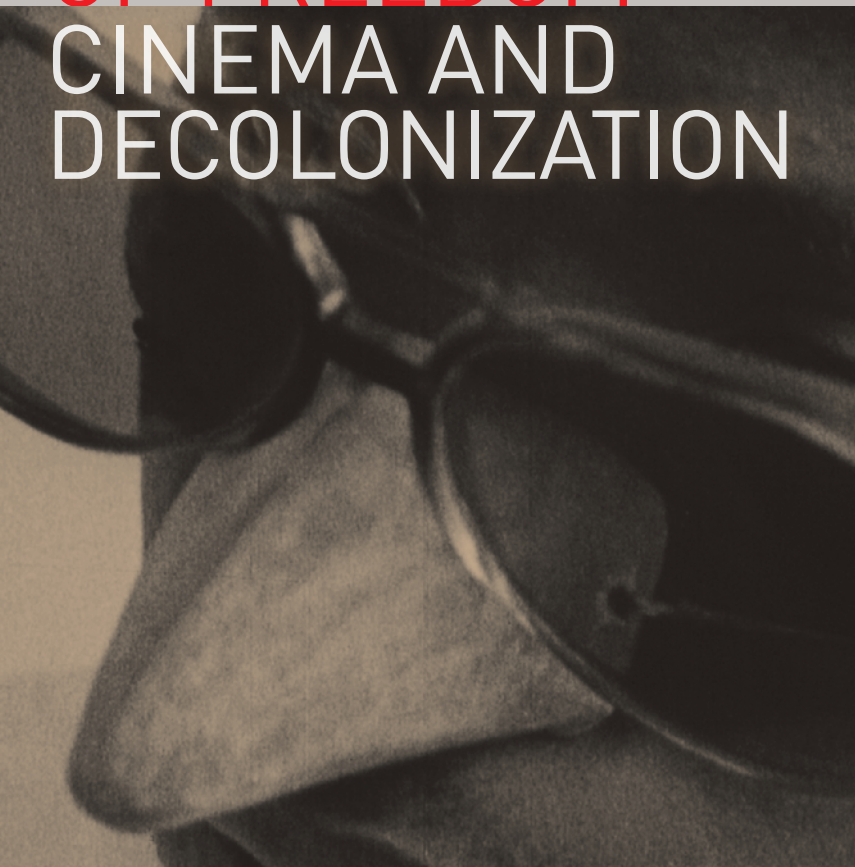


SPECTERS OF FREEDOM



CINEMA AND DECOLONIZATION



arsenal
institut für film und videokunst e.v.

F₁ On vit
 F₂ On survit
 F₁ On nous
 photographie
 F₂ Pour leurs belles dames
 et leurs beaux messes

Quote from the voice-over of
 LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI.
 Flipside of a letter by Assia Djebar
 to the director of the Berlinale Forum,
 dated Paris, January 23, 1983.

Vorwort

Das Goethe-Institut als das deutsche Kulturinstitut ist bei seiner Arbeit auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent beständig mit der Frage nach dem Rahmen eines europäischen Kulturinstituts im Kontext des Post-Kolonialismus konfrontiert. Die Reflexion der kolonialen Vergangenheit, der Umgang mit dem kolonialen Erbe, der Rolle des Instituts in Zeiten des Post- und Neo-Kolonialismus und während der Dekolonialisierung des Kontinents sind wichtige Fragestellungen für das Netzwerk der Goethe-Institute. Nur ein offener Umgang mit der Komplexität dieser Themen kann der Arbeit die Glaubwürdigkeit verleihen, die das Goethe-Institut in Zusammenarbeit mit lokalen Partnern, Künstlern, Akademikern und Intellektuellen benötigt. Aus diesem Grund arbeitet das Goethe-Institut auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent mit verschiedenen Kulturprojekten zu diesem Themenkomplex.

Während die deutsche koloniale Vergangenheit in den ehemals kolonialisierten Ländern zum Allgemeinwissen gehört und teilweise identitätsstiftend ist, wurde die Auseinandersetzung in Deutschland von anderen Prioritätensetzungen wie dem Umgang mit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg überlagert. Die deutliche Stärkung der Diskussionen in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit zur Aufarbeitung der deutschen Kolonialvergangenheit sowie die Auseinandersetzung mit den Dekolonialisierungsprozessen haben dazu geführt, dass diese wichtigen Themen auch in Deutschland eine stärkere Präsenz erfahren.

Preface

In its work on the African continent, the Goethe-Institut as the German cultural institute is continuously confronted with the question of how to frame the mission of a European cultural institute in the post-colonial context. Reflecting on the colonial past, dealing with colonial heritage, defining the role of the institute in times of post- and neo-colonialism and in times of decolonization of the continent are important issues for the network of the Goethe-Institut. Only when these complex topics are addressed openly can the institute's work receive the credibility necessary for cooperation with local partners, artists, academics, and intellectuals. For this reason, the Goethe-Institut works with a variety of cultural projects on the African continent that deal with these topics.

While the German colonial past is common knowledge in the countries that were formerly colonized, and sometimes even defines identities, the discourse in Germany has been dominated by other priorities, such as dealing with World War II. Recent discussions on how to deal with the German colonial past are becoming more robust in the German public discourse, and decolonization processes are being reflected upon, which has meant that these important topics have been brought into focus in Germany as well.

The film package "Specters of Freedom – Cinema and Decolonization" can make an important contribution to these reflections. The films that originated in the years between 1969 and 1982 and that describe the liberation

Das Filmpaket „Specters of Freedom – Cinema and Decolonization“ kann einen wichtigen Beitrag zu dieser Auseinandersetzung leisten. Die Filme, die zwischen 1969 und 1982 entstanden und die Befreiungskämpfe und den Beginn der Post-Kolonialität beschreiben, sind wichtige Anfänge der Dekolonialisierungsprozesse, die bis heute andauern. In einer Zeit, in der zum Beispiel in Südafrika heftige Diskussionen um die Dekolonialisierung der Universitäten und des Curriculums geführt werden, sind diese Zeitzeugnisse der Bildproduktion von unschätzbarem Wert.

Wir möchten uns herzlich beim Arsenal – Institut für Film und Video-kunst e.V. in Berlin, und dabei besonders Stefanie Schulte Strathaus und Markus Ruff, sowie den Kuratoren des Programms, Tobias Hering und Catarina Simão, für ihre zähe und geduldige Arbeit bedanken, das Filmpaket zusammenzustellen, die Materiallage und die Rechte zu klären, die Filme zu digitalisieren und sie damit einer breiten Öffentlichkeit wieder zugänglich zu machen. Das Goethe-Institut hat mit dem Filmpaket „Specters of Freedom – Cinema and Decolonization“ so die Möglichkeit, an den wichtigen Diskursen mit diesem filmischen Erbe teilzunehmen und sich dabei den Anforderungen eines deutschen Kulturinstituts auf adäquate Weise zu stellen.

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struggles and the beginnings of post-colonialism are important starting points for the decolonization processes that are still underway today. In times where lively debates are taking place on how to decolonize universities and the curriculum, for example in South Africa, the historical testimony of this image production is invaluable.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art in Berlin, and in particular to Stefanie Schulte Strathaus and Markus Ruff, as well as to the curators of the program, Tobias Hering and Catarina Simão, for their tenacious and patient work in compiling the film package, in tracking down the films, in clarifying legal issues, in digitizing the films, and as a result in making them available to the broader public. With the film package “Specters of Freedom – Cinema and Decolonization,” the Goethe-Institut has the opportunity to participate in this important discourse through the film heritage and thereby adequately to meet the challenges of a German cultural institute.



Film still MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE

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Specters of Freedom – Cinema and Decolonization

The selection of films in this DVD box set had its origins in a three-day film program co-curated by Tobias Hering and Catarina Simão at the Arsenal Cinema in Berlin in November 2012. It consisted of the six films comprised by this edition, plus *A Queda* (*The Fall*, Brazil, 1978), the film that Ruy Guerra made in Brazil just before he returned to his country of birth, Mozambique, where he would take on a leading role in post-liberation cinema production and politics.

The title “Specters of Freedom” is a reference to the spectral and unruly nature of all films, particularly when they are taken out of an archive and brought back to life in a projection. The scope of the research had been framed as: films produced during a period of political upheaval that either document the period in question or can themselves be seen to express a “new time.” Films in search of images and sounds capable of conveying a new sense of freedom that is imminent or has already been attained whilst still often having to grapple with the specters of freedom: ideas thought to have been overcome reappearing in fresh garb; the scrap heap of symbols, images, and slogans and a suddenly anachronistic language; the euphoria of those past and their unfulfilled hopes.

The original program was the result of an interwoven research in film archives in Berlin (Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art), Maputo (O Instituto Nacional de Audiovisual e Cinema – INAC), and Lisbon (Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema). During the

production of the DVD, specific questions concerning the print status of Asia Djebar’s film *LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L’OUBLI* also involved archives and researchers in Algiers, including the Établissement public de télévision (EPTV). The constellation of films as well as the source materials resorted to for their digitization inevitably reflect the set priorities as much as the contingencies of such a situated research and production process. If the supplementary title, “Cinema and Decolonization,” already used for the program in November 2012, was maintained for the DVD, it is not meant to lay claim to any representative, let alone comprehensive character of this selection. Keeping this title rather meant to give credit to the fact that the histories inscribed in these films also encompass the necessities, contingencies, and virtualities of film archives in general and of “the colonial archive” in particular: a signifier for a transnational, desituated, displaced residue of a collective but fragmented historical experience, which keeps engaging our present and which, when researched, will inevitably prompt what Édouard Glissant has called *détournement*, re-routing and deviation.

Ruy Guerra’s *MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE*, a crucial and complex contribution to the cinema of decolonization, has also been an essential film for this research, because it is the only one of the six films on this DVD of which a print (alas in different edits) exists in all three of the archives in Maputo, Lisbon, and Berlin. Officially the first fic-

tion film produced in post-liberation Mozambique, *MUEDA* entered Arsenal’s collection when it was also the first Mozambican production ever selected for the Berlinale’s Forum program (in 1981). Linking Catarina Simão’s already ongoing research in Maputo and Tobias Hering’s film viewings in Arsenal’s archive, where *MUEDA* has remained the only Mozambican film to date, the film offered itself as a rich source for conceptual considerations. Its vibrant combination of cinema vérité, popular theater, oral tradition, and post-liberation didactics, its playful ambivalence between documentary claims and fictional appearance, its engagement with a post-liberation re-enactment of colonial violence inevitably attracted the interest of a project ready to charge the specters of freedom and to raise questions on the whereabouts of the “colonial archive.”

The research was initiated in the context of the larger cycle, “Living Archive – Archive Work as a Contemporary Artistic and Curatorial Practice” (2011–2013), in which Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art invited over 40 curators, filmmakers, artists, and researchers to propose projects around its own collection of films that would explore archival work as a contemporary practice by linking research, preservation, and publication. Since then, this concept of an accessible archive, of an archive that only lives when its contents are seen, has turned out to be enormously fruitful. Several follow-up projects have not only given shape to new ways of thinking and performing an archive, but also and importantly helped to re-appreciate and safeguard

contested cinematic legacies in Sudan, India, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Nigeria, and elsewhere.

The idea of a “living archive” has helped to clarify that an archive bears testimony to the past as much as it makes demands on the present. Digitization, digital restoration, and redistribution of endangered film prints and footage is an important factor in contemporary archival practice and an obvious means to give films new life. However, it is not always the only or even the most desirable way to go, and the “Living Archive” project has therefore paid equal attention to cinema practices, to time-based forms of presentation, and to the wealth of knowledge transmitted by the physical and sensual qualities of the archive. While some participants in the “Living Archive” project had made the digitization and DVD release of films an essential part of their project proposals, the digitization and release of the selection presented here was a supplement to the curatorial research and was made possible by support from the Goethe-Institut. At the time when this DVD edition was first deliberated, no one foresaw that it would end up being five years in the making.

It has been an ambitious undertaking in many ways. This DVD reinserts into cycles of awareness and appreciation six films that hitherto have not been given the attention they arguably deserve. None of these films have previously been publicly released on DVD. Their visibility even among interested circles informed by Third Cinema and the cinema of decolonization has been extremely limited due to these films’ mostly scarce and precarious existence



Film still MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE

as analogue prints or pirated video copies. Some of these material, economic, and political aspects will become more explicit in the following texts.

The significant differences in the archival politics around these films and their reception, however, should not be overlooked. While REASSEMBLAGE and, to a certain extent, LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI have been registered and appreciated in discourses on the cinema of decolonization, the Portuguese language films in this selection have not been widely seen since the sometimes spectacular reception by their first audiences. This is not, however, to diminish the merits of the pioneering research and programming done internationally in recent years by Diana Andringa, Maria do Carmo

Piçarra, Ute Fendler, Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc, Monica Lima Gomes, Maria Paula Meneses, Gabriel Mondlane, Luis Carlos Patraquim, Pedro Pimenta, Catarina Simão, and others to which this DVD release is indebted and for whose work it will hopefully prove valuable. It should also be noted that due to the re-appreciation of Arsenal's rare archive prints of MUEDA and MONANGAMBEE, these films have recently been exposed to a growing number of cinema audiences.

*Tobias Hering
Berlin, December 2017*

Mueda, Memória e Massacre.

When the nation achieved independence in 1975, the Mozambican urban elite embarked on an intense discovery of the events that had unfolded during the war in the northern part of the country. There had been ten years of clashes between FRELIMO guerrillas and Portuguese colonial troops but little was known about these events, since information was tightly controlled by the colonial government. Stories about battles and victories had yet to be revealed. However, just like in Algeria or in Cuba, cinema relating to Mozambique's independence sought to be the "art of the masses." The most essential aspect was that it should function in pedagogical terms, with a view to creating a unifying conscience in the country, without necessarily concentrating on investigating the complexities of the war.

In 1979, the National Cinema Institute of Mozambique (Instituto Nacional de Cinema de Moçambique – INC) produced a film entitled MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE, directed by the Mozambican filmmaker Ruy Guerra – who returned to Mozambique after more than 20 years of self-imposed exile in Brazil and in Europe. The film examined an episode during the anti-colonial resistance movement that became known as the "Mueda Massacre" (*Massacre de Mueda*), which occurred in 1960, in the Cabo Delgado region, a few kilometers from the border with Tanzania. Even though it essentially involved ethnic and local elements – between Makonde migrants in Tanzania and the Portuguese administration

– the contours of this episode meant that it was interpreted as the crucial turning point for the commencement of the armed struggle. The war began a few years later, in 1964, in the region where the massacre took place, and hence it is narrated as the inaugural event within FRELIMO's campaign to achieve freedom and independence.

The film about the massacre, as imagined by Ruy Guerra, did not adopt a heroic approach, imbued with overtones of virility and physical confrontation, which might have seemed an opportune way of honoring the sacrifice and courage of the liberators. Instead, the film substituted "realist" violence with popular theater, with laughter, words, and satire.

During a journey to Cabo Delgado, Ruy Guerra learned of a play that the guerrillas used to stage in the Nachingwea training camp during the war years. Surprisingly, the play continued to be performed even after independence, in the town of Mueda, during commemorations to mark the anniversary of the massacre. While this play was an integral part of mobilizing for the independence struggle in Nachingwea, its repositioning during that moment and at that very site resulted in a particularly interesting symbolism: the inhabitants of the town of Mueda – which included survivors of the massacre – became actors representing a theatrical version of their own story. They portray the events that had taken place 18 years earlier, representing an illustration of past realities as though

it were a Western or a thriller. Captured on film in this work by Ruy Guerra, the play recreates the dialogues, the protagonists, the songs, and the sequence of events that induced the colonial authorities to respond with disproportionate violence to the populace's peaceful demands for independence. Chronological rigor and complex intricacies of this historical past are attenuated so as to facilitate the "naturalization" of this living and oral drama.

One of the film's main themes is this very movement of naturalization, insofar as the film relates an event from Mozambique's colonial past, showcasing aspects that could never be attributed to this past: the space of administrative power is now profaned by the popular play, which occupies the erstwhile site where the massacre took place; the actions are always accompanied by lively reactions and hearty laughs by the participating public; the universe of the white colonists is perspicaciously mimicked by black actors, who "purloin from colonialism both its costumes as well as the role of costumed actors which they played in all colonial actions"¹; hoisted to the sound of the national anthem, the Portuguese flag is shown upside down, "symbolizing its undue and abusive use by a handful of oppressors and their lackeys in an attempt to legitimize their actions."² Clearly, it is not so much the spectacle of the inversion of the "colonizer-colonized" power equation that creates the subversive lines of this play as much as the profoundly affective and familiar appropriation of the colonists' universe, which the Ma-

konde actors bring to life, in a caricature that is effortlessly recognizable even today.

II The effect of being immersed in a theatrical play is interspersed with brief descriptions recounted by survivors of the massacre. Their personal memories of the events anticipate what is depicted in the play or pepper the structured sequence repeatedly with dates and names, showing the arrival in Mueda of various political delegations from Tanzania (which was called Tanganyika at the time). However, some of these eye-witness accounts diverged from official narratives concerning the massacre. This meant that changes had to be made even after the film was released. Constantly occupied with negotiations relating to his works being produced in Brazil, Ruy Guerra only sporadically accompanied this process of "correction," which was entrusted to the team at the National Cinema Institute. Various versions of the film were made before the definitive version which was released for distribution. This episode of changes is consistent with news from the period (explaining the one year delay in the film's international distribution) and Ruy Guerra categorically dismissed any suggestion of censorship in this regard. When questioned by Soviet journalists at the Tashkent Festival (where the film won an award in 1980), a member of FRELIMO's Central Committee openly addressed the matter: "We decided to edit it in order to restore historical truth. The Mueda Massacre is still set in the context of a regionalist move-

ment (in this case, the Makonde region), a phase that only changed with the creation of the FRELIMO, under Eduardo Mondlane."³

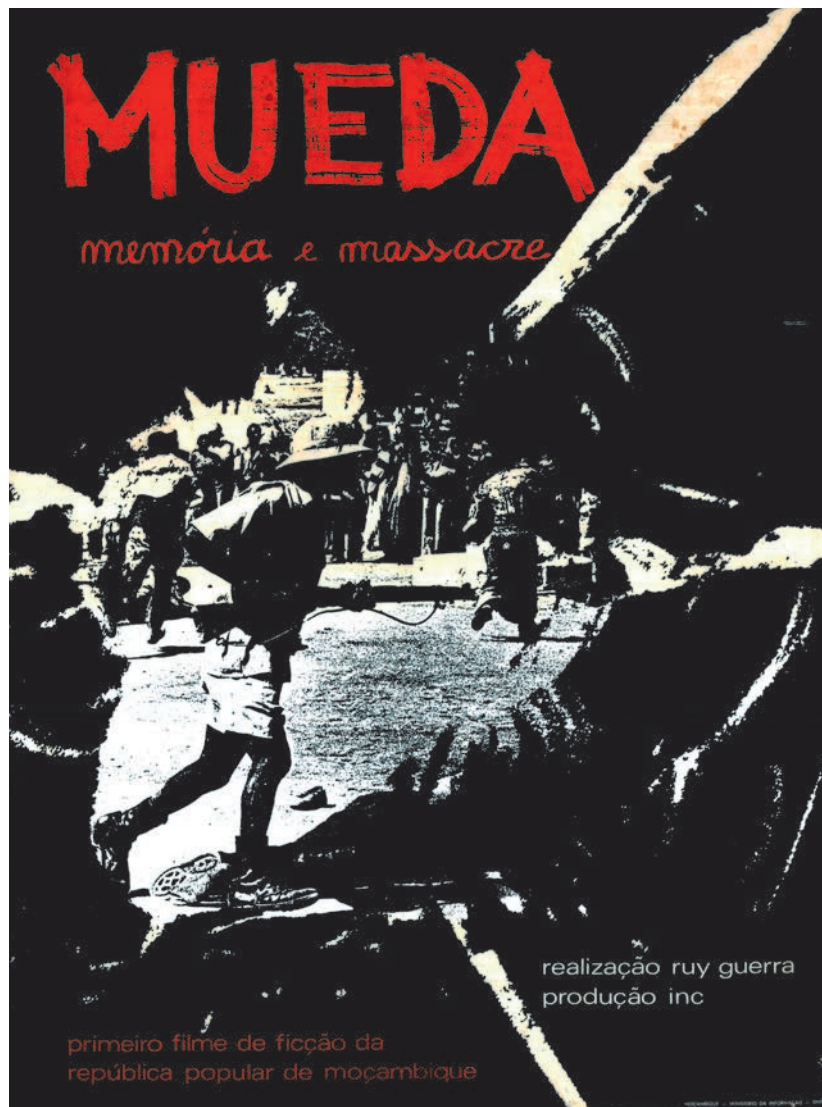
In his recently published biography⁴, Ruy Guerra's return to Mozambique is viewed in terms of a mature militancy. A renowned filmmaker who was an integral part of the Brazilian new cinema movement and had great international prestige, he sought to redeem his absence from the country during the struggle for independence. However, Ruy Guerra affirmed that he did not wish to provoke any friction: "During revolutionary processes, military elements always clash with artistic elements; they are different paths, clashing with the powers that be."⁵

But years later, Ruy Guerra did not hide his nostalgia for his film on the massacre, the original MUEDA. Guerra was not interested in the assumed and unequivocal position in the voices of those who witnessed the massacre: "I was interested in knowing what they thought about individual stories in relation to collective fact."⁶ The play's political thrust was translated into an artistic proposal in the film by means of fragmented glimpses relating to the day of the massacre. Ruy Guerra called this the "accumulation of memories."⁷ MUEDA shows the testimony of one of the real protagonists of this episode (the proto-nationalist Faustino Vanombe), while others describe events seen from the perspective of the Portuguese forces, such as the sepoy Ernesto and the former Portuguese colonial administrator, who only appears in the first version of the film. The presence of a narrator providing a

historical context for the events exists only in the early versions. The narrator was re-filmed and was later substituted by an actor before being definitively removed in the final version.

Ruy Guerra viewed the testimony of the former administrator of Mueda as a sign of the party's political generosity and non-dogmatic openness. This erstwhile colonial administrator had been arrested immediately on the first day of independence but was later "pardoned" and released by President Samora Machel himself. His testimony in the film, however, deprived the day of the massacre of an important element of its mythical construction. Starting by questioning the number of dead (600 dead in the official version), it reduced a violent massacre to a simple riot caused by unrealistic expectations of claims emanating from Tanganyika.

III Ruy Guerra argued that the didactic sense of MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE functioned by opening the process up to the unknown: "We here at the Institute [the INC] were not the people who decided to make a full-length feature film about a piece of fiction. In light of this knowledge, we decided to experiment within an existing reality. We went to film without even knowing what the show was all about, how it unfolded and without any parameters *a priori*, neither in terms of aesthetic or political judgments."⁸ It is interesting that Ruy Guerra presents the process of the film's construction as heralding the work's language. The fact that it was considered the first fiction film of the People's Republic of Mozambique clearly indicates the open concept with



Poster, "Mueda, Memória e Massacre: first fiction film of People's Republic of Mozambique" DNPP – Direcção Nacional de Propaganda e Publicidade, 1980

which it set out, by articulating fictional and non-fictional elements. Apart from the programmatic needs associated with the historical moment when the film was made, part of the film's interpretation is due to the transparency of its production process and to its didactic purposes (and isn't this the real plane for an encounter with a political vision?).

The project for this film mobilized a large part of the staff of the National Cinema Institute in an effort to use exclusively national resources, influencing the use of available technical means. Black-and-white film was chosen so that it could be developed at the Institute's laboratory. As the date of the commemoration of the massacre drew closer, Ruy Guerra travelled to Cabo Delgado with the team so as to record a journalistic view of the play, camera in hand, "a cinema-document," since the team was keenly aware that this commemoration would not be repeated many more times in the future since, owing to independence and greater mobility among the population, migration away from rural areas was inevitable. It was only during his second trip to Cabo Delgado, about two months later, that a decision was made to compile the testimonies of the survivors and film them. During this second journey, Guerra tried to improve the technical aspects of the *rac-cord*, the sound and image, always without altering the original structure of the play. The succession of takes implies that the play is repeated en bloc, until the actors gradually become aware that they are participating not only in the play but also in the film,

where their role is to be actors and the role of the crowd is to be the crowd. Guerra strove to demonstrate how fiction could appear by recording elements of reality and thus to contribute towards breaking the taboo of being incapable of producing fiction during that difficult period, with the absence of technical preparation. Later, in 1985, the institute would produce a fictional film, a co-production with Yugoslavia, with actors and scenography clearly within the conventions of the genre. The attribution of the status of first fiction film to MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE was then contested. However, for many of the young filmmakers of the National Cinema Institute, the experience of MUEDA was in fact an initiation into the technical and narrative procedures of fiction.

IV No other myth of the history of nationalism in Mozambique involved so many paradoxes as the massacre at Mueda on 16 June 1960. This perhaps explains why MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE was rarely seen within the country when compared to the international circulation the film enjoyed from the outset in the years after it was released for distribution (it won awards at Soviet film festivals, was screened in Europe, India, Brazil, Australia, and the USA).

The preoccupation with working with the print in the best condition was raised in technical terms by the promoters of this digitization project, but was also of historical interest, since it entailed research in the archives of the National Cinema Institute, consultations with documentation produced

at the time, and surveying opinions among local audiences. It was important to understand the aspects that could be worked upon in this project. Hence, the dialogues in the Makonde language and the lyrics of the songs chanted by the crowd were translated and subtitled in the film. The narrative power of the songs was now restored by means of the film editing options.

In the film, while meeting with the Portuguese administrator, the Portuguese governor discusses the imperial cartography of the African continent, being divided up in Berlin among the major colonial powers. Continuing, he dismisses Julius Nyerere, the nationalist leader of the country next door, who in 1960 negotiated Tanzania's independence from Great Britain. The scene filmed inside the Administrative Station is imbued with songs that can be heard coming from outside. Tensions rise. The crowd chants the refrain, a preamble to the conflict, since its message describes a paradigm that is opposed to that of the colonizers. Freedom is claimed on the basis of a far broader cartography, which is much more ambivalent than national borders.

After the whites are dead in Mueda / Nyerere will come to govern ... / Nyerere's ideas fly high / as though they were airplanes ... / The ideas of the natives fly high / as though they were kites.

At the time the film was produced, an article by Licínio Azevedo was published in the magazine *Tempo*:

1,2 In *Tempo* no. 436, 1978.

3 In "Le retour de Ruy Guerra", *Positif*, 268 (1983).

4 "Ruy Guerra: paixão escancarada," by Vavy Pacheco Borges, Edit. *Boitempo*, São Paulo, 2017.

"Something dangerous is happening in Mueda." The text spoke of the assertiveness of the lyrics of the songs being chanted at the theater in Mueda. The songs are a parallel plot to the action unfolding in the film, which is hidden from those who do not understand the Makonde language. However, they allow access to layers of historical developments linked both to the day of the massacre as well as to past and future times, revealing the overlapping of past and future aspirations within a time frame chalked out by the film. These more subtle aspects permeate the story that is being recounted by the actors, expanding their significance.

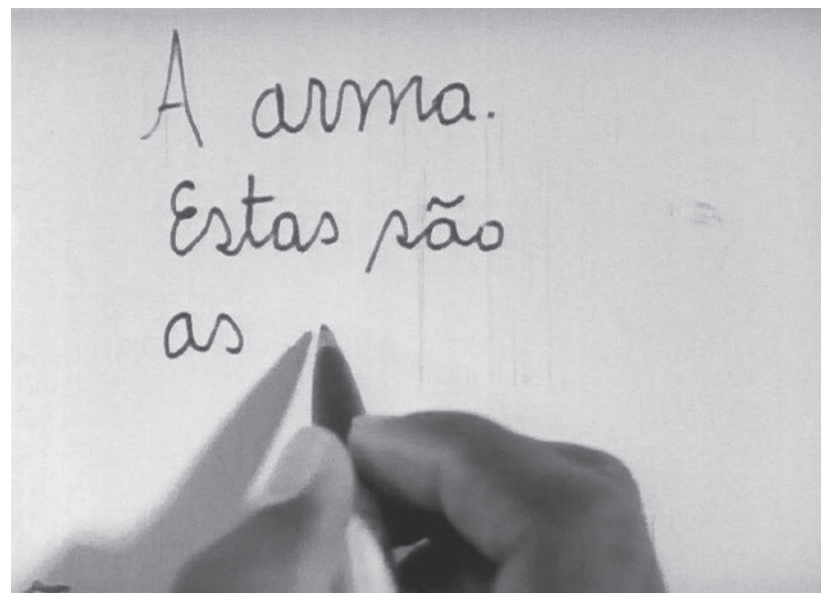
While these small dissonances vex the official interpretation of MUEDA (evident in the texts of the intertitles, in the univocal interventions of the witnesses, etc.), they pave the way for other possible interpretations of the film or for interpretations which permeate the work; especially when the question returns to its point of origin: to the condition of bearing witness to a massacre. Something terribly violent happened to us: the "us" being those who bring the play to life. So "we" are the ones who can bring (colonialism to) justice, through theater.

Catarina Simão
Lisbon, December 2017

*Translated from Portuguese
by Roopanjali Roy.*

5 The direct quotes are from the interview with Ruy Guerra by Catarina Simão made in September 2011, Maputo.

6,7,8 In *Tempo* no. 512, 1980.



Film still ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS

Estas são as armas.

After having overthrown the colonial yoke in 1975 the new government of independent Mozambique embarked on a strategic mission as part of the international alliance against apartheid. The film *ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS* served as a tool to denounce apartheid at the United Nations, proving the illegal aggression wrought by the Rhodesian apartheid regime within Mozambique's borders. These incursions occurred because Mozambique continued to be profoundly involved in the processes of decolonization taking place in the neighboring country, supporting the guerrilla faction led by Robert Mugabe, who later won the first elections held in independent Zimba-

bwe in 1980. The film sought precisely to explain to the entire population the reasons to continue to support the guerrillas who were opposing the racist Rhodesian regime, even though it meant suffering the effects of war and destabilization. "Mozambique is at war with those who exploit our brothers, the people of Zimbabwe, at war with those who are killing our own people." However, while the film introduced a sense of urgency and sought to mobilize viewers by focusing on these current events, it also served to consolidate a historical narrative of power.

ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS was produced by the National Cinema Institute (Instituto Nacional de Cinema – INC)

and was released on 25 September 1978, the day that commemorated the start of the armed struggle (1964–1974). The film was directed by a young Brazilian photographer, Murilo Salles, albeit with significant input from the FRELIMO party's Department of Information.

In the film, the process of Mozambique's independence is depicted completely in the context of the dynamics of the region of southern Africa, relegating relations with the Western world to a collateral plane. The collusion between the Portuguese colonial authorities and their allies (South Rhodesians and South Africans) is shown by means of a broad selection of films documenting the armed struggle supporting the FRELIMO, which were provided by journalists and foreign directors who lent their weight to the FRELIMO cause. The work also includes excerpts from newsreel type films, summarizing news from the colonial period. This material, which was Portuguese and had been "nationalized" with independence, was appropriated anew to highlight other facets of the white conspiracy more candidly: commercial and diplomatic aspects. Other colonial sources, such as radio archival material, contribute towards creating a spirit of disruptive appropriation, whether by means of songs from the period or the speech by the last president of the *Estado Novo* Council, Marcelo Caetano.

The splicing of older and more recent archival images shows vestiges of significant physical differences while switching between different formats. More than accidental defects, they re-

veal how the violence of such aggression can respond to the violence of a visual montage. The film opens with two very violent Rhodesian attacks. The first took place during the armed struggle period in the province of Tete, in the northern part of the country. The images used are from a militant Soviet film made in 1971 entitled *Viva Frelimo! (Long Live Frelimo!)*, which already denounced the violence of the Rhodesian aggression against the defenseless populace. The Soviet film explained that the attack took place in retaliation for the blockade caused by guerilla activities in accessing the construction of the Cabora Bassa dam. This was a "white line," considered to be vital, located between the Rhodesian border and access to the sea. The film's text while describing the extent of the white collusion is particularly insightful: "However, the power lines transmitting electricity in the future were already paving the way for a spiritual union of the Portuguese colonizers with the racist citadels – the Republic of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. [...] This made the dam a symbolic element, since it would rupture the waves of the national freedom movement. It is nothing more than a conspiracy and a strategy to ensure control. And the Selous Scouts from South Rhodesia will enter into Mozambican territory, without their work clothes, without their shovels and diggers."

The film then follows a "current events" approach, with images of one of the most atrocious Rhodesian massacres that had taken place until then. This attack occurred in Nyazonia, in August 1976, in one of the protected

areas beyond the frontier, inside Mozambique. Dubbed "Operation Eland" by the Rhodesian Selous Scouts, this was an attack where hundreds of refugees from Zimbabwe were slaughtered by "Ian Smith's illegal and racist" government troops. The images are from reports covering the destruction caused by the attacks, which threatened the territory along the border from early 1976 onward. In March 1976, Mozambique closed its borders with Rhodesia and the latter retaliated swiftly: not just via attacks but also by creating an insurgent group of saboteurs which began to act within Mozambique. This was how the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO) faction, an armed movement which sought to destabilize the Maputo regime, came into being. The clashes continued even after Zimbabwe's independence and ultimately escalated into a civil war (1977–1992).

The film becomes more complex when it discovers the potential of the images of the armed struggle to reinterpret Mozambique's post-independence problems – and not just proof of who the enemy was and who vanquished the nation's foes. The editing used these recycled images first to narrate a history of the legitimization of power and to then construct an argument for mobilization: Samora Machel, the FRELIMO leader, gripped two small Uzi machine guns and uttered the slogan that structured the film: These are the weapons! "These are the weapons that began the war here in Cabo Delgado! The trucks you have are due to these weapons. The bazookas and the guns you have today are due to

these weapons. The crops you have today, peanuts, sesame, and chestnuts, are due to these weapons." Because not only did the weapons free the people from colonialism, they also enabled them to rebuild their lives. Hence, the future of the people depended on weapons to safeguard against each new threat to the nation's development. Those images of Samora Machel in Cabo Delgado were from a 1970 report by Rob de Vries for Dutch TV called *Viva Frelimo*. The other films cited, apart from the Soviet film *Viva Frelimo! (1971)* by the Leonid Maksimov/Yuri Yegorov collective, are *A Luta Continua (1971)* by the American filmmaker Robert Van Lierop, the film *Venceremos* by the Yugoslav Dragutin Popovic (1967), and *Behind the Lines (1971)* by the British filmmaker Margaret Dickinson. Despite the diversity of the cinematography, a common narrative line is discernible in them – the ideological and revolutionary line of the FRELIMO. The excerpts are chosen according to the situations that best illustrate the nature of the narrative: the interaction between military successes and changes in social life, the importance of discipline and responsible governance, education and health in the Liberated Zones, communal production, solidarity and support from the people, etc; in short, preparation for a socialist society, opposed to the abuse and exploitation of colonial capitalism and to imperialism. The film's editing nonetheless reflects this more pragmatic aspect, in which the history of the freedom struggle serves as a guide for actions to bring about a post-independence socialist

transformation. Hence, the second part of the film unfolds from the resolutions adopted at the III Congress in 1977, where the FRELIMO declared itself to be a single party and formally adopted a Marxist-Leninist orientation. In the images showing popular support for Zimbabwe, we can see the people marching while brandishing slogans against Ian Smith. They perfectly reflect the vision of the dominant party.

The director, Murilo Salles, lived in Mozambique for two years and personally witnessed one of the turbulent phases of the nation's reconstruction. When I met with him at his production studio in Rio de Janeiro in August 2012, he spoke vividly of his memories.¹

"I ended up in Mozambique when I was 27 years old, in 1977, I don't recall what month it was. At the time I was just a photographer. Ruy Guerra had contacted me while I was here to go and make a documentary in Mozambique on the III FRELIMO Congress [...] At the time I was a militant and as I had not participated in the armed struggle here, since I was much younger at the time, I felt I had an ethical debt to repay to myself. So I went there ... I went with Ruy. When we arrived in Mozambique we found that there was no material ... there was nothing. Once there, the director of the Institute [INC], Américo Soares, invited me to give workshops and I then stayed on to teach classes, as a volunteer. I even ended up becoming part of the media team documenting President Samora Machel's travels."

Between 1977 and 1978, Murilo Salles taught a course in photography and directing for a group of young photographers and cameramen at the

National Cinema Institute: Amade Ali, Luis Simão, João Costa (Funcho), Vicente Bai Bai, and Chabele. Luis Simão had already worked with archival material documenting the armed struggle and it was felt that it would be good to make a film based on this footage to conclude the course. However, the film quickly assumed far greater proportions, involving more people at the Institute as well as senior party members.

"The writer Luis Bernardo Honwana worked with me on that film. He structured the text for the film; he was Samora's trusted lieutenant. And also Jorge Rebelo, who was the Minister for Culture. The editing was done with Luis Simão, he made the film with me. Except we didn't film anything, because in the beginning there was no film stock, we only used the footage that was there in the archives! Fernando Silva, who was a very important guy there at the Institute, he filmed ... and I filmed, yes I did, with him ... that was when Rhodesia invaded the camps of the guerrillas who were fighting there, led by Mugabe. The film has those scenes. [...] Nobody knew about those camps, I didn't know where they were ... I only learnt about them when those attacks took place and I would go there to film ... I would first vomit, I filmed with my eyes closed and I would count: 1, 2, 3, ... 10."

Concentrating on the screen and on the space button on the keyboard, Murilo Salles allows the images of the film to whirl past, looking to pause at a specific point which illustrates what he is preparing to explain. The lesson begins with the "ideological codes" that



"We Mozambicans are fed up with Smith's taunts – sucker banker. We are determined to fight against him for good! The struggle continues!" Demonstration in support of the closing of borders with Rhodesia, March 1976, Baixa, Maputo. Photo and courtesy of João Costa (Funcho).



Mass rally in which President Samora Machel announced the closing of borders with Rhodesia at the stadium of Sporting Clube de Maputo (today Clube de Desportos do Maxaquene), March 1976, Baixa, Maputo. Photo and courtesy of João Costa (Funcho).

are discernible in the alignment of its editing: "Here, you have something with which the people can identify. The FRELIMO wanted to form military cadres. And the key question after coming to power was to organize, reform, and create a popular army which could irrevocably ensure the FRELIMO's power, so that there was no going back. That is why you can see, right at the beginning of the film, there are some guerrillas walking in individual rows. Then they start to organize themselves some more, carrying things, they are already dressed better, and here (pauses) is the transition which I mentioned; that is already to show the organization within the armed struggle. And then you can see progress, there is already an army. You will now see a sequence of community work ... here they are: that was on a collective farm, it was to prove that the soldiers wield arms and they also wield hoes. There, oh ... the film is entirely edited with this preoccupation that the organization developed gradually. [...] Here you can see Samora Machel, right there at the start he made a point of showing the weapons. Those are the weapons that provided the title for the film, nothing is symbolic ..., those are real weapons, they are literal weapons! If the FRELIMO won the war it was because the FRELIMO was armed. That is Marxism-Leninism, isn't it? ... One cannot have a revolution without weapons, it really is seizing power. [...] The images of the Liberated Zones caused a stir there, when the Portuguese people saw those images ... it was an armed struggle, with organized armies! This had an incredible power. And I filmed

those images there, or rather I projected them onto a white wall and filmed them again with a 35mm camera. I synchronized everything thanks to the energy cycle. It was very rudimentary, but it worked! [...] Samora Machel would say: the people don't know how to read, the people speak local languages, they can barely understand Portuguese, the film has to enthrall them by means of the images. I found that to be quite incredible! That was a challenge. And I used a lot of music too. I even used the music of Jean-Michel Jarre and a lot of similar music by ... by bourgeois bands! However, the greater concern was to use a lot of images, because the film was to be screened in the *machambas*. It was shown all over the country, it was even screened in the bullring ... it wasn't shown in a cinema hall even once! And the people remembered and knew those Portuguese authorities, but they were still not familiar with their representatives, those who came later. So, as you see, that was very important. [...] That was the purpose of this film, to show the people and explain what imperialism was and it had to be as simple as possible ... Samora was very uncomfortable when he used to say: "Down with Imperialism!" He was sure that nobody knew what it was. In truth, that was the quest. He said to me: "My Brazilian comrade!" (that was what he called me), I say, "Down with Imperialism!" and everyone says, "Down with Imperialism!" and then I ask, "What is Imperialism?!" and everyone is silent. "Imperialism is colonialism! [...] The film is absolutely a political film ... I did not like Stalinists much, even though

I complied with a task. And making ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS really was a task! I wasn't even mentioned in the credits! But the film was sent to festivals. In fact, the National Film Board has records of a review of the film and a festival in which it participated in Leipzig, where it won an award in 1979. I remember that the check came in my name, they asked me to endorse it on the back and I did. I was just a photographer, I wanted to become a director and I became a director with this film."

Catarina Simão
Lisbon, December 2017

*Translated from Portuguese
by Roopanjali Roy.*

¹ The following quotes are taken from an interview with Murilo Salles by Catarina Simão on August 18, 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Film still ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS



A text assemblage on “Reassemblage”

Woman is depicted as the one who possessed fire. Only she knew how to make fire. She kept it in the worst places: at the end of the stick she used to dig the ground with, for example. [from the voice-over of REASSEMBLAGE]

In her debut film, Trinh T. Minh-ha tried to break the ethnographer’s “habit of imposing a meaning on every single sign” by exposing everyday images of rural life in Senegal to a self-reflexive voice-over, which starts with the claim to “not speak about, just speak nearby.” While at first sight the images in REASSEMBLAGE are scarcely different from

a conventional anthropological film, disorientation sets in when one notices the apparent lack of a narrative, when sequences are interrupted, then repeated, elements singled out by close-ups, sounds and voices looped in what seems like a constantly pending dramaturgy. “A film about what? A film about Senegal; but what in Senegal?”

Bérénice Reynaud¹:

A woman of many talents and many cultures, Trinh T. Minh-ha embodies with a rare ethical elegance the contradictions of a “postmodern” condition: the fractures of a dominant discourse, questioned by categories of people conveniently labelled “Others:” women, people of color, inhabitants of the Third World. This is sharply described by the director herself: “What is at stake is not only the hegemony of Western cultures, but also their identities as unified cultures; in other words, the realization that there is a Third World in every First World, and vice versa. The master is made to recognize that His Culture is not as homogeneous, not as monolithic as He once believed it to be. He discovers, often with much reluctance, that he is just an Other among Others. In this ‘horizontal vertigo,’ identity is this multiple layer whose process never leads to the True Self, or to Woman, but only to other layers, other selves, other women.” [...]

What struck me when I first saw REASSEMBLAGE at the New York Film Festival was its voice-over: unmistakably feminine, unmistakably foreign, hesitant yet resolute, ironical yet poetic, it slightly irritated me. When I related this experience to a group of students at Ann Arbor, I was asked to explain my discomfort. “It is because, at the time, I was not very comfortable with my own femininity,” I quickly free-associated. The truth is, the first encounter with Trinh’s films is often unsettling for the viewer, because it decenters his/her positioning as a subject. Instead of centering the subject/viewer with the comfortable notion that a quantum of “knowledge” about something was provided by the film, it sends him/her back to his/her own essential displacement – what Trinh calls “the trial of the subject.” So this soft, disquieting female voice was saying, “A film about what? my friends ask. A film about Senegal; but what in Senegal?” REASSEMBLAGE



Trinh T. Minh-ha at work, courtesy of Trinh T. Minh-ha

was also unsettling for the viewer because it could not be pinned down to a genre: was it documentary, diary film, experimental venture? In a seminal text published in 1984, “Mechanical Eye, Electronic Ear, and the Lure of Authenticity,” the filmmaker particularly explained: “Some call it Documentary. i call it No Art, No Experiment, No Fiction, No Documentary. To say something, no thing, and allow reality to enter. Capture me. This, i feel, is no surrender. Contraries meet and mate and i work best at the limits of all categories.”

This definition of “intertextuality” is often applied to feminine writing that takes place “(in) the interstice: that banned place, which remains unheard, opaque, incomprehensible to the dominant’s here.” For Trinh it has many other functions as it defines the “meeting and mating” of such “opposites” as: Asia/Africa, First World/Third World, filming subject/filmed subject, film/

music, voice/text, natural/fictional, Western thinking/Eastern thinking, subject/object – and finally, i/you: it is because “I” is generically used to express a white male unitary subject that, as a woman of color, a “non-unitary subject,” Trinh feels its inadequacy and often uses the alternate form i, or even I/i. [...]

After spending her first seventeen years in Vietnam, Trinh T. Minh-ha came to the United States, where she continued her studies in music composition (she has composed a number of musical pieces), ethnomusicology, and [French and] Francophone literatures. She then went on to teach musical composition at the Dakar (Senegal) Conservatory of Music from 1977 to 1980, while doing research at the National Cultural Archives. During these three years, she traveled extensively in Senegal, Mali, and Burkina Faso and became passionately involved in the local culture, especially music and architecture. [...]



Film still REASSEMBLAGE

Trinh T. Minh-ha²:

The thought of making a film in Senegal came to me quite unpredictably after I had lived and taught there for three years. The time spent in Senegal and in several other West African countries was partly marked by the almost routine encounter with the normative discourse of cultural expertism and of anthropology, whose authority made itself felt in the smallest daily events, whenever people talked about the culture – whether they were African city dwellers (that is, insiders to the culture) or local outsiders (mostly foreign researchers, administrators, businessmen, and technical assistance). Hence, the necessity immediately to question my own position as outsider and as a “hybrid insider” because, despite the differences, I recognize

acutely the ethics and the experiences related to colonialism’s aftermath, which I myself grew up with in Vietnam. [...] The encounter with African cultures thus became a catalyst to think about questions of subjectivity and of power relations.

Why Africa? Why do we have to always limit ourselves to the boundaries that are marked for us? Whose interest do we serve when we abide by them? I think there is something to be said again and again about the complex issues involved in the way dominant identities maintain the flexibility of the boundaries while those marginalized are expected to remain within well-divided, well-defined frontiers set up “for their own good.”

Greg de Cuir Jr.³:

My personal highlight at the 63rd Robert Flaherty Film Seminar in 2017 was meeting the theorist and artist Trinh Minh-ha. [...] It seems fitting she is such a diminutive woman with a soft voice and a modest, inviting manner of speaking and relating to people. At first it seemed a slight disappointment to see her REASSEMBLAGE projected in a low-quality digital version. Then again, I do not think I’ve ever seen this work on celluloid. At least for me, a degraded REASSEMBLAGE is better than no REASSEMBLAGE at all. No deficiency in image quality can mask the poetic and political resonance of this film. Furthermore, hearing Minh-ha speak about REASSEMBLAGE was worth the sacrifice in technical quality. Perhaps that is also fitting.

As she recounted to the assembled audience, when she was invited to the Flaherty more than thirty years ago to present REASSEMBLAGE, she was given stiff rebukes about the technical (and by implication artistic) qualities of her work. Seminararians attacked her use of silence, as if silence is not an essential component of music! They questioned her use of black frames, as if the cinema is not also an art of absence and as if REASSEMBLAGE is not embedded in black experience. They complained that “this is not a film,” as if that is not among the highest compliments that can be paid to any artist that works to disman-

tle and decolonize “their” notions of what a film is, of what “they” stand for, and what “they” subject Others to. The grand old founding fathers of our discipline in attendance at that screening must have felt their hegemonic tradition of quality being chopped down to size, then set on fire.

As we see an image of a burning field, Minh-ha asks, “What can we expect of ethnology?” Her film answers: the charred remains of the natural world. REASSEMBLAGE refused to submit, refused to play by the rules, and refused to “speak about.” Her film indeed speaks nearby. It must miss the mark of the totalizing quest of meaning, offering instead a chance to reassemble the world of ethnographic representation in a more humane and generous manner.

Cut to 2017 and the post-screening discussion of REASSEMBLAGE. I sit in the back of the room taking notes, curious to observe the effect of the film on new audiences in this new century. History repeats itself. The film is attacked for its representation of Africans and African culture, for its perceived incoherence, and again for its technique. All these years later the film has not lost its avant-garde edge, its ability to stir bodies and souls, the sincere insolence of its documentary refusal.

Text assemblage by Tobias Hering

1 Excerpts from the foreword to “Jumping into the Void,” a public interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha at Hatch-Billops’s Artist and Influence series in New York, May 1992; first published in “Artist and Influence,” ed. James V. Hatch and Leo Hamalian, Vol. XII, 1993. Republished in Trinh T. Minh-ha: “Cinema Interval,” New York/London, Routledge, 1999, pp. 50–73. Courtesy of Bérénice Reynaud.

2 Excerpts from “Jumping into the Void,” a public interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha by Bérénice Reynaud, published in Trinh T. Minh-ha: “Cinema Interval,” op. cit., pp. 53f.

3 Excerpts from a text published on the Ithaca College Blog in September 2017. Courtesy of Greg de Cuir Jr.

Des regards libres du cinéma algérien. Uncovered Eyes of Algerian Cinema. A Conversation on “La Zerda et les Chants de l'Oubli” and “Monangambée”

Viktoria Metschl: The beginnings of an internationalist archive of Algerian cinema testify to a security related need to conserve the archives in several locations. This is a direct result of Algeria's armed revolutionary struggle for independence, accompanied and supported by anti-colonial cinema: “For reasons of security and conservation, the negatives of films shot in the *maquis* were removed to Yugoslavia, a country that stood in solidarity with the cause of the Algerian people. This is how the first archives of Algerian cinema were established.”¹ In this context, this cinema's physical materiality forces us to reflect on the unity of the struggles of colonized peoples, without losing sight of or denying local differences and their values – an essential demand of Third Cinema's founding manifestos. MONANGAMBÉE and LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI, produced in Algeria in 1969 and 1982, both address pan-African and pan-Arab internationalization of combat and the fundamental ambivalence of national yet solidary borders of a united anti-colonial front. The placing of film reels in archives throughout Europe reminds us of seas to be crossed on the different levels of space, body, and the imagination – knowing that these waters are structured by a dominant brutality that continues to speak of the immeasurable difference between the two places as a perpetuation of colonialism's “world cut in two.”² To repeat a phrase by Édouard Glissant, I hear

echoes in both films of a “Sea to cross, between reality and memory. A people extradited to the vertigo of oblivion.”³

Echo in MONANGAMBÉE: “Monangambée” was a rallying cry and warning to the Angolan population when Portuguese slave-traders disembarked on the Angolan coast. At a later stage, the MPLA, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, used the same rallying cry as a slogan of resistance; under the same title they co-produced the film with the C.O.N.C.P. (The Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies), funded by the FLN (The National Liberation Front of Algeria).

Echo in LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI: Assia Djebar and Malek Aloulou delved into the colonial archives to challenge the colonial and orientalist gaze with polyphonic and pan-Maghreb narratives. Toward the end of the film, a female voice says: “All our dead, eyes open, are slowly coming back to us, floating on the waters of our forgetfulness.”

Through the cinematographic eye of Sarah Maldoror and Assia Djebar, what stories, what characters, what dreams, ideals, ideologies will populate the “vertigo” or intransigent margin of oblivion in the context not only of Algerian, but also of pan-African and pan-Maghreb film production?

Habiba Djahnine: In both MONANGAMBÉE and LA ZERDA, there is a kind of

razor-edged observation that uncompromisingly exposes us to colonial reality. More than showing, these films analyze, construct new representations, and superimpose various discourses so as to propose a fresh interpretation. These two films, however, were produced in different periods in quite different political contexts. In my opinion, the post-independence history of North Africa, and more broadly of the African continent, gave rise to an experience of acceleration. After more than a century of domination by colonial empires, the arrival of independence by dint of violence engendered several types of emergencies: nation building, crafting a means of self-representation, creation of national narratives to rally countries round this new condition of independent peoplehood. Such a long-awaited change-over for the peoples. But ... does being independent mean being decolonized? This acceleration of history inevitably left a large place for colonialism's *impensé* (unthought elements of colonial domination). Frantz Fanon laid the theoretical foundations for this future work by introducing notions that to this very day require consideration. Thus far it has been paramount to develop, feed, cure, eradicate serious diseases and epidemics, to train, educate, build schools and hospitals outside the big cities, and so forth. Post-independence Algerian cinematographic productions are all marked by a uniquely national narrative, with a form of Arabic that vacillates between literary Arabic and vernacular Arabic. It was paramount to celebrate the people's heroism, the heroes' courage, and to radically denounce the abuses perpetrated under French colo-

nization. These films do not necessarily dwell on the complexity of what happened during the (Algerian) War of Independence. Their denunciatory and accusatory tenor functioned like a catharsis for Algerians who, moved and astounded, discovered images of their gruesome national history that they had just lived through. To cite some examples: Mohamed Rachedi's *L'Opium et le Bâton* (*Opium and the Stick*, Algeria 1969), Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina's *Le Vent des Aurès* (*The Wind of the Aures*, Algeria 1967), *Chronique des Années de Braise* (*Chronicles of the Years of Fire*, Algeria 1975), and even Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Bataille d'Alger* (*The Battle of Algiers*, Algeria/Italy 1966), produced by Yacef Saadi's Casbah Film, in which Saadi would play himself and Sarah Maldoror was production assistant. By 1960, the independence movements across the African continent, followed by the pan-African trend in the wake of Algeria's independence in 1962, had begun to stimulate a huge cinematic and literary output throughout the world. This creative output sought to show the suffering endured by colonized peoples. René Vautier, Pierre Clément, Cécile Decugis, Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina and so forth in cinema, and Kateb Yacine, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Assia Djebar, Jean Amrouche, Mohamed Dib and so forth in literature. They were all committed to denouncing the abuses perpetrated under colonial empires by putting themselves on the side of the oppressed, the colonized, the dispossessed, and the tortured, all while trying to describe for some and to dissect [analyze] for others the empire's mechanisms of enslavement. It was paramount to showcase

the birth of the nationalist spirit and the ensuing demand for independence. And, perhaps, to launch a phase of reflection about colonial alienation, as well.

Sarah Maldoror shot *MONANGAM-BEEE*, the first film she shot as a director set on the African continent, in 1969. It was co-produced by Algeria barely seven years after the country's independence, and six years before the independence of Angola. The cinematographic form (fiction) is quite classic, the narrative is linear, the acting at times accentuated. But what strikes me as essential is to analyze what this film tells. For Maldoror, it is a case of highlighting misunderstandings and colonial violence through the prism of carceral conditions. Everything is condensed in this one place, and the film's scenario is created in such a way so as to converge at this very violent moment where prisoners are shattered and starved out. Apart from that she also films that which builds solidarity: the prisoner's wife who brings food and clean linen, and those prisoners who care for their tortured and wounded companion and feed him. Here, violence is never shown directly; it is suggested. And yet, that which will serve as a counterpoint to violence is clearly shown: solidarity, resistance discourse, and determination. Music by the Art Ensemble of Chicago will also play a vital role in the film's narrative and dramaturgy, underpinning its most somber moments.

Assia Djebar's film, co-written by Malek Alloula, was shot in 1982, and produced by the Algerian Television Radio (RTA). It is projected in an utterly different social and political context from

the '60s and '70s. At that time, Algerian society was crippled by questions of identity. The question of re-appropriating the memory of the Algerian War of Independence informs various works by artists and intellectuals. Re-appropriating ancestral Algerian culture was the order of the day, as was that of the vernacular languages (the demand in 1980 for the recognition of Amazigh [Berber] and popular Arabic). In my view, *LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI* responds to a yearning to bring an inner gaze to what has befallen our scarred memory by relying on archival footage so as to reveal the ferocity of that which African peoples and lands endured. The archival images, painstakingly chosen by Djebar and Alloula, are of unfading strength. The soundtrack builds around multiple male and female voices, with sounds, songs, whispers, screams, and sighs bespeaking the audacity to look beyond history. And that, even if only one eye remains to look into the depths of our painful memories. Who are these veiled women who introduce the film? Who are they and in what direction are they walking? "Memory is a woman's body." They are not invisible. They are looking at the world through the one eye they have left, like the gaze of a photographer or a filmmaker. Reality is invariably partial; it is reconstructed through these blinkers that witness the world. But "only her uncovered eye stares at our present."

For a long time, the two co-authors have individually and over their careers grappled with issues of representation, war, violence, memory, modernity, reconstruction, the presence of women, emancipation, speech, and language.



Sarah Maldoror during the shooting of *Des fusils pour Banta* (*Guns for Banta*) in Portuguese Guinea, 1970. Photo by Suzanne Lipinska. Courtesy of Sarah Maldoror.

Malek Alloula wrote a reference book, "Le Harem Colonial" (The Colonial Harem), Assia Djebar wrote "Femmes d'Algiers dans leur Appartement" (Women of Algiers in Their Apartment). To mention but these two.

VM: Both films refuse to adapt or assimilate to an aesthetic standard of heroism that plays on a colonial-hegemonic and binary difference between sexes and genders. After the debut screening of *MONANGAMBEEE*, Sarah Maldoror was accused of having made a "women's film" because she refused to "realistically" show colonial violence, and torture in particular, instead inventing a way that is at once poetic and clearly subversive-revolutionary, for it deconstructs several levels of colonial

violence: physical brutality, racism, and institutional domination, and the impossibility of communication in the colonial world. Basically, she also attacks what could be called, as Fanon did, the "epidermalization"⁴ of racism. *LA ZERDA* transforms her camera's lens into the eye of a woman veiled by the haik: "only her uncovered eye stares at our present." Based on re-appropriated silent images, the camera-eye montage creates a pantheon of North African heroes – Emir Abdel Kader, Jugurtha, Abdelkrim Al Khattabi, Omar Ibn El Mokhtar – while women's voices sing, speak, whisper, scream, bemoan their lives and tales and those of these heroes. This coexistence as a counter-voice leads to the destabilization and decentralization of the colonial gaze



Film still MONANGAMBEE

in a very different but no less poetic way than the techniques employed in MONANGAMBEE.

HD: The very essence of cinema is to suggest rather than to proclaim. In both films there is the openly admitted choice of using a form of lyricism. In Maldoror's film, this lyricism can be observed in the film's slow-paced rhythm, in the choreographic approach to the tortured man, in the poem he recites in his cell, in the emphatic actions by his co-prisoners and even his torturers. In my view, that which has disturbed those who described this film as a "women's film" is not the fact that torture is not clearly shown, but rather that this whole situation of imprisonment, of torture is carried out on the basis of a misunder-

standing based around "le complet," which can mean a three-course dish in Angola or a man's three-piece suit in Portugal. It is as if the prisoner is not reproached for being rebellious and demanding independence or liberation, but rather for exchanging words with his wife in this misunderstood language. Like the misunderstood language of peoples colonized by colonizers. This subtlety, which at the same time is the language of "deflection" and of metaphor, brings something fresh to the approach.

In Djébar's film, lyricism is omnipresent. First in the poetic voices, in the text and its meaning, in the metaphors they suggest, in the rhythm of the editing of archival images, in the way of presenting North African heroes who resisted colo-



Film still LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI

nization: lamenting for a nation that continues to seek its birth, its liberation, its decolonization. The cinematographic form is compelling in its experimental nature. Some sections of the film are worked as a form of trance. They offer a sort of effusiveness of liberation. At times the form can go beyond the content and reveal to us by means of the misappropriation of images that which will befall these peoples.

What do the women do while men go to war? They tell stories so as not to forget. They craft an intimate account of wars. Some of them also participate by taking up arms, cameras, and carrying "the three-course," and so on. It strikes me in these two films that the question of heroism is highly present, but it is handled differently than in films di-

rected by men dealing with the same subject. It seems to me that the questions of failure, sagas, quests, retreat, war, suffering, disappearance are implicitly treated in these heroic situations. This heroism becomes a demand to claim one's lineage; to revive memories that have been killed or erased.

VM: In relation to the erased memories, I hear another resonance between Glissant's idea of the archipelago and the two films: "And when the nation makes itself possible, it also denies itself."⁵ LA ZERDA and MONANGAMBEE strike me as being akin to cinematographic passeurs, who defend the uncompromising independence of African nations, and at the same time aspire to broader and smaller forms of belonging, which do

not negate the heterogeneities inside as well as outside a given country. This inevitably brings to the fore the question of the various institutions that regulate and monitor memory by producing “the vertigo of oblivion” along the lines of a power and command chain (often in the form of funding) that have not really changed their direction of oppression “North” – “South” ...

HD: I think that when one comes from the “South,” and hence from “dominated countries” or formerly colonized lands, there is a marked sensitivity to everything that could be universal. To claim universalism is first of all to know and be deeply aware of where we come from, and hence from where we’re speaking. The strength of a singular word is that it implicitly holds an unfailing respect for and recognition of all other peculiarities and singularities. It effectively challenges us to take into account heterogeneity so as to counteract hegemony. A work whose mission is to “save” our memory from those who want to condemn us to eternal oblivion. This process of condemnation is repeated in all dominating systems, and continues to be repeated faced with the totalitarian and dictatorial regimes in countries that have regained their independence.

On the other hand, the “North” lends assistance to creative projects that respond to its simplistic and Manichean vision of filmmakers from the “South” (while not a generality, it is often the case). Any work with a certain complexity in its gaze or a critical and a self-assertive vision is scarcely acceptable. This selection obviously is made by

institutions and their choices of what they will finance or not.

In both films, the two directors propose a radical critique of history and of the colonial past; they each in their own way deconstruct the discourse of good and evil as conveyed by colonial thought. The civilizing proposal is severely put to the test in the face of the colonial empire’s savagery and destructive abuses. Moreover, these films also offer to monitor the present. What has happened to all of this? Constructing images within a system of de-alienated thought, free from any hint of domination, is a path toward redefining the self. The self disdained by a colonial night that lasted way too long. And yet, it is difficult to deny that this North/South relationship still lingers; it is still present. Nowadays, it seems difficult to enter into negotiations to transform this relationship. But it’s not impossible. The only way to get rid of it (to transform it) is to know where we stand and to whom we are talking. Only independent films can accomplish this.

Translated from French by John Barrett.

- 1 “Images et Visages du Cinéma Algérien,” Alger, ONCIC 1984, p. 7.
- 2 Fanon, Frantz. “The Wretched of the Earth,” New York, Grove Press 1963, p. 38.
- 3 Glissant, Édouard. “L’Intention poétique,” Paris, Seuil 1969, p. 187.
- 4 Fanon, Frantz. “Black Skin, White Masks,” New York, Grove Press 1967, p. 11.
- 5 Glissant, Édouard. “L’Intention poétique,” p. 219.



Film still DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS

Deixem-me ao menos subir às palmeiras.

Produced during an advanced stage of the Independence Struggle, the film DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS was the first fiction film in Mozambique which reflected the political mindset of the nationalist urban elite. The film avidly absorbs the revolutionary purpose of the clandestine literature produced in Angola and in Mozambique and finds therein the aesthetic references of a rupture with the regime’s stereotypes. The aspirations of the *negritudists*, reconciled with other antinomies of the Marxist-inspired social struggles, the anti-assimilation stance, nationalism, and anti-colonialism together shaped a complex space where various struggles converged. The common element, apart from their clandestine nature, was the intellectual militancy working in favor of an armed

resistance to achieve the nation’s independence.

The film’s director, Joaquim Lopes Barbosa (LB), even today keenly relives the episodes relating to his film, about which he still has precise and disquieting memories. A Portuguese filmmaker, he grew up in the town of Vila Nova de Gaia during the 1940s and 1950s under the “New State” (*Estado Novo*) regime. He was a self-taught journalist, cinema critic, and film club aficionado. He began by making amateur films in 8mm, then became a reporter during his military service and filmed in 16mm. When he went to Lourenço Marques from Luanda in 1970 he began to film in 35mm, while at producer Courinha Ramos’s SOMAR studio. Three years later, he concluded his first fiction film – and his only such work to date. From Portugal,

he returned to Mozambique in 1998, where he currently lives.

In 1972, when he began to make this film, LB was 28 years old and he applied everything he had learnt until then to this work: "I had already read Marx and Lenin and was aware that what was happening in Mozambique was an exceptional situation. There were contradictions that had to be explained and that could not be maintained forever."¹ He continued, saying that, "It was necessary to revolt," but then corrected himself, "No, a revolt was inevitable, it was necessary to find an aesthetic way to speak about an inevitable revolt!"

In DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS LB was the director, the director of photography, screenwriter, editor and he even handled the sound and lighting. That was not his objective, since the names of the technicians appearing in the final credits were invented on the spur of the moment. LB also wrote the initial poem which summed up the denunciation expressed in the film: the oppression of black workers by white colonists. The poem was set to music by the guitarist Jaimito, who declaimed it from start to finish, in a shot where LB said he experimented with a dual cinematographic influence: the film *António das mortes* by Glauber Rocha, as it allowed him to concentrate at length on a single scene, and Soviet cinema, reflected in the "hard" black-and-white photography he chose for the film, which he managed to perfect with the backlit silhouettes in that scene. This was followed by other fundamental references, such as neo-realism: "The film had to have real people, it had to be as close as possible to

the culture of domination and it also had to be as close as possible to the culture of subjugation." Even though the Mozambican short story used as the script for the film was in Portuguese, the film innovates and is in the local language (Xironga) because, "It rejects assimilation, which we know was imposed and is thus artificial ... they have to speak their own language."

The film also has scenes in direct cinema, which are interspersed among the fictional scenes, where there is no divergence between the reality shown within the film and the reality outside it. This is such a porous connection that LB is sometimes surprised to see the results of his daring. "It was a miracle that everything was in the right place; in the casting for the film, people seamlessly adopted the personalities of their role, without any prior preparation, apart from representing their own lives. With the exception of the foreman, played by a black actor, all the other black actors naturally adopted their state of submission. It goes without saying that nobody was paid for their work, everything was the result of mobilization." LB could not be the one mobilizing the actors. The Mozambican painter Malangatana Valente, who had already spent time in jail as a political prisoner due to his ties with the FRELIMO, was like the "second producer" of this film. He brought in all the black actors in the film, involved the community in his village, and accepted the role of a guerrilla fighter in the film's most enigmatic scene: "The legacy bequeathed to black workers is to be born and to die. The crucifixion scene in the film signifies the destruction of their potential. Black workers are born to be hu-

miliated and crucified. It is the ruthless crushing of a culture and a people!" LB also filmed men being transported to work on the vast sisal plantations of the Zambézia region. In banana plantations on the outskirts of Lourenço Marques, he filmed lines of child laborers who we see trampling over each other to receive a brick of xima (maize pap) as their meal for the day. The scenes filmed on the Umbelúzi agrarian station correspond to the machamba farm scenes where, apart from Djimo, Madala, and the foreman, all the men we see working on the land are prisoners from the Machava jail, forced to serve their sentences there toiling for the state.

Inspired by the Angolan poem "Mongambamba" (1961) penned by the poet António Jacinto, he found a portrait of the lives of forced laborers, which the colonial regime used and abused for its own benefit, in a clear usurpation: "When I read Angolan literature and poetry, especially this poem, it says it all. I was lucky in that when I arrived at Lourenço Marques I found exactly the same thing as depicted in the book containing seven stories by Luís Bernardo Honwana entitled 'Nós Matámos o Cão-Tinhoso' (1964), in the story entitled 'Dina.' However, I couldn't take things further without his consent. Honwana was a militant member of the FRELIMO, who was living a clandestine existence on the run, so the meeting was over in a minute: 'May I use it? Yes, you can.'" LB needed a story, since the poem was just a denouncement. So he merged the two aspects and knew he was going to make a work that was simultaneously an anti-colonial film and a denouncement, with the war taking place

in the northern part of the country and having to contend with unavoidable institutional censorship, which had absolute power to ban the film.

The film's producer, Courinha Ramos, "did not know anything about this. He had not read any works by Bernardo Honwana." However, he did know that he could earn some money producing a full-length film in exchange for some film stock and a 35mm camera, which he placed at LB's disposal. Courinha Ramos essentially produced advertisements and newsreel films. He was an astute and highly regarded entrepreneur. His clients included colonial industrialists and he stayed relatively aloof from the regime's ideology (just like he seems to have remained aloof from LB's progressive ideas). The fact is that LB felt totally free to make the film just like he did, with all the shots he had written into the storyboard, such as the stills in the scene depicting the attack against the foreman and during Maria's rape. That is where the film evokes Portuguese "Cinema Novo" (New Cinema), using something he saw in the film by Fernando Lopes about the boxer *Belarmino* (1964): when the image freezes, the scene is then edited according to the pace of the action during the fight – in the boxing ring. That is the mechanism used to depict the struggle on the ground in the bush where the foreman lures Maria. "I shot the rape directly but then I created another rape from it," by editing a montage of fragments of the images, without sound. "It was a real experiment, to innovate like that!"

The film depicts a series of non-revolts, almost driving viewers to despair.



Production photo, courtesy of Joaquim Lopes Barbosa.

The key sequence of the film, which definitively sets the revolt in motion, is Maria being raped by the foreman. It is the humiliation this means for Madala, her father, who sees everything. In the written tale the workers urge Madala to revolt, but he caves and does not do so. However, in the film this possibility is left to the imagination as being a feasible option. "It did not make sense not to have a revolt ... illiterate blacks, who were the majority, were submissive and accepted the oppression of the structure that crushed them. They did not have a choice, except for that which I showed later in the film: either they leave, giving up on and renouncing everything, or they seek freedom, resisting and fighting." This is what the most incisive of them all, Djimo, the hero of the film, does in the end. We do not know the reason for his incisiveness, "Because he is just like all the others." So what caused the revolt? "We also don't know: it could be an emotional reason or a political reason. But it would probably have been political, because at the time when the film was made the guerilla forces had already reached the Zambézia region."

In one of the concessions he made to try and get the film past censors (the other concession was made during the

editing, dubbing the words uttered by the landowner into English), LB used a black actor to play the part of the foreman – who was white in the written tale. "I thought that this would deflect the attention of censors, but without compromising the relationship of domination, which I wanted to keep intact." Here too we do not know if this is a rape or prostitution. We know that the foreman used Maria, he managed to seduce her, but there is no explanation of how he did so. The black foreman only further heightens this enigma that the film creates. Honwana's text is silent on this point – and so is LB.

Just like in the written tale, Madala dies. However, in the film we also see the funeral rites in which the entire village participates and where LB includes, "a comprehensive portrait of Mozambican society, guerrillas boots marching and a frieze of figures who represent the colonial city: the clerics, civil society, the PIDE, the Governor. If there is something going on there apart from the funeral, it has to be unobtrusive ... because I could not be more explicit. What the film wanted to say was that there was an entire dynamic process that was happening at the same time that the film was produced." The day when the film would be viewed by the censors dawned in August 1973. The political implications of the frieze where the key agents of colonial society were caricatured were so obvious that the only question the censor asked was: "Who are those white people who attended the funeral of the old man?" LB, clearly caught off-guard, said: "They aren't people, they are symbols! And that was the end of that. The film was

doomed! When we reached the SOMAR studio, Courinha Ramos summoned me and fired me." At the end of the day that wasn't the result expected by someone who thought he was making a profitable investment. Fearing even worse repercussions, LB returned to Portugal.

However, DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS was subjected to further violence at the end of the regime's rule, set against the backdrop of the transitional city of Lourenço Marques. The fascist regime was toppled in Portugal on 25 April 1974 and with it fell the structure of control which had condemned the film a few months ago. This meant a new opportunity for the producer, who could now recover his investment by screening the film in theaters. In possession of the negatives, Courinha Ramos went to Portugal and proposed to LB to debut the film in Lourenço Marques. The film needed subtitles for the dialogues in the Xironga language, which LB knew by heart. This helped the producer make two positive prints in Lisbon: one in 35mm, subtitled to be screened in theaters, and another in 16mm, without subtitles, which remained with LB and would allow the director to use that print independently (until he lost track of it). Strapped for funds, LB enrolled as a new settler to avail himself of a free air ticket to Mozambique so as to attend the release of his film. In reality, LB did not arrive in time to attend the film's debut. But he was able to piece together the event years later in the archives of the Notícias newspaper, where he found a news item describing the pre-release preview of his film at the São Miguel Cinema in Lourenço Marques on 4 September

1974. This was just a few days before 7 September 1974, the day when the Portuguese government formally handed over power to the FRELIMO after the Lusaka Agreements.

The euphoria of the end of the colonial regime and the open clashes between the groups that were for and against the FRELIMO revived the memories of colonial humiliations, which the film denounced. Thus, the context of an inevitable revolt spread through the streets of the capital, where a great wave of violence was unleashed by Africans between 7 and 10 September. This happened in response to the even more violent actions of extremist paramilitary colonial groups, who set off bombs at various sites around the city. The owner of the São Miguel cinema hall feared that the mob could set his theater on fire for showing a film against the regime or for screening a film made by a Portuguese director and withdrew it, after which the film was definitively archived. "Only very recently, just a few years ago, Maria do Carmo Piçarra, a researcher, discovered a copy that the producer had given to the Portuguese Cinema Museum [Cinamateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema] before he died and contacted me." From then on that print has been shown around the world and has gained a second lease on life.

*Catarina Simão
Lisbon, December 2017*

*Translated from Portuguese
by Roopanjali Roy.*

1 Direct speech excerpts are taken from three different interviews with Joaquim Lopes Barbosa by Catarina Simão in Maputo in 2011, 2013, and 2017.

DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS

— Novas perspectivas para o cinema moçambicano

★ O FILME

«Deixem-me ao menos subir às palmeiras». Este filme, também ele, tem a sua longa história. Realizado em pleno colonialismo, quando a PIDE-DGS semeava o semearia ainda por dois anos, na sua lenta agonia, uma das mais hediondas vogas repressivas da história, foi nesse contexto que Lopes Barbosa, quase que isolado mas resolutivo, resolveu cinematizar o extraordinário conto de Luis

Bernardo Honwana, «Dina», inserto na sua obra anti-colonialista «Nós Matámos o Cão Tinoso». Várias modificações foram feitas em relação ao original e muita da força que Honwana emprestava a certas situações perdeu-se. Os condicionais da época a isso obrigaram porque havia sobretudo a necessidade de fazer chegar ao povo moçambicano, na sua esmagadora maioria iletrado, uma extraordinária mensagem humana. Daí que o fil-

me, seja na sua quase totalidade, dialogado em changana (Tsonga).

Não queremos deixar aqui de frisar que uma desesperante falta de meios técnicos e financeiros acompanhou toda a feitura deste filme que, como é absolutamente natural, disso se ressentiu. Mas a vontade pertinaz de mostrar uma verdade está bem patente apesar da impreparação de uma equipa humana que dá os seus primeiros passos no campo do cinema.

★ OS AGENTES DO COLONIALISMO

A acção do filme desenrola-se numa grande fazenda onde um capataz, agente e lacão do colonizador, submete os trabalhadores a penosas e infindáveis horas de trabalho forçado que, muitas das vezes, só terminam com o desfalecimento dos mais fracos.

O capataz, que no conto original era branco, aparece neste filme representado por

um actor negro. Embora continue uma desvirtuação em relação ao conto, produto dos condicionais de então, este facto, contrariamente ao que possa parecer à primeira vista, não desvirtua o conteúdo geral da obra. Diríamos mesmo que, neste momento, em Moçambique, até levanta um problema oportuno. Permite deste modo esclarecer que a exploração não conhece cores nem raças. Não se trata de uma oposição entre brancos e pretos mas sim entre exploradores e explorados.

São exactamente lacões do tipo do capataz, sejam eles brancos ou pretos, que, vendendo-se ao opressor, constituem o veículo ideal para a penetração do neo-colonialismo. De facto, na situação neo-colonial, a exploração e a opressão mantêm-se. Simplesmente, nalguns casos, o agente (ou executor) estrangeiro é substituído por um nacional, continuando a exploração a fazer-se sob formas semelhantes. E continuando o grande capital internacional a ser o seu principal usufrutuário, agora camuflado por uma falsa independência política. Contra este perigo, só uma linha política de facto revolucionária como a que o «FRELIMO» adota pode constituir precaução suficiente.

★ A EXPLORAÇÃO, SEMEIA A REVOLTA

A exploração e a revolta, semeia a revolta. É esta ou-

tra das realidades que o filme nos documenta. Para além de obrigados a trabalhos forçados no cultivo das machambas (embora subalimentados), os trabalhadores são também submetidos a todo o tipo de vexames morais. No caso de «Deixem-me ao menos subir às palmeiras» é a filha do madala, o velho trabalhador, que é abusivamente violada pelo capataz. Este, surpreendido neste hediondo acto, vê-se obrigado a enfrentar a fúria dos trabalhadores que incitam o velho à revolta. Porém, num ultrajante gesto o capataz remata a situação oferecendo uma garrafa de vinho ao madala que, vergado pelos anos de exploração e já sem capacidade da revolta, a aceita, totalmente vendido. Mais alguns dias de trabalhos forçados e aniquilado pelo desgosto, acabará por sucumbir.

★ O SISTEMA COLONIAL, VERDADEIRA CAUSA DA EXPLORAÇÃO

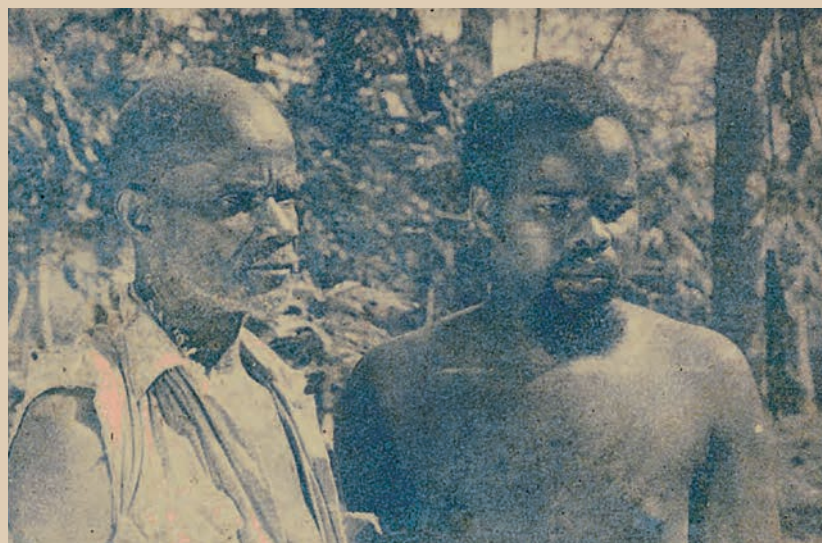
Está bem patente nesta obra a necessidade de recusar o superficial indo directamente às verdadeiras causas dos problemas. O realizador, embora de certa forma limitado por se tratar de uma obra quase que metáfora «a martelo», tenta enquadrar socialmente a história que nos conta. Referimo-nos concretamente a uma das cenas finais do filme em que nos aparecem, lado a lado, os representantes simbólicos das instituições mais repressivas

da sociedade colonial: os elementos da famigerada PIDE-DGS imediatamente reconhecíveis pelas suas patibulares faces amentadas com os fatídicos e bem característicos óculos escuros, a senhora religiosa e piedosa cuja prolição é fazer «caridade» através de instituições de «protecção aos desemparelhados», o padre e respectivos sacerdotes representantes da ma religião hipocrita que, servindo-se do obscurantismo, perpetuam a dominação colonial, etc., etc., etc...

★ NOVAS PERSPECTIVAS PARA UM VERDADEIRO CINEMA MOÇAMBICANO

Apesar de todas as suas limitações estamos, indubitavelmente, perante uma obra que rasga decididamente novas perspectivas para um novo cinema moçambicano. E dizemos novo porque nos lembramos de outras obras tão acarinhas pelo anterior regime como por exemplo «O ZÉ DO BURRO» ou «LIMPOPO», verdadeiros excrescimentos da produção cinematográfica local.

Sobretudo agora, após uma longa noite de colonialismo, que, através de decalques já dados, está finalmente a ser libertada a energia criadora de todo o povo moçambicano, o Cinema-Clube de Lourenço Marques a esta obra que antes estava interdita.



Translation (excerpts):

AT LEAST LET ME CLIMB THE PALM TREES – New perspectives on Mozambican cinema

“At least let me climb the palm trees.” This film, too, has its long history. Produced during colonialism, when PIDE-DGS [political police] had sowed and was still to be sowing for two more years, in its slow agony, one of the most hideous waves of repression in history, it was in this context that Lopes Barbosa, almost isolated but resolute, decided to cinematize the extraordinary short story by Luis Bernardo Honwana, “Dina,” inserted in his anti-colonialist work “We Killed Mangy Dog.” Several changes were made in relation to the original text and much of the strength that Honwana lent to certain situations went lost. The circumstances of the period forced him [Barbosa] to do so because there was, above all, the need to bring to the Mozambican people, in their overwhelmingly illiterate majority, an extraordinary human message. Hence the film’s dialogue is almost entirely in Changana [Tsonga]. [...]

The action of the film takes place on a large farm where a foreman, agent, and lackey of the colonizer subjects the workers to painful and endless hours of forced labor, which often only end with the weakening of the weak. The foreman, who in the original tale was white, appears in this film portrayed by a black actor. Although this constitutes a distortion of the story, a product of the constraints of the time, this detail, contrary to what may seem at first glance, does not distort the general content of the work. We would even say that, at the moment, in Mozambique, it raises a timely problem. In this way it is possible to clarify that the exploration knows neither colors nor races. It is not an opposition between whites and blacks but between exploiters and exploited. They are exactly the foreman-type lackeys whether they are white or black, who, selling themselves to the oppressor, are the ideal vehicle for the penetration of neo-colonialism. [...]

Production Notes

Since its founding in 1963, the Arsenal – Institute for Film und Video Art has collected around 10,000 films from all genres, lengths, and formats. Throughout the history of the institution that is unique in its combination of cinema, festival, distribution, and archive, Arsenal has reflected the emergence and expansion of independent cinema worldwide.

Four of the six films on this DVD exist as analogue distribution prints in the archive of the Arsenal: *MONANGAMBEEE* by Sarah Maldoror, *MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE* by Ruy Guerra, *LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI* by Assia Djebar, and *REASSEMBLAGE* by Trinh T. Minh-ha. The first three of these were presented at different times at the Berlinale Forum, a section of the Berlin International Film Festival organized by the Arsenal.

The selection is complemented by two rare and important films from Mozambique, *DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS* by Joaquim Lopes Barbosa and *ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS* by Murilo Salles, the first production of the Instituto Nacional de Cinema – INC (nowadays: Instituto Nacional de Audiovisual e Cinema – INAC).

MONANGAMBEEE was screened at the Berlinale Forum in 1971. At the time of digitization, this 16mm film print was the only available source material. It has a variety of damages and flaws. The right side of the image is blurry due to an analogue printing error. The quality of the optical soundtrack is very poor, which significantly

impairs the comprehensibility of the dialogue in certain spots. By taking recourse to the original French dialogue list, however, the selectable English and French subtitles make legible those parts lost on the soundtrack.

MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE was presented at the Berlinale Forum in 1981 in a 35mm print with German subtitles. *MUEDA* was originally shot on 16mm. The original elements and other prints have been researched by Catarina Simão as part of her investigation on this film. For this DVD publication two prints could be considered as a source material: the print from Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema, which contains Portuguese subtitles, and the one from Arsenal's archive. Due to the fact that both prints were circulating in distribution, both of them show considerable optical damage. After a comparison the decision was made to digitize the Portuguese version. Due to certain defects on the soundtrack, however, a large part of the soundtrack has been replaced by the optical track from Arsenal's print. The subtitling in English for this DVD edition is based on a revision of the translation of all dialogues and lyrics of the songs.

LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI was presented at the Berlinale Forum in 1983 in its French language version with German subtitles. This 16mm print was produced on a color printing stock. The investigation for source materials for the digitization brought to light an Arabic language version in the archive

of Établissement public de télévision (EPTV) in Algiers that is printed on black-and-white stock. The original elements of the film remain untraceable. Since the film contains a color sequence in the middle of the film, the digitization was conducted on the basis of Arsenal's print. In addition, Arsenal holds a separate magnetic soundtrack of the film that was used for this digitization.

REASSEMBLAGE was shot on 16mm and mainly circulates without subtitles. A print from Arsenal's archive was used as the source material for this digitization. The optical soundtrack has been replaced by a former digitization.

DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS was digitized by Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema at their archive (ANIM – Departamento de Arquivo Nacional das Imagens em Movimento) in 2009. It is based on a 35mm distribution print. For this DVD publication the subtitles were revised and expanded based on a Portuguese dialogue list.

ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS was produced on 35mm. For this DVD edition, a Beta SP could be used (courtesy of Catarina Simão). The subtitles have been revised for this DVD edition.

Film still *LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI*





DVD 1

MUEDA, MEMÓRIA E MASSACRE

Mozambique 1979–80, 75 min*

Directed by Ruy Guerra

Produced by Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC)

Premiere February 3, 1980 in Maputo

Original format 35mm (shot on 16mm), b&w

Scan (4K) and color grading Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema, Lisbon
Digital restoration ARRI Media, Munich
Sound digitization Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema, Lisbon and Kornmanufaktur, Berlin
Sound processing Poleposition d.c., Berlin

ESTAS SÃO AS ARMAS

Mozambique 1978, 59 min*

Directed by Murilo Salles

Assistant director Luis Simão
Produced by Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC)

Premiere September 25, 1978 in Maputo

Original format 35mm, b&w

Telecine (SD)

REASSEMBLAGE

USA 1982, 40 min*

Directed by Trinh T. Minh-ha

Produced by Jean-Paul Bourdier
Premiere September 24, 1983 in New York

Original format 16mm, color

Scan (2K) and color grading Kornmanufaktur, Berlin
Sound processing Poleposition d.c., Berlin



DVD 2

LA ZERDA ET LES CHANTS DE L'OUBLI

Algeria 1982, 59 min*

Directed by Assia Djebar

Produced by Radiodiffusion-télévision algérienne (RTA)

Premiere July 20, 1982 [Algerian Television]

Original format 16mm, color and b&w

Scan (2K) and color grading Kornmanufaktur, Berlin
Digital restoration ARRI Media, Munich
Sound digitization Omnimag, Ingelheim
Sound processing Poleposition d.c., Berlin

DEIXEM-ME AO MENOS SUBIR ÀS PALMEIRAS

Mozambique 1972, 71 min*

Directed by Joaquim Lopes Barbosa

Produced by SOMAR filmes
Premiere September 4, 1974 in Lourenço Marques

Original format 35mm, b&w

Telecine (SD) Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema

MONANGAMBEE

Algeria 1969, 15 min*

Directed by Sarah Maldoror

Produced by C.O.N.C.P. [Conférence des Organisations Nationales des Colonies Portugaises]

Premiere May 16, 1971 in Cannes

Original format 16mm, b&w

Scan (2K) and color grading Kornmanufaktur, Berlin
Digital restoration ARRI Media, Berlin
Sound digitization Omnimag, Ingelheim
Sound processing Poleposition d.c., Berlin

* The duration refers to the original projection speed of 24 fps.

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Sarah Maldoror (center left) during the shooting of
La Bataille d'Alger directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, 1965.
Courtesy of Sarah Maldoror.