Murmúrios* presents us with Eva Lopo’s attempts at coming to terms with trauma. Unlike Helena’s sharp, clear memory, however, Eva’s memories

are far more convoluted and clouded. This could, perhaps, be attributed to the fact that, within the timeframe of the book, Helena's trauma has occurred much more recently than Eva's. Yet there are other factors at work which suggest alternate possibilities. As has already been examined, Eva Lopo continually calls into question the verisimilitude of the events she relates in her narrative; she does this not only for what she encounters in *Os Gafanhotos*, but also for her own memories, as well.

Ronald W. Sousa suggests that this is an attempt by Jorge to question the historiography and rhetoric used by Portugal with regard to the colonial wars —

...our text is likely to elicit... a question formulated more or less as: "Is this [work] a critique of Portuguese colonialism effected through a complexly presented but 'realistic' portrayal, or is it a critique of the language practices justificatory of that colonialism effected through their narrative dismantling?"

To the extent that the two propositions separation can be maintained... the choice must fall to the latter. ("Translator's Preface" v)

While this is certainly true, it should be noted that this statement only examines part of what Jorge is doing in her work, ignoring entirely the ways in which Jorge's book and, by extension, Cardoso's film scrutinize the effects of trauma. With that in mind, Eva Lopo's repeated questioning is not merely a "critique of the language practices" of the Portuguese government and military, it is also an example of the impact trauma can have on a victim's psychological state. Indeed, it is fairly common for survivors of trauma to have doubts about their own memories, especially when their version of events contrasts with those of others. Caruth writes,

The survivors' uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the event returns... insistently and against their will. Nor is it a matter of indirect access to an event... It is not, that is, having too little or indirect access to an experience

that places its truth in question, in this case, but paradoxically enough, its very overwhelming immediacy, that produces its belated uncertainty.

(“Introduction” 6)

The idea that “the event returns” is here an interesting one — the reader is never given any indication as to how or why Eva Lopo has come into possession of a copy of *Os Gafanhotos*. We know she did not write the short story herself. Did the author of the story write it for her? Were the suggestions and advice offered by Eva Lopo solicited by the author of the story or were they offered by Eva through her own initiative? We cannot know any of this for sure, but the fact that Eva Lopo writes her memoir in response to someone else’s version of events suggests that she has tried to ignore that period of her life. *Os Gafanhotos*, then, can be understood as the traumatic event returning against Eva’s will — even if she has succeeded in compartmentalising the trauma she experienced in Africa, the existence of *Os Gafanhotos* means that she is unable to escape it and must, ultimately, confront it.

Examining the ways in which aged Holocaust survivors dealt with their trauma as they grew older, Henry Krystal writes, “[i]n old age, as in treatment, we come to the point where our past lies unfolded before us, and the question is, What should be done with it? The answer is that it must be accepted or one must keep waging an internal war against the ghosts of one’s past” (78). This idea, perhaps, gives the reader an insight into what, exactly, Eva Lopo’s narrative represents — her past having been unfolded before her through a combination of the passing of time and by reading *Os Gafanhotos*, Eva, in her old age, can either accept it, process it, and move on from it, or she can reject it and continue to allow the trauma to impact her life. By acknowledging *Os Gafanhotos*, by writing her own version of events, Eva Lopo demonstrates that she is, in fact, ready to confront the past. Indeed, many of the

rhetorical devices used by Eva Lopo in her memoir are tools with which she can engage her memory and begin to work through the traumatic events she experienced in Africa without giving up control entirely. Maintaining control is, according to Krystal, a very important factor in the healing process — “[t]he process of making peace with one’s self becomes impossible when it is experienced as bringing back the helplessness and the *shame* of the past” (83). This is, perhaps, why Eva Lopo chooses, despite the difficult past she is confronting, to provide her own narrative, one which compliments and critiques *Os Gafanhotos* — by taking authorial and narrative control, Eva Lopo ensures that she has a say in what is remembered and what is not.

One of the most notable aspects of Eva Lopo’s narration in the novel is her constant repetition of the phrase “disse Eva Lopo”. This phrase, translated in English as “said Eva Lopo,” is used to demarcate the moments in the narrative when we have returned to the present and it is Eva Lopo, as opposed to Evita, who has made the comment. However, it might also serve another purpose, one which is closely related to Eva Lopo’s attempts at confronting her traumatic past — it may serve as a means of separation between the Eva Lopo of the present and the Evita of her memory. It is important to differentiate, here, between the aged, reflective Eva Lopo and the young, active Evita — Eva Lopo, narrating twenty years after the events of the novel (or film) take place, is not the same character as Evita, the woman she is writing about, because Eva Lopo has already experienced everything that Evita goes through as the work progresses. This phenomenon can be understood as one of the lasting effects of trauma on the victim’s psyche —

One of the most devastating aftereffects of trauma is that it causes widespread use of repression, denial, and psychic splitting. Much of the psychic representation of... clearly personal attributes like one’s own emotions come

to be experienced as outside the self-representation. *Thus the post-traumatic state is characterized by an impoverishment of the areas of one's mind to which the "I" feeling of self-sameness is extended, and a hypertrophy of the "not-I" alienated areas.* (Krystal 85, emphasis original)

The differentiation between Eva Lopo and Evita, therefore, arises precisely from the fact that one character (Eva Lopo) has experienced trauma while the other (Evita) has not yet, meaning that Eva cannot consider herself to be the same person as she was. Over the course of *A Costa dos Murmúrios*'s narrative, we follow Evita's transformation from a naïve, newly-wedded bride into a jaded widow; this transformation is catalysed by trauma. The work we are ultimately presented with, a work produced (as it were) by Eva Lopo, is a product of that trauma. Eva Lopo and Evita are fundamentally different people because one has seen too much, while the other has not seen enough.

Returning to a phrase briefly touched upon earlier in this dissertation, the film makes this separation even more explicit at the end of Eva's first voice-over monologue, which she concludes by stating, "Evita era eu," "I was Evita." The wording of this statement is highly significant — by claiming she "was Evita," she implies that she no longer *is* Evita — she has become someone different, someone detached from her past. The actions she remembers are not hers, they are someone else's, someone she was once upon a time but has ceased being. Additionally, this statement suggests that the narrator of the film is entirely unreliable, for she is still affected by the trauma she has experienced. Remembrance of traumatic events is, at best, a difficult proposition, in large part because traumatic events are so sudden, so unexpected, it is impossible to fully comprehend in the moment what, exactly, has occurred. It is only after a period of latency and, often, forgetting, that the event fully

takes shape in the victim's mind. This is why, twenty years after she has left her trauma behind, Eva Lopo is still haunted by it — “[t]he historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all” (“Introduction” 8). The viewer (or reader) cannot know what Eva Lopo has forgotten, what she has remembered, what is fact, and what is fiction. She acknowledges this throughout her narrative, yet never fully explains why. While Sousa's claim that *A Costa dos Murmúrios* is a critique of Portuguese colonial rhetoric is certainly valid, we must also consider that the work is a rumination on the coping mechanisms of a traumatised generation.

University of Cape Town

SURVIVING THE IMPOSSIBLE:

Adaptation as Coping Mechanism

“Parece o fogo gosta de nos ver crianças.”

“It seems the fire likes to see us as children.”

— Tuahir

Magical realism is, to a certain extent, a contentious topic. It seems that every article written about the genre provides its own unique definition of it and, despite a general acceptance of the phrase, there are those (such as Liam Connell, author of the 1998 article “Discarding Magic Realism”) who would prefer, if not to abandon its use altogether, to seriously reconsider its prevalence. Despite the proliferation of articles and monographs providing their voice to the argument, the collection *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (1995), edited by Zamora and Faris, includes two articles which attempt to define, or at least give structure to, the concept of magical realism. Wendy B. Faris’s article “Scheherazade’s Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction” (1995) provides five primary and nine secondary specifications that she believes are central to any definition of the genre, some of which are examined later in this chapter. John Erickson provides a more succinct summation of the concept, while also providing an important point of comparison with similar but ultimately different terms —

The term magical realism must be defined with care, for critics have used it indiscriminately, often confounding it with the marvellous or the fantastic.

The “marvellous” narrative depicts a fictitious world totally removed from conventional reality, while the “fantastic” narrative heralds the sudden apparition of the supernatural in the midst of the everyday world... In narratives marked by magical realism, to the contrary, two diametrically opposed ontologies coexist on equal terms: the empirical world of reason and logic and the supernatural world of unreason. (Erickson 428)

With these distinctions serving as a base point, this chapter will examine Mia Couto’s first novel, *Terra Sonâmbula* (1992), and Teresa Prata’s similarly titled 2007 film adaptation of the work. The novel will be examined as a piece of magical realist fiction, one where, as Erickson prescribes, two ontologies exist next to each other. It will be argued that the film, on the other hand, is less a work of magical realism and more a piece of fantastic fiction, one characterised by sudden “supernatural” events rather than two clearly identifiable worlds interacting. Further, this chapter will analyse both how and why Couto uses magical realism, from a literary and societal perspective, and why the fifteen year span separating the release of the novel and the release of the film plays such a large part in the representation of the fantastic in Prata’s film. The chapter begins with a brief look at Bakhtin’s comparison of “epic” and “novel” and concludes with an equally brief examination of how Prata’s work remains true to Bakhtin’s conception of the epic while also bringing it to relevancy.

In his essay “Discourse in the Novel,” Bakhtin succinctly defines the novel as “a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organised” (“Discourse” 262). He expands on this definition in his essay “Epic and Novel,” claiming, “[t]he novel is not merely one genre among other genres... It is the only genre that was born and nourished in a new era of world history” (“Epic” 4). Bakhtin goes on to compare the novel with the

epic, which he defines as “an absolutely completed and finished generic form, whose constitutive feature is the transferral of the world it describes to an absolute past of national beginnings and peak times” (“Epic” 15). Mia Couto’s work combines elements of both of these genres, to such an extent that it is difficult to categorise the novel one way or the other. The narrative is epistolary and multi-levelled, with each of the eleven sections of the book broken in two — a “chapter” in which the actions of the novel’s two primary protagonists, the aged Tuahir and the adolescent, slightly lame Muidinga, are described by an omniscient narrator; followed by a transcription of one of “Kindzu’s notebooks,” private journals discovered by Tuahir and Muidinga in the remains of a burnt out bus. In this sense, it very much fits with Bakhtin’s definition of the novel. Additionally, although the time in which the novel takes place is never specifically stated at any point in the work, the fact that the country in which Tuahir and Muidinga find themselves is in the midst of a civil war suggests that it is set in what was then the present day. The images and experiences described in the novel strike a chord with a particular moment in Africa’s, and especially Mozambique’s, recent history. This “contact with the present” (“Epic” 11) is fundamental to the narrative — it is what gives the story both urgency and primacy. Indeed, as José Ornelas writes,

O momento e a situação de Moçambique, ou seja, as circunstâncias do quotidiano ainda continuam a ser a fonte da qual se nutre o conteúdo da obra do autor, porém recontextualizados esteticamente de outra forma. (42)

The moment and the situation in Mozambique, that is, the circumstances of the quotidian continue to be a source which nurtures the content of the author (Couto), albeit aesthetically recontextualised in a different manner.

However, using Bakhtin's definitions, it might be argued that Mia Couto's book does, in fact, fall within the parameters of the epic. For while the novel is ostensibly about Tuahir, Muidinga, and Kindzu, it is really about Mozambique's past, present, and future, the three characters becoming, in a sense, the Mozambican response to Odysseus or Aeneas. Kindzu, especially, can be easily understood as a sort of epic hero, "the hero," Bakhtin explains, "who, by his very nature, must perish" ("Epic" 36). Other aspects of Couto's work hearken back to the epic literature of classical antiquity —

[t]he consciousness of death as an immediate possibility, and of the transience of life, is of the essence in the experience of Mia Couto's protagonists. But their reaction to these facts tends to be... peculiar, literally Antiquated, a species of smiling resignation which is, paradoxically, very close to Stoicism as it was originally, philosophically understood by the Greeks. (Lisboa 193)

And, while the novel is not set in the epic past, an "epic distance" is nevertheless achieved through various techniques, primary among them the use of the fantastic or magical real. Ultimately, it proves impossible to singularly define the genre of Mia Couto's work — it is certainly a novel, but it contains so much of the "clay" (to use Bakhtin's phrase) of the epic that the only suitable classification of the book must be that it is an epic novel; a novel that is epic not so much for its length, (for there are certainly much longer books) but for its scope.

Teresa Prata's film adaptation of the book is, in some ways, a much simpler tale — in comparison to the novel the film presents a much more superficial narrative, one that is not nearly as grand or detailed in its depictions and character development. However, it must be emphasised that Teresa Prata's *Terra Sonâmbula*, though based upon and inspired by certain aspects of Mia Couto's similarly titled novel, is not

merely an attempt to recreate the book in cinematic form. One of the most significant differences between the two works is, as this chapter examines, the film's relatively softer approach towards the representation of violence. Though somewhat explicitly violent scenes bookend the film, there is very little actual violence shown over the course of the movie, with many of the violent or traumatic moments of the novel glossed over or removed from the narrative altogether. Another major difference between the plot of the two works is the way in which Couto's novel engages, almost from the beginning, with magical realism — a boy placed in a chicken coop gradually metamorphoses into a chicken; one of the lasting effects of his illness is that Muidinga has lost his shadow; Kindzu spends too much time on the water and the webbing between his fingers begins to expand, slowly turning his hands into fins — whereas the majority of Prata's film is presented in a realist mode (albeit a reality in which the effects of long-standing trauma have left an appreciable mark on the psychological well-being of the population) before suddenly, almost entirely unexpectedly, incorporating magical realist imagery as the film reaches its crescendo.

There are many possible explanations for why there is such a significant shift in tone between the two works, the most obvious being, perhaps, the technical limitations of the film medium when compared to the literary one. Whereas the imagery used by Couto (or any other author) is limited only by his imagination, to bring the magical elements of Couto's book to life would have cost enormous sums of money, sums that Prata simply did not have — in interviews, Prata has stated that one of the biggest challenges she faced when making the film was the cost of filming in Mozambique (Prata, "Fotograma"). Yet there is another fact, not nearly so blatant, which must be considered — first published in 1992, the year that fighting ended, Mia Couto's novel was written during the civil war which had been raging in Mozambique

for the majority of the previous twenty years. This war was, of course, preceded by the anti-colonial war fought against the Portuguese which had, in itself, lasted for a decade. Couto's novel, then, emerges from a war-weary, jaded shell of a nation that, at the time of the novel's publishing, was considered the archetypal example of a failed state. Teresa Prata's film, by comparison, was released in 2007, after several years of such astonishing economic growth that some referred to Mozambique as an economic miracle (Newitt 231). Indeed, there is a fortuitousness to be found in the symmetry of the release of the two works — Couto's novel was published fifteen years after the start of the civil war, while Prata's film was released fifteen years after the end of the civil war. The two works, therefore, reflect two noticeably distinct periods in Mozambique's history as an independent nation, and as such should be expected to not only carry different messages, but also to articulate those messages in different ways. From the very beginning of the film, Teresa Prata signals that her work, though ostensibly set during the same moment in Mozambique's history as Couto's work, contains a different message than the source material because it comes from a different time, indeed a different place, than the source material.

Though Couto's narrative presents magical realist moments much more often than Prata's film, the novel begins, as with the film, in a relatively straightforward mode. The first paragraph of the novel describes the war-ravaged countryside using the evocative language which characterises Couto's prose and immediately expresses the devastation the country has experienced —

Naquele lugar, a guerra tinha morto a estrada... A paisagem se mestiçara de tristezas nunca vistas, em cores que se pegavam à boca... Aqui, o céu se tornara impossível. E os viventes se acostumaram ao chão, em resignada aprendizagem da morte. (Couto 9)

In that place, the war had killed the road... The landscape had merged with unseen sorrows, in colours which stuck to one's mouth... Here, the sky had become impossible. And the living had accustomed themselves to the earth, in resigned apprenticeship to death.

This description of the environment establishes, directly, the contrasting nature of the novel's prose — beautifully florid, highly metaphorical language which is used to describe terrible, quite often violent situations. The first chapter also provides some insight into the trauma that the two primary characters have already experienced. Couto does this not by recounting a violent scene, but rather by having Tuahir and Muidinga, the old man and his young companion, discover a burned out bus which they decide to use as shelter. The reaction of the two characters to what they encounter in the bus draws attention to just how damaged the world in which the two exist has become —

Entram no autocarro. O corredor e os bancos estão ainda cobertos de corpos carbonizados. Muidinga se recusa a entrar. O velho avança pelo corredor, vai espreitando os cantos da viatura... Muidinga arruma o saco num banco. Senta-se e observa o recanto conservado. Há tecto, assentos, encostos. O velho, impávido, já se deitou a repousar... — *Tuahir, vamos tirar esses corpos daqui.* — *E porquê? Cheiram-lhe mal?...* — *Lhe peço, tio Tuahir. É que estou farto de viver entre mortos.* (Couto 11-12)

They enter the bus. The aisle and the benches are still covered with carbonised bodies. Muidinga refuses to enter. The old man walks down the aisle, checking every corner of the vehicle... Muidinga tosses his bag onto a

bench. He sits and observes the salvaged section. There are seats, headrests, shelter. The old man, unconcerned, had already lied down to rest... —*Tuahir, let's get these bodies out of here. — Why? Do they smell bad?... — I'm begging you, uncle Tuahir. I'm sick of living amongst the dead.*

Instead of the horrified reaction that might be expected upon encountering a group of burned corpses, the two characters, especially Tuahir, are more concerned with finding food and a place to rest. Finally Muidinga manages to convince Tuahir to help him remove the bodies, not because they scare or repulse him but because he has spent too much time around the dead. Tuahir and Muidinga, symbols for the Mozambican population, have become annealed to death through constant exposure to it.

The difference in tone between Couto's work and Prata's is visible immediately. Where Couto's opening paragraphs speak of the vast expanses of dead countryside, stretching from the road all the way to the horizon and further beyond, Prata's film begins far more delicately. Instead of endless vistas, we are presented the tightly-framed image of a boy pushing a makeshift toy in front of him, the camera equal to the boy's point of view so that we see only what he sees: the worn-down toy, a sort of wire-rim sailboat with wheels, passing haphazardly over washed-out dirt roads. Every time the camera begins to rise, hinting at what lies ahead, it immediately returns to Muidinga's sailboat, as if reminding the viewer of Muidinga's reality. The road that Muidinga and Tuahir walk down is shielded on both sides by tall, brown grass and pale green shrubbery, so that the horizon is practically nonexistent. This contrasts with the way in which the African countryside is traditionally presented in film — from Western films such as Basil Dearden's *Khartoum* (1966) or Sydney Pollack's *Out of Africa* (1985) to African films like Yasmine Kassari's *L'enfant*

endormi (2004) or Darrell Roodt's *Yesterday* (2004), the continent's size is emphasised through the use of wide shots that take in huge distances. This is not unique to African films (or, more specifically, films set in Africa). Writing about Latin American films, Fredric Jameson finds something similar —

South American films... frequently identify themselves by means of an opening 'logo' meant to signify the immensity of the continent itself: a high-angle panoramic shot of the enormous sweep of jungle vegetation as it rises and falls into an illimitable horizon. (308)

Couto's opening paragraphs can be understood as doing the same thing as the films to which Jameson is referring — not only does Couto's description of the countryside signify the enormity of the Mozambique, it also signifies the enormity of the problem the country is faced with. Prata, on the other hand, makes clear her intentions by focussing less on the landscape and far more on the individual. Indeed, almost immediately after the film begins, we are invested in well-being of Muidinga and Tuahir — first the two encounter the destroyed wreck of a jeep and then, around a bend in the road, the voices and weaponry of an armed gang suddenly appear. The old man and his young companion are forced to take shelter in the brush to avoid being detected, and as the gang walks by their vain boasts intimate the threat they pose — “What were they thinking? When we stopped the bus they thought we were fools! When I grabbed her she screamed!” Where the novel implies the risk that Muidinga and Tuahir face by travelling alone through the countryside, the film shows it immediately. In fact, this palpable sense of danger and violence is one of the most notable differences between the novel and the film — perhaps because of the way the novel starts, and because of the epic nature of the narrative, the reader never truly fears for either of Muidinga or Tuahir's lives. There is a sort of understanding that

the two characters fit into Bakhtin's description of the epic hero and that their destinies are already pre-determined by the time the work begins. This is not the case in Prata's film — violence is an ever-present, and the threat of death is real. The moment the two characters enter the bus is indicative of this — while the scene as it is presented in the novel is certainly moving, it is much more visceral in the film. The viewer is presented not only with the sight of a busload of charred corpses, but also Muidinga's reaction to the things he is witnessing. Everything is much more immediate and demanding; even after the bodies are buried, the image of the blackened corpses, the heat of the fire having trapped them in their seats, remains with the viewer as a sort of warning about the reality in which the film takes place.

Altered Realities

In both the novel and the film it is, paradoxically, an encounter with a dead person that begins to alter that reality. Though they do not, at first, know the man's name or anything about him, when the two protagonists encounter Kindzu's body (or, perhaps more pertinently, his suitcase) their world begins, imperceptibly at first, to change. For it is within the notebooks of Kindzu's diaries that the first episodes of magic realism are described. This change is much more readily apparent in the novel as compared to the film. In the first notebook presented in the novel, Kindzu describes several episodes which can be understood as magical realist in nature, the most significant of which is when he relates how his father decides that the family's youngest child Junhito (literally "Little June") must leave the house and live, instead, in the chicken coop. Kindzu's father believes that by hiding there, and taking on the

mannerisms of a chicken, Junhito will be protected from the marauding gunmen about which the family has been hearing rumours —

Fez seguir ordens do seu mandamento: o miúdo devia mudar, alma e corpo, na aparência de galinha. Os bandos quando chegassem não lhe iriam levar.

Galinha era bicho que não despertava brutais crueldades... aquela era a única maneira de salvar Vinticinco de Junho. (Couto 19)

He made us follow his instructions: the child had to change, in body and soul, his appearance into a chicken. The gangs, when they arrived, would not take him. A chicken was a creature that didn't awaken brutal cruelties... this was the only way to save Vinticinco de Junho.

This decision by Kindzu's father does not, taken by itself, suggest anything beyond the thought that Kindzu's father has, perhaps, gone mad. The reaction from his family, however, not only lends credence to the idea, it also is crucial in establishing the parameters of the world in which Kindzu lives; the family reacts negatively to the idea, not because they consider their father unstable, but rather because they have heard that the chicken coop is one of the first places the roving gangs set upon when they attack a village. Indeed, Kindzu's description of Junhito's transformation into a chicken emphasises the magical qualities of the world found in *Terra Sonâmbula* —

A partir desse dia, o manito deixou de viver dentro da casa. Meu velho lhe arrumou um lugar no galinheiro. No cedinho das manhãs, ele ensinava o menino a cantar, igual aos galos. Demorou a afinar. Passadas muitas madrugadas, já mano Junhito cocoricava com perfeição, coberto num saco de penas que minha mãe lhe costurara... Depois, Junhito já nem sabia soletrar as

humanas palavras. Esganiçava uns cóóós e ajeitava a cabeça por baixo do braço. E assim se adormecia. (19-20)

From that day forward, the boy stopped living inside the house. My father fixed up a place for him in the chicken coop. In the early mornings, he would teach the boy to crow, just like the roosters. It took him a while to master it. After many mornings, little Junhito finally cock-a-doodle-doo'd with perfection, covered by a bag of feathers my mother had sewn for him... Later, Junhito didn't even know how to pronounce human words. He simply let out a few coo-oo-ooos and rested his head underneath his arm. And that's how he fell asleep.

Although it is not made clear if Junhito has, in fact, metamorphosed into a chicken, what is obvious is that his family believes it to be so, and it is presented as so.

This scene foreshadows several of the magical realist elements of the novel by establishing a pattern for their appearance. Kindzu's father is so convinced that the only way to prevent Junhito's death is by forcing him to transform his "body and soul" into a chicken that, despite whatever Junhito himself might feel about it, the act is willed into reality. This intense desire for the impossible (improbable?) to become possible is what, throughout the novel, serves as a catalyst for it to happen. It is significant, therefore, that the character who becomes a chicken, who literally transforms from one being into another, is named Vinticinco de Junho – Twenty-fifth of June, the day Mozambique declared its independence from its former colonial power, Portugal. Mia Couto's novel is explicitly political yet it manages to be so while still maintaining a certain amount of artistry in its prose —

Recordo meu pai nos chamar um dia... Anunciava um facto: a Independência do país. Nessa altura, nós nem sabíamos o verdadeiro significado daquele anúncio... Chamou minha mãe e, tocando sua barriga redonda como lua cheia, disse: — *Esta criança há-de ser chamada Vinticinco de Junho*. (16-17)

I remember my father calling us one day... He spoke of a happening: the Independence of the country. At that moment, we did not even understand the true significance of the announcement... He called my mother and, touching her belly which was as round as the full moon, said: — *This child must be named Vinticinco de Junho*.

Although political commentary runs throughout the novel — indeed, the first sentence of the work establishes, through its references to both war and death, a necessarily political tone — this passage (and, more broadly, the entire case of Junhito) provides the reader with the first overt suggestion of Couto's politics. The metaphor here is an obvious one, indeed — Junhito, in both name and spirit, represents the nascent Mozambican nation, and both the infant child and the equally infant nation symbolise all of the possibilities that life can offer. The war, however, robs both Junhito and Mozambique of that future, reducing them, instead, to an existence fraught with fear and despair, until, gradually, the once human Junhito, the once proud, independent Mozambique, has disappeared entirely. And it occurs not only because of the threats posed by others, but also because of the desires of those that care for the child, for the nation, and who believe there is no alternative. This conflict runs throughout the novel —

Like much of Mozambican literature published in the nineties... Couto's *Terra* participates in a complex and at times excruciating meditation on the

possibilities of the nation in the wake of a civil war that has sought ruthlessly to obliterate both communal and familial ties. (Madureira 212)

As we have seen in a previous chapter, the breakdown of the community and the family that Madureira mentions was absolutely one of the most insidious legacies of the civil war. Couto himself has commented on this in interviews —

Vai demorar dezenas de anos até que se normalize a vida em toda a Nação. Até lá reinará a miséria material que gera a miséria moral. Ao nível individual, este processo de degradação humana e social colocou em evidência tendências que se mantêm ocultas em situações de normalidade. (Saúde 11)

It will take decades until life is normalized throughout the Nation. Until then material misery, which generates moral misery, will reign. At the individual level, this process of human and societal degradation has made evident tendencies that are kept hidden in normal situations.

In *Terra Sonâmbula*, Couto often uses magical realism to draw attention to, and even heighten the effects of, this “human and societal degradation” — Kindzu’s family is so scared of the threat of violence posed by the gangs of armed bandits they have been hearing about that they cause, through their collective actions, the disappearance of Junhito. His magical transformation from human to animal, presented as reality in the narrative, underscores the stresses placed on the family as their world gradually becomes engulfed by violence.

Another magical realist scene in the book serves a similar function. Kindzu, having left his family in the hopes of finding and joining a group of *naparama* warriors, makes his way up the coast, primarily on water but occasionally on land. As his journey progresses, Kindzu is faced with several challenges, some of which he is

prepared to face, some he is not. His first difficulty arises when he realises that his oars are leaving a trace in the water, calling spiritual attention to his voyage —

Essas pegadas na água eram as marcas do *chissila*, esse mau-olhado que me castigava.... Lembrei o conselho do *nganga* e tirei a ave morta debaixo do meu assento. Estava preparado para essa batalha com as forças do aquém. Em cada pegada deitei uma pena branca. No imediato, da pluma nascia uma gaivota que, ao levantar voo, fazia desaparecer o buraco. (Couto 41)

Those tracks in the water were the mark of the *chissila* [curse], that evil-eyed thing that punished me... I remembered the advice of the *nganga*³ [sangoma] and threw the dead bird underneath my seat. I was prepared for this battle against the forces of beyond. In each track I dropped a white feather.

Immediately, from the feather was born a seagull which, upon taking flight, made the tracks disappear.

Things become much worse for Kindzu, however, as he goes further and further north — heavy winds tear the sail of his boat to shreds, and each piece of fabric becomes a fish. Instead of swimming away from him, however, this sudden school of fish circles around his head. His oars have also been cursed: the dead wood suddenly turns green and begins sprouting branches. When the oars have transformed entirely into trees, Kindzu lets them go and they gradually sink in the water. As a result, Kindzu is forced to paddle with his hands until he realises,

³ One of the defining features of Couto's work is his use of the various words and phrases taken from Mozambique's many indigenous languages, including Shangaan (the primary Bantu language spoken in southern Mozambique). In the original these words have a footnote with the definition attached to them.

...tanto as usei que, entre os dedos, me nasceram peles sobressalientes.

Dentro da água eu sentia as escamas no lugar da pele. Lembrei as palavras do feiticeiro: no mar, serás mar. E era: eu me peixava, cumprindo sentença. (42)

...I used them so much that, between my fingers, the skin started to grow. In the water I felt scales in place of my skin. I remembered the words of the witchdoctor: in the sea, you will be sea. And I was: I was fishifying myself, carrying out the sentence.

Although this scene, as with many others in the book, comes across as both fantastical and amusing, it represents something much more serious. Kindzu is forced to head north by sea because, according to the sangoma he speaks with, to make the voyage on land would attract too much attention from evil spirits. The difficulties he encounters on the sea, therefore, are doubled — not only does he still attract negative attention from the spirits, but his isolation on the water means that he is gradually giving in to the ocean's power and becoming a marine animal instead of one designed for land. Considering the novel's explicit political message, this must be read as a metaphor for the challenges facing Mozambican society during and immediately after the civil war — the land is too dangerous to live on, but the ocean offers no better, and in fact maybe an even worse, alternative. The incorporation of both magical elements — sails turning into flying fish, hands turning into fins — and aspects of traditional African cosmology — advice-giving sangomas, ever-present spirits — accentuates the crisis produced both by the war and the collapse of society that accompanied it. It also, vitally, underscores the inadequacies of rational thought in the face of such sustained horror —

Na ficção de Mia Couto... predomina a valorização da cultura tradicional africana. A presença acentuada do imaginário ancestral direciona as narrativas para o insólito. Os elementos fantásticos presentes no texto e oriundos das cosmogonias africanas são os traços essenciais no confronto entre a tradição e o mundo atual e atuam aqui como sustentáculo para que se dê a resistência da população assolada pela guerra. (Abrahão dos Santos Oliveira 104)

The valorisation of traditional African culture predominates in the fiction of Mia Couto. The accented presence of the ancestral imaginary directs the narratives towards the unusual. The fantastical elements present in the text, derived from African cosmogonies, are the essential traces of the confrontation between tradition and the current world, and act here as a support system for a population that has been devastated by war.

Both of these episodes of metamorphosis — Junhito's complete transformation and Kindzu's partial one — are rooted in the literary history of the twentieth century, echoing similar mutations in works stretching from Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915) to Cortazar's short story *El Axolotl* (1956) and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988). The transformation of human into animal is a particularly popular motif in works that are traditionally classified as magical realist, and invariably carries with it some sort of particular significance. This is a concept examined by Christopher Warnes, who looks at two examples of transformation, one from Miguel Ángel Asturias' *Hombres de maíz* (1949) and one from Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Warnes states that though the trope is the same, the purpose the trope serves is very different —

In the case of Asturias, the metamorphosis stands as one part of a culturally-specific, non-Western way of relating to the world in which categories like natural and supernatural do not hold. In the latter example, Rushdie's reference points are literary rather than anthropological: metamorphosis becomes a figure of metaphor itself, showing how meanings are carried over from text to text, from language to the world and to the body, and back again.

(15)

The metamorphoses present in *Terra Sonâmbula* suggest that Couto does not fall entirely into either of Warnes' oppositions. Junhito's transformation functions at the same metaphorical level as that of Saladin Chamcha in Rushdie's work — it is a manifestation of the damage inflicted upon Mozambican society. And while Kindzu's partial metamorphosis does, to a certain extent, represent that same idea, his is much more related to the traditional beliefs that exist within his culture — as his hands and skin become steadily more fish-like, he realises that he is merely fulfilling the prophecy he received from his sangoma. Couto, then, can be understood as engaging in different modes of magical realism, and for different reasons. Those reasons have as much to do with the background of Couto's intended audience as they do with the background of his characters.

Although generally considered the most successful and important Mozambican author of recent times — *Terra Sonâmbula* was voted one of the twelve best African books of the twentieth century by the Zimbabwe International Book Fair in 2002, while academics have compared him to seminal Brazilian authors such as João Guimarães Rosa and José de Alencar (whose 1865 novel *Iracema* is considered one of the fundamental texts in helping to establish a national identity in post-independence Brazil), — the fact that he is a native Portuguese speaker writing in a

country where the majority of the population is illiterate and speaks Portuguese as a second language (if at all) means that much of his critical acclaim has come from outside his own country. Phillip Rothwell states,

[Couto's] work has received wide acclaim outside Mozambique because of the manner in which it is deemed to enrich the Portuguese language... he is seen to provide a bridge between a highly intellectualized written culture — that of the former colonizer — and an innocent, lyrical orality — that of the Mozambican nation. (487)

While Rothwell is writing specifically about Couto's use of linguistic elements, the same basic idea may be used to explain the author's use of magical realism — at specific times in the novel, magical realism is used as an intricate political metaphor, while at other times it is used as a means of referencing, even acknowledging, the varied cultures of Mozambique and their differing cosmologies. As with his linguistic tropes, Couto's use of magical realism “gives these communities a voice externally, which they themselves cannot hear” (Rothwell 487). Couto's use of Portuguese, indeed the mere fact that Couto's primary form of artistic expression is the written word, means that his intended audience is not, necessarily, the masses of the Mozambican public.

This aspect of Couto's work has been questioned (if not directly criticised) by some scholars. Maria Manuel Lisboa states, “whatever the sources, allegiances and motivations behind Mia Couto's undeniable linguistic originality... language as an exercise in power, both by the author himself, and within the textual worlds he brings into existence, becomes a pressing consideration (209). Lisboa continues her questioning by stating,

...some political significance... must be supposed to be invested... in a literary style such as that of Mia Couto, which clearly emerges as inaccessible, in all its punning agility and neologistic revisionism, to any except the highly educated, literary sophisticated, *native speakers* of Portuguese. It is beautiful. But is it Mozambican? (210, emphasis original)

Superficially, this is a fair argument. Couto's work does appeal to a specific demographic within Mozambique — educated, Portuguese-speaking, with a knowledge of Western literary traditions — and, of course, the broader international market. However, it is unfair to suggest that Couto use of literature is anti-Mozambican, or in some way used as a tool with which to distance himself from his country. Rather, the exact opposite is true. Couto was originally contacted by the FRELIMO government in the mid-1970s to write for their *Tribuna* newspaper and, later, run the newly independent nation's *Agência de Informação de Moçambique* news agency. He has since a very young age used literature as a tool of nation building. Ferreira Daverni describes how,

A fim de oferecer sua parcela de contribuição para a liberdade moçambicana, Mia arma-se de vocábulos e lança-se à luta... O valor do jornalismo, portanto, não estava reduzido apenas ao seu caráter informativo, como era de costume à maioria dos meios de informação, visto que representava um espaço no qual era possível desenvolver novas experiências lingüísticas, temáticas e literárias. (Ferreira Daverni 421-2)

With the aim of contributing his part to Mozambican freedom, Mia armed himself with words and went to war... The value of journalism, then, was not reduced merely to its informative character, as was normal for the majority of

the information media, since it represented a space in which it was possible to develop new linguistic, thematic, and literary experiences.

With *Terra Sonâmbula*, Couto shows just how much power and influence the written word can have on the world. For while the “traditional African culture” to which Abrahão dos Santos Oliveira refers is present from the very beginning of the novel — Tuahir admonishes Muidinga for crying by warning him that to do so he runs the risk of “calling the spirits” — it is only once Muidinga reads Kindzu’s journals, laden as they are with magical realism, that similarly fantastical events begin to occur in Muidinga and Tuahir’s reality. The discovery of Kindzu’s journals, therefore, represents a sort of watershed moment, not only for Muidinga and Tuahir, but also for Mozambique generally. At the beginning of the novel, Tuahir attempts to comfort a disillusioned and depressed Muidinga by assuring him that,

Qualquer coisa vai acontecer qualquer dia. E essa guerra vai acabar. A estrada já vai-se encher de gente, camiões. Como no tempo de antigamente.
(Couto 13)

Anything can happen on any given day. And this war is going to end. The road will fill up with people, trucks. Like it used to be.

Tuahir says these things, but it seems impossible to believe him — the characters are sheltered in a burned out bus, they have just buried the victims of the fire, and they appear to be walking through a barren, desolate wasteland. Considering the fate of this bus, of these people, Tuahir’s promises ring hollow; where will the people, where will the trucks, come from? Madureira claims,

In *Terra Sonâmbula*... the desire for a viable national culture and community persists. The latter remains thinkable (or imaginable), even amidst the spent

ordnance and charred human remains that clutter the abandoned (or murdered) roadway. It endures with all the contradictory symbolic force of the disquieting sheltering potential afforded to a young boy by the burnt-out hulk of a bus destroyed by boy soldiers. (212)

While this is true, it is not the case in the first chapter of the novel. At the beginning of the narrative, Muidinga and Tuahir exist in a world that is, essentially, dead. Aside from the two protagonists themselves, the only sign of life encountered is the death and destruction left in the wake of the roving gang that must have attacked the bus. The enduring “desire for a viable national culture and community” that Madureira states runs throughout the novel only begins to emerge after the introduction of Kindzu’s journals. For it is in Kindzu’s journals that we first encounter life and vibrancy. Rather than begin with images of death, Kindzu begins his journals by writing about his family, and his village, and the magical world in which he was raised. Where Muidinga and Tuahir struggle to imagine better days, Kindzu does not. And it is the idea of what is imaginable and what is not that is central to the narrative — in Kindzu’s world, everything is possible, everything is imaginable. Within the context of Kindzu’s life, Tuahir’s reassurance to Muidinga that “anything can happen on any given day” is not a mere platitude; it is fact.

After reading the first of Kindzu’s journals, Muidinga is awoken in the middle of the night as an animal licks his face. Tuahir assumes it is a hyena and urges Muidinga not to move; in fact, the animal licking Muidinga’s face is a young goat. That this occurs immediately after Muidinga has first read Kindzu’s journal is significant — the road on which the two protagonists travel is described as “morto,” dead, and yet from this dead landscape a living animal emerges. And while Tuahir fears that the animal is a hyena, a scavenging beast that, according to Tuahir, likes to

eat the nose off people's faces and which is traditionally associated with negative connotations, it is in fact a goat, a positively associated animal. There is no explanation as to where the animal came from, nor why it chose to climb into the burned-out bus in which Muidinga and Tuahir are sleeping; it just appears. The next morning, as Muidinga ties the goat up to a tree, he realises that the tree was not there the day before —

Então se admira: aquela árvore, um djambalaueiro, estava ali no dia anterior? Não, não estava. Como podia ter-lhe escapado a presença de tão distinta árvore? E onde estava a palmeira pequena que, na véspera, dava graça aos arredores do machimbombo? Desaparecera! (Couto 37)

Then he looked: that tree, a jambul tree, was it there the day before? No, no it wasn't. How could the presence of such a distinct tree have escaped him? And where was the small palm tree which, in the evening, had graced the area around the bus? It had disappeared!

With this paragraph, the world in which the two protagonists exist has begun to merge, ever so gradually, with Kindzu's world. Every night, Muidinga reads another journal from the diary to Tuahir, and it is this act of reading out loud that eventually brings the two worlds together until, at the end of the novel, they converge into one. As Tutikian and Albertoni da Silva explain, the recollection of an actual voyage inspires a "static" voyage — the memory of Kindzu's odyssey functions as a catalyst for the two main protagonists so that, despite their bus being stationary, they are still able to experience their own epic journey, a journey which eventually leads them into a new reality (86). The novel begins with three epigraphs, one of which is attributed to Tuahir — "O que faz andar a estrada? É o sonho. Enquanto a gente sonhar a

estrada permanecerá viva...” (Couto 7). (“What is it that makes the road move? Dreams. As long as people dream the road will remain alive...”) With Tuahir’s quotation serving as foreshadowing to what occurs later, the importance Mia Couto places on the written word becomes clear once Muidinga realises that the scenery around the bus changes every night. After all,

...de onde vem o sonho que mobiliza e movimenta? Do relato de viagem escrito por Kindzu... [N]esse sentido, a viagem imaginária termina configurando... um percurso iniciático, pois é o sonho provocado pelo relato de Kindzu que desperta a mobilidade da outra estrada, possibilitando a viagem estática dos protagonistas. (Tutikian and Albertoni da Silva 86-7)

...where does the dream that mobilises and animates come from? From the travel diary written by Kindzu... [I]n this sense, the imaginary trip ends up representing... an initiatory voyage, since it is the dream provoked by Kindzu’s story which awakens the mobility of the other road, making possible the static voyage of the protagonists.

In a country as ravaged and desolate as civil war-era Mozambique, Mia Couto shows how dreams, and through dreams an alternate reality, are made possible because of the power of the written word; while not the only tool, literature would be one of the fundamental tools that Mozambique would need to use in order to escape its violent history. His use of magical realism is also significant since, as Faris has noted, one of the basic motifs of the genre is the way in which it “highlights the fertile magic of language itself, its capacity to create absorbing worlds out of thin event” (176). Within Couto’s narrative, the impossibility made possible by the combination of real and magical is one of the most important aspects of this vital tool of nation building.

Altered Perspectives

By the time Teresa Prata's film adaptation of *Terra Sonâmbula* was released in 2007, a decade and a half after the year that saw both the end of the civil war as well as the publishing of Couto's novel, Mozambique could, justifiably, claim to be on the road that Tuahir had promised would return. The distance between the release of the novel and the release of the film is a significant one, for in the intervening years Mozambique had experienced drastic changes. While still challenged by many of the same issues facing most post-colonial African nations, the fifteen years since the end of the civil war in 1992 had seen Mozambique experience record-breaking economic growth and comparatively political transparency and stability. Prata's film, therefore, reflects a very different reality to that reflected in Couto's novel. Couto's novel seems intended to function as a sort of beacon of hope, the message of which states that despite the terrible things Mozambique has experienced, a new reality, one free of the violence and oppression and fear that war brings with it, is possible. Teresa Prata's film, on the other hand, seems to be more concerned with the lasting effects of trauma on the Mozambican population. Fifteen years after the civil war, Prata's *Terra Sonâmbula* seems less concerned with assuring viewers that a different, better world is possible than it does with assuring viewers that the damage of three decades of violence and trauma can be overcome eventually, even if they have yet to be properly addressed. Indeed, much (but not all) of the magic realism of Couto's work has been removed from Prata's film, so that the episodes which remain in the film provide the viewer with a very different understanding of the world. This is best reflected in how Kindzu's journals begin in the film; the very first lines of the journal, as read by

Muidinga to Tuahir, stress a sentiment that pervades the film's narrative — that of madness. Kindzu writes, “Começo escrever esses escritos para espantar o medo de enlouquecer. As lembranças que tenho parecem difíceis de ordenar, como se quisessem fugir da minha cabeça.” (I'm writing this to get rid of my fear of going mad. The memories I have seem difficult to organise, as if they want to flee out of my head.) It is this “medo de enlouquecer,” this fear of going mad, that runs throughout most of Teresa Prata's film, often functioning as the primary impetus to the narrative itself.

Most of the scenes presented as magical in the novel are reinterpreted in the film, which is much more influenced by realism, so that the existence of magic (or even its possible existence) is removed entirely. In the film, Kindzu's father has “died from cholera many years ago,” so it is his mother who decides to hide Junhito in the chicken coop. As with the moment when Muidinga and Tuahir enter the shell of the burned out bus, the scene when Junhito is actually placed in the coop is much more traumatic in the film than in the novel. As Kindzu approaches his home, Muidinga's voice can be heard reading from the journal — “I could feel our family breaking apart like a clay pot smashed on the ground” — while, in the background and seemingly ignored by Kindzu's brothers and sisters, the crack of gunfire rings out. Upon hearing the gunfire, Kindzu's mother, seemingly mumbling to herself but according to the subtitles explaining to Junhito what she is going to do, picks up her baby and deposits him in the chicken coop, scattering some feed over his head to punctuate the decision. The scene is incredibly chaotic — Junhito is crying, Kindzu's mother is mumbling an explanation while simultaneously fighting off the protests of Kindzu and his siblings, and to heighten the confusion the camera sways and moves, emphasising the instability of the mother's (and, perhaps, the country's) mental and

emotional state. Unlike in the novel, there is not at any point in the scene a suggestion that anyone (other than, perhaps, Kindzu's mother) believes that Junhito will actually turn into a chicken, a point which is made clear in the subsequent scene when Kindzu visits the Indian shopkeeper Surendra, to whom he confides, "You know, my mother isn't well. Today she locked up brother Junhito in the chicken coop. She says it will save him. I couldn't change her mind." Surendra's response is, like the introductory paragraph of the journals themselves, one that establishes a pattern for the rest of the film — "It must be this war." Kindzu's mother, like the country itself, has been driven mad because of violence and trauma.

This sentiment is repeated after Siqueleto has caught Muiding and Tuahir, declaring his intention to "sow" the two travellers into the ground so that "from each blossom a person will be born." From the moment Siqueleto appears on screen, it is clear he is mentally unstable — instead of helping the two protagonists out of the hole they have fallen into, he lectures them about the evil residing in their teeth, showing them that he has removed all of his own and keeps them in a tin box. After Siqueleto explains what he plans to do with his two captives, Muidinga whispers to Tuahir, "the old man is mad. He is going to kill us." Upon arriving in Siqueleto's destroyed village, many of the huts still smoking from the fires that burned them to the ground, the cause of Siqueleto's madness becomes clear, as he tells his prisoners,

I'm an old man. I've seen a lot of misery. But I've never seen anything like this, here, in my village. Now it's empty. Everyone died or had to flee. I'm the only one that didn't want to run away. This is the tree of my ancestors. It looks dead, but it's not. It's living, very quietly. Like me... I'm going to get the hoe to bury you.

As Siqueleto turns to get his tool, Tuahir attempts to reason with him one last time by promising that things will get better — “Mr. Siqueleto, the war is coming to an end. The rich countries are going to help us. You won’t have to dig the ground anymore. Cut the net!” As Tuahir finishes his plea, one of the most jarring moments of the film occurs — Siqueleto, who up to this point has been speaking his indigenous language, suddenly starts singing “*Parabéns Para Você*” (“Happy Birthday to You”) in Portuguese. He then kicks Tuahir, tells him “I’m going to bury you, evil one,” and leaves to get his hoe, continuing to sing “*Parabéns para você*” to himself as he walks away. When the two finally manage to escape, Muidinga’s claim that Siqueleto was crazy is rejected by Tuahir, who responds by explaining to the child,

No he isn’t. He wants people to be born, so he can show them where the sacred tree is, so they’ll pay their respects to the dead. That is why he doesn’t want to die alone. So that everything won’t die with him.

Tuahir’s compassionate words come, perhaps, as a surprise to the viewer, considering what he has just experienced. Siqueleto posed a very real threat to Tuahir and his companion, one which the two were only just able to escape from; yet instead of expressing anger or resentment towards his captor, Tuahir professes not only to sympathise with him but also understand him. The difference in opinion between Muiding and Tuahir makes clear the drastically different way in which the two have experienced the conflict that has engulfed their country. Though the effects of the war have left Muidinga orphaned (at least, that is how he is presented at the beginning of the film), much of the trauma he experienced prior to encountering Tuahir has been, essentially, erased from his memory. He cannot remember his family; he does not know where he comes from; and it is only Kindzu’s journals which slowly awaken in him some previous knowledge of himself — he only realises he knows

how to read, for example, once he discovers that he is unwittingly capable of reading what is written in the notebooks. Tuahir, in contrast, is well aware of what he has experienced — his son has become a migrant labourer in South Africa; he has witnessed the horror of the refugee camp where, from a group of dead children about to be buried, he encountered a gravely ill Muidinga and nursed him back to health; and, perhaps most importantly, he has watched his country descend into the madness in which it now finds itself. Because he has experienced so much, his response to Siqueleto, who has watched his village burn to the ground, its residents either murdered or fled for their safety, is far more considerate. Siqueleto's sanity is certainly questionable; his actions are easily interpreted as those of a man who has lost all sense of rationality, and the moment when he begins singing "*Parabéns Para Você*" marks him out as someone whose mind and body are functioning on different levels. Most importantly, people within his own world consider both his beliefs and his actions to be those of a madman even if, as in the case of Tuahir, they are capable of understanding what made them come about. The empathy which Tuahir shows, however, comes from the fact that both he and Siqueleto are witnesses to and survivors of severe trauma. That Muidinga, still relatively innocent compared to those around him, might be unable to express the same sympathy and understanding towards Siqueleto is unsurprising. Whatever Siqueleto says, however Tuahir tries to explain it, their experience is impossible to reproduce. This was noted amongst survivors of the Holocaust, and it pertains here primarily because, "these survivors suffered an experience... that is beyond communicability even by the 'messengers,' and certainly cannot be re-created, represented, or understood by those who were not there." (Browning 36).

The climax of the narrative is also the one truly, undeniably magical realist episode of the film, and it occurs very late in the narrative. Having convinced himself that the Farida who appears in Kindzu's journals is his mother, Muidinga sets out for the coast, determined to find the abandoned ship on which Farida is living. Every day Muidinga and Tuahir walk towards the coast, yet at the end of every day they find themselves back at the burned-out bus in which they originally took shelter. At first, the two believe that they are lost, walking in circles. However, while it is neither noticed nor remarked upon by either character, the landscape around the bus changes constantly. One day the bus is surrounded by brown grass and shrubbery, with only a lone, barren tree across the road; the next, as the two travellers prepare to leave, we see that the bus is covered in the shade of numerous green plants and trees, and the road upon which the two travel is enclosed by healthy plants. Yet at the end of the same day, when they arrive back at the bus in exasperation, almost all the plants have disappeared, replaced by more brown grass and non-descript surroundings. Finally, after several days of this, Muidinga loses faith. Looking at his toy ship, however, gives him an idea and he begins to dig. When Tuahir asks him what he is doing, Muidinga replies, "A river always flows to the sea, right? I'm making a river." His digging, magically, causes water to spontaneously seep up from the ground, at first a trickle and then, suddenly, in waves and waves, so that Muidinga is able to stop digging and watch with Tuahir as the road floods and the burned-out bus begins to float away. As the two sit in their bus-cum-boat, Tuahir says to Muidinga, "Let me tell you something, boy. I know it's the truth. We're not moving, it's the road that's moving... Everything happened near the bus. The whole country went past us, sleepwalking. Yes, boy, we're travelling in this bus that is standing still; we haven't stopped travelling." The moment when water starts bubbling up from Muidinga's feet

is certainly unexpected — the constantly changing landscape around the bus does, perhaps, open the possibility that something strange and fantastical is possible, but it is presented so subtly, without any mention of it made by either character, that it is not readily apparent on first viewing of the film. As a result, the viewer is as surprised by the water in Tuahir's hand as he himself is. The fact that this scene appears so late in the film is significant, as well as the fact that, though inspired by a similar episode in Couto's novel, this scene has been drastically altered from the source text. Both the placement of the scene and the alterations made by Prata result in a moment which is pivotal to the film, and also pivotal to understanding the vast differences, both in tone and message, between the film and its source material.

The chapter from which this episode is inspired occurs almost directly in the middle of the novel — chapter five of eleven — and is titled *O Fazedor de Rios (The Creator of Rivers)*. Muidinga and Tuahir happen upon a former co-worker of Tuahir's, a man named Nhamataca, standing in the middle of a hole “tão funda e cumprida que parecia que a intenção dele era partir o mundo em dupla metade” (Couto 94). (“So deep and wide that it seemed the man's intention was to split the world in two halves.”) When the two ask Nhamataca what he is doing, he explains that he is creating a river — *Mãe-água*, Mother-water — which will serve not only to aliment the land, but also as a barrier of sorts —

Suas águas serviriam de fronteira para a guerra. Homem ou barco carregando arma iriam ao fundo, sem regresso. A morte ficaria confinada ao outro lado.

O rio limparia a terra, cariciando suas feridas. (Couto 95)

Her waters would serve as a border to the war. Any man or ship carrying weapons would sink to the depths, without return. Death would be confined to the other side. The river would clean the earth, nursing her wounds.

Despite having witnessed numerous magical, miraculous things by this point in the narrative, Muidinga is sceptical. When Tuahir tells Nhamataca that he and the boy will help dig in order to speed up the process, Muidinga argues against staying. He believes Nhamataca is crazy, and they would be better off continuing their journey towards the coast. They remain, however, and help to dig, until their hands are bloodied and Muidinga has run out of patience. The very evening that Muidinga expresses his exasperation, however, a rainstorm of biblical proportions arrives, the rain coming down in such quantity that the enormous canal dug by the three has filled up with water, creating a river. Nhamataca is so overjoyed by the sight of his dream coming to fruition that he begins to dance around in the rain, throwing his hands up to the sky in thanks. The combination of torrential rain and innumerable lightning bolts flashing down eventually cause Nhamataca to disappear, either washed away by the flood, cremated by the lightning, or a combination of both. The rain continues all morning, however by mid-day the rain has stopped, and Muiding and Tuahir watch as the earth, momentarily replenished by the deluge, quickly returns to its previous, barren state. Where the night previous there had been a river, now only the dry soil remains. The green shoots of life encouraged by the rain have been suppressed by the dead, brown landscape, and neither Nhamataca nor any sign of his dream remain —

Onde a água imperara há escassas horas, a poeira agora esfuma os ares. Ouve-se o tempo raspando seus ossos sobre as pedras. Em toda a savana o chão está deitado, sem respirar. A cauda do vento se enrosca longe. Até o capim que nunca tem nenhuns pedidos, até o capim vai miserando. (Couto 98)

Where water had reigned just a few short hours previous, dust now clouds the air. Time can be heard scraping its bones against the rocks. All over the savannah the soil is at rest, unable to breath. The tail of the wind curls up far away. Even the grass, which never asks anything of anyone, even the grass is becoming miserable.

The contrast between the two scenes is stark, the differences between them so noticeable that it is difficult to suggest that the creation of Muidinga's *Mãe-água* in the film is anything more than a reference to Nhamataca's similarly named concept. The two scenes, so similar in some ways and yet so drastically different from one another, are both somewhat unique within the context of their respective narratives. The moment water begins to gurgle up from the bottom of the hole Muidinga is digging is a pivotal moment in the film — for over seventy of the film's ninety-seven minutes, the closest the narrative ever gets to magical realism is the almost imperceptible change of scenery surrounding the bus every day. For those first seventy minutes, the film might be characterised as a sort of melodramatic realism. The characters are relatively stereotypical exaggerations — Kindzu the selfless hero, Farida the grieving mother, Muidinga the innocent child, Tuahir the wise and cynical old man — yet they move within a world that seems to accurately reflect what the viewer expects. Yet, suddenly, the film switches modes entirely, and from a world where things are exactly how they seem, the viewer is presented with a world where *nothing* is what it seems. In a sense, the appearance of the river is the ultimate magical realist moment — how it occurred is never explained, the fact that something impossible has just become possible is never commented on, even the protagonists themselves do not consider its appearance particularly astonishing, as Tuahir's

reaction is one more of amusement than the bewilderment that might be expected. The scene is a prime example of Erikson's conception of magical realism as mode in which "the empirical world of reason and logic and the supernatural world of unreason" coexist. Finally, the arrival of the river is a joyous moment, one which marks a shift in the environment not only literally but figuratively, as well. By suddenly appearing, the water fundamentally alters the landscape — we watch with Muidinga and Tuahir as the dusty dirt road is overcome with water; as the brown, dead flora is overtaken by green plants on either side of the river. The water brings with it people, as well. As the bus floats down the river, a group of people are visible on the shore, cleansing themselves (as Tuahir explains), singing and dancing and giving thanks. The *Mãe-água* functions as a symbol of hope, a sign that things in the country have changed.

In contrast, the tale of Nhamataca and his *Mãe-água* is a tragic one, and essentially functions as the lowest point in a generally pessimistic work. Where, in the film, Muidinga digs for a few minutes and then finds himself waist-deep in water, in the novel Nhamataca spends weeks and weeks, perhaps months, perhaps even years, digging before Tuahir and Muidinga encounter him. They then add their strength to the effort, and dig until their hands begin to bleed. At no point does water begin to seep from the ground. The rainstorm that allows his dream to become a reality is, perhaps inevitably, the same thing that causes his death, so that he never gets to enjoy the fruits of his labour. Even if he had survived he would have had to watch, helplessly, as the water evaporates or disappears into the earth, his dream lasting no more than a day. What is most shattering is the inevitability with which the "river" disappears once the rain stops, as if there was never any chance that Nhamataca's dream would ever be anything more than that. The entire episode is,

quite obviously, a metaphor for the experience of Mozambique itself — after years and years of struggle to create a “*Mãe-água*,” in this case an independent nation, once the goal was achieved it proved to be as ephemeral as raindrops on a draught-stricken savannah, and before long the nation was plunged into, arguably, an even worse situation than it had been previously; one where the dream had been experienced, however momentarily, making its loss all the more painful. Perhaps because of this explicit metaphor, Couto refrains from using magical realism in this chapter, which is almost as unexpected as the *use* of it in Prata’s film. The *Mãe-água* episode fills the viewer with hope when watching the film — things can change, things can get better, through desire and hope the problems faced by the characters and, indeed, the country will be overcome. It does the complete opposite in the book. Arriving immediately after Muidinga and Tuahir have escaped from Siqueleto, the death of Nhamataca devastates the reader, serving as a reminder of both the brief, glorious high of independence as well as the profound, crushing lows of war and famine and drought that Mozambique had experienced in the previous three decades.

Altered Worlds

This comparison between the two versions of the *Mãe-água* scene exposes a significant, fundamental difference between the two works, one which highlights the profound changes Mozambique has experienced over the course of the last forty years. Magical realism has been (indeed, continues to be) a notoriously difficult idea to succinctly summarise or define — both Fredric Jameson and Stephen Slemon acknowledge that the complexity of the concept might serve as justifiable grounds for discarding the phrase all together — however Slemon provides a useful explanation

when he writes, “in the language of narration in a magic realist text, a battle between two oppositional systems takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other” (10-11). This is particularly the case in the literary version of *Terra Sonâmbula*; the two worlds presented in the novel, the real on the one hand and the magical on the other, are constantly clashing with one another, almost as if they are balancing each other out. Virtually every episode in the novel, especially in the Muidinga/Tuahir narrative, is presented as a sort of dance or balancing act, where the real world of the narrative — that is, the world in which Muidinga and Tuahir find themselves at the beginning of the novel, a world devoid of life or hope and engulfed by death and destruction — is constantly being encroached upon by the fantastical world. And, in Couto’s work, the fantastical world is the world which provides hope, life, a future. Perhaps the best example of this is the episode concerning Siqueleto. The film version of this episode has already been analysed and, in many ways, the episode in the novel is similar. However, the two differ drastically in how they each conclude. In the film, Tuahir manages to rip open the net in which he and Muidinga have been ensnared and the two run away while Siqueleto has left to find his hoe. The novel, however, presents an entirely different scenario, one which is both significantly more graphic and, paradoxically, significantly more hopeful. Instead of forcing their way out of captivity, in the novel Siqueleto releases them of his own accord. He does this because Muidinga, tired and bored, manages to grab hold of a stick and write Siqueleto’s name in the dirt. The illiterate Siqueleto asks the boy what he has drawn and, upon learning that the scratches in the earth are in fact his name, cuts down his captives and marches them to the largest tree in the village, where he demands that Muidinga carve his (Siqueleto’s)

name into the tree's trunk. Once Muidinga does so, Siqueleto lets his captives go and commits suicide —

— *Agora podem-se ir embora. A aldeia vai continuar, já meu nome está no sangue da árvore.*

Então ele mete o dedo no ouvido, vai enfiando mais e mais fundo até que sentem o surdo som de qualquer coisa se estourando. O velho tira o dedo em um jorro de sangue repuxa da orelha. Ele se vai definhando, até se tornar do tamanho de uma semente. (Couto 75)

— *You two can leave now. The village is going to continue, now that my name is inside the blood of the tree.*

Then he inserts his finger into his ear, pushing deeper and deeper until they can hear the muted sound of something popping. The old man removes his finger and a stream of blood spurts from his ear. He begins to shrink, until he's the size of a seed.

Despite the significantly more violent ending to this scene when compared to its presentation in the film, the episode is, ultimately, a hopeful one. Whereas in the film the two protagonists escape and, after the briefest of moments of reflection, forget about Siqueleto entirely, in the novel Muidinga is directly responsible for the continuation of Siqueleto's village. It is, paradoxically, the fantastical manner of Siqueleto's death that ensures his final statement is a believable one — if it is possible to simply shrivel up into a seed, that you might be planted and sprout more people, why is it improbable to believe that Siqueleto's village will continue to exist?

Tutikian and da Silva explain —

Ora, a árvore, na cultura africana, é vista como agente cíclico da evolução cósmica: morte e regeneração. Assim, ao transformar-se em semente, Siqueleto incorpora-se ao mundo vegetal, predispondo-se ao eterno ciclo do nascer, morrer e renascer, vencendo a solidão, mas, mais do que isso, vencendo a morte física e cultural. (89)

The tree, in African culture, is seen as a cyclical agent of cosmic evolution: death and regeneration. Therefore, by transforming himself into a seed, Siqueleto incorporates himself into the floral world, predisposing himself to the eternal cycle of birth, death and re-birth, defeating solitude, but also, more than that, defeating physical and cultural death.

By removing all the fantastical elements of this episode, and despite leaving Siqueleto alive, Teresa Prata's film actually presents a much more pessimistic view — the viewer knows that Siqueleto will eventually die and the village will disappear, because there is nothing in the presentation of the episode to suggest that anything else is possible. The “African culture” to which Tutikian and da Silva refer, a concept which often closely interacts with the more general idea of the fantastic or magical, is absent from the film's narrative. Throughout Mia Couto's novel, this fantastical, magical element — this magical realism — is used as a sort of reassurance, a tool to assuage both the reader and, perhaps, the characters themselves, that the plurality of traumas that are presented in the book can be overcome. It is for this very reason that the scene involving Nhamataca and his *Mãe-água* can be understood as the novel's nadir. The appearance of his river during a rainstorm of biblical proportions is completely in keeping with reality. Nhamataca's death and disappearance, as well as the equally fast disappearance of the river once the rain has stopped, is also

completely plausible. What makes this episode so tragic and demoralising, both to the reader and to Tuahir and Muidinga, is the very fact that the magical never appears. There is no hopeful ending, no promise of a continuing legacy; there are only the bloodied hands and squandered efforts of a deceased man.

A comparison of Siqueleto and Nhamataca demonstrates that in Couto's work, magical realism is used in a relatively straightforward manner, if we use Faris's article "Scheherazade's Children" as a sort of basic guideline for the concept. The novel includes many of the tropes recognized by Faris — for as poetic and fluid though it may be, the language of the narrative "appears to the late-twentieth-century adult [reader]... as fresh, child-like, even primitive" (177), and both the "irreducible element of magic" and the "closeness or near-merging of two realms" (167), are present. Significantly, Faris's statement that "many of these [magical realist] texts take a position that is antibureaucratic, and so they often use their magic against the established social order" (179) also holds true in Couto's work. Faris does not include any African work in her study but others have commented on similar themes in African magical realist fiction — analysing Congolese author Sonny Labou Tansi's magical realist-tinged novel *La vie et demie* (1979), Moudileno writes, "like so many other African works before it, the narrative denounces the totalitarian power of postindependence regimes" (29). Of course, Couto's work emerged at a time when Mozambique was experiencing, for all intents and purposes, a complete vacuum of established social order, so rather than attack a "totalitarian government" or some other form of centralised authoritarian power, Couto uses his novel to attack the oppressive forces of war and instability. The situation in Mozambique in the early 1990s was so chaotic that there was no specific political figure or totalitarian authority that could be easily criticised, as can be seen in such seminal magical realist texts as

Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* (1967) or Miguel Ángel Asturias' *El señor presidente* (1946). Instead, Couto attacks the breakdown of both society and hope brought about through a combination of drought, famine, disease, and a civil war which intensified the effect of those circumstances dramatically.

Teresa Prata's film, on the other hand, is different. If, as has been stated, one of the optimal uses of magical realism is to be subversive, to be "receptive in particular ways to more than one point of view, to realistic *and* magical ways of seeing, and... open the door to other worlds" (Faris 180), Prata is, to a certain extent, already at a disadvantage in her attempt to create a magical realist film. This is due, primarily, to the fact that by the time the film was released in 2007 Mozambique had enjoyed fifteen years of peace. Although the country's economy is still relatively fragile — the floods that devastated the Mozambique's southern regions in 2000 were adjudged to have set back the country's development not by a matter of months but by several years (Smith) — there is a noticeable absence of the tension and, at times, outright hostility between different ethnic or political groups that can be seen in neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe and South Africa. Indeed, since the release of the film the year before the global financial crisis hit, a new wave of immigration has begun, consisting primarily of Portuguese and other Europeans (some of whom have an historical connection to the country) moving to the country in order to help fill the demand for specialist labour. The complicated relationship that exists between Mozambique and Portugal is topic enough for several books, but the example given here serves the purpose of demonstrating that present-day Mozambique has emerged, somewhat miraculously considering both its war-torn history and where it was socially and economically in the early-1990s, as a peaceful, stable nation. As a result, there is no oppressive regime to subvert, no implicit suggestion that the situation in

the country needs to be changed. If, as has been claimed by numerous scholars, one of the hallmarks of magical realism is its dissenting nature, how does one create a magical realist work in a country that is free from authoritarian regimes and oppressive government policies? By no means does this suggest it is impossible to do so, and indeed Mozambique continues to face enough difficulties that there are plenty of things that might inspire outcry, yet Prata does not appreciably alter the focus of Couto's work to adequately reflect the changes that have occurred in the intervening fifteen years. The aspects that Couto criticises — the oppression of war, the devastation brought about by a lack of community — are the same things Prata's film attacks, despite the fact that Mozambique, for all its success, still faces considerable problems. Essentially, Prata's film, for all that it does well, lacks the explicitly political undercurrent of the source text. Of magical realism, Jameson writes,

The possibility of magic realism as a formal mode is constitutively dependent on a type of historical raw material in which disjunction is structurally present; or, to generalize the hypothesis more starkly, magic realism depends on a content which betrays the overlap or the coexistence of precapitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features... [T]he organizing category of magic realist film is not the concept of the generation... but rather the very different one of modes of production, and in particular of a mode of production still locked in conflict with traces of the older mode. (311)

21st-century Mozambique certainly does provide the exact circumstance that Jameson argues is necessary for magical realism to emerge, yet Prata misses the opportunity to engage with the “disjunction” to which Jameson refers.

In interviews, Prata has stated, “I wanted the film to start very harshly and move slowly towards magical realism... I wanted to begin with hard war stuff and go

slowly, slowly, slowly into the poetical world” (Prata, “Women on Film”). Her film, however, does not particularly reflect this desire. As has been examined in this chapter, the film does indeed begin with “hard war stuff,” however it is difficult to argue that the film moves “slowly towards magical realism,” as the writer/director claims. Rather, much like the river Muidinga creates, magical realism (or the fantastic, or whichever word one chooses to describe the moment) bursts forth unexpectedly. Because of this, it is not entirely accurate to call Teresa Prata’s film a magical realist one. Rather, Erickson’s description of the fantastic — “the sudden apparition of the supernatural” — seems more appropriate. The description does not fit perfectly — Erickson’s description of the fantastic also claims that the “narrative turns on the resolution of the supernatural through rational explanation” (428), which never occurs in the film — but it is a more accurate term than magical realism in this circumstance, since magical realism implies a sort of consistent presence throughout a work. The combination of these two aspects — the fact that Prata’s film does not noticeably take into account the important changes that have occurred in Mozambique since the end of the civil war and the fact that for most of the film’s duration magical realism does not really present itself — results in a very different understanding of the moment when magic appears. To be sure, the sudden creation of an all-cleansing river is, in Prata’s work, a very important moment in the narrative. Not only does the river wash away the barren landscape which has persistently accompanied Tuahir and Muidinga throughout the film, representing the hopes and possibilities of a peaceful future, it also brings about drastic changes in each of the characters’ lives. The river brings with it life of all sorts — people, of course, but also mosquitoes — and it is strongly implied that, despite showing signs of weakness before the river appears, Tuahir’s death is caused by the malaria those mosquitoes inevitably carry with them.

The loss of one parental figure, however, is offset by the arrival of another, as the film ends with Muidinga's floating bus drifting up to the abandoned ship on which Farida, the woman he believes to be his mother, is living. The river, then, can be understood as a symbol for many things — hope, the future, possibility, even the cyclical nature of life, for the river returns Muidinga to his mother (or so we are led to believe).

What differentiates this from Couto's work, however, is that in the novel it is the moment of magic itself that brings hope, and without that moment hope is virtually non-existent — hence the differing reactions to the hopeful death of Siqueleto and the tragic death of Nhamataca. In the film, Prata does not give meaning or significance to the moment of magic itself so much as the outcome of that moment. It is the river itself, not the emergence of the river, which represents hope. Cooper writes, "it is... through rendering events meaningful, making them symbolic of wider and deeper processes, that [magical realist] plots endow stories with the ability to represent history and overcome the mystery of the historically unknowable" (36). Prata does not render the event meaningful; rather she renders the outcome meaningful. This is a subtle differentiation, but a significant one — we do not know what occurs to Siqueleto once he has shrunk to the size of a seedling, but it does not matter because it is the magical event of becoming a seed that is meaningful, rather than the outcome of that moment. The appearance of the river in Prata's film, however, is meaningless unless accompanied by a river that carries significance; in the novel, the event itself is meaningful, whereas in the film the event is secondary to its outcome.

What this means, in the end, is that Couto's novel can be read, as with most works that fall within the broad spectrum encompassed by magical realism, as a commentary on Mozambique's past, present, and future. The moments of magic in his work are significant, meaningful, and highly metaphorical. It is a work that

maintains its freshness and importance through its perceptive commentary on and critique of the challenges faced not only by Mozambique but, indeed, any developing nation wracked by indiscriminate violence. Couto's *Terra Sonâmbula* is a work which is highly invested in the process of nation-building, emerging at a time when Mozambique had been suffering through almost three decades of uninterrupted warfare. It is a novel which makes constant reference to the future, to the longed-for time when Mozambique will emerge from the violence of war and begin to fulfil its potential. It is hopeful and optimistic in a way that only a novel, grounded as it is in renovation, can be. And yet, it is also very much an examination of and attempt to understand Mozambique's past, and an attempt to find redemption and validation in that past. By not engaging with magical realism early in the narrative, and then by diminishing its importance once it does emerge, Prata's film loses a certain amount of that immediacy. Prata's film does not show two different worlds (reason and unreason, in Erickson's terminology), in contact and struggle as in magical realist fiction, but rather it presents one world which is altered fundamentally by one single event. As a result, Prata's film never seems to engage with the present or the future, instead choosing to focus entirely on the past, functioning more as a sort of retrospective, a reminder of the horrors of war. Returning to the Bakhtin, if Couto's work combines novel and epic, adapting aspects of both in order to create a new sort of work, we can see that what Prata has created, essentially, is an epic in cinematographic form, one which fits almost perfectly into Bakhtin's description of that genre. Although Bakhtin criticises the genre, by combining aspects of the ancient and the modern Prata has, in her own way, created a unique, important piece which refreshes the epic while maintaining the important aspects of it. Prata's work serves as a useful reminder of just how miserable life can become for the innocents trapped

in a situation entirely out of their control; its visceral representation of war and, especially, the madness that war generates lingers with the viewer, suggesting an unexpected poignancy. Perhaps not as complex as the original work which inspired it, Teresa Prata's *Terra Sonâmbula* nevertheless remains a memorable, significant work in its own right.

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CONCLUSION

This dissertation began by asking a series of questions — how do we define adaptation; and how do we define its limits? How do the four works under consideration represent the conflict that engulfed Mozambique for nearly three decades? And how are trauma and violence represented in each work? I believe this study has begun to answer these questions, or at the very least has provided enough insight so as to encourage a further, more in-depth analysis of each of the four individual works that form this study's axis. The first two chapters of this dissertation examined different historical and theoretical concepts which served as essential background information for the study as a whole.

Chapter 1 examined Mozambique's cinematic history, with special attention paid both to the importance of film in garnering international support for and validation of the liberation movement, as well as the development of the film industry in Mozambique both post-independence and post-civil war. This chapter also looked at the multi-cultural, almost global nature of the Mozambican film industry, in the process questioning the concepts of both regional (in this case African) and national cinema. This study has rejected those terms, considering them too limiting to be of any particular relevance generally, but especially in the case of Mozambique.

Chapter 2 analysed the concept of adaptation, and attempted to expand the limits of the term. Instead of focussing solely on the adaptation process between literature and film, this study has additionally considered the ways in which real,

historical events on the scale of the two wars fought in Mozambique have been adapted into fiction. In order to understand just what, exactly, the population of Mozambique experienced over the course of the thirty years of violence that blighted the country, this chapter also provided a brief historical background of the atrocities committed in the country. Although some of the episodes related in this chapter were particularly gruesome, an understanding of this history is vital to any understanding of the fiction that has emerged from Mozambique, whether in literary or cinematic form, in the years since the 1992 Rome General Peace Accord marked an end to the cycle of violence that had engulfed Mozambique for nearly three decades. Ultimately, this chapter shows that the reality of the violence witnessed in Mozambique was often so horrible as to be beyond rational comprehension, so that the only way for the population to adequately process their trauma was by fictionalising it.

Chapters 3 and 4 examined four works concerning the two different conflicts that occurred in Mozambique from 1964 to 1992. For most of this dissertation, the four works (and, indeed, the two conflicts) have been separated into two distinct pairings, based on the relationship between source text and film adaptation. At first glance, the two pairings of novel and film analysed have only a tenuous link to one another. *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, analysed in Chapter 3, focuses on the experiences of Portuguese colonials as the last embers of the once-great Portuguese empire rapidly burn out, while *Terra Sonâmbula*, studied in Chapter 4, examines the effects of a devastating civil war on both a country's population and, just as importantly, the land itself. The two primary characters of *A Costa dos Murmúrios* are both white European women of a relatively similar age, wives to Portuguese soldiers who have arrived in Mozambique not by choice but by obligation, while the three protagonists of *Terra Sonâmbula* represent three generations of black African males, all of whom

have lost everything as a result of the war that is tearing their country apart and has forced them to wander the barren countryside. One work is set in the late 1960s, while the other takes place some twenty-five years later, in the early 1990s.

Superficially, the only thing that connects *A Costa dos Murmúrios* with *Terra Sonâmbula* is the fact that in each case the narrative occurs in Mozambique.

However, as is so often the case, in this instance first impressions are deceiving. For all their differences, thematically the two pairings share much in common — both narratives are, essentially, narratives of trauma. Although that trauma is presented differently in each work (indeed, as this study has shown, there are significant differences even between the literary and cinematic manifestation of each narrative), ultimately both *A Costa dos Murmúrios* and *Terra Sonâmbula* are about people who have suffered as a result of both the large-scale, anonymous brutality of war as well as the small-scale, personal traumas that war brings with it.

Chapter 3 focussed solely on Lídia Jorge's novel *A Costa dos Murmúrios* and Margarida Cardoso's film adaptation of that work. Both of these works are set in the late-1960s, at the height of the war fought between Portugal and Frelimo. Although some Portuguese are presented negatively, especially the military in the form of Jaime Forza Leal and (somewhat less harshly) Luís Álex, neither the novel nor the film endeavours to demonise the entire colonial-era Portuguese population. Indeed, both works attempt to show that although Portugal was the colonising power, and the actions of the colonial government and military inflicted almost unimaginable damage on the local population, the Portuguese themselves were also severely traumatised by their experience of the war. This chapter concentrated much of its analysis on the function of postmodernism in both the novel and film, and attempted to explain not only the ways in which postmodernism is used, but also the reasons for it. What

Chapter 3 demonstrates, I believe, is that the postmodern questioning of fact and fiction, the acknowledgment that history is just as easily alterable as fiction, arises from the trauma experienced by the two female protagonists. Both Evita and Helena alter history, obfuscate facts, and wilfully exclude information from their narratives as a means of processing and coping with the trauma they have experienced. That the recipients of this trauma are members of the colonising, rather than colonised, power suggests that the legacy of Portugal's colonial actions have as much an influence on Portuguese society as they do on Mozambican society.

Chapter 4 studied the impact and legacy of the Mozambican Civil War, as envisioned in Mia Couto's novel and Teresa Prata's film version of *Terra Sonâmbula*. Rather than take explicit political sides, *Terra Sonâmbula* refrains from engaging too deeply with politics, instead focusing on how the sprawling, unorganised, yet simultaneously extremely violent and traumatic conflict which engulfed Mozambique for nearly two decades affected the country's general population. Similar to the function of postmodernism in *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, magical realism is used, especially in Mia Couto's novel, as a coping mechanism which allows the characters in *Terra Sonâmbula* to remain hopeful. In this chapter I argue that the relative absence of magical realism in Teresa Prata's film is the primary reason that work has such a different feel to it when compared to the source text. Finally, Chapter 4 also analysed the way in which the narrative's scope was altered by the novel-to-film adaptation process, concluding that while Couto's novel is as concerned with the present and future as it is with the past, Prata's film functions primarily as a retrospective of a previous era, a reminder of both what Mozambique experienced and how far it has come.

This dissertation has examined the ways in which violence and trauma are represented across different media. It has looked at both the limitations faced by, and possibilities offered to, literature and film when it comes to understanding traumatic and violent events which are, by their very traumatic nature, inherently unknowable. Although the four works in question in this study are all works of fiction, this dissertation has shown that the violence encountered in each work is inspired by historical events and situations. The traumatic episodes in which the characters of *A Costa dos Murmúrios* and *Terra Sonâmbula* find themselves are, quite often, metaphors and symbols for the violence found throughout Mozambique's history. Rather than attempt to invent some grand truth that unites all four works, this study has, rather, chosen to examine the connecting theme that runs through the four works – that of trauma representation and how societies, and the individuals who make up those societies, first process that trauma and then, finally, reproduce it for further generations.

Perhaps the one doubt that remains unanswered, upon reaching the conclusion of this work, is whether it is valid to group these four works together, since two of the works focus primarily on Europeans, while the other two focus primarily on Africans. I would contend, however, that this is an argument which is far too essentialist and limited in nature. As with virtually every formerly colonised African nation, the legacy of both European colonisation and the violent struggle for independence from that oppression is still visible in Mozambique. The country's primary university, originally known as *Universidade de Lourenço Marques*, has, since independence, been named after Eduardo Mondlane, the American-educated Sociology professor who helped found, and served as the first president of, Frelimo and who was assassinated by the Portuguese secret police in 1969. An enormous statue of Samora

Machel now towers over the plaza in front of Maputo's city hall building; during the colonial era the Portuguese literally spelled out on the sidewalk in front of this building, using different coloured stones, the words AQUI É PORTUGAL: this is Portugal. Streets throughout Maputo carry symbolic names — Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh, Karl Marx, Lenin — that serve as a constant reminder of the Frelimo government's Socialist policies of the 1980s. And yet on those same streets can be found colonial-era mansions replete with Portuguese *azulejo* tiles — buildings that would not feel out of place in posh Lisbon suburbs. It is virtually impossible to consider present-day Mozambique without acknowledging the role Portugal has played in the African nation's history.

Indeed, Mozambique, the Pearl of the Indian, has always been a cross-roads of the world's cultures — even before the arrival of Europeans, the Mozambican coast served as a place where tribes from the interior of Africa interacted with North African merchants and Indian sailors to create an early melting pot of cultures and societies. The concept of *Moçambicanidade*, therefore, is one that by very definition must serve to include as many different voices and viewpoints as possible. The two authors and two directors whose works are examined in this study all have different relationships with the country in which their works are set. To provide just one example — Mia Couto, born and raised in Mozambique and an active member of the liberation struggle, must absolutely have a different understanding of the country than the Portuguese Lídia Jorge, who travelled to Mozambique during the colonial era as a soldier's wife. This study, then, has attempted to incorporate as broad a definition of “Mozambican” as possible, including even that which others might not.

Finally, as discussed in the introduction, the amount of English-language scholarship focussed on Mozambican film is, at present, woefully inadequate. While

a Master's dissertation is just a small contribution, it is my hope that this study will soon be joined by additional critical analysis of a nation which must be considered — given not only the fundamental role of film both during the struggle for independence and its immediate aftermath, but also the amount of quality work (especially in the documentary field) emerging from Mozambique at present — one of the centres of African visual culture.

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