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PORTUGUESE CINEMA AND PHILOSOPHY

edited by Patrícia Castello Branco and Susana Viegas

CINEMA PORTUGUÊS E FILOSOFIA

editado por Patrícia Castello Branco e Susana Viegas

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Cover: *The Siege* (O Cerco, 1970), dir. António da Cunha Telles.

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Capa: O Cerco (1970), real. António da Cunha Telles.

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EDITORIAL: PORTUGUESE CINEMA AND PHILOSOPHY

This fifth issue of *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* is entirely dedicated to philosophy and Portuguese cinema, with a particular focus on the philosophical perspectives about its motion pictures. We took, as our starting point, the awareness that, although the studies with this kind of focus are scarce (and brief), centred primarily on the works of Pedro Costa and Manoel de Oliveira, the majority of Portuguese films have a strong connection with philosophical inquiry. This particular encounter is revealed in a unique aesthetic, but also in a complex network, determined by circumstances of the recent political, cultural and social history, which marked Portuguese cinema at a political, ethical, aesthetic and cultural level. With this issue, we aim at helping to fulfil this gap, contributing to the philosophical inquiry on Portuguese cinema, taken here in its broadest sense, i.e., including feature films, documentary films and trends in video art. We have tried to broaden the already established dialogue between filmmakers and philosophers, widening the scope of the aesthetic-philosophical analysis to meet the disciplinary intersection of historical, political and psychoanalytic readings, also crossing intermediatic approaches to the moving image that include such disparate creators as Paul Rocha, Miguel Gomes, Alberto Seixas Santos, António da Cunha Telles, Solveig Nordlund, José Álvaro Morais, Manuel Goncalo Mozos, opening the scope to other protagonists of the moving image in our country, such as Vasco Araújo, João Onofre or Filipa César.

The section of original "Essays" opens with an article that reveals a deep knowledge of Portuguese cinema and of philosophical inquiry. In "The End of History Through the Disclosure of Fiction: Indisciplinarity in Miguel Gomes's *Tabu* (2012)," Carolin Overhoff Ferreira develops the potentiality of a new concept: the "indisciplinary film." The author, inspired by the thought of Jacques Rancière, redefines this concept, proposing it as an alternative to the concept of "essay-film," and argues that Gomes' film "thinks Portugal's colonial history between disciplines."

In "Thinking the Revolution in Alberto Seixas Santos's *Mild Manners* and *Gestures and Fragments*," Luís Trindade focuses on the historical turn of the Portuguese revolution of

April, the 25th, 1974. The author examines the relationship between ideology that defines both the narratives and the very revolutionary process, through the presence and influence of three philosophers: Marx and Engels on *Mild Manners* (*Brandos Costumes*, 1974), and Eduardo Lourenço in *Gestures and Fragments* (*Gestos e Fragmentos*, 1982).

The focus on the same historical epoch is shared by Érica Faleiro Rodrigues who, in “Between Narcissism and Repression: The Castration of Female Desire in Portuguese Film — Julia Kristeva and Abjection, the 1974 Revolution, *The Siege* and *Dina and Django*,” gives us a totally different approach, based in an original reading of the films *The Siege* (*O Cerco*, 1970) by António da Cunha Telles, and *Dina and Django* (*Dina e Django*, 1983) by Solveig Nordlund. Taking these two works as paradigms of a certain vision of the feminine at epochs as seemingly as diverse as the “before” and the “after” of the 25th April Portuguese revolution, the author highlights how, such supposedly so divergent social and political circumstances, share main features. Drawing on the ideas of Julia Kristeva, Érica Rodrigues tries and demonstrates how, in both films, the female protagonists evolve from narcissism to punishment, and present themselves as characters in struggle (internal and external) for social and sexual emancipation that, however, cannot reach.

The volume continues with the analysis of the cinematic work of Pedro Costa, offered by two different essays, which also draw upon two philosophers: Gilles Deleuze (once again), and Jacques Rancière. Maria del Pilar Gavilanes, in « Apprendre chaque jour de nouveaux mots, de beaux mots: le cinéma de Pedro Costa comme scène politique d'une démonstration égalitaire » (“Learning New Words Every Day, Beautiful Words: Pedro Costa’s Cinema as a Political Scene of an Egalitarian Demonstration”), inspired by Rancière, focuses on the playing of words and the construction of both the meaning and the characters in Costa’s films, seeking to demonstrate how they function as a “statement of equality.” In another approach to the films of Pedro Costa, this time drawing on a Deleuzian perspective, Patricia Brás, with the essay “*Ne Change Rien* (2009): Time is Political,” presents a detailed interpretation of a particular scene in this film that, in the opinion the author, illustrates the relationship between “becoming,” repetition and the passage of time in the music essays of Jeanne Balibar as a critique of the artwork itself (Hannah Arendt and Karl Marx), when the gesture becomes political.

It is also upon the thought of Gilles Deleuze, and mainly upon his book “The Time-Image,” that John M. Carvalho draws for his analysis of the work of Miguel Gomes in —

“*Tabu: Time Out of Joint in Contemporary Portuguese Cinema.*” The author tries and demonstrates that this film forces us to think. Identifying the feeling of loss, or *objet petit a*, according to Jacques Lacan, as the guiding thread of the movie, the author acknowledges also in the work of Manoel de Oliveira and of the filmmakers of Cinema Novo, the well-known moving advocated by Deleuze's from the movement-image to the time-image.

It is precisely with Manoel de Oliveira that we continue, this time with a couple of essays, entirely dedicated to his works. In the first one, Talitha Ferraz — “Coexistências nas Margens: Reflexões sobre *Douro, Faina Fluvial* a partir de Deleuze e Guattari” (“Coexistences Along the River: Reflection about *Labor on the Douro River* from Deleuze and Guattari”) — examines this pioneering film by Oliveira, in the light of the concept of the movement-image and of the thoughts by Deleuze and Guattari. In the second, Cam Cobb — “Narrative Pedagogy on a Train” — focuses on the film *Singularidades de uma Rapariga Loura* (*Eccentricities of a Blond-haired Girl*, 2009), following the perspective of pedagogy and undertakings of learning within the narrated story.

From Manoel de Oliveira, we proceed to other major name of Portuguese cinema: Paulo Rocha. Carlos Melo Ferreira presents us with the poetical reading entitled “Paulo Rocha no Cinema Português” (“Paulo Rocha in Portuguese Cinema”) — in which Rocha's aesthetic choices are reframed in the light of the ideas of modernity, the concepts of *poésis*, tragic, lyric, epic and mythic, with an particular emphasis on how all this incorporates the main influences of the creator and, at the same time, how it lays the foundations of a very special and unique aesthetics that, nonetheless, holds some strong contact points with other Portuguese filmmakers, which were strongly influenced by Rocha.

From the cinema of Paulo Rocha, this time to another type of moving image, in a radically different approach, Luis Deltell and Jordi Massó Castilla, in their essay “Imagen y Pensamiento en el Videoarte Portugués Actual” (“Image and Thought in Contemporary Portuguese Video Art”), propose an original perspective that highlights an issue that is itself also innovative: Portuguese contemporary video art. In this article, Luis Deltell and Jordi Massó Castilla find a set of characteristics which they believe are common to the works of the artists of the new generation of Portuguese creators such as João Onofre, Vasco Araújo or Filipa César, and may even function as distinguish features at an international level. The authors argue that the work of this new generation of Portuguese creators share a theoretical and reflexive concern centred essentially on two main topics: the subject of time and the

question of representation. These are, in the opinion of Deltell and Castilla, the two major issues that place the new generation Portuguese video artists in a direct dialogue with some of the most fruitful theories on these matters and that, at the same time, demonstrate, in a unique and very productive way, that art “thinks” and can “think” by its own means.

From video art to the documentary film, the article “O lugar da voz na construção do espaço documental português: Morais, Mozos e Tocha” (“The role of the voice in the construction of Portuguese documentary space: Morais, Mozos and Tocha,” by Filipa Rosário, draws on the analysis of three Portuguese documentary films of the last three decades, and whose central focus are specific “places” and “spaces” in their own materiality, in order to examine how another spatiality (the film) creates, through the connection and/or disconnection between images and sound (i.e., the use of voice-over), various film poetics.

In the section “Interviews,” Susana Nascimento and Nuno Lisboa entail a conversation with Susana de Sousa Dias, raising a number of issues, such as the necessary interconnections between theory and practice in the work of this Portuguese filmmaker, who also has a significant amount of theoretical work. These are major issues that converge in a number of other key subjects to the creative process of Sousa Dias, and that are related with a deep inquiry on the connection of her films to the historical past and present time, discussing, also the ideas of Archive and historical record, in the essential tension that they establish with the cinematographic creative process, and that also includes the primary relationship between images and words.

We finish this volume with two book reviews of two recently published works dedicated to Portuguese cinema: Patricia Vieira's book — *Cinema no Estado Novo: A Encenação do Regime* — by Sofia Sampaio, and *Espectres del Cinema Portuguès Contemporani. Història i Fantasma en les Images* by Nuno Crespo.

With all this, we hope to have contributed to the deepening of the knowledge and, especially, of the questioning, on Portuguese cinema, aiming at thinking more *with* the films than *about* the films. This volume, with its deep belief in the transformative power of thought, in all of its forms, is entirely dedicated to it.

THIS ISSUE'S EDITORS

Patrícia Castello Branco

Susana Viegas

EDITORIAL: CINEMA PORTUGUÊS E FILOSOFIA

Este número 5 da *Cinema: Revista de Filosofia e da Imagem em Movimento* é totalmente dedicado à filosofia e ao cinema português, com uma particular incidência nas perspectivas filosóficas sobre as suas imagens em movimento. Partimos da ideia de que, ainda que sejam escassas (e breves) as publicações neste sentido, centradas principalmente nas obras de Pedro Costa e Manoel de Oliveira, a maioria dos filmes portugueses tem uma forte ligação com a investigação filosófica. Este encontro espelha-se numa estética singular, mas também numa complexa rede, determinada por circunstâncias da sua recente história política, cultural e social, que marca a história do cinema português a nível político, ético, estético e cultural. Com este volume, procuramos colmatar essa lacuna contribuindo para a reflexão filosófica do cinema português, tomado no seu sentido alargado, e integrando os filmes de ficção, documentário e as mais recentes tendências da arte-vídeo. Ou seja, para além dos diálogos já estabelecidos entre cineastas e filósofos, procurámos alargar o âmbito da análise estético-filosófica, na encruzilhada disciplinar de leituras históricas, políticas e psicanalíticas, cruzando também objetos e abordagens intermediáticas da imagem em movimento, que incluem criadores tão díspares como Paulo Rocha, Miguel Gomes, Alberto Seixas Santos, António da Cunha Teles, Solveig Nordlund, José Álvaro Morais, Manuel Mozos ou Gonçalo Tocha, e abrem o leque para outros protagonistas da imagem em movimento no nosso país como Vasco Araújo, João Onofre ou Filipa César.

Iniciamos a secção de Ensaaios com um texto que revela um profundo conhecimento do cinema português e do ensaio filosófico. Em “The End of History Through the Disclosure of Fiction: Indisciplinarity in Miguel Gomes’s *Tabu* (2012),” Carolin Overhoff Ferreira desenvolve as potencialidades de um novo conceito: o “filme indisciplinar.” A autora, inspirada no pensamento de Jacques Rancière, redefine este conceito, que propõe como alternativa ao conceito de filme-ensaio, e defende que o filme de Gomes “pensa a história colonial de Portugal entre disciplinas.”

Luís Trindade, em “Thinking the Revolution in Alberto Seixas Santos’s *Mild Manners and Gestures and Fragmentos*,” tem como centro de análise a viragem histórica do 25 de Abril de

1974. O autor analisa a relação entre a ideologia que marca as narrativas e o próprio processo revolucionário através da influência e a presença de três filósofos: Marx e Engels em *Brandos Costumes* (1974) e Eduardo Lourenço em *Gestos e Fragmentos* (1982).

O enfoque na mesma época histórica é partilhado por Érica Faleiro Rodrigues que, em “Between Narcissism and Repression: The Castration of Female Desire in Portuguese Film — Julia Kristeva and Abjection, the 1974 revolution, *The Siege* and *Dina and Django*,” nos oferece uma abordagem totalmente diferente a partir de uma leitura original dos filmes *O Cerco* (1970) de António da Cunha Teles, e *Dina e Django* (1983) de Solveig Nordlund. Tomando estas duas obras como paradigmas de uma certa visão do feminino em épocas aparentemente tão diversas como o “antes” e o “depois” da revolução, a autora destaca a forma como, mesmo em circunstâncias sociais e políticas supostamente tão divergentes, se mantêm traços dominantes. Inspirada nas ideias de Julia Kristeva, Érica Rodrigues, demonstra como, em ambas, as protagonistas evoluem do narcisismo para o castigo, e se apresentam como personagens em luta (interna e externa) por uma emancipação social e sexual que não conseguem alcançar.

A leitura continua com a análise da obra cinematográfica de Pedro Costa oferecida por dois ensaios distintos e que partem também de dois filósofos maiores: mais uma vez, Jacques Rancière e Gilles Deleuze. Assim, Maria del Pilar Gavilanes, em « Apprendre chaque jour de nouveaux mots, de beaux mots: le cinéma de Pedro Costa comme scène politique d'une démonstration égalitaire, » Gavilanes inspira-se em Rancière e centra-se na encenação da palavra para a construção do sentido e das personagens nos filmes de Costa, procurando demonstrar como ela funciona nesse caso como uma “demonstração de igualdade.” Numa outra abordagem aos filmes de Pedro Costa, partindo diretamente de uma perspectiva deleuziana, Patricia Brás apresenta, com o ensaio “*Ne Change Rien* (2009): Time is Political,” uma interpretação minuciosa de uma cena em particular deste filme que, na opinião da autora, ilustra a relação entre o “devir,” repetição e a passagem do tempo nos ensaios de música de Jeanne Balibar, como crítica do próprio trabalho artístico (Hannah Arendt e Karl Marx), quando o gesto se torna político.

É também ao pensamento de Deleuze e ao livro *A Imagem-Tempo* que John M. Carvalho se inspira para a análise que faz da obra de Miguel Gomes — “*Tabu: Time Out of Joint in Contemporary Portuguese Cinema*” —, filme que, defende, nos obriga a pensar. Tendo como fio condutor o sentimento de perda, ou *objet petit a*, segundo Jacques Lacan, o autor identifica

a conhecida passagem defendida por Deleuze da imagem-movimento para a imagem-tempo na obra de Manoel de Oliveira e nos cineastas do Novo Cinema.

Ora, é precisamente com Manoel de Oliveira que continuamos, com um par de ensaios que lhe são inteiramente dedicados. No primeiro, Talitha Ferraz — “Coexistências nas margens: reflexões sobre *Douro, Faina Fluvial* a partir de Deleuze e Guattari” —, analisa esta obra pioneira de Oliveira à luz do conceito de imagem-movimento e do pensamento de Deleuze e Guattari. No segundo, Cam Cobb — “Narrative Pedagogy on a Train” —, centra-se no filme *Singularidade de uma Rapariga Loura* seguindo o ponto de vista da pedagogia e dos actos de aprendizagem, a partir da história narrada.

De Manoel de Oliveira seguimos para outro nome maior do cinema português: Paulo Rocha. Aqui, Carlos Melo Ferreira presenteia-nos com uma leitura poética — “Paulo Rocha no Cinema Português” — na qual as opções estéticas que atravessam os diversos filmes deste cineasta são reenquadradas à luz de ideias de modernidade, dos conceitos de *poéisis*, de trágico, lírico, épico e mítico, com especial destaque para a forma como tudo isto incorpora as influências maiores no criador e, ao mesmo tempo, lança os alicerces de uma estética particularíssima e única que, não obstante, mantém alguns pontos de contacto e forte influência em outros cineastas portugueses.

Do cinema de Paulo Rocha para um outro tipo de imagem em movimento, numa abordagem radicalmente diferente, Luis Deltell e Jordi Massó Castilla, no seu ensaio “Imagen y pensamiento en el videoarte portugués actual,” propõem um visão original que destaca uma temática também ela inovadora: a arte-vídeo contemporânea portuguesa. Neste artigo, Luis Deltell e Jordi Massó Castilla procuram um conjunto de características comuns às obras de artistas da nova geração de criadores nacionais como, João Onofre, Vasco Araújo ou Filipa César, e que os distinguem a um nível internacional. Os autores argumentam que as obras desta nova geração de criadores partilham uma preocupação teórica e reflexiva centrada, sobretudo, em duas temáticas principais: a questão do tempo e a questão da representação. Estas são, na opinião de Deltell e Castilla, os dois grandes temas que colocam a nova geração de vídeo artistas portugueses em diálogo com algumas das teorizações mais profícuas nestas matérias e que demonstram, de forma única e muito produtiva, como a arte “pensa” e pode “pensar” pelos seus próprios meios.

Da arte-vídeo desta feita para o documentário, o artigo “O Lugar da Voz na Construção do Espaço Documental Português: Morais, Mozos e Tocha,” assinado por Filipa Rosário,

parte da análise de três filmes documentais portugueses das últimas três décadas, e cujo enfoque central são “lugares” e “espaços,” na sua materialidade muito própria, para analisar a forma como uma outra espacialidade (a cinematográfica) cria, através do mesmo dispositivo de articulação e/ou desarticulação entre a imagem e a palavra (nomeadamente o uso da voz *off*), poéticas fílmicas diversas.

Na secção “Entrevistas,” Susana Nascimento e Nuno Lisboa, numa conversa com Susana de Sousa Dias, levantam uma série de interrogações que passam pelas necessárias interligações entre a teoria e a prática na obra da cineasta portuguesa que conta também com um significativo trabalho teórico. Estas são interrogações maiores que confluem numa série de outras questões determinantes para o processo criativo da cineasta e que passam por uma profunda reflexão acerca da ligação das imagens cinematográficas ao presente e ao passado históricos, discutindo intensamente as ideias de registo e de arquivo, na tensão essencial que estabelecem com processo criativo eminentemente cinematográfico e que inclui, também, a primordial relação entre a imagem e a palavra.

Terminamos este volume com duas resenhas de obras dedicadas ao cinema português e recentemente publicadas: o livro de Patrícia Vieira — *Cinema no Estado Novo: A Encenação do Regime* — assinado por Sofia Sampaio, e *Espectres del Cinema Portuguès Contemporani. Història i Fantasma en les Images*, assinado por Nuno Crespo.

Com tudo isto, esperamos ter contribuído para o aprofundamento do conhecimento e, sobretudo, da reflexão sobre o cinema português, pensando mais *com* ele do que *sobre* ele. Este volume, com a sua crença no poder transformador do pensamento em todas as suas formas, é-lhe dedicado.

AS EDITORAS DESTE NÚMERO

Patrícia Castello Branco

Susana Viegas

ABSTRACTS

THE END OF HISTORY THROUGH THE DISCLOSURE OF FICTION: INDISCIPLINARITY IN MIGUEL GOMES'S *TABU* (2012)

Carolin Overhoff Ferreira (Federal University of São Paulo)

This article aims to discuss a new concept, the interdisciplinary film, and prove its analytical benefits by studying an outstanding and prize-winning contemporary Portuguese example: Miguel Gomes' *Tabu* (2012). The concept is inspired in Jacques Rancière's idea of philosophy as an area of knowledge that thinks between disciplines, as well as in his notion of the aesthetic regime. I will argue that interdisciplinarity in the context of cinema can substitute the essay film as a category and point out why and how it can shift the discussion towards key issues such as the relation between method and fiction, politics and aesthetics, and reception. It can serve as an analytical tool by means of exploring interdisciplinary films' main characteristics that can be resumed as follow: 1) co-presence of temporalities; 2) in-definition of borders between the reason of facts and the reason of fictions; 3) suspension of the opposition between the activity of thought and the passivity of sensible matter; and 4) re-composition of the landscape of the visible. With regard to *Tabu*, I will show that the film thinks Portugal's colonial history between disciplines by addressing it in an unprecedented way that focuses mainly on the construction of fiction and spectator expectations. The bonds between film history and colonial history are straightened in a way that cannot be simply described by using current ideas associated with modern cinema and the author film such as auto-reflexivity or subjectivity. Film is used in such a way as to propose a model of the world that gravitates around our cultural experiences of relating to reality and history through fiction. Other than the written media, that, according to Vilém Flusser, aims to offer linear explications of our world, Gomes' film proves the full potential of the technological codes and their capacity to make us understand how we are structuring History through fiction and how fiction can offer a deeper understanding of historical events. I will claim that Gomes sets new standards for film watching experiences in Portuguese cinema by constructing a two-parted film that engages (in "Paradise lost") with a common woman, the Christian human rights activist Pilar, and her fascination with her upper class neighbour's colonial background that becomes (in "Paradise") a muted melodrama based on Aurora's unhappy love story.

Keywords: colonialism, Portuguese cinema, post-colonialism, indisciplinary, Miguel Gomes.

THINKING THE REVOLUTION IN ALBERTO SEIXAS SANTOS'S *MILD MANNERS* AND *GESTURES AND FRAGMENTS*

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This article analyses the ways in which two films by Portuguese filmmaker Alberto Seixas Santos, *Mild Manners* (*Brandos Costumes*, 1974) and *Gestures and Fragments* (*Gestos e Fragmentos*, 1982), engage with history and, in particular, with the Carnation Revolution of 1974-1975. The article argues that the director's politics should be looked for in the ways both films participate in the general critique of audiovisual forms of the 1960s and the 1970s, rather than in specific ideological positions conveyed in the narratives. In this context, *Mild Manners* and *Gestures and Fragments* deploy forms of philosophical thought to mediate the relation between their narratives and the revolutionary process. More specifically, whereas *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels provide the former with a utopian impulse, the considerations of Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço about the Carnation Revolution in *Gestures and Fragments* is instrumental in the definition of this second film as a reflection on the revolution's memory. In both cases, by rigorously equating representation and thought, Seixas Santos's films are allowed to emerge as faithful figurations of a particularly critical historical moment.

Keywords: historiography, the long 1960s, narrative, new cinemas, revolution.

BETWEEN NARCISSISM AND REPRESSION: THE CASTRATION OF FEMALE DESIRE IN PORTUGUESE FILM – JULIA KRISTEVA AND ABJECTION, THE 1974 REVOLUTION, *THE SIEGE* AND *DINA AND DJANGO*

Érica Faleiro Rodrigues (Birkbeck College, University of London)

The Portuguese films *The Siege* (*O Cerco*, 1970) and *Dina and Django* (*Dina e Django*, 1983) are set within divergent socio-political situations: twelve years separate the two, with Portugal's

1974 revolution and the end to almost fifty years of dictatorship (1926-1974) between them. A man directs *The Siege* (António da Cunha Teles), while a woman directs *Dina and Django* (Solveig Nordlund). I depart from Julia Kristeva's pivotal book *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* to ask how two films produced over a decade apart and under different social and political conditions, can both portray women protagonists castrated in the fulfilment of their desire for sexual pleasure and social emancipation — why, in both, these characters progress from narcissism to repression to punishment.

Keywords: depolitisation, dictatorship, Julia Kristeva, revolution, sexuality.

APPRENDRE CHAQUE JOUR DE NOUVEAUX MOTS, DE BEAUX MOTS : LE CINÉMA DE PEDRO COSTA COMME SCÈNE POLITIQUE D'UNE DÉMONSTRATION ÉGALITAIRE [LEARNING NEW WORDS EVERY DAY, BEAUTIFUL WORDS: PEDRO COSTA'S CINEMA AS A POLITICAL SCENE OF AN EGALITARIAN DEMONSTRATION]

Maria del Pilar Gavilanes (École de Haut Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris)

The Portuguese filmmaker Pedro Costa has been working on Lisbon's suburbs for more than fifteen years. In his films, these neighbourhoods' residents invent the stories that are being told, at the same time they are interpreting them. Costa's cinema takes strongly into account the events and the transformations of the urban areas he is filming and of lives of its residents. This paper will try and address this focusing of Costa's films, articulating it with Jacques Rancière's notions. It will try and argue that they are a demonstration of equality, for through the *mise en scène* of the speech itself, characters are also revealing their capacity to actualize and expose a particular conception of their world. Moreover, the specific treatment of characters in these films offers a multiplicity of voices that refer, not only to individuals, but also to collective figures. In Costa's cinema, the elaboration of narratives during the process of making a film requires an attentive listening that is also extended to the spectators, engaging them in the process. In this cinema, telling and understanding stories include the possibility, or the impossibility, of transmitting them.

Keywords: Jacques Rancière, Pedro Costa.

NE CHANGE RIEN (2009): TIME IS POLITICAL

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This article engages with the Deleuzian concepts of “becoming” and “time-image” but also the Marxist term of “commodity fetishism” and Hannah Arendt’s notion of “labour” to argue that in Pedro Costa’s *Ne Change Rien*, time is political.

Keywords: becoming, commodity fetishism, duration, inflation of meaning; interpretative contingency, labour time, political gesture, sound, temporality.

TABU: TIME OUT OF JOINT IN CONTEMPORARY PORTUGUESE CINEMA

John M. Carvalho (Villanova University)

“The time is out of joint.” So says Hamlet in Shakespeare’s play. For Gilles Deleuze, Hamlet’s words anticipate a revolution in philosophy that will be replayed in the history of film where time is no longer subordinate to movement but movement to time. In films made after the Second World War, Deleuze famously holds, the movement-images of classic Hollywood cinema gave way to direct time-images, images of time as duration. In the history of Portuguese cinema, this change was anticipated in the films of Manoel de Oliveira. It is followed, in the modern Portuguese cinema of Miguel Gomes. In his latest film, Gomes deploys time-images to present what is experienced as loss in contemporary Portuguese culture. Specifically, Gomes gives us images of a paradise experienced as lost which was never really paradise in the first instance. This sense of loss can be helpfully characterized in terms of what Jacques Lacan has called the *objet petit a*. Drawing from Deleuze and Lacan, we will treat the paradise represented by Gomes as an object cause of desire trapped in time and experienced as lost in contemporary Portuguese culture and film. The time is out of joint in *Tabu* for the characters who act out its narrative as well as for the target audience for this film. Gomes has made a film that brings us into contact with that loss and with a longing (*saudade*) that will never and can never be satisfied.

Keywords: Gilles Deleuze, Miguel Gomes, *objet a*, *saudade*, time.

COEXISTÊNCIAS NAS MARGENS: REFLEXÕES SOBRE *DOURO, FAINA FLUVIAL* A PARTIR DE DELEUZE E GUATTARI

[COEXISTENCES ALONG THE RIVER: REFLECTION ABOUT LABOR ON THE DOURO RIVER FROM DELEUZE AND GUATTARI]

Talitha Ferraz (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro/NOVA)

This paper examines the first version of *Douro, Faina Fluvial* (1931), Manoel de Oliveira's film, under the light of the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, especially "cartography," "becoming" and "collective assemblages," concepts described in the paper. Could we envisage this film working with scenes that contain a narrative line based on the joint functioning of man, machine and nature/animal? The connection of these elements along the river is the main element the director captures with his camera. Thus, I reflect, in addition to other strands of thought, on the nature of the ties between the subjects the director puts forward in this work. I discuss how the documentary, which is influenced by Vertov's *Kino-eye* of the soviet cinema, departs from a "game of different realms," i.e., the recording and construction of a symphony of otherness that coexists in the same territory, expanding it and at the same time marking it. In this movie, men make alliances with the river, relationships with the boats, animals and machines. They are producing a universe along the Douro, marked by daily hard work. However, it is important to understand how the documentary explains the opening of new matches within these rooted connections on the riverside. Man, river, machine and animal before being limited at the level of representation, shot by shot ally in favour of "becoming the other." It is on the trail of this intense relationship of exchanging alterities recorded and developed by the aesthetic force of Oliveira's editing that this paper is based. At the same time, the text applies concepts of the cornerstone of Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophy.

Keywords: becoming, collective assemblages, documentary, Manoel de Oliveira.

NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY ON A TRAIN

Cam Cobb (University of Windsor)

Shortly after his hundredth birthday, Portuguese director Manoel de Oliveira released *Eccentricities of a Blond-haired Girl*. Running at 64 minutes and set in present day Portugal, the film

is based on a story by nineteenth-century realist, Eça de Queirós. The film begins and ends on a train. The train itself moves through space and also moves through time. Speeding away from Lisbon, Macário, a young accountant, is heading to Algarve, the southern region of Portugal. But he is haunted. While he might be able to physically depart from Lisbon, he is stuck there in his mind. A smartly dressed middle-aged lady is seated beside him and he strikes up a conversation with her. Macário informs her he is upset and adds that he is prepared to tell her why. The lady urges him to say more. What follows is a conversation strewn with flashbacks and sprinkled with questions and clarifications. It is also a pedagogical exchange. Using his declarative memory, Macário reconstructs a lived experience, relating the story of his failed romance with Luísa. In sharing his narrative, Macário endeavors not only to make sense of his past but also to cope with his present, and ultimately move on to his future. The conversation between the two travelers exemplifies how we use our personal narratives to engage in learning exchanges, connect with others, and better understand our lives. It also has wider implications for Oliveira's film.

Keywords: narrative inquiry, narrative pedagogy.

PAULO ROCHA NO CINEMA PORTUGUÊS

[PAULO ROCHA IN PORTUGUESE CINEMA]

Carlos Melo Ferreira (CEAA, Escola Superior Artística do Porto)

A study about the films of Paulo Rocha, that brings together *modernism* and *modernity* with both *tragic* and *lyrical*, *epic* e *mythical* characteristics in its unfolding between the New Portuguese Cinema of the 60's, his presence in the Far East and his return to Portugal with a creativity that made him more a pursuer of the classics, namely Kenji Mizoguchi, than a contemporary of the "nouvelle vague" and the *new cinemas*, which he also was. The phases of his creation are marked alongside his own life, with special attention to formal aspects, namely the use of *long shot with deep length* in new terms and of *collage*. His place in Portuguese cinema goes way beyond founding the New Portuguese Cinema to place itself at the level of the best cinema of the 20th, early 21st centuries, with a *poetics* of his own, close to Manoel de Oliveira and future influences.

Keywords: collage, contrasts, long shot, modernism, modernity.

IMAGEN Y PENSAMIENTO EN EL VIDEOARTE PORTUGUÉS ACTUAL
[IMAGE AND THOUGHT IN CONTEMPORARY PORTUGUESE VIDEO ART]

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The Portuguese video art has excelled during the past three decades in the international art scene due to creators like Filipa César, Pedro Gomes, Vasco Araújo, João Onofre, Francisco Queiroz and Nuno Cera, amongst others. Although it is difficult to determine common traits that allow to talk about a “Portuguese School,” on the contrary it can be noted that these artists share a preoccupation concerning the issue of time and the problem of “representation,” present in much of their works. All attempts of theorizing video art, from the earliest (Deleuze, Bellour) to the latest (Parfait, Spielmann), have attempted to meditate on these issues. However, these philosophers and art theorists have realized the complexity owed to the particularity of a medium that presents unprecedented characteristics in the Art History, such as the use of the electronic image. This could be the reason why theory of video art has reached a relatively poorly development. However, the case of those Portuguese artists shows that the creation has been far ahead of theorizing. In this sense, many of their works offer a meditation on time of great interest that cannot be ignored by Aesthetics. This paper discusses some of these creations in order to explain on which consists this particular inquiry about the temporal question, unparalleled in the international video art.

Keywords: aesthetics, Filipa César, João Onofre, Vasco Araújo, video art.

O LUGAR DA VOZ NA CONSTRUÇÃO DO ESPAÇO DOCUMENTAL PORTUGUÊS:
MORAIS, MOZOS E TOCHA
[THE ROLE OF THE VOICE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PORTUGUESE
DOCUMENTARY SPACE: MORAIS, MOZOS AND TOCHA]

Filipa Rosário (CEC, Universidade de Lisboa)

Zephyr directed by José Álvaro Morais (*Zéfiro*, 1994), *Ruins* by Manuel Mozos (*Ruínas*, 2009) and *It's the Earth Not the Moon* by Gonçalo Tocha (*É na Terra Não é na Lua*, 2011) depict several Portuguese places, while presenting different types of tension between images and words. In each movie, the audience is confronted with both real and symbolic spaces, the latter being created by their voiceover narrations, a feature shared by all of them. And since they focus on specific territories — respectively, the South of Portugal, Portuguese ruins and Corvo, the smallest island in the archipelago of Azores — it becomes possible to analyze the dialogical relation between filmed landscapes and the “aura” they obtain when confronted with their own voiceover commentaries.

This article aims to understand not only what these voiceover narrations awake in the images, but also where to these two narrative strengths project the spectator.

Keywords: documentary, José Álvaro Morais, Gonçalo Tocha, Manuel Mozos, *voiceover narration*.

THE END OF HISTORY THROUGH
THE DISCLOSURE OF FICTION:
INDISCIPLINARITY IN MIGUEL GOMES'S *TABU* (2012)

Carolin Overhoff Ferreira (Federal University of São Paulo)

INTRODUCTION

This article proposes a new concept, the interdisciplinary film, and aims to prove its analytical benefits by analysing an outstanding and prize-winning contemporary Portuguese example: Miguel Gomes's *Tabu* (2012). The concept is inspired in Jacques Rancière's¹ idea of philosophy as an area of knowledge that thinks between disciplines, as well as in his notion of the aesthetic regime. As I have suggested elsewhere,² the notion of the interdisciplinary film aims to substitute that of the essay film. I will repeat my argument, in order to justify why I think that the study of films that escape classification should not focus on auto-reflexivity and subjectivity, but rather concentrate on their relation between method and fiction, politics and aesthetics, and reception.

I will advocate that Gomes's film thinks Portugal's colonial history between disciplines since its interest lies in the disclosure of fiction, as well as in acting on spectator expectations by engaging with our visual, aural and audio-visual experiences of colonial history in photography, music and film. Other than the written media that, according to Vilém Flusser,³ participated in offering a linear explication of our world, *Tabu* proves the full potential of the technological codes appointed to by the author. This is due to their capacity to develop concepts of images instead of understanding the world as an accumulation of scenes (as images do) or concepts that signify ideas (as literature does). In a very literal sense techno-imaginary codes indicate the end of history⁴ and the entrance into the world of models. Images and literature can thus be recognized in their role as mediators. I will claim that Gomes, whose film is inspired in F. W. Murnau's *Tabu: a Story from the South Seas* (1931), which discussed the influence of writing on native cultures, makes us perceive this dimension of techno-images as concepts, thus setting new standards for contemporary film and its relationship with history as fiction.

In fact, with his title, his topic and aesthetics Gomes sets up an intense and contemporary dialogue with Murnau's silent masterwork. He follows the German filmmakers' representation of colonialism from an anthropological point of view, his defiance of categories such as ethnographic documentary and fiction film and his highlighting of the materiality of the cinematographic image and of sound, but focuses even stronger on the performativity of the characters' roles. However, Gomes deals from a changed because post-colonial perspective with the feeling of loss of an empire, instead of the loss of an autochthonous society. The contemporary filmmaker actually permits the feeling of nostalgia for the colonial past, camouflaged as the longing for one's youth, as post-colonialism's insistence in its most negative side, explicitly the master-servant relationship towards contemporary African migrants. As a result, *Tabu* stands out in present film production by confronting the spectator expectations usually aroused in European and Hollywood films, as well as in ethnographic films that express an un-deliberately craving for lost empires.

INDISCIPLINARITY VERSUS THE ESSAY-FILM

Given its aesthetics and defying politics, *Tabu* is difficult to classify. Even though close to what is usually considered a fiction film, it could easily be associated with what filmmakers and theoreticians have called an "essay film." As part of modern cinema, this concept has been used to inscribe film into the history of modernism, however mainly for films that are stronger linked with documentary filmmaking.

How then approach this genre resisting film? I suggest "indisciplinary film" since the concept reveals the construction of fictions and calls attention to film's capacity to make us experience aesthetic heterogeneity and dissent, presenting as such the possibility to grasp a deeper understanding of film as a sensorial *and* cognitive art form. Following Rancière⁵ and his ideas on art and the avant-garde, I am proposing that we should abandon the notion of modernity in cinema, associated with self-referentiality and the subjectivity of the author, and analyse the trans-historical relation between knowledge, politics and aesthetics articulated in film instead.

What are we giving up and what can we earn from doing so? Claiming the essay as a genre for film theory and practice has been an important item on a political agenda: to de-

find the mass medium as a serious art form whose critical and reflexive capacity is comparable to philosophy and other disciplines of knowledge. Michel de Montaigne, responsible for introducing⁶ the concept in his famous book, was, on the other hand, more interested in human limitations. The *Essays* presented the “thoughts” and the “essence”⁷ of its author, so as to delineate how to understand and live with humanities imperfections. Self-observation and reflection on human behaviour, disregard for rules and schemes, idealization or typification lay at its core. While this could be regarded as an “indisciplinary” methodology that thinks between disciplines, the essay was quickly adopted as a genre in a wide range of disciplines, from philosophy to human sciences and the arts, among them film. The genre question is actually the one issue that still divides scholars in the theorization of the essay-film.⁸

Establishing the essay-film as a genre meant defending it as an audio-visual tool for reasoning. Sergei Eisenstein was the first to embrace the concept for *Oktyabr* (*October*, 1929), maintaining that cinema was “capable of articulating ideas”⁹. Based on Eisenstein, Bela Balázs¹⁰ argued in the 1930 that the “Gedankenfilm” mediated abstract ideas through sensitive forms and intellectual thought through the effect of images. In the same line, Hans Richter¹¹ pondered in 1940 that the essay-film was a much-anticipated variation of the documentary film, capable of visualizing ideas and thoughts by making the invisible visible.¹² Almost a decade later, in 1948, Alexandre Astruc¹³ fell short of pointing out a filmic example that deserved to be called an expression of thinking. In his notorious text on the camera-pen he was nevertheless certain that this hypothesis would soon become a reality.

Examples of the kind of filmmaking he idealized were being observed from the 1950s onwards. In 1954, Jacques Rivette¹⁴ described Roberto Rossellini’s feature *Viaggio in Italia* (*The Lonely Woman*, 1954) as an essay, sustaining that cinema was as capable of being essayistic as literature by stressing the film’s remarkable mix of everyday details and ideas. In 1958, André Bazin¹⁵ spotted a film that fitted Astruc’s foresight perfectly: *Lettre de Sibérie* (*Letters from Siberia*, 1958) by Chris Marker. Fascinated by an editing style that cut from eye to ear (called horizontal montage), Bazin claimed that this could take documentary filmmaking to a new level. Astruc, for his part, reckoned that the camera-pen would be as much a tool for fiction as for documentary. In 1965, German filmmakers Alexander Kluge, Edgar Reitz and Wilfried Reinke¹⁶ picked up on the ideas of Balázs by concentrating their attention on the dialectical relationship between aesthetics and concepts in films that they considered suitable for the communication of complex ideas. In the same year, Jean-Luc Godard designated

his *Pierrot Le Fou* (1965) an essay-film.¹⁷ Roughly at the same time, in 1969, Argentinian directors Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino¹⁸ signposted what the essay-film could offer to the development of their 'Third Cinema' in Latin America.

When the essay-film became a key concept in film studies in the 1980s, mainly in German¹⁹ and French²⁰ academia, the concerns changed only slightly. In the wake of the definition of modernist art²¹ and avant-garde film,²² subjectivity of point of view and auto-reflexivity were singled out as key characteristics of films that encourage active spectator participation and involve the audience in the decoding of inventive sound to image montage. The rational side thus remained paramount to its definition and the documentary was seen to be its main playground.

When the concept's theoretical discussion and usage as an analytical tool spread in the following decade around Europe,²³ reaching North and South America²⁴ at the turn of the new millennium, it was generally agreed that the essay-film was an open art work that breaks away from the parameters of established genres, questioning their and the medium's limits by disregarding established hierarchies between literature, philosophy and visual media. In short, it was modern cinema's most modernist accomplishment that made its audiences think and question established knowledge by means of its filmmaker's authorial style.

George Lukács,²⁵ in 1910, and later Theodor W. Adorno,²⁶ in 1958, strongly influenced this mind-set by stressing the centrality of the author and his critique of ultimate knowledge. Both discussed the essay in the light of a revision of sciences' objectivity. Even though Adorno disagrees with Lukács' definition of the concept as an artistic form,²⁷ he cites him extensively to underline the contribution of the essay to unorthodox thinking and to foreground the limitations of scientific methods:

Even the empiricist doctrines that grant priority to open, unanticipated experience over firm, conceptual ordering remain systematic to the extent that they investigate what they hold to be the more or less constant pre-conditions of knowledge and develop them in as continuous a context as possible. Since the time of Bacon, who was himself an essayist, empiricism — no less than rationalism — has been "method." Doubt about the unconditional priority of method was raised, in the actual process of thought, almost exclusively by the essay. It does justice to the consciousness of non-identity, without needing to say so, radically un-radical in refraining from any reduction to a princi-

ple, in accentuating the fragmentary, the partial rather than the total. Perhaps the great *Sieur de Montaigne* felt something like this when he gave his writings the wonderfully elegant and apt title of *Essays*. The simple modesty of this word is an arrogant courtesy. The essayist dismisses his own proud hopes which sometimes lead him to believe that he has come close to the ultimate: he has, after all, no more to offer than explanations of the poems of others, or at best of his own ideas. But he ironically adapts himself to this smallness — the eternal smallness of the most profound work of the intellect in face of life — and even emphasizes it with ironic modesty.²⁸

The inconclusiveness of methods is recognized by both authors and approaches them more than their divergence on the essay as an art form might suggest. Both thinkers also underline the centrality of the author who opens up a space of experience through which the essay articulates its doubts and its critique of ultimate knowledge. Lukács speaks of reflexive monologues and the essayist's growing consciousness of his own nature, whereas Adorno uses the image of the author as a stage of interrogations and doubts:

Actually, the thinker does not think, but rather transforms himself into an arena of intellectual experience, without simplifying it. While even traditional thought draws its impulses from such experience, such thought by its form eliminates the remembrance of these impulses. The essay, on the other hand, takes them as its model, without simply imitating them as reflected form; it mediates them through its own conceptual organization; it proceeds, so to speak, methodically unmethodically.²⁹

Accordingly, Adorno recognizes that the essay's aesthetic shares the possibilities of non-conceptual works of art. But since he understands art to be non-discursive, the essay can by no means be considered an artistic expression.

Whereas both authors' observations on the importance of experience were not so eagerly remembered but, conversely turned into the subjectivity of the author, Adorno factually ended up complicating matters for the reception of the essay in art theory. For once, since his paradoxical statement on its "methodically un-methodically" procedure made up for much of the mystification of the essay-film. And second because he considered this "method" as purely literary. Paradoxically, it the questioning of this hierarchization of disci-

plines that helps to explain why filmmakers from Eisenstein to Getino were attracted to this label. The audio-visual was already being perceived as having a potential that could rival with any other discipline that produces knowledge. But this was being supported by drawing strongly on film's capacity to think, as well as on a modernist nomenclature that overshadowed conceptually what was already a consciousness of cinema's capacity to make concepts of images, as Flusser would say. In fact, there is nothing wrong with claiming the essay for film art, had its definition not been so strongly connected with reason, modernism and documentary.

Since Adorno defended, inconsistently, the logo-centric side of the essay, time has passed and hierarchies have crumbled. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's³⁰ well-known definition of the philosopher as a creator of concepts is less restrictive and much sharper with regard to the differences between art, science and philosophy and are certainly responsible for Rancière's idea of indisciplinaryity. Focusing on concepts demonstrates that the filmmaker's worries and those of today's film scholars have lost ground. Accepting that each field of knowledge is creative and interrelated, Deleuze and Guattari explain that they all think, even though in very different ways:

from sentences or their equivalent, philosophy extracts concepts (which must not be confused with general or abstract ideas), whereas science extracts prospects (propositions that must not be confused with judgments), and art extracts percepts and affects (which must not be confused with perceptions or feelings). In each case language is tested and used in incomparable ways — but in ways that do not define the difference between disciplines without also constituting their perpetual interbreeding.³¹

In the philosophers' understanding science is also less affirmative than Adorno would have it, and art undoubtedly capable of thinking: "Art thinks no less than philosophy, but it thinks through affects and percepts." One might want to add that it does so in varying degrees.³²

If the essay-film was successful in fighting film's case as high art (in post-modern times somehow obsolete), it can, given its association with the above mentioned characteristics of modern cinema, also prove misleading as an analytical tool. Let me briefly demonstrate this with *Tabu*. The film juxtaposes two parts set in different historical moments after a prologue. It makes references to Hollywood movies, ethnographic films, the silent masterpiece *Tabu: A*

Story from the South Seas, pop songs from the 1960s and colonial photography. If we looked for its self-reflexivity and the author's subjectivity, we would ignore the dissent, which is at the core of Gomes aesthetic: that he establishes identity with Murnau's film and differences with dominant cinema's take on colonialism, uses several main characters and their contradictory viewpoints, engages with their moods without identifying with them, and that he reveals the enduring connection between colonial past and present.

Instead of looking to a hierarchizing literary theory in order to canonize film as a modernist art form, as filmmakers, theoreticians and scholars of the essay-film have done for decades, a turn towards philosophy might offer a more productive methodological approach that focuses the dissident attitude stronger by concentrating on the relation between the production of disciplinary knowledge and aesthetics, in short, indisciplinaryity.

THE INDISCIPLINARY FILM

Adorno was undoubtedly concerned with counterattacking disciplinaryity when he highlighted the anti-methodological method of the essay. While Jacques Rancière's concept is obviously indebted to some of his ideas, indisciplinaryity presents an original take on the problem of method that makes it more attractive to film analysis since it foregrounds the question of fiction. The author claims that disciplines are not defined *a priori* by their methods, but rather by "constituting an object as an object of thought and as the demonstration of a certain idea of knowledge."³³ This attention towards the system on which knowledge production is based is reminiscent of Michel Foucault. But the relation between power, truth and subject is enhanced by the question of aesthetic practices, as the author himself clarifies:

If the reader is fond of analogy, aesthetics can be understood in a Kantian sense — re-examined perhaps by Foucault — as the system of *a priori* forms determining what presents itself to sense experience. It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible of speech and noise [...].³⁴

Aesthetics is, then, a problem that concerns every aspect of human life, including science and politics. Science for once is seen in a dim light: not only as a "war machine against al-

lodoxy. But what is called allodoxy is, in reality, an aesthetic dissent.”³⁵ The disciplines of knowledge are being criticized more drastically and from a different vantage point. In fact, they are accused of trying to neutralize everything that breaks away from consent and threatens social balance, everything that would put the distribution of social roles and occupations at risk. In short, everything that aims to restructure the “distribution of the sensible.”

Following Deleuze and Guattari, Rancière’s target is philosophy’s rival, sociology. But, factually, all human and social sciences are in his sight. Post-structuralism’s lessons have been learned: the boundaries hide the fact that methods actually unfold into the construction of stories. While Jacques Derrida would speak of deconstruction, Rancière calls this indisciplinaryity. He defines it as a way of thinking that reveals the borders established by the various disciplines, as well as their purpose as weapons in their “war” against aesthetic dissent. For that reason, methods do not examine a territory but try to define it by telling stories. Any area of knowledge, with philosophy at its lead, needs to pay attention to the tales of other disciplines — which they call methods — in order to maintain its indisciplinaryity:

Disciplinary thought says: we have our territory, our objects and the methods which correspond to them. This is what sociology or history, political science or literary theory, says. This is also what philosophy, in the regular sense, says, posing itself as a discipline. But at the moment in which it wants to found its status as a discipline of disciplines, it produces this reversal: the foundation of foundation is a story. And philosophy says to those knowledges [*savoir*] who are certain of their methods: methods are recounted stories. This does not mean that they are null and void. It means that they are weapons in a war; they are not tools which facilitate the examination of a territory but weapons which serve to establish its always uncertain boundary.³⁶

Like Deleuze and Guattari, Rancière sees no difference between the diverse disciplines. It is the construction of their stories that varies: “Only the language of stories can trace the boundary, forcing the aporia of the absence of final reason from the reasons of the disciplines.”³⁷ In one big stroke Rancière also does away with differences between science, art and politics. Fictionality is, indeed, the one trait they all share: “Politics and art, like forms of knowledge, construct “fictions,” that is to say, material rearrangements of signs and

images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done.”³⁸

It is surprising that when the philosopher speaks of film, apart from challenging the avant-garde discourse of pure art, he positions art film again as opposed to classical Hollywood narrative, as though cinema was destined to produce fables and not fictions. He actually says that: “The art of cinema has been constrained, empirically, to affirm its art against the tasks assigned to it by the industry. But the visible process by which it thwarts these tasks only hides a more intimate process: to thwart its servitude, cinema must first thwart its mastery. [...] The film fable is a thwarted fable.”³⁹ Curiously, this sounds like the unmethodological method of Adorno and is thus less poignant than his ideas about the fictionality of all method. Moreover, although Rancière’s understanding of fable might not be an Aristotelian one, when he speaks of cinema’s open, fluid and passive character, which he calls a “positive contradiction,”⁴⁰ he does not seem to have resolved the theoretical problem that is usually referred to as the binary opposition between realism and anti-realism.

In this respect, the philosopher Martin Seel developed a more compelling idea by affirming film’s indeterminacy⁴¹. Analysing in detail the two opposing trends in film theory — one that discusses the extra-filmic reality and another that spotlights the construction of reality — as well as film’s illusionism — presented in a new light within film history with the concept of the cinema of attractions — Seel advances with a different approach capable of expressing film’s ability to produce an audio-visual experience that is neither real nor illusionary but always an indeterminate construction. Rancière, on the other hand, who is revisiting its history, does not engage with this theoretically undefined potential. Parting from Seel’s definition of film as unspecified in its relation to the construction of reality, I would suggest that film does not need to thwart its mastery, since the mastery itself is only a fiction of film history — a fact that Rancière is tackling but not resolving with the same theoretical consistency as Seel.

Rancière’s definition of the aesthetic regime, however, is much more suitable for the theoretical definition of film’s aesthetic possibilities. By employing a philosophical concept to define art, this other axiom in Rancière’s thinking has two key goals: to define art in the singular, i.e., to abandon the idea of art’s specificity, and to question the very idea of modern art and its impact within the periodization of art history. What is more, it presents a defini-

tion of realism that is not only groundbreaking for film (and aware of its indeterminacy within art) but also proposes a way to use indisciplinaryity as an analytical tool for film studies.

The turning point towards the aesthetic regime is spotted in two instances: in German idealism and in literary realism. With regard to the latter the author develops a dynamic concept: “its inaugural moment has often been called realism, which does not in any way mean the valorisation of resemblance but rather the destruction of the structures within which it functioned.”⁴² *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert is the philosopher’s prime example. He argues, and this is of the utmost importance for my critique of the essay-film, that the book does not bear the traces of its author’s intervention, i.e., his subjectivity, but, rather, of the indifference and passivity of things without will or significance: “The fictionality specific to the aesthetic age is consequently distributed between two poles: the potential of meaning inherent in everything silent and the proliferation of modes of speech and levels of meaning.”⁴³

Consequently, realism retracts from the imitation of action and highlights the “brute” materiality of the objects, remembering, at the same time, their narrative potential.⁴⁴ Pre-established borders are imploded and new experiences proposed that reconfigure the distribution of the sensible. Is this not Rancière’s very own definition of indisciplinaryity? And is film not an art form for which this is particularly true? It is worth noting that recent scholarship on the avant-garde film has put forward a comparable redefinition. Gabriele Jutz⁴⁵ and A. L. Rees,⁴⁶ for example, have questioned authors such as Clement Greenberg and P. A. Sitney, who famously defended self-reflexivity and subjectivity, by foregrounding the relation between materiality and performativity in films from the early 1920s to the present.

Since indisciplinaryity is concerned with the fictions of disciplines that construct borders and consent, its main objective is described not only as the foregrounding of these fictions, but also as the re-configuration of the sensible and thus as an aesthetic of dissent. Rancière’s definition is as follows: “Thus dissent is not an opposition between a government and people who challenge it, it is a conflict about the configuration of the sensible. [...] Dissent has as its aim what I call the cut-out of the sensible, the distribution of private and public spaces, of issues that are dealt with or are not, and of the actors that have or have not a motif to be there to take care of them.”⁴⁷ It seems to be a simple equation — fictionality equals consent and indisciplinaryity equals the redistribution of the sensible — if it were not for the aesthetic

dimension. Rancière's idea of the aesthetic regime believes in the necessity of an aesthetic dissent, not in the Marxist sense but as a means for a democracy that needs to question the binary oppositions on which consensus is built.

When elaborating on the aesthetic regime, the author actually specifies a number of characteristics that may serve as key indicators for film's indisciplinaryity. They all share a fundamental "identity of contraries,"⁴⁸ that is, they manifest a heterogeneous world-view that goes beyond the border construction of conventional methods. I will use them therefore as methodological tools for film analysis: 1) the co-presence of temporalities; 2) the in-definition of borders between the reason of facts and the reason of fictions; 3) the suspension of the opposition between the activity of thought and the passivity of sensible matter; and, generally, and, finally, 4) the re-composition of the landscape of the visible.⁴⁹

Let me look at the third feature more carefully as it is especially important for a revision of the characteristics associated with modernist art, modern cinema and the essay-film. Film studies, developing on Brecht's ideas on anti-Aristotelian theatre, has a long tradition of defining the spectator as body-less and of challenging his passive, ocular perception, as for example, in the apparatus theory, the discussion on continuity editing, suture and the panoptic view, or in feminist film theory. Much recent film scholarship has contested this point of view. As Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener⁵⁰ put it: "Cinema is not a case apart of perception with proper rules; the brain processes all sensible perception and that of the body, in cinema and anywhere else." Rancière too argues for the concept of an emancipated spectator by saying that there is no distinction between active and passive reception whatsoever: "Spectatorship is not the passivity that has to be turned into activity. It is our normal situation."⁵¹

With regard to the essay-film, recent theoretical debate has gone from the activation of the spectator towards the idea of a dialogue between author and audience.⁵² Although it sounds more dynamic, it factually remains based on distinguishing the essay-film from other films by overestimating its cognitive reception and by forgetting, or ignoring, sensitive stimuli that are equally important in the process of constructing signification. One could argue that the indisciplinary film is in fact grounded on the sensitive engagement with the "brute" presence of materiality since it is interested in the construction of meaning in a complex way that exceeds rational perception. If we can agree that any film is always active and passive,

cognitive and sensitive, we might be able to look more closely at the way in which (indisciplinary) films try to re-distribute the sensible and produce dissent.

A second point needs further clarification: the author's subjectivity. I would argue that since Montaigne, self-observation has been much more important to artists than authorship. I would even claim that the so-called "subjectivity" which has been singled out as the key characteristic of the essay-film, has been a misinterpretation of Montaigne's intent to focus on self-scrutiny, i.e. the setting up of a stage for experiences that makes life's heterogeneity perceptible. Much of the theorization of the essay-film, strongly influenced by auteur theories in the context of modern cinema, is actually built on this "fiction."

Let me summarize my arguments: Even though the essay-film looks back on more than eighty years of theoretical discussion, a number of concerns have persisted and some questions have remained unanswered. The interdisciplinary film as a theoretical framework aims to resolve these issues or to prove that they have become obsolete. Accordingly, it wants to settle the question of whether film cannot only think but act by arguing that it does so between disciplines. This results from its interest to work towards the redistribution of the sensible by means of dissent. This brings the discussion about the essay-film as genre to a close. By using Rancière's definition of realism, it surpasses a questioning of the boundaries between fiction and documentary by foregrounding art's attention towards the signifying potential of the heterogeneity of recorded and thus constructed reality. As a result, subjectivity and the centrality of the author lose their position as key characteristics. Finally, and in tune with current scholarship, formal aspects become less important and the idea that the essay-film "activates" the spectator is revised.

I trust that the concept of the interdisciplinary film can change our perspective on film and its reception in general and on the essay-film in particular by shifting our attention towards more vital features for future theorization and film analysis outlined above. I will now examine *Tabu* in order to point out how the film acts between disciplines.

TABU (2012) BY MIGUEL GOMES

Tabu distinguishes itself from most of contemporary Portuguese film production, since it opens up a new and interdisciplinary path with regard to the way it deals with national history

and the sentiments of loss involved⁵³. Let me first look at how it constructs a co-presence of temporality that jeopardises linear history and renders the inseparability of the reason of facts and fictions perceptible. Then I will demonstrate how the film suspends the opposition between activity of thought and passivity of sensible matter, so as to offer the experience that techno-imaginary codes are always nothing else but mediators.

CO-PRESENCE OF TEMPORALITY AND UNDEFINED BORDERS BETWEEN FACTS AND FICTIONS

Portuguese cinema has used historical comparison or the association of different historical moments to depict colonialism or the colonial war before. *Non ou a Vã Glória de Mandar* (*No or the vain glory of command*, 1990) by Manoel de Oliveira and *Um Adeus Português* (*Portuguese Farewell*, 1985) by João Botelho are well known examples.⁵⁴ *Tabu*, shot entirely in black and white, takes this analogy to another level, since it insists, in contrast to the earlier films, in the persistence of the colonial mind-set in contemporaneity, and it does so by foregrounding its presence in both the colonial and post-colonial temporality.

In order to do so it is divided into two parts with a prologue. The first part, entitled “Paradise Lost,” is set in modern day Lisbon, while the second, “Paradise,” takes us back to the 1960s in an unspecified and overtly fictitious Portuguese colony on the African continent. I will explain in more detail how these two parts not only cite Murnau’s *Tabu*, but actually invert and comment on the earlier film’s structure. The short prologue complements yet another time layer, the 19th century, while setting up the tone, the subject and the aesthetics of the film.

PROLOGUE

The film opens with an image of an explorer equipped with a tropical helmet and a water pouch. He stands still in a pose reminiscent of photography, a frozen image in time of a prototype explorer in the African bushes. The iconographic image comes to life when his African carriers appear in the picture. While the titles blend in, he remains motionless.



Fig. 1: *Tabu* — the explorer.

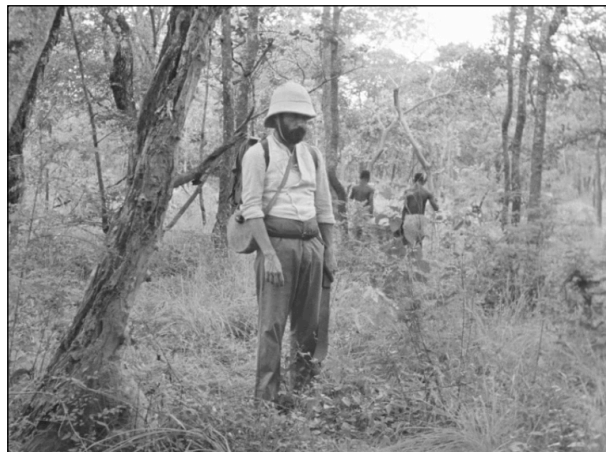


Fig. 2: *Tabu* — the explorer and his servants.

Already in this first shot Gomes puts at stake a historical self-image that Portugal has developed over centuries: that its colonization was a humanistic and scientific project without economic interest.⁵⁵ The filmmaker recreates one of the images that this idea entails, and then exposes its construction by revealing it as a pose when the Africans move at the explorer's service. The moving image thus tells more about colonialism than the photographic image, since it is capable of demonstrating the subservience at its base. This capacity of movies to disclose fictionality will be employed throughout the film.

The historical photographic or documentary images that have participated in structuring discourses on Africa and its landscape are as much revisited, as are the romantic adventure stories that have been told by mainstream cinema. The prologue deals, therefore, with another central fiction that will also be vital in the second part: the love story. But this occurs

in a fashion that enhances as much the fictionality of Hollywood movies set in the African jungle, as well as by acting on our ideas on facts by means of the aesthetics of ethnographic filmmaking.

An omniscient voiceover, reminiscent of this type of documentary film, explains that the explorer is not propelled by scientific longing for knowledge, but by the grief for his deceased spouse. We see the explorer walking through the savannah and having an encounter with his dead wife who tells him he will not be able to run away from his feelings. He then throws himself into a river to be eaten by a crocodile, as the voice tells us. In a generic twist that emphasizes even stronger the character of documentation, his African servants, who witness his ridiculous love suicide, perform a dance. Some of the dancers establish eye contact with the camera, as though we were now watching a genuinely authentic ethnographic film. However, the constant play with genre conventions jeopardises any binary opposition between the reason of facts and fictions. We are perceptibly confronted with a fictional account that comes in the disguise of documentation.



Fig. 3: *Tabu* — citation of ethnographic documentaries.

Returning to the love story and underlining the surreal dimension of the story, which takes us even further away from the reason of facts, the voice over then informs us that according to legend the melancholic animal was often seen in the company of a lady. This is then illustrated by a shot of the two creatures. Due to the estranging ethnographic approach and the deadpan acting the sequence is not only unreal but also rather comic. In travelling or static shots, the characters perform mechanically their supposedly deep feelings, and while the explorer recalls Buster Keaton, his wife looks like a ghost from a B-Movie. One of the fa-

avourite genre mixes of Hollywood — adventure and love stories in exotic landscapes — is dismantled with dry humour the performativity of the roles of tragic romantic hero and haunting love object.

Thus, the introductory part makes us perceive two kinds of fiction: colonialism camouflaged as exploration and the cinematographic love story set in a tropical environment. This is made possible by Gomes's citation and appropriation of codes from artistic movements and genres such as Surrealism, the Hollywood adventure melodrama, silent comedy, the ethnographic film and colonial photography. They set up a dialogue that excels the imposition of a subjective viewpoint on the colonial imaginary. On the contrary, by reactivating this imaginary the film makes its fictionality perceptible. This interdisciplinary approach is already obvious in the prologue where it shows that the impact of colonialism can only be understood if the different genres and methodologies involved are revisited. By revealing their constructiveness as sentimental backdrop, a dissident outlook becomes possible that ridicules the imaginary heroes of the imperial past.

PARADISE LOST

So as to underline the positive disguise of colonialism and its audio-visual cover-up through the love story, and to establish a relation with contemporary times — where these fictions persist in a different temporality — a cut takes us to Pilar, the main character of the first part, sitting in the cinema and, presumably, watching this movie. The blending in of the title "Paradise Lost" already sheds an ironic light that will intensify once we have seen the second part of the film. But even after the prologue the question arises, if this was Paradise, what has been lost?

But there is more to the inter-title and the idea of having been expelled from the Garden of Eden in nowadays Lisbon. As in the prologue, it is not only a historical and biblical reference, but also an artistic and aesthetic one. Fritz Murnau's film on a love story in the South Sea is equally divided in two parts. A native couple, Reri and Mathai, defies the religious authorities and ends tragically since they have to flee from their island. The first part, set on Bora-Bora, is called "Paradise" and the second, set on an island that has already suffered the effects of colonization, "Paradise Lost." Gomes not only reverses this logic, but radicalizes

the lack of rigidity of this binary opposition with the aim of developing on his main theme: the persistence of the colonial mind.

As Julian Hanich notes, the native society in Murnau's *Tabu* is already corrupted on the native island in "Paradise."⁵⁶ When Reri, the daughter of the chieftain, is claimed by the Polynesian king to become the virgin of their gods, a priest arrives on a French ship and presents his demand in writing, which proves that the once oral and flexible society has already become rigorous and authoritarian. Threatened by their own society, the couple finally becomes victim of capitalist colonialism in "Paradise Lost." Unfamiliar with the monetary system, Mathai, who now earns money diving for pearls, becomes indebted to Chinese merchants. Even though he successfully defies imposed taboos twice, he and Reri cannot get away from the exploitation institutionalized by modern civilization.

Murnau's *Tabu* thus not only engages with a critique of Western civilization brought forward by his contemporary anthropologists such as Franz Boas, Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict.⁵⁷ The film also criticizes the triumph of the written word and law, imposed by religion and colonialism: "writing in *Tabu* is a means of power and authority."⁵⁸ The focus on the act of writing and its implications thus associates the loss of the natives' world with the end of silent film being that the silent film considers the spoken word as equally threatening to the art of filmmaking as the written word is to pre-colonial society. It is worth remembering that both, and Murnau was certainly aware of this, written law and sound film — build the basis for capitalism.

Gomes's situation is dissimilar but not completely different. His post-colonial context makes him equally sceptical towards contemporary society, but he adopts a caustic change that results from his historical perspective. Instead of focusing on natives, as Murnau did in a moment in which colonialism was being challenged by anthropology, he uses a romantic couple from the colonial period, which he ironically calls "Paradise." As a result, he includes the notion of nostalgia towards the characters' youth that seems to push the colonial question into the background but guarantees a more heterogeneous engagement with their contradictions. The post-colonial moment, on the other hand, is entitled, paradoxically but coherently, "Paradise Lost," given that the persistence of the colonial mind is the true fall from Eden. As mentioned before, the spectators will only get a chance to understand the full meaning of the titles at the end of the film. I will return to them after discussing each part.

The modern paradise-lost part establishes a sense of loneliness, hollowness, and so engages consciously with a latent sense of lack, which, again, serves to obstruct the political question that lies at its core. It thus introduces with great understatement important contemporary socio-political issues that result from colonial times, particularly the manner in which African migrants are treated, but, equally important, how, if at all, the characters engage with history. The story of Pilar, a common and lonely middle-aged Portuguese woman who tries to be a good Christian and an active citizen, is told in short sequences that span over a week. She is politically engaged in an NGO, assists her demented neighbour Aurora, offers to host a nun who comes to Lisbon for a meeting of the ecumenical Taizé community (turning out to be just an ordinary Polish girl) and spends time with an elderly painter friend who has a crush on her. Her fascination with Aurora — who, in a pun on the novel *Out of Africa* by Karen Blixen and its cinematographic adaptation — once had a farm in Africa, testifies to her desire of a more exiting life that she tries to satisfy by frequently going to the movies, as we already saw. Aurora, on the other hand, is a senile gambler who constantly loses her money at the casino. Empathic with Aurora, Pilar censures Aurora's black housekeeper Santa for not taking action, even though she is only a poor immigrant from some unspecified country of the PALOP, paid for by Aurora's daughter who lives in Canada.

Santa's character reveals the limits of Pilar's Christian and democratic values. Even though she is friendly, Pilar also assumes an intimidating and superior position. Aurora's demonization of her — she says Santa was sent by the devil — testifies more visibly against a happy coexistence between ex-colonizer and former colonized. Both attitudes demonstrate that luso-tropicalism and lusophony, two key concepts related to Portugal's "soft colonialism" survived in post-colonial society as a common sensual mentality, covered under a pseudo-democratic veil.

Lusophony and luso-tropicalism deserve special attention since they have been substantial in the development of a positive imaginary with regard to Portuguese colonialism. As I have stated elsewhere,⁵⁹ luso-tropicalism can be defined as propagating Portugal's outstanding accomplishments — the discoveries of sea routes, islands and "continents" — as a consequence of the country's desire to convert the world to Christianity in a peaceful manner. Trying to distinguish itself from the Spanish conquerors, Portugal's colonial process has been interpreted as guided by religious instead of material interests and understood to have been non-violent, by engaging, living and mixing with the most diverse cultures and ethnicities

from the southern hemisphere. Luso-tropicalism is, in fact, based on the idea that the Portuguese people, due to their own cultural miscegenation that suffered influences from Europe and the North of Africa, are trans-national in their essence.⁶⁰

Lusophony, on the other hand, is a product of international decolonization but entered the lusophone stage only permanently after Portugal finally let go of its colonies in Africa in the early 1970s, which brought a feeling of loss to the core. It also advocates a harmonious trans-national community in the colonies and aims to guarantee its survivals after the end of the empire by identifying the Portuguese language as a metaphor for a shared culture. To do so, it ignores regional and national linguistic, cultural and historical differences and uses Portuguese as the principle and corner stone of a common cultural identity, which — due to its transnational dimension — is considered superior to any national identity. Both concepts are powerful tools that convert the colonial history into a collective cultural history.

As I have noted in a different place,⁶¹ only in the last decade or so have Portuguese literary critics and social scientists started to translate the insights from post-colonialism and the awareness of a post-colonial national identity crisis into the critical assessment of these and other concepts and ideas associated with Portugal's colonialism. Questioning the national predisposition for transnationality and the celebration of its post-colonial cultural legacy, this has helped to lay bare luso-tropicalism's and lusophony's intent to camouflage difference by acknowledging that they were designed to maintain the imaginary of Portugal as a great nation.

The same is true for Gomes's film, but in an ironic way. It is possible to sense the persistence of an oblique master-servant relationship between Aurora and Santa that reveals luso-tropicalism to be a fraud, but also between her and Pilar. *Tabu* takes great care to sustain also the inexistence of lusophony since Santa is just learning how to read and write in Portuguese. Poignantly, even the Polynesians in Murnau's film were literate, though this was not to their advantage. As an African immigrant in 21st century Portugal, Santa's way out of illiteracy is thorny. Her teacher displays paternalistic arrogance when she praises the fact that Santa is ahead of her class because she is reading a book; and the literature she picked only reaffirms her subordinate place. *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Dafoe, the most famous and widely published book on the colonial encounter, tells the story of a castaway who establishes a master-servant relationship, which Gomes subtly associates not only with Aurora, but also with Pilar.



Fig. 4: *Tabu* — Santa reading *Robinson Crusoe*.

Contemporary Portugal appears as a rigid and secluded world in which the power play from colonial times continues.⁶² However, none of the characters seems to be at ease or even remotely happy with their lives. Fixed static shots and mechanically delivered dialogues are aesthetic hints towards an unrevealed subtext. Each composition is “brute” in the sense that its materiality hints towards meaning that surpasses what the characters disclose. What is more, embedded in a disconnected structure of two parts, the narrative potential is not only present in the shots but remains also rather disconnected due to the divided plot.

The first sequence of the first part may serve as an example for the materiality of the shots. After we see Pilar sitting in the cinema where she watches the film on the explorer, there is a cut to a shot in which she is driving through the streets. Lisbon is not at all portrayed as being picturesque, only modern and functional buildings fly by the window whose indifference and passivity are telling about the life in the city.



Fig. 5: *Tabu* — On the way to the airport.

The artificial composition of the framing of the shots, which is added to the levels of meaning inherent in the filmed objects, enhances the sense of inflexibility and dullness of this society. They make it possible to sense that human relationships in this environment are superficially cordial but actually corrupted. When Pilar reaches the airport to pick up the supposed nun she is going to host, the girl wants to stay with friends and lies that her guest did not come.



Fig. 6: *Tabu* — Maya and Pilar at the airport.

But this exaggerated stiffness preserves also some of the humour and, above all, the irony from the prologue. Another example is the demonstration of Pilar's NGO against the ONU that is discernibly rendered ludicrous. Not only because it demonstrates that her religious values are stronger than her democratic ones when she breaks the moment of silence in order to pray for her unhappy neighbour, but mainly because the whole action seems pointless in its staged and insincere tedium. The actions, the arrangement and the props of the scene are far from realistic and expose that the supposedly democratic act is only a fake.



Fig. 7: *Tabu* — Pilar and her NGO.

However, none of this is completely obvious or determined in its meaning. Comparable to the genre citations in the prologue, the portrayal of contemporary Portugal results from references that only when perceived together render the puzzling scenes into an unsettling image. The shots are not simply stylized expressions of self-reflexive filmmaking that wants to make us realize that we are watching a movie. The materiality of the shots is better described to be interdisciplinary, because it reveals that the young democratic society is equally a fiction as the romantic colonialist explorer — civic action is merely a ritual, people deceitful and post-colonial power structures persistent. In other words, it is not the foregrounding of filmic strategies that develops this dissident imaginary but rather the composed shots and the gaps between them that offer a signifying potential beyond their narrative function. The common sensual conception of nowadays Portugal — a post-colonial multiracial democratic system — is rendered a fiction. This exposure of fictionality is still enhanced by the disclosure of the performativity of the roles the characters have chosen for themselves in post-coloniality — Aurora is mocked as grand lady with an exotic past and Pilar as the Good Samaritan.

The second part steps in to show us that another fiction, based on the imaginary of the former colonies as “Paradise,” and present in Pilar’s attraction with Aurora and period films, does not deserve the nostalgia invested into it. Aesthetically, it is equally interdisciplinary in the sense that it works towards a re-composition of the visible regarding the colonial period.

PARADISE

In “Paradise” a non-Portuguese migrant, Gian Luca Ventura, who Aurora calls to her death-bed but arrives too late, tells their illicit love story in a non-existing African country where she lived on her husband’s tea plantation at the foot of a fictitious mountain named Tabu. Not only the invented mountain points at the fictionality in this second part. Since Gomes’s ethno-fiction comes with the contemporary twist of a voice-over, we now enter, in contrast to Murnau’s *Tabu*, into the already imaginary territory of memory.

But memory not only stands in for the selective recollections of a man who had a certain distance as a non-colonialist foreigner. As a result of his dialogue with Murnau’s film, Gomes takes advantage of the earlier filmmaker’s conclusion for his representation of colonialism.

Instead of using signs or letters that express the colonial regime, he shows that the unruliness of imperialism — it is grounded in no legal right — cannot gain an official account. By choosing a narrator for his second part, Gomes hints in a very subtle way at the fact that colonialism was always a lawless activity and colonized countries unlegislated places.

The choice of the narrator has yet another drastic result: there are no dialogues. In another uncanny reference to Murnau's critical assessment of sound film⁶³ and his employment of synchronized music, we can only hear Gian Luca's memoirs, environment sounds — for example a stone dropping into a pond — nostalgic pop songs from the 1960s, or the chants of the natives.

The love songs are particularly important since they are emotionally charged and highly popular hits that have not lost their romantic power. "Be my baby" (Jeff Barry, Ellie Greenwich, Phil Spector), sung in Spanish, is already introduced in the first part to underline Pilar's loneliness. When Gian Luca speaks of his easy life, the band led by his friend Mário performs "Cosi Come Viene" (Remo Germani). And while Aurora chats with her girl friends, we hear "Lonely Wine" (Roy Orbison), followed by "Baby I love you" (Ramones) at a party.

Exposing the materiality of the sounds has several effects: first and foremost, in the era of sound-film it boosts the film's fictionality in the same ways as the shots in the first part. With regard to the music, the character's feelings and longings are not developed through their speech acts but only suggested by means of the soundtrack and the very personal narration. Thus, it is possible to perceive the utopian and sentimental dimension of their acts even more strongly. And this is vital for the spectator's interdisciplinary engagement, which is quite complex because, beyond the possible cognitive critique towards the soppy colonizers, they can equally connect with their own memories and sensations evoked by the romantic melodies. I will return to this suspension of the opposition between the activity of thought and the passivity of sensible matter in more detail in a moment.

With regard to the colonial imaginary, Gomes seems to take distance from Murnau's ethnographic stance in "Paradise Lost." But, in fact, the second part of the film takes also the shape of an odd ethnographic study of this very restricted part of colonial society. This is especially noticeable in the character's roleplaying that is highlighted through the lack of dialogue. Generally, they appear to be performing the parts of young adults who are living without a cause in an exotic setting. But they also remind the spectator of many common film roles, i.e., the Italian lover, the bold heroin, the betrayed husband and the loyal best friend.

The performances of these roles are an obvious ironic take on Hollywood movies set in Africa. Since Gomes is not interested in denouncing imperialism but its imaginary, Gian Luca introduces the characters verbally as self-indulged adventurers. Aurora is described as a spoiled young woman and as a renowned hunter. And Gian Luca presents himself as someone attracted to escapades that involve women, gambling and unknown, preferably exotic places. In effect, the second part not only depicts colonialism as an unlegislated regime but decisively as one that allows for self-centred behaviour.



Fig. 8: *Tabu* — Aurora, the hunter.

Whereas the original silent movie shows a native couple whose downfall is caused by authoritarianism, this pair is characterized as being irresponsible and extravagant by taking their unruly environment too literal. As part of the colonial society, they are perpetrators but also become victims of the double standards of Christian morality, an issue already developed in the first part. In contrast to Reri and Mathai, Aurora and Gian Luca factually commit sins within the context of Christian dogma. And they are incapable of escaping from this overpowering cultural mind-set. It is their Christian consciousness that results in their expulsion from “Paradise”: they are not only adulterous, but Aurora, the skilled shooter, kills her husband’s and Gian Luca’s best friend Mário. Developing on Pilar’ hypocrite character, Mário is equally ambivalent and likewise an essential piece of the story. A former seminarian and Gian Luca’s bandleader, he is portrayed as a womanizer and a liar, but it is him who manages to prevent Aurora from running away, even if he pays with his death.

After the murder, Aurora, who is pregnant, gives birth to a girl. Full of remorse, Gian Luca calls her spouse and father of the child, and they never see each other again. Thus, at

the end of the film the loss of Paradise, associated with contemporary Portugal, reveals itself as a punishment of sorts of the illicit affair, but also, more generally, of the foolish acts that occurred in the colony. As mentioned earlier, Gomes does not judge the characters or denounces colonialism directly; he simply shows how each of them — just like the imperialist regime — was entangled in his or her desires.

By concentrating on the question of Christian sin in the colonial context, *Tabu* posits itself within the tradition of Portuguese film history but by dialoguing strongly with Manoel de Oliveira's films, especially with *Le Soulier de satin* (*The Satin Slipper*, 1985) offers a laical interpretation. Oliveira sustains in his adaptation of Paul Claudel's play that the European desire for material wealth and power during colonialism is in vain and submitted to God's higher plans, but does not blame Portugal, occupied by the Spaniards at the time.⁶⁴ Gomes visibly does not share Oliveira's religious stance. Mostly secular or just hypocrites, his characters do not gain such insight. Instead of taking rescue in an omniscient godly perspective and the flaws of human vision, Gomes challenges the fictions told on colonialism, including these by Oliveira.

SUSPENSION OF THE OPPOSITION BETWEEN THE ACTIVITY OF THOUGHT AND THE PASSIVITY OF SENSIBLE MATTER

Given his aesthetic strategies that either follow Murnau's silent film closely or read them in a contemporary mode, there is no conventional melodramatic structure in Gomes's *Tabu*. We are not invited to identify with the characters or to indulge in their stories: we watch them while they try to perform their chosen roles. This is mainly the result of the artificial framing and the indifference and passivity of the things and characters filmed. In the second part the camera is more mobile, using the African landscape to express the adventurous side of the characters, but the materiality of the sounds due to the lack of dialogue the odd environment sounds and the nostalgic love songs assume the creation of additional levels of meaning.

These strategies could easily be described in the tradition of Brecht as alienating, or in the tradition of the essay-film as trying to activate the spectators in order to make them evaluate the characters and the issues at stake. But this would only be half the story. Let

me return to the use of music in order to make this more evident. In the second part, we are as much engaged intellectually by means of the divers aesthetic strategies that make it possible to perceive the production of fiction, mainly the sound, as we are allowed to immerse in the images of the African landscape or the nostalgia associated with the pop sound track.

The songs are, in fact, an important instrument to create a non-judgmental and interdisciplinary ambivalence that not only foregrounds human desire but arouses the spectator's feelings as well. Even if we do not identify with the characters, the songs make us understand their moods and resonate with our own sentiments. Their heightened materiality as music and the feelings they raise in the spectator make them also distinguishable in their sugary and inadequate sentimental flair. Consequently, in the moments that feature music it is truly impossible to divide the cognitive from the sensitive. What is more, since the second part of the film seems to be much more about rebels without a cause than about colonialism, we get several chances to blank the issue out and stay only with the love story, if it was not for the prologue and the first part that remained as puzzle pieces in our minds and that needed to be fitted cognitively into the story.

Additionally, the prominence of the materiality of the film's elements – sound, image and performance — adds also a layer of documentation to the character's actions. Since we are not able to hear what they utter, we get to observe them better and this observational take reminds of conventional ethnographic film and its depiction of the "Other." There is no clear cut between the reason of facts and the facts of fiction. Portraying the colonialists in such a manner does not reduce them to objects. On the contrary, with the help of the sentimental music, they are neither essentialized nor demonized. It is possible to perceive them in a heterogeneous way: we can recognize their desires for romance and adventure but also grasp their capriciousness.

Whereas Murnau made a statement against colonialism *and* sound film, Gomes profits in post-colonial times from his aesthetic strategies in order to make us see and feel the persistence of an absurd longing for exotic adventure and passionate love perpetuated in the talkies ever since they came into being. Rendering perceptible that this nostalgia masquerades, together with Christian love, the master and servant power play still being practiced in nowadays Portugal, is the achievement of the film's interdisciplinary aesthetics.

CONCLUSION:

RE-COMPOSITION OF THE LANDSCAPE OF THE VISIBLE

Tabu uses understated humour and irony to deal with the persisting positive and romanticized imaginary of colonialism in photography, music, and films. While the film engages with the fictionality of earlier portrayals of the colonial past in ethnographic documentary, ethno-fiction, adventure melodrama and/or love-stories, silent comedy, period drama, colonial photography, among others, it also confronts disciplinary thinking put forward in social and human sciences such as luso-tropicalism and lusophony in post-coloniality.

Divided in two main parts and a prologue, the spectator literally discovers the strong liaison between colonialism and post-colonialism step-by-step. By telling no linear story, the gaps between the narrative on the romantic explorer, the present-day sensation of an unspecified loss in Lisbon together with the subtle portrayal of the hardship of migrants from the PALOP, and the tale on a self-indulgence colonial society, the spectator is offered to perceive this relationship and, accordingly, the perpetuation of colonial power relationships.

In the prologue, the pose of the farcical explorer and the way in which his extravagant and absurd story is told, acted and framed already reveals Gomes's witty interrogation of adventure and love story as quintessential colonialism. Whereas present-day Lisbon's civilizational malady has no palpable explication at first, it can already be sensed that the central myths of the colonial mind — lusophony and luso-tropicalism — endured. The way this lost paradise is filmed gives the present a grotesque and stiff appearance. By means of the materiality of the cinematographic elements, sound and image, together with the general lack of dialogue, the eminence of romantic pop music and the performativity of the characters, the love-story of the last part renders comprehensible that any nostalgia towards the colonial past results from a utopian imaginary, comparable to the illusive remembrances of our youth. The analogy between the psychological mechanisms with which we look back on colonialism and those with which we evoke our formative years, makes it possible to associate the personal wrongdoings of the characters with the collective "sin" of colonialism.

After watching this film, the idea of a humanist, and above all, Christian colonialism, and even post-colonialism, becomes distinguishable as pure fiction. The film is therefore not un-political, as some international critics noted. On the contrary, its indisciplinary take on the colonial imaginary factually reconfigures the landscape of the visible for good.

In order to understand this more fully and to pinpoint the film's dissent, I have read *Tabu* not as yet another example of modern cinema, that is to say, as an essay film. Instead of simply describing it as the self-reflexive and subjective view of an *auteur*, I have focused on the relation between method and fiction, politics and aesthetics, and reception. This methodology discloses that Gomes's dissent goes deeper. It results, above all, from the interdisciplinary dialogue with the history of film and of photography, as well as with the sentimental potential of pop music, making it possible to "think" the colonial past between established disciplines and genres. By disclosing their fictions, *Tabu* thus announces the end of disciplinary or generic accounts of colonialist history and the post-colonial present in moving and still images, as well as in music and sound films, offering the spectator a chance to challenge his or her expectations by engaging cognitively and sensually with the contradictions and inconsistencies of the existing imaginaries.

1. Jacques Rancière, "Thinking Between disciplines?: An Aesthetics of Knowledge," *Parrhesia* 1 (2006): 1-12.

2. See Carolin Overhoff Ferreira, "Em favor do cinema indisciplinar: o caso português" [In favour of interdisciplinary cinema: the Portuguese case], *Rebeca – Revista brasileira de estudos de cinema e audiovisual* 1.2 (2012): 100-138; and Ferreira, "Indisciplinary Cinema: Jia Zhang-Ke's *Hai shang chuan qi* (*I Wish I Knew*, 2010)," *Transnational Cinemas* 4.1: 43-66, doi: 10.1386/trac.4.1.43_1.

3. Vilém Flusser, "The Codified World," in *Writings*, ed. Andreas Ströhl. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 35-41.

4. Flusser uses this expression, which came up again in Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest* (Summer 1989): 3-18, after the iron curtain came down.

5. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum, 2006), 20.

6. Laura Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera* (London: Wallflower Press, 2009), 30, suggests that the essay is a literary tradition that goes back to Cicero and Seneca. George Lukács, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay: A Letter to Leo Popper," in *Soul and Form* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978), 1-18, speaks of Plato as a predecessor.

7. Anton Franz, "Einleitung," in Michel de Montaigne, *Die Essais* (Frankfurt am Main: Reclam, 1993), 34.

8. Whereas some define it as a major narrative form of the modern world — see Christian Scherer, *Ivens, Marker, Godard, Jarman. Erinnerung im Essayfilm* (Munich: Fink, 2001) — next to fiction, non-fiction and experimental cinema, others sustain that it is an anti-genre that should not be pushed into classification, since it transgresses all existing genres and subgenres — see, among others, Nora Alter, *Chris Marker* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), Volker Pantenburg, *Film als Theorie* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2006), and Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera*.

9. Sergei Eisenstein, "Notate zu einer Verfilmung des Marxschen 'Kapital'," in *Schriften 3: Oktober* (Munich: Hanser, 1975), 290.

10. Bela Balázs, *Der Geist des Films* (Frankfurt am Main: Makol, 1972).

11. Hans Richter, "Der Filmessay," in *Schreiben, Bilder, Sprechen. Texte zum essayistischen Film*, ed. Christa Blümlinger and Constantin Wulff (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1992), 195-98.

12. Richter's examples are the English films by Alberto Cavalcanti, Basil Wright and John Grierson, as well as those by filmmakers around Jacques Brunis in France and Henri Storck in Belgium.

13. Alexandre Astruc, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: 'La Caméra-Stylo'," in *The French New Wave: Critical Landmarks*, ed. Georges Vincendeau and Paul Graham (London: BFI, 2003).

14. Jacques Rivette, "Lettre sur Roberto Rossellini," in *Rivette: Texts and Interviews*, ed. Jean Narboni and Jacques Rosenbaum (London: BFI, 1977), 54-64.

15. André Bazin, "Lettre de Sibérie," *Le Parisien Libéré* 4399, 3 Nov. 1958.
16. Alexander Kluge, Edward Reitz, and Walter Reinke, "Wort und Film," in *Schreiben, Bilder, Sprechen. Texte zum essayistischen Film*, ed. Christa Blümlinger and Constantin Wulff (Vienna: Sonderzahl), 209-223.
17. Suzanne Liandrat-Guigues, "Un art de l'équilibre," in *L'Essai et le Cinéma*, ed. Suzanne Liandrat-Guigues and Murielle Gagnebin (Seysell: Éditions Champ Vallon, 2004), 9.
18. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, "Towards a Third Cinema," in *Movies and Methods*, vol. 1, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 44-64.
19. See, for example Karl Kanzog, "Filmgenres, Strukturkonventionen und Diskurse," in *Filmphilologie* (Munich: Schaudig/Bauer/Ledig, 1991), 59-67; Hanno Möbius (ed.), *Versuche über den Essayfilm* (Marburg: Augenblick, 1991); Christa Blümlinger and Constantin Wulff (eds.), *Schreiben, Bilder, Sprechen. Texte zum essayistischen Film* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1992); Michel Hattendorf, "Selbstreflexivität und Essayismus im Dokumentarfilm," in *Dokumentarfilm und Authentizität* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 1999), 258-73; Christian Scherer, *Ivens, Marker, Godard, Jarman. Erinnerung im Essayfilm* (Munich: Fink, 2001).
20. See, e.g., Raymond Bellour, *L'Entre-Images. Photo. Cinéma. Vidéo* (Paris: La Différence, 1990); Bellour and Laurent Roth, *Qu'est-ce qu'une Madeleine? A propos du CD-ROM « Immemory » de Chris Marker* (Paris: Yves Gevaert, 1997).
21. Clement Greenberg, *Modernist Painting* (1960), <http://www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/modernism.html>, accessed 21 Aug. 2012.
22. P. A. Sitney, *The Essential Cinema: Essays on the Films in the Collection of Anthology Film Archives* (New York: New York University Press, 1987).
23. See, e.g., Adriano Aprá (ed.), *Le avventure della nonfiction* (Rome: Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema, 1997), María Luisa Ortega and Antonio Weinrichter (eds.), *Mystère Marker. Paisajes en la obra de Chris Marker* (Madrid: T&B Editores, 2006), and Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera*.
24. See, for example, Alter, *Chris Marker, Timothy Corrigan, The Essay-film: From Montaigne, After Marker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Cezar Migliorin (ed.), *Ensaio no Real* (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue Editora, 2010).
25. George Lukács, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay," 1-18.
26. T. W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form," in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).
27. George Lukács was conscious of the ambiguity of his proposition, since he saw the parallel between art and the essay only in its gesture towards life, acknowledging also their differences.
28. Adorno's idea survived in Jean-Luc Godard's suggestion that the film is "a form that thinks" who tried to highlight the fact that it is not necessarily the filmmaker who thinks but the "material" he puts together.
29. Adorno, "The Essay as Form," 101.
30. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Verso, 1996), 5.
31. *Ibid.*, 24
32. *Ibid.*, 166. Percepts and affect are understood by the philosophers, as "autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience or have experienced them: Combray like it never was, is or will be lived; Combray as cathedral or monument" (168).
33. Rancière, "Thinking Between Disciplines," 6.
34. Rancière, *The Distribution of the Sensible*, 13.
35. *Ibid.*, 6.
36. Rancière, "Thinking Between Disciplines," 11.
37. *Ibid.*, 6.
38. Rancière, *The Distribution of the Sensible*, 39.
39. Rancière, *Film Fables* (New York: Berg, 2006), 11.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Martin Seel, "Realismus und Anti-Realismus in der Theorie des Films," in *Die Macht des Erscheinens* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007).
42. Rancière, *The Distribution of the Sensible*, 39.
43. *Ibid.*, 37.
44. Exploring this heterogeneous potential, the works of art of the aesthetic regime differ from those of earlier artistic rules: the ethical regime of images and the regime of representation. Echoing Adorno, Rancière (*The Politics of Aesthetics*, 3) explains: "a product identical with something not produced, knowledge transformed into non-knowledge, logos identical with pathos, the intention of the unintentional, etc."
45. Gabriele Jutz, *Cinéma brut. Eine alternative Genealogie der Filmavantgarde* (Vienna: Springer, 2010).
46. A. L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video. From the Canonical Avant-Garde to Contemporary British Practice* (London: Palgrave, 2011).

47. Rancière, "O Dissenso," in *A crise da razão*, ed. Nicolas Bignotto and André Novaes (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996), 367-82
48. Rancière, *The Distribution of the Sensible*, 24.
49. *Ibid.*, 20-41. The author also mentions the subversion of the distinction between high and low, popular and cultured, but this does not seem to be important for film since it is, factually, always a popular mass medium with the potential of being an art work.
50. Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 164.
51. Citation from <http://ranciere.blogspot.com/2007/ranciere-emancipated-spectator.html>, accessed 3 Jan. 2012.
52. See Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera*.
53. With the exception of Pedro Costa's Fontainhas trilogy — *Bones (Ossos, 1997)*, *In Vanda's Room (No Quarto da Vanda, 2000)*, *Colossal Youth (Juventude em Marcha, 2006)* and Teresa Villaverde's *The Mutants (Os Mutantes, 1998)* that present an equally critical and heterogeneous view of colonialism and its legacy. See Ferreira, *Identity and Difference – Postcoloniality and Transnationality in Lusophone Films* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012).
54. See Ferreira, "Decolonizing the Mind?: The Representation of the African Colonial War in Portuguese Cinema," *Studies in European Cinema* 2 (2005): 227-39.
55. Eduardo Lourenço observes in *Portugal como Destino seguido de Mitologia da Saudade* (Gradiva: Lisboa, 1999), 79–80, that Portugal did not have a cultural revolution during the re-democratization and that it remained "a structurally imperial ideology without empire. Militant, hagiographic, ultra-nationalist, openly and innocently hostile to democratic inspirations, it was not possible to overcome half a century of 'single thinking'."
56. Julian Hanich "Jenseits der Stille. F. W. Murnaus *Tabu* zwischen Hollywood und Südsee, Moderne und Primitivismus und dem Ende des Stummfilm-Kinos," in *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 47.4 (2002): 517.
57. *Ibid.*, 512.
58. *Ibid.*, 515.
59. Ferreira, *Identity and Difference*, 19-20.
60. The Brazilian sociologist, Gilberto Freyre (n.d.) is considered the concept's spiritual father in an attempt to tighten and pacify the Luso-Brazilian bonds. It regained importance in the 1950s when the Portuguese empire was getting under threat by the decolonization processes in the anglophone and francophone colonies.
61. Ferreira, *Identity and Difference*, 19.
62. As I have argued elsewhere, national and transnational films on the encounter of colonialists and the native population still tend to recycle luso-tropicalism. See Ferreira, *Identity and Difference*.
63. Hanich "Jenseits der Stille," 520, quotes David Flaherty who explains: "It is not without significance that *Tabu* was made as a silent in the beginning of the era of talkies. This was a deliberate choice, dictated not by economic but by aesthetic considerations. If *Tabu* enjoys a certain universality and timelessness, credit this (for that time) bold decision."
64. See Ferreira, *Identity and Difference*, 90-92.

THINKING THE REVOLUTION IN
ALBERTO SEIXAS SANTOS'S *MILD MANNERS*
AND *GESTURES AND FRAGMENTS*

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INTRODUCTION — FILMING REVOLUTION

The 1974-75 revolutionary process in Portugal is particularly challenging to historical and filmic representation. This is partly a consequence of the specific nature of the period stretching from the 1950s to the 1970s, what historians have called the *long 1960s*, a historical moment marked by sudden social transformation and dramatic political events. But this challenge is also a consequence of transformations occurring at a different level. As Fredric Jameson has convincingly shown, this was the moment of a decisive shift in the order of representation, one in which the realm of culture — as a set of discourses, thoughts and narratives about the world — spread so widely that it became hard to disentangle from the objects it was supposed to represent.¹ More specifically, culture became gradually equated with audiovisual forms that are now seen as constitutive, indeed structural, aspects of society and politics. Cinema played a key role in this process, by emerging as a critical instance of contemporary visual forms. To analyze the relations between cinema and the 1974-75 Revolution is thus particularly relevant not only because the revolution was intensely filmed, but also in the sense that it broke, like all revolutions, the historical continuum, somehow turning traditional forms of representation obsolete.² This brings me to the problem I would to raise with this article, in which the work of the Portuguese filmmaker Alberto Seixas Santos will be contextualized as an important example of that broader critique of dominant cultural forms performed by cinema during the *long 1960s*.

The two films I will be analyzing, *Mild Manners* (*Brandos Costumes*, 1974) and *Gestures and Fragments* (*Gestos e Fragmentos*, 1982), thus question their own status as forms of filmic representation. They try, in this sense, to rise to the occasion and keep up with the challenges brought by revolutionary transformation. In short, one could go as far as suggesting that if the revolution disrupted an order of things dominated by the audiovisual, a form of critical

cinema like that of Alberto Seixas Santos had to engage with the process by performing its own *filmic revolution*. Consequently, cinema and revolution seem to make a perfect match in his films, as films that both describe revolutionary processes and disrupt the dominant forms of perception.

The work of Seixas Santos encapsulates all the different aspects of the relationship between film aesthetics and that particular historical period. This occurs, as it will become clearer throughout the analysis, at at least three levels. To start with, the two films explicitly use history as their referent. However, historical objects as such (Salazarism, in *Mild Manners*; the Revolution, in *Gestures and Fragments*³), only represent a first layer in the narratives and we have to dig deeper to get to a second-degree relation between the director and the context: for reality, or history, is never given here without a complex set of mediations through which film language is questioned *in order* to re-create reality, or history, in all its complexity. Seixas Santos's engagement with history (the history of film, in this second layer of the relationship) is, again, clear and explicitly assumed: his cinema deliberately takes part of the period's critique of representation and of the aesthetical and political debate around the figures of Bertolt Brecht and Jean-Luc Godard.⁴ Finally, and to complete this circle dialectically, what comes out of such a critical representation is a heightened engagement with history, whereby film goes beyond a mere depiction of events or historical circumstances to become simultaneously involved in, and invested by, history.

One could add that this is where Seixas Santos's politics lie, for these are films made by a director involved in the struggle against the Portuguese dictatorship and committed to the revolution, while simultaneously participating in a radical critique of dominant images. As before, the question is twofold. Seixas Santos is *faithful to the events* simply by recognizing their complexity (the fact that history is non-linear and non-uniform), which then reverses into the films' structures in the form of "narrative discontinuity" and through the use of "mixed materials," to use the author's own words.⁵ The main consequence of this is that both *Mild Manners* and *Gestures and Fragments* think the Dictatorship and the Revolution while *representing* it in its different aspects. Thinking and representing are here so intertwined as to become virtually indistinguishable,⁶ and this is what constitutes not only Seixas Santos' politics, as I have just suggested, but also its historicity proper.

And yet, despite the intellectual move these essay films⁷ (as the director himself defines them) make apparent — the use of theoretical-driven authors like Brecht and Godard and the

impact of a concept like *estrangement* —, Seixas Santos seemed to have felt the need of a “harder” version of thought to reinforce the historical engagement of his films. In fact, both *Mild Manners* and *Gestures and Fragments* literally *stage* philosophy. More specifically, whereas the former uses *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels to conclude the narrative, the latter “stars” a philosopher, Eduardo Lourenço, saying his own text and thus playing his own role in the film. The role of philosophy thus becomes a key aspect of Seixas Santos’s critical move. Ultimately, to identify the status of *thought* in his two films will allow us to argue that philosophy is here not just to clarify politics or explain history, but that which mediates between history and politics within filmic narrative. To put it simple: if, following Paul Ricoeur,⁸ time and history can only be thought through narrative, Seixas Santos’s use of philosophy and philosophers in his own narratives may give us an important key to the complex temporality and historical consciousness with which he engages, as a filmmaker, with the period.

In order to achieve this, I will analyze both films separately, in chronological succession. This will allow me to use the 1974-75 Revolution as the historical event organizing the films’ temporalities and determining their genres and the role of philosophy and philosophers in the narratives. In other words, by situating the films historically *in relation* to the revolution, it will be possible to grant them a specific *presence in history*, whereby *Mild Manners* will be conjugated in the future tense and *Gestures and Fragments* in the past. Of course, in order to consider what changes from one film to the other, one also has to consider the impact of the revolution and how film engaged with the event. Only this will allow us to define *Mild Manners* as a pre-revolutionary film – a revolutionary film that still did not have a revolution to show – and *Gestures and Fragments* as a post-revolutionary film — a film that distances itself from the already past revolution and from its saturation of images in order to better think about it. One could go as far as saying that the role of philosophers and philosophy in both is precisely to mediate this lack, a revolution that is still not there — only a utopia in *Mild Manners* — or that is not there anymore — history, or memory, in *Gestures and Fragments*.

1. MILD MANNERS: HOW TO FILM A UTOPIAN EVENT

Mild Manners weaves its narrative through the articulation of two different sources: footage from the Estado Novo’s⁹ newsreel propaganda (and a sequence from a colonialist feature

film) with a series of fictional sequences with particular scenes in a bourgeois family's everyday life. Juxtaposed throughout the narrative, newsreel and fiction narrate a history of the political regime and of Portuguese society in parallel, as the two sides of the same historical context. So, side by side with the formation of the dictatorship and the evolution of authoritarian order (throughout some key episodes, such as the Second World War and the beginning of the colonial wars in Africa in the 1960s), we can also see the family unit being formed, with episodes showing their domestic "events": marriage, the upbringing of two daughters, a birthday party and other episodes of the everyday. At the end, both narratives conclude in the same way, with the deaths of the father and Salazar (thereby shown as the head of a patriarchal society). This articulation is mostly achieved through montage. For example, after newsreel footage with speeches by Salazar and by a young athlete praising the dictator for having "saved" Portugal from Second World War, the narrative cuts to the family's kitchen where the wife and mother (the characters have no names and stand explicitly as *types*) lectures the maid about the dangers of mendicancy. The cut from one scene to the other is further problematized by discourse: whereas the images of the War are narrated by the mother's voice-over recounting the family's hardships and the country's poverty during the European conflict, her own speech to the maid (and to the camera) literally reproduces the conservative official doctrine the dictatorship produced about poverty.

In short, the device runs throughout the whole narrative in a constant dialogue between seemingly realist newsreel and all sorts of fictional representation (although fictional representation is far from exhausting the wide range of narrative techniques used by Seixas Santos: from the theatricality of sung dialogues to literary and political quotations and discourses uttered directly to the camera). This structure presents several challenges to interpretation. To start with, its relation with history is far from straightforward. Mostly shot with the fictional sequences just before the revolution, it would only be completed — with the archival footage — and premiered after the Revolution in 1974. Paradoxically, the images added later, taken from newsreel, are what allow the film to narrate a history of the New State (when the film was originally produced), whereas the fictional narrative, shot still under the dictatorship, not only draws a subversive picture of salazarist society (an act of freedom under censorship), it actually ends up with a utopian moment that literally announces a military coup. The film, with this dual use of filmic materials, seems to challenge periodiza-

tion: still immersed in the historical period it narrates, the dictatorship, while simultaneously contributing to its imminent fall.

This strange relation with history becomes further intricate if we question Seixas Santos's own classification of *Mild Manners* as an essay-film. The essay-film would presuppose the subsumption of one narrative under the other. Either as a fiction organized around newsreel or vice versa, the essay form would always involve a narrative disjunction between the two layers, in which one would function as the critical stance of the other — this critique being the form of the essay proper —, which could take one of two forms: a) the fictional scenes of the everyday life of a middle class salazarist family would run in parallel with a documentary history of the dictatorship, as a *case study*; or b) the History of the New State from the start until the death of the dictator Salazar would work as the *historical context* in which that same family's life story was immersed. Instead, I would like to suggest that what endows the film with its strong historicity depends on the impossibility to establish a clear differentiation between the two. In other words, to consider archival footage and fictional staging, i.e., history and fiction, within the same (complex) narrative, may take us beyond allegory — the device usually used to classify the film¹⁰ — and equate the two levels (history and fiction, but also the public and the private, the political and the intimate, the ideological and the moral, etc.) as the two sides of a metonymical relationship.

Taking the historical images of mass demonstrations and political speeches, on the one hand, and the fictional scenes of domestic life, on the other, as contiguous, metonymical, levels in the same narrative — in which none would represent the non-diegetic level of the other's diegesis — is thus what grants *Mild Manners* with its specific historical status. In part, because the tension between the two narrative forms constituting the film's metonymical association activates one of those critical situations we became accustomed to associate with the period's political cinema. Simultaneously, what this duality also seems to do is to combine the public and the private within the same political discourse, thus synthesizing the double front of 1960s and 1970s radical politics — when politics targeted both individual and collective subjectivities. To return to my main point, it may thus be suggested that what makes the film such a critical object lies in the radical questions it asks history. Conversely, one should add that what allowed for the narrative to raise the question of its own relation with history was in history itself: a particularly radical moment as the early 1970s brought contradictions (namely those combined within the film's structure) very visibly to the fore.

Seixas Santos's affinity with the period's counter-cinema is thus easily recognizable. If one thinks of Peter Wollen's contemporary analysis of Jean-Luc Godard's political films, for instance, it is not difficult to identify the exact same filmic procedures at work in *Mild Manners*. According to Wollen, Godard enacts a series of oppositions whose role is to short-circuit any kind of familiarity (Brecht's *estrangement* always looms closely) in a way rigorously akin to the constant tension between newsreel and fiction in *Mild Manners*: oppositions between "narrative transitivity" and "narrative intransitivity," between "identification" and "estrangement" ("using the same voice for different characters, different voices for the same character"), "transparency" and "negation," "closure" and "aperture" ("just as there are a multiplicity of narrative worlds, so too there are a multiplicity of speaking voices"), and, last but not the least, "fiction" and "reality."¹¹

At this point, one might wonder what further insight over the complexities of history does this counter-narrative open up for the spectator to see. The answer was already suggested earlier on — the combination of diverse forces (the individual and the collective, the private and the public) within the same radical move — and can now be more concretely shown in the figure of the family's younger daughter (the *rebel*, as opposed to the conservative eldest sister). The choice is not obvious, though. In fact, it can be said that the film's organizing force is the father, or rather the father's death — which has inspired most interpretations about the film as a specific allegory of the death of Salazar, the dictator thus becoming the country's father figure, the embodiment of patriarchy both at an institutional and social level.¹² More than plausible, this interpretation is backed up by Seixas Santos himself. And yet, the narrative of *Mild Manners* is open enough to allow for other readings.

To choose the daughter as the film's organizing force may enable us, I believe, to not only get closer to the crux of the narrative, but also, and as a consequence, to identify the politics of the film, to assess how philosophy articulates narrative and politics, and finally to assign *Mild Manners* to a different genre (other than the essay film). It can then be suggested that the daughter is important not so much because the film *is about her*, but in the sense that she organizes, not only the narrative, but indeed its temporality. This is something she starts doing right from the start when we are confronted with a medium shot of her apparently looking at the camera, and wading through her father's death:

It's your death, your death we're talking about. It is our painful duty to announce... it's my painful duty to announce your death. What if my father died? *"What if my father died," she asked ... "as if for the first time the idea had entered her head. ... but she saw an old house, falling to pieces in a slow motion. ... and her father's lips... moving slowly ... repeating his last commandment. It was a projection, a ghost imitating the echo of its own voice. She knew it... and couldn't help meditating on the significance of all this. [...]."*

When he dies I'll go into mourning. *"The daughter, the family, bereaved wish to thank all those who participated."* Dead you are. Already dead.

The speech then continues with a resentful complaint about her upbringing ("I hardly know how to speak. I can't find the right words. [...] Unlike what you think, your pedagogic system worked: what I am is the result of your education") and the order the father represents. However, despite the symbolical and ideological significance of this overture (in which the father is explicitly defined as a figure of repression), I believe that what is here most important lies elsewhere: her voice can be heard as part of the "multiplicity of speaking voices" identified by Wollen in Godard's films (she speaks both directly as a character and through the mediation of a narrator's voice-over) and time is left open, or at least undecided, between the future ("what if my father died?") and the past ("Dead you are. Already dead"). So, if the daughter plays such an important role in the narrative, this is because she utters more than one voice (and project more than one image: when the sequence ends, we realize we have been watching her reflection in a mirror all along) and because she points the narrative towards the future. Whether as an announcement or as a celebration, she embodies the historical opening of post-Salazarism to future generations. But by contemplating change through her father's death — by considering a political break stemming from a family, private, event —, emancipation becomes something she will have to come to terms with personally. Political freedom, as such, becomes a personal problem.

The full meaning (or utopian potential) of this initial speech will finally be fulfilled in the last sequence. As in the opening, it is the daughter who takes charge of the closure. The father is already dead (at least symbolically, as we are still able to see him cross the frame) and she decides to take matters into her own hands, as initially promised. This is when the ultimate political text written by a philosopher comes to lend a helping hand: she sits on a table, reading the first paragraph of the section "Bourgeois and Proletarians" from *The Com-*

munist Manifesto. And yet, as we were initially told, she hardly knows how to speak and has trouble finding the right words. Rather than reading, then, she starts by stuttering the first lines, as if learning how to read through practice: “The his... to... ry of all hith... er... to ex... is... ting so... cie... ty is the his... to... ry of class stru... ggles.” This is an extraordinary demonstration of what a *theory of praxis* looks like. One is not supposed to learn how to read in philosophy books. In her case, however, literacy and political consciousness will come simultaneously.¹³ As she keeps repeating the words, the text becomes more coherent. Gradually, she is not alone. Other voices overlap, insistently repeating those famous words determining the sense of history and the inevitability of class struggle. At the end, one can say her education is over: she closes the book, and facing the camera, repeats “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” in only one go, as if the words were already hers. From this moment on, she becomes the true subject of the narrative, and, as such, a true subject in history.

This is the point when the film achieves one of those rare moments when the distinction between historical *thinking* and *representation* blurs. Faithful to the nature of the text, the daughter’s utterance combines theory and practice in a truly political *speech act*. In these circumstances, philosophy (in the form of a particularly authoritative theory of history) not only enters the narrative, it indeed determines its outcome. This is what grants *Mild Manners* with a singular historicity: the noise of soldiers in the street (celebrated by the maid, but terrifying the other members of the family around the table where the daughter reads, impassive) emerges as a direct result of those words, illustrating rather tellingly my initial suggestion that the relationship between the form of the narrative and the historical moment it engages with works both ways. Rather than an allegory of Salazarism, then, the narrative dynamics of *Mild Manners* endows history with a utopian impulse. But utopia should here be seen as a genre in its own right, a narrative form capable of anticipating a revolutionary movement and determining its ideological origins,¹⁴ on the one hand, and combining individual emancipation (the girl learning how to read by herself) with collective consciousness (the words of *The Communist Manifesto* immersing her voice in a collective multiplicity of voices), on the other.

Paradoxically as it may seem, the revolutionary process triggered by the military coup on 25 April 1974 may here be seen as the historical figuration of an already existing filmic narrative. It was as if Seixas Santos was somehow able to anticipate the political event.

Whereas the soldiers marching on the street seem to anticipate the coup itself, the daughter's self-discovery and engagement with a political collective (under the aegis of class struggle) prefigures the following eighteen months, as a period when many sectors of Portuguese society were mobilized in all kinds of political struggle, from open challenges to capitalism and private property (namely with the nationalization of banks and the popular occupation of land, factories and houses) to forms of individual rebellion and cultural subversion. It should be stressed that if *Mild Manners* is able to announce the revolution at all, this is not so much for the explicit reference to soldiers on the street (the anticipation of the coup) but for the type of political subjectivity the daughter embodies (the individual voice merging with the innumerable). This may allow us to revisit the question of the relation between Seixas Santos's critical cinema and the challenges of the historical period. For the revolution, as an event unfolding in discourse and consciousness as much as in the streets, and potentially led by anyone (and everyone), rather than organized around political institutions, such an event seems completely inappropriate for conventional filmic narratives based on individual protagonists and linear plots.

2. GESTURES AND FRAGMENTS: HOW TO FILM A HISTORICAL EVENT

I already suggested that *Mild Manners* and *Gestures and Fragments* can be conjugated in both the future and the past tenses, in relation to which the revolution functions as a point of reference. *Mild Manners* thus points to the future (in the utopian impulse of the narrative towards the revolution), whereas in *Gestures and Fragments* the revolution had already been fixed in the past (as a failed event, from a revolutionary point of view). The second film thus deals with defeat and mourning, and it discusses the event from a distance. In fact, the film's relation with the revolution is historiographical, rather than historical, in the sense that it reflects about the past rather than engaging with the present. The difference between *Gestures and Fragments* and *Mild Manners* can be seen in this relation to history. There is nothing like the energy of the younger daughter heading towards emancipation in the latter. *Gestures and Fragments* is much more self-reflective, one could almost say contemplative. And yet, it is not really from *Mild Manners* that *Gestures and Fragments* is trying to distance itself. In between the two, the revolution had already been given a filmic narrative by innumerable documenta-

ries frantically engaged with the different struggles of the revolutionary process. So, to fully understand what changes from *Mild Manners* as a film pointing to the future, to *Gestures and Fragments* as a reflection on the past, we need to briefly discuss all this filmography (in which Seixas Santos also participated as one of the authors of *A Lei da Terra*, a 1977 collective film on land occupations) deeply committed with the revolution. My initial suggestion is that *Gestures and Fragments* would be incomprehensible without this contrast between its narrative structure and that of most documentaries about the revolutionary process, as films that only rarely helped falling into the kind of linearity Seixas Santos's own work criticizes.

In fact, films from the revolutionary period usually reflect the contingencies of the political process. The engagement of filmmakers was more than just a question of political activism, as they struggled to follow the events as they occurred. In this sense, these documentaries are in a permanent tension between a *revolutionary interpretation of the revolution* (in the choice of topics and situations, in the use of voice-over, but mostly in the final editing) and events whose narrative keeps changing in unexpected ways. Like in the films of Seixas Santos, a relation between thought and representation is established, but contrary to the historical objects of *Mild Manners* and *A Lei da Terra*, the ongoingness of the revolutionary process never allows thought in the documentaries to crystallize. Robert Kramer, a North-American director who made one of the most emblematic films on the Portuguese revolution, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Portugal* (1977), describes very clearly the impact of these historical circumstances in his work:

This time it felt wonderful to document a mass revolutionary struggle. [...] We would get a body of material and then begin to think what needed to be there to fill it out. We'd look for a strand, and then follow it up with subsequent filming. Only the reality was that much more vibrant as it erupted around us. The disruptions that would constantly alter the direction of our work felt good, forcing us to include them in the scope of the film.¹⁵

To make a film in these circumstances thus requires a true militant involvement with the event.¹⁶ The director's efforts to weave a narrative out of what seems a random succession of many things happening simultaneously is usually visible in the ideologically imposing tone of the narration. The main challenge to filmmakers like Kramer was thus to combine the two

political aspects already announced in the last scene of *Mild Manners*: military action and collective participation. But despite all the efforts to embark in the event's non-linearity, most documentaries had no choice but to *follow* the present. This creates a very visible ambiguity traversing these films, that clearly distinguishes them from *Mild Manners* and *Gestures and Fragments*: if, on the one hand, the present imposes over the making of the documentaries, documentaries themselves will come back with a revenge by imposing its duration (less than two hours) over the revolution's eighteenth months. It can thus be said that the revolutionary process was less frantic than what this films' duration usually indicate, and that frenzy was, above all, the consequence of the tense process of editing with which documentary directors tried to synthesize the event's heterogeneity. By *emplotting* the revolution within the narrative structure of the documentary feature, most documentaries have given, even if inadvertently, a very similar picture of the revolution as a moment of excess.

It may now become easier to understand the role of distancing in *Gestures and Fragments*. In this second film, Seixas Santos's strategy should be seen as the refusal of any type of immediacy, a negative move that will hopefully allow us to grasp the true contradictory nature of the revolutionary process hidden under the linearity of a narrative of excess and chaos. It may be worth remembering that when it was shot, in the early 1980s, social memory of the Prec was already covered by two dominant ideas (or plots): that the revolution had mostly been a process led by politicians and the military, and that the confusion between the two institutions (politics and the army, i.e., the politicization of the armed forces), had been the main cause of the period's chaos (the moment of *excess* I referred to).

If we look at the discourses Seixas Santos chose to populate *Gestures and Fragments*, we may initially be led to believe that he did not avoid reinforcing the hegemonic view. In fact, the whole film is taken by *institutional* figures and events: we can hear a protagonist of the military process, Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho (the head of the operations on the 25 of April 1974, and the commander of COPCON, one of the most radicalized military units throughout the revolutionary process); the intellectual who has first written about the contradictions between the military and the political levels of the revolution, Eduardo Lourenço (Portuguese philosopher who published *Os Militares e o Poder* as early as 1975); and even the more ambiguous character played by Robert Kramer (who went back to Portugal, but this time to play the role of a journalist inside a room, trying to make sense of what *really* happened on 25 of November 1975, the date of the very confusing counter-coup) does not escape the nar-

rative of a revolution led by soldiers and politicians and organized around important dates. At first sight, then, it seems that the film is about individual protagonists, the military process and particular events. The fluid multitudinous revolution promised at the end of *Mild Manners* with which documentaries tried to come to terms with seems, at least at first, somehow lost.

And yet, these institutional voices are not allowed to stand on their own. Seixas Santos does not just let these three men speak; he questions their authority by forcing the discourses to dialogue with each other through a very rigorous exercise of montage,¹⁷ an articulation between the three voices that short-circuits the dominant memory of the revolution they are trying to convey. In a sense, the film's structure emerges as a fourth voice through which the director himself *thinks* the revolution, or at least shatters the limits through which the revolution can be thought.¹⁸ This means that whatever is left to interpret about the revolution in *Gestures and Fragments*, it is not to be found, or at least not primarily, in the excerpts Eduardo Lourenço reads from *Os Militares e o Poder*; or in the biographical interview given by Otelo; or in the detective-like monologues of Robert Kramer. In fact, Seixas Santos seems to suggest the exact opposite. His work is a subtle exercise whereby each discourse questions, when not indeed cancels, the others, and any new interpretations the film might have about the event have to be negatively grasped among the debris left over by the destructive impact the three discourses have on one another.¹⁹

The exercise is mostly visible in the articulation between the discourses of Eduardo Lourenço and Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. Both seem to stand in propitious settings for their speeches to come forth (but this will later reinforce the sense of contradiction): Otelo is at home, and speaks about his life, revisiting his military career, the war and the mounting dissatisfaction of soldiers, all the way up to the revolution and his involvement in the process, especially as the commander of COPCON; Lourenço stands in bucolic landscapes and browses through his book, reading extracts about the incompatibility between military life and politics. His point is clear and, at first sight, fair:

One cannot have the two swords, pure force and political supremacy, in the same hands, without tyrannically confiscate civil liberties. Of all citizens, the soldier has to be the most democratic, and the essence of his democraticity [...] consists on privileging in himself the civilian he also is, or better still, the citizen, to the detriment of the soldier.

The problem with the revolutionary process, and with the overtly political behavior of military units such as COPCON, was that soldiers were indeed involved in politics qua soldiers, which, for Lourenço, was a contradiction in terms. In his subtle analysis, Lourenço is of course aware of why this was so: no one but the armed forces had the power to dethrone the dictatorship. The problem, however, subsisted. Soldiers are not supposed to get involved in politics because they are not supposed to think.²⁰ When they start thinking, the political consequences are inevitably disastrous, which would constitute the revolution's ultimate deadlock. At this point, montage intervenes, for all these seemingly reasonable ideas about the nature of military life and politics put forth by the philosopher are juxtaposed with Otelo's interview, where the latter shows a remarkable capacity to think, in general, and to give a sophisticated political analysis of the context that led the Portuguese armed forces to trigger the revolutionary process. So, while Lourenço theorizes about the incompatibility between the army and *thought*, Otelo proves his ability to *think* politically. Depending on how one chooses to look at it, one of the discourses is always bound to collapse (and the contradiction between the two are further dramatized by the domestic and rural settings where they take place), whether because the philosopher proves the commander's reasons to get into politics illegitimate, or because the commander's narrative exposes the vacuity of the philosopher's reasoning.

While both entertain their destructive "dialogue," the "journalist" struggles to understand the event. He draws a chronology on a board, writes notes and assembles newspaper clips. He tries to make sense of the ambiguous actions of soldiers and politicians, in order to come up with a clear picture of what really happened. And yet, the event always seems to escape him. Seixas Santos's *strategy of negation* can here be seen at another level. Kramer is looking for the revolution in the wrong place, for what distinguished the revolutionary process from a mere coup was the overflow of politics from the realm of institutions all the way to society as such. In this sense, what made the revolution so difficult to represent was the complete contingency of a political process *permanently participated by virtually everyone* with no reference points in fixed protagonists, institutions or events.

This brings us to a point where the historical meaning of *Gestures and Fragments's negativity* can finally come forth. As I suggested earlier, the revolution challenged representation because it transcended the limits of any *positive* narrative. The utopian drive at the end of *Mild Manners* lacked this positivity, as the revolution was still no more than a potential

event. On the other hand, to try to encapsulate the flow of energies at work during the revolutionary process within the single narrative of the documentary film was bound to fail as still another effort to close its multiplicity within a single narrative. Seixas Santos counter-narrative, a narrative destroying other narratives, may not exactly constitute a new form of *representation* of how things happened. What it does, however, is equally decisive: by not enclosing the revolution in a single narrative, it allows us to *think* the event's intrinsic openness.

CONCLUSION: THINKING THE REVOLUTION

There are times when you're lucky to belong to the mass, to history, and you're happy to give up your *specialness*, your individuality to a sense of common work and tasks that need to be done. And there are other times when this common energy has exhausted itself and it's willful and finally destructive to pretend that it exists in the same way. Times when there aren't many maps, when you have only your wits, your beliefs, your closest friends to help you navigate. And it's hard to say which one of these is really easier or more productive than the other. Each has its difficulties.²¹

The two temporalities mentioned by Robert Kramer in the epigraph above do not exhaust all the time tenses analyzed in this article. Probably because *Mild Manners* was made before history proper — the moment when, still according to Kramer, collective action brought everyone to participate in historical transformation —, he did not consider the last days of the dictatorship, when the younger daughter became ready for revolution through the reading of *The Communist Manifesto*. As for Alberto Seixas Santos, he tried to articulate the gap between *before* and *after* the 1974-75 revolution with *Mild Manners* and *Gestures and Fragments*. The radical difference between these two historical and cinematic moments may allow us to come back, for the last time, to the role of philosophers, and thought more generally, in both films.

The contribution of Eduardo Lourenço to *Gestures and Fragments* and the role of *The Communist Manifesto* in the narrative of *Mild Manners* could not, in this sense, be more contrasting. Whereas Lourenço will provide a conceptual reflection on the event, crystallizing it

as a theoretical failure, the manifesto will point beyond the film's narrative towards historical transformation. This would rigorously fit in still another declaration by Karl Marx, the famous last thesis "on Feuerbach": "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."²² In fact, it would not be difficult to match the figure of the interpretive philosopher with Eduardo Lourenço's theory on the military and the revolution, whereas Marx could emerge as the embodiment of his own call, when the manifesto was appropriated and put to use by the younger daughter.

And yet, there is a third thinking figure to consider in-between Lourenço and Marx. For the ways in which the ideas of both philosophers are allowed to reach their specific performances depend on the roles ascribed to them by Seixas Santos. From *Mild Manners* to *Gestures and Fragments*, the director seems to have moved from what Colin MacCabe calls a Brechtian "moment of subversion" (i.e., the girl reading the manifesto) to a "strategy of subversion" (the systematic refusal of dominant discourses). In the latter, according to MacCabe, "the narrative does not produce for us the knowledge with which we can then judge the truth of those discourses. Rather than the narrative providing us with knowledge — it provides us with various settings."²³ Seixas Santos's thought thus seems to call for still another thinking subject: the spectator, or the political spectator he had in mind with these two films²⁴, capable of opening the long monologues of *Gestures and Fragments* and articulating these various settings within a more productive memory of the revolution. In these circumstances, the relation between film and thought can shift from the realm of authors, narrative and characters (even when philosophers themselves) to active forms of spectatorship, where watching a film literally becomes another way of thinking.

1. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

2. The critique of contemporary audiovisual forms was one of the priorities of all "new cinemas" emerging during the 1960s and the 1970s. As Michael Witt has recently demonstrated in his analysis of Jean-Luc Godard, these new cinemas were particularly concerned with the forms through which cinema inscribed itself in history. Cf. Michael Witt, *Jean-Luc Godard, Cinema Historian* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

3. *Brandos costumes* could be translated as *mild* (or *soft*) *manners*, a pervasive expression in Portuguese political culture, supposedly defining the non-violent character of the Portuguese people. Seixas Santos's use of the expression is ironic. *Gestos e fragmentos* literally means *gestures and fragments*. One of the film's characters refers both gestures and fragments as examples of traces left over by past events. I will be using the original titles to keep both its colloquial and symbolic resonances.

4. According to Seixas Santos, the idea to make *Mild Manners* as a “essay film” (“I never wanted to make a documentary”) was inspired by Jean-Luc Godard — Manuel Neves, “Entrevista de Alberto Seixas Santos,” in *Alberto Seixas Santos*, coord. Neves (Lisboa: ABC Cine-Clube de Lisboa, 2008), 26. In the same interview, Seixas Santos also recognizes his intimate kinship with the cultural atmosphere of the 1960s, including Maoism, psychoanalysis, semiotics, the refusal of “naturalist illusions” and his inclination to Brechtian techniques of distanciation, “narrative discontinuity,” “mixed materials” and “heterogeneity.” (23-24).

5. This is a key aspect to my argument for it suggests that the type of historical knowledge one gets is already ingrained in, if not indeed determined by, the structure of historical events, thus reverting the traditional relation between event and its representation by somehow conferring history with discursiveness while simultaneously giving a material and historical existence to discourse. The combination of ideas from Fredric Jameson (a theorist committed to the historicization of literary works) and Hayden White (a historian concerned with historiographical narrative) shapes this relationship: my suggestion is that historical narratives become the figuration of historical events to the extent in which they are already prefigured in the events themselves. Cf. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), and Hayden White, *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

6. Film theories from the 1960s and the 1970s have been subject to severe scrutiny in the last two decades. In *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (probably the most thorough attempt to undermine ideological analysis of film), Noël Carroll, one of the book’s editors, synthesizes the critique’s main point: film theories impose their pre-established ideologies on film: “Not only do contemporary film scholars pretend to find technique after technique and film after film that exemplify this or that general pattern — such as imaginary identification and subject positioning — film scholars also claim to find films that *express* the theories in question, that is, films [...] that share themes with such figures as Freud, Lévi-Strauss, and Lacan.” — David Bordwell and Noël Carroll, *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 43. The problem with this critique, especially when one thinks of a filmmaker such as Seixas Santos, is that it sees filmmaking as an ideological-free act, thus becoming unequipped to consider the deliberate forms of thought conveyed by the film and the filmmaker.

7. On the essay film genre in Portuguese cinema cf. Carolin Overhoff Ferreira, “Em Favor do Cinema Interdisciplinar: O Caso Português,” *Rebeca: Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Cinema e Audiovisual* 1.2 (2012): 99-138.

8. See especially vol. 1 of Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

9. Estado Novo (New State) was part of the wave of European Fascist regimes in the 1930s, and lasted from 1933 to 1974. Given the charisma and resilience of its leader, António de Oliveira Salazar (in power from the early thirties until 1968), the regime, and indeed the period, is also known as Salazarism.

10. On the status of metaphor and other formal aspects of the film, see Leonor Areal, *Cinema Português: Um País Imaginado, Vol. II – Após 1974* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2011), 45-48.

11. Cf. Peter Wollen, *Readings and Writings: Semiotic Counter-Strategies* (London: Verso, 1982), 80-90.

12. “With *Mild Manners*, we seem able to see the everyday of fascism, salazarist ideology at work.” — Fernando Lopes, “Duas ou Três Coisas a Propósito de *Mild Manners*,” in *Alberto Seixas Santos*, coord. Neves (Lisboa: ABC Cine-Clube de Lisboa, 2008), 120.

13. This image is not completely strange in the context of the Portuguese revolution, where literacy and political consciousness were often equated. I want to thank Tiago Baptista for pointing this out.

14. There is nothing divinatory in this anticipation. As António Pedro Pita aptly noticed apropos the 25 of April 1974, revolutions bring the future to the present, i.e., their temporality is particularly dense, as they come as the fulfillment of a utopian drive (or an imaginary narrative) previously constituted somewhere in the past. Cf. António Pedro Pita, “O Dia Inicial: 25 de Abril ou O Imaginário da Revolução” (paper presented at the III Colóquio História e Arte, Florianópolis, 2010).

15. Kramer started shooting *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Portugal* while visiting the country in 1975, during the revolutionary process. Cf. Thomas Brom, “Interview with Robert Kramer: Filming in the Fist of the Revolution,” *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* 12/13 (1976, 2004): 29-30.

16. This does not stop Kramer from raising specific, and complex, questions related to his own position as a filmmaker and to the relation between the camera and the event, as Raquel Schefer has recently noticed: “news-reel sequences cut by abrupt intertitles, the gap between the shooting and the editing processes, the prologue and the epilogue being disruptive sequences which not only point out to the processual nature of revolution, but also to the contradictions of class struggle, and the ambiguities of militant cinema.” — Schefer, “The Lived Cinema of Robert Kramer: Politics and Subjectivity,” *La Furia Humana* 16 (2013).

17. “*Gestos* is completely planned [*pensado*: thought about], shot by shot, angle by angle, with an absolutely millimetric rigor.” — Seixas Santos, in *Alberto Seixas Santos*, coord. Neves (Lisboa: ABC Cine-Clube de Lisboa, 2008), 25.

18. In one of the best texts ever written about *Gestures and Fragments*, Augusto M. Seabra speaks of Seixas Santos's camera as the self-conscious "fourth character" typical of modern cinema: the "strategy of disjunction" opened by montage allows "the spectator to think" in a way that is very close to Huillet's and Straub's "filmic cubism." — Seabra, "À Procura da Revolução Perdida," in *Alberto Seixas Santos*, coord. Neves (Lisboa: ABC Cine-Clube de Lisboa, 2008), 148.

19. Seixas Santos on his own method: "to choose a strategy of negation, of confrontation between different levels, different ways of saying. The difficulties, the sterility of an interruptive reading, blocking what is "natural" in a spontaneous word [...]. And more, the essential: to subvert the rules of simple addition, to make a film from a set of destructions." — *ibid.*, 143.

20. "[W]hen the army starts thinking as a civilian institution [...] then the citizen senses the visible disorder of that thought and finds the indelible mark of stupidity in it."

²¹. Robert Kramer, in *Gestures and Fragments*.

22. Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 173.

23. Colin MacCabe, "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses," *Screen* 15.2 (1974): 19.

24. "I want to give the spectator back his role as spectator, I want him to be sitting in the movie theatre [*na plateia*], not having a secondhand experience of dramatic events." — cf. Neves, "Entrevista de Alberto Seixas Santos," 26. The Brechtian move not only is not difficult to identify in the way montage allows the spectator to *read* the film (as montage is equated with thought), it becomes the director's ultimate achievement: "The aim is no longer to fix the spectator apart as receiver of a representation but to pull the audience into an activity of reading: far from separating the spectator, this is a step towards his inclusion in a process." — Stephen Heath, "Lessons from Brecht," *Screen* 15.2 (1974): 111.

BETWEEN NARCISSISM AND REPRESSION:
THE CASTRATION OF FEMALE DESIRE IN PORTUGUESE FILM
– JULIA KRISTEVA AND ABJECTION, THE 1974 REVOLUTION,
THE SIEGE AND DINA AND DJANGO

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INTRODUCTION

Julia Kristeva, in her pivotal book *Powers of Horror – An Essay on Abjection*, explores how fear and the object are linked and considers amongst other things “the object as a trimming of anguish,”¹ in its relation with the concept of abjection. This article is an analysis of two films pivotal to the understanding of the role of women in Portuguese cinema in the decade and a half that encircles the 1974 Revolution. It is informed by Julia Kristeva’s concepts in *Powers of Horror*.

In spite of Kristeva’s anchoring of her analysis of desire in literature, it seems possible to redeploy the concepts in *Powers of Horror* to the language of film.

The Portuguese films *The Siege* (*O Cerco*, 1970) and *Dina and Django* (*Dina e Django*, 1983) are set within divergent socio-political situations: twelve years separate the two, with Portugal’s 1974 revolution and the end to almost fifty years of dictatorship (1926-1974) between them. A man directs *The Siege* (António da Cunha Telles), while a woman directs *Dina and Django* (Solveig Nordlund). I depart from Julia Kristeva to ask how two films produced over a decade apart and under different social and political conditions, can both portray women protagonists castrated in the fulfilment of their desire for sexual pleasure and social emancipation – why, in both, the characters progress from narcissism to repression to punishment.

THE FILMMAKERS

By the time António da Cunha Telles has settled on directing *The Siege* he is already an important figure in the production of Portuguese Cinema Novo (New Portuguese Cinema).²

Under his belt as a producer, we can count films such as *The Green Years* (*Os Verdes Anos*, 1963) and *Belarmino* (1964); films that were pivotal for Cinema Novo. Cunha Telles represents a new generation of professional film practitioner who has studied abroad and cut his *cinéphile* teeth watching international cinema between Paris in London. He is *au fait* with the Nouvelle Vague movement, the international political movements of the time and how the language of cinema and the representation of women are being shaped by international filmmakers. We also need to be aware that when he embarks on the project to direct *The Siege* he is bankrupt due to the commercial failure of his previous projects and in a critical career moment upon which he needs to film what will finally materialise as a commercial success. However, *The Siege* is far from being the work of an isolated man: its script was co-written by, amongst others, a woman about to finish her philosophy degree, Gisela da Conceição, and an anti-dictatorship intellectual, Vasco Pulido Valente. Vasco Pulido Valente was also the husband of the actress playing the main protagonist of the film, Maria Cabral (who had also studied philosophy). Registers of the shooting mention that the script was constantly being changed, almost every day throughout the shoot, and that the intellectual exchange between director, actors and scriptwriters was dynamic and intense. What is being projected on the screen is not solely Cunha Telles' perspective; it is the product of a small collective of young women and men's work. Women and men that are middle-class and cultured, and want to present a narrative portraying specific situations on the screen, under the repressive eye of the dictatorship and while trying to make a commercial success. Marta, the main protagonist of the film, in all her misadventures, her characterisation and suffering, is the result of this collective vision.

Solveig Nordlund was deeply involved in the 1974 revolution. She worked as an assistant director for several of João César Monteiro's pre-revolution films and became an editor on Alberto Seixas Santos' 1974 film *Mild Manners* (*Brandos Costumes*). She worked with the main revolutionary filming collectives Cinequipa and Cinequanon and, in 1975, was one of the founders of Grupo Zero, developing several films in collaboration with Teatro da Cornucópia. Teatro da Cornucópia was, at the time, a space for the politicisation of the arts, and a space where Portuguese contemporary life could be brought to the stage and acted upon. *Dina and Django* was produced by Grupo Zero and was therefore the vision of a highly politicised collective. Whilst *Dina and Django's* narrative (the film was released in 1983 and set around April 1974) accompanies the revolution of April 1974, its main protagonist, Dina, re-

mains oblivious to it. Can this disconnection be construed as a remark on the depoliticisation of women? Perhaps through the development of Dina's character, as one which is largely focused on seeking pleasure, oppression is unacknowledged, emancipation is unachieved, and a transitional object fails to arise? Dina succumbs to the sticky net of patriarchal entrapment and punishment in a way parallel to Marta's pre-revolution surrender to the *pater-dictatorship*.

POLITICAL CONTEXTS

The Siege is filmed during what is called the Marcelist spring, a period under which, under the new leadership of Marcelo Caetano, the dictatorship tries to transmit the appearance of a softer tone, as a counterpoint to the Salazarist hard-line that precedes it. This softness is, in many ways, a cosmetic gimmick: Caetano had been, throughout his political life, an ultra-conservative and had acted, in his previous role, as an enforcer of the highest calibre of Salazar's doctrines. During the Salazar regime, women were orientated towards the home and the family, as these were where their attention should lie, as well as their main social and personal outlook and duty. Salazar's regime conceived of women as primarily mothers and housewives. Women were out-and-out blocked from several public service professions, or they could be dismissed if becoming single mothers or if they married while in certain public posts. The dictatorship was adamant that, for the good of the nation, women should marry and become mothers and, from the outset, in primary school books, young girls were made to understand that their future jobs, pastimes and objectives would be intrinsically different from those of boys. In addition, Portugal's agreement with the Vatican (*Concordat* of 1940) had consolidated a long-standing relationship between the Portuguese state and the Catholic Church, and this would be the basis for a moralisation of female behaviour and social standing in deep concurrence with the Church. This strengthened the social mantra of the subordination of women and of a sexual code that was solidly structured around catholic morality. "It is within that undecidable space, logically coming before the choice of the sexual object, that the religious answer to abjection breaks in: *defilement, taboo, or sin.*"³ If a woman chose to depart from this moral code, there would be negative social categorisation and punishment: the so-called polarisation of *saints or whores*.

In the late 1970s, Portugal had initiated its process of integration into the European Union and, in 1979, a centre-right party had won the general elections. The centre-right, together with the Socialist Party, changed the constitution that had been written immediately after the revolution (Constitution of 1976), eliminating or altering several revolutionary aspects of it. These changes were officially implemented in 1982, one year before the release of *Dina and Django*. For an awareness of the political context around *Dina and Django*, it is also important to understand that a strong counter-revolutionary process, accompanied by an acute depoliticisation of the masses, was taking place in simultaneity to the production of the film. The country and its people were being twisted by two strong, antagonistic pulsations: the revolution and its anti-capitalist inheritance, in particular an anxiety that capitalism may dissolve collective structures and unsettle individual lives, and the opposite desire to see the country embrace internationalisation and all the new commodities an open market may bring. The disquiet transmitted by these two strongly opposed poles was being reflected across all art forms.

THE ABJECTION IN CAPITALISM —

THE ABJECTION OF DEPOLITICISATION

“Abjection — at the crossroads of phobia, obsession and perversion — shares in the same arrangement.”⁴ Both films happen in periods of a sudden acceleration of the capitalist process in Portugal, and both films, in a more-or-less straightforward way, address the desire for and the fear of rising consumerism.

In *The Siege*, this happens as the dictatorship softens its tone, opening up to foreign investment and apparently easing up censorship in the display of erotic images in magazines, advertising and film. One of Marta’s lovers is Bob, an American airline director who treats their affair in the most opportunistic of ways, denying Marta financial help and emotional support. Is perhaps Bob representing the attitude of international multinationals in Portugal? If this is the case, then the beautiful and petite Marta, treated by Bob with such disdain, is not short of a symbol of what is happening to the nation, surrounded by external forces that push her in directions she wouldn’t otherwise take, whilst being, at the same time, attracted to and wanting the comfort and protection of those same forces.

All through *The Siege* we watch the apparent perversity of the advertising world, the superficiality of it all. Marta's beauty is used in her job as a model to sell products: "They need to want you first to then want the whisky," says one of the agency's employees. This voyeurism of advertising can be anchored by Kristeva's words: "Voyeurism is a structural necessity in the constitution of object relation, showing up every time the object shifts towards the abject."⁵ It is openly assumed, in the film, that Marta's body and face are a commodity. She spends long moments combing her hair, applying make-up, dazed by her own image. She needs to use it to sell products or to get a man who will pay her bills. Without selling her body, without desacralising it, she is unable to give anything to the capitalist machine. This commodification is also the object upon which falls the violence of both her husband and one of her failed lovers. The impossibility of truly possessing her disturbs both men. This limit on possession can be explained by Kristeva's analysis: "The vision of the ab-ject is, by definition, the sign of an impossible ob-ject, a boundary and a limit. A fantasy, if you wish, but one that brings to the well-known Freudian primal fantasies, his *Urfantasien*, a drive overload of hatred or death, which prevents images from crystalizing as images of desire and/or nightmare and causes them to break out into sensation (suffering and denial (horror), into a blasting of sight and sound (fire, uproar)."⁶ The impossibility of completely owning the object of desire leads to the transformation of sexual want into violence.

As with so many Portuguese women of this period, Marta's intelligence and her other talents are muted or diluted. We know from the outset that she is middle-class and educated. We watch her reading novels in French, playing the piano at her grandmother's house and listening to classical music in her flat. However, perversely, all throughout the narrative, her intellectual value is not something she seems able to use to sustain herself. She is fired from her job in an airline because she separated from her husband. And the only job that seems possible is in modelling for an advertising agency, or obtaining little sums of money from the lovers she keeps on accruing. Throughout the film, Marta's education remains worthless; only her body and how men can use it for their benefit can constitute the token of exchange.

Paradoxically, at the same time as *The Siege* criticises the world of advertising, it embraces it full on, with unconcealed product placements all through the film, almost forty years before Morgan Spurlock's 2011 documentary *The Greatest Film Ever Sold*. *The Greatest Film Ever Sold* is a film about branding, advertising and product placement that is financed and made possible by brands, advertising and product placement, and this is exactly what

Cunha Telles and his team did in 1971. Capitalism and its advertising world is in this film “an Object of fear and fascination. Abjection itself. He is abject: dirty, rotten.”⁷ At the outset of the film, Marta’s husband expresses vehemently how the advertising world is corrupting Portuguese culture, creating images of desire whilst degrading artistic values.

Dina is an altogether different reflection on capitalism and the Portuguese class system. She is a teenager, brought up by a grandmother who works hard as a maid for a middle-class family. The grandmother wants her to have a proper education, but Dina “bunks off school” to go to the bars and cafés where she flirts with boys and men. In a middle-class apartment, Dina and her grandmother sleep in a tiny bed in a small bedroom, hugging each other. Dina constantly concocts false stories in which she tells to whoever wants to listen that she comes from a wealthy lineage. Dina steals her grandmother’s boss expensive jumper and wears her secret luxury *eau de cologne*. Dina longs for a more affluent life. From the outset, we are made aware that the cheap love stories she reads have had a profound influence on her. Dina is a woman-child: we witness her mixing reality and fiction, and her despair to belong and be loved. This despair for love and a better life will be the cause of her downfall.

In *Dina and Django*, the soundtrack supplements the characters’ individualism and political indifference. When Dina sees Django for the first time and runs away with him, we can hear in the background Paulo de Carvalho’s song *E Depois do Adeus* — this was the initial radio password that triggered the April Revolution. As the collective journey of the revolution starts, Dina and Django start their individual, solipsistic journey. Further along in the film, we can see images of the revolutionaries singing repeatedly — *The people united, will never be defeated*.⁸ Dina and Django are completely detached, just centred on one another and on their mutual desire for each other. Later on, as they steal, we can hear Sérgio Godinho (an influential political songwriter) singing about the needs of the people and freedom.

Marta is a pre-revolution woman and Dina is a woman in the present of the revolution; they both live in politically charged periods and yet they are both apathetic. We need to remember that both directorial teams had strong political views and that they were both responsible for building the narratives that “punish” these women. Both Marta and Dina represent a woman who wants independence, but is superficial and consumeristic, oblivious to the social change around her. Both live historical moments with a strong collective desire for new commodities — the allure of consumption mixed in with the allure freedom. Marta and

Dina are the tragic muse, the classical symbol described by Kristeva: “And there you have the muse just as she is after two thousand years of art and religion. A muse in the true tradition of the lowly genres — apocalyptic, Menippean and Carnavalesque.”⁹ Marta’s and Dina’s narratives of the beautiful woman attracting tragedy are a recurrent, classic set up in the tradition of western narratives.

The *siege* that surrounds Marta is the patriarchal capitalist society, of which she is dependent, the men that want her and degrade her “such femininity is nonetheless in the position of a fallen demon who finds being only with reference to man.”¹⁰ Her social validation arises and decays from the gaze and desire of men.

Dina’s narrative is written half a dozen years after the revolution, looking back. She is portrayed as a vain beautiful woman, her narrative occurring around the revolution. She is so taken aback by her passion for Django that she is just a participant in her smaller narrative, oblivious to the revolution unfolding around her. We know how conscious Dina is of her beauty, we know of her frivolity. Solveig Nordlund is, in the present from which she films, recording a character of a recent past and consciously shaping her as politically indifferent.

THE NARCISSIST WOMAN — SEXUALITY AND REPRODUCTION

Both Dina and Marta are portrayed as narcissistic characters, allured by their beauty and their mirror reflection. However, in both films, narcissistic behaviour will lead to feelings of suffering and horror, narcissism leading to abjection. When relating abjection and narcissism Julia Kristeva states that

Abjection is therefore a kind of *narcissistic crisis*: it is witness to the ephemeral aspect of the state called “narcissism” with reproachful jealousy, heaven knows why; what is more, abjection gives narcissism (the thing and the concept) its classification as “seeming.”¹¹

Thus, there is an apparent, but not actual or genuine narcissism, as the self-esteem of the characters as independent women is systematically violated and broken.

The two women are used as commodities and in both situations the mother is absent and is replaced by the grandmother. Kristeva states that

When psychoanalysts speak of an object they speak of desire as it is elaborated within the Oedipal triangle. According to that trope, the father is the mainstay of the law and the mother the prototype of the object. Toward the mother there is convergence not only of survival needs but of the first mimetic yearnings. She is the other subject, an object that guarantees my being a subject. The mother is my first object — both desiring and signifiable.¹²

In this instance, we could construe that to see the mother is to see a primordial reflection of the self.

Because for both Marta and Dina the figure of the mother is absent, there is no sense of feminine generational continuity in their lives. There is not a woman between the blossom of fertility and the stumbling into menopausal existence. With the mothers removed from their narratives, they are isolated as female objects of desire, as active and fertile sexual women. There is a vacuum where continuity is supposed to exist. They are chronologically too far ahead and inveterately too far away from their grandmothers, they are an isolated island of femininity and reproductive *allure*. Kristeva can help us to understand how the role of the mother creates intermediate meaning in the Oedipal complex:

Do we not also find, in the very process that constitutes the mother as other, a series of *semi-objects* that stake out the transition from a state of indifferenciation to one of discretion (subject/object)-*semi-objects* that are called precisely “transitional” by Winnicott?¹³

Finally, do we not find a whole gradation within modalities of separation: a real *deprivation* of the breast, an imaginary *frustration* of the gift as maternal relation and, to conclude, a symbolic castration, inscribed in the Oedipus complex; a gradation constituting, in Lacan’s brilliant formulation, the object relation insofar as it is always “a means of masking, of parrying the fundamental fund of anguish” (Seminar of 1956-1957)?¹⁴

This is therefore the first crisis, the one of finding the mother as an object external to us, that doesn't belong to us. This crisis is consequently enhanced when the mother disappears completely, because with her void, gradations of meaning of the Oedipus complex also disappear.

The important difference between a mother and a grandmother is that the mother would be an intermediate object, able to make that bridge between the blossom of sexuality and desire and its absence in terms of representation. What is at stake here is the representation of something even more powerful in its social and sexual value, the image of a woman that is at a reproductive age: her choices and decisions can lead to procreation and therefore morale and taboo will have to bear a different, heavier weight. Dina and Marta defy this *pater-catholic* morality and will suffer the consequences of their sinful actions. Kristeva explores further the meaning of the mother and of sin within the Biblical perception:

Through the process of interiorization, defilement will blend with guilt, which already exists on a moral and symbolic level in the Bible. But out of the merger with the more material, object-like abomination, a new category will be established — Sin. Swallowed up, one might say reabsorbed, Christian defilement is by token a revenge of paganism, a reconciliation with the maternal principle. Freud moreover stressed the point in *Moses and Monotheism*, revealing that Christian Religion is a compromise between paganism and Judaic monotheism.¹⁵

The mother is the symbolic bridge between the daughter and sin. The mother is always a reminiscence of Eva's original sin. Without the mother desire and sin just have one object, the daughter, and the abject is unavoidable.

Since Eva's original sin, from misdeed, from sexualisation, comes the ability to become a mother. The mother is the midpoint object between puberty and menopause and would work as a transitional symbol of representation. Dina and Marta can only see in the mirror beauty, sexuality and reproduction in their present. Narcissism and anguish are unavoidable. In Dina's and Marta's family chronologies the woman with whom they could share a comparable symbolic value, the mother, is absent; it is a ghost and ghosts are mirrors and mirrors reflect them, creating the abjection of the self and, in a whirlpool, the abjection in others - sin

and punishment in an endless cycle. They carry wholly on their own shoulders the burden of representation of female sexual desirability, sin, and its catharsis.

The isolation of the self of the daughter as a representation of women, marks the daughter as the representation of both the self and the mother. And it is this essence of the feminine that turns exponential when confronted with abjection. If not for their grandmothers, the protagonists in both films are alone, relying on their (male) sexual partners for a sense of being and empowerment. They both lack political perspectives and neither belongs to any political groups in what were intensely political times. During the moments of the film when Dina is surrounded by people celebrating the collective experience of the revolution, she is oblivious to it. She is frozen to the need to embrace the collective revolution, as her focus is directed to her relationship with Django.

To recapitulate, Dina and Marta carry the burden of representation of female sexuality and desire, the symbolism of women in their reproductive age. Being motherless, they float in the sea of representation in isolation; they are the sole object of desire, the sole sexual object, and the sole reproductive being. The grandmother is devoid of any of this symbolic value, as her beauty has long faded and she is no longer capable and active in the reproductive cycle. A symbolic rift separates granddaughter and grandmother; they signify differently and cannot touch each other on a representational level. The mother would be the link, bridging the representations of the fertile woman and the woman whose fertility has long departed.

THE ABSENCE OF THE FATHER —

THE ABJECTION IN THE ABSENCE OF SEXUAL TABOO

Like the mother, the figure of the father is also absent from Dina's and Marta's lives. Without the father, there is no man who can give them love, care for them, protect them without sex ever becoming an option. There is no sexual taboo separating them from any man. Kristeva comments that "Freud notes that the morality of a man starts with "the two taboos of totemism — *murder and incest*." ¹⁶ *Totem and Taboo* begins with the evocation of the "dread of incest." ¹⁷ Therefore, the absence of the father is the absence of sexual taboo in and towards the male.

With the absence of the father, the Electra Complex as the basis of heterosexual relationship building will be forever unresolved. And with the removal of the sexual taboo in relation to all and every single male around them, both Dina and Marta can be construed as limitless objects of desire – what is precipitated by the narratives of both films. Kristeva in the sub-chapter *Beyond The Unconscious* helps us to better understand the importance of this relationship between exclusion and desire:

Put another way, it means that there are lives not sustained by *desire*, as desire is always for objects. Such lives are based on *exclusion*. They are clearly distinguishable from those understood as neurotic or psychotic, articulated by *negation* and its modalities, *transgression*, *denial* and *repudiation*. Their dynamic challenges the theory of the unconscious, seeing that the latter is dependent upon a dialectic of negativity.¹⁸

And one of the exclusions in the case of Dina and Marta is the exclusion of the symbolic value of the father. He is a missing object, the cause of further symbolic negativity.

Dina and Marta have no space to disengage from the sexual pulsations of men, and from their own sexual attraction to the masculine; there is no space for not being sexual with a man. The absence of the father is also the absence of a male notion of the self: the presence of the father is the presence of an ascendant, of a biological part of the self. When the father is present, that masculinity is internalised. He can see in her a descendent, a shared biology, a part of him. And equally, she can see in him an ascendant, the same shared biology and a part of her. Father and daughter can be individuals, but they will always have each other's reflection. The father, when sexual taboo is present, is the ascetic bridge between the female and the male, between taboo and sexuality and desire. For the father, when taboo against incest is present, the body of the daughter is not objectified, as it does not exist to be used by him. Kristeva expands:

I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and instead of what will be "me." Not at all an other with whom I identify and incorporate but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be. A possession previous to my advent: a being-there of the symbolic that a father might or might not embody. Significance is indeed inherent in the human body.¹⁹

The abjection exists both in the identification/confusion of the self with the father and in the absence of the father.

Important Freudian/Jungian symbols, and their meaning and consequent vertices of catharsis and complexity, are vanished from Dina's and Marta's lives due to the symbolic absence of the father and the mother. Important bridges are missing, emotional identity is perturbed and in its place appears a language of fear. A language created by a consciousness of what is absent. From the mother and the father what is left is their persona, their reflection in the mirror. We can add to this argument Kristeva's reasoning that

The abjection of the self would be the culminating form of that experience of the subject to which it is revealed that all its objects are based merely on the inaugural *loss* that laid the foundations of its own being. [and that] There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the *want* on which any being, meaning language, or desire is founded.²⁰

Dina and Marta, by being in their reflection, mirrored symbols of the mother and the father, make the abjection of the self ultimately unavoidable; what is not there is paramount for their sense of displacement.

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF BEAUTY — SNOW WHITE STEPMOTHER'S COMPLEX

In both *The Siege* and *Dina e Django*, the characters Marta and Dina spend moments transfixed by their beauty reflected in the mirror. Putting this image of the woman that is allured by her own image in the mirror into perspective, the tale of Snow White immediately springs to mind.

Yet, Snow White is different from Dina and Marta in the fact that she doesn't look in the mirror, that she is not narcissistic and vain, and that her beauty is pure because of the lack of consciousness she has of it. The hunter, the animals of the forest, the prince, all succumb and are touched by her beauty, but Snow White is unaware that she is desired because of her beauty. She is innocent. She is not narcissistic.

In her chapter *The Abjection of The Self* Kristeva states that:

One always passes too quickly over this word, “want,” and today psychoanalysts are finally taking into account only its more or less fetishized product, the “object of want.” But if one imagines (and imagine one must, for it is the working of imagination whose foundations are being laid here) the experience of *want* itself as logically preliminary to being and object-to the being of the object-then one understands that abjection, and even more so abjection of self, is its only signified [...]. Mystical Christendom turned this abjection of self into the ultimate proof of humility before God, witness Elizabeth of Hungary who “thought a great princess, delighted if nothing so much as in abasing herself.”²¹

We can consider that the vanity of looking in the mirror, but above all of being bewitched by the beauty of our reflection, is construed as the opposite of Christian humility.

The curses that fall upon Dina and Marta arise from the fact that, contrary to Snow White, they want to possess their beauty, they are conscious of it. Psychoanalysis and Marxism meet when they look in the mirror, become aware of the value of their beauty and want to use this value as a form of exchange for something. In the case of Marta, she represents this woman of the late sixties, early seventies, that is bathed by the echoes of the feminist liberation movements happening internationally during this period. She is trapped, nonetheless, in a society that is profoundly patriarchal and set in catholic rules. And her vanity, one of the seven catholic cardinal sins, threatens her with punishment. Furthermore, her consciousness of her beauty makes her an active player in the dynamics of the sexual partners she decides to interact with. She is conscious that she can attract and seduce and, because of this, she embodies the essence of so many *femmes fatale* in the history of cinema - her net of seduction, as in traditional *film noir*, will lead to death. She represents a new woman, she is empowered by the awareness of the self, by the consciousness of the mirror. However, because the Portuguese society of the time is sedimented in a strong patriarchal logistic, her empowerment cannot persist and, as such, needs to be dismantled. Because she separated from her husband, she is dismissed from her job with an airline and to make ends meet has to engage in activities one could concede as soft prostitution. Her freedom from her husband is her downfall, and her conscience of her beauty is to be used for the benefit of others. Be-

cause she has stepped out of the classic cadre of ascetic beauty (contrary to humble Snow White), Marta will fall victim to a Snow White Stepmother's complex and will therefore have to be punished as Snow White's stepmother was. Snow White's stepmother is an epiphany of narcissus.

Dina, also conscious of her beauty, will also inevitably suffer punishment. The value of her beauty will be used as a commodity by her boyfriend and this game will also lead to tragedy and death. Like Marta, Dina is Snow White's Stepmother. Dina is also narcissus and will generate her own tragedy.

ABJECTION, CATHARSIS AND REPETITION

In both films we see agents of abjection and catharsis associated with repetition. In *The Siege*, this narrative cycle is enacted by Marta; whilst in *Dina and Django*, it is ritualised by Django's character.

Django is attracted to Dina's beauty. However, paradoxically, he is consumed by jealousy and afraid that some other man will be attracted to her and will defile her body, which he believes, belongs to him. Because of this need to control her beauty, he stops working to be able to follow her around. He is jealous of other men, and of the fact that by attending school she will look down on him. The attraction and the fear of losing her make him have a rage and assault her. After this, he forces Dina to walk the streets at night as if she was a prostitute, only to, at the last moment, save her and punish those who have fallen for her.

Kristeva reasons that

There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not left itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects.²²

By becoming a feigned pimp, Django controls Dina's beauty as a commodity. By repeatedly using her as bait and punishing the men who fall for her, he makes his fear tangible and exercises catharsis. Dina will not stop being beautiful, therefore he has to ritualistically and repeatedly control his fear, defile what she represents, symbolically transforming her into the prostitute who could have sex with others. By making her act as a prostitute he is symbolically degrading her, transforming her into the object of abjection he fears the most. By controlling the situation and punishing her would-be clients, he is in control and she is purified for him.

Marta's cycle of repetition is in all the lovers she successively takes in the hope of finding someone who will love her and, failing that, someone who will simply help her pay the bills. Contrary to the husband she is separating from, Marta wants independence and is reluctant to ask for financial support from her family. The price of this freedom is to have to depend on lovers to make ends meet. In Marta, we can see the echoes of Ana Karina's character in Jean-Luc Godard's *Vivre Sa Vie*. Like Marta, she starts the film breaking off from a relationship because of the wish to be free, only to have to prostitute herself to survive in a patriarchal society. Another film similar to Godard's, where the female protagonist falls prey to consumer society, is *Two or Three Things I Know about her*.

In both films is the reverberation of ideas of the feminine that had been inscribed by international filmmakers, and the repetition of the plight of women wishing for a break away from patriarchal rule, across countries, from the 1960s to the 1980s. We also see represented in these narratives the failure of this female struggle for freedom and emancipation.

SEXUALITY AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Marta and Dina suffer physical violence at the hands of their partners; the object of female desire becomes an object of anguish and abjection. Julia Kristeva, when considering the relation between *Jouissance and Effect*, argues that

One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it [*on en jouit*]. Violently and painfully. A passion. And, as in *jouissance*, where the object of desire, known as object *a*

[in Lacan's terminology], bursts with the shattered mirror where the ego gives up its image in order to contemplate itself in the Other, there is nothing either objective or objectal to the object. It is simply a frontier, a repulsive gift that the Other, having become *alter ego*, drops so that "I" does not disappear in it but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence. Hence a jouissance in which the subject is swallowed up but in which the Other, in return, keeps the subject from foundering by making it repugnant. One thus understands why so many victims of the abject are its fascinated victims — if not its submissive willing ones.²³

From the outset of the film, we see that Marta's husband persistently undermines her intellectual ability. After that, we see Marta being assaulted for the first time, when her husband, after she has stated that she wants to break free from the relationship, goes into a fit of rage. This is a brutal scene of domestic violence: her husband beats her up; Marta tries to fight back, only to succumb to his physical strength, ending up being raped. There is a transference of desire into violence, an erotisation of abjection, which is explained by Kristeva: "he acts on the strength of its power in order to condemn, he grounds himself on its law to tear the veil of oblivion but also to set up its object as inoperative. As jettisoned. Parachuted by the Other."²⁴ Male violence is, in both films, the ultimate mechanism for male recovery of emotional control.

We watch Marta being attacked a second time, when the photographer who had become her lover fails to hold onto his erection. She is punished because he is unable to execute his role as a lover, and is embarrassed by his inadequacy as a symbol of virility. At the end of both scenes she embraces herself in a movement of self-soothing, comforting herself from the humiliation and pain, once again from the impossibility of fighting back at someone who is stronger than her. Julia Kristeva, quoting a description in Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night*, talks about "those intermediate states, those non-states, neither subject nor object, where *you* is alone, singular, untouchable, unsociable, discredited, at the end of a night that is as particular as it is incommensurable."²⁵ For Dina and Marta these moments of discredit and loneliness are the instances when they have suffered the violence of their partners, a violence that is enclosed and goes unnoticed.

Django assaults Dina whenever he feels like it, to force her to work as a bait to attract men from which he will steal. His violence is the catalyst for her symbolic defilement, for her

life of crime; because of his perverse thoughts, she becomes perverse in her actions. Her submission and acceptance become her tragedy. Django's sadistic desires manifest themselves as abjection on an intimate side, on the suffering that his physical violence causes upon Dina. And as a public spectacle, this abjection is transformed into horror in the shape of violence and murder that together they will perpetrate on others.

Ultimately, when Dina's and Marta's lovers assault them, they are assuming the role of the punishing father; a Father where sexual taboo has been broken and which has to castigate the body as the representation of sinful desire.

LADY MACBETH AND THE OBJECT IN MURDER

In the chapter *Females Who Can Wreck the Infinite* Julia Kristeva analyses paranoia and crime in the feminine "Lady Macbeth-who, under the apparent narcissistic essence of the feminine, bares death drive."²⁶ As mentioned before, the association of women to sin is resurgent in classic western narratives, from literature to film. The ultimate sin is murder; women are the symbolic bearers of life, women who lead to death are therefore the supreme object of abjection. Kristeva argues: "For it is death that most violently represents the strange state in which a non-object, a stray, having lost its non-objects, imagines nothingness through the ordeal of abjection."²⁷ Dina and Marta become Lady Macbeth. With hands tainted by blood and the guilt of a murder, they are vertices of the negative, the anti-object as violence/abjection.

As a replacement of sleepwalking, as Lady Macbeth did, Marta goes on a bereavement journey in a *Cacilheiro* (typical boats that cross the Tagus river). In this journey, she revisits the river spot her lover and friend (Vitor Lopes) was found dead in. We can almost hear Lady Macbeth's lament — Out, damned spot! —, but there is nothing that Marta can do to erase the guilt of murder. Kristeva comments on loss that

The object is the violence of mourning for an "object" that has always already been lost. The object shatters the wall of repression and its judgements. It takes the ego back to its source on the abominable limits from which in order to be, the ego has broken away — it assigns it a source in the non-ego, drive, and death. Abjection is a resurrection that has

gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new significance.²⁸

Because she couldn't keep a secret of his smuggling activities, Vitor Lopes lost his life. By creating death, life is forever transformed. The association of a woman with murder, makes the principles of life and death become one.

The same way Marta superficially used her body to obtain money, the same way she ostensibly spoke too much, her lack of grasp for the consequences of her actions, her superficiality, has led to bloodshed. We can see in this a widespread misogynistic perspective in which women are unable to keep a secret, and where female discourse is used as an extension of vanity: women are peacocks, unable to stop themselves from displaying to others the secrets that have been treasured to them.

On the other hand, Dina literally washes her hands from blood after having killed a taxi driver. The roads were being patrolled by the revolutionary army, and in a moment of panic, Django, hot-blooded, shot the taxi driver when he became suspicious of them (they had a shotgun under a blanket, used just moments before in an attempted robbery). However, immediately afterwards, it is Dina who triggers the fatal shot. It is "[m]urder as underground lining of the unclean-thinking being."²⁹ The stress of events dazing her actions and judgement and leading to murder. Dina has nightmares and wakes up in the middle of the night screaming with guilt. Afterwards, she will be caught, brought to justice and put in prison.

In the guilt both Dina and Marta manifest, we can find what Julia Kristeva describes as *The Abjection of Self*:

If it be true that the object simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very *being*, that it is none other than abject.³⁰

By leading to the death of her friend and lover, Marta has condemned herself to further isolation: the only man to show a gentler manner with her is gone. In the *siege* of men that still

surrounds her there are no friends and she knows it. The film ends with Marta back in front of the mirror, absorbed once again in the application of false freckles to her face. Her beauty, her ultimate commodity, is the only thing she has left to console her.

After the murder and another beating by Django (to force her to go on another thieving rampage), Dina tries to brake off from the relationship. Dina calls for her grandmother to come and save her, but by then it is already too late, she will have to go to prison and be lonely. All her egotism and superficiality, her blindness to the collective movement around her, is punished, she will be barred from the consumer society she longed to embrace.

CONCLUSION

Both Dina and Marta are striking women, alienated from the collective political processes surrounding them. They seek freedom, but because they are depoliticised, they turn into the ultimate patriarchal object, the representation of the whore, doomed and tragic. The search for personal pleasure and narcissism is punished. Both films progress from the portrayal of relatively unbound narcissism to the representation of repression and the symbolic enactment of castration with Kristeva's notion of *abjection* surfacing in a plethora of manifestations.

Ultimately, these two narratives manifest political circumstances that generate the social entrapment of the female, expressed in the castration and perversion of their desire and freedom. In so many ways, in the manner it reflects their female tragedies, pre-revolution cinema and post-revolution cinema mirror unexpected similar endeavours.

1. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 32.

2. Portuguese New Wave.

3. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 48.

4. *Ibid.*, 45.

5. *Ibid.*, 46.

6. *Ibid.*, 154-155.

7. *Ibid.*, 185.

8. From the portuguese "O povo unido jamais será vencido."

9. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 169.

10. *Ibid.*, 167.

11. *Ibid.*, 14.

12. Ibid., 32.
13. Ibid. Kristeva asks the reader to see particularly D. W. Winnicot, *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965) and *Playing and Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1971).
14. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 32-33.
15. Ibid., 116.
16. Kristeva is quoting *Totem and Taboo* (1913), in vol. 13 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Vintage, 1975), 185.
17. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 57.
18. Ibid., 6-7.
19. Ibid., 10.
20. Ibid., 5.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 1.
23. Ibid., 9.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 135.
26. Ibid., 169.
27. Ibid., 25.
28. Ibid., 15.
29. Ibid., 152.
30. Ibid., 5.

APPRENDRE CHAQUE JOUR DE NOUVEAUX MOTS,
DE BEAUX MOTS:
LE CINÉMA DE PEDRO COSTA COMME SCÈNE POLITIQUE
D'UNE DÉMONSTRATION ÉGALITAIRE

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UN CINÉMA DE QUARTIER

On peut aussi faire des films comme ça: comme si on partait tourner tous les jours comme on fait la manche, sans savoir ce qu'on va nous donner — de la monnaie, un merle doré, un bouquet de fleurs, une cuiller d'argent.¹

Depuis une quinzaine d'années, Pedro Costa se rend quotidiennement dans un quartier populaire aux faubourgs de Lisbonne. En 1994, lors du tournage de son film *Casa de Lava* (1994) au Cap Vert, les habitants de l'archipel lui ont remis des paquets pour leurs familles installées au Portugal. De retour au continent, le cinéaste devient par ce biais un habitué de Fontainhas, quartier bâti dans les années soixante-dix par des immigrants cap-verdiens qui y résident. Ce quartier devient le site privilégié des films suivants. *Ossos* (1997) intègre quelques habitants parmi des comédiens professionnels, tandis que *Dans la chambre de Vanda* (*No Quarto de Vanda*, 2000) et les films ultérieurs seront joués exclusivement par des personnes que le cinéaste rencontre à Fontainhas. Pendant le tournage du film *Dans la chambre de Vanda*, le quartier sera démoli. Le film suivant, *En avant jeunesse* (*Juventude em Marcha*, 2006), suit les habitants qui ont été relogés dans de nouveaux appartements. Ce film prend pour sujet cette communauté délogée qui doit trouver dans une nouvelle architecture de nouveaux moyens d'existence. Une partie des habitants est venue constituer ainsi l'équipe de travail du cinéaste, ils ont réalisé ensuite des courts-métrages: *Tarrafal* (2007), *The Rabbit Hunters* (2007), *Notre homme* (*O Nosso Homem*, 2010) et *Sweet Exorcist* (2012). Ils continuent à travailler ensemble à l'heure actuelle.

En accord avec les rythmes du quartier populaire et de la vie précaire de ses habitants, ce travail de cinéma fonctionne sur la base d'une économie minimale. À partir de *Dans la*

chambre de Vanda, les films sont réalisés en vidéo, permettant aux tournages de s'étaler sur plusieurs mois, grâce à un budget de production réduit. Pendant l'élaboration d'un film, ce sont les habitants du quartier qui reconstruisent et inventent les histoires qu'ils interprètent à l'écran. À travers le travail de la fiction, des personnes ordinaires deviennent des narrateurs, elles réorganisent les lieux et les temps.

LE TEMPS DE LA PAROLE

Pendant les deux années de tournage du film *Dans la chambre de Vanda*, Pedro Costa met en place un processus d'élaboration des récits avec ses collaborateurs, leur travail consiste à atteindre la justesse d'une prise par de nombreuses répétitions. Le récit de la personne filmée peut fonctionner aussi comme une réappropriation de son expérience, puisque pendant le temps de préparation et de tournage, chacun prend le temps de se voir pour pouvoir (se) raconter. Néanmoins, la mise en scène de la parole dans ces films n'est pas conscience ou expression d'un soi, ni affirmation d'une identité close. Ainsi par exemple, certains personnages apparaissent dans le même film sous plusieurs prénoms, notamment celui qu'ils portent dans la "vraie vie." Au nom de qui est-ce qu'ils parlent ?

Pedro Costa affirme que les personnes filmées "deviennent des personnages dans ce sens qu'ils deviennent extérieurs à eux-mêmes et commencent à chercher une mémoire des gens qu'ils connaissent. Un personnage, c'est au mieux une concentration de beaucoup de personnes dans une seule."² En effet, dans les films les habitants relatent certaines expériences de leurs vies passées, partiellement ou complètement inventées ou bien, ils s'approprient les histoires de leur voisinage. Ainsi, c'est à travers la mise en scène d'une fiction qu'un individu peut incarner les voix d'une communauté ; des êtres singuliers racontent des histoires collectives.

A propos du film *Dans la chambre de Vanda*, le cinéaste déclare que Vanda investi les différents rôles: "Elle est Dieu et elle est le Diable, la mort et la vie, et dans un même personnage. Et elle a à faire à des personnages exactement comme elle."³ Ces personnages sont construits sur des variations, autour et par rapport à leurs rencontres, dans un apprentissage de leurs propres capacités et des rapports possibles aux autres. C'est aussi le cas de Ventura dans le film *En avant jeunesse*; il est censé être le père de tous les personnages qui émergent successivement

dans la trame du film. Il apparaît comme un corps évidé qui incarne à tour de rôle plusieurs registres de parole ; imaginaire, souvenirs et silences accompagnent ses traversés. La diversité des rencontres configure la singularité de chaque personnage, mais ce sont des singularités hétérogènes car, sous la même apparence, elles sont traversées par plusieurs voix.

Ainsi, le temps employé à l'élaboration des dialogues lors des tournages est encore démultiplié par des personnages à voix multiples qui apparaissent à l'écran, comme Vanda dans sa chambre ou Ventura dans le nouveau quartier. En ce qui concerne l'élaboration de récits et leur mise en scène, on peut déceler dans l'ensemble des films l'apparition progressive de différentes voix collectives ; elles sont construites à travers des stratégies diverses. Dès le film *Casa de lava*, par exemple, l'usage des lettres met en jeu des voix qui ne sont pas clairement assignables à un seul personnage. Ces lettres vont réapparaître dans les films ultérieurs : *En avant jeunesse* et *Tarrafal*. Aussi, les opérations de l'imagination, de la mémoire et les répétitions engendrent également un brouillage du statut de ces personnages à voix multiples pour le spectateur.

UNE POLITIQUE DE L'EGALITE

La particularité de cette démarche cinématographique est de tenir dans la durée. Aussi, c'est un travail de cinéma qui s'organise tenant compte de la réalité des habitants, des transformations et des imprévus de leur quotidien ; ce qui importe d'avantage, c'est une organisation du travail en accord avec les sensibilités du quartier. Le travail de cinéma est subordonné dès le départ aux conditions de vie des personnes qui participent à sa production. De plus, les premiers spectateurs de ces films sont les habitants eux-mêmes, qu'ils y participent ou non. En effet, à chaque film des projections ont lieu dans le quartier et des copies DVD circulent. Ainsi, les films terminés sont mis à leur disposition.

Tenant compte des caractéristiques spécifiques d'un cinéma produit et exposé dans un contexte précis, on envisage cette démarche cinématographique et l'ensemble des films de Pedro Costa comme la scène politique d'une démonstration égalitaire, suivant la conception du philosophe Jacques Rancière pour qui l'activité politique a toujours besoin de constituer une scène. Cette scène, est celle de la *mésentente*, une scène litigieuse "où le compte des parts et des parties de la société est dérangé par l'inscription d'une part de sans-part."⁴ Ce cinéma

place au cœur des récits filmiques des êtres ordinaires qui sont aussi des personnes reléguées aux marges de la société portugaise.

La scène de la *mésentente* est le lieu d'une démonstration où une partie exclue de la société produit le topos d'un argument égalitaire. La querelle porte sur la considération des êtres parlants comme tels, sur la revendication des capacités et du logos de "ceux dont la voix n'est censée exprimer que plaisir ou peine."⁵ La démonstration égalitaire implique une manifestation subjective et l'exposition d'un monde. Lors des tournages, les habitants prennent la responsabilité de construire une représentation de soi, de leur mode de vie et de leur monde. Ces films sont des documents sur l'évolution du quartier et la vie de ses résidants. Documents, on l'entend, en suivant la distinction établie par le critique du cinéma Serge Daney dans son livre *La maison cinéma et le monde*,⁶ car il ne s'agit pas des films faits *sur* les gens, mais des films faits *avec* eux.

Jacques Rancière écrit précisément sur le cinéma de Pedro Costa. Dans son livre *Les écarts du cinéma*, il évoque une scène d'intérieur du film *Dans la chambre de Vanda* en ces termes: "Que le soir survienne dans ce logement sans électricité, et deux petites bougies sur la même table donneront à une conversation misérable ou à une séance de shoot une allure de clair-obscur hollandais du Siècle d'Or."⁷ Il argumente que la manière dont le quartier et ses personnages sont représentés dans les films manifeste une richesse sensible et une puissance de parole dans l'existence de vies précaires. Dans le même texte, il dépeint aussi un personnage du film *En avant jeunesse*, maçon à la retraite: "Ventura n'est pas un *travailleur immigré*, un humble auquel il faudrait rendre sa dignité et la jouissance du monde qu'il a aidé à construire. Il est une sorte d'errant sublime, un personnage de tragédie qui interrompt de lui-même la communication et l'échange."⁸ En effet, le montage du film est rythmé par les déambulations de Ventura qui apparaît la plupart du temps silencieux, mais dont les récitations insistantes d'une lettre le transforment en poète.

Suivant les propos de Jacques Rancière, on peut penser à ce cinéma implanté dans un monde en marge et à la représentation des êtres quelconques qui lèvent leur voix, comme une altération d'un *partage du sensible* qui porte "sur la configuration d'un monde commun spécifique, sur les objets qui en font partie et les sujets qui sont capables de les désigner et d'argumenter à leur sujet."⁹ Le mot partage est entendu dans les deux sens du terme: ce qui divise et ce qui rassemble. En ce sens, le *commun* n'est pas une propriété ni une caractéristique d'un ensemble, mais un enjeu politique concernant la répartition de dénominations et de

corps, le rapport du dicible au visible qui se construit dans la confrontation, par l'irruption dans la scène du sensible de ceux supposés être dépourvus des capacités de percevoir le monde et d'en parler.

La représentation d'un monde spécifique est donnée par l'ensemble des films de Pedro Costa. La production des mots et des images produit un écart ; ce qu'un corps peut dire produit un écart avec le discours dans lequel il se trouve déjà inscrit. D'une part par rapport à la distribution des corps et des voix dans la communauté, cette production cinématographique instaure un écart avec le stéréotype marginal du quartier et ses habitants qui démontrent, à travers le travail de cinéma, leurs capacités et leurs résistances. D'autre part, les tournages impliquent une redéfinition constante des rapports de proximité et de distance entre les personnes engagées dans l'élaboration d'un film. Dans ces films, il s'agit de voir comment les gens sont ensemble, s'ils sont ensemble. Cette pratique cinématographique met en jeu une logique propre à la subjectivation politique qui n'est pas un rapport à soi mais une démonstration qui s'adresse à un autre ; elle est le refus ou l'altération d'une identité fixée par un autre. Elle ne vise pas pour autant à établir une nouvelle identité.

UNE MULTIPLICITE DES TEMPS ET DES VOIX

L'ellipse est une forme caractéristique de la narration dans les films de Pedro Costa. Elle est construite de plusieurs manières, à la fois sous forme autonome dans le récit de chaque film, et à travers des liens que l'on peut établir entre les films. On y trouve des figures proprement cinématographiques, comme la réapparition des personnages ou la répétition des lieux. L'emploi de la musique prend la forme de ritournelles.¹⁰ Dans le film *Casa de Lava*, par exemple, on perçoit d'abord un vieux personnage qui se déplace seul en jouant du violon. Il va réapparaître avec ses fils lors de différentes fêtes, tandis que sa fille Tina, elle, chantonne tout au long du film. Finalement, on entend la musique en toile de fond sans qu'on ait plus besoin de voir ni fête ni musiciens. Les disques apporteront cette musique dans les films suivants.

De même, la répétition des lettres qui vont être écrites, lues, et traduites par les différents personnages produit des ellipses à l'intérieur d'un film, mais elles vont aussi se déplacer d'un film à l'autre. Si les échanges épistolaires passent par l'écrit, la spécificité des lettres au cinéma est de représenter, de donner une voix ou bien un corps, à celui qui étant absent a

écrit une lettre. Or, les films dont on parle maintiennent une indécidabilité quant à la personne qui est à l'origine d'une lettre ainsi qu'une ambiguïté quant au destinataire de celle-ci. Ce sont des places vides occupées successivement par divers personnages en plusieurs lieux, en temps différents. L'usage des lettres dans les récits des films implique également des parcours répétés entre le Portugal et le Cap-Vert, et réciproquement. Elles convoquent à la fois des faits historiques et des conflits contemporains dans les rapports entre ces deux pays.

Ainsi, dans le film *Casa de Lava*, une lettre d'amour est lue par plusieurs personnages à plusieurs reprises, sans que l'on puisse définir avec précision ni son auteur ni la personne adressée. Elle peut aussi bien appartenir aux personnages qui apparaissent à l'écran qu'à des individus évoqués dans le film qui ne sont plus en vie. La première apparition de cette lettre a lieu lorsque Mariana, une infirmière portugaise en déplacement au Cap-Vert, découvre des lettres dans le tiroir d'Édith, une femme installée dans l'archipel depuis longtemps. Portugaise elle aussi, Édith semble avoir oublié sa langue maternelle et ne parle que le créole. Le spectateur est amené à croire que ces lettres sont un souvenir précieux de son amant de jeunesse, militant communiste de la péninsule, déporté vers les îles à l'époque coloniale, mort et enterré au camp de Tarrafal.¹¹

Deuxième mouvement, Mariana au chevet du malade qu'elle accompagne, sort une lettre de sa poche. La scène qu'on a décrite précédemment nous induit à penser qu'elle a volé cette lettre dans le tiroir d'Édith. Or, elle demande à Tina, une fille qui l'aide souvent comme interprète, de la lire. On découvre à ce moment que la lettre est écrite en créole. Cette traduction installe une ambiguïté dans l'histoire du film. Si l'homme amoureux d'Édith était portugais, on suppose qu'ils s'écrivaient dans leur langue natale. Avec ce déplacement, on infère alors une substitution de l'auteur de la lettre.

Dans une troisième séquence, une lettre sort à nouveau de la poche de Mariana. Elle la tend à Leão, le malade dont elle s'occupe et qui a repris conscience, en lui disant : "j'ai quelque chose qui t'appartient, je l'ai pris dans ta poche." Le trouble autour de la lettre est redoublé ici par l'écart entre le geste répété de Mariana qu'on a vu et ses paroles qui le déplacent vers une supposée usurpation qu'on ne verra pas. Et de nouveau accentué par la réponse de Leão qui affirme ne pas savoir écrire. Désorientée, elle l'interroge non seulement sur le destinataire de cette lettre mais également sur la personne qui l'a écrit à sa place. Préfiguration du personnage de Lento demandant à Ventura d'écrire une lettre d'amour pour sa femme dans le film ultérieur, *En avant jeunesse*.

Dernier mouvement, une lettre revient dans les mains de Tina. Sa voix de fille l'avait fait auparavant entendre, maintenant elle la porte. Une dernière image nous la montre dormant sur les pentes du volcan parmi des morceaux de plusieurs lettres déchiquetées et emportées par le vent. Les lettres se multiplient à nouveau. De même que se sont multipliés les narrateurs et les destinataires à chacune de ses occurrences.

Il est encore question d'une lettre dans le court-métrage *Tarrafal*, inspiré à la fois du scénario d'un film de Jacques Tourneur, *Night of the Demon* (1957) et d'une fable cap-verdienne. Le film commence autour d'une table, José Alberto demande à sa mère de lui décrire cet endroit au Cap-Vert où autrefois, elle habitait. Où ça se trouve exactement ? Qu'est devenue la maison de son père ? Qu'est-ce qu'il y a là-bas ? Leur conversation est accompagnée par les sons de l'extérieur, un dehors où les regards des personnages se perdent, accompagnant leurs paroles qui évoquent un ailleurs: *Mourao, Montinho, Achada Ungueira, Raçatcho, Montinho de Cima, Montinho de Baixo, Milho Branco...* Puis, la mère relate une légende populaire au Cap-Vert. C'est l'histoire d'un démon qui apprivoise ses victimes en leur faisant porter une lettre qui lui est adressée. Avec ingéniosité, il la glisse dans une des poches de sa victime, sans que celle-ci s'en aperçoive. Au marché, par exemple, il la fera passer par du papier qui sert à envelopper une portion de riz. Il croise ensuite le chemin de ses proies et leur réclame la lettre. Inéluctablement les victimes, en lui rendant la lettre, perdent leur âme. La dernière image de ce court-métrage est un plan rapproché d'une autre lettre *maudite*, adressée au jeune homme qui écoute l'histoire de sa mère au départ du film. Dans un plan rapproché de cette lettre clouée avec un couteau à l'écorce d'un arbre, on peut lire l'annonce officielle par l'état portugais de la déportation prochaine de José Alberto. L'histoire rapportée par la mère cap-verdienne donne l'impression à son fils qu'il serait capable de ruser avec le démon. On peut imaginer que c'est avec le même esprit de débrouille qu'il reçoit la lettre d'expulsion.

EN AVANT JEUNESSE :

LA VOIX INVISIBLE, LA VOIX DU SOUVENIR, LA VOIX POETIQUE

Du haut d'une fenêtre découpée dans la pénombre, des meubles éjectés bruyamment brisent le silence de la nuit. Puis une femme, menaces à la bouche et couteau à la main, oblige son mari à s'éloigner. Exilé dès la séquence d'ouverture, Ventura va errer tout au long du film de

la chambre de l'un de ses multiples enfants, à la table d'un autre, en passant par des appartements aux murs blancs, non-habités, vides. L'errance de Ventura est une expérience inquiétante. Mais, l'ayant suivi dans ces visites à ses présumés enfants, on peut aussi envisager Ventura comme un *porteur*.¹² Il retrace dans la nouvelle cité l'invisibilité des liens qui autrefois, tissaient la vie entre les habitants de l'ancien quartier. La difficulté de cette tâche se manifeste à travers des variations de la mise en scène de sa parole.

La voix invisible

Lorsqu'il rend visite à ses enfants, Ventura est souvent atteint d'un étrange mutisme. Syndrome d'une crise liée à la démolition de l'ancien quartier, Fontainhas.

Le film précédent se déroulait presque entièrement *Dans la chambre de Vanda* où la parole venait raconter ce quartier. Pedro Costa décrit le dispositif de ce film soulignant les particularités de cet espace: "on ne sait vraiment pas si on est dans la maison de quelqu'un, dans la maison de tout le monde, ou si cette maison-là, ce salon, cette chambre, n'est pas plutôt un square ou un forum, une agora, un lieu où les gens passent pour dire des tas de choses ou se cacher."¹³ Les histoires du quartier traversaient l'espace perméable de cette chambre ; elles étaient reprises, modifiées et racontées à nouveau, devant la caméra. En revanche, dans le film *En avant jeunesse*, les personnages peinent à placer leurs récits parmi les parois intactes des nouvelles architectures. La neutralité des logements sociaux donne des images d'une blancheur clinique, à différence des clairs-obscurs et des pénombres qu'apportaient les ruelles étroites et les murs enchevêtrés de l'ancien quartier populaire. Ventura se rend à plusieurs reprises dans le nouvel appartement de Vanda. Dans la chambre, leurs silences sont accompagnés du son de la télévision allumée en permanence. La parole de Vanda est constamment interrompue par une toux violente, elle s'inquiète de ne pas voir sa fille grandir. Les récits d'autrefois cèdent la place à des craintes d'avenir. Par ailleurs, lorsque Ventura se rend chez sa fille Bête qui n'habite pas encore un logement neuf, ils retrouvent ensemble des histoires à raconter. Deux tortues, une poule, un flic en uniforme, un lion montre ses dents, un démon. Allongés sur le lit, leurs voix font apparaître des figures et des fantômes sur les tâches et les fissures du mur de la chambre. Leur imagination projetée sur cet ancien mur contraste avec la luminosité lisse des nouveaux espaces muets.

La voix du souvenir

Parmi les déambulations silencieuses de Ventura, il y a un retour en arrière lors d'une séquence tournée dans la Fondation Gulbenkian à Lisbonne. Ventura apparaît à côté du tableau *Portrait d'Hélène Fourment*, et de *Fuite en Égypte* de Rubens et d'un *Portrait d'homme* de Van Dyck. Il ne contemple pas les œuvres, mais les murs de ces salles qu'il a bâtis autrefois, quand il travaillait comme maçon. Un gardien s'approche de lui pour le conduire vers la sortie. Il essuie avec un mouchoir les éventuelles traces laissées par Ventura sur la place qu'il occupait. Ensuite, les deux personnages sont assis côte à côte dans le jardin du musée, où ils entament une conversation. Le gardien explique que ce musée est pour lui un monde antique, un refuge loin des quartiers populaires où il habite lui aussi. Ventura, pour sa part, lui relate l'histoire de son arrivée au Portugal le 29 août 1972 et celle de sa chute lors de la construction de la Fondation avec d'autres ouvriers. Il est alors question d'échafaudages, de grenouilles, de maraîchages sauvages qu'on passe des heures à déblayer, des briques et d'un pingouin. Comme si Ventura aurait eu besoin de s'éloigner du nouveau quartier pour être en mesure de raconter.

La voix poétique

Plusieurs séquences du film *En avant jeunesse* montrent Ventura en train de réciter une lettre. C'est une libre adaptation de la *Lettre à Youki*, écrite par le poète français Robert Desnos le 15 Juillet 1944 au Camp de Floha, où il a été déporté par le nazisme. Dans le film, les mots du poète se mélangent indistinctement à ceux de Ventura.

Ne se considérant pas capable de concevoir une belle lettre pour l'envoyer à sa femme, son ami Lento demande à Ventura de l'écrire à sa place. Dans la baraque qu'ils habitent, il n'y a ni papier ni stylo. Au lieu de la rédiger, Ventura va dire la lettre que l'on peut croire à l'origine, adressée à sa propre femme. *Cent mille cigarettes, une douzaine de robes et un bouquet de quatre sous, une maison de lave...* Il va la répéter à plusieurs reprises dans le film, afin que Lento puisse la retenir. Cette action insistante amène une des dernières séquences du film : cadrés sous fond d'appartement incendié, Ventura et son ami se tiennent debout, se prennent par la main et cette fois, c'est Lento qui récite enfin la lettre. Celui qui se croyait au départ incapable d'écrire une lettre d'amour, s'approprie alors les mots des poètes Robert Desnos et Ventura. Cependant, il le fait après avoir raconté à Ventura qu'il a péri avec toute sa famille dans l'incendie de leur demeure. Lorsqu'on l'entend réciter le poème, Lento est à l'image un revenant.

Cette lettre est la même qui circulait déjà écrite sur papier dans le film *Casa de Lava*. Dans les deux films donc, la polyphonie des voix est articulée autour de cette lettre d'amour plusieurs fois donnée, usurpée ou retrouvée ; écrite, lue et traduite. Une lettre qui finalement, n'appartient à personne. On peut reconnaître dans cette indiscernabilité des voix un *trait de l'égalité* qui met des corps "hors de leur place, hors de leur propre."¹⁴ Aussi, l'être-ensemble est dans ce cinéma un être-entre : "entre les noms, les identités ou les cultures."¹⁵ Ces films construisent des intervalles entre la langue portugaise et le créole, entre l'oral et l'écrit, parmi des morts et des vivants. Ces intervalles ouvrent des voix vers la transmission, la traduction ; vers une continuité possible entre les générations.

LE TEMPS DE L'ECOUTE

Les conteurs mettent en œuvre leur capacité à partager leurs propres expériences ou celles rapportées par autrui. Des vécus personnels peuvent devenir, à travers le partage de leur récit, des expériences collectives. Dans son texte *Le conteur. Réflexions sur l'œuvre de Nicolas Leskov*,¹⁶ Walter Benjamin caractérise le conteur, l'auditeur, et le processus de transmission des récits oraux, tout en remarquant dans le monde moderne un déclin progressif de l'expérience et conséquemment, un affaiblissement de la capacité à raconter des histoires. L'évidence d'une expérience transmise de génération en génération s'estompe, selon Walter Benjamin, à l'époque de la Première Guerre Mondiale, d'où les personnes revenaient muettes, incapables de transmettre leur vécu. Ce déclin était déjà entamé par l'essor du roman suite à l'invention de l'imprimerie et encore plus sérieusement affecté plus tard, avec l'arrivée de la presse. L'auteur oppose le récit oral à l'écriture. En effet, si le récit est lié à des expériences transmises de bouche à oreille, le roman par contre est inséparable du livre. L'expérience de l'écriture reste confinée à un espace de solitude, autant du côté du romancier que de celui du lecteur.

Dans la démarche cinématographique de Pedro Costa, l'oralité est articulée à l'écriture cinématographique. Ses films n'ont pas de scénarios écrits mais contiennent pourtant beaucoup de texte. Pendant les tournages, les habitants du quartier mettent en œuvre leur mémoire lors des nombreuses répétitions de chaque scène. Le cinéaste s'explique sur leur méthode: "le travail consiste à faire une scène, l'oublier, puis la refaire trois mois, six mois après

: ce n'est plus exactement la même, les acteurs s'en souviennent mais quelque chose a mûri. Comme s'il fallait complètement oublier la scène pour la refaire."¹⁷ Ce qui rappelle les mots de Walter Benjamin lorsqu'il affirme que "la mémoire est, entre toutes, la faculté la plus nécessaire à l'épopée," et de rappeler que "Mnémosyne, celle qui se remémore,"¹⁸ était déjà pour les Grecs la muse de l'épopée. La multiplicité des voix des personnages est dans ce cinéma une opération inventive autant qu'un travail de la mémoire. D'emblée, les histoires que les personnages racontent dans les films ont tant un rapport à leurs souvenirs qu'à ce qu'ils imaginent de leur vie passée. Il s'agit moins de conserver une mémoire que de la créer. La mémoire se révèle être une œuvre de fiction. De plus, le cinéaste affirme que leur "seule vraie richesse" est "leur mémoire."¹⁹ Cette pratique cinématographique s'est installée aux marges de la ville, parmi des personnes qui n'exercent que des travaux précaires, qui n'ont pas d'occupation stable ou qui ne peuvent plus assurer une activité. Si l'évolution historique des forces productives a progressivement éliminé le récit du domaine de la parole vivante, ce cinéma fonctionne au sein d'une certaine désoccupation, parmi des personnes économiquement inefficaces qui ont en revanche, du temps. Un temps qu'ils consacrent à raconter et à entendre des histoires.

Walter Benjamin caractérise l'art du conteur par l'habilité à rapporter une histoire sans avoir recours aux explications. Cette qualité s'avère fondamentale dans deux sens. D'une part, par rapport à la liberté d'interprétation qui est laissée à celui qui écoute l'histoire. D'autre part, en relation au processus de transmission d'un récit. Si l'histoire racontée n'apporte pas d'explications sur les faits qu'elle relate ni sur les décisions prises par ses personnages, c'est afin que l'auditeur puisse mieux la retenir. L'auteur affirme que "plus le conteur renonce à toute différenciation psychologique, plus les histoires resteront dans la mémoire de l'auditeur, plus elles se couleront dans sa propre expérience, et plus il prendra plaisir à les raconter à son tour."²⁰ Dans le cinéma de Pedro Costa, le fait de ne pas donner d'explications est un parti pris ; on ne trouve ni explication sociologique des situations ni psychologie des personnages, dans une écriture cinématographique elliptique et fragmentée. Quant à la narration, des personnages à voix multiples transmettent, comme les conteurs traditionnels, les récits "des faits multiples et dispersés," reprenant les paroles "des innombrables conteurs anonymes";²¹ actualisés, reformulés et modifiés par l'accumulation des prises successives lors des tournages.

Ainsi, on envisage la pratique cinématographique de Pedro Costa comme une réactivation de la figure du conteur traditionnel et de la potentialité de la transmission orale des histoires; à la fois dans le processus d'élaboration des films et dans les films eux-mêmes. Les habitants du quartier deviennent des conteurs pendant l'étape de préparation, puis devant la caméra pendant le tournage, pour apparaître finalement comme conteurs dans les films, face aux spectateurs. Les voix du quartier sont projetées parmi les habitants ainsi que pour un public plus large. Les spectateurs peuvent devenir conteurs à leur tour, reprenant les histoires des films qui se mettent à circuler une deuxième fois dans le quartier. Elles sont aussi, éventuellement conservées parmi leurs collections DVD, ainsi que partiellement archivées dans leurs mémoires. Elles ont la possibilité de *devenir souvenir*. Souvenir donc à la fois matériel et immatériel. Puis, les remembrances, personnelles ou collectives, réactiveront à nouveau le flux des récits fictionnels.

Dans ce cinéma de quartier, étroitement lié à son lieu de travail, la possibilité ou l'impossibilité de raconter des histoires est devenue non seulement le sujet essentiel des films, mais le moteur même de cette pratique. Néanmoins, si on peut affirmer que c'est un cinéma réalisé par des conteurs qui apparaissent également à l'écran, il est aussi important de préciser que ces conteurs se manifestent comme des figures problématiques. Ils présentent des complexités supplémentaires par rapport aux conteurs traditionnels tels que décrits par Walter Benjamin. La parole des personnages qui portent les récits des films comporte également des difficultés à raconter, exposant aussi leur lien conflictuel avec la contemporanéité. Le travail de la parole dans le cinéma de Pedro Costa est lié à la mémoire qui peine ou pas à se dire au présent.

Ainsi le film *En avant jeunesse* montre la complexité, à travers le personnage de Ventura, de la possibilité de prendre la parole pour raconter. Personnage paradoxal, lorsqu'il sort de son mutisme, Ventura assume le rôle du conteur. Des tentatives de transmission de son expérience passée et de la lettre/poème font irruption dans la béance de son présent. Dans un court-métrage ultérieur, *Sweet Exorcist*, le personnage de Ventura va réapparaître. Enfermé à l'intérieur d'un ascenseur, il est accompagné cette fois d'un soldat. Soldat revenant, soldat muet. Les lèvres de Ventura s'ouvrent à peine. Longue descente où voyage dans le temps, des phrases émises par des voix invisibles retentissent successivement, puis simultanément, dans l'espace de la cabine. Nouvel artifice de mise en scène d'une multiplicité des voix, cette fois, fantomatiques. Tandis que dans le court-métrage *Tarrafal*, c'était la réappropriation du

scénario du film de Jacques Tourneur qui permettait dans cette reprise à une mère cap-verdienne de causer avec son fils. La possibilité de raconter prend la forme d'une fable, inspirée à la fois d'un film et d'une légende. En effet, dans le monde contemporain, les histoires requièrent la médiation de la mise en scène et du montage.

En guise de conclusion, on peut d'abord affirmer que ce travail de cinéma constitue une scène égalitaire en relation à l'importance du temps accordé à l'élaboration des récits lors des longs processus de mise en scène. Dans cette pratique, l'acte de raconter engage à la fois la parole et l'écoute. Parmi des accords et désaccords, les habitants démontrent leurs compétences et leur apprentissage dans la construction progressive de leurs propres fictions. Ensuite, on peut déceler aussi une politique de l'égalité dans les choix de mise en scène de la parole. À travers la circulation des lettres et autres artifices, une poétique des voix multiples met les récits des habitants, les paroles d'un poète, légendes populaires et reprises d'autres films, indifféremment, au même niveau. Enfin, on peut aussi affirmer que devant cette scène égalitaire, la capacité des spectateurs y est aussi convoquée. L'effort consacré à l'élaboration d'un film se traduit symétriquement de la part des spectateurs par une nécessité de prendre le temps de le regarder. L'effort de l'adresse suppose la volonté de l'autre comme condition ; une volonté qui fait l'effort de parler appelle une volonté à l'entendre. La capacité propre à chaque spectateur est convoquée par l'expérience de se confronter aux corps et aux paroles des autres. Le spectateur est appelé à prendre le temps. Et, non seulement le temps d'une séance mais aussi, par l'évocation et le souvenir fragmenté des personnages et des histoires qui se répètent ou se reconfigurent au fil de différents films, les spectateurs peuvent faire eux-mêmes leur propre montage.

Dans le cinéma de Pedro Costa, le temps qui manque dans la vie moderne pour raconter et entendre des histoires, est restitué par une pratique cinématographique qui évolue en concordance avec les rythmes de vie d'un quartier populaire. Le récit des histoires demande un temps pour *apprendre*, ou on pourrait dire *réapprendre*, à les transmettre. Dès lors, on peut aussi penser à ce cinéma comme une épreuve du désir. De longue haleine.

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1. Pedro Costa in Cyril Neyrat, *Dans la chambre de Vanda : Conversation avec Pedro Costa* (Nantes : Capricci, 2008), 31.
 2. Ibid., 82.
 3. Costa in Jacques Lemièrre, "Entretien avec Pedro Costa," *Images documentaires 61/62* (Paris : Images documentaires, 2007), 83.
 4. Jacques Rancière, *La Méésentente : Politique et philosophie* (Paris : Galilée, 1995), 169.
 5. Ibid., 44.
 6. Serge Daney, *La Maison cinéma et le monde, Tome 2* (Paris : POL, 2002), 90: "Un document informe sur l'état de la matière filmée ou à filmer et sur l'état du corps filmant. L'un avec l'autre. Deux pôles d'une seule opération. Un bon document est un branchement réussi. Tout bon film, en ce sens est un document."
 7. Le philosophe Jacques Rancière se réfère au cinéma de Pedro Costa dans ses écrits et particulièrement dans "Politique de Pedro Costa," in *Les écarts du cinéma* (Paris : La Fabrique, 2011), 137-153, 139.
 8. Ibid., 151.
 9. Rancière, *Le partage du sensible : Esthétique et politique* (Paris : La Fabrique, 2000), 17.
 10. L'usage de la musique ou des lettres récitées dans les films de Pedro Costa peut être interprété dans le sens donné à la ritournelle par Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari qui la lient aux problèmes de territoire, d'entrée et de sortie d'un territoire. Voir notamment, Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux : Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2* (Paris : Minuit, 1980), 381-433.
 11. Le camp de Tarrafal a été installé au Cap Vert par le régime dictatorial portugais en 1937 et fermé en 1974, suite à la Révolution des Oeillettes.
 12. Cf. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas ou le gai savoir inquiet : L'œil de l'histoire, 3* (Paris : Minuit, 2011), 80-174. L'auteur envisage la figure d'Atlas comme emblématique d'une polarité : il manifeste à la fois la *puissance* du porteur et la *souffrance* qu'il endure sous le poids de ce qu'il porte.
 13. Costa in Neyrat, *Dans la chambre de Vanda*, 15.
 14. Rancière, *Aux bords du politique* (Paris : Gallimard, *Folio essais* 434, 1998), 194.
 15. Ibid., 122.
 16. Walter Benjamin, "Le conteur. Réflexions sur l'œuvre de Nicolas Leskov," in *Oeuvres III* (Paris : Gallimard, 2000), 114-151.
 17. Costa in Neyrat, *Dans la chambre de Vanda*, 66.
 18. Benjamin, "Le conteur," 134.
 19. Costa in Neyrat, *Dans la chambre de Vanda*, 68.
 20. Benjamin, "Le conteur," 125.
 21. Ibid., 135.

NE CHANGE RIEN (2009):
TIME IS POLITICAL

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This article engages with a close analysis of a sequence from Pedro Costa's *Ne Change Rien* (2009) to argue that in this film, temporality expresses a political gesture that emerges from the opening of signification and the positing of an interpretative contingency. Despite less socially engaged than Costa's previous films, *Ne Change Rien* is capable of expressing a political gesture insofar as art can be political without addressing directly social representation.¹

The article employs Deleuzian terminology such as "becoming," "time-image" and "the virtual" to argue how time, as an intrinsically aesthetic element of the filmic image, is thus capable of both disturbing and contributing to signification. It also finds useful the Marxist concept of "commodity fetishism" and Hannah Arendt's distinction between labor and work in order to discuss how the sequence in *Ne Change Rien* is a direct expression of labour-time to further suggest that in this sequence, image and sound are divested from a signifying outcome.

Ne Change Rien (2009) is a documentary film that follows singer and actress Jeanne Balibar through gigs, rehearsals, and singing lessons by means of long shots and sequences. Music is the true material object of the film. More than a film to watch, *Ne Change Rien* is a film to listen to. I would like to demonstrate this through a close study of a sequence that registers the "making" of a song. Here, the protagonist, Jeanne Balibar, struggles to find a melody, accompanied by a band member playing bass guitar outside the shot. The melody changes slightly every time she sings, allowing the viewer to witness the process through which the song is being made, despite the fact that little seems to be happening, at least in the visual field.

At the beginning of the sequence (23'08"), the guitar player is already in the shot when Balibar enters the frame and sits on the couch holding some notes on her lap. The camera is positioned quietly and still, framing Balibar in the foreground. She gets comfortable in her seat and lights up a cigarette. Then, she begins to sing, trying to find a melody with the

support of the guitar player in the background of the shot and accompanied by a bass guitar playing outside the frame. At some point (28'08"), there is a slight cut to show the bass player but the camera rapidly returns to Balibar, sitting on the couch.

Rhythm is expressed in the duration of the sequence through Balibar's murmur, which allows for sound to appear as the active element within the image, the element that exposes change. In this sense, sound works as a Deleuzian "becoming": it exposes change in an apparent sameness. Deleuze describes "becoming" by mentioning the controversial scene of the vase in Yasujirō Ozu's *Late Spring* (1949). Following a conversation between daughter and father, the scene ends with an ambiguous shot of a vase in the room where both characters are sleeping. Here, according to Deleuze, the vase is "interposed" between the daughter's smile and her tears, and that "the form of what changes does not itself change, does not pass on." It is "time itself, 'a little time in its pure state': a direct time image, which gives what changes the unchanging form in which the change is produced."²

In this sequence, time is expressed through the minimal change of Balibar's singing. Because Balibar continuously repeats the lyrics in search of a melody, it can be said that sound constitutes a direct expression of time through repetition. Sound acts as the virtual element within the visual space of the image. According to Patricia Pisters, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari "consider sound in its potential to engender all kinds of molecular becomings' because sound has the capacity to 'create territories' as much as 'deterritorialize', while also having a greater capacity to '(de)territorialize than sight'."³

Sound seems to "(de)territorialize" the static visual field which may suggest that sound is the active element for signification. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari attribute three characteristics to the musical refrain: a) to create a "calm and stable center in the heart of chaos"; b) "to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space"; and c) "to join with the forces of the future."⁴ The ability to "join with the forces of the future" seems to suggest that sound, just like the out-of-field, can also contribute to leave the interpretation of the cinematic image open.

The sequence also conveys a moment of stasis. Here, the camera remains still throughout the shot, registering only Balibar's singing of the lyrics for a long period of time. The stillness of the shot supports time thus generating a moment of stasis in which signification is allowed to come forth from the recognition of sound through repetition. According to Deleuze, "the mind has a memory or acquires habits, it is capable of forming

concepts in general and of drawing something new, of subtracting something new from the repetition that it contemplates.”⁵ Drawing from Deleuze to analyze Costa’s sequence, it could be said that memory is what determines our perception of what is being changed insofar as it enables the viewer to add new elements to every image. Consequently, the audience is able to recognize the invisible but audible transformation of the song pushing the melody to a gradual crescendo.⁶

Time enables the viewer to recognize how the song initially was. In these circumstances, the narrative is constituted through the actual experience of time. Time as duration opens the possibility of meaning to emerge. But meaning is still contingent. While signification remains open, never being completely disclosed, it is up to the viewer to choose to participate, or not, in the production of meaning. The entire film seems to be based upon this procedure: the scenes and sequences registering the rehearsals and the gigs lack a coherent and conclusive progression. In other words, the audience’s hope to identify a progressive narrative is always frustrated in *Ne Change Rien*, as the film is shown as a collection of fragments with no linear temporality.⁷

The combination of the static position of the camera with the 15 minutes duration of our initial sequence thus exposes the slow-moving but ongoing flowing of the melody. The duration of the shot is extended to the limit as if time was stretched, almost frozen. This is what creates a moment of suspension. But suspension creates another problem; it challenges the viewer’s ability to follow the film. In other words, the audience has to rely on the audible elements in order to compensate for the fixity of the image where nothing seems to be happening and no meaning seems to be given. This is what allows a mental image to emerge.

Cinema always suggests mental images. However, this procedure seems to be particularly forceful in this sequence, as the mental image emerges from a conceptual break between the visual and audible, triggered by the exposure of the passage of time through the combination of active sound and static framing. So, the flowing of the song’s melody exposes the passage of time within the stillness of the frame in which characters remain seated and nothing within the visual field seems to happen.

The viewer is allowed to transcend the visual field by means of the persistence of a virtual element, posited within the relationship between the visual and sound elements of the filmic image, and from which a mental image can emerge. The sequence in turn plays

with the disjunction between those same visual and the sound elements of the image, where we can recognize what Deleuze understands as the “part of inexhaustible possibility that constitutes the unbearable, the intolerable, the visionary’s part”⁸ — or, as I understand, the encounter with thought that grants the opportunity for an active construction of meaning.

What seems to be intolerable is the encounter with thought, or with what cannot be thought, as they appear to be intrinsic. Therefore, the intolerable is nothing less than the frustration felt through the encounter with an image that seems to adjourn a conclusive and meaningful outcome. Meaning seems to be absent. Yet, rather than absent, meaning is non-actualized, as it was left open and inconclusive. In this sense, the virtual is the element that remains undisclosed. However, if the viewer is willing to engage with the interpretation of the image, then, a mental image may emerge from this encounter through which the virtual image is, in turn, actualized.

According to Deleuze, the virtual image is implicit within the duration of the shot, and/or within the temporal dimension of the image. Moreover, it is from the articulation between the virtual and the actual image that the mental image arises to regulate the narrative. This image is not visible but thought of in an attempt at signification thus, it is actualized in the mind of the viewer.

In the case of the sequence, sound is repeated within the duration of the shot to carry the difference that serves to deploy meaning. As a result, Costa’s film seems to deploy an intrinsic constituent of cinema — time — in order to assert meaning through the opening and constant becoming of the image, something which is expressed in the constitutive changing of the song. Time offers the opening of a system of interpretation through which we can attempt to make sense of what we see. Moreover, the passage of time is not only expressed in the duration of the shot but also in the evolving creation of the song.

In the film, the audible change that indicates time is expressed in Balibar’s repetitive murmur. The viewer is aware of the passage of time but not in the same way as when seeing an expanded time/overlapped frame in a film sequence.⁹ In the latter, a cinematic gimmick attempts to represent the passage of time through an “indirect representation of time.”¹⁰ In Balibar’s sequence, by contrast, time is experienced and felt *through the actual duration of the scene and through the repetition of her singing*, something that constitutes a “direct time-image.”¹¹

Time is an intrinsic constituent of cinema, unarguably a *raw material* through which meaning comes forth as an ongoing “becoming” insofar as the duration of the shot/scene/

sequence regulates the narrative. Moreover, through repetition, time seems to offer a very peculiar way of producing meaning as, by not providing it in the form of information, it frustrates and challenges understanding. This procedure underpins a co-operation between the audience and the director in the production of meaning itself, but only insofar as the audience is willing to participate, something which already expresses a contingency.

In *Ne Change Rien*, repetition asserts a difference in the melody each time Balibar murmurs the song. In other words, difference is established by the repetition of sound. On the other hand, as the different scenes in the film seem disconnected and randomly related with no sense of a “before” and “after,” one gets the impression that montage is circular. In this sense, both past and present are juxtaposed and the film appears to have no beginning or end. And yet, repetition introduces difference into this circularity, which avoids a feeling of sameness because in the sequence, there is always something new that can be added, which suggests that signification is not closed. In this sense, what seems to occur is not an attempt to ‘represent’ repetition but to set in motion an operation through which meaning is deployed through the recognition of repetitive structural elements. Hence, it is through repetition that a new element is introduced in the crescendo of the song. Balibar’s murmuring of the melody delivers this new element that is added to the last in an attempt to avoid the closure of signification and at the same time, to pose its constant formulation.

In addition to the previously analysed sequence, *Ne Change Rien* is composed of several other rehearsals in which we can see Balibar in opera lessons, rehearsing a play on stage, playing songs with her band in the backstage between gigs, and recording songs in the studio. The performance of the gig is not presented as the outcome of the rehearsal as montage refuses to propose a causal relationship between scenes and/or sequences. On the other hand, the equivalence between performance and rehearsal shows Costa’s ongoing concerns with artistic production. For that reason, this section will analyse the rehearsal in order to argue that this is a crucial element through which the film seems to put a critique of artistic production forward. My analysis uses Belgian artist Francis Alÿs’s *Politics of Rehearsal* (2005) to start arguing that the problematization of production may be seen as a key element of Costa’s *Ne Change Rien*.

Francis Alÿs frequently uses a repetitive structure within his work which, again, exposes the creative procedure and cancels the presentation of a pre-determined artistic outcome. In this way, his work not only seems to accept but indeed actively deploys the failure of the

artistic outcome. In his film, *Politics of Rehearsal*, we are shown an exhaustive rehearsing of a stripper taking off her clothes on a stage, while we hear the performance of a soprano and a pianist in the background. The film also comprises a voiceover reading of a text written by Alÿs's frequent collaborator Rafael Ortega in which he relates the stripper's rehearsing to "Latin America's ambiguous affair with Modernity."

The film opens with found footage of Harry S. Truman's presidential inauguration speech in 1949, in which Truman highlights the necessity for capital investment in underdeveloped nations so as to promote continuous and prosperous economical growth in all nations of the world. For Ortega, Truman's speech signals the beginning of the Cold War. Moreover, the found footage serves to introduce the discourse of a pseudo-economic recovery in Latin American history. By contrast, the rehearsed performance of the stripper stands as a metaphor for modern progress insofar as the stripper teases the viewer with the promise of taking her clothes off while at the same time, always adjourning a conclusive outcome.

In this sense, Ortega claims that "modernity is pornographic" because it aims to maintain a source of excitement without providing a real and prosperous economic outcome.¹² As a result, the promise of progress is always adjourned. Thus, in Alÿs's film, the rehearsal is a metaphorical expression of a history that is repeated without ever coming into being. The problem, for Ortega, is that progress is highly deceptive because it divides the economic structure of the world into developed and underdeveloped countries without questioning the social system.

The function of the rehearsal, in Alÿs's film as much as in Costa's, is related to temporality because it expresses the constant deferral of an outcome. In this way, according to Ortega, the rehearsal exposes the process of creative production, distinguishing the "time of production" from the "time of the product."¹³ It thus seems that the rehearsal uncovers the intrinsic relationship between labor and time. This is why Ortega uses Hannah Arendt's distinction between work and labour us, in *Politics of Rehearsal* to highlight the meaning of the rehearsal as an expression of labour rather than work.

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt proposes an analysis of three forms of human activity — labor, work, and action. For Arendt, "the human condition of labor" is equivalent to "life itself"; while work "provides an 'artificial' world of things" in contrast with natural surroundings; and action "corresponds to the human condition of plurality," being the "only

activity that goes directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter."¹⁴ Labor assures "the life of species' through necessity, while work relates to the permanence and durability of the 'fleeting character of human life,' and action corresponds to 'the condition of remembrance and history'."¹⁵

Arendt thus sees labor as being related to the biological cycle of human life, and this distinguishes from work insofar as it is not dependent on its outcome, on its result. Arendt argues that the "'word' labor, understood as a noun, never designates the finished product, the result of labouring."¹⁶ Only work is related to an outcome, and to the final result that is materialized in the product. On the other hand, because labour is conceived within the biological cycle of human life, it is also related to consumption. Arendt contends that labour and consumption "are devouring processes that seize and destroy matter, and the 'work' done by labor upon its material is only the preparation for its eventual destruction," adding that more specifically the "destructive, devouring aspect of the labouring activity, to be sure, is visible only from the standpoint of the world and in distinction from work."¹⁷

Still following Arendt's words close, labor, according to her, is a "constant, unending fight against the processes of growth and decay."¹⁸ Labor endures "and what makes the effort painful is not danger but its relentless repetition."¹⁹ Arendt's distinction between labour and work is radically different from that of Karl Marx, as she reminds us: "Marx insists that the labor process comes to an end in the product." However, she argues that Marx "forgets his own definition of this process as the 'metabolism between man and nature' into which the product is immediately 'incorporated,' consumed, and annihilated by the body's life process."²⁰ So, if the product of labour becomes immediately "incorporated," it is not materialized. Hence, it is not work — the outcome of labour.

In accordance with Arendt's argument, Ortega contends that the rehearsal stands for "the aesthetic of labour,"²¹ which leads him to conclude that temporality is made evident in the process of the rehearsal. In other words, the effort and time both of both the rehearsal and labour cannot be reduced to their final product. In this sense, in *Politics of Rehearsal*, the figure of the stripper could be said to suggest the teasing of an outcome. It stands as a metaphor for modern progress and its frustrated accomplishment of what had been envisioned as a result of its processes of labour.

In Costa's *Ne Change Rien*, the rehearsal sequence is a direct expression of artistic labouring, and one which infinitely postpones and frustrates the outcome of the melody.

Thus, through Arendt's definition of labour, we can argue that the sequence seems to endure a "relentless repetition" expressed in Balibar's attempt to reach a melody without ever delivering the result of a song. In this sense, her labour never becomes work.

As we have seen in *Ne Change Rien*, the passage of time is expressed through the repetitive process through which the melody of the song is looked for. Time exposes not only the slight change of the melody but also the failure of a final outcome as Balibar never manages to complete the song. She is incapable of reaching the final form of the song. A tension is created by the fact that the scene is over before the song is completed; and for that reason, the tension is never dissolved.

Because the film is made of several rehearsals, Costa seems more interested in the process of "making" music rather than in final results, such as concert performs. However, when interviewed, Costa has argued that the concert is always the goal of the musician, in the same way the film director always wants to exhibit the film.²² However, I argue that Costa enjoys a reflexive use of the formal procedures of the image, thus it is not surprising that *Ne Change Rien* dedicates so much time to the labouring of music. After all, Costa seems to be permanently dwelling with the labouring of filmmaking himself.

As we have seen, the rehearsal exposes the time necessary to produce something, refusing the outcome of a pre-determined artistic object. In this sense, it is always an inconclusive practice, and the decision to show it shows a preference for production rather than the final product. Despite Balibar's attempt to find the melody of the song, this will never be completed. The exhaustive repetition of her singing reveals time and the continuous working-through of artistic production. It thus seems clear that what allows for the rehearsal sequence to expose creative is to be found in the reflexive procedures of filmmaking. But in order to highlight further the relationship between time and production, the following section engages with the Marxist theory of "commodity fetishism."

As David Harvey puts it, through his reading of Marx's *Capital*, human labour is objectified, which makes the value of human labour abstract. We cannot find, for instance, the value of a table internally but only in relation to something else insofar as the commodity disavows the labour time necessary to produce an object. Due to the dimension of the market, it is impossible to expose the social relations implied in the production of things.²³ Moreover, there is nothing hidden behind the surface of appearance — as they appear, or as they really are. According to Harvey, we just need to look closely to the underlying structure

that produces these appearances insofar as they are composed of social relations. In Harvey's reading of Marx, value is abstract but that it nevertheless objectifies social relations. Social relations are then understood as immaterial but they exist and subsist and despite being invisible in the commodity form, their labour is nonetheless objectified in that same commodity form.²⁴

Through the reading of Marx, we can return to the analysis of the rehearsal sequence. As was suggested previously, if we follow Arendt's distinction between labour and work, the sequence seems to expose the process of labouring. This process is expressed in Balibar's murmuring, where the passage of time is exposed. On one hand, according to Arendt's argument, we can argue that because it depicts the incomplete process of song making, the sequence evokes the process of labour rather than work. In this sense, Costa seems to grasp the "making" of the song rather than its result. On the other hand, if we look at the sequence through Marx's theory, then we can also claim that by exposing the process of labour, Costa manages to reject the objectification of social relations and the reduction of labour time to its final product.

In this context, it can be argued that the scene's political gesture does not depend on any particular social representation as its subject matter. By showing the necessary time to produce a song, Costa seems to refute the objectification of human labour when exposing the labouring of the artistic object, rather than its outcome — the completed song. In this sense, Costa exposes the time of production rather than the result of labour, or in Arendt's terms, of work, also rejecting the possibility of an interpretative outcome.

In order to further develop the argument that the duration of the sequence seems to suggest an interpretative contingency that is political, I will engage with Franco Berardi Bifo's theory on immaterial labour where he correlates Marx's theory with the accumulation of time. Bifo argues that in labour it is not only social relations that are materialized in "things and/or goods," but that time is also objectified.²⁵ However, as Bifo argues, the artistic object seems to pose a different problem. This is because while before it was easier to determine the value of material labour according to the time needed to produce it; it is far more difficult to "decide how much time is needed to produce an idea, a project, a style, a creation."²⁶ According to Bifo, artistic production becomes semiotic and "the relationship between time, work and value" evaporates, "melting into air."²⁷ In this sense, determining the necessary time to produce immaterial creative labour is a far more complex process.

The sequence in *Ne Change Rien* seems to be a good example of the argument proposed above, since Costa appears to cancel the delivery of the result by preferring to emphasize the duration and the repetitive and exhaustive process required in order to produce a song, an idea and/or a semiotic good.

Moreover, according to Bifo, nowadays we seem to be overloaded by a production of semiotic goods, of signs and words that produce less and less meaning. Because the “brain functions in time,” it seems that more time is needed to fully give attention to the overloaded and accelerated circulation of information.²⁸ Thus, if more information is required to circulate while also providing “less meaning,” Bifo concludes that an “inflation of meaning” seems to occur.²⁹ According to his argument, if you are incapable of “keeping up” with the overloaded information that is provided, you will need “someone who makes things easy for you.”³⁰ As a result, meaning becomes a problem of time.

If more information seems to be circulating in a faster pace of time, while our brains are less capable of consuming all the information provided, this means we cannot grasp the meaning of all semiotic goods in circulation. Costa’s film can thus be seen as an overt reaction against this state of things. Costa seems to articulate duration in order to restrain the excessive delivery of overloaded information, while in the same move he refuses to provide meaning as such; instead, exposes the process of how meaning comes to being.

Put differently, access to and circulation of information requires time, but time does not seem to be sufficient once information is overloaded and distributed at a rapid pace. In this sense, the emergence of the “time-image” within modern cinema can be seen as a repudiation of not only linear time but also the inflation of meaning. The time-image calls for contemplation rather than action, it provides seers not agents, and in doing so it disrupts the sensory-motor schema which regulates “homogenous space and time.”³¹ It presupposes the opening of meaning insofar as images and scenes are not connected through a cause and effect quality, refusing a greater outcome. In this sense, the use of duration and temporality in modern cinema should be seen as a counteraction of the easy, fast and excessive circulation of semiotic goods.

Costa seems to frustrate signification but he also invites the viewer to either “enter or close the door of the film.”³² Accordingly, the viewer is confronted with a difficult choice because in order to enter the film, he or she is required to invest time: nothing is going to be delivered “on a platter” as information is not easily facilitated. Pedro Costa’s long rarefied

shots and sequences thus de-accelerate the delivery of information, which at first seems to prevent the circulation of meaning. Because of this, to consumers of fast and overload information, his cinema may offer a rather difficult experience.

In *Ne Change Rien*, Costa shows the labouring of the song, exposing the time invested in artistic production but also the process through which film signification itself comes to being. If meaning is the “surplus value of art,”³³ the artistic object is that specific kind of commodity that is capable of exposing the process of its own production through reflexivity. As we have seen, Balibar’s singing expresses labour time and because the sequence never presents the complete song, implying that meaning is restrained and impossible to freely circulate at a fast pace.

The impossibility of the circulation of meaning is reflected in the reception of Costa’s films. For instance, *Colossal Youth* (2006) was once described as “anti-cinema.”³⁴ Yet Costa’s reflexivity transforms cinema into both the subject and object of his films. For that reason, it can be said that this “anti-cinema” label stems from the difficulties of engagement that viewers may endure in the context of a work that resists commodification by rejecting the closure of signification. In other words, Costa’s cinema requires the viewer to endure long scenes and sequences that provide little information. Thus, if meaning is a commodity and appears to be fleeting, and not materialized, the film turns into an object of difficult consumption.

Reflexive as it may be, Costa’s films deploy the medium’s formal procedures to suggest an interpretative contingency rather than just attempting to expose a reality behind the camera. Reflexivity, according to Deleuze, is introduced through the crises of the action-image, and found, for instance, in the film within the film, expressing “this infernal circuit between image and money, this inflation which time puts into exchange, this overwhelming rise.”³⁵ If, according to Marx, exchange value is always in constant motion and value is generated through the relationship between two commodities; then to prevent an equivalence and/or a correspondence between the two, is to reject the logic of the commodity. Moreover, it is in this sense that Deleuze contends that “if it is true that movement maintains a set of exchanges or an equivalence, a symmetry as an invariant, time is by nature the conspiracy of unequal change or the impossibility of an equivalence.”³⁶ Hence, by following Deleuze’s argument, while also returning to “Bifo”’s notion of inflation of meaning, my idea is to argue that in *Ne Change Rien*, time seems to frustrate this inflation

by challenging semiotic consumption, highlighting that time, as an intrinsic element of the cinematic medium, is capable of simultaneously frustrating and deploying meaning. It can be further argued that Costa's articulation of time and duration suggests a non-equivalence that aims to slow down the constant relational movement from one scene to the other and between the elements of the image and their meaning.

In relation to Costa's film, I would like to conclude by suggesting that when it becomes independent of the movement of montage — and its tendency to organize scenes according to contiguity and/or antagonism — the filmic image is able to produce moments of stasis that reject the constant flux of signification. In this case, temporality refuses continuity in order to frustrate meaning. If information is not provided, meaning is stopped from circulating, implying a counter-movement to what "Bifo" describes as the inflation of meaning. Instead of presenting a sequence or scene in which the audience is capable of having full access to meaning, Costa provides more time for the audience to engage with speculative thoughts about what they see.

In this sense, *Ne Change Rien's* sequence exposes the moment of production and the required labour time by keeping the song incomplete. The viewer thus remains incapable of determining value as far as unable to determine the outcome of artistic production. More specifically, time is extended within the image in order to stop the circulation and the equivalent exchange of meaning. For that reason, the viewer is required to participate actively in the construction of meaning as the latter is never fully provided.

To conclude, *Ne Change Rien* expresses a critical thinking upon artistic production. On one hand, its critique is expressed in the labouring of the artistic production of the song through Balibar's melody. As we know, however, the song (the object of meaning) is never completed, which is what makes it impossible to circulate. And on the other hand, this critique is also expressed in the way in which Costa uses the formal procedures of the image in a reflexive gesture that exposes time as the matter of film.

Although lacking any kind of reference to social representation, the film implies a political gesture that is put forward through the problematization of the relation between time and production, when the "making" of the creative process is exposed. The artistic object is able to uncover the process of labour through reflexivity. In the sequence I have been analysing, this takes place by exposing the necessary time to produce a song in particular and meaning in general. This is what makes time political: if the time of

production is exposed, human labour cannot be objectified, and if meaning is not entirely disclosed it is also stopped from circulating as any other commodity. In this respect, I conclude that *Ne Change Rien* expresses a political gesture without addressing the issue of social representation but rather by deploying time and duration in order to suggest the non-equivalence of images and their meaning.

1. Among other films, Costa filmed a trilogy dedicated to the slums of Fontainhas in the periphery of Lisbon, *Bones* (*Ossos*, 1997), *In Vanda's Room* (*No Quarto de Vanda*, 2000) and *Colossal Youth* (*Juventude em Marcha*, 2006) and three short films also shot in the slums of Fontainhas — *Tarrafal* (*Tarrafal*, 2007), *The Rabbit Hunters* (*A Caça ao Coelho*, 2007) and *Our Man* (*O Nosso Homem*, 2010). Due to the subject of these films, his work can be understood as addressing social representation.

2. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: The Athlone Press, 1989), 16.

3. Patricia Pisters, *The Matrix of Visual Culture: Working with Deleuze in Film Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 188.

4. Deleuze and Guattari Félix, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2004), 343.

5. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 1994), 16.

6. The viewer recognizes the changing of the song as a witness to the loss of what was once and thus recover from it with something new. Watching the moving image partly consists of a process of loss and recovery as it unfolds through the shifting movement from one frame to the other. In this sense, memory provides for recognition in repetition.

7. Montage connects scenes and sequences of gigs, rehearsals and/or musicians playing a song backstage without articulating a progressive narrative. The film opens with a scene of Balibar on stage; and throughout the film, we return to performances during gigs, rehearsals, recording sessions and jamming sessions without a gradual progression of the narrative or a cause and effect relation between these different scenes/sequences.

8. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 19.

9. The expansion of time can be accomplished by intercutting a series of shots, or by filming the action from different angles and editing them together. This technique may also be used to stretch time, and to exaggerate the passage of time when combined with slow motion.

10. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 34.

11. *Ibid.*, 16.

12. Alÿs, *The Politics of Rehearsal*.

13. Alÿs, *The Politics of Rehearsal*.

14. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 7.

15. *Ibid.*, 8.

16. *Ibid.*, 80.

17. *Ibid.*, 100.

18. *Ibid.*, 100.

19. *Ibid.*, 101.

20. *Ibid.*, 103.

21. Alÿs, *The Politics of Rehearsal*.

22. Pedro Costa, personal interview, London, 7 Oct. 2012.

23. David Harvey, "Reading Marx's *Capital* Vol. I - Class 1, Introduction," *Reading Marx's "Capital" Volume I with David Harvey*, <http://davidharvey.org/reading-capital/> (accessed Jun. 2011).

24. *Ibid.*

25. Franco Berardi Bifo, "Time, Acceleration, and Violence," *E-Flux* 27 (2011): 1, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/time-acceleration-and-violence/> (accessed Aug. 2012).

26. *Ibid.*, 2.

27. *Ibid.*, 2.

28. Ibid., 6.

29. Ibid., 6.

30. Ibid., 7.

31. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson e Barbara Habberjam, (London: The Anthlone Press, 1986), 17.

32. Pedro Costa, "Seminar at The Film School of Tokyo," trans. M. Downing Roberts, in *Pedro Costa Film Retrospective in Sendai 2005*, ed. Ogama Naoto (Sendai: Sendai Mediatheque, 2005), 134 .

33. In his book, *On (Surplus) Value in Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008), Diedrich Diederichsen engages with Marx's theory in order to come up with a proposition concerning the 'surplus-value' of art. Diederichsen, however, does not recognize meaning as the surplus value of art. Instead, he argues that indexicality is in relation to the aura of the art work, which in turn, is related to value. Nevertheless, he proposes that "value is always (at least partly) thematically embedded as content in a specifically concealed manner, since artworks offer themselves as fetishes" (45). Thus, I offer a distinct re-interpretation of what Diederichsen understands by "surplus-value of ar" in order to further develop my argument in relation to Costa's films.

34. James Quandt, "Still Lives," in *Cem Mil Cigarros – Os Filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisboa: Orfeu Negro, 2009), 39.

35. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 76.

36. Ibid., 75.

TABU:
 TIME OUT OF JOINT IN
 CONTEMPORARY PORTUGUESE CINEMA

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“The time is out of joint.” So says Hamlet after consulting with his father’s ghost, the former king, outside castle Elsinore. His words appear to refer to the rotten state of Denmark. Hamlet will attempt to set that state right by taking the life of Claudius, his uncle, in bed with his mother, who took the throne after killing Hamlet’s father. Hamlet’s efforts will cost him his own life and cost the Danish people a Danish king. In Shakespeare’s tale, Denmark will be ruled henceforth by the prince of Norway whose father Hamlet’s father killed. The price of monarchy, it seems, is so much treachery and so much death. So long as there be kings, Shakespeare’s play suggests, and, ever after, rulers who claim a divine or derived right to rule, all those who are ruled, who have no rights, will suffer.

Gilles Deleuze is not thinking about ghosts or kings or Denmark when he hears Hamlet’s speech. Deleuze is thinking about time in the context of cinema.¹ In a Preface to the English translation of *Cinema 2*, Deleuze says that Hamlet’s words signify that “time is no longer subordinate to movement, but movement to time.”² Deleuze hears in Hamlet’s words a revelation about a revolution in philosophy, waged over several centuries, from the Ancient Greeks to Kant, that is repeated, in the sphere of cinema, over a much shorter history. In European films made after the Second World War, on his view, the movement-images of classical Hollywood cinema gave way to time-images, direct images of time in its pure state. Specifically, he says, Italian neo-realism and the French New Wave abandoned representations of movement in action, which counted time as the link between successive, immobile segments, for direct presentations of time, for movement understood as concrete duration.

In the history of Portuguese cinema, this same shift is anticipated in the films of Manoel de Oliveira and realized in the films of the Novo Cinema of Fernando Lopes, Paulo Rocha, and others. In modern Portuguese cinema, Miguel Gomes shares this preference for a direct presentation of time. In what follows, we aim to show how, in his latest film, *Tabu* (2012), Gomes deploys time-images to present what is experienced as loss in contemporary Portu-

guese culture. Specifically, representing Portugal's colonial past in the form of a film within the film and in the form of a memory played as another film within this same film, Gomes gives us images of a paradise experienced as lost which was never really paradise in the first instance. We believe this sense of loss can be helpfully characterized in terms of what Jacques Lacan has called the *objet petit a*. Drawing from both Deleuze and Lacan, then, we will treat the paradise represented by Gomes as an object cause of desire trapped in time and experienced as lost in contemporary Portuguese culture and film. The time is out of joint in *Tabu* for the characters who act out its narrative as well as for the target audience for this film. Gomes has made a film that brings us into contact with that loss and with a longing (*saudade*) that will never and can never be satisfied.

The movement-image, as Deleuze understands it, incorporates time in the form of purpose and action. In classic Hollywood films, where the movement-image prevails, what we see and hear in the present alerts us to what we can expect from the actions that mobilize the narrative toward its immediate future. In Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder* (1954), for example, we hear the phone ring, see the pool of light flood out of the bedroom door, watch Margot walk from the bedroom to the desk, wait for Swann to come out from behind the curtains, and all of this adds up to an action we can reasonably expect to advance the story. The deployment of our sensory motor skills is rewarded with the realization of a purpose our perceptions anticipate. In this classic model, an action, the phone ringing, precipitates a situation, Margot now standing with her back to a would be assailant, leading to another action, Swann's attempt to strangle our heroine. On a larger scale, a situation, Mark's suspicions about Margot, call for an action, Mark's plot to have Margot killed, leading to another situation, Mark's detention by the police. In general, the audience for a film of this type observes goal oriented activity realizing its intended purposes. Time is subordinated to movement, here, because it is action in movement that advances the narrative and time serves merely as a measure of the realized purpose of this action.

In Oliveira's *Aniki Bóbo* (1942), by contrast, nothing happens, no purpose is realized. This is not because the film lacks drama. Carlitos, just a boy, acts tough to fit in with a gang of rougher kids. He and Eduardinho problematically share affections for the same girl, Terezinha. But there is no large action form. There is no problem the film promises to resolve. The film ends pretty much where it begins, leaving the children with their adventures, their minor conflicts and their more or less innocent pastimes. In Roberto Rossellini's *Strom-*

boli (1950), to take what will be, perhaps, a more familiar example, Karin goes out of her way, literally fleeing her situation, to make something happen, but nothing she does leads to any purposeful result. She is reduced to an observer of her adopted island home and the customs of its inhabitants. There is a breakdown of the sensory motor link between perception and action. What she sees of her situation does not support or anticipate any action that will alter this situation, and this breakdown characterizes the relation of the viewer to the content of this film, as well.³ The audience for a film of this type experiences time as duration, as the thick present in which a story unfolds but to no end.

So, while there is time in the movement-image, that time is in the service of action. It is time in a straight line, chronological time, time subordinate to movement. In the time-image, on the other hand, as Deleuze presents it, and as we encounter it in *Aniki Bóbo* and *Stromboli*, time is presented in its pure state as duration, as the time it takes for Carlitos to “prove” himself or for Karin to confront her inevitability. More formally, this duration is formed from a present which passes and a past which remains present. The past is formed from the present which must pass to make time for the present which is always present only in virtue of a past that is also present, virtually, as habit or memory or a distension of the mind. His habitual timidity gives time to Carlitos’s adventures. Her memory of a life on the European mainland before the war makes Karin’s time on the island endless. More generally, with the time-image we are given time to think precisely because we do not know what to think.

In the time-image, then, the actual situation of a subject in the present is thickened by habits or memories from the past brought to bear in the present on any possible future or, to put the same point in another way, the virtual situation of a subject in the time-image is a projection toward a future actualized by a past composed of habits and personal or shared memories. On this model, movement is subordinated to time. Whatever future action a subject may want to undertake in the present is conditioned by a past that constitutes and, often, confounds the present as the present that it is. The time-image gives us subjects who cannot act because what they want to do is complicated and compromised by a time that is virtually present in the form of a past that remains vague, indeterminate and unstable.

This is the situation in *Tabu*. The short story of the “intrepid explorer” that plays as a film and as a prelude to the film which includes this film is vague, indeterminate and unstable. We are, in the first place, and on first viewing, unaware that we are watching a film within a film. The content and the title, “*Tabu*,” superimposed on its opening shot associate

what we see with F. W. Murnau's 1931 film of the same name. Murnau's *Tabu* tells the story of traditional mores and forbidden love, but the story of our intrepid explorer concerns a love lost to death. The movement of his legs is said to be commanded by the king, but the movement of his spirit is motivated by a futile attempt to escape his broken heart. Though we cannot know it, yet, this is the general theme of Gomes's *Tabu*. In the short film, our explorer will rather throw himself to the crocodile and die than live without his heart's desire. In the film as a whole, the woman we will come to know as Aurora will lose her heart's desire and die, of dementia and old age, before she can be reunited with her true love and partner in "unspeakable crimes."

Yet, apart from this tragic eventuality, nothing happens in Gomes's *Tabu*, and the short film that opens the film gives us a taste of this breakdown in the sensory motor scheme. Though it is apparently set at the turn of the 20th century, the visual aesthetic, the music, the acting and the voice-over by Gomes himself are clearly from our time. The voice-over has an especially destabilizing effect since it does not describe but explains what we see.⁴ It adds purpose — especially by its invocations of "the most insolent muscle of all anatomy," the heart — to what on the face of it has no special meaning. The short film ends with a moonlit image of a crocodile and the specter of the explorer's lost love seated together along the river "united by a mysterious pact." In this image, we see the explorer, again, in the figures of those to whom he has committed his body and his soul. Nothing has changed. He is as melancholic as ever only, now, transformed in the image of an ancient reptile and the ghost of a lady from bygone days. He has still not escaped his heart.

So, things go on, time passes, parts of the narrative change in relation to the whole of the narrative which changes in relation to changes in the parts which change, again, in relation to the changing whole, but nothing is accomplished in all this change. When we cut to Pilar (played by Teresa Madruga), sitting alone, in a theater, staring astonished at the screen, we know, for the first time, that we have just viewed, with her, a film within the film that is *Tabu*. In one respect, this is a reflexive gesture pointing to the art of making films. In another respect, we are introduced, by this gesture, to something about Pilar and about ourselves. As the film, *Tabu*, will go on to confirm, Pilar is astonished by life and by representations of life: she is taken aback and amazed by the spectacle of things. Films are especially skilled at providing such spectacles. We have come to this film expecting such a spectacle. Pilar goes to the movies to engage the spectacle of a lovelorn explorer, on the Dark Continent of Africa, in

one of Portugal's colonies, seeking, in vain, to escape his heart. Why was Pilar attracted to this film? What about it has captivated her? For what broader audience was this film made? We are given the time of Pilar's drive from the theater to the airport to think about these questions without knowing what it is we are to think about them.

As said, above, the generalized time-image of this short film sets up the time-image that is *Tabu*. The thinking we do without knowing what to think is characteristic of this time-image which, Deleuze says, gives movement to thought.⁵ This thinking begins in the part of the film subtitled "Paradise Lost." This title, which refers, again, to Murnau, also sets us thinking without knowing what to think. For in Murnau's film, the first section, in which Matahi falls in love with Reri, is titled "Paradise," and the second half, in which Matahi loses Reri, is titled "Paradise Lost." We wonder, then, what Gomes has in mind when he calls the first part of his film, which follows Pilar's life in contemporary Portugal, "Paradise Lost." What was paradise, and how was it lost? Lost to Pilar? To someone we know so far only as a woman who visits films about Portugal's colonial past? Of course, this colonial past is not entirely lost in Pilar's or Portugal's present but remains, virtually, a vague, indeterminate and unstable part of it.

The balance of "Paradise Lost" explores this vague, indeterminate past as it is present in the life of Pilar. Pilar lives alone but extends herself to others. She offers her home to a Polish student visiting Lisbon over the holidays. She socializes with a man her age who also appears to live alone. She patronizes political causes. She practices her faith. And, importantly for the narrative of *Tabu*, she looks after her elderly neighbor, Aurora. We are introduced to Aurora when Pilar is summoned by Aurora's Cape Verdean housekeeper, Santa, to pick her up at the casino where she has gambled away all the money she has, including her train fare home. Aurora (played by Laura Soveral) appears to us as she appears to Pilar, as a movie star from a bygone era, someone to gaze at, in astonishment. Accessorized with large frame sunglasses she is wearing indoors, jewelry and a paisley scarf, with the background moving behind her, because they are sitting on a revolving bar, she tells Pilar a fantastic dream about hairy apes who convince her to test her luck at the casino, "at the old one, because the new one is rubbish." This is apparently not the first time Aurora has lost it all at the tables, and she does not appear devastated by her loss. Her actions appear to have no real consequences.

We learn soon after this that Aurora takes anti-depressants and may be abusing them, that she has a daughter from whom she is, for some reason, estranged, that she depends on

her daughter for the renewal of her prescriptions as well as for the funds she needs to live and that she squanders gambling. Pilar appears to accept Aurora's account of her daughter's neglect and of Santa's lack of assistance. She implores Santa to do more for her mistress, to contact Aurora's daughter or to give her the number so she can contact the daughter herself. She becomes so involved in Aurora's affairs that Santa asks her why she doesn't mind her own business. She becomes so consumed with concern for Aurora that she can barely contain herself. Out at the movies, New Year's Eve, her painter friend asleep in the seat next to her, she sits weeping, not for the spectacle on the screen, but, distracted from that spectacle, secretly, in the dark, to herself. While the soundtrack plays two verses and the chorus from a cover version, by Les Surfs, of the Ronettes 1963 classic, "Be My Baby," the camera closes in on Pilar's distraught and tear streaked face.

This is the first music we have heard since the opening sequence. As there, the music, here, links a film within the film to the narrative of *Tabu*. Shortly after the rebuke by Santa, we cut to a scene where Pilar presents a gift for Maya, the Polish girl who was to have spent the New Year holiday with her, to the "friend" of Maya who is, of course, Maya herself. Maya thanks Pilar and tells her, "You are a very kind lady. God bless you." The scene of this exchange is followed by a close-up of Pilar, her introspection indicated by the music, "Be My Baby," which has no source in this part of the film but which will figure so prominently in the film's second part. This reference to the early 1960's is part of the past present to Pilar, part of an indeterminate and destabilizing affect that complicates and confounds Pilar's ability to act in the present. The girl who has lied to her says that she is kind. The housekeeper who refuses her kindness tells her to keep to herself. Aurora pleads for that same kindness. Pilar's tears sign her confusion, the lack of any clear purpose to be served. There is a breakdown in the relation between what she perceives and any action that might change the perceived situation. The film gives us, here, an image of time as duration. Pilar does not know what to do or think, and we feel something for her that is entirely indeterminate.

What is it about this music, in particular, that alerts us to this image of time? What past does it make present for Pilar and for the target audience for this film? The early 1960's were the beginning of the end of Portugal's colonial empire. Just more than fifty years after the setting for the film that began this film, about an intrepid explorer trekking the Dark Continent on behalf of his king, the African colonies began asserting themselves against their European rulers. Portugal was the last European nation to give up its foreign territories in

Africa. The film that so captivated Pilar at the start of the narrative of *Tabu*, as the 1960's American pop song, captures and preserves a nation's sense of itself as an important empire. Even more specifically, Les Surfs, the band whose cover of the Ronette's hit song is used in the film, was formed on Madagascar and came to prominence in Europe after their island home won its independence from the French colonial empire. This sheet of past veils the narrative of "Part One" of Gomes's film as a virtually present but never actually determinate moment of it. It haunts Pilar as it haunts the culture of Portugal, generally.

Returning to the narrative, not long after midnight, in the first hours of the New Year, Santa rouses Pilar from her sleep. Her mistress is not feeling well. We cut directly to a close-up of Aurora, white as a sheet, on a bed of white sheets, in a white-walled hospital corridor, coming to, confused by her surroundings, thinking she is in Africa, finding her situation a nuisance, and worried about the crocodile. "What crocodile?" Pilar asks? With Pilar and Santa, we are inclined to think that Aurora is not quite herself. Besides the crocodile, she talks about her obsession with a Gian Luca Ventura, and it is her dying wish to see this Gian Luca Ventura, again. Pilar tracks him down in a nursing home, but before she can get him to the hospital Aurora has died. Ventura will have time only to attend the funeral and to sit with Pilar and Santa, after it, for a coffee before returning to his home. Unexpectedly, he begins, "She had a farm in Africa." Pilar looks up, startled. "Desculpe," excuse me, she asks. And so begins the story that will compose "Part Two: Paradise," of *Tabu*.

On Deleuze's view, the time-image comes in two forms, peaks of present and sheets of past. The peaks of present are accents in a single event which implicate a past and a future in the present: "a time is revealed inside the event, which is made from the simultaneity of these three implicated presents, from these de-actualized *peaks of present*."⁶ Films characterized by this form of the time-image can be treated as one single event and as the basis for the implication of several successive present states. Deleuze assigns this time-image to films by Alain Robbe-Grillet. It would be possible to find these peaks of present accenting Oliveira's *Aniki Bóbo*, as well. The sheets of past, by contrast, give us aspects, regions, strata, layers, each "with its own characteristics, its 'tones,' its 'aspects,' its 'singularities,' its 'shining points' and its 'dominant' themes."⁷ These regions form a past that is not in us as a personal memory or an individual history. In these time-images, "the past appears as the most general form of an already-there, a pre-existence in general which our recollections presuppose...and which our perceptions" use.⁸ Only because they co-exist in the present as this or that aspect

of the past does the present exist as present, as the moment which has not yet passed and, yet, must pass to fill out a layer, a stratum, that, as past, can give meaning to the present.

Gomes's *Tabu* is manifestly dominated by these sheets of past. The short film that begins the film is one such sheet, the song by Les Surfs is another, each with its own singularities, tones and dominant themes. The story Ventura narrates, and that comprises the whole second half of the film, is yet another. This stratum takes us from present day Lisbon to an unspecified African colony at a time before the wars for independence. We are given a 16 mm image of the region Ventura explores with his narrative, and the contrast with the 35 mm film used for the first half of the film gives this image the physical look of a memory or recollection. It is not entirely clear whose image of this recollection we are seeing — is it Gian Luca's visual memory or Pilar's visual imagination of the story Gian Luca narrates — nor can we be entirely certain about the reliability of this image. Until now, we have seen the world largely from Pilar's point of view. The nephew has described his great uncle as "going bonkers." It will be enough, however, for us to consider this image and this tale as a stratum already-there, a pre-existence any recollection of this period in Portugal's past would presuppose and a meaning or sense, a direction given by this stratum to the present time of *Tabu*.

Aurora's farm is said to have been at the foot of a fictional Mount Tabu. This imaginary geography serves as a reminder of Murnau's film. For just as Reri, by virtue of being designated the virgin bride of her people's god, was taboo and could not be touched by the boy she loved, so Aurora, by virtue of her marriage and pregnancy, is taboo and not to be touched by the man she loves. The man Aurora loves is Ventura, himself, and the "monumental crimes they lived" involve touching, often, passionately, obsessively, tragically. This is a region of the past that co-exists with the present of Aurora in the first part of Gomes's *Tabu*. Her gambling — Aurora's father is said to have lost a fortune to gambling — her relation with Santa, her estrangement from her daughter, whom she was carrying while she and Ventura carried on, all make more sense in the context of this stratum of the past brought to light by Ventura's recollections. The present sense of the film as a whole, however, is wanting something else from this sheet of past.

This sheet of past in the film is titled "Paradise," but it is not paradise in any ordinary sense, except, perhaps, in the sense that it is experienced as lost. This sheet of past, a region recollected as paradise and distinguished by its own singularities, is distinctly tinged with a melancholy that occupies the first part, the present time, of the film. The folly of the colo-

nists, as recounted by Gian Luca, their occupations and preoccupations cannot conceal a dread, a foreboding of emptiness. This is not the sense that something is coming to an end. It is the sense that there is nothing to end. Aurora is said to spend her time hunting animals for sport. Mario is introduced as a friend who forms a band to entertain his friends at what are presented as “parties” but which are nothing more than another way of spending time. The white colonists form militias and organize shooting contests ostensibly to protect themselves against the black indigenous population, but this is just one more distraction. In this context, the event that brings Aurora to Ventura’s door, a lost pet crocodile, is hardly significant.

Yet, it may not be too much to suggest that the crocodile stands, here, as it figures in the prelude to the film, for that still untamed element in Africa, for what has not and cannot be civilized. Although Aurora keeps the crocodile as a pet, she cannot keep this primitive creature from escaping her and leading her into what her cohabitants in “paradise” will consider uncivilized acts. Aurora and Ventura share an obsession that will not be contained. Mario, “the Priest,” demands that Ventura break off his unholy affair, but Aurora will kill Mario in the end to keep him from interfering in their destiny, if that is what it is. They have no plans. They can only and barely endure the time it is taking for Aurora to come to term. In the sheet of past that is the second half of *Tabu*, Aurora’s pregnancy can be described as a time-image of the second sort, the single event accented by peaks of present – conception as past present, delivery as future present, detection as ever present – that is this affair between Aurora and Ventura.

This shared obsession is clearly no paradise, even if that is what Aurora and Ventura seek as a respite from the “paradise” that life in the colony also is not. What is it that Aurora and Ventura want, that the Portuguese who colonized Africa wanted? What is it that is ostensibly lost in the lives of Pilar and her contemporaries? If we cannot put our finger on it, perhaps it is because there is nothing that can fill what is wanting or lacking in the real or fictional lives of these individuals. This lack, and the impossibility of filling it, is described by Lacan in terms of the *objet petit a*. Most crudely put, the *objet a* is the unobtainable object of desire and, as such, the object cause of that desire. That is, because it cannot be obtained, it causes the desire that would be satisfied were it to be obtained. As such a cause, Lacan associates the *objet a* with the Greek word for ornament, “agalma,” the precious something hidden in a worthless box.⁹ He takes this image from Alcibiades’s mocking description of Socrates in Plato’s *Symposium*. In the transference, the analyst is to embody

objet a for the analysand and so motivate the analysand in the same way as the inner beauty of Socrates, in spite of his outward ugliness, causes Alcibiades to love him.

For our purposes, it seems wrong to characterize the young Ventura (played by Carloto Cotta) and Aurora (played by Ana Moreira) or even the continent of Africa as outwardly ugly, worthless boxes. All are very pretty on the outside, easy on the eyes, as they say. The form of the box, however, is of no importance for Lacan. What matters is what is inside. Not because there is a precious something inside but because inside there is a fundamental lack. This is why it is paradoxical and not wrong that the young Ventura and Aurora, and the African landscape, as well, are pretty to look at. In the look that Ventura and Aurora give one another, and the looks we give both of them, they (and we) see the gaze of the other, the *petit autre*, looking back at them. They see something that cannot be encompassed by their own regard. That something, that otherness, is the residue of what Lacan calls the Real, that part of the Real which exceeds our narcissistic perception of reality. That residue, that otherness, which signifies a lack in our perception of the world, is Lacan's *objet petit a*.¹⁰

In short, and in general, we see what we want to see of the world. We see what satisfies a narcissistic projection of ourselves in the world. This vision is reality as we want to see it, but this vision of the world is lacking everything that does not reflect us back to ourselves. We are, of course, not alone in the world, but where we do not see ourselves we do not, alternatively, necessarily, see others. We see a lack of ourselves instead, and we desire to fill that lack. That lack, the *objet a*, is the object cause of our desire. Were we to satisfy this lack, we would stop desiring, and we would be dead. The death drive is this drive to satisfy this desire, to stop desiring, which will never happen so long as there is a lack, a want to be filled. Ventura and Aurora serve this function for one another. They are, for one another, the gaze that signifies, for the look of the other, the lack in the signifying function of each of them. Their love flows from a desire in each of them to fill a lack felt in their encounter with the other which is their own lack, what in the Real exceeds the capacity of each of them to tame it.

In this context, it will seem even more paradoxical to describe the continent of Africa gazing back at its European colonizers. Remember, however, that this gaze is not a literal looking but an uncanny sense that the object of one's signifying regard cannot be completely grasped by the orders of signification at one's disposal. Paradise is what the European colonizers called Africa (and Indonesia and the Americas, etc.). For the indigenous population,

however, Africa was just their home. Paradise is a construct imposed on Africa for the cultural and economic benefits it brought to those colonizers. It made western Europeans feel civilized by comparison and superior in respect of knowledge, even if this was only an affect fueled by a perceived distance of European civilization from the so-called primitive and pristine state of this Dark Continent. Narratives of the sort documented in the film that opens *Tabu* were made to reinforce this myth.

By incorporating this narrative as a film within his film, Gomes goes out of his way to expose this myth. Without resorting to Deleuze and Lacan, we are already alerted to the tension between the mission assigned our intrepid explorer by his majesty the King and the mission assigned him by his own heart. This tension is brought out in the voice-over by Gomes which questions what can be known by “men of reason” about what is truly important and importantly true. Gomes’s critique is also captured in the open irony of the subtitles. “Paradise Lost” can only describe the trauma in Pilar’s Lisbon of a fundamental lack, paradise as *objet petit a*, paradoxically experienced as taken. “Paradise,” shown in images from the story narrated by old Ventura, exposes the lack — in the palpable melancholy, in the tragic consequences of Aurora’s affair, in Ventura’s broken heart, Mario’s death, and the beginning of the colonial wars — felt traumatically as lost. Finally, the adventures of Mario’s Band appear to separate everything in this part of the film from any recognizable reality.

At the same time, it could be argued that Gomes goes out of his way to actively reinforce this myth. *Tabu* is by all accounts a visual beautiful film. The crisp, black and white, 35 mm, celluloid print produces a rich palette of gray tones for the first half of the film. The 16 mm celluloid stock used to film the second half gives the images of Africa a dream-like quality. It is a seductive spectacle, and the music of Mario’s Band is used to enhance this lure. There is no obviously abusive treatment of native people. White people are presented, for the most part, as benign conquerors, and black Africans are represented as obliging servants. The penultimate images of the film, devoid of white colonists, show indigenous people carrying on many of their domestic and field labors as if they still served some master, and the final image of Mount Tabu itself, the fictional setting for the film, is free — primitive, pristine — from the effects of human intervention.

And, yet, in Gomes’s beautiful and untrammelled tableau, there are images that return our look with a gaze that contains a residue of the Real, the *objet petit a*, a lack that wants to be filled but that will be ever wanting, that resists our capacity to order it symbolically. There

is the image of Pilar weeping in that movie theater. It is not just that we do not know why she is crying. Her glistening tears gaze back at us emptied of symbolic meaning. They threaten us with an excess that exposes our failed mastery of reality. We do not know how to understand her, and nothing in the film prepares us to make sense of her sadness. There is the wreath Santa places on Aurora's grave site with the motto "com eterna saudade," with eternal longing, in lieu of the daughter who does not attend her mother's funeral. This wreath also returns our look with a gaze. It demands that we make sense of it but overwhelms us with an apparent lack of meaning, an excess that cannot be ordered. We watch Santa place it on a hill of dirt beside the grave from Pilar's point of view. It contrasts with the single lily Ventura drops on the coffin itself. After showing the backs of the funeral party departing the scene, the camera returns us to this wreath and to its memory of "my dear mother," *minha querida mãe*.

We can find this same gaze in the entirety of the images that make up the second half of the film. We suggested as much above. It is especially present, however, in the image of the bodies and faces of the native inhabitants who literally look back at us when they are assembled for the government information sessions held to address rumors about "revolts and massacres" perpetrated by blacks against whites in the colony. It is not just what we know we don't know about the intentions of these African natives. What gazes back at us from these black bodies is an excess that cannot be subsumed by a Eurocentric symbolic order. Old and young, male and female, clad in tribal dress and variations on western garb, they demand a meaning we cannot give them. Yet, we encounter a residue of the Real in these black bodies only just in case we are vulnerable and can be wounded by what exceeds us, only just in case we have the courage, the temerity to recognize what cannot be narcissistically subsumed to the same. In images throughout his film, Gomes gives us encounters with this excess which threaten to wound us and, in threatening us, challenge the status of the paradise experienced as lost in contemporary Portuguese culture and film.

The time-images that dominate *Tabu* alert us to the ways Gomes challenges the mythology of a paradise that so captivates the imaginary of Portuguese culture and film. The main characteristic of the time image is the reversal of the subordination of time to movement. In classic cinema, and in the metaphysics of representation up to Kant, time served as the link between perceptions and purpose. What we see is connected to an end aimed at in action. But in post-war European film, and post-Kantian representation, movement is subordinated

to time. Time is the concrete duration in which movements begin and end, the Whole which is the condition for changes in the parts of that Whole which changes in relation to the changes in those parts. With *Tabu*, Gomes complicates the present, puts the time out of joint and forces us to think about the present in relation to the regions or strata or sheets of past which are co-extensive with it.

In addition, in this film, Gomes exposes the present day perceived trauma of a loss, paradise, that was never truly lost, not because it was an empty dream or an imagined state, but because it was only ever possessed as a fundamental lack, an absence, the *objet a*, serving as an object cause of a desire that will never and can never be satisfied. This trauma is not a debilitating illusion but one part of the source, the font for the longing, *saudade*, that is so crucial to the spirit of Portuguese culture and film. Pilar's kindness flows from this spirit and this longing but so does Pilar's astonishment with everything that makes up her life. Aurora's "mischievous behavior" and "taste for adventure" flow from this same spirit as does Ventura's "foolishness" and, generally, self-destructive acts. Most importantly, Miguel Gomes's love of film and of the sensuousness of the cinematic experience derives from this same longing to make present something that remains irretrievably past.

Tabu is a film in two parts. Gomes has said, "What counts is the third part, which does not exist in the film but is produced in your mind."¹¹ The time-image above all gives movement to thought. *Tabu* does not give us to think about what it means, as if it were a problem or a puzzle to solve. In confronting us with what cannot be ordered by the categories we have at our disposal, *Tabu* asks us to think without telling us what to think. The pleasure of this film can be found in the beauty of its images, the care taken in the organization of its parts, the time it gives these parts to find their place in the whole, and the thinking it inspires for those who take their time with *Tabu*.

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), and *Cinema 2: the Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

2. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, xi.

3. See Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 46-7.

4. On the autonomy of speech and visual image in modern cinema see Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 247-53.

5. Gilles Deleuze, "On *The Time Image*," in *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 57-61.

6. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 100.

7. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 99.
8. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 98.
9. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre VIII: Le transfert, 1960-61*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991), 163-178.
10. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1978), 67-116.
11. Quoted in Dennis Lim, "Past Is Present Yet Irretrievable," *New York Times*, 21 Dec. 2012.

COEXISTÊNCIAS NAS MARGENS:
REFLEXÕES SOBRE *DOURO, FAINA FLUVIAL*
A PARTIR DE DELEUZE E GUATTARI

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1. INTRODUÇÃO

Encadeamentos, engrenagens e possibilidades de “tornar-se outro” sem, contudo, anular o que há de alteridade; “coexistência de ‘durações’ muito diferentes”¹ entre termos que não querem a correspondência ou a equivalência, mas a comunicação por aliança. Esse breve relance analítico, que, em linhas gerais, se remete a alguns conceitos propostos por Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari, parece já indicar, mesmo apressadamente, a ordem das conexões engendradas entre homem, natureza/animal e máquina em *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, documentário que Manoel de Oliveira realizou entre 1929 e 1931, com fotografia de António Mendes, cujo lançamento, ainda com uma versão não sonorizada, ocorreu em 1931, durante o V Congresso da Crítica de Lisboa.

Na esteira de *Berlim, Sinfonia de uma Capital* (*Berlin, Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, 1927), de Walter Ruttmann, e sob as influências de uma câmera-olho do cinema soviético de Vertov — heranças temáticas e estéticas assumidas pelo próprio Oliveira —, o filme não foi bem aceito pela crítica portuguesa, mas causou impacto entre os analistas internacionais no momento de sua *avant première*. Poucos anos mais tarde, em 1934, o diretor revisitou a obra, que, então, ganhou banda sonora, com música assinada pelo maestro Luís de Freitas Branco.

Por meio de imagens que se detêm nas 24 horas da vida de trabalhadores e *habitués* da margem direita do Rio Douro, na cidade do Porto, norte de Portugal, o filme mostra a coexistência de elementos de categorias humana e não-humana (maquinais e animais), no contexto histórico da primeira metade do século XX.

Analiso esta primeira versão do filme *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, no que concerne à possibilidade de haver, na narrativa da obra, planos que trabalhem com as questões da alteridade e do cofuncionamento entre homem, máquina e natureza/animal. Perscruto os aspectos da “cartografia” produzida pela câmera documental e formalista do realizador.

Nessa empresa, faço uso da ideia deleuzeana de “cartografia” — oposta à atitude de apreensão e interpretação de determinado campo de ação/objeto — para pensar a apropriação do cotidiano à beira do Douro que Oliveira executa ao desenvolver o *plot* de seu documentário. A cartografia aproxima-se de formas de observação que preveem uma espécie de rastreamento, de interação com os “dados do campo” a partir de uma postura que supera o dualismo sujeito-objeto. Nela, sujeito e objeto habitam de maneira compartilhada o mesmo território existencial.

Nas leituras que faz acerca da noção de cartografia, a pesquisadora brasileira Virgínia Kastrup explica que o termo é um método formulado por Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari, cujo objetivo é “acompanhar um processo, e não representar um objeto. Em linhas gerais, trata-se sempre de investigar um processo de produção.”² Portanto, neste artigo, avalio a maneira conforme Oliveira passeia com sua câmera pelas margens do Douro de forma a rastrear a faina diária dos homens e mulheres que ali tecem relações entre si, conectando-se a elementos como animais, natureza e máquinas.

Os planos indicam que Oliveira busca mais “senti-los,” de forma háptica, do que “representá-los,” de forma puramente objetividade e ótica, se aqui aplicarmos os conceitos de “percepção háptica” e “percepção ótica,” os quais se ligam ao método cartográfico, conforme coloca Kastrup:

Deleuze distingue a percepção háptica da percepção ótica. A percepção ótica se caracteriza pela organização do campo em figura e fundo. A segregação autóctone faz com que a forma salte do fundo e instala uma hierarquia, uma profundidade no campo. Além do dualismo figura-fundo, faz parte da percepção ótica a organização cognitiva no dualismo sujeito-objeto, que configura uma visão distanciada, característica da representação. O ótico não remete apenas ao domínio visual, mas este, em função de suas características, é aí dominante. Já a percepção háptica é uma visão próxima, onde não vigora a organização figura-fundo. Os componentes se conectam lado a lado, se localizando num mesmo plano igualmente próximo. O olho tateia, explora, rastreia, o mesmo podendo ocorrer com o ouvido ou outro órgão. De todo modo, a distinção mais importante aqui é entre percepção háptica e percepção ótica, e não entre os diferentes sentidos, com a visão, a audição e o tato. Para Deleuze, o movimento da percepção háptica se aproxima mais da exploração de uma ameoba do que do deslocamento de um

corpo no espaço. O movimento da ameba é regido por sensações diretas, por ações de forças invisíveis como pressão, estiramento, dilatação e contração. Não é o movimento que explica a sensação, mas, ao contrário, é a elasticidade da sensação que explica o movimento.³

No entanto, mesmo crendo que o resultado das tomadas organizadas pela câmera documental empreende um rastreamento dos espaços e tempos desenvolvidos pelas personagens num movimento contra a representação, atentamos para o fato de que espaço, tempo, composição dos quadros e narrativa de *Douro, Faina Fluvial* interligam-se por meio de um planejamento de filmagem que procede de forma bastante direta e intencional. Isso parece, sim, indicar que há nesta obra um caminho autoral (e imagético) rumo à representação. O que nos leva até essa problematização é o próprio posicionamento formalista de Manoel de Oliveira ao ressaltar, em uma entrevista concedida a João Bénard da Costa, de 1989, o valor essencial do planejamento operado por meio da decupagem, o que, segundo o diretor, alicerçou o documentário e fundamentou o tratamento dado aos planos e ângulos, aos elementos/personagens em cena e, em última análise, o que pode organizar a própria montagem-rei.

Estava já tudo na *découpage*. Estava escrito. Sempre improvisei muito pouco. Nada foi resultado da montagem. Foi uma provocação premeditada. Tinha já uma noção muito precisa do que deveria ser a construção cinematográfica. Como a deviam compor. Disso, tinha uma noção muito precisa. [...] Basta ver, para se perceber que tudo está estruturado, que há uma intenção [...].⁴

Assim, nesta investigação, verifico as relações imagéticas de *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, tendo em vista mais a aplicação dos conceitos deleuzeanos do que um exame baseado em conceitos cinematográficos e suas escolas paradigmáticas. No entanto, não desprezo o que há de sedimentado acerca do documentário e das intenções de seu diretor. A proposta, portanto, é aplicar os conceitos aos momentos que considero profícuos no que tange às possibilidades de existência de vetores que funcionam para além da representação, mesmo que para isso seja feita a aposta em observações, em algum grau, desligadas das análises sobre o filme até então concretizadas pelas críticas acadêmica e cinematográfica.

Ao optar pelo trabalho com a primeira versão de *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, em vez de lidar com a versão mais recente do filme — que, remontado e reeditado por Oliveira, em 1994, acabou por receber um novo tratamento sonoro com a introdução de outra música, a “*Litanie du feu et de la mer*,” composta por Emmanuel Nunes —, a intenção foi destacar a originalidade do primeiro documentário, no que concerne à sua contextualização histórica (à época dos anos 1930) e à combinação entre cortes e cadências da trilha musical de Luís de Freitas Branco.

Nesse caso, acredito que a montagem e, três anos depois, a inserção da música (colocada sobre um filme originalmente não-sonoro), podem se aproximar da ideia vertoviana de “montagem musical das imagens.” Oliveira destaca que: “Procurava fazer do cinema um meio de expressão. Pus em prática teorias da época, a especificidade da montagem, a montagem por contraste, por analogia.”⁵

Mesmo tendo sido criado como uma obra não sonorizada, o que se nota no documentário de 1934, depois da colagem da banda sonora aos fotogramas animados, são o realce que esta música terá (com seus graves, intervalos bem definidos e acelerações e desacelerações pontuais) e o papel que ela desempenhará na complexificação do discurso documental ali construído.

Creio que a música desta versão marca tanto as intenções previstas na decupagem, como também abre possibilidades para reforçar o entrelaçamento que há entre os elementos homem, natureza/animal e máquina, que seguem no filme lado a lado. Ou seja, a música original, assim reflito, vem em auxílio à história social da época — atrelando-se aos aspectos modernos — e às singularidades desses elementos, os quais cofuncionam em ritmos específicos (que nos remetem a uma sinfonia moderna). Mantêm-se em suas particularidades, mas permanecem abertos à mistura, a outrem, ao agenciamento com a alteridade. Portanto, a escolha desta análise pela versão de 1931 se deve também ao tipo de sonorização efetuada em 1934 e mantida até os anos 90 do século passado.

Dando sequência ao exame aqui proposto, a conexão que percebo existir entre os elementos mostrados pelo filme — homem, natureza/animal e máquina — se dá não por relações de correspondência, imitação, identificação ou filiação, mas por um *tornar-se outro*, por uma sugestão de simpatia entre cada um dos termos. Deste modo, a montagem passa a conceber “blocos de devires,” isto é, parece trabalhar unindo cada quadro de forma com que, em contágio, um componha com o outro uma narrativa que antes de estabelecer níveis de correspondência entre os elementos basilares do filme (homem, natureza, animal, máquina),

abre-se para leituras clandestinas desses elementos, eles também, por sua vez, em aliança. O conceito de “devir,”⁶ pensado por Deleuze e Guattari, não propõe a multiplicação identitária ou a fragmentação de identidades em partículas menores, nem mesmo se aplica às ideias de imitação, progressão (regredir-progredir), evolução e produção de laços por filiação. O “devir” do homem (devir-animal, devir-mulher, devir-criança, etc.) é “um verbo tendo toda sua consistência; ele não se reduz, ele não nos conduz a ‘parecer,’ nem ‘ser,’ nem ‘equivaler,’ nem produzir’.”⁷

Portanto, ao buscar amparo nesse vasto conceito para refletir sobre a natureza das conexões entre os termos que Oliveira destaca em *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, creio que nos deparamos com um “jogo de reinos diferentes,” no qual há os homens que se aliam ao rio, aqueles que se associam ao barco e os que se conectam à máquina (aos carros, às rodas, roldanas, carroças, mesmo que, nesse caso, se reencontrem com forças que os apaziguem e os aprisionem em representações majoritárias ligadas ao Capital, ao Estado, ao Avanço). Os homens também se agenciarão aos animais, quando, por extensão corporal, um boi ou um peixe confere a eles determinados graus de continuidade de seus corpos e ações. E é nesse ponto que lhes é permitido o acesso a clivagens de si mesmos, não para imitar ou se fundirem com o animal, mas para conviverem ali, às margens e ao longo do Douro, sem ignorar a alteridade que um sempre será para o outro.

O devir pode e deve ser qualificado como devir-animal sem ter um termo que seria o animal que se tornou. O devir-animal do homem é real, sem que seja real o animal que ele se torna; e, simultaneamente, o devir-outro do animal é real sem que esse outro seja real.⁸

Plano a plano, os homens e as mulheres de Oliveira entrelaçam-se com elementos “de uma ordem outra que a da filiação.”⁹ Estão constantemente nos limites de suas primeiras identidades, incessantemente perante os seus devires, sem, no entanto, se transmutarem no outro, porque o “devir,” ainda nas palavras de Deleuze e Guattari,

não produz outra coisa senão ele próprio. É uma falsa alternativa que nos faz dizer: ou imitamos, ou somos. O que é real é o próprio devir, o bloco de devir, e não os termos supostamente fixos pelos quais se passaria aquele que se torna. [...] [U]m devir não tem sujeito distinto de si mesmo; mas também como ele não tem termo, porque seu termo

por sua vez só existe tomado num outro devir do qual ele é o sujeito, e que coexiste, que faz bloco com o primeiro.¹⁰

Há também nas composições dos quadros outras possibilidades de combinações e coexistências entre corpos, que não se fundem e nem dialogam de forma dialética, mas se estabelecem no documentário de modo complementar, comunicando-se. Homem que amalgama sua boca à boca de um boi. Mulher que tem como prolongamento do próprio braço, conectado à sua mão, um peixe. Homem que se articula a cabos e correntes, tal como se fizesse parte da estrutura desses objetos inumanos.

As concatenações entre esses três elementos basilares da obra de Manoel de Oliveira foram observadas pelo poeta José Régio, cuja reflexão é mais um ponto que fundamenta esta hipótese acerca dos agenciamentos profícuos entre aspectos humanos e não-humanos tratados pela narrativa documental a partir do registro cartográfico da câmara e das composições dos planos, cortes e música do filme.

É uma pequena obra de arte. A moderna poesia de ferro e aço, o encanto da natureza nos seus vários aspectos e nuances, a tonalidade das horas a alegria e a miséria do homem sócio do animal na luta pelo pão de cada dia — tudo, ao longo de um dia de actividade na margem do Douro, é-nos dado com verdadeira grandeza.¹¹

Percebo ainda que os planos de Oliveira captam as “territorializações” e “desterritorializações”¹² dos elementos que se agenciam às margens do Douro (homem, máquina, animal) — e com o Douro —, sendo possível observar na concatenação realizada pela montagem (e nas opções de enquadramento que o realizador faz) uma contínua tradução da “superfície” do Douro: ora se aproximando de um “espaço liso,”¹³ ora se aproximando de um “espaço estriado,”¹⁴ conceitos que serão aprofundados adiante.

2. HOMEM, NATUREZA / ANIMAL, MÁQUINA

Em cada plano de *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, o que se nota é uma espécie de sinfonia entre elementos heterogêneos, que são pontuados pela câmara neorrealista nos passeios à beira do Douro.

Manoel de Oliveira leva a sua câmera para a margem direita do Rio Douro, no Porto, sua cidade natal e lá filma as atividades de trabalhadores. A circulação, a carga e a descarga dos barcos, o rio e seu ambiente, a ponte e o bairro operário ganham um tratamento poético.¹⁵

Logo na tomada inicial do filme, após breves cenas com o farol que pisca em meio a uma imensa escuridão, vê-se a menção a paisagens aquáticas, as quais se interpõem, ombro a ombro, com imagens que capturam as estruturas físicas que margeiam o rio: o porto, o farol, o concreto onde batem as ondas fluviais. Em *fade*, surge um barco, que rasga o ambiente aquático e logo sai de quadro, já mostrando um estriamento, uma marcação precisa, num processo cirúrgico que cruza o rio, abrindo-o para a presença do homem e suas “máquinas.” É um anúncio do que vem a seguir: uma cartografia da relação natureza, homem, máquina e das possibilidades de abertura e cruzamentos que ali se desenrolam efetivamente ou se mantêm em latência.

A paisagem diurna vai aparecendo e, pouco a pouco, a composição dos quadros apresenta ao espectador as personagens humanas, animais e materiais ligadas à faina que subsiste na superfície e às margens do Douro. As misturas entre naturezas e ordens diversas de existentes, entre temporalidades e espacialidades heterogêneas, são percebidas já de partida.

Um dos aspectos a se destacar em Douro é a maneira como podemos perceber a passagem do tempo, paradoxalmente expressa na permanência do passado no presente, como na arquitetura do lugar, no envelhecimento (corpos marcados pelo cansaço e pelas intempéries), ou no embrutecimento do corpo fustigado pelo duro cotidiano. Isso nos parece remeter a uma situação que inscreve essas três dimensões do tempo — o da faina fluvial, o da vida na labuta e o da natureza — não apenas nas pedras, nas máquinas e nas construções, mas também nas pessoas — sejam elas homens, mulheres ou crianças. E isso não como uma vida cotidiana que se perfaz num ciclo que se repete, sob a regra de um trabalho repetitivo, mas como um cotidiano recheado de chances para a repetição da diferença.¹⁶

Além da conexão entre alteridades, que sugere a prevalência da diferença e da não-homogeneização dos elementos do *plot* do documentário, verifico, em uma série de cenas, referências a tramas — cujos pontos se encontram, marcando o espaço da tela — e a movimentos de linhas transversais — que, não se cruzando, caminham para fora do quadro. São as redes de ferros das pontes; o entremeado dos balaios de palha; os peixes, lado a lado, todos voltados para uma direção específica, orientada para fora do quadro; pedaços de madeira e ferro, que antes de se direcionarem para cima ou para baixo, visam à diagonal, por um enquadramento de câmera que nos sugere uma linha de fuga, pelo meio, uma chance de escape que não se organiza pelo norte, nem pelo sul.

Na composição de alguns quadros do filme, nosso olhar é convocado a examinar as linhas formadas pelos elementos apresentados, que parecem se mover sem orientação para cima ou para baixo. A saber, encontramos essas imagens em *takes* como aqueles que mostram o entrelaçamento da palha no cesto de peixe, naqueles onde ferros lineares, em diagonal, são colocados sob um enquadramento pelo qual as pontas das vigas parecem furar a tela. Há, do mesmo modo, as sequências que trabalham com a justaposição dos peixes: amontoados para a venda no mercado, seus corpos formam linhas, elas também em escape, procedendo pelo meio, rumo a uma direção que anuncia outro plano que já não cabe mais ali.

Tais imagens compõem-se em mapas de não-localização, desajustáveis, onde há a abertura para o “devir” e a entrada de novos vetores com naturezas várias (significantes e a-significantes). Assim, a lógica deste jogo de diagonais é da multiplicidade, da combinação entre elementos heterogêneos que passeiam e se misturam quadro a quadro, promovendo uma espécie de rompimento com as suas estruturas identitárias, onde residirá menos a representação e mais as “multiplicidades de devir, ou de transformações.”¹⁷

Recorro a outro conceito-chave de Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari, “agenciamentos coletivos,”¹⁸ já que essa ideia parece pertinente à análise das conexões estabelecidas entre os elementos homem, máquina e natureza/animal na narrativa documental de “Douro, faina fluvial.” Para esses autores, “agenciamentos coletivos” é uma noção que pressupõe a articulação de elementos heterogêneos, da ordem do discursivo e do não-discursivo. A natureza dos agenciamentos em um primeiro eixo — nível que Deleuze e Guattari chamam de “horizontal” — comporta

dois segmentos: um de conteúdo, ou outro de expressão. Por um lado, ele é agenciamento maquínico de corpos, de ações e de paixões, mistura de corpos reagindo uns sobre os outros; por outro lado, agenciamento coletivo de enunciação, de atos e enunciados, transformações incorpóreas sendo atribuídas aos corpos.¹⁹

Há ainda um segundo eixo natural aos agenciamentos, o “eixo vertical orientado.” Nele, os agenciamentos lidam com dois aspectos. O primeiro diz respeito a “lados territoriais ou reterritorializados que o estabilizam; já o segundo aspecto refere-se aos picos de desterritorialização que o arrebatam.”²⁰

Assemelhando-se mais a um “arranjo,” ou a um “tipo de conexão,” do que a uma “estrutura”²¹ os agenciamentos não se remetem à “produção de bens,” mas a “misturas de corpos obrigatórias, necessárias ou permitidas”:²²

Em seu aspecto material ou maquínico, um agenciamento não nos parece remeter a uma produção de bens, mas a um estado preciso de mistura de corpos em uma sociedade, compreendendo todas as atrações e repulsões, as simpatias e as antipatias, as alterações, as alianças, as penetrações e expansões que afetam os corpos de todos os tipos, uns em relação aos outros.²³

Trata-se de “elementos heterogêneos agenciados, funcionando como engrenagens de produção,” de onde se depreende que não há a “precessão de figuras como sujeito, significante, identidade, representação, que são resultantes possíveis no jogo dos agenciamentos e não entidades primeiras.”²⁴

A partir desta perspectiva, percebo as afinidades e afetações entre homem, máquina e natureza/animal que ocorrem, quadro a quadro, ao longo do documentário de Oliveira. De fato, parece haver entre esses elementos heterogêneos uma combinação pela qual se agenciam, mantendo as suas próprias unidades, mas se conectando engrenados em um arranjo que, por vezes, propõe uma via diagonal.

Em vez de uma unidade ou de um somatório de forças (elementos) de onde resultem sentidos finais e unitários,²⁵ percebe-se um cofuncionamento que não quer singularizar, mas seguir numa “sinfonia” de multiplicidades.

3. DOURO, FAINA FLUVIAL: O RIO COMO ESPAÇO LISO E ESPAÇO ESTRIADO?

Para prosseguirmos além dos conceitos de “devir” e “agenciamentos coletivos” e, daí, propormos à luz desta via teórica algumas questões sobre o tratamento dos espaços em *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, é pertinente manejar mais duas ideias deleuzeanas, conforme havíamos anunciado acima. São elas: “territorialização” e “desterritorialização.”²⁶

Nas cenas onde há evocação ao rio e às suas águas e, igualmente, à parte sólida da margem direita (onde se fixam estruturas mais rígidas, tais como cais, carros, guinchos, suportes de pontes, e onde se localizam de maneira sedentarizada as pessoas, os barcos parados e os animais vivos e mortos, tais como bois e peixes), penso que o filme trabalha com a convivência — arrisco dizer, harmônica — entre as chances de sedimentação e as chances de desterritorialização de todos esses elementos.

É nesse bojo que aproximamos as análises do universo do Rio Douro da ideia de “mar,” trazida por Deleuze e Guattari,²⁷ quando refletem, com base em Pierre Chaunu, acerca das demarcações do oceano à época das expansões marítimas europeias do século XIII ao XV. O mar, nessa reflexão, é visto como “não apenas o arquétipo de todos os espaços lisos, mas o primeiro desses espaços a sofrer uma estriagem que o tomava progressivamente, e o esquadrihava aqui ou ali, de um lado, depois do outro.”²⁸ Falam de uma ordem marítima, que se aproxima de um arquétipo do liso, o qual, por sua vez, não exclui as possibilidades de estriagem.

Seguindo esse pensamento — e validando-o em relação a outros espaços, que não sejam propriamente o mar — entendo que as águas de *Douro, Faina Fluvial* são fluidas, estrutura desterritorializada, mas se deixam estriar, marcar e organizar, mesmo que depois venham incidir novamente sobre elas desmarcações e acidentes, os quais, por sua vez, provocarão pequenos escapes das ordens homogeneizantes. A estriagem, no sentido dado por Deleuze e Guattari, ordena o “mar,” mas o “mar” restitui uma espécie de espaço liso — onde sempre haverá uma potência de desterritorialização.

Sem dúvida, é por isso que o mar, arquétipo do espaço liso, foi também o arquétipo de todas as estriagens do espaço liso: estriagem do deserto, estriagem do ar, estriagem da estratosfera (que permite a Virilio falar de um “litoral vertical” como mudança de direção). É no mar que pela primeira vez o espaço liso foi domado, e se encontrou um

modelo de ordenação, de imposição do estriado, válido para outros lugares. O que não contradiz a outra hipótese de Virilio: ao término de seu estriamento, o mar restitui uma espécie de espaço liso, ocupado pelo *fleet in being* [...]. O mar, em seguida o ar e a estratosfera ressurgem como espaços lisos, mas para melhor controlar a terra estriada, na mais estranha das reviravoltas. O espaço liso dispõe sempre de uma potência de desterritorialização superior ao estriado.²⁹

A cartografia de Oliveira sobre as margens do Douro (e a superfície desse espaço aquático) indica a existência de determinadas relações com a terra, além de trocas entre as pessoas, dinâmicas comerciais e profícua vida construída naquelas adjacências. Tudo isso aponta uma gama de elementos formadores de um território que não se deixa sedentarizar por completo. Há no tratamento “documental” da câmera de Oliveira uma potência de desterritorialização nas conexões entre tais elementos. O espaço liso do rio é evidente, mas haverá aí oportunidades de estriamento das margens, por onde, então, se realizarão controles e marcações, tal como ocorre nos *takes* em que a figura do guarda, face do Estado e da Ordem, surge para apaziguar e reestabelecer um breve momento de conflito entre natureza, animal, máquina e homem. Não concorrendo com a potência de desterritorialização, esses componentes da faina fluvial irão se territorializar às margens do Douro, estriando o rio, marcando-o, definindo-o como *locus* do trabalho e também como lugar de descanso e, até mesmo, de namoro, se aqui for lembrada a sequência dos flertes entre um jovem casal que se afaga discretamente durante a pausa para o almoço.

Portanto, as imagens do filme lidam com espaços lisos e estriados. Para Deleuze e Guattari, essas noções não são facilmente distinguíveis e só existem, de fato, “graças às misturas entre si: o espaço liso não para de ser traduzido, transvertido num espaço estriado; o espaço estriado é constantemente revertido, devolvido a um espaço liso.”³⁰

O liso e o estriado se distinguem em primeiro lugar pela relação inversa do ponto e da linha (a linha entre dois pontos no caso do estriado, o ponto entre duas linhas no caso do liso). [...] No espaço estriado, fecha-se uma superfície a ser “repartida” segundo intervalos determinados, conforme cortes assinalados; no liso, “distribui-se” num espaço aberto, conforme frequências e ao longo dos percursos [...].³¹

Há redes, estriamentos, marcações ponto a ponto, mas o que vemos a todo o instante, em quadros que dão continuidade às imagens de redes e “sedentarismos” à beira do rio, é a aposta em algo que escapa, que sai dos entremeados e abre possibilidades de fuga, ainda que depois disso ocorra uma reterritorialização.

4. BREVES CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

Neste exame, propus que o documentário *Douro, Faina Fluvial* desenvolve uma série de articulações entre os elementos que apresenta ao longo de seus planos, através de um encadeamento que se aproxima do conceito de “agenciamentos coletivos” de Deleuze e Guattari, tanto pelo viés dos enquadramentos da câmera documental de Oliveira, como pelo viés da montagem.

Quando nos deparamos com as conexões entre homem, natureza/animal e máquina promovidas pela ordenação das cenas e sugeridas pela montagem há indícios de que o documentário constrói um campo aberto em elogio às possibilidades do homem perante seus “devir-animal” e “devir-máquina.” Para Deleuze e Guattari, a noção de “devir-animal,” que pode nos valer para o entendimento da noção de devir-máquina aqui proposta, é,

precisamente, fazer o movimento, traçar a linha de fuga em toda a sua positividade, transpor um limiar, atingir um *continuum* de intensidades que só são válidas por elas próprias, encontrar um mundo de intensidades puras, em que todas as formas se desfazem assim como todas as significações, significantes e significados, em benefício de uma matéria não formada, de fluxos desterritorializados, de signos a-significantes.³²

O homem do rio Douro em sua faina diária convive com animais e máquinas, vetores que se tornam, eles mesmos, parte de uma engrenagem que funciona na ausência de determinismos e sem a intencionalidade de fundar filiações, correspondências e imitações. Antes disso, o que se percebe é um funcionamento heterogêneo entre essas partes. O homem não se confunde com o animal, nem com a máquina, mas a eles se conecta e, portanto, há claro espaço para a existência da diferença.

Intensidades capturadas pela câmera. Imagens de um espaço que concebe complexas alternâncias entre o liso e o estriado e que prevê a entrada de vetores heterogêneos, os quais operam em agenciamentos coletivos. Em *Douro, Faina Fluvial*, Oliveira compõe, a partir de seus registros cartográficos, uma microssinfonia. Inaugura mais margens para a tessitura das relações entre o homem e os intercessores natureza/animal e máquina, que, no documentário, se dispõem em benefício de profícuas coexistências à beira do rio.

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1. Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari, *Mil Platôs: capitalismo e esquizofrenia*, vol. 4 (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1997), 18.
 2. Virgínia Kastrup, "O Funcionamento da Atenção no Trabalho do Cartógrafo," *Revista Psicologia e Sociedade* 19.1 (2007): 1.
 3. *Ibid.*, 18.
 4. Frederico Lopes, "Plano e corte 29." Programação da Cinubiteca de Covilhã, Universidade da Beira Interior, 7 Dez. 2004, 1. O programa deste festival inclui trecho de fala de Manoel de Oliveira sobre o roteiro de *Douro, Faina Fluvial*.
 5. Manoel de Oliveira, "Douro, Faina Fluvial," in *Manoel de Oliveira*, ed. Álvaro Machado (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2005), 195.
 6. Deleuze e Guattari, *Mil Platôs*, vol. 4, 4.
 7. *Ibid.*, 19.
 8. *Ibid.*, 18.
 9. *Ibid.*, 19.
 10. *Ibid.*, 18.
 11. José Régio, "Douro Faina Fluvial," *Presença* 43.XII (1934): 1.
 12. Deleuze e Guattari, *Mil Platôs: capitalismo e esquizofrenia*, vol. 5 (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1997).
 13. *Idem.*
 14. *Idem.*
 15. Oliveira, "Douro, Faina Fluvial," 195.
 16. Mauro Rovai, "O Douro, a Caça e o Espelho de Alice," in *Estudos de Cinema – Socine VIII*, ed. Rubens Jr. Machado (São Paulo: Annablume, 2007), 23.
 17. Deleuze e Guattari, *Mil Platôs*, vol. 5, 221.
 18. Deleuze e Guattari, *Mil Platôs: capitalismo e esquizofrenia*, vol. 2 (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1995).
 19. *Ibid.*, 29.
 20. *Ibid.*
 21. Janice Caiafa, *Aventura das cidades: ensaios e etnografias* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2007), 151.
 22. Deleuze e Guattari, *Mil Platôs*, vol. 2, 31.
 23. *Ibid.*
 24. Janice Caiafa, *Aventura das Cidades: ensaios e etnografias* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2007), 152.
 25. Nesse ponto, podemos pensar em um descolamento entre Oliveira e a escola de Vertov, já que não há, em princípio, na montagem de *Douro, Faina Fluvial* a tentativa de se chegar a uma síntese ideológica.
 26. Deleuze e Félix Guattari, *Mil Platôs: capitalismo e esquizofrenia*, vol. 5, 5.
 27. *Ibid.*, 186
 28. *Ibid.*
 29. *Ibid.*, 187.
 30. *Ibid.*, 180.
 31. *Ibid.*, 188.
 32. Deleuze e Guattari, *Kafka: para uma literatura menor* (Lisboa: Assírio e Alvim, 2003), 34.

NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY ON A TRAIN

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There are multiple narrative layers to *Eccentricities of a Blond-haired Girl* (*Excentricidades de uma Rapariga Loura*, 2009). On one level there is the narrative of the film itself. Here, director Manoel de Oliveira uses elegant settings and images, sparse but highly stylized dialogue, and a series of temporal shifts to tell the story of a young man's struggle with lost love. As storyteller, Oliveira establishes Macário (Ricardo Trêpa) as a distraught protagonist and sets up a flashback pattern early on in the film. Yet there is another narrative layer to the film. It is Macário's. Within the wider landscape of Oliveira's work is the narrower frame of Macário's personal story. As *Eccentricities of a Blond-haired Girl* unfolds, Macário shares his story with Senhora (Leonor Silveira), the dignified lady seated next to him on the train.¹ By sharing his story Macário acts as a narrative pedagogue, and the train car — within which the two travel — acts as a sort of teaching and learning space. As the seatmates interact, and their conversation unfolds, the lady also becomes a pedagogue. With these aspects of the film in mind, three questions arise: What exactly makes Macário and Senhora narrative pedagogues? How do the travelers benefit from their pedagogical exchange? What are the implications of this exchange for the film itself? In this paper I aim to address all three of these questions.

To analyze Macário and Senhora's practice of narrative pedagogy, and consider the wider implications for the film itself, I have divided this paper into three segments: (1) "Narrative Pedagogy on a Train," (2) "Narrative Benefits on a Train," and (3) "Implications for *Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl*." In the initial segment I briefly summarize how narrative pedagogy has been practiced and defined in recent years. In this segment I also outline how Macário and his seatmate act as narrative pedagogues throughout the film. In the second segment I draw from core aspects of narrative pedagogy, as well as narrative paradigm theory, to identify what it is the two travelers gain from their dialogue. In the closing segment I discuss what Macário and Senhora's practice of narrative pedagogy means for the film itself, as well as those who watch it.

NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY ON A TRAIN

In this segment I ask: What exactly makes Macário and Senhora narrative pedagogues? To discuss this question it is necessary to determine what narrative pedagogy is. Over the past few decades, narrative pedagogy has been discussed, and indeed practiced, by a wide range of educators and theorists, including Kieran Egan, Walter Fisher, and Ivor Goodman.² While there are differences in the way these thinkers have conceptualized and practiced narrative pedagogy there is also much that they share. A review of key writers in the narrative pedagogy arena reveals three overarching themes in how it is commonly conceptualized. These themes include: (1) *Restorying* experiences to form personal narratives and then sharing them with others, (2) *Conversing* with others about the narratives we share, and (3) *Making meaning* of our lives by examining the narratives we share. In addition to outlining these three core aspects of narrative pedagogy it is important to consider how they link to Macário and Senhora's exchanges throughout the film. After all, the way the two travelers experience *restorying*, *dialoguing*, and *meaning making* forms a key part of Oliveira's wider narrative, and ultimately contributes to the film itself.

Restorying

When conversing with others we often share stories from our past experiences. Although this process might seem straightforward, it isn't. Using narratives to communicate with others involves a number of interlocking steps. Initially, we access our declarative memory, which acts as a sort of reservoir; to peruse things we have done as well as things we have seen or heard about.³ We then select an event, or series of events, to form a narrative. Macário begins this process very early in the film. Shortly after engaging Senhora in conversation the young accountant casts his mind back and begins to recall his recent experiences in Lisbon, which centered on his entanglement with Luísa (Catarina Wallenstein). In order to do this, he draws from his declarative memory. In a general sense, we might say that a narrative is a "temporal sequence, a plot, characters, a context, and [...] the sense of an ending."⁴ But it is important to note that drawing from our past experiences is not purely a matter of recall. In selecting and then presenting a narrative we actually reconstruct, or *restory* that experience.⁵

According to researchers F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin, “A person is, at once, engaging in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories.”⁶ Within this process, our memories, and perspective of the past, is never static. As curriculum theorist Carola Conle noted, “each telling” of a story is fluid because it “somehow adds and changes the story [one] remembers.”⁷ Macário’s personal narrative is fluid on three levels. On one level, he accesses episodes from his past using his declarative memory, episodes which he remembers differently each time he recalls them.⁸ On another level, he is telling the story to someone who asks him to expand on, and/or explain, certain points along the way. By conversing with Senhora, Macário’s narrative is reshaped as it is told. On a third level, Macário is telling a story that he might retell, albeit in a slightly different way, in the future. Because the study of narrative is “the study of the ways humans experience the world,” narrative education could be viewed as: “the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; [where] teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other’s stories.”⁹ In other words, the reconstruction we carry out in accessing memories and telling our stories is a social process that has direct implications for learning.

As *Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl* unfolds, Macário demonstrates restorying process in a number of different ways. In telling his story to Senhora, he strategically selects moments from his declarative memory and reconstructs them to form a larger overarching narrative. The narrative that Macário constructs; which focuses on his courtship of Luísa, is made up of a series of smaller vignettes. Along the way, the troubled accountant includes certain episodes and excludes others. Key events that Macário relates in his story include the first time he came face-to-face with Luísa, the time he first met her, and the last time they saw one another. It is important to note that selecting which experiences to include in a personal narrative is only one way of restorying our experiences. People also restory past experiences by blending separate events to form composite narratives, and even sometimes graft fictional elements onto their personal narratives.¹⁰ Of course, it is possible that Macário draws from a variety of these restorying techniques throughout the film. While restorying is certainly an important dimension of story sharing and learning, as we see with Macário, it is just a starting point. Narrative pedagogy is also about conversing.

Conversing

When we revisit our experiences and form them into narratives we often share, and some-

times also discuss, those narratives with others. As researcher Howard Sklar noted, “narratives are implicitly *social*.”¹¹ With this view of storytelling in mind, we might say that conversing forms the second core aspect of narrative pedagogy. Focusing on an actual school context, Conle observed that, “The milieu most conducive for narrative interactions is a classroom climate that promotes personal, experiential reactions.”¹² In a general sense, the practice of narrative pedagogy presents people — both storytellers and listeners¹³ — with an opportunity to “share publicly and interpret their experiences.”¹⁴ The conversational manner in which Macário and Senhora explore the young man’s Lisbon narrative exhibits this dialogic process. For Macário, it is important to not only have someone who will listen to his story, but someone who will also converse with him about the story.

On one level, conversing is an important part of narrative pedagogy because it is transformative. Curriculum theorists Ivor Goodson and Scherto Gill reasoned that: “dialogic interaction and reciprocal encounters and exchanges” help lead to “shifts in individuals’ narrative characters.”¹⁵ To present people with opportunities to benefit from narrative exchanges, learning contexts rooted in narrative pedagogy gather individuals “into converging conversations wherein new possibilities for practice and education can be envisioned.”¹⁶ In *converging conversations*, people are encouraged “to describe personal meanings and significances about their experiences.”¹⁷ As Macário and Senhora journey to Algarve, and delve further into the young man’s entanglement with Luísa, the travelers engage in exactly this sort of a conversation. Ideally, according to Andrews et al., these exchanges inspire people to challenge their day-to-day assumptions about the world.¹⁸ When Senhora voices her response to different elements of Macário’s ongoing narrative, she prompts the distraught young man to revisit and, on occasion, even rethink events he has just described. Some overarching questions that might arise in conversations rooted in narrative reflection, include: “What does this subject mean to my life? How does it help me make sense of my life or give it direction?”¹⁹

But engaging in dialogue is not a given. For people to participate in conversations rooted in narrative reflection, they must not only have opportunities to speak, but they must also be empowered to speak. Additionally, those participating in a dialogue should feel that the space within which they are speaking is safe and open to multiple viewpoints. As Connelly and Clandinin noted, “In beginning the process of narrative inquiry, it is particularly important that all participants have voice within the relationship.”²⁰ In Conle’s view, the conversational nature of narrative pedagogy lends itself to collaborative learning where in-

dividuals, “are co-inquirers and co-learners, each with their own crucial expertise contributing to the process.”²¹

With the conversational nature of narrative pedagogy in mind, it is important to remember that *Eccentricities of a Blond-haired Girl* is essentially an extended dialogue between two travelers. More precisely, Macário and Senhora are at once on a physical journey through Portugal as well as a psychological journey into Macário’s past. Their psychological journey is guided by their conversation, with a series of flashbacks (some long and some short) interspersed throughout. While their actual dialogue comprises approximately eight minutes of screen time, which amounts to about one-eighth of the film, the exchanges between the Macário and Senhora are significant. While she is often a listener, Senhora expresses interest in Macário’s story on numerous occasions through her words and her body language. Her excitement encourages Macário to continue with his narrative, which considering its content is not an easy one to share. But Senhora’s contributions go beyond encouragement. From time to time she asks Macário to clarify, or elaborate on points he has made. And her questions persuade Macário to add details, as well as explanations, to support his observations. On occasion, Senhora even draws her own conclusions about Macário as well as his narrative. At one point, for instance, she tells the distraught traveler he is being bitter. Later in their conversation she informs him he has “the face of an honest lad.” Through actively dialoguing with Macário, Senhora contributes to the way his narrative is shared, which represents another narrative layer of the film.

Making Meaning

As we reflect on the narratives we share, as well as the ones we hear, we participate in conversations. Such conversations help us to reflect on, respond to, and ultimately understand the narrative at hand. More specifically, they also help us to consider not only what occurred in the narrative but also what it tells us about our lives. Both Macário and Senhora engage in this contemplative process throughout *Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl*.

In a general sense, we construct meaning as we contemplate our experiences.²² With this relationship between storytelling and meaning making in mind, we might say that narrative pedagogy is not about knowledge transfer, but rather about interpretation and construction. Connelly and Clandinin viewed this interaction as narrative inquiry, “a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and restorying.”²³ As Andrews et al. observed, narrative

pedagogy “engenders a relationship with skill acquisition and content that is situated in meanings and significances rather than knowledge alone.”²⁴ Further, as interactive thinking forms a part of our conversations, pedagogy rooted in the narrative mode: “focuses on processes such as teaching; interpreting; critically thinking; and analyzing concepts, ideas, and situations.”²⁵ But the atmosphere within which a conversation unfolds is also important. Imagine for instance, Macário defensively snapped at Senhora every time she asked for a clarification or expressed her thoughts on his narrative. Such behavior would perhaps have hindered the interactive nature of their journey. Perhaps it would have even ended their dialogue altogether. According to Scheckel and Ironside, the spaces where people take part in narrative exchanges need to encourage, and not detract from, discourse.²⁶

While trekking to Algarve, the two travelers make meaning of Macário’s narrative in a number of different ways. Macário seeks to understand how events in his past relate to one another. He selects certain occurrences from his memory to share with Senhora and discards others. The occurrences he selects present a larger sequence of events that, when taken together, form the narrative of his courtship with Luísa. By choosing to relate the events that he does, Macário identifies a perceived causal relationship between them. But Macário’s perspective of his own narrative goes beyond causality. He is also interested in the uniqueness of his experiences. Before beginning his narrative, for instance, he tells Senhora, “You can’t imagine what happened to me.” Later on, he states, “What happened next, you cannot even imagine.” In these two statements the young accountant is telling Senhora that his experiences are extraordinary. He believes that Luísa deceived him in love, and a friend deceived him in business. While being deceived isn’t necessarily extraordinary, Macário believes that the circumstances surrounding his dramatic experiences of deception were singular enough to make them extraordinary. In the following segment, which considers what exactly Macário and Senhora gained from their exchange, I will delve further into the matter of making meaning in *Eccentricities of a Blond-haired Girl*.

NARRATIVE BENEFITS ON A TRAIN

The interconnecting acts of developing, sharing, and analyzing our narratives are all important parts of our lives. As we better understand our past experiences we are better able to

face challenges in the present and prepare for the unknown future. Formulating and interacting with our personal narratives also helps us to construct and perceive our identity. On this point, Goodson and Gill argued that: “a person’s sense of self is imbedded in the narrative construction.”²⁷

While Macário and Senhora’s dialogue is clearly rooted in narrative pedagogy, it is important delve further into their prolonged exchange. In order to do this we might ask: How do the travelers benefit from their pedagogical exchange? To address this question, I have divided their benefits into two general categories: benefits for Macário and benefits for Senhora. I have further divided these benefits into five subcategories. For Macário, the storyteller, benefits include having an opportunity to: *restory* a personally significant experience and share that experience with an attentive listener, *dialogue* on the experience with his audience, and *make meaning* of the experience. For Senhora, the listener, benefits include having an opportunity to *hear* a good story, and *converse* with, and offer *help* to, the storyteller.

Benefits of Restorying and Sharing – Macário

One benefit for Macário is having a venue, and opportunity, to share his narrative. In telling his story, he relives his first few months in Lisbon as well as his trip to Cape Verde. During those months he worked as an accountant, often saw Luísa at the window across from his office, and quickly became captivated by her beauty and grace. He found a way to encounter Luísa in a social setting and soon thereafter courted her, with the approval of her mother. When he lost his job and was unable to find a new position, Macário quickly spiraled into near destitution. Although Luísa still wanted to marry him, he asked her to wait until he could regain a stable position; and for a period he reluctantly refrained from seeing her. After a business trip to Cape Verde, as well as a few set backs, the youthful accountant eventually regained his job, reestablished his savings, and became engaged to Luísa. While selecting a ring with his fiancée, however, Macário became aware of something that very quickly led him to end their engagement. And this is where his narrative ends.

Although Macário’s story contains many unpleasant memories and ultimately concludes unhappily, it is one he could not suppress. It haunts him. According to Conle, we share our stories with others because “there is a certain content that wants to be told.”²⁸ For Macário, the need to share his experience is powerful, and he even prefaces his narrative by telling Senhora: “I really need to get it off my chest.” The act of sharing his personal narra-

tive thus enables Macário to confront feelings of sorrow, anger, and confusion that are entangled with his memories. Perhaps the very act of telling his story is cathartic.

Benefits of Dialoguing – Macário

While articulating his story might be cathartic, Macário benefits from his storytelling experience in other ways. Very early in the film, the storytelling dynamic transforms into a dialogue between the narrator and listener. In this dialogue there is a clear element of reciprocity between the two travelers. Senhora not only informs Macário that she is willing to listen to his narrative, but on more than one occasion she excitedly tells him how curious she is and urges him to continue with his story. Rather than being a passive listener, Senhora asks questions and offers comments. Early on, for instance, she speculates, “And you fell in love with her?” Macário’s reply encapsulates his feelings about the entire affair, “That was my great misfortune.” Later, when describing Luísa’s curtains, Macário’s disdain noticeably surfaces as his tone of voice and words reveal scorn. After listening, and patiently waiting for Macário to finish his description, Senhora observes, “I see you are very bitter.” Macário’s anger subsides, and after pausing for a moment he quietly replies, “I am.” Perhaps having a thoughtful, eager audience is precisely what Macário needs as he revisits the emotional experience of falling in and out of love with Luísa. Dialoguing with Senhora provides the distraught traveler with an opportunity to not only articulate, but also discuss his recent troubles.

Benefits of Making Meaning – Macário

When telling his story to Senhora, Macário has an opportunity to gaze back in time and make sense of his past. “During this act of telling,” according to Conle, storytellers “are likely to remember or discover incidents and details not held in mind at the outset of the telling. This remembering may in fact even change their story or prompt a new understanding of it.”²⁹ In order to access his memories and restory them into a narrative, Macário takes a looking-back perspective and selects key events in his relationship with Luísa. Selecting these particular events in turn leads him to make connections, as the events offer insights into Luísa’s sense of honesty as well as his own sense of trust.

In the early part of his narrative, Macário describes the first time he came face to face with Luísa. It occurred when the young lady and her mother were visiting the shop located

below Macário's office. Shortly after the visit Macário learned that some "150 Euros worth of handkerchiefs" went missing from the shop on that very day. Later, when detailing the evening he first met Luísa, Macário recalls a poker game in which he participated. During the game, a poker chip slipped and rolled along the table, toward Luísa. When she moved to catch the chip it suddenly disappeared. Luísa claimed that she was unable to locate the chip, and it was never found. At the conclusion of his story Macário relates what occurred on the day the couple went to purchase an engagement ring. While selecting a ring, as well as a pair of earrings, a diamond ring went missing from the display tray. Although Macário was unaware of what had occurred, Luísa's sleight of hand did not go unnoticed. Soon thereafter, when the couple prepared to exit the store, the shopkeeper confronted Macário. Shocked and embarrassed, the young accountant quickly paid 500 Euros for the ring Luísa was clutching. In retrospect, a theme of theft and deception runs through Macário's encounters with Luísa.

According to Conle, oral or written discourse aims to convey not only an event but also a larger series of events.³⁰ Macário's narrative presents a pattern of events, where it seems that Luísa deceived him on three separate occasions. While the poker chip and missing handkerchief incidents might not have stood out to Macário when they occurred, his perspective of looking back leads him to draw connections and recognize a possible pattern of deception. Conle called this process *narrative playback*.³¹ Highlighting the reflective aspect of narrative playback, Ironside noted that narrative pedagogy helps people "think through and interpret the experiences they encounter."³²

Having a venue to restory his past and discuss it with a thoughtful listener prompts Macário to consider not only how events fit together, but also how they resonate with his life. The young man's process of making connections between events in his personal narrative might help him to approach situations of trust and relationships in the future. According to Connelly and Clandinin, "Stories function as arguments in which we learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community, as lived."³³ For Macário, this learning involves his view of honesty, trust, love, and in particular, situations where the three intersect. Through his process of making meaning of his narrative, Macário develops certain knowledge of himself. Self-knowledge, in the words of van Manen, is ultimately "related to the search for one's own life story."³⁴

Benefits of Hearing a Good Story – Senhora

While journeying to Algarve, Senhora gets to hear a *good story*. And she benefits from this experience in two ways. On one level she converses with Macário, the storyteller; and on another level she offers him her help. However, before analyzing these benefits for Senhora it is necessary to do two things. First, I will establish what it means for a story to be *good*, and second I will consider whether or not we might say Macário's Lisbon narrative is a *good story*.

To establish what it means for a story to be good I will draw from narrative paradigm theory. First coined by Walter Fisher, narrative paradigm theory entered into our lexicon in the early 1980s. When outlining the theory, Fisher proposed that human communication is firmly rooted in a narrative mode, whereby "all normal human discourse is meaningful and is subject to the tests of narrative rationality."³⁵ He further contended that, "meaning is a matter of history, culture, and character as well as linguistic convention and interanimation."³⁶ Two foundational components of the paradigm, according to Fisher, are narrative probability and narrative fidelity. Narrative probability stems from an individual's schema regarding storytelling and story structure.³⁷ It is one's awareness of "what constitutes a coherent story."³⁸ Narrative fidelity is "whether the stories [people] experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives."³⁹ Elaborating on this premise, Fisher stated that narrative fidelity: "concerns the "truth qualities" of the story, the degree to which it accords with the logic of good reasons: the soundness of its reasoning and the value of its values."⁴⁰ Good stories, however, push beyond narrative probability and fidelity. When researching the affect of fictional characters on young audiences, Sklar noted that the core activities of narrativity are "observing and judging."⁴¹ Similarly, Fisher noted that: "*good stories function in two ways: to justify (or mystify) decisions or actions already made or performed and to determine future decisions or actions.*"⁴² In short, good stories also link to judgment.

According to narrative paradigm theory, good stories demonstrate narrative probability and fidelity, and help us to both judge things and understand ourselves. With this framework in mind, we might ask: How does the narrative Macário shares with Senhora exhibit these qualities, if at all? In order to assess the young accountant's story through the lens of narrative probability, we need to pose a further question, namely: How does Macário's Lisbon narrative constitute what we would call a coherent story? To answer this question, we

might draw from Conle's fivefold definition of narrative, which includes a "temporal sequence, a plot, characters, a context, and [...] the sense of an ending."⁴³ In terms of temporal sequence, Macário's story follows his first few months in Lisbon along with his trip to Cape Verde in forward moving chronological order. The plot's foreground concerns itself with his courtship with Luísa. It's middle ground and background depict Macário's relationship with his uncle, his struggles with money and work, and his business interactions with the man in the straw hat. The context of Macário's story is Portugal in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis. Regarding the sense of an ending, the breakup between Macário and Luísa presents a denouement to Macário's story. In sum, Macário's Lisbon narrative exhibits narrative probability in a variety of ways.

While Macário's narrative demonstrates narrative probability there is also the dimension of narrative fidelity to consider. Drawing from Fisher to consider the matter of fidelity, we might ask: How does Macário's narrative accord with "the soundness of its reasoning and the value of its values?"⁴⁴ Macário's story conveys narrative fidelity in three key ways. First, it is the story of a young man trying to start his life in a new city. The challenges he faces with securing adequate employment and paying his bills are common challenges and his attempts to overcome these challenges quite plausible. To find a new job he contacts former business associates and when his funds run precariously low he seeks help from his uncle. Second, when Macário has a second opportunity to work in Cape Verde he deeply struggles with this decision, as travelling would once again separate him from his beloved Luísa. For Macário, the very thought of separation is upsetting. Balancing family and work commitments is not always easy, and it is reasonable for Macário to struggle with this decision. Third, the distraught accountant's narrative depicts what it is like to fall in love and then be deeply disappointed by that person. Shocked to discover that Luísa had attempted to steal a ring from a jewelry shop, Macário responded by breaking off his engagement. While the manner in which Macário ended the relationship with Luísa was certainly abrupt, it was not unsurprising given his intense feelings of disillusionment. Although there are other examples of narrative fidelity in Macário's Lisbon narrative, these three examples indicate key ways in which the young accountant's story demonstrates narrative fidelity.

Benefits of Conversing and Helping – Senhora

In listening to Macário's Lisbon narrative Senhora becomes, in a sense, the young account-

ant's audience. While she retrospectively *observes* Macário's unfortunate recent experiences, she transforms into more than a *sympathetic witness* as the film unfolds.⁴⁵ By the end of the film, Senhora has become a participant in the larger narrative of Macário's life. Having an opportunity to converse with, and offer help to, Macário leads to a variety of benefits for Senhora. On one level, she benefits from dialoguing with the storyteller. While listening to the young man share his story, Senhora occasionally poses questions to ask for clarification. She also, on occasion, put forward her own views and interpretations of the events in Macário's narrative, as well as their implication. Because I provided examples of Senhora's queries and observations earlier in this paper I will not delve into their details here.

By pausing his narrative to respond to Senhora's queries and listen to her comments, Macário demonstrates a readiness to engage in a dialogue with his fellow traveler. Senhora not only has an opportunity to listen to Macário's narrative – a good story – but she also has an opportunity to discuss its content and meaning. Because she is welcomed to express herself as a listener, the space within which Senhora engages in dialogue is one of respect and empowerment. And her exchange with Macário is one of participatory inquiry. Reflecting on the atmosphere within which narrative pedagogical exchanges unfold, van Manen noted: "spaces can be created where pedagogical relations in classrooms and schools have a chance to emerge, to be nurtured and strengthened."⁴⁶ As previously mentioned, the train care within which the seatmates speed forward is one where Senhora feels safe to articulate her views.

The dialogue between Senhora and Macário presents Senhora with a venue, and space where she feels safe in expressing her views, but it also, on another level, presents her with an opportunity to offer help. According to Brown et al., "Telling personal experiences promotes empathy and understanding."⁴⁷ While the act of telling his story might be cathartic for Macário, the content of his narrative remains painful. As an active and thoughtful listener, Senhora is able to offer affirmation and solace to the storyteller on numerous occasions throughout the film. Near the end of the narrative, for instance, as Macário relives the distress he felt when deciding whether or not he would return to Cape Verde for a second business trip, Senhora calmly nods in agreement. Without using words she silently indicates that she is listening to Macário, she understands his pain, and she empathizes with his dilemma. As a consequence, Senhora offers both affirmation and a "sympathetic response," to her fellow traveler.⁴⁸

On one level, conversing with Macário leads Senhora to listen to his narrative and make meaning of what she heard. But she also has a chance to support the distressed storyteller. Not only does she have a voice but she also engages in a critical thought process and bonds with the storyteller. As Brown et al. observed, “Cognitively, narratives help improve learning and problem solving; affectively, they help instill hope; interpersonally, they serve as a socialization tool, helping to establish trust and promote bonding; finally they help foster personal growth.”⁴⁹

IMPLICATIONS FOR *ECCENTRICITIES OF A BLONDE-HAIRED GIRL*

In sharing his Lisbon narrative with Senhora, Macário acts as a storyteller throughout *Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl*. As the two travelers converse about the young man’s trying experiences, they make meaning of his narrative and Macário’s act of storytelling transforms into an exchange. While both Macário and Senhora benefit from their exchange it is important to consider what it means for the film itself. To examine the relationship between Macário’s storytelling, the seatmates’ experience of narrative pedagogy, and the storytelling of the film itself, I address the following question in this segment: What are the implications of Macário and Senhora’s exchange for the film?

Narrative Layering

Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl is a film with multiple narrative layers. In a wider sense, the film is a cinematic narrative, with director Oliveira performing role of storyteller. In a narrower sense, the film portrays a distraught young man who is telling his own story while journeying on a train. Rather than opening the film in the past, Oliveira launches Macário’s Lisbon narrative *after* establishing the young accountant as narrating protagonist. Moreover, before Macário begins to tell his story, Oliveira’s audience already knows its end result. We know that the young man’s entanglement with Luísa will ultimately prompt him to leave Lisbon in a distraught state, as we see in the film’s opening. By sketching Macário’s character and situation before jumping into his narrative, Oliveira gives the young man’s story a clear voice. Narrative framing helps Oliveira provide a rich context for the events depicted in the film’s extended flashbacks.

Macário is a naïve storyteller who has been shaken by his experiences in Lisbon. Senhora is a thoughtful listener. Because Macário is presented as a quiet, likeable man who is clearly troubled by his recent experiences, Oliveira's audience is invited to feel for his difficult situation. Because Senhora sympathizes with the young accountant, the film's audience is not only privy to Macário's storytelling but the very telling of the story is a human exchange. In a sense, Oliveira's use of narrative layering personalizes the events portrayed in the film's extended flashbacks. As Sklar noted, "narratives provide absorptive experiences" as the audience becomes "immersed in the events and details of a story and the sensations that they produce."⁵⁰ For *Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl*, narrative layering deepens the audience's emotional, and absorptive, experience.

Inter/Active Proxy Listener

Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl depicts the story of Macário telling his narrative to a smartly dressed lady on a train. The narrative Macário shares opens enigmatically. Before beginning, the troubled young man tells the lady: "You cannot imagine what happened to me." His narrative is elusive in other ways as well. Macário knows little of Luísa, and consequently her actions — such as trying to steal a ring — are left unexplained. The enigmatic nature of Macário's experiences quickly draws Senhora into his narrative, and just as Senhora is drawn into Macário's narrative we, as Oliveira's audience, are drawn into the film. Senhora, however, is more than a proxy for the film's audience. At times, she asks for clarifications, articulates her observations, and occasionally affirms her new acquaintance. Because she both engages in and responds to Macário's narrative, Senhora becomes inter/active listener as the film progresses.

Senhora both listens and responds to Macário's story. When she poses questions to Macário, she does so on behalf of the audience. The clarifications Macário provides for Senhora not only benefit her but they also benefit those who are watching the film. When Senhora affirms Macário, whether it is through her words or her body language, she sympathizes with the distraught narrator on behalf of the film's audience. Through Senhora, Oliveira's audience is, in a sense, able to indirectly interact with Macário. As an inter/active proxy listener Senhora is also a critical interpreter of what she hears from Macário. Whenever she challenges Macário, as she does when she tells him he is bitter, her comments serve multiple purposes. Some who watch the film might have been thinking the same things and

in such cases, Senhora's comments would serve to articulate their thoughts. Her challenges also act as a sort of warning. Senhora is warning the film's audience that the narrative Macário is about to share will be told through a subjective lens — one that is tinted by his bitterness.

CONCLUSION

Narrative pedagogy begins with our experiences. Utilizing our declarative memory we populate and structure narratives, which we then share with others. As we revisit past experiences, as Macário does throughout the film, we reconfigure them. In part, this is because we recall things differently each time we tap into our declarative memory.⁵¹ While speeding to Algarve, Macário selects episodes from his relationship with Luísa and then recounts them to Senhora. As the travelers' exchange indicates, the process of sharing personal narratives can be highly interactive. On such occasions, we engage in dialogues about our narratives, and collaboratively explore such questions as: What happened? Why did these things happen? What do these things mean for my understanding of the world? Of course, Macário's narrative raises additional questions about love, honesty, and trust, including: What does it mean to be honest? How can I know when to trust someone? How can I love someone I cannot trust? While these questions are complicated, they are universal. In van Manen's view, "It is the significance of good narratives that they tend to reveal universal aspects of human beings."⁵²

Although Macário restories his past when sharing his Lisbon narrative with Senhora, the story itself is not an example of narrative pedagogy. The travelers only become pedagogues through their exchange. By interactively examining and making meaning of Macário's recent experiences, the seatmates demonstrate key processes and benefits of narrative pedagogy. On a wider scale, by depicting a storytelling process, Oliveira layers the narrative of the film, which contextualizes Macário's story and gives it a strong personal voice. By presenting Senhora as an inter/active proxy listener, the director draws his audience — who are also listening to Macário's story — into the film, where it is possible to vicariously interact with the young man who is sharing his personal narrative. *Eccentricities of a Blond-haired Girl* is a film about love and trust. It is also a story about a young man who is telling

his own difficult narrative. The film offers its audience a layered, educative experience that captures how we use narratives to understand our past and connect with others.

1. Macário refers to his seatmate as *Senhora* throughout the film. In English, the word means *Lady*. From hereon I will refer to the lady as *Senhora*.

2. Key theorists who focus on narrative pedagogy include Kieran Egan, Nancy Diekelmann, and Carola Conle. Additionally, while F. Michael Connolly and Donald E. Polkinghorne practice narrative inquiry, much of their work overlaps with narrative pedagogy. Narrative inquirers draw from the voices and stories of participants in a research context. Like narrative pedagogy, inquiry involves the processes of listening to personal stories and dialoguing with storytellers to make meaning of one's experiences. See Kieran Egan, *Teaching as Storytelling: An Alternative Approach to Teaching and the Curriculum* (London: Routledge, 1988) and Donald E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988). Also see Ivor S. Goodson and Scherto R. Gill, *Narrative Pedagogy: Life History and Learning* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2011) and Walter Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *Communication Monographs* 51 (1984): 1-22.

3. For an overview of our understanding of memory, see Larry R. Squire, "Memory Systems of the Brain: A Brief History and Current Perspective," *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory* 82 (2004): 171-177. To learn about declarative memory, see Neil Burgess, Eleanor A. Maguire, and John O'Keefe. "The Human Hippocampus and Spatial and Episodic Memory," *Neuron* 35 (2002): 625-641. To read about links between declarative memory and storytelling, see Peter Hazel, "Toward a Narrative Pedagogy for Interactive Learning Environments," *Interactive Learning Environments* 16.3 (2008): 199-213.

4. Carola Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula," *Educational Researcher* 32:3 (2003): 5.

5. F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," *Educational Researcher* 19.5 (1990): 2-14.

6. *Ibid.*, 4.

7. Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula," 10. To read about research on memory instability see Peter S.B. Finnin and Karim Nader, "The Role of Metaplasticity Mechanisms in Regulating Memory Destabilization and Reconsolidation," *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 36 (2012): 1667-1707.

8. For further discussion on the subject of memory instability, see Karim Nader and Oliver Hardt, "A Single Standard for Memory: The Case for Reconsolidation," *Nature Reviews* 10 (2009): 224-234.

9. Connelly and Clandinin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," 2.

10. For a discussion on story truth and happening truth, see Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula."

11. Howard Sklar, "Narrative as Experience: The Pedagogical Implications of Sympathizing with Fictional Characters," *Partial Answers* 6.2 (2008): 491.

12. Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula," 5.

13. From hereon I will use the word *listener* in place of *listener-reader-viewer*.

14. Catherine A. Andrews, Pamela M. Ironside, Catherine Nosek, Sharon L. Sims, Melinda M. Swenson, Christine Yeomans, Patricia K. Young, and Nancy Diekelmann, "Enacting Narrative Pedagogy: The Lived Experiences of Students and Teachers," *Nursing and Health Care Perspectives* 22.5 (2001): 253.

15. Goodson and Gill, *Narrative Pedagogy: Life History and Learning*, 114.

16. Pamela M. Ironside. "Using Narrative Pedagogy: Learning and Practising Interpretive Thinking," *Issues and Innovations in Nursing Education* 55.4 (2005): 479.

17. Andrews, Ironside, Nosek, Sims, Swenson, Yeomans, Young, and Diekelmann, "Enacting Narrative Pedagogy: The Lived Experiences of Students and Teachers," 255.

18. *Ibid.*, 253-254.

19. Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula," 13.

20. Connelly and Clandinin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," 4.

21. Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula," 4.

22. See Ironside, "Using Narrative Pedagogy: Learning and Practising Interpretive Thinking."

23. Connelly and Clandinin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," 4.

24. Andrews, Ironside, Nosek, Sims, Swenson, Yeomans, Young, and Diekelmann, "Enacting Narrative Pedagogy: The Lived Experiences of Students and Teachers," 258.

25. Sylvia T. Brown, Mary K. Kirkpatrick, Dana Mangum, and Jeanette Avery. "A Review of Narrative Pedagogy Strategies to Transform Traditional Nursing Education," *Educational Innovations* 47.6 (2008): 283.
26. Martha M. Scheckel and Pamela M. Ironside. "Cultivating Interpretive Thinking Through Enacting Narrative Pedagogy," *Nursing Outlook* 54 (2006).
27. Goodson and Gill, *Narrative Pedagogy: Life History and Learning*, 114.
28. Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula," 6.
29. *Ibid.*, 7.
30. *Ibid.*, 5.
31. *Ibid.*, 10.
32. Ironside, "Using Narrative Pedagogy: Learning and Practising Interpretive Thinking," 485.
33. Connelly and Clandinin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," 8.
34. Max van Manen. "Pedagogy, Virtue, and Narrative Identity in Teaching," *Curriculum Inquiry* 24.2 (1994): 159.
35. Walter Fisher, "The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration," *Communication Monographs* 52 (1985): 351.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," 8.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Fisher, "The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration," 349-350.
41. Sklar, "Narrative as Experience," 484.
42. Fisher, "The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration," 362.
43. Conle, "An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula," 5.
44. Fisher, "The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration," 349-350.
45. To read more about the benefits for *sympathetic witnesses*, see Sklar, "Narrative as Experience," 481-501.
46. van Manen, "Narrative Identity in Teaching," 152.
47. Brown, Kirkpatrick, Mangum, and Avery, "A Review of Narrative Pedagogy Strategies to Transform Traditional Nursing Education," 284.
48. To read more about the affective and cognitive dimensions of sympathy in relation to audience experiences with fictional characters, see Sklar, "Narrative as Experience," 483.
49. Brown, Kirkpatrick, Mangum, and Avery, "A Review of Narrative Pedagogy Strategies to Transform Traditional Nursing Education," 284.
50. Sklar, "Narrative as Experience," 492.
51. See Squire, "Memory Systems of the Brain: A Brief History and Current Perspective." Also see Burgess, Maguire, and O'Keefe, "The Human Hippocampus and Spatial and Episodic Memory."
52. Van Manen, "Narrative Identity in Teaching," 160.

PAULO ROCHA NO CINEMA PORTUGUÊS¹

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1. INTRODUÇÃO

Paulo Rocha foi, com Fernando Lopes, António de Macedo e alguns outros, um nome fundamental no arranque e estabelecimento do Novo Cinema Português dos anos 60 do Século XX, com profundas influências nos cineastas que, já nos anos 70, se lhe seguiram.

Ir-se-á abordar brevemente a sua obra, atravessada pelo *modernismo*, bebido nomeadamente no *primeiro modernismo português*, e pela *modernidade cinematográfica* que contrapôs ao cinema português anterior. Com recurso a uma metodologia biográfica e histórica, tentar-se-á identificar no cinema de Paulo Rocha os traços que mais fundamentamente o marcaram quer temática (do *trágico* na acepção grega antiga ao *lírico* como assomo sentimental, do *épico* passado ao *mítico* como simbolização herdada)² quer estilisticamente (a *novidade* e a *frescura do olhar*, o *plano-sequência com profundidade de campo* como figura moderna do cinema usada de forma original, a *colagem espacial* e a *composição fragmentária* do modernismo).³

Dessa forma, e com largo recurso a depoimentos do próprio cineasta e de qualificados contemporâneos seus, se tentará identificar a *poética fílmica* que, no sentido composicional e no sentido criativo, marca a sua obra.

2. AS ORIGENS E OS INÍCIOS

Nascido no Porto em 22 de Dezembro de 1935, o cineasta português Paulo Rocha, depois de ter estudado num colégio de jesuítas em Santo Tirso, chegou durante os anos 50 a Lisboa e rapidamente se tornou um homem cosmopolita, conhecedor do melhor cinema mas também das outras artes e da vida, com que travara contacto na sua cidade natal, onde precocemente mostrou um interesse especial pelo Japão. O primeiro filme japonês que viu foi *Jigoku-mon* (*Gate of Hell*, 1953), de Teinosuke Kinugasa, que em Portugal se chamou *Amores de Samurai* e em 1954 recebeu a Palma de Ouro em Cannes. Em Lisboa, para onde foi estudar Direito, es-

teve ligado ao Centro Cultural de Cinema e à equipa que viria a estar, na década seguinte, na origem da revista cultural “O Tempo e o Modo.” Em 1959 foi para Paris onde, no I.D.H.E.C. (Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques), concluiu em três anos o curso de realização. Esta permanência em Paris foi muito importante, decisiva mesmo, porque lhe permitiu conhecer a obra de cineastas maiores, nomes de referência do cinema clássico como Fritz Lang, Kenji Mizoguchi e Jean Renoir, com o qual veio a estagiar como assistente em *O Cabo de Guerra (Le caporal épinglé, 1962)*. Mas entre as suas preferências contavam-se também Manoel de Oliveira, que conhecera no Porto, no estúdio cinematográfico instalado na sua própria casa, e Carl Th. Dreyer. Em Paris descobriu, além das vanguardas, a literatura chinesa e japonesa.

Assim, quando se estreia no cinema com *Os Verdes Anos* (1963), feito a seguir ao seu regresso a Portugal, Paulo Rocha sabe o que quer, com preferências definidas na vanguarda (Stockhausen, o teatro Nô, Ezra Pound, o teatro Kabuki) e no cinema.

Os seus dois primeiros filmes, de uma grande modernidade face ao cinema português da época em que dominavam o conformismo e um cinema comercial baixo, eram filmes essencialmente clássicos, feitos sob a influência dos grandes clássicos do cinema cujos filmes ele conhecera durante os três anos da sua permanência em Paris. Ora admiti-lo e reconhecê-lo implica também reconhecer que ele e o Novo Cinema Português dos anos 60 — incluindo naturalmente Manoel de Oliveira, de quem ele sempre foi muito próximo — foram os verdadeiros protagonistas de um *cinema clássico português*, num país que antes deles, por razões essencialmente políticas, ligadas ao Estado Novo, não o teve — e em todo o caso o cinema português anterior, salvo Oliveira, não só não lhes servia de referência como o rejeitavam.

O próprio Rocha não escondia o seu cepticismo em relação à *nouvelle vague* francesa, pelo que, embora o Novo Cinema Português possa ser entendido como o equivalente dela e dos *cinemas novos* de então, não se deve esquecer que ele, pelo menos no seu início com as Produções Cunha Telles, foi o verdadeiro *classicismo* no cinema português, com Rocha, Fernando Lopes, António de Macedo, nomeadamente, surgidos depois do fracasso inglório (ou glorioso) de Manuel Guimarães, situável na pré-história desse *cinema novo*. De facto, inutilizável o cinema anterior como paradigma clássico, estes cineastas tiveram que, cada qual usando as suas próprias referências no cinema clássico mundial, instaurar com a sua modernidade um primeiro paradigma clássico no cinema português.

Os Verdes Anos, baseado num *fait divers* de imprensa, instaurava a tragédia em pleno lirismo, entre um jovem par de namorados, ele chegado da província, ela criada de uma família burguesa, uma tragédia que eclodia num momento terminal de uma personagem introvertida e pulsional (O “Ai, minha senhora” com que Ilda/Isabel Ruth morre é inesquecível). *Mudar de Vida* (1966) surpreendia no seu regresso da guerra colonial e de África um homem que vai encontrar a sua antiga namorada casada com o seu próprio irmão e depois disso, enquanto ela sofre e morre (“Lembraste-me longe, esqueceste-me perto. Todos carregamos a nossa cruz,” diz Júlia/Maria Barroso a Adelino/Geraldo d’El Rey), encontra numa mulher mais nova (“Só me põe a mão quem eu quero,” diz Albertina/Isabel Ruth ao mesmo Adelino) uma possibilidade de esperança. Mas a Lisboa do primeiro filme e a praia do Furadouro do segundo, com momentos documentais da pesca inteiramente novos e uma filmagem excepcional da terra e do mar, não tinham já nada a ver com o cinema que se fizera nas três décadas anteriores em Portugal, tinham uma frescura e uma novidade, uma sensualidade e um erotismo, que faziam desses filmes um novo início, o verdadeiro início do cinema português.

Se os seus dois primeiros filmes, *Os Verdes Anos* e *Mudar de Vida*, absolutamente fundadores do Novo Cinema Português (o primeiro recebeu mesmo o prémio para a primeira obra no Festival de Locarno), dão conta de um país fechado, cercado, em que no segundo é, apesar de tudo, permitida a esperança no final, não espanta que, logo em 1975, Paulo Rocha parta para o Japão, onde vai permanecer durante nove anos como Adido Cultural junto da Embaixada de Portugal em Tóquio. Antes disso, estivera na Direcção do Centro Português de Cinema, cooperativa de cineastas apoiada pela Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, que esteve na base da segunda fase do Novo Cinema Português, e na comissão instaladora da Escola Piloto para a Formação de Profissionais de Cinema, que depois evoluiu para a Escola Superior de Cinema do Conservatório Nacional, hoje Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema, e foi a primeira forma que revestiu o ensino oficial do cinema em Portugal.

3. O JAPÃO

Assim, sem fugir de Portugal, Paulo Rocha, que entretanto já viajara muito (Canadá, Nova Iorque, Nepal, Moçambique, México), foi procurar o que lhe interessava no Extremo-Oriente, concretamente no Japão pelo qual sentira uma atracção precoce, que o teatro e o cinema sem

dúvida alimentaram. Tinha sido notória, aliás, a influência da gravura japonesa e de Kenji Mizoguchi nos seus dois primeiros filmes, nomeadamente do ponto de vista plástico da composição visual do plano — os dois jovens perdidos na cidade nova e nos espaços desérticos envolventes em *Os Verdes Anos*, a praia de pescadores pobres em *Mudar de Vida*, de que Jorge Silva Melo viu bem a complexidade, a tragédia e a inspiração visual.⁴

No Japão vai interessar-lhe em especial a literatura antiga, tanto chinesa como japonesa, sobre a qual vai construir os seus filmes seguintes, mantendo embora a raiz portuguesa das suas personagens. De facto, nos nove cantos de *A Ilha dos Amores* (1982), em *A Ilha de Moraes* (1984) e em *O Desejado ou As Montanhas da Lua* (1987) ele procura encontrar as origens que lhe interessam sem perder de vista que trabalha sobre um terreno perigoso, porque escorregadio, que é o de um cruzamento de culturas, propício a extrapolações precipitadas e simplificações perigosas. Mas a cultura e o conhecimento de causa dele levam tudo de vencida.

Aqui é preciso perceber como, depois de dois primeiros filmes extraordinários na sua modernidade, e das curtas-metragens *Sever do Vouga – Uma Experiência* (1970), uma encomenda em que usa pela primeira vez a cor e o som directo, e *Pousada das Chagas* (1971), filme fundamental porque, no projecto de filmar a arte sacra, segundo ele “[c]om a ajuda do Peixinho saiu um auto modernista, uma colagem de vozes, textos, objectos, espaços, corpos, pulsações,”⁵ o cineasta decide que é fora de Portugal que pode eventualmente encontrar o que lhe interessa, o que como criador cinematográfico procura. Não é, por certo, apenas o exotismo de uma cultura diferente e mítica que então lhe interessa e o que o chama, mas o mistério que se esconde por trás das culturas milenares do Extremo Oriente.

Parafraseando o início da epígrafe de *Clepsydra*, de Camilo Pessanha (1920) — *Eu vi a luz em um país perdido* —, Paulo Rocha terá percebido que, para encontrar alguma coisa do que mais lhe interessava e era propício à sua criação, teria que partir, e partir para longe, como antes dele desde as Descobertas portuguesas outros fizeram — Camilo Pessanha, nome de referência do *simbolismo*, com grande influência sobre e mesmo proximidade do *primeiro modernismo*, e Wenceslau de Moraes, escritor do *exotismo com motivação decadentista e neo-romântica*, menos de um século antes.⁶

Além de encontrar Portugal no Extremo Oriente, o que aliás procurava desde o final dos anos 60 com o projecto de *A Ilha dos Amores*, Paulo Rocha vai submeter os seus filmes a uma evolução muito curiosa que aqui deve ser assinalada.

Na terra do clássico mais amado e, para ele, mais influente, Kenji Mizoguchi, Paulo Rocha vai tentar ser radicalmente moderno, *modernista* mesmo, o que vem de *Pousada das Chagas* e em *Máscara de Aço contra Abismo Azul* (1988) vai sofrer uma outra evolução reveladora. Como ele próprio dizia,

a partir da *Pousada*, a colagem passa a dominar o meu trabalho. Colagem, plano-sequência, recusa da psicologia, do plano subjectivo, do campo contra-campo, do grande-plano. Recurso à cena teatral, à frontalidade, ao espelho. A forma da *Ilha* vem da *Pousada*.⁷

E são, então, os planos fixos muito longos, expositivos e contemplativos sem a simples justificação de um texto, como em Manoel de Oliveira, que em *A Ilha dos Amores* dão forma cinematográfica original e única aos labirintos do tempo, do sonho e da memória de uma personagem e de um povo enquanto se aproxima de uma outra cultura, de uma outra civilização, com as suas próprias regras, hábitos e práticas, de convívio e artísticas. E com esse pretexto o cineasta revisita Camões e *Os Lusíadas*, Vasco da Gama e as Descobertas portuguesas, de novo com recurso à colagem de textos mas também à colagem em profundidade no interior de planos longos.

Será preciso, pois, perceber que Rocha não se perde, nem perde de vista o seu país, quando se afasta para penetrar nas culturas mais distantes. O que ele então faz é procurar o que o atrai para aí se procurar a si próprio, satisfazer a sua precoce curiosidade, descobrir a sua expressão pessoal. Mas para isso vai, ao mesmo tempo, procurar o operador de fotografia de *Anatahan* (*A Saga de Anatahan*, 1954), de Josef von Sternberg, o mítico Kozo Okazaki que trabalhara no cinema japonês clássico, e com quem voltaria a trabalhar em *O Desejado*, para lhe juntar os dois melhores directores de fotografia portugueses, Acácio de Almeida e Elso Roque.

Sempre argumentista dos seus próprios filmes, Paulo Rocha soube rodear-se dos melhores colaboradores. Falemos então de colaborações: em *Os Verdes Anos* a adaptação e os diálogos de Nuno de Bragança, então futuro grande escritor moderno português; em *Mudar de Vida* os diálogos de António Reis, poeta realista *sui generis* e futuro grande cineasta moderno português; a música de Carlos Paredes em ambos, com versos de Pedro Tamen no primeiro; Elso Roque, que fora assistente de Luc Mirot em *Os Verdes Anos*, passa a director de fotografia em *Mudar de Vida*, função que passa para Acácio de Almeida e Augusto Cabrita em *Sever*

do Vouga – *Uma Experiência* (em que surge a voz de Alexandre O'Neill e a música de Fernando Lopes Graça), e em que fica apenas o primeiro em *Pousada das Chagas*.

Continuemos a falar de colaborações: os actores — Rui Gomes, Isabel Ruth, Rui Furtado e Paulo Renato em *Os Verdes Anos*, Geraldo d'El Rey, Maria Barroso, João Guedes e Isabel Ruth em *Mudar de Vida*, precedem a chegada de Luís Miguel Cintra e Clara Joana em *Pousada das Chagas*, uma presença que se vai manter em *A Ilha dos Amores* onde, como Wenceslau de Moraes, ele terá tido a interpretação da sua vida, e em *O Desejado ou As Montanhas da Lua*. Mas o que aqui importará sublinhar é que a Isabel Ruth de *Os Verdes Anos* e de *Mudar de Vida* terá sido talhada sobre o modelo da actriz japonesa Machiko Kyo, intérprete de *Amores de Samurai* de Teinosuke Kinugase e de vários filmes de Kenji Mizoguchi como *Ugetsu Monogatari* (*Os Contos da Lua Vaga*, 1953), *Yokichi* (*A Imperatriz Yang Kwei-Fei*, 1955), *Akasen Chitai* (*A Rua da Vergonha*, 1956), como notou justamente João Bénard da Costa.⁸

Portanto, *A Ilha os Amores* de novo e sempre, que terá sido a obra-prima de Paulo Rocha pela sua radical e intransigente modernidade construída sobre o clássico *Nove Canções*, escrito no Século IV a.C. pelo mais antigo poeta chinês de que se conhece o nome, Chu Yuan, que na sua cabeça se juntava aos *Cantos* de Ezra Pound, a *Os Lusíadas* e, pela via do “tema erótico da viagem dos espíritos que voltam a este mundo para um encontro amoroso — a viagem chamanística —, era próximo dos temas do teatro *Nô* e do livro de Moraes sobre *A Dança dos Mortos, O Bon-Odori de Tokushima*.”⁹ Sobre o chinês Chu Yuan, Paulo Rocha esclareceu: “Desterrado numa terra do sul, teria encontrado, entre populações primitivas, nove canções chamanísticas, que ele reescreveu numa forma mais literária.”¹⁰ E então aí tudo se mistura, a imagem e o texto, o épico e o mítico, o lírico e o trágico, numa mistura fabulosa e única.

Detenhamo-nos no trágico que, aliado ao lirismo, vinha de *Os Verdes Anos*, filme que o cineasta considerara “parente pobre” de *M* (*Matou*, 1931) de Fritz Lang,¹¹ e de *Mudar de Vida*, em que tinha contraponto na esperança, no final permitida apenas aos mais novos. O trágico tem, na sua original formulação pelo teatro da Grécia Antiga, uma relação com um destino, funesto, que dita por si o destino fatal do herói.¹² Numa linha que não encontra precedentes no cinema português, Paulo Rocha acolhe a sombra da tragédia antiga desde os seus primeiros filmes mas sobretudo em *A Ilha dos Amores*, em que o destino espera Wenceslau de Moraes com as suas duas sucessivas mulheres japonesas, Oyoné Fukumoto/Yoshiko Mita em Kobe e a sua sobrinha, Ko-Haru/Atsuko Murakumo em Tokushima, num filme com diálo-

gos que são colagens de textos prodigiosas e abismais de Luíza Neto Jorge e Sumiko Haneda, que incluem textos do próprio Moraes.

A deste filme é a mais sublime e também a mais trágica história de amor do cinema português, em que o moderno acolhe o clássico de maneira superior — nem Manoel de Oliveira foi tão longe como Rocha aqui vai, tanto narrativa como esteticamente, na conjunção entre amor e morte. Os planos-sequência muito longos, nocturnos, recortados numa iluminação precisa, contrapõem-se aos planos diurnos, também eles longos, solares, que acolhem mais o mito e o épico. As noites profundas do filme entre Moraes e Oyoné, entre Moraes e Ko-Haru, são trabalhadas pelo lírico e pelo trágico, que desde os dois filmes inaugurais estão aliados na obra do autor. Num filme em que o próprio cineasta interpreta Camilo Pessanha, a ideia da máquina do mundo, as correspondências entre Macau (com a conversa por trás do busto de Camões), o Japão e Lisboa, a cena do banho com a sua marionetista, os diferentes tempos no mesmo plano-sequência (o que é raríssimo no cinema — Théo Angelopoulos em termos formalmente mais rígidos), a leitura a Wenceslau de Moraes do texto sobre a sua própria morte marcam contrastes abissais. Aliás toda esta obra imensa é atravessada e trabalhada pelas energias que dimanam dos próprios actores, uma questão que, a partir de Dreyer e Manoel de Oliveira, Paulo Rocha sempre trabalhou e em que aqui atinge um plano superior.

Mas vejamos o que sobre este filme, a sua absoluta obra-prima, o próprio cineasta disse:

No caso de *A Ilha*, tratando-se de um projecto influenciado pela ópera, pelo Kabuki, pelo Nô, pelo ritual, pela publicidade, impunha-se o plano-sequência. Permitia uma poética nova do espaço, dos corpos e das vozes do actor, do texto... À medida que se lhe iam descobrindo as regras, aparecia um novo tipo de “montagem-generalizada,” uma forma de *collage* no interior do plano bastante longo, fazendo-o explodir e produzindo dezenas ou centenas de pequenas rupturas e de ecos ou rimas internas, de fragmentos narrativos que eram reunidos dentro do mesmo plano, ou pelo movimento de câmara ou pela deslocação dos actores no *décor* e que criavam um jogo de espelhos, relações de cumplicidade ou de “alergia” entre partes de imagens, de corpos, de palavras, de sons, levando ao rubro cada ponto isolado do fluxo temporal.

Na origem do plano-sequência havia também a pintura clássica, os grandes conjuntos murais, as capelas sistinas, cuja respiração não se compadecia com os planos frag-

mentados. Havia um tipo de sentimentos que não cabiam no plano normal, que pediam uma maneira larga, uma escala “grande.” Havia também o desejo de que cada plano correspondesse a uma espécie de absoluto, de verdade total sobre um sentimento, uma situação na vida, um determinado tipo de local. Essa verdade definitiva só podia ser atingida através da longa duração.¹³

O que aqui é novo no uso do plano-sequência no cinema é ele não ser utilizado com intuito ou efeito meramente realista, mas como um elemento de colagem espacial que, simultaneamente, remete para o onírico, para o que, não mostrado, sugere, para o que excede o mundo imediato.

O que daí resulta é que, para Paulo Rocha, não há saída, não há saídas para ninguém, a não ser, eventualmente, para os mais novos, o que com o passar do tempo e dos filmes vai mesmo desaparecer — *O Rio do Ouro* (1998) — ou relativizar-se — *Vanitas* (2004). Nos filmes dele ninguém sai vivo, ou então ninguém deve alimentar esperanças. Haverá, mesmo assim, alguma coisa que Paulo Rocha tenha amado mais que tudo nos seus filmes? Sim, ele amou a beleza, mas sobretudo a beleza final do trágico, a que não se escapa.

Para *A Ilha dos Amores* ele familiarizou-se com a história e a cultura do Japão e da China, com a vida e o tempo de Wenceslau de Moraes. E a tudo isso juntou a cultura portuguesa e europeia, o que, além do que se disse antes, confere ao filme o carácter de obra-prima absoluta. Aproveitando os documentos da época de Wenceslau, nomeadamente fotografias e correspondência, recolhendo testemunhos, reconstituindo, filmando nos locais em que ele viveu e encenando-se a si próprio, fez ainda o documentário *A Ilha de Moraes*, que mais do que um mero documentário é um ensaio em que questiona a história, a personagem e sobretudo se questiona a si próprio, como notou José Manuel Costa.¹⁴

Antes de prosseguir, deve dizer-se que, antes de se voltar para Wenceslau de Moraes e *A Ilha dos Amores*, Paulo Rocha desejava, desde 1966, fazer um filme sobre a introdução das armas de fogo no Japão pelos portugueses, no final do Século XVI, a partir de *Peregrinação*, de Fernão Mendes Pinto. O projecto chegou a ter nome, *A História da Introdução das Armas de Fogo*, mas o financiamento japonês falhou, o cineasta teve de processar a produtora por ter feito um outro filme a partir do seu material e conseguiu mais tarde uma indemnização. E isto deve ser relacionado com o projecto do cineasta de fazer a *História Trágico-Marítima*, mais exactamente, o episódio de Sepúlveda (o título desse projecto é *O Naufrágio de Sepúlveda*),

porque ele próprio disse ter trabalhado nesse projecto durante três anos, depois de ter acabado *O Desejado*, até chegar à segunda versão em 1991. Comentário seu:

[O]s primeiros grandes escritores europeus que passaram uma parte importante da sua vida longe das cortes, dos reis e das catedrais da Europa foram os portugueses, e isto durante vários séculos. [...] Antes de Chateaubriand, que foi viver no meio dos índios da América, foram os europeus de segundo plano quem emigrou: apesar de escreverem muito bem sobre as viagens, são simples missionários ou viajantes. Os portugueses eram quase sempre os melhores. Enquanto os medíocres ficavam em casa, os melhores partiam, muitas vezes porque se sentiam prisioneiros e preferiam correr riscos [...]. Estamos todos, mais ou menos, nesta situação, obrigados a emigrar por causa das pequenas e sujas histórias entre nós, quer seja de família ou entre amigos.¹⁵

O trágico tal como acima enunciado atingiu, assim, o próprio cineasta, pois os projectos em que trabalhou longamente sobre *Peregrinação*, de Fernão Mendes Pinto, e *História Trágico-Marítima* nunca puderam ser por ele concretizados. Como tragédia, ficou-se por tragédias individuais, mas com acenos claros para uma tragédia colectiva. Aliás, o próprio Paulo Rocha confirmou a existência de outros projectos nunca concretizados, anteriores a *Os Verdes Anos*, nomeadamente *A Viagem de Inverno*, escrito em Paris, *O Rio do Ouro* (reformulado e concretizado no final do século, em 1998), um novo filme urbano com Isabel Ruth e uma fantasia musical em jeito renoiriano, a que na mesma fonte se refere nos seguintes termos:

Era uma fantasia musical, uma fantasia dramática num sentido musical, como chamava Renoir aos seus filmes depois da *Regra* [...] como a *Helena e os Homens*. É a ideia musical da forma aberta, da recusa de fazer uma cópia da realidade, cópia no sentido naturalista. A *Helena e os Homens* teve uma enorme influência na minha vida privada, é uma espécie de arte poética pessoal.¹⁶

Mas como não ver a tragédia dos pobres amantes em *Os Verdes Anos*, dos antigos namorados em *Mudar de Vida*, de Wenceslau de Moraes e das suas duas mulheres japonesas como réplica e símbolo de uma tragédia portuguesa na obra do cineasta, que só parcialmente a partir de *O Desejado* passa a assumir, temporariamente, contornos diferentes — a que preço, perguntar-

se-á, nesse filme já passado e rodado em Portugal mas baseado no *Romance de Genji* de Shikobu Murasaki (“Desde os meus tempos do IDHEC que queria filmar *O Romance de Genji*, o maior dos clássicos japoneses escrito há mil anos. É o meu projecto mais antigo.”)¹⁷ — com Jorge Silva Melo, que com ele trabalhara desde *Pousada das Chagas*, e Manuel de Lucena na adaptação e diálogos. Sobre este filme Paulo Rocha escreveu:

No *Desejado* muita coisa vem dos meus filmes anteriores. O personagem da Antónia é o da Isabel Ruth nos *Verdes* e no *Mudar*, é a Ko-Haru da *Ilha*, a jovem revoltada e frágil. O tom melodramático, o pulsional, vem do *Mudar*. Da *Ilha* vem o Oriente, o operático, a sensualidade e o plano-sequência. De mais novo é a exploração sistemática de uma certa polifonia. De plano para plano há um cruzar contínuo de temas e grupos opostos, que se desenham no espaço e no tempo como uma figura geométrica. A emoção e o entendimento que daí resultam vem de um gesto musical global. Cada detalhe ou personagem nada é, fora dos intervalos e contrastes que os sustentam.¹⁸

O plano-sequência, que vem de *A Ilha dos Amores* sobretudo, é a grande figura moderna da linguagem cinematográfica que pelo menos desde aí o cineasta usa, exacerbando-a para a grande duração. Numa narrativa tornada moderna é essa figura formal que vem introduzir o acorde e o acordo moderno, embora o operático, que em *O Desejado* atinge o seu acume mozartiano (*Don Giovanni*), não deva ser minimizado — e desse ponto de vista esse é, para alguns, o melhor filme de Paulo Rocha, aquele em que ele enfrenta o presente com o olhar do passado e do futuro.

4. O REGRESSO ÀS ORIGENS

Note-se que Paulo Rocha fez *Os verdes Anos* com 27 anos e que as duas *Ilhas*, que formam um *díptico*, são concluídas antes de ele completar 50 anos.

Dizendo isto aponto para aquilo que me parece subjacente na obra de Paulo Rocha mas também para o caso dele — e João Benard da Costa compara mesmo os silêncios de Rocha com os de Manoel de Oliveira,¹⁹ embora o que ele nos deixou, para mais com um inédito de carácter autobiográfico, *Se Eu Fosse Ladrão...Roubava* (2011), seja mais do que suficiente para

dar plenamente conta do seu génio pessoal. O mais só mesmo como sonho, como quimera compreensível, que ao ter permanecido como tal se torna mais esclarecedor, por doloroso que tenha sido para o cineasta. Vejamos como a continuação da sua obra confirma esta ideia.

A *O Desejado* vão seguir-se filmes fundamentais sobre a própria criação artística e sobre o próprio cinema. Primeiro *Máscara de Aço contra Abismo Azul*, sobre Amadeo de Sousa-Carvalho, que ecoando *Pousada das Chagas* vem confirmar a ligação do cineasta com o modernismo português da maneira mais estranha porque mais directa: a fragmentação e a ausência de profundidade. De facto, Paulo Rocha aí distancia-se do plano-sequência, que anteriormente marcara o seu *modernismo*, para se aproximar de um processo de colagem, de justaposição de planos que, na sua fragmentação, o aproxima, na reprodução de formas com ausência de profundidade visual, do mítico pintor *modernista*, contemporâneo e companheiro de Fernando Pessoa, Mário de Sá-Carneiro, Almada Negreiros e dos outros que se moveram em torno da revista "Orpheu" — aquele que, como o segundo, esteve em Paris durante muito tempo.²⁰ E aí Rocha move-se mais entre a pintura e o desenho (os quadros de Amadeo), as fotografias, o teatro (e é ao filmar a cena teatral que ele mantém o plano longo), o espaço (a casa) e a correspondência epistolar. Memórias, vestígios e traços de quem esteve lá, em cima do *modernismo*, e foi precocemente levado pela pneumónica em 1918. Mais do que um documentário, *Máscara de Aço contra Abismo Azul* é um ensaio sobre a arte, uma época e um artista.

Paulo Rocha faz depois os dois filmes para a série francesa *Cinéma de notre temps*, *Oliveira, o Arquitecto* (1993) — sobre o cineasta da sua predilecção desde a juventude, com quem colaborara em *Acto da Primavera* (1963) e de quem se mantivera próximo na sua própria obra —, e *Shohei Imamura, le libre penseur* (1995) sobre o grande cineasta japonês, seu contemporâneo, do pulsional. Também aí o cineasta se move na área do ensaio sobre arte, no caso o cinema, e sobre artistas, no caso cineastas.²¹ Ao olhá-los sem concessões a partir de um grande saber e de uma enorme cumplicidade, Paulo Rocha olha-se e esclarece-se a si próprio.²² Tendo dado conta da história do mundo e da sua arte, faltava ao cineasta dar mais directamente conta de si próprio, o que vai fazer nos seus derradeiros filmes de uma maneira que permite, além dos projectos não concretizados e dos filmes feitos no Extremo Oriente, falar a seu respeito num "exílio interior."

O Rio do Ouro é o filme que assinala o seu regresso ao Porto, onde nascera. É muito esclarecedor este regresso à origem de um homem que começámos por qualificar como “cosmopolita” e que completara um tríptico sobre a arte com um díptico sobre o cinema. Talvez que tal regresso se explique pelo facto de ele já não ter mais nada de importante a procurar longe, onde se tornara *persona non grata*, e precisar de não esquecer o que mais perto de si poderia encontrar — e este filme corresponde à reconversão de um projecto inicial seu.

Esse regresso às origens vai ser assinalado pela colaboração, nomeadamente, com as co-argumentistas Cláudia Tomás, Jeanne Waltz, Raquel Freire e Regina Guimarães, que se alguma coisa trazem de novo ao universo do cineasta é um olhar ainda mais impiedoso sobre as mulheres, o que transparece em *O Rio do Ouro* e em *Vanitas* — em *A Raiz do Coração* (2000), filmado em Lisboa e recuperação também de um projecto antigo, mais como paródia, num filme assinalado pela ambiguidade sexual, as festas populares do Santo António, o uso do plano-sequência e o regresso de Luís Miguel Cintra.

De facto, nesses dois filmes joga-se a força das mulheres e a fraqueza dos homens, mesmo quando no segundo, que é o seu *necrofilme*, elas morrem. Com Isabel Ruth de regresso, Paulo Rocha parece regressar aos seus filmes iniciais, o que, contudo, não acontece, dada a sua impressionante fidelidade ao plano longo composto em profundidade.

Esclareça-se que o plano-sequência com profundidade de campo foi objecto de uma primeira abordagem realista por André Bazin,²³ que embora possa parecer datada é ainda hoje de referência. Nos anos 60, Pier Paolo Pasolini dedicou um estudo ao “plano-sequência infinito,” radicalizando a leitura baziniana.²⁴ Nos anos 80, foi a vez de Gilles Deleuze tratar do mesmo tema nos seus escritos sobre cinema. Depois de a propósito da “subjectiva indirecta livre” se ter limitado a sublinhar o “enquadramento insistente,” “obsessivo,”²⁵ vai dizer que o plano-sequência com profundidade de campo tem uma função temporalizadora em Orson Welles²⁶ e que a profundidade de campo tal como instaurada por Jean Renoir e Orson Welles abre uma via de pensamento, teorematizada, no cinema, o que vai exemplificar precisamente com o caso de Pasolini e discutir na comparação do plano-sequência *com* e *sem* profundidade.²⁷

Mas vai ser nos últimos filmes de Paulo Rocha que a festa popular, esboçada como baile em *Os Verdes Anos* e plenamente explicitada em *Mudar de Vida*, vai regressar, como aí com plena integração diegética, nomeadamente em *O Rio do Ouro*, deixando bem marcada a presença de uma comunidade viva mais larga em que o drama, ou a tragédia decorre — a festa

popular mas também o cego/José Mário Branco que toca acordeão e canta na Estação de São Bento. Permitirá isto falar na presença da “cultura popular” nos filmes do cineasta, ao lado da “cultura erudita” para que remetem alguns dos seus filmes mais importantes? A nosso ver não só permite como exige, o que é mesmo corroborado pela curta-metragem *As Sereias* (2001), parcialmente aproveitada em *Vanitas*.

Paira contudo sobre *O Rio do Ouro* como sobre *Vanitas*, filmes sobre mulheres dominantes mas que pedem “Leva-me daqui” (Mélita/Joana Bárcia no primeiro, Né Calheiros/Isabel Ruth no segundo) e homens sofredores (no início do primeiro António/Lima Duarte diz: “A gente volta sempre ao princípio”), a mesma ideia de tragédia e de “exílio interior.” O que significa aqui este “exílio interior”? Remete para os longos silêncios do cineasta, para os projectos que não pôde concretizar, para o seu regresso às origens, em que foi procurar reencontrar-se e reencontrar a inspiração para prosseguir a sua obra. Contudo, mesmo a este seu derradeiro “exílio interior” Paulo Rocha já respondera durante o seu “exílio interior,” no Extremo Oriente: no exterior como no interior, sempre nos espera o *trágico destino* de cada um, a que, seja como for, na nossa humana condição não escapamos.

Com um permanente domínio da forma, Paulo Rocha não apenas manteve nesses seus últimos filmes o plano-sequência e a profundidade de campo, como em *O Rio do Ouro* assumiu de novo a influência de Kenji Mizoguchi em especial nas sequências no rio, fazendo um aproveitamento superior dos sons dos comboios, provenientes do fora-de-campo, e em *Vanitas* regressou ao tema do corpo e do espírito, que vem de *A Ilha dos Amores*.

Contudo, a Kenji Mizoguchi liga-o mais que aspectos temáticos e formais, liga-o ter sido em medida muito importante um *cineasta das mulheres* que, com os seus próprios meios, tentam combater o seu destino, a que a presença dos homens não é alheia. E aí, além das japonesas, Isabel Ruth, primeiro muito nova, depois mais velha, foi sem dúvida a sua atriz de eleição, sem minimizar Maria Barroso, Clara Joana, Zita Duarte, Inês Medeiros ou Joana Bárcia. E ser um cineasta das mulheres implicou nele, como implicara em Mizoguchi, um alto grau de sensualismo e de erotismo, que contudo foi depurando com um certo ascetismo, que o terá tornado um exemplo perfeito de epicurista do cinema português, com profundas influências chamanísticas e budistas.

Mas a influência de Mizoguchi significa também a opção por um *tratamento da tragédia em tom de melodrama, mesmo de melodrama popular* (questão documentadamente discutida por Leonor Areal²⁸ em termos justos de cujas conclusões parcialmente se discorda), o que não

deixa de caracterizar a obra de Paulo Rocha, de *Os Verdes Anos* a *O Rio do Ouro*, mas em especial neste, no seu tom folhetinesco a que as canções ajudam muito, e com menor intensidade nos filmes japoneses. Há alguma coisa nesse tom que é sempre nova, reinventada, e faz de cada um dos seus filmes um objecto novo e surpreendente, fazendo dele um cineasta maior e impedindo definitivamente que o seu nome seja apenas ligado à fundação do Novo Cinema Português.

Com a morte de Paulo Rocha em 29 de Dezembro de 2012 desapareceu uma das partes mais importantes do cinema português, que no entanto permanece na sua obra. Que não restem dúvidas: entre classicismo e modernidade, *modernismo* mesmo, ele rasgou e percorreu um caminho único e inimitável, embora extremamente influente, no cinema português. Mais modernista e mais clássico, ou pelo menos de um outro classicismo, que Manoel de Oliveira, de quem, todavia, se sentiu próximo, justamente no seu classicismo e na sua radical modernidade. Desaparecido em vida do seu antecessor, Rocha foi o grande e principal herdeiro de Oliveira, de cuja herança se apropriou e manifestamente excedeu.

E aqui é preciso compreender que o que distingue Manoel de Oliveira e Paulo Rocha é a natureza e a inspiração do olhar cinematográfico, mais radicalmente fixo desde o início em Oliveira, mais curioso e mutável, inquieto e inquietante em Rocha. *O mestre*, a fonte, não é ele mas o outro, para ele que foi beber a muitas outras fontes e gerou, como *um outro mestre* que foi, outras nascentes em influências que exerceu. De facto, enquanto Oliveira é um produto dir-se-ia típico do *segundo modernismo português*, o de Coimbra, do Porto e da revista *Presença*, Rocha liga-se lapidarmente ao *primeiro modernismo*, mais lisboeta e cosmopolita, sem desprezar no segundo o próprio Oliveira, o que é indiciado desde logo pela sua partida (para Paris, primeiro, para o mundo, em especial para o Extremo Oriente, depois), mas é decididamente confirmado pela opção de ser o *clássico* do seu próprio *modernismo* e por *Máscara de Aço contra Abismo Azul*.²⁹

Podendo parecer o contrário, não estou a querer dizer com isto que um é maior, mais importante do que o outro, mas que devemos saber onde procurar cada um deles, pois aí onde os procurarmos os encontramos — Oliveira foi naturalmente ter com José Régio e Agustina Bessa-Luís, Rocha cruzou-se com Luíza Neto Jorge e foi acabar nos braços de Regina Guimarães. A um Leonor Silveira, ao outro Isabel Ruth. E que não só não foram estranhos um ao outro como os ligou uma amizade cúmplice provam-no a supervisão (nominal) de Oliveira em *Sever do Vouga – Uma Experiência*, o filme de Paulo Rocha sobre Manoel de Oli-

veira e a sua presença como actor em *Francisca* (1981). Estou, isso sim, a dizer que será profundamente estranho compreender um e não compreender o outro.

Apesar disso, sempre se dirá que, por regra, Paulo Rocha moveu-se entre personagens e meios populares, que na obra de Oliveira, cineasta da burguesia, em especial da burguesia nortenha, surgem mais esporadicamente, embora em filmes fundamentais — nomeadamente *Douro, Faina Fluvial* (1931), *O Pão* (1959), *Acto da Primavera* (1963), *A Caça* (1963), *Viagem ao Princípio do Mundo* (1997). Não passará por aí grande diferença entre eles? Talvez não passe, já que a diferença entre ambos radica sobretudo naquilo que em Oliveira remete para o transcendente, justamente em *O Pão* e *Acto da Primavera*, que parece ausente nos filmes de Rocha, salvo nos de inspiração oriental e mesmo nesses de forma muito especial, chamanística e budista.

Um outro elemento que separou Oliveira e Rocha foi a música, pois aos motivos clássicos que o primeiro passou a escolher frequentemente para os seus filmes depois de terminada em 1988, com *Os Canibais*, a sua colaboração com João Paes, Paulo Rocha sempre preferiu música moderna, nos seus dois primeiros filmes com as sonoridades tipicamente portuguesas, românticas e saudosistas de Carlos Paredes, Jorge Peixinho em *Pousada das Chagas*, depois, salvo em *O Desejado*, com música de Paulo Brandão, em *O Rio de Ouro* e *A Raiz do Coração*, que têm Elso Roque como director de fotografia, música e canções de José Mário Branco (“mas o corpo nunca mente!”), sem esquecer os bailes populares tão importantes em *Os Verdes Anos* e *Mudar de Vida*, em *O Rio do Ouro*, *A Raiz do Coração* e *Vanitas* — que começa com o célebre quadro *Et In Arcadia Ego*, de Nicolas Poussin, e cujo subtítulo é *O Outro Mundo*. Para ser breve, enquanto em Oliveira a música comenta, dialoga,³⁰ em Rocha a música é personagem.

No seu excelente estudo sobre a *mise en scène*, o francês René Prédal, no capítulo 3 dedicado ao *plano-sequência* lamentavelmente omite a referência a qualquer cineasta português.³¹ Limita-se a falar de Théo Angelopoulos a propósito dos *cinemas novos*³² e do “efeito plano-sequência,”³³ deixando a outros o estudo do caso português.

Por isso aqui se propõe uma leitura *poética*, no sentido de oposição às constricções da prosa identificada com a planificação e a montagem clássicas, sem o sentido restrito do “cinema de poesia” de Pasolini³⁴ — que é o sentido em que Paulo Rocha utiliza a palavra na citação acima transcrita sobre *A Ilha dos Amores* — do plano-sequência no cinema português, especialmente em Manoel de Oliveira, António Reis e Paulo Rocha. E será mesmo esta a questão que mais aproximará o primeiro e o último.

Tendo tido, sem dúvida, um pensamento teórico sobre o cinema, presente nomeadamente na ideia que lançou de uma “escola portuguesa,”³⁵ Paulo Rocha não se deixou envolver em querelas estéreis, embora não se tenha furtado ao confronto polémico quando justificado — do que pode ser encontrado rasto em *Paulo Rocha e i novissimi dell’uomo*.³⁶ Na verdade, como presidente da Associação Portuguesa de Realizadores ele envolveu-se nos anos 90 em acesa polémica com a então presidente do IPACA (Instituto Português da Arte Cinematográfica e Audiovisual), o que se encontra documentado na imprensa portuguesa do tempo, uma polémica que teve pelo menos o mérito de mostrar quem estava do lado da arte e quem estava do lado da política e de demonstrar a dimensão ética e intelectual do cineasta. Foi um grande artista do cinema, que sempre o entendeu como arte, e grande arte, cujos filmes foram só compostos por imagens artísticas e enriqueceram extraordinariamente a arte do cinema. Foi também um grande sábio, um homem de grandes e múltiplos saberes, de um gosto refinado e de uma vastíssima cultura, artística, literária e cinematográfica, o que explica que ele tenha sido um gigante do cinema português, um dos maiores cineastas mundiais do seu tempo.

5. CONCLUSÃO

Em função do que antecede, o cinema de Paulo Rocha foi, conclusivamente, caracterizado por:

a) uma *poética* lírica e trágica que, em justo tom melodramático, entre chegada, regresso e vontade de partir se cumpria;

b) uma *poiesis*, no sentido da *Metafísica* de Aristóteles, de criação, de produção do espaço, com recurso frequente ao plano-sequência com profundidade de campo de carácter não meramente realista antes também poético, ocasionalmente substituído por uma colagem fragmentária;

c) uma *poética* dos corpos, das vozes e dos textos, dos sons e da música, em que *A Ilha dos Amores* se conta simultaneamente como obra-prima e *arte poética*.³⁷

Influente como poucos, deixou marcas nos que com ele conviveram e se lhe seguiram no cinema português, em especial João César Monteiro, António Reis, mais tarde Pedro Costa e Manuel Mozos.

1. Este trabalho foi desenvolvido no CEAA (Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo) da Escola Superior Artística do Porto (uID4041 da FCT) sendo financiado por Fundos Nacionais através da FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia) no âmbito do Projeto Estratégico PEstOE/EAT/UI4041/2011.

2. Sucintamente: “épica: poema de cunho narrativo que trata dos feitos históricos e/ou lendários de certos heróis que, no meio de cometimentos bélicos, se destacam pelas suas qualidades superiores”; “mito: relato fantástico da tradição oral, ger. protagonizado por seres que encarnam, sob forma simbólica, as forças da natureza e os aspectos gerais da condição humana”; “lírica: 3 que constitui uma expressão ética e dramática do sentimento; que se distingue pelo sentimento, pelo enlevo poético”; “tragédia: Teat na antiga Grécia, peça em verso, de forma ao mesmo tempo dramática e lírica, na qual figuram personagens ilustres ou heróicos e em que a acção, elevada, nobre e própria para suscitar o terror e a piedade, termina ger. com um acontecimento funesto” — António Houaiss e Mauro de Salles Villar, *Dicionário Houaiss da Língua Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2002/2003). Para um maior desenvolvimento e enquadramento, cf. Oswald Ducrot e Tzvetan Todorov, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des Sciences du Langage* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), ed. port. *Dicionário das Ciências da Linguagem*, orient. Eduardo Prado Coelho (Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1978), 187-194. Sobre o mito, cf. “Mythos/Logos Sagrado/Profano” in Fernando Gil (coord.), *Enciclopédia Einaudi*, vol. 12 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1987).

3. Sobre o primeiro modernismo, cf. António Quadros, *O Primeiro Modernismo Português – Vanguarda e Tradição* (Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América, 1987); Óscar Lopes e Maria de Fátima Marinho (dir.), *História da Literatura Portuguesa*, “6. Do Simbolismo ao Modernismo” (Mem Martins: Publicações Alfa, 2003), 419; Fernando Cabal Martins (coord.), *Dicionário de Fernando Pessoa e do Modernismo Português* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2008). Sobre o segundo modernismo, cf. Eugénio Lisboa, *O Segundo Modernismo em Portugal* (Lisboa: Instituto de Cultura e Língua Portuguesa – Biblioteca Breve, 1977/1984); Lopes e Marinho (dir.), *História da Literatura Portuguesa*, “7. As Correntes Contemporâneas” (Mem Martins: Publicações Alfa, 2003), 11. Para a comparação entre o primeiro e o segundo modernismo é ainda hoje fundamental Eduardo Lourenço, *Tempo e Poesia* (Lisboa: Relógio D’Água, 1987).

4. Cf. Jorge Silva Melo, “Tra il fantasma e la volpe. «Mudar de Vida» di Paulo Rocha,” in Roberto Turigliatto, *Paulo Rocha a cura di Roberto Turigliatto* (Turim: Landau Cinema, 1995), 43-51.

5. Paulo Rocha, apud. Jorge Silva Melo (dir.), *Paulo Rocha: O Rio do Ouro* (Lisboa: Cinemateca Portuguesa-Museu do Cinema, 1996), 80.

6. Sobre Camilo Pessanha, cf. José Seabra Pereira, “A Poesia Nova do Fim-de-Século: Eugénio de Castro, Camilo Pessanha, António Nobre,” in *História da Literatura Portuguesa*, “6. Do Simbolismo ao Modernismo” (Mem Martins, Publicações Alfa, 2003), 19; Quadros, *O Primeiro Modernismo Português*, 77; e Fernando Guimarães, “Camilo Pessanha e os Caminhos de Transformação da Poesia Portuguesa,” in *Simbolismo, Modernismo e Vanguardas* (Porto: Lello & Irmão, 1992), 25. Sobre Wenceslau de Moraes, cf. João Barreira, “A Evolução da Nar Fernando Guimarãesrativa Finissecular,” in *História da Literatura Portuguesa*, “6. Do Simbolismo ao Modernismo” (Mem Martins: Publicações Alfa, 2003), 160-166; Ana Paula Laborinho, *O Essencial sobre Wenceslau de Moraes* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2004); e Pedro Barreiros (org.), *Evocação de Wenceslau de Moraes* (Lisboa: Instituto Camões/Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2007).

7. Rocha, apud. Silva Melo (dir.), *Paulo Rocha*, 80.

8. João Bénard da Costa, “Paulo Rocha e i novissimi dell’uomo,” in Roberto Turigliatto, *Paulo Rocha a cura di Roberto Turigliatto* (Turim: Landau Cinema, 1995), 14-15.

9. Rocha, apud. Silva Melo (dir.), *Paulo Rocha*, 81.

10. *Ibid.*, 81-82.

11. *Ibid.*, 35-36.

12. Cf. Jacqueline de Romilly, *Précis de littérature grecque* (Paris: PUF, 2007), ed. port. *Compêndio de Literatura Grega* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2011).

13. Rocha, apud. Silva Melo (dir.), *Paulo Rocha*, 85-86.

14. José Manuel Costa, apud. Jorge Silva Melo (dir.), *Paulo Rocha: O Rio do Ouro* (Lisboa: Cinemateca Portuguesa-Museu do Cinema, 1996), 164-165.

15. Rocha, “Isole sommerse,” in Roberto Turigliatto, *Paulo Rocha a cura di Roberto Turigliatto* (Turim: Landau Cinema, 1995), 131.

16. *Ibid.*, 131, onde estão publicados quatro dos seus projectos, retomado em tradução portuguesa em Jorge Silva Melo (dir.), *Paulo Rocha: O Rio do Ouro* (Lisboa: Cinemateca Portuguesa-Museu do Cinema, 1996), 129-130, que não inclui esses quatro projectos.

17. Rocha, apud. Silva Melo (dir.), *Paulo Rocha*, 115.

18. *Ibid.*, 116.

19. Bénard da Costa, “Paulo Rocha e i novissimi dell’uomo,” 13.

20. Sobre Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso, cf. José-Augusto França, *Amadeo de Souza Cardoso – O Português à Força Almada Negreiros – O Português sem Mestre* (Lisboa: Bertrand, 1983); e França, *O Essencial sobre Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2005). Cf. também Nuno Júdice, *A Era do “Orpheu”* (Lisboa: Teorema, 1986).

21. E volta a filmar em 16mm, o que antes raramente usara — além de *A Ilha de Moraes* e *Máscara de Aço contra Abismo Azul*, esses vão ser os seus únicos filmes nesse formato.

22. Antes houvera o vídeo *Portugal-San, O Senhor Portugal em Tokushima*, média-metragem em vídeo de 1993, ainda à volta de Wenceslau de Moraes; depois houve *Camões –Tanta Guerra, Tanto Engano*, uma outra média-metragem em vídeo de 1998 sobre o mito maldito português.

23. Cf. André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma ?* (Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1958), VII e XX.

24. Cf. Pier Paolo Pasolini, “Observações sobre o plano-sequência,” in *Empirismo Eretico* (Milão: Garzanti, 1972), ed. port *Empirismo Hereje* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1982), 193ff.

25. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-mouvement* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1983), cap. 5.1.

26. Cf. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1985), cap. 5.2.

27. *Ibid.*, cap. 7.3.

28. Cf. Leonor Areal, *Cinema Português: Um País Imaginado, Vol. I – Antes de 1974* (Lisboa, Edições 70, 2011), a propósito de *Os Verdes Anos* (392-396) e de *Mudar de Vida* (403-405).

29. Sobre o modernismo, ver n. 3, supra.

30. Sobre a música nos filmes de Manoel de Oliveira, cf. Philippe Roger, “Oliveira et la musique – Esquisse d’une scénographie musicale,” *Études Cinématographiques* 70, “Manoel de Oliveira,” dir. Michel Estève e Jean A. Gili (Caen: Lettres Modernes Minard, 2006).

31. Cf. René Prédal, *Esthétique de la mise en scène* (Paris: Cerf-Corlet, 2007).

32. *Ibid.*, 204.

33. *Ibid.*, 248.

34. Pasolini, “O ‘cinema de poesia’,” in *Empirismo Eretico* (Milão: Garzanti, 1972), ed. port *Empirismo Hereje* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1982), 137ff.

35. Questão discutida em Areal, *Cinema Português: Um País Imaginado, Vol. II – Após 1974* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2011), 265-301, incluindo o plano-sequência (285-287).

36. Bénard da Costa, “Paulo Rocha e i novissimi dell’uomo,” 32.

37. Para uma leitura actualizada de Aristóteles, *Poética*, trad. Eudoro de Sousa (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1986), cf. Umberto Eco, “A Poética e nós,” in *Sulla letteratura* (Milão: Bompiani, 2002), ed. port. *Sobre Literatura* (Lisboa: DIFEL, 2003), 242ff.

IMAGEN Y PENSAMIENTO EN EL VIDEOARTE PORTUGUÉS ACTUAL

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1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Tal vez por estar insertado en un período tan fructífero en revoluciones estéticas, desde la que abanderó Marcel Duchamp hasta la más reciente del *art net* y del *media art*, el videoarte ha sido considerado como un medio de expresión artístico de los muchos que caracterizaron al siglo XX, como el arte conceptual o la *performance*, con los que ha estado emparentado desde sus primeros pasos. Al igual que aquéllos, el arte del vídeo vivió un momento de gloria, en su caso entre 1965 y 1975, que le permitió consolidarse, sobreviviendo incluso a la obsolescencia de la técnica que estaba en su origen, el vídeo. Sin embargo, el éxito del que ha gozado el videoarte parece haber ensombrecido lo que probablemente ha sido su mayor aportación a la historia del arte: el empleo con fines estéticos de la imagen electrónica. Formada por puntos luminosos que se desplazan siguiendo líneas horizontales, y emitida — que no proyecta — por una pantalla, esta nueva imagen poco tenía que ver con las producciones de otras artes, incluidos el cine y la fotografía, que también produjeron, al surgir, un impacto enorme. Ahora bien, así como el cine, que fue uno de los elementos de inspiración (junto a la televisión y el arte de acción, entre otros) para los pioneros del videoarte, cuenta desde hace tiempo con su propia teoría, configurada por nombres bien conocidos como los de Rudolf Arnheim, André Bazin, Noël Burch, Gilles Deleuze, Noël Carroll o Francesco Casetti,¹ por lo que respecta al videoarte los trabajos que lo estudian desde una perspectiva filosófico-estética son aún incipientes y poco numerosos. Obviamente esto no quiere decir que no existan ensayos dedicados a este medio de expresión, ni tampoco que no haya habido pensadores que hayan reflexionado sobre el particular. Baste recordar, por ejemplo, los abundantes trabajos de Raymond Bellour, o los de François Parfait e Yvonne Spielmann,² por mencionar los más significativos. Más bien lo que aún está por llegar es un análisis filosófico que se haga cargo de los rasgos propios del vídeo, esto es, que piense las dimensiones que para la Estética y

para una ontología de la imagen abren las imágenes electrónicas y, muy especialmente, su traslación en la Era Digital.³

En efecto, el videoarte implica ante todo una nueva relación del arte con el espacio y, sobre todo, con el tiempo. Y unido a esto, plantea unas nuevas posibilidades de representación en las que está en juego una concepción temporal inédita, que exigen volver a pensar nociones ahora caducas como la de “original,” “imitación” o “reproducción,” ineficaces, como en su día constataron Baudrillard, Foucault o Deleuze, para reflexionar acerca de unas imágenes más cercanas a la lógica del simulacro que a la de la representación. En general, y como pronto se verá, con el videoarte se consume el paso de un arte dependiente de la representación mimética, a un arte del desvelamiento o de la *presentación*, cuyas bases se encuentran en los textos de Martin Heidegger⁴. El cine seguía dependiendo de una lógica, la de la *mimesis*, asentada en una concepción temporal lineal que presupone un inicio y un final bien determinados, esto es, un pasado, un presente y un futuro que no se confunden. Como es obvio, esta concepción encaja a la perfección con un arte basado en lo secuencial y que incluso en su propia materialidad — las tiras de fotogramas — está presente la idea de linealidad —. En el videoarte cada imagen no depende de la precedente — lo que no quiere decir que no exista una relación entre ambas —, sino que más bien lo que hay un *continuum* de puntos iluminados que conforman un tipo particular de *imago*, la electrónica, que ya no debe ser pensada como integrante de una cadena. Lo que vemos en el arte del vídeo son imágenes que no dependen necesariamente de una lógica lineal. De ahí la tendencia a reproducirlas en bucle, esto es, en una incesante repetición que dificulta identificar un comienzo y un final, y que, por tanto, subvierte la noción misma de “representación,” siendo preferible, en el caso del videoarte, hablar como venimos haciendo de presentación (*darstellung*), de un “aquí y ahora” constantemente repetido, a diferencia del cine.

Dado el tamaño del envite, no resulta extraña que la primera respuesta de la filosofía fuese el silencio o, al menos, la confesión de su impotencia ante la imagen electrónica. Valgan como ilustración dos ejemplos. Gilles Deleuze, autor de la distinción entre “imagen-movimiento” e “imagen-tiempo,” confesó que “las imágenes electrónicas aún deberán cimentarse en otra voluntad de arte, o bien en aspectos todavía no conocidos de la imagen-tiempo.”⁵ Las imágenes del vídeo, explicaba, carecen a diferencia de las cinematográficas de exterior — fuera de campo — e interior — pueden nacer desde cualquier punto de la imagen

precedente —; se organizan desde un espacio omnidireccional, y su ámbito de proyección, la pantalla, no es tanto una ventana como un tablero de información. Por fin, su conexión no es, consiguientemente, lineal, sino tomando prestado uno de sus términos conocidos, “rizomático,” esto es, con enlaces aleatorios, siguiendo direcciones móviles, sin principio ni fin.

Por muy sugerentes que sean estas reflexiones de Deleuze, es obvio que resultan escasas para dar cuenta de la novedad que suponía la irrupción de la imagen electrónica. Otro filósofo, Jacques Derrida, compartía con él su dificultad para aprehender el espacio abierto por el vídeo, cuya “diferencia irreductible” propiciaba, en su opinión, una novedosa “técnica de escritura en todos sus estados (encuadre, montaje, “incrustación,” lugar de proyección, almacenamiento, reproducción, archivo, etc.)”⁶ En este texto, dedicado al videoartista norteamericano Gary Hill, Derrida observaba cómo el vídeo sacaba al arte del ámbito de la representación para introducirlo en el dominio de un “simulacro de presentación” en el que las palabras — para describirlo, para relatarlo... para mostrarlo — revelaban su total impotencia. Bien es cierto que el comentario de Derrida estaba apegado a la obra de un artista, Hill, en la que tiene un peso enorme tanto la tradición mística como los textos del filósofo Maurice Blanchot. Si por algo se caracteriza este último es por la búsqueda incansable de ese espacio pre-lingüístico del que surge toda obra artística, un ámbito que se identifica con lo corporal y al que las palabras, nacidas una y otra vez *tarde*, apenas rozan. La cita de Derrida podría entenderse, pues, como una glosa apegada a la obra de Hill/Blanchot. Y, sin embargo, hay en su análisis una poderosa intuición, un atisbo de eso situado en el corazón del videoarte y que, hasta ahora, apenas ha sido señalado y que tiene que ver, como venimos diciendo, con una nueva relación del arte con el tiempo (¿un nuevo arte del tiempo?).

En efecto, el arte del vídeo ha renunciado a la finalidad meramente representativa, que quebró mucho tiempo atrás, con las Vanguardias.⁷ Su producto rehúye el tradicional juego entre original y copia, entre modelo y representación. Escapa, por decirlo con Heidegger, a quien tendremos muy presente para lo que sigue, a la concepción metafísica que concibe la verdad como *adequatio*.⁸ Pero también evita ese otro discurso que piensa las imágenes como una proliferación de simulacros que se asemejan los unos a los otros, sin que sea posible distinguir un principio que actúe de causa inicial o fundamento para la serie.⁹ Las imágenes del vídeo no son representaciones, pero tampoco simulacros. ¿Qué son entonces? Eso es lo

que queda, aún hoy, por pensar. Para ello contamos con dos herramientas. La primera de ellas es la propia obra de los videoartistas que con sus piezas han llevado al límite la reflexión acerca de las posibilidades de re/presentación que ofrece el medio del vídeo. Estas piezas se complementan con algunas sugerencias teóricas que, a modo de fogonazos, arrojan los pocos pensadores que han asumido que el videoarte, lejos de ser un medio de expresión artístico entre los demás, es un camino que lleva al arte a un terreno desconocido por la relación, inédita hasta entonces, que mantiene con el tiempo. En nuestra opinión, es posible encuadrar estas reflexiones dentro aquellas tendencias de la Estética que han problematizado la cuestión de lo fugaz como elemento característico de unas sociedades “líquidas,” en palabras del sociólogo Zygmunt Bauman. Nos referimos tanto a la conocida “Estética de la desaparición,” de Paul Virilio, como, y sobre todo, a la menos conocida “Estética de lo efímero,” de Christine Buci-Glucksmann,¹⁰ de la que forman parte sus “imágenes-flujo” que muy bien podríamos identificar con las imágenes del vídeo.¹¹

Nuestra investigación se centra en la aparición de una generación de jóvenes videoartistas marcada, en primer lugar, por el hecho de ser portugueses. Y es que en las dos últimas décadas no hay un país que haya dado tantos artistas de primer nivel que hayan trabajado prioritariamente con el vídeo. Una somera enumeración a vuelapluma no podría olvidar los nombres de Julião Sarmento, Ernesto de Sousa, Antonio Cerveira Pinto, Catarina Campino, Pedro Tropa o Pedro Paixão, entre otros muchos. No cabe duda de que la nacionalidad de estos artistas parecería, en principio, algo anecdótico, aunque el hecho de que Portugal se distinga por esta sobresaliente producción de videoarte sugeriría, al menos, una pregunta por las posibles causas. Más importante aún para lo que nos ocupa es la circunstancia de que unos cuantos de estos videoartistas se hayan distinguido por compartir una preocupación por la imagen en movimiento y por su dependencia de lo temporal. No podemos sino estar de acuerdo con Pedro Lapa cuando, al referirse a este grupo de creadores, afirma que para ellos “la dimensión temporal revelaba la imagen como un compuesto visual, auditivo expandido y productor de un acontecimiento, presuponiendo una radical alteración de los conceptos de representación.”¹² Este rasgo, común con todos aquellos creadores que han hecho de sus trabajos una meditación sobre el tiempo y los problemas de la representación, se acentúa si cabe en el caso de esta, llamémosla así, escuela portuguesa de videoarte, añadiendo características propias. Así, la fascinación que sienten por la imagen electrónica ya no les lleva a explorar sus cualidades

materiales, perceptivas y estéticas, tarea en la que se han distinguido creadores como Woody y Steina Vasulka, Shigeo Kubota, Alexander Emshwiller o Eugenia Ballcells. El videoarte portugués más reciente da por superada esta fase autorreflexiva para centrarse en la indagación de lo que la “imagen-vídeo”¹³ supone para la lógica de la representación. Es decir, el videoarte portugués se saltó aquella etapa germinal en la que los videoartistas se esforzaban en mostrar que este medio de expresión era propiamente un arte con cuya materia, la imagen electrónica, había que jugar en busca de sus límites perceptivos y sus posibilidades estéticas.

Con buen criterio, Lapa detecta en alguno de ellos esa preocupación “por la producción del conflicto de representaciones en el acontecer de la imagen.”¹⁴ ¿Quiénes son estos videoartistas sin parangón con los de otros países? Lapa menciona los nombres de João Onofre, João Pedro Vale, Vasco Araújo, Francisco Queirós, Filipa César, Pedro Gomes y Nuno Cera, a los que también añade el de João Tabarra. Describir y comentar los principales trabajos de todos ellos excedería el propósito de este trabajo. En vez de esto, seleccionaremos obras de unos cuantos de estos jóvenes artistas — a los que nosotros sumamos a Pedro Paiva João Maria Gusmão, próximos al mundo del cine experimental, lo que hace que no siempre sean considerados videoartistas —, aquellas en las que se aprecia con mayor nitidez una reflexión sobre el tiempo y el problema de la representación en el videoarte.

En lo que sigue, abordaremos el análisis de algunas piezas de estos creadores, para lo cual ha sido necesaria una metodología de investigación consistente en su consulta directa en diversos archivos y bibliotecas internacionales. Muchas de las obras citadas han sido ya expuestas en museo portugués, españoles y de otros países europeos, existiendo una valiosa documentación gráfica en galerías y museos europeos.

2. EL VIDEOARTE PORTUGUÉS Y LA CUESTIÓN DEL TIEMPO

Los videoartistas portugueses han debido enfrentarse a dificultades comunes, que si bien no les identifican o caracterizan, sí que los agrupan con claridad. El principal obstáculo que tuvieron que afrontar fue el carácter periférico (físico) del país y (estético) del arte portugués. Así, todos ellos se encontraron con una nación que despreciaba las nuevas técnicas artísticas, como demuestra el que hasta la década de los ochenta los creadores lusos se centraron

principalmente en las disciplinas más tradicionales, como pintura y escultura, obviando nuevas corrientes y medios artísticos como la *performance*, el *happening* o el propio videoarte. Otro dato revelador es que el primer museo de Arte Contemporáneo público y estable no se abriría hasta la llegada de la democracia. El segundo óbice que comparten todos estos autores es la dificultad de pertenecer a la periferia estética que, en este caso, tenía sus implicaciones tecnológicas. El arte portugués no había desarrollado ningún acercamiento a la imagen electrónica de forma institucional u oficial. Ni la Rádio e Televisão de Portugal ni ningún otro ente público habían desarrollado actividades educativas, sociales o artísticas sobre el videoarte o la televisión de vanguardia, algo que fue decisivo, para el videoarte norteamericano, el francés o el inglés.¹⁵ A diferencia de la mayoría de las naciones europeas, de las norteamericanas o de Brasil, el videoarte portugués era casi inexistente hasta finales de los años setenta.

Todos los artistas que mencionamos y, en concreto, la segunda generación compuesta por João Onofre, Vasco Araújo, Francisco Queirós, Filipa César, Pedro Gomes y Nuno Cera, se han formado en el extranjero (rompiendo así con el aislamiento estético de Portugal), si bien contaron con el apoyo de las dos grandes instituciones y fundaciones lusas: Fundação Serralves y Fundação Calouste Gulbenkain, que han servido de impluso para estos jóvenes creadores. Fue precisamente la Fundação Serralves la que en 1993 (treinta años después de la irrupción del videoarte en el panorama artístico europeo y estadounidense) organizó una exposición que ha servido de inspiración para la mayoría de los autores y creadores: *Imagens para os 90* comisariada por Fernando Pernes y Miguel von Hafe Perez.

La dependencia casi total de las dos instituciones culturales mencionadas, la Fundação Serralves y la Fundação Calouste Gulbenkain, apunta hacia una seña de identidad propia del arte del vídeo portugués: la tensión entre un posible clientelismo como deuda por el apoyo de ambas fundaciones, y un cosmopolitismo casi único en el mundo (sólo comparable a las videoartistas escandinavos y fineses).

Los videoartistas portugueses de los que nos ocupamos comienzan sus carreras en un momento en el que los debates iniciales y la justificación de este medio de expresión artístico se encontraban superados en el contexto mundial. Ninguno de ellos tuvo que enfrentarse, como la primera y la segunda generación de videoartistas norteamericanos y europeos, a las disputas y los cuestionamientos germinales de cualquier arte. Todo lo contrario: la mayoría de estos creadores de imágenes electrónicas/digitales se hicieron cargo, directamente, de los

problemas más complejos del vídeo y de la imagen electrónica y digital. La situación política y artística de Portugal supusieron primero un obstáculo pero, después, a partir de la década de los ochenta, una gran oportunidad para participar desde una posición privilegiada en el debate en torno al videoarte.

Fue Derrida quien con gran lucidez situó el gran problema del videoarte en el hecho de que en él hay, ante todo, un *videor*, un “yo veo.” Derrida cita a otro filósofo al que pronto volveremos, Jean-Luc Nancy, para quien

el *videor* asegura el *cogito*, pues ratifica la única presencia que la duda no puede agrietar: *videor* es constante, incluso en plena fantasmagoría, incluso en plena ilusión. [...] El *videor* es la ilusión que, por una torsión o una perversión inaudita, fija la certidumbre en pleno abismo de ilusión. El lugar del *videor* es la pintura, el retrato, el más facticio y a la vez el más fiel de los rostros, el ojo más ciego y más clarividente.¹⁶

Ahora bien, así como este “ego video” era, en Descartes, el comienzo de la autodeterminación del sujeto, una herramienta al servicio de la certeza ontológica del “ego sum,” lo que el vídeo pone de relieve es que esa mirada, lejos de permitir la construcción de la propia subjetividad, la abisma. Y ello porque lo que percibe no son sino fragmentos de un todo irrecuperable, imágenes que no remiten a un más allá que dé cuenta de ellas — *epekeina tes ousias* —, pero tampoco a una facultad que las genere a partir de esquemas puros. El *videor* es, como señala Nancy, una ilusión, como lo es el “yo,” la identidad sustancial de la metafísica. Es esto último, “lo mismo,” el “yo” pretendidamente idéntico, lo que será una y otra vez cuestionado en el videoarte, pues ¿cómo se puede afirmar la identidad cuando esta es un constructo, una suma de imágenes, de desdoblamientos sin fin? Este, y no otro, es el problema del “narcisismo” que atrajo a la primera generación de videoartistas, comenzando por Bruce Nauman, quien en sus famosas instalaciones, los “corredores,” obligaba al espectador a enfrentarse con su propia representación. Y a veces, cuando la tecnología lo hizo posible, tal percepción tenía lugar con un retardo que producía en el público una desasosegante sensación de extrañamiento, pues había sido sacado del “tiempo real,” desde el que habitualmente se aprehenden los fenómenos, para ser trasladado a una nueva forma de temporalidad que exige, por parte del sujeto, un ejercicio perceptivo diferente, próximo a la “duración” de la que habló Henri Bergson.

Los videoartistas de los que venimos hablando son conscientes de la mirada a la que apelan sus trabajos. No es la de un sujeto que aprehenda las imágenes y las inserte en una cadena significativa solidaria de una lógica representativa, sino la de un “sujeto,” si es que aún se puede emplear ese término, deconstruido en la operación de crítica de la metafísica occidental inaugurada por Nietzsche y culminada por Heidegger. Las “imágenes-vídeo” no remiten a una realidad a la que ellas representasen, sino que es su propia presentación lo que muestran. Uno de los videoartistas que se sitúa en este sendero es Vasco Araújo. Como observa Jacinto Lageira:

[N]o ilustra ni adapta los textos, sino que traslada su sentido a otro lugar. La trama funciona por desplazamientos, si bien se mantiene siempre un eco más o menos lejano del texto, y son las imágenes las que adoptan una consistencia totalmente distinta cuando la gestualidad, la voz o el escrito así lo señalan, inevitablemente, insertándose en él de forma sutil, sin dejar apenas un rastro del desplazamiento.¹⁷

Así sus vídeos y grabaciones como *Hereditas*, *Far de Donna* y sus instalaciones como *O morto* apelan a textos (propios y de otros), a lenguajes y a representaciones artísticas, pero el resultado no es una imagen o un homenaje a una representación previa, sino una nueva representación que se muestra así misma.

Con el vídeo, dice Nancy,

ya no se trata del cuerpo textualizado del cine. Se trata de algo diferente, cuyo nombre genérico es incrustración. No ya la incrustración de las palabras en la imagen, sino la incrustración de la propia imagen: ésta se hunde en la materia de la pantalla, no se posa sobre ella como la imagen del cine, y tampoco se funde con una tela como en la pintura. En cierto sentido, ni siquiera hay que hablar de pantalla: el vídeo no pertenece al orden de la pantalla, sino al de la penetración.¹⁸

“Imágenes-vídeo”: imágenes incrustradas que nada representan regidas por una nueva temporalidad y cuyo sentido no debe buscarse fuera de ellas mismas. Tal podría ser una definición de lo que venimos buscando y que intuimos en los trabajos de los videoartistas portugueses y que dependen, una vez más, de un *videor*, de una mirada, en este caso dirigida al arte, a la manera de entender el arte, inédita.

Al prestar atención, al desconfiar de cualquier referencia exterior de la imagen que supuestamente nos permitiría ver, representarnos algo, la mirada se vuelve hacia sí misma. [...] [E]s la imagen misma proyectada hacia delante, arrojada contra nuestra mirada y haciéndonos saber que no vemos, que cuanto más observamos, tal vez, menos vemos, porque en definitiva es la imagen la que nos observa, nos escruta y nos golpea.¹⁹

Fue Lacan quien puso las bases de este juego de miradas en el que se asienta el trabajo de João Tabarra, en obras como *Please Don't Go*. La mirada del espectador que es "domada" por la que le dirige obra de arte²⁰ y que neutraliza sus pretensiones de (re)conocimiento, algo en lo que Lacan coincide con Heidegger. Si para este último en la creación artística no se da una representación con pretensiones de veracidad de una sustancia (algo así como "el Arte," por ejemplo), para el primero es lo real lo irrepresentable por antonomasia. Como mucho, el arte puede aspirar a mostrar el encuentro fallido, traumático, con lo real, ese mismo real que asoma, ominosamente, al final de *Please Don't Go*, cuando descubrimos que esa paradisíaca imagen de una playa no es más que un cartel publicitario rodeado de artificios sonoros para engañar a la percepción del espectador.

Onofre, que establece un diálogo con la verosimilitud y juega con la percepción del espectador, suele llevar al público a la tesitura de interpretar su obra como real o irreal. Así, en la serie *Ghost* (2009-2012) construye una "isla flotante." En una pequeña embarcación monta una gran duna de arena blanca y, sobre esta, un oasis en el que se aprecia una única palmera tropical. Onofre abandona en el río Tajo su isla, que desciende por el estuario, y tras pasar por las cercanías de la ciudad de Lisboa y bajo el Puente 25 de abril, termina desapareciendo en el horizonte del océano Atlántico. La "isla flotante," que inevitablemente recuerda a otros textos portugueses, como *A Jangada de Pedra* de José Saramago, materializa la idea de una península ibérica a la deriva, pero al mismo tiempo plantea una mirada a la realidad. El espectador del vídeo contempla la pieza como un simulacro imposible, como una realidad inventada o ficticia, una "isla flotante," pero al mismo tiempo esta realidad se inserta en un contexto real y cotidiano: la ciudad lisboeta, la desembocadura del río Tajo y el área metropolitana más poblada de Portugal.

Como sostiene Robert Stam: "la imagen digital también implica una desontologización de la imagen baziana [...] la producción de imágenes digitales hacen posible prácticamente cualquier imagen."²¹ Por ello, el videoartista, a diferencia del cineasta, no está apegado a la

realidad o al realismo, tan influyente en la teoría de André Bazin. Todo lo contrario: este nuevo creador goza de plena libertad y no debe pleitesía a ningún sistema o modelo icónico de representación precedente. Más aún, puede transformar y manipular de múltiples maneras lo real. Así, Filipa César en *Aura* (2004) reconstruye un universo imposible, pero verosímil al mismo tiempo. La autora, nacida en Oporto y afincada en Berlín, graba en las cercanías del Reichstag de esta ciudad, no para documentar o mostrar una realidad y un espacio turísticos del país alemán, sino con la finalidad de mostrar la extrañeza del espacio. Como recurso tecnológico, César opta por la reproducción marcha atrás. Las primeras imágenes de la pieza — el follaje de los árboles y la brisa sobre la hierba del parque — resultan inquietantes pero lógicas. Sin embargo, el espectador pronto es incapaz de entender la coherencia de las acciones de las personas que deambulan por el jardín. Surge entonces una necesidad de comprender y de aprehender lo que aparentemente carece de sentido, pues las figuras que aparecen caminan de espaldas y realizan gestos insólitos pero, tal vez, posibles. Solo cuando el público observa el vuelo en retroceso de un cuervo comprende que se trata de un vídeo que reproduce marcha atrás y que la temporalidad, por tanto, ha sido invertida.

Lo anterior confirma que los videoartistas lusos se encuentran ante el hecho de que lo representado deja de tener un valor narrativo, genérico y estético. El vídeo y las imágenes electrónicas se convierten en el centro de la creación. Andrew Darley ha sintetizado este proceso en el panorama internacional del audiovisual actual: “Me interesa llamar la atención sobre las maneras específicas mediante las cuales la imagen digital está construyendo formas estéticas y ocupando un lugar en su seno, pues tales formas resultan muy distintas de sus correlatos de hace treinta años (caso de que existieran). Aquí, de manera consciente o no, las imágenes estimulan y/o atraen la atención sobre sí mismas en tanto imágenes, al mismo tiempo que, de modo concomitante, desvirtúan la representación, entendida en su acepción tradicional, girando, en primera instancia, más en torno a estilos, formas y géneros (previos y coexistentes).”²² Así ocurre en otra obra de Filipa César, *Alle der Kosmonauten* (2004), un largo paseo en cámara fija por el Berlín oriental. La pieza no se preocupa en documentar, no quiere insertarse dentro del género del documental, del cine informativo o de los vídeos de denuncia social/histórica, sino que se trata de una contemplación en sí mismo, de un “paseo.”

También João Onofre está interesado en fijar la atención del espectador en la propia obra, es decir, en el propio vídeo. En *Untitled (N'en finit plus)* (2011) el espectador escucha la

voz de una joven (Beatriz Mateus) que canta la letra de “La nuit n’en finit plus” de Petula Clark. Sin embargo, lo que contempla el público no es más que un pedazo de tierra húmeda. La cámara comienza un larguísimo movimiento (realizado con una grúa y con un posterior *etalonaje* digital) que permite que aparezcan, primero, los pies, luego las piernas y, por fin, el cuerpo de la joven. Pero el misterio se mantiene porque el espectador no puede entender el lugar donde se encuentra la joven. La cámara sigue ascendiendo y se descubre que Beatriz Mateus canta desde una especie de fosa o tumba gigante. La imagen se aleja aún más y vemos la fosa abierta, perdida en un campo verde en mitad de la noche. En verdad la obra podría entenderse como una escenificación de la letra de la canción de Petula Clark, pero la pieza sobrepasa la mera cita musical y atrapa al espectador, obligado a reflexionar sobre la propia imagen.

El videoarte y su composición electrónica-digital se transforman en el tema central de las obras y su relación con la realidad, que ha dejado de ser representativa, es el tema central de las obras de estos videoartistas. No se trata, pues, de adecuarse a la realidad, sino de develarla, en términos heideggerianos. Esto sólo es posible una vez que el arte se libera de una concepción temporal basada en la sucesión de momentos de idéntica magnitud, dentro de los cuales se producen los acontecimientos. En su lugar, a lo que se apunta es a una concepción temporal extática en la que el tiempo no es aquello que facilita nuestras representaciones, sino lo que da cuenta de nuestro ser. Ser y tiempo. Una de las consecuencias que esto tiene es que el vínculo evidente entre significado y significante se rompe, pues el primero no actúa como la sustancia a la que el segundo señalaría. Cera es, posiblemente, el creador audiovisual que más ha reflexionado sobre este proceso de ruptura o de quiebra en la relación directa entre significado y significante. En casi la totalidad de sus propuestas, este creador portugués se plantea la cuestión del extrañamiento (entendido como lo que define Viktor Shklovski:²³ una ruptura entre el significado y el significante). Así, piezas como *II* (2012) y *The Proa Complex* (2005) no pueden entenderse como documentales o estudios sobre lo real, sino precisamente como un *extrañamiento* de lo real. Ambos vídeos consisten en la grabación de arquitecturas y de espacios industriales de los no-lugares de los que habla Marc Augé. Estos trabajos podrían recordar a los “tiempos muertos” del cine de ficción de Michelangelo Antonioni o los célebres “pillow shot” de las películas del director japonés Yasujiro Ozu. Son el formato de las obras de Cera (en el primer caso la polivisión o pantalla múltiple; en el segundo, un tempo lento), la iluminación y el montaje los que dan el nuevo significado a las

obras. Los espacios y lugares retratados por Nuno Cera no nos resultan cercanos o próximos, sino lejanos y “extraños.”

En cuanto a Pedro Paiva João Maria Gusmão, artistas más cercanos en sus planteamientos al cine experimental y de no ficción que al videoarte, se sitúan intencionalmente en un espacio de extrañamiento. Para ellos sus vídeos y sus instalaciones son, ante todo, procesos que presentan paradojas que no pueden sino suscitar la inquietud de quien los contempla. Así, la visión de los engranajes de un molino se convierte en un universo enigmático en *Water Mill* (2012). La mirada de Pedro Paiva João Maria Gusmão se centra en (de)mostrar lo extraño presente en actividades tan cotidianas como el acostarse, que se transforman en un proceso místico al ralentizarse – de nuevo la manipulación temporal — hasta lo inquietante: *Getting in to the Bed* (2011).

4. CONCLUSIONES

En la década de los ochenta, Jean Baudrillard se preguntaba por el impacto que las nuevas videoculturas tendrían en el arte. Tiempo atrás había escrito que “en el corazón de esta videocultura siempre hay una pantalla, pero no hay forzosamente una mirada.”²⁴ Pues bien, los artistas portugueses a los que nos hemos referido, y muy especialmente los pertenecientes a la generación nacida en la década de los setenta, demuestran haber encontrado una mirada.

La primera característica que comparten casi todos ellos es, como se ha visto, que en su formación han incluido directamente dos instituciones lusas Fundação Serralves y Fundação Calouste Gulbenkain. Y una segunda seña de identidad fundamental es el haber permanecido durante grandes períodos en estancias formativas y de creación en el extranjero. Ahora bien, el nexo común más interesante para lo que nos ocupa es que puede apreciarse en sus trabajos la misma búsqueda continua y permanente de la propia mirada. Lo que se plantean es entonces cómo tal mirada, al depender de un sujeto descentrado, deconstruido, no puede aprehender la realidad, que ya no depende de esa lógica sujeto-objeto. Es precisamente esto lo que descubren, lo que muestran, las “imágenes-vídeo,” en las que el tiempo se libera de su función ordenadora de los fenómenos para alcanzar todo su alcance ontológico. Este tipo de imágenes no se encadenan a partir de un comienzo que

actúe como fundamento, lógico y legal, de la su serie. De hecho, cada pieza de videoarte, gracias al recurso al *loop* o a la repetición incesante, sitúa al espectador en el terreno de la iteración, que no es exactamente el de la repetición de lo mismo, sino, por decirlo con Derrida, el de la “huella,” creadora de “imágenes-fantasma.” Las imágenes se suceden, no cronológicamente, sino, si se nos permite parafrasear a Heidegger, “extáticamente.”

Eso lo que Jean-Luc Nancy, según vimos, denomina la “incrustación.” ¿Se puede, pese a todo lo anterior, buscar una lógica narrativa — dependiente, por tanto, de una temporalidad — en el videoarte? ¿Cabe contar historias, relatos, con el arte del vídeo? Sí, pero a condición de asumir que el referente de las imágenes no está fuera de ellas, sino en el espacio que habitan, y en el que toman del tiempo su razón de ser. En *F for Fake*, Filipa César lleva hasta el paroxismo el juego entre imágenes ficticias (un falso documental, una película) y “reales” hasta el punto de llegar a confundirlas, no porque, como diría una lectura superficial antiposmoderna, se haya anulado la diferencia entre ambas, sino porque en el vídeo unas y otras comparten un mismo ser, esto es, un mismo tiempo: el tiempo de las “imágenes-tiempo.” Cuáles son los efectos que para el arte puede tener semejante concepción son un gran desafío para la estética actual. Mucho nos tenemos que estos apuntes poco pueden aportar al respecto, dada la magnitud de la empresa. En su lugar nos conformamos con esbozar alguna posible línea de estudio que ha de quedar inevitablemente por desarrollar. Sirva, pues, lo anterior como propuesta y como elogio de una generación de videoartistas portugueses que se han atrevido a ir más lejos que otros artes del vídeo nacionales en su reflexión sobre la condición temporal de la imagen del vídeo.

1. Destacamos: Rudolf Arnheim, *El cine como arte* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1986); André Bazin, *¿Qué es el cine?* (Madrid: Rialp, 2001); Noël Burch, *Praxis del cine* (Madrid: Fundamentos, 2008); Francesco Casetti, *Dentro de lo Sguardo. Il Filme e il suo Spettatore* (Roma: Bompiani, 1986); Noël Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies of Contemporary Film Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985).

2. La obra más significativa de Bellour es *L'Entre-Images. Photo. Cinéma. Vidéo*. (Paris: La Différence, 2002). De Yvonne Spielmann hay que destacar su *Video. Das reflexive Medium* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Press, 2005). Y en cuanto a Parfait, resulta ineludible la lectura de *Video: an art contemporain* (Paris: Editions du regard, 2001).

3. La propia François Parfait así lo constata al comienzo de su obra *Video: un art contemporain*. Tras señalar la ingente cantidad de producciones artísticas realizadas en formato vídeo, añade que “a esta proliferación de expresiones electrónicas cuya visibilidad y procedimientos no es evidente — construcciones de lo más elaboradas junto a gestos de lo más indolente —, le corresponde un déficit del discurso crítico y una debilidad en los medios de descripción y de análisis, medios con los que ninguna otra forma de expresión plástica ha sido sometida en el mismo grado” (7).

4. Así, en “El origen de la obra de arte” leemos: “Pero [...], ¿al decir que el arte es el ponerse a la obra de la verdad vuelve a cobrar vida aquella opinión ya superada según la cual el arte es una imitación y copia de la realidad? [...] Nada de eso.” — in Martin Heidegger, *Caminos de bosque* (Madrid: Alianza, 2008), 25.

5. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, 347-348. Un poco antes, Deleuze había confesado que su interés por la nueva imagen, la del videoarte, era subsidiario respecto a su estudio del cine: “no pretendemos efectuar un análisis de las nuevas imágenes, tarea que desbordaría nuestro proyecto, pero sí indicar ciertos efectos cuya relación con la imagen cinematográfica es necesario dilucidar” (346).

6. Derrida, Jacques, “Videor,” in *Passages de l'image*, ed. Raymond Bellour et al. (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1990), 160.

7. Cf. Fernando Rampérez, *La quiebra de la representación* (Madrid: Dykinson, 2004).

8. Cf. Heidegger, *Nietzsche (I)* (Madrid: Destino, 2000), 496.

9. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1973).

10. Cf. Paul Virilio, *Esthétique de la disparition* (Paris : André Balland, 1980); Buci-Glucksmann, *Esthétique de l'éphémère* (Paris: Galilée, 2003).

11. De hecho, Buci-Glucksmann menciona con frecuencia en su ensayo trabajos de videoartistas como Bill Viola. Es indudable que esa “Estética del videoarte” por la que venimos abogando debería tomar en consideración estos análisis de esta autora, así como los del propio Virilio, si bien la aplicabilidad de los de este último al videoarte es menos evidente.

12. Pedro Lapa, “Cartografía delgúns conflictos e propostas / Cartografía de algunos conflictos y propuestas,” in *Outras alternativas: novas experiências visuais em Portugal*, ed. David Barro (Vigo: Fundación MARCO, 2003), 44.

13. Preferimos este término, que alude a la célebre distinción trazada por Deleuze entre “imagen-tiempo” e “imagen-movimiento,” al de “imagen electrónica,” toda vez que los avances tecnológicos han permitido al videoarte acercarse a nuevos formatos, como el digital, que poco tienen que ver con el empleado para generar las primeras imágenes que grababan las cámaras, portátiles en su mayoría, magnetoscópicas. No obstante, ya que el videoarte, pese a que comienza a prescindir del vídeo desde los años 80 del siglo XX, conserva el término “vídeo,” nosotros, por nuestra parte, haremos lo mismo al hablar de esta “imagen-vídeo.”

14. Lapa, “Cartografía delgúns,” 48.

15. Christine Van Asche (ed.), *Vidéo Vintage* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2012).

16. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Ego sum* (Paris: Aubier Flammarion, 1979), 72.

17. Jacinto Lageira, “Volver a quedarse mudo,” in *Más que la vida/Mais que a vida/Larger than life* (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Vigo: Fundación MARCO, 2010), 83.

18. Nancy, *Au fond des images* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 137.

19. Nancy, “La sacudida de lo inicial. Los golpes de James Coleman,” *Carta 3* (2012): 16.

20. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre XI. Les quatre principes fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

21. Robert Stam, *Teorías del cine* (Barcelona: Paidós Comunicación, 2001), 264.

22. Andrew Darley, *Cultura visual digital. Espectáculo y nuevos géneros en los medios de comunicación* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2002), 297.

23. Viktor Shklovski, *Cine y lenguaje* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1971).

24. Jean Baudrillard, “Videosfera y Sujeto Fractal,” in *Videoculturas de fin de siglo* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989), 31.

O LUGAR DA VOZ NA CONSTRUÇÃO DO ESPAÇO DOCUMENTAL PORTUGUÊS: MORAIS, MOZOS E TOCHA

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Zéfiro de José Álvaro Morais (1994), *Ruínas* de Manuel Mozos (2009) e *É na Terra não é na Lua* de Gonçalo Tocha (2011) são filmes sobre espaços portugueses que apresentam diferentes tipos de tensão entre a imagem e a palavra. Eles encenam de formas distintas esse jogo de poder, levando a que em cada um destes filmes o espectador seja confrontado com espaços físicos e espaços simbólicos diferentes. Por se tratarem de documentários sobre lugares — respectivamente, o Sul de Portugal, ruínas portuguesas e a ilha do Corvo, nos Açores —, torna-se possível analisar a relação dialógica entre paisagens filmadas e aquilo em que elas se tornam quando confrontadas com o comentário em *off* que as acompanha. Ou seja, compreender o que é que esta voz *off* acorda na imagem e para onde as duas forças narrativas projectam, “situam,” o espectador, que reagirá a esse posicionamento.

No filme de José Álvaro Morais, a voz *off* ganha corpo no início da narrativa, isto é, o narrador é uma personagem que surge em campo e fala directamente para a câmara, como se se tratasse de um pivot televisivo. Mas não deixa de falar também em *off*: ele alterna entre o espaço diegético que a câmara apreende e o lugar inacessível ao espectador e à personagem de onde a voz *off* discursa — inacessível, no sentido em que não pode ser acedido de facto, apenas representado, invocado. Este movimento oscilatório articula e expõe fronteiras e funções narrativas diferenciadas, levando a que *Zéfiro* seja um filme não só sobre um território geográfico concreto, mas também uma demonstração da elasticidade e resistência do poder simbólico e efectivo do espaço da narração em *off*. Se aqui existem linhas narrativas autónomas — a voz narradora, a trama ficcional e as recriações históricas —, desenvolvendo-se, cruzando-se e afectando-se mutuamente, no filme de Mozos essa questão não se verifica. *Ruínas* é um filme depurado, composto por planos fixos e longos de edifícios e partes de edifícios degradados, levando o espectador à contemplação, na maioria das vezes silenciosa. Vozes *off* masculinas e femininas dizem textos de naturezas diferentes: listas, relatórios, poemas, cartas, instruções, editais institucionais; ou seja, elas in-

vocam dimensões ficcionais na imagem por via de cada narração. As vozes são enigmáticas, nunca identificadas ou contextualizadas; aparecem e desaparecem em silêncio, parecem fantasmas a habitar os espaços. O grupo de narradores é heterogêneo e desagregado também pelo modo como cada narração invoca um mundo-em-si. A imprevisibilidade e heterogeneidade da narração e a natureza fragmentária da própria palavra revelam forças discursivas raras no que respeita ao comentário em *off*. Em *É na Terra não é na Lua*, a narração procede enquanto legenda da imagem, ou seja, a voz esclarece aquilo que o espectador vê: identifica pessoas, explica trajectos, contextualiza práticas. Aqui a narração é encenada sobre a forma de diálogo entre o realizador e o operador de som, que falam como numa conversa privada cujo tempo resulta ambíguo. Isto é, ambos dissertam sobre a imagem no momento do visionamento, como se ela os levasse a recordar os episódios da rodagem, suscitando assim comentários que fazem a ligação entre o espectador e a imagem: o procedimento normal da voz *off*. Contudo aqui essa ligação parece ter um efeito diferente: ela parece “situar” o espectador num espaço que não é o do acontecimento documentado — a vida no Corvo —, mas o da experiência íntima do visionamento das imagens filmadas.

1.

Cada um dos filmes aqui referidos apresenta e concretiza de forma particular potencialidades diferentes da narração em *off* no cinema. De um ponto de vista histórico, a figura tutelar da voz *off* no documentário dos anos 30 e 40 corresponde à “voz de Deus,” cujo exemplo maior é o comentário em *off* da série de jornais cinematográficos norte-americanos *The March of Time*. Sobre esta voz, Charles Wolfe afirma:

disembodied, this voice is construed as fundamentally unrepresentable in human form, connoting a position of absolute mastery and knowledge outside the spacial and temporal boundaries of the social world the film depicts. [...] In the 1950s and 1960s, most histories tell us, the technique was rejected as authoritarian, didactic, or reductive by filmmakers who, committed to new strategies of observation (direct cinema, cinéma vérité, cinéma direct), opted for location sound [...].¹

É no momento em que as fronteiras de género no cinema, nomeadamente entre a ficção e o documentário, são postas em causa e começam a esbater-se que a tal posição de conhecimento e mestria absolutos da voz *off* é derrubada. O discurso torna-se pessoal ou casual, múltiplo ou dividido, fragmentário ou auto-questionador, enveredando pela experimentação linguística coloquial ou poética, pela autoria difusa ou por multivocalismos.²

Zéfiro, Ruínas e *É na Terra não é na Lua* situam-se neste segundo paradigma histórico da voz *off* documental, comunicando cada um dos filmes com questões teóricas diferenciadas no contexto desta “libertação” discursiva dos anos 50 e 60. Os filmes de José Álvaro Morais e de Manuel Mozos são documentários ficcionais ou ficções documentais, gozam de um hibridismo genológico e estrutural que a narração em *off* personifica de formas diferentes. Por seu lado, o filme de Gonçalo Tocha, apesar de integrar elementos ficcionais, não se baseia na ficção para representar o real.³ De qualquer forma e independentemente do grau com que estes filmes metaforizam o factual, eles partilham o comentário em *off* enquanto dispositivo narrativo: dão palco à voz do narrador.

No cinema, a voz age como o mais importante marcador sonoro; ela impõe uma hierarquia da percepção, em detrimento da música, efeitos e silêncio — trata-se do “vococentrismo” que Michel Chion refere.⁴ Ela ultrapassa fronteiras diegéticas, criando muitas vezes significado fílmico de forma disruptiva. Em articulação com a imagem a que está ancorada, a voz revela diferentes potencialidades narrativas. Quando ela se liga a um corpo presente em campo, quando a sua origem é revelada, essa linha garante estabilidade narrativa. Contudo, quando essa ligação é quebrada — fragmentada, disfarçada, deslocada ou apagada –, outros significados são gerados. Mas é a relação que tem com o espaço, com a imagem, que dita a sua natureza, e consequentemente a sua acção.

Voice-off e *voiceover* surgem assim como termos relativamente auto-explicativos, no sentido em que distinguem espacialmente vozes de naturezas diferentes. Em português, a terminologia relativa à voz no cinema não é rigorosa: “voz *off*” é o único termo existente neste contexto e corresponde à voz cuja origem não se encontra em campo, podendo pertencer por exemplo a uma personagem ou a um narrador, conhecidos ou desconhecidos, com ou sem ligação ao campo e ao seu espaço contíguo. Mary Ann Doane contempla a distinção entre *voice-off* e *voiceover* em termos da heterogeneidade do cinema:

Voice-off refers to instances in which we hear the voice of a character who is not visible within the frame. Yet the film establishes, by means of previous shots or other contextual determinants, the character's "presence" of the space of the scene, in the diegesis. [...] In its own way, it accounts for lost space. [...] The voice-off is always "submitted to the destiny of the body" because it belongs to a character who is confined to the space of the diegesis, if not to the visible space of the screen. [...] The voiceover commentary in the documentary, unlike the voice-off, the voiceover during a flashback, or the interior monologue, is, in effect, a disembodied voice. [...] As a form of direct address it speaks without mediation to the audience, bypassing the characters, and establishing a complicity between itself and the spectator.⁵

Kozloff define a narração em *off*, a "voice-over narration," enquanto "oral statements, conveying any portion of a narrative, spoken by an unseen speaker situated in a space and time other than that simultaneously being presented by the images on the screen."⁶ A coexistência destes tempos diferentes, o da imagem e o da voz, abala o já referido efeito de real ao estabelecer uma heterogeneidade narrativa, no sentido em que os tempos representam fios narrativos distintos, mesmo que comunicantes. Isto é, ambos discursam a partir de espaços simbólicos diferentes, dotando o filme de um hibridismo que a própria Kozloff justifica por via da existência de dois impulsos contraditórios: "a hearkening back to simple story telling and a modernist (if not "post-modernist") self-consciousness regarding narrative discourse."⁷

Este quadro tem resultados diferentes na ficção e no documentário, onde o espectador não tende a estranhar a voz *off*. O poder secreto deste tipo de narração, afirma Mary Ann Doane, prende-se com o facto já referido de não ter uma origem localizável.⁸ E mesmo em silêncio, a voz *off* produz um discurso. Sobre a ideia de "deixar o evento falar por si" no contexto do documentário, Pascal Bonitzer afirma:

Formule intéressante, non seulement parce que s'y laisse lire l'élimination du point de vue (de l'auteur) sur l'événement en question, mais aussi parce qu'elle déplace cette « question du point de vue » — qui importe tant aux « politiques » — vers un problème de *parole* ; parce que s'y inscrit que « ça parle », que la juste vision de l'événement dépend de ce qu'il « dit », que l'œil est emporté par la voix et en l'occurrence une voix, sinon silencieuse, du moins *sans sujet*.⁹

Ela dirige-se directamente ao espectador a partir do lugar intangível da linguagem, adquirindo força simbólica, aprofundando a diegese. Daí que em relação à imagem, esta voz surja distanciada, poderosa e onisciente. Ela é também estruturadora da mesma imagem: pertence-lhe e organiza-a, preparando-a para o espectador, conduzido — “encantado” — por essa voz narradora. Esta guia e, assim, goza do tal valor repressivo e opressivo do texto que Barthes refere, na relação com a imagem que acompanha.¹⁰ A palavra age sobre a imagem, retirando-lhe poder à força — usurpação, defende Bonitzer¹¹. E Chion concorda: “The sound film also has an offscreen field that can be populated by acousmatic voices, founding voices, determining voices — voices that command, invade and vampirize the image.”¹²

Por outro lado, na ficção, a existência de narradores sem corpo tende a perturbar o espectador por abalar o efeito de real. É neste sentido um território mais sensível a heterogeneidades. De qualquer forma, na ficção, quando a narração é “estranha,” isto é, quando a relação causal entre eventos ou a apresentação linear do tempo são postas em causa, aí a voz narradora consegue naturalizar essa estranheza: “an odd, impersonal narrative agency is thus humanized and tamed,” Kozloff explica.¹³ Desta forma, um poder simbólico é adquirido por via do reforço da omnisciência do narrador num dispositivo agora antropomorfizado. O comentário em *off* atenua os efeitos de uma montagem que foge à convenção narrativa ficcional. Ele oferece uma ordem à lógica do mundo do filme quando a imagem exige apoio, essa é a regra.

Em todo o caso, a narração em *off* surge sempre no cinema como um dispositivo narrativo disruptivo porque instaura, personificando, um subnível diegético que concorre na edificação do significado fílmico, mas fá-lo de fora — daí parecer encontrar-se *acima* da imagem, observando-a como um espectador, mas a partir de um lugar privilegiado. Michel Chion contempla a voz comentadora como uma espécie de pódio abaixo ou ao lado do ecrã,¹⁴ apelidando-a de “acousmètre”-comentador: “he who never shows himself but who has no personal stake in the image.”¹⁵

Tudo isto corresponde, no fundo, a um teatro montado para afectar o espectador, onde o olho da câmara e a voz narradora representam cada um o seu ponto de vista,¹⁶ são autónomos, podendo confluir ou divergir na ideologia. Oráculo, voz de Deus, narradores sérios, justos, irónicos, não fiáveis, desconhecidos: o que está permanentemente em causa é um jogo de poder, a espelhar uma ética e a criar uma estética.

Nesta dinâmica subtil, uma outra questão se coloca: se a narrativa fílmica representa os eventos da história do ponto de vista de uma testemunha imaginária ou invisível,¹⁷ como se define o espaço simbólico do espectador neste jogo de forças entre palavra e imagem? De que forma o realizador desenha esse ponto de vista que, em última instância, projectará o seu espectador para um universo virtual?

2.

I.

Zéfiro é um documentário ficcionado que José Álvaro Morais realizou para a televisão em 1994 sobre o Sul de Portugal. O ponto de partida geográfico do filme é Lisboa; existe uma trama responsável pelo desenvolvimento narrativo — um homem comete um crime no Largo de São Vicente, em Alfama, e para escapar à polícia dirige-se para sul —, uma trama que opera como McGuffin. O caminho do protagonista passa por cidades, aldeias, campos abertos, ruínas e rios, culminando no mar, por onde ele acabará por enveredar. A câmara acompanha-o sempre e *Zéfiro* apresenta-se dessa forma como *travelogue*, expondo o cenário geográfico que com frequência absorve a personagem, retirando-lhe centralidade narrativa, criando paisagens.¹⁸

Contudo, o mais sólido fio condutor do filme é o comentário do narrador, que informa o espectador sobre a história do Sul português sem nunca se referir ao homem em fuga. De facto, a função do narrador de *Zéfiro*, o papel que ele representa, é muito peculiar: a sua voz está presente desde os primeiros momentos do filme, agindo como guia histórico do espectador. Os seus comentários informativos, objectivos, acordam no filme curtas recriações históricas, isto é, pequenas ficções sobre as quais ele não fala. As personagens desses excertos históricos chegam a contracenar com o criminoso em fuga, levando a que a voz do narrador funcione com frequência enquanto ponto de fuga daquelas duas linhas ficcionais aparentemente independentes. A complexa e intrincada estrutura do filme tornam-no num híbrido no que respeita a distinções de género, o que tem efeitos no que respeita à narração em *off*.

Depois de estar visualmente estabelecido o tema do filme e apresentada a trama que o anima, José Álvaro Morais filma o narrador a falar directamente para a câmara, revelando um campo por norma não acessível ao espectador. Ele aparece como num placó, sobre um modelo da Península Ibérica de grandes dimensões, caminhando sobre ele enquanto dá as suas lições

de História. O fundo do cenário simula um céu estrelado, o narrador veste um fato e segura uma bengala que aponta para os lugares mais distantes naquele modelo. Este interior surgirá com frequência durante o filme, é a sala de aula do narrador, uma autoridade sobre o assunto. O campo/ contra-campo da cena invoca o teatro: a perspectiva da câmara é a de um espectador numa peça, de frente para o palco e distante do narrador/ personagem/ actor.¹⁹

José Álvaro Morais introduz desta forma uma dimensão espacial e simbólica, que no fundo corresponde à encenação do espaço de onde o narrador intervém. O momento em que ele surge em campo é antecedido por imagens de Lisboa ao amanhecer, seguida por uma imagem da Terra perspectivada do espaço. Deste muito aberto ângulo aéreo, a câmara simula um movimento ascendente que termina já dentro daquele espaço metalinguístico.

Há toda uma retórica da voz *off* aqui encenada que surpreende o espectador e que poderia funcionar contra si mesma no sentido em que, ao dar um corpo a uma voz que se define precisamente por essa privação, a essência da mesma voz altera-se. Mas de facto o gesto transgressor não se esgota na auto-anulação, há um discurso ali montado e que é positivado pelo jogo gradativo de escalas, movimento de câmara, cenografia, escolha do actor, frontalidade do olhar do narrador em relação à câmara, até mesmo pela dinâmica entre o espectador de cinema e o de teatro ali convocada.

O espaço de onde o narrador comunica está interdito à personagem, é um espaço privilegiado que fica acima dela — trata-se sempre da “voz-sobre” —, e contemplável apenas por via da representação. A câmara assiste ao monólogo do narrador, levando a que naquele momento o espectador fílmico incarne o espectador teatral, a dinâmica é auto-reflexiva e tem como ponto de fuga a figura e voz narradora. Este é apresentado num palco situado pela câmara num lugar sobre-humano, ao nível das estrelas. A questão da voz de Deus é desta forma encenada, funcionando aqui enquanto variação dessa voz poderosa e teatral que, nos anos 30, narrava documentários. Mas o narrador de *Zéfiro*, apesar de situado literal e simbolicamente acima do mundo real, não é onipotente, onisciente e ubíquo: a voz de Deus aqui é esvaziada. De facto, ele tende para o oposto pelo modo como é gradualmente absorvido pela linha narrativa protagonizada pelo criminoso em fuga. O narrador, depois de surgir no seu elemento, liberta-se dele e passa a acompanhar os passos do fugitivo, chegando inclusivamente a cruzarem-se a dado momento. Quando é apresentado em campo e tem algo a dizer sobre guerras, costumes, artefactos e práticas passadas naqueles espaços, ele fita directamente a câmara. Quando não fala, assiste à corrida do fugitivo.

Durante o filme, o narrador regressa pontualmente ao espaço metalinguístico inicial mas termina no entanto a sua viagem em Lisboa, no Largo de São Vicente, o ponto de partida ficcional da narrativa. Aí contracena com outras personagens e intervém na acção, revelando uma dimensão terrena e humanizada que o filme indiciava, e parecendo concretizar de certa forma as palavras de Bonitzer: « la seule institution du récit, où elle s'inscrit, la rend caduque, mortelle. Il suffit que le sujet de cette voix apparaisse à l'image (il suffit donc qu'il y puisse apparaître), et ce n'est plus que la voix d'un homme, autrement dit d'un quelconque imbécile : la preuve? un coup de feu, il tombe – et avec lui, mais dans le ridicule, son discours aux accents prophétiques. »²⁰ Esta dimensão patética que o narrador/personagem adquire reforça, por sua vez, o estatuto sobre-humano do narrador *off* representado no início de *Zéfiro*. Ela corresponde de facto a uma perda de poder simbólico por parte do narrador, mas em todo o caso a tal heterogeneidade do cinema que o comentário em *off* revela não desaparece, pois ele não deixa de narrar. Ganha corpo, materialidade, mas não perde a capacidade de falar a partir daquele fora de campo inacessível.

Como a narração em *off* não refere a trajectória do criminoso, reportando-se exclusivamente ao espaço filmado, ela confere-lhe uma profundidade de campo abstracta, no sentido em que adiciona uma dimensão — a informação — à imagem, dimensão essa construída por dentro. O espectador assiste de facto à humanização da figura do narrador, mas aquilo que este traz à narrativa, aquilo que oferece ao espectador, não perde o seu valor simbólico, nem se torna ridículo. A palavra do narrador — em *off* e também, no seu formato mais televisivo, dita em campo — resiste por entre as múltiplas linhas ficcionais do filme. Mais, ela reage com solidez, sobretudo quando se tem em conta de que se trata de um filme que integra uma encenação do espaço “impossível” de onde fala um comentador. A voz *off* é documental mas a malha narrativa que ela estrutura, da qual aliás ela faz parte, é ficcional. Mesmo tornada física e “situada,” ela permanece uma autoridade na sua função, conseguindo ao mesmo tempo naturalizar um dispositivo narrativo “estranho,” como Kozloff apelidaria.

II.

Se existe na narração em *off* de *Zéfiro* uma ligação quase directa à ideia da voz de Deus, no filme de Mozos a figura que por vias diferentes surge é a do fantasma. Como já se referiu, em *Ruínas*, a voz *off* é difusa uma vez que o discurso é fragmentado — textos de origens diversas —, para além de que existem vários narradores, masculinos e femininos. O filme é um

travelogue composto por blocos correspondentes a edifícios em ruínas em vários locais de Portugal. Em cada local, vêem-se ângulos e pormenores diferentes dos destroços, restos de espaços e sinais de vida passada. Isto é, provas materiais e simbólicas de vida humana que, pelo que revelam — pelo que são —, invocam aquilo que foram. Mozos concentra-se no que ali subsiste para se referir ao que já não existe: a memória, enquanto erosão, a organizar o esquecimento, e o filme como narrativa que possibilita a fixação e a partilha dessa mesma memória.²¹

A imagem retrata a ruína, e o som também. Este, sobretudo por via da narração em *off*, mas também pela música não-diegética, pelo som directo e pelo silêncio, vem fortalecer uma dimensão sombria e fantasmagórica da imagem, fechando-a de certa forma. A natureza segmentada na narração leva a que o poder simbólico da voz *off* se reparta, e assim ela deixa de ser una e coesa. Esta fragmentação, num primeiro momento, leva a que a perspectiva do olho da câmara pareça mais “sólida” e “fiável.” A fixidez e duração dos planos, assim como a quase ausência de movimentos de câmara trabalham nesse sentido. Aquela câmara é segura, pressente o espectador. Mas, depois, entrando as vozes narradoras em acção — em campo —, uma outra ordem é estabelecida e que se prende com uma ficcionalização dos espaços, que agora ganham história. A ficção chega às ruínas por via da voz.

Cada narrador convoca personagens invisíveis em cada espaço documentado no filme, transformando desta forma *Ruínas* no retrato de lugares habitados por fantasmas. Estes correspondem às personagens que os textos invocam em si e aos próprios narradores sem corpo, que por serem vários e distintos tornam-se tão ou mais misteriosos do que as personagens por eles referidas.

Neste sentido, a existência de uma mulher narradora é particularmente significativa pois no cinema documental as imagens tendem a ser comentadas por homens,²² tornando mais insólita aquela voz narradora em particular, assim como toda a narração em *off* do filme em geral. Mozos dá voz a quem geralmente não fala e visibilidade ao que também por norma não a tem. Sobre o assunto, afirma Luís Miguel Oliveira:

A natureza encontrou uma maneira de se regenerar a partir dos seus próprios detritos e obsolescências, e a morte gera sempre alguma espécie de vida. O “mundo cultural,” o mundo dos homens, nunca encontrou essa maneira. Ou encontrou, selectivamente: quando reconhece algum tipo de significado (histórico, estético) às suas ruínas chama-

lhes “monumentos” e torna-as lugares de peregrinação. Ou mete-as num museu. Quando não reconhece nada disso abandona-as, faz por esquecê-las até que a evidência material da sua presença se torne demasiado embaraçosa, ou um empecilho no caminho de novas construções.²³

A ordem que estrutura o mundo de *Ruínas* é mais claramente democrática do que a de *Zéfiro*, com o seu narrador transgressor. Não são apenas os comentadores que contribuem para o estabelecimento deste sistema; os longos momentos de silêncio do comentário em *off* no filme também o fazem porque dramatizam a entrada em cena das tais vozes, dão-lhes poder. E é nesse movimento preciso que uma força edificante de outra natureza se insurge, dotando retroactivamente a voz *off* de confluência, unidade e solidez. Ou seja, apesar de dispersa, fragmentada, heterogénea e imprevisível, a “voz-sobre” no filme de Mozos torna-se numa força narrativa tão forte quanto o olho da câmara sempre mostrou ser.

Para além dos narradores e do seu silêncio, existe o som directo e música não-diegética: música electrónica original composta por anakedluch e música diversificada pré-existente. Apesar de surtirem efeitos contraditórios — o som directo a fortalecer um lado documental e a música a invocar o artifício —, ambos os elementos irmanam-se numa função concreta: a construção de uma paisagem real e simbólica. O som directo fortalece, cena a cena, o lado observacional da realidade concreta que o filme tem; dá poder à imagem, trabalha para ela. A música não-diegética — instrumental, grave, sóbria —, cria por seu lado uma atmosfera soturna, quase obscura nas imagens. O olhar atento e prolongado da câmara, que se interessa tanto pelo lugar que cada ruína ocupa no seu *milieu*, como por pormenores do próprio destroço, em articulação com a banda sonora musical atmosférica levam a que, ali, se olhe para o espaço “de fora”; trata-se de um olhar exploratório.

Neste sentido, o filme torna-se numa experiência museológica, pelo trajecto pensado, os blocos narrativos autónomos formados por quadros estáticos que adquirem profundidade ficcional por via do som a dirigir o olhar do espectador. Quando atrás se referiu um fechamento é nesta perspectiva em concreto: apesar de neste filme se viajar, passear por ruas, e observar de fora — até o mar aqui se vê —, é a sensação de imersão, interioridade, intimidade que se destaca. Daí que o momento mais dramático do filme seja a cena do sanatório.²⁴

O filme parece tender para o momento em que a câmara mostra um antigo sanatório: as paredes vistas do exterior, os claustros com azulejos arrancados nas paredes, corredores, sa-

las já sem janelas, ganchos enferrujados presos no tecto, outras salas de grandes dimensões, o chão de algumas divisões, o próprio edifício visto de vários ângulos, à distância, com a paisagem em redor. Existem dois narradores durante a cena: o primeiro, um homem, lê uma carta onde se fala sobre a estação de rádio que funcionou no sanatório. A segunda voz narradora pertence a uma mulher que lê excertos de relatórios clínicos de pacientes do Sanatório das Penhas da Saúde, e, pela primeira e única vez no filme, voz e imagem parecem confluir linearmente no mesmo significado de uma forma específica. A imagem apresenta as reminiscências de um tempo a que o discurso da narração em *off* pertence, de uma forma que ainda não tinha ocorrido no filme, e que não voltará a ocorrer. E por seu lado, a voz invoca a dinâmica do sanatório na imagem, resgatando-a naquele espaço de erosão. Existe um eco artificial desta voz narradora, criado pela sobreposição da leitura de dois relatórios médicos diferentes pela mesma voz. Este desdobramento que dá origem ao eco dá profundidade física aos espaços filmados, ligando-as também por esta via.

Os doentes a que se refere a narradora parecem quase ganhar corpo físico, levando a que o fantasma que assim surge passe a pertencer ao cenário e a que o cenário seja, então, inconcebível sem o seu fantasma. Ainda não tinha acontecido em *Ruínas* o comentário *off* e a imagem tenderem tanto um para o outro. Mesmo que o espaço seja retratado de forma aséptica e depurada, ali tudo resulta dramático. O discurso em *off* é descritivo mas assertivo e objectivo na forma como se refere à decadência dos corpos, e é só sobre isso que se fala: febre, espectoração, inflamação. É a voz que acorda no espaço a dimensão da putrefação e da escatologia, e que revela sobretudo aquelas ruínas como território entre-vidas.

A propósito de *Psycho* (1960) de Hitchcock, onde uma voz “perdida” paira sobre a imagem, Chion explica:

To bury someone is not merely to dispose of the body for purposes of hygiene. It also means designating a place for the soul, the double. Or for those not believing in an after-life, it is a place for what remains of the person *within us* or for us. Burial is marked by rituals and signs such as the gravestone, the cross, the epitaph, which say to the departed, “You must stay here,” so that he won’t haunt the living as a soul in torment. In some traditions, ghosts are those who are unburied or improperly buried. Precisely the same applies to the *acousmètre*, when we speak of a yet-unseen voice, one that can nei-

ther enter the image to attach itself to a visible body, nor occupy the removed position of the image presenter. The voice is condemned to wander the surface.²⁵

A voz *off* — o discurso em si mesmo e a própria encenação da narração —, traz à cena a dimensão espectral que a própria imagem já continha em potência. E por seu lado, aqueles espaço vazio, sujo e destroçado, onde o som ecoa, representa poeticamente o lugar da “voz-sobre” no cinema.

III.

A narração de *É na Terra não é na Lua* distancia-se da de *Zéfiro* e da de *Ruínas*, pois a voz *off* não acorda abertamente significados ocultos na imagem, nem tende para a divergência. Ela procede de uma forma mais linear, no sentido em que informa sobre a vida no Corvo e, em menor escala e mais subtilmente, sobre a experiência pessoal do realizador e do técnico de som, Dídio Pestana, da rodagem na ilha. O filme traça um retrato profundo do espaço ao longo de três horas: filma-se o mar, os habitantes, as suas casas, as ruas, a boca do vulcão, os caminhos, a lixeira, a vida e a morte dos animais, a discoteca, a missa, as praças, e outros espaços. Trata-se de um olhar atento, curioso e afectivo, que se debruça sem pressão de tempo sobre a paisagem – olha-se muito e prolongadamente para o mar e para o céu, o que cria no filme uma respiração subjectiva e apaziguante na organização de toda aquela matéria viva.

Os comentadores em *off* são o realizador e o técnico de som, que conversam sobre as imagens de um filme que é também um diário de viagem: filma-se a vista do quarto e alguma interacção pessoal com os corvinos. Os narradores surgem em campo, apesar de não o fazerem com frequência. Mas a auto-figuração é consciente, levando a que este documentário sobre o Corvo seja também a história de como foi feito o único filme sobre a ilha.

Neste sentido, *É na terra, não é na lua* descende de *Chronique d'un été* (*Crónica de um Verão*, 1960) de Jean Rouch e Edgar Morin, pois não só tematiza uma ideia complexa de forma profunda, como também o autor se inscreve na matéria do filme, relacionando-se com ela. A interacção leva a que todos eles — entrevistados e entrevistadores — se irmanem no estatuto: tornam-se personagens do mesmo universo narrativo. De facto, o fio condutor do documentário é a produção de um gorro tradicional corvino por Inês Inêz, uma habitante local que oferece ao realizador o artefacto, onde se lê “GONÇALO 2008 CORVO”: a produção do gorro como metáfora da obra, cujo tema tem naturalmente vida autónoma mas que, em todo o

caso, não é independente do realizador. Quando o gorro fica pronto, Inês Inês diz-lhe que agora tem de mostrar como fica com ele, e o realizador obedece. A cena seguinte, a última do filme, revela a sombra da imagem de Gonçalo Tocha de gorro numa parede da discoteca, que se move ao som da música diegética – trata-se da assinatura do autor.

A narração em *off* revela também, e desde o início do filme, o impulso autofigurativo e autobiográfico. É com as seguintes palavras que ela abre a narrativa:

Corvo.

A ilha do Corvo.

Pleno Oceano Atlântico.

Açores.

Uma ilha de 7 por 4.

De 6 por 4. 7 por 4.

Habitada na ponta sul numa única vila.

440 habitantes.

450.

Já teve 900.

Já teve 300.

Uma cratera de vulcão: o Caldeirão.

Uma estrada.

Uma Câmara Municipal.

Uma aerogare.

Uma pista de 800 metros.

Um avião três vezes por semana.

Um posto médico.

A Santa Casa da Misericórdia, um infantário, uma escola.

Um porto.

Uma igreja.

Um restaurante.

Dois cafés.

Três.

Vamos filmar tudo o que conseguirmos.

Vamos tentar estar em todos os sítios ao mesmo tempo e não perder nada.

Vamos tentar conhecer toda a gente.

Filmar todas as caras.

Filmar todos os serviços, todas as casas.

Todas as ruas.

Todos os trabalhos.

E cantos da ilha.

Todas as árvores, todos os campos.

Todas as vacas.

Todos os porcos.

Todas as rochas, todos os pássaros.

Toda a música, toda a noite.

Da ilha do Corvo, também se vê a Lua.

O Corvo é na Terra, não é na Lua.

O texto é dito à vez pelos dois membros da equipa e toda a narração em *off* segue a mesma lógica: a de dar a impressão de uma conversa “improvisada,” as deixas passam informação sobre a ilha, as pessoas, os mitos, a memória do espaço, mas também sobre o quarto do realizador, conversas tidas na véspera ou o plano do dia. Trata-se sobretudo de um discurso descritivo. O olho da câmara também parece transitar entre uma perspectiva mais informativa e uma outra mais poética como quando se filma de noite, e em campo surge a escuridão, ou se filma o céu visto de dentro do mar. Neste sentido, a selecção das fontes é democrática: ouvem-se histórias, lêem-se reportagens, vêem-se *home movies*, fotografias, mapas e tabelas, e a par destas encontra-se a sensibilidade expressionista do autor, autorretratado no filme.

A obra do realizador alemão Werner Herzog comunica com esta dimensão do filme de *Tocha*, invocando um outro paradigma do documentário na obra: a paisagem, composta pelo espaço e seus habitantes, é tematizada e retratada afectivamente, e mitificada sem julgamentos, nem condescendência. Há uma postura aberta face ao real, destacando a diferença, pessoalizando o olhar, deixando desta forma a descoberto um mundo interior. Mas aquilo que no cinema de Herzog é analítico, aqui resulta sobretudo expositivo, sendo que para a obtenção desse efeito intervém não só a ideologia do próprio discurso — há sempre uma retórica

no discurso de Herzog —, mas também a encenação da voz *off*, isto é, o grão da voz, cujo significado Barthes resume da seguinte forma:

the volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate 'from within language and in its very materiality'; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings), expression; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language — not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sounds-signifiers, of its letters — where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work. It is, in a very simple word but which must be taken seriously, the *diction* of the language.²⁶

A voz *off* de Herzog é de facto uma assinatura,²⁷ a extensa obra do realizador alemão recorre com frequência à narração em *off*, consolidando a sua dicção, tom, timbre e velocidade de discurso como uma marca autoral do próprio, sobretudo quando fala em inglês. A voz de Tocha naturalmente não goza desse estatuto mas já tinha todavia surgido em *Balaou* (2007), a sua primeira obra. Nesta, o comentário *off* é constante, muito pessoal e emotivo; há claramente um impulso literário, que em *É na terra, não é na lua* reside sobretudo na montagem. Aqui, a sua voz é reservada, e concorre no sentido daquele impulso.

A personagem que Tocha cria no seu comentário em *off* não se revela autoritária, não questiona a lógica do mundo, é descritiva, encenando assim a figura do realizador e do seu técnico de som enquanto turistas, no sentido em que a voz reflecte um olhar sempre colado ao mundo que o filme retrata. O facto de a narração corresponder a um diálogo leva a que uma outra dinâmica seja criada. No processo de recriação daquele tempo impossível de onde falam os dois narradores, o discurso é estilizado no sentido em que se repetem palavras, clarificam-se ideias, como se o diálogo não estivesse fixado à partida. Porém ele está, e é aplicado com contenção. O espectador é desta forma invocado, pela narração em *off*, para a esfera pessoal e íntima dos dois comentadores no momento do visionamento do filme – um gesto virtual e metacinematográfico que reproduz o impossível. Ele é então levado a conhecer o Corvo ao lado de Tocha e Pestana e, apesar de o grão da voz dos dois não recriar naturalidade no diálogo, a experiência narrada do filme resulta sempre “fresca,” “nova.” E isso prende-se precisamente com o confronto entre esta narração “amadora,” sóbria e minimal e a monumentalidade do que ali está a ser registado. O poder simbólico da voz de Deus é delegado

na imagem, que a voz quer que se exponha na sua amplitude, complexidade e profundidade para que a paisagem possa surgir tal como Tocha a contempla.

3.

Aquilo que define a voz que narra em *off* é o facto de não ter um corpo a que se ancorar e esta não-existência física influi de forma específica na construção do espaço fílmico. Este efeito reflete uma encenação, uma performance por parte da própria “voz-sobre,” que adiciona uma profundidade simbólica, ideológica, ao campo/ contra-campo. Assim, a dinâmica desta voz *off* pode ser concebida de forma polarizada também, isto é, a voz age, a imagem ressent-se e, desta forma, distingue-se um outro campo/ contra-campo na estrutura do filme.

Os três filmes analisados articulam de formas distintas este quadro. *Zéfiro* encena literalmente o lugar de onde o narrador em *off* cumpre a sua função, começando por apresentá-lo enquanto voz de Deus, para depois destroná-lo, mostrando que a autoridade da voz não desaparece quando o corpo a resgata. Por seu lado, *Ruínas* também encena, mas com outra complexidade, o universo onde habitam aquelas vozes espectrais, condenadas a pairar à superfície, sem penetrar no campo/ contra-campo mas a tender vertiginosamente para ele. *É na terra, não é na lua* opera noutro sentido: sem expor o lugar das vozes, o comentário em *off* situa virtualmente o espectador nesse espaço exclusivo, levando a que o contacto com a paisagem retratada no filme se torne numa experiência “única,” quase num privilégio.

A câmara revela paisagens nestes três filmes, o espectador é conduzido pela voz do narrador e pelo olho da câmara, familiarizando-se dessa forma com aqueles espaços criados, com uma prática produtora de significado e com uma instância narrativa: uma viagem dentro do próprio cinema.

1. Charles Wolfe, “Historicizing the ‘Voice of God’: The Place of Vocal Narration in Classical Documentary,” *Film History* 9 (1997): 149.

2. *Ibid.*, 162.

3. Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*. 3.^a ed. (Nova Iorque: Routledge, 2006), 106.

4. Michel Chion, *La voix au cinéma* (Paris: Editions de l’Etoile, 1982): 15.

5. Mary Ann Doane, “The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space,” in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, 6.^a ed. (Nova Iorque: Oxford University Press, 1999), 366, 368, 369.

6. Sarah Kozloff, *Invisible Storytellers: Voice Over Narration in American Fiction Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 5.
7. *Ibid.*, 128.
8. Doane, "The Voice in the Cinema," 367.
9. Pascal Bonitzer, "Les silences de la voix," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 256 (1975), 23.
10. Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of Image" [1964], in *Image-Music-Text*, trad. Stephen Heath (Londres: Fontana Press, 1977), 40.
11. Bonitzer, "Les silences de la voix," 26.
12. Chion, *La voix au cinéma*, 32.
13. Kozloff, *Invisible Storytellers*, 128.
14. Chion, *La voix au cinéma*, 13.
15. *Ibid.*, 27.
16. Wolfe, "Historicizing the 'Voice of God'," 150.
17. David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 9.
18. Nunca se ouve o homem falar. A sua história é apresentada de forma depurada, as cenas em que surge são construídas em função do espaço circundante e concebidas de forma a levar o espectador a reparar na paisagem, a debruçar-se sobre ela. Daí a mudez da personagem e a banda sonora não diegética a tapar a sua voz na única cena em que efectivamente poderia ser escutado: a cena final. Mas o que importa é o espaço, a personagem é instrumentalizada para deixar a descoberto uma paisagem.
19. Neste sentido, a escolha de Luís Miguel Cintra para o papel de narrador é particularmente significativa. Enquanto criador e director do Teatro da Cornucópia e uma referência maior da representação artística em Portugal, a sua presença sublinha a dinâmica teatral.
20. Bonitzer, "Les silences de la voix," 25.
21. Marc Augé, *Oblivion*, trad. Marjolijn De Jager (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 21, 20.
22. Doane, "The Voice in the Cinema," 369.
23. Luís Miguel Oliveira, Folha da Cinemateca para *Ruínas*.
24. A cena que abre o filme é igualmente bastante dramática. Nela estabelece-se o tema e o tom do filme através de imagens da implosão de um prédio de grandes proporções em Tróia. O resto do filme assemelha-se à exploração de um cenário pós-apocalíptico devido a esta primeira cena, que marca o espectador tanto pela espectacularidade das imagens, que não voltará a repetir-se, como pelo tal estatuto de ponto de partida narrativo — a cena abre um caminho.
25. Chion, *La voix au cinéma*, 116, 117.
26. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, 182, 183.
27. Eric Ames, "Herzog, Landscape and Documentary," in *Cinema Journal* 48.2 (2009): 50.

“CADA FILME, MESMO QUE O REALIZADOR
NÃO O TENHA CONSCIENCIALIZADO,
VEICULA UMA DETERMINADA IDEIA DE HISTÓRIA”:
ENTREVISTA A SUSANA DE SOUSA DIAS

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Com três filmes — Processo-Crime 141/53: Enfermeiras no Estado Novo (de 2000), Natureza Morta (de 2005), 48 (de 2010) — e uma tese de Doutoramento defendida em 2014 (“Abrir a História: Imagem de Arquivo e Movimento Desacelerado”), a tua obra tem sabido integrar as inquietações que a têm atravessado, à medida que estas se foram tornando inseparáveis de uma interrogação maior sobre o próprio cinema enquanto meio de representação da História, num movimento em que a teoria não explica a prática, nem esta é a ilustração daquela. Podes falar do modo como para ti o cinema se foi progressivamente insinuando como forma de pensar a História, a partir do teu trabalho sobre as imagens em movimento do período da ditadura e do Estado Novo português?

Trata-se de um processo que se inicia de forma casual, com um convite que me é feito nos anos 1990 para realizar um documentário para uma série televisiva sobre o cinema português. Propuseram-me o período que corresponde ao apogeu da ditadura, dos anos 1930 a 1945. Foi nessa altura que comecei a investigar a história do cinema português da época e que mergulhei nos arquivos do ANIM [Arquivo Nacional das Imagens em Movimento]. Ao longo deste processo, conheci de uma forma mais aprofundada a nossa própria cinematografia (eu fiz a Escola Superior de Cinema, mas a verdade é que se falava do cinema português essencialmente a partir dos anos sessenta) e olhei atentamente para o período do Estado Novo, interessando-me sobretudo pela forma como cinema e política (e portanto, História) estavam articulados, inclusive nas comédias aparentemente mais inocentes que nós consumíamos desde crianças.

Pouco tempo depois, a minha mãe começou a fazer um mestrado em estudos sobre as mulheres e a trabalhar sobre a história de duas enfermeiras que foram presas durante os anos 1950, por irem contra uma lei que as impedia de casar, uma lei sem paralelo nas outras

ditaduras europeias. Achei esta história insólita, muito reveladora das idiossincrasias do regime e sobretudo da sua violência. Comecei a trabalhar este assunto, agora sim, com um interesse assumido pelo período do Estado Novo. A minha vontade era contextualizar historicamente o processo e, com essa finalidade, para além das protagonistas, entrevistei também historiadores, recorrendo amplamente a imagens de arquivo. Mas durante o processo de feitura do filme comecei a sentir uma série de contradições. E quando entrei no arquivo do Exército, o CAVE (Centro de Audiovisuais do Exército), tive um choque. Isso obrigou-me a reflectir de uma forma mais profunda sobre a nossa própria História.

Porquê?

Porque quando eu entro no arquivo do Exército, começo a ver filmes dos anos 60, muitos deles sobre a Guerra Colonial. Este é já um período que me diz respeito directamente, pois eu vivi 12 anos em ditadura e tive familiares, particularmente dois tios direitos, que estiveram na guerra colonial. Chego ao arquivo com um objectivo pré-determinado de utilização das imagens e de repente tudo se altera. Ou seja, há uma guerra colonial, eu consigo analisá-la histórica e teoricamente, mas de repente há qualquer coisa que me vem tocar e obrigar a olhar para as imagens de uma forma diferente. Constató que esta guerra, aparentemente longínqua, afinal sempre esteve dentro da minha família, apesar de nunca ter sido falada e muito menos pensada. A consciencialização deste paradoxo leva-me a pensar numa série de questões, sobretudo históricas. E é aqui que se anuncia a inversão que se daria com o filme seguinte: deixar de fazer filmes com temáticas históricas para começar a pensar a história por meio do cinema e através das suas imagens.

Outro momento crucial foi a entrada no Arquivo da PIDE/DGS, o encontro com as fotografias dos prisioneiros políticos, o facto delas me perturbarem imenso e de eu não saber porquê. Na verdade, só percebi o porquê depois de ter feito o 48; toda a inquietação e o fascínio provocados pelos arquivos não tiveram repercussão no filme *Processo-Crime 141/53: Enfermeiras no Estado Novo*. Eu estava a fazer o filme com uma produtora que me impunha uma série de constrangimentos: “Tens que acabar em tal data, o filme tem de ter esta duração, não podes usar mais imagens de arquivo por razões de orçamento,” etc. E acabei por utilizar a imagem de arquivo de uma forma completamente contraditória em relação ao que eu já estava a pensar sobre ela. Para além disso, utilizei modelos narrativos convencionais, enquadrados numa lógica aristotélica de causa-efeito. Era como se estivesse “naturalmente” dentro

de um sistema. Ora, é preciso perceber o que há de errado nesse sistema, pois estamos a perpetuar ideias de História e de Cinema e a utilizar formas padronizadas.

O facto da componente narrativa promover um discurso teleológico, fechado, com a imagem de arquivo utilizada como mera ilustração, não se prende unicamente com estratégias cinematográficas. A questão deixa transparecer um problema mais fundo, o dos modelos de concepção da História que lhes estão subjacentes, muito ligados a uma abordagem de cariz positivista, neste caso. É preciso ver que cada filme, mesmo que o realizador não o tenha consciencializado, veicula uma determinada noção de História que transparece não só na maneira como os temas são abordados, mas igualmente nos recursos cinematográficos que são utilizados. No fim, saio deste filme [*Processo-Crime*] com três grandes interrogações: O que é um documentário? De que formas pode a História ser contada? O que é uma imagem de arquivo? Numa imagem que tem valências tanto estéticas como históricas, como articulá-las, como pensá-las? Este filme marca um ponto de ruptura ainda que a consciencialização deste processo tenha surgido *a posteriori*, durante a realização de *Natureza Morta*. Na verdade, este meu interesse mais aprofundado pela relação entre Cinema e História nasce de uma frustração e de todas estas condicionantes.

Como se a forma cinematográfica não estivesse à altura das inquietações...

Os arquivos podem ser uma coisa terrível, lançar-nos num verdadeiro turbilhão, perturbar tudo: quer a nossa história pessoal, quer a própria História tal como até então a entendíamos. Como conciliar a memória pessoal com a História colectiva? Quais os mecanismos que fazem com que determinados assuntos caiam num limbo durante décadas? Na altura do *Processo-Crime*, eu tinha uma nuvem de interrogações e muito poucas, ou nenhuma, conclusões. Estas chegam mais tarde, ainda que nunca deixem de ser parcelares, pois tudo isto está em movimento. No meu caso em particular, o processo passa por procurar encontrar aquilo que eu designo por “forma justa,” a forma que melhor se adegue aos assuntos que estou a tratar. Esta será sempre uma “forma que pensa,” para citar Godard e as suas *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-98) — uma “forma que pensa” e não um “pensamento que forma,” apanágio dos maus filmes, como ele diz; e, de facto, se pensarmos nos modelos narrativos convencionais, trata-se de um pensamento formativo *a priori*, a coisa é dada ao espectador já pensada, já triturada. E é também dada de imediato: a minha preocupação em *Natu-*

reza Morta e, sobretudo, no 48, é integrar todo um espaço de reflexão dentro do próprio filme, instaurando-o através da temporalidade.

A “forma justa” é portanto uma questão de realização?

Passa também pela questão menos falada dos meios de produção, pois estes acabam por influir na própria conceptualização do filme. Não foi por acaso que eu decidi abrir a minha própria produtora depois do *Processo-Crime*. A ideia inicial para este filme passava por criar um universo visualmente fechado, uma espécie de *huis-clos* fílmico, em que os *travellings* nos espaços prisionais se entrecruzavam com os *travellings* nos hospitais, tornando ambos os espaços indiscerníveis. Mas não houve dinheiro nem para os dias, nem para os metros de *charriot* que eu precisava. Houve uma altura em que eu não conseguia deixar de atribuir a responsabilidade à produção pela insatisfação que eu sentia com o filme. Mas depois tornou-se evidente que eu não podia continuar a responsabilizar terceiros pelo que tinha sido eu, afinal, a fazer. Foi quando decidi fundar a minha própria produtora. Tratava-se de ter o total controlo sobre o tempo de produção e a duração do filme, sobre o material de arquivo e sobre a respectiva gestão: como empregar os meios financeiros disponíveis em prol do filme e das pessoas que trabalham nele e não de uma estrutura de produção. Foi por isso que a Kintop nasceu sob a forma de associação sem fins lucrativos. Também o fiz por uma questão de responsabilização: se o filme falhar, eu assumo plenamente essa falha mas sei que fiz tudo para criar as melhores condições para o fazer. É por isso que demoro tanto tempo a fazer os filmes: tento chegar aos limites, ir o mais longe possível dentro daquilo que me propus.

Como é que nesse caminho, da nuvem de interrogações às conclusões parcelares, os filmes se foram respondendo uns aos outros?

Natureza Morta nasce do *Processo-Crime*, directamente. E porquê? Porque nasce do momento em que eu entro no Arquivo da PIDE e vejo as imagens dos prisioneiros. Mas também da insatisfação que referi. No *Processo-Crime* utilizei as imagens de arquivo de uma forma puramente ilustrativa, subsumindo-as ao texto; mas a minha vontade, mal as vi, era a inversa, era dá-las a ver sem a pressão das palavras. Na génese do *Natureza Morta*, estão as imagens do arquivo do Exército, estão algumas que tinha visto também no ANIM e, claro, as dos prisioneiros políticos. Sabia que queria dar espaço às imagens, que lhes queria dar tempo, tudo aquilo que não tive no outro filme. Mas não sabia, por exemplo, se ia utili-

zar texto ou não. Estava completamente perdida no filme, o que coincidiu com uma altura em que estive em Paris a frequentar um atelier em *La Femis*. Tinha de explicar o projecto, mas não sabia ainda como é que o ia resolver. Até que uma noite, pus um CD com músicas do meu irmão [António de Sousa Dias] e ouvi uma composição electroacústica, de oito minutos, intitulada *Natureza Morta com ruídos de sala, efeitos especiais e claquette* (curiosamente é uma homenagem ao cinema), que é extremamente espacial: fechamos os olhos e somos transportados para espaços físicos. E tive um clique. Subitamente, apareceu-me toda a solução para o filme. Decidi organizá-lo com base na noção de exposição na sua acepção mais lata, não só como exposição de trabalhos, mas também como forma de expor alguma coisa à luz, como revelação. E comecei a pensar a estrutura narrativa do filme através da ideia de “salas,” com base numa narrativa não-linear, já não de causa-efeito como tinha sido no *Processo-Crime*. E foi aí também que nasceu a ideia de fazer o filme sem palavras. Trabalhei muito no projecto, na sua fundamentação, na abordagem visual e sonora e na estrutura narrativa; e também naquilo a que chamo a estrutura vertical (e que depois percebi melhor quando fiz o 48), ou seja, os conceitos de base que vou trabalhar, a maneira como vou tratar a questão da ditadura, as problemáticas que vou abordar e como o vou fazer, o lado mais subterrâneo do filme.

Como se desenvolve o trabalho sobre essa “estrutura vertical” do filme?

É um processo dialéctico entre um pensamento mais ligado à prática, a decisão sobre os princípios formais, por exemplo, e um pensamento teórico que surge através de um outro tipo de investigação. Walter Benjamin foi muito importante para mim, a ideia da História a contra-pêlo e a sua noção de passado, um passado inacabado, aberto e actualizável, que rompe com a concepção determinista da história. O passado deixa de ser um ponto fixo, homogéneo, que se procura determinar, sendo preciso fazer o contra-movimento para ver como esse passado chega até nós: é a revolução copernicana da História de que fala Benjamin, e que depois Didi-Huberman retoma, ao dizer que a revolução copernicana de Benjamin se traduz na ideia do passado não ser já entendido como facto objectivo, mas como facto de memória. Este foi para mim um dos fundamentos mais relevantes na construção do *Natureza Morta*, mas também na maneira como vou trabalhar os testemunhos, não só no 48, mas no filme que tenho entre mãos. Esta ideia de História permite-me utilizar o anacronismo como princípio fundador do filme [*Natureza Morta*]. E permite-me ter toda uma outra

abertura para a própria imagem de arquivo, não estar só a ver o que ela representa do ponto de vista histórico, documental, no sentido mais estrito do termo, mas estar consciente dos múltiplos tempos que a atravessam e da sua plasticidade intrínseca. Finalmente, a fórmula extrema do Didi-Huberman foi a chave fundamental para o filme: «saber sem ver ou ver sem saber». Trata-se de permanecer num dilema entre ver ou saber. Porque quando se lançam imagens de arquivo ao público, a vontade, num primeiro momento, é explicar, ou seja, utilizá-las como recurso para explicitar alguma coisa ou apresentá-las de tal forma que elas sejam auto-explicativas. Por exemplo, no *Processo-Crime*, eu tinha essa ambição. Depois houve essa contradição que passou pela experiência pessoal e também pela compreensão de que uma imagem é muito mais do que um mero objecto visual. Na verdade, eu consegui fazer o *Natureza Morta* porque já tinha explicado muita coisa no filme anterior. A questão foi assumir o dilema: eu posso dar a ver alguma coisa ao espectador sem que ele tenha de saber tudo; ele próprio pode situar-se entre aquilo que eu estou a propor e o seu próprio conhecimento. Obviamente, há toda uma estrutura, a imagem não é aberta livremente a todos os sentidos, é trabalhada, é enquadrada mas mantendo uma abertura; e tudo isto é feito com muito cuidado. É muito complexo trabalhar com imagens de arquivo e sobretudo com imagens de arquivo de propaganda. É preciso ver que eu estava a trabalhar sem palavras e a tentar mostrar o avesso de imagens que, na sua maior parte, foram produzidas pelo próprio regime que eu queria desmontar.

Quando é que percebeste que querias usar o cinema para suspender um saber sobre as imagens? Como é que, no Natureza Morta, se desenvolve a metodologia que te permite trabalhar imagens de propaganda contra o regime de produção dessas mesmas imagens?

A ideia foi sendo desenvolvida através dos próprios visionamentos nos arquivos (era eu quem operava a moviola, parava, revia, tornava o movimento mais lento) e através das reflexões de carácter teórico, cujo resultado se traduziu no projecto do filme que era acompanhado por uma exemplificação prática de 3 minutos. Mas quando acabo a investigação, ou melhor (porque a investigação não acaba propriamente, a não ser no final do filme), quando consigo o [apoio do canal de televisão] ARTE e me dizem — “agora faça o filme” —, eu vou para a mesa de montagem e afinal não sei que filme é que tenho. E foi assustador, porque se tem o projecto todo desenhado, as ideias desenvolvidas e não se sabe por onde começar.

Foi preciso lidar com o efeito caleidoscópico provocado por todas aquelas imagens que eu tinha quando comecei a montar. Porque pode pôr-se uma imagem de arquivo a dizer uma coisa mas também se pode dizer exactamente o seu contrário. Basta mudar um plano e todo o filme se pode inverter. De súbito, está-se a fazer passar de novo a mensagem do regime. A montagem foi extremamente complexa mas eu utilizei recursos muito simples no *Natureza Morta*: o *ralenti*, a fusão a negro e o reenquadramento. O som também teve um papel primordial, muitas vezes de separador. É muito fácil justapor dois planos e pô-los a fazer passar visualmente aquilo que nós pretendemos. Ora eu não queria — e essa foi outras das dificuldades — extrapolar a natureza da própria imagem. Queria virar, sem deturpar. Não queria dar sentidos à imagem que não estivessem latentes nela própria. Obviamente que isto tem os seus limites, daí a importância das fusões e dos planos negros. No fundo, há princípios que parecem estéticos ou plásticos, mas que não o são. Isto foi uma das problemáticas desenvolvidas na minha tese de doutoramento: o *ralenti* não é usado como mero efeito plástico, mas sim como uma entidade que permite abrir o pensamento, abrir o conhecimento.

Como decorreu o processo de trabalho com o ARTE?

Tive grandes dificuldades com o ARTE, mas se não fosse o ARTE não teria feito o filme que fiz. No início, eles queriam legendas: “Agora, para esta imagem, temos de saber se é Angola, se é Moçambique, se é de 62, se é de 66...”; queriam tudo especificado, sugeriram uma *voz off*. Portanto, todo o trabalho com os *commissioning editors* foi explicar-lhes que era possível fazer o filme sem palavras e sem as legendas. Aliás, a situação era mais drástica: o filme que estava a propor não poderia existir com legendas explicativas. Isto implicou que eu tivesse de lutar por cada plano que está no filme e fez com que chegasse ao final de todo o processo com muitas certezas em relação ao filme. Entretanto, eles não aceitaram a primeira versão do filme. Disseram: “Não, isto pode ir mais longe. Queremos ver outra versão.” Aí é que começou o verdadeiro trabalho de construção do filme. Porque a primeira versão tinha 45 minutos de imagens de arquivo e a versão final incluía apenas 12 minutos de imagens de arquivo. O *Natureza Morta* conta a história da ditadura a partir de 12 minutos de imagens de arquivo. Se não fossem eles a pressionar-me, se eu não tivesse tido de lutar constantemente por cada ideia, cada plano, eu não teria ido tão longe.

Portanto, no final dessa primeira versão, já havia uma série de batalhas ganhas. O que se passou depois, na redução dos 45 para os 12 minutos de imagens de arquivo?

Sim, a primeira versão já não tinha palavras, por exemplo. O meu co-produtor francês estava a pressionar-me para entregar logo a primeira versão, enquanto o *commissioning editor*, pelo contrário, dizia que esta tinha de ser apurada. Na sequência deste episódio, comecei a trabalhar sozinha (até aí tinha trabalhado com uma montadora, sendo que depois a montagem durou mais um ano) e a pensar que me tinham dado tempo e, nesse sentido, não tinha condicionantes. Na reunião seguinte, quando a ideia era apresentar ao ARTE a nova versão já concluída, cheguei a Paris apenas com seis minutos de filme. Esses seis minutos, que correspondem ao início do filme, tinham já todos os princípios que eu iria mobilizar no futuro. O meu produtor francês ficou em estado de choque: quando viu um dos planos iniciais do filme, uma bomba a rebentar, achou-a ridícula, disse que parecia um foguete, um efeito especial do Georges Méliès; depois, acerca do soldado que aparece ferido, agarrado à mão, comentou que parecia alguém a lamentar-se — “mamã, tenho um dóidói na mão....” Ele estava realmente assustado — “Como é que vou mostrar isto ao ARTE?” Mas, por outro lado, disse que estava inteiramente do meu lado, que me ia defender (tivemos uma longa discussão sobre estes seis minutos) e lá fomos. E o *commissioning editor* adorou, achou fantástico, reconheceu que o filme estava lá.

E o que é que este excerto tem? De facto, a primeira imagem é o rebentamento de uma bomba a que as pessoas podem não dar grande importância devido à sua dimensão. Mas é uma verdadeira bomba. É uma imagem anódina, a que ninguém à primeira vista vai ligar. No entanto, a explosão tem um impacto de tal ordem que apesar de ocorrer lá ao fundo, toda a câmara balança. E para mim era importante colocar este plano a abrir uma das primeiras sequências do filme: a bomba explode e afecta todo o nosso horizonte, que balança, revelando-nos que entre nós e a imagem há a mediação de uma câmara. E o soldado que caminha agarrado à mão — a mão é aquilo que opera, a mão está ligada ao pensamento — não é um soldado grandiosamente ferido, é o humano que está ali. Há toda uma série de potencialidades naquela imagem que me interessam muito mais do que as grandes imagens do regime, as grandes encenações.

É a partir daí que todo o processo se desenrola de uma forma muito mais consciente: deixo de precisar de muitas imagens de arquivo para fazer passar uma ideia. Tenho, por exemplo, dez planos numa determinada sequência e percebo que num único plano tenho

tudo o que preciso. E começo a montar na vertical, em profundidade, e já não na horizontal. A montar por dentro da imagem. E tudo isto vai transformar a própria temporalidade do plano e a própria estrutura do filme.

Através dos procedimentos que referiste - a desaceleração e o reenquadramento?

A desaceleração, os reenquadramentos, as fusões a negro, a não utilização da palavra, a presença da música — que é um factor muito importante porque a música é utilizada como recurso para, por vezes, criar separações entre planos. Para mim, era importante não colar planos, criar interstícios entre eles. A música teve aí um papel muito importante; foi-me dada em sequências e também tive alguns sons avulsos (portas, etc.) que eu podia montar como quisesse e experimentar as sonoridades que melhor se adaptavam às imagens. Ou seja, tinha “planos” musicais, que ia articulando com os planos visuais, operando da mesma forma: *ralenti*, corte, encadeado, etc. Fiz a montagem de imagem e som em simultâneo, não se pode separar uma da outra. Por fim, a própria estrutura narrativa foi muito trabalhada.

Queres detalhar em que consiste a “desaceleração”? Por entre esses vários procedimentos, talvez seja o que define melhor o teu gesto de cineasta.

A desaceleração não é apenas o *ralenti*, é mais vasto do que isso. Quando passo para o 48, esse *ralenti* é extremo: o filme tem 93 minutos, mas se colocasse a banda de imagem à velocidade normal com que filmei, o filme só teria 7 minutos. Há aqui um paradoxo, pois eu estou a estender o tempo de uma fotografia — como é que se estende o tempo de uma fotografia?

Percebi que a desaceleração extravasava a questão do *ralenti* com os testemunhos e com o facto de procurar pensar o que é o testemunho e qual é a importância que habitualmente se lhe confere — está é uma reflexão que me ocupa actualmente e que comecei a consciencializar nessa altura. Trata-se duma “narrativa certificada,” como refere Ricoeur, citando Dulong. Eu parti para o 48 com uma ideia de dispositivo muito clara: mostrar as imagens de cadastro acompanhadas pela voz dos testemunhos. E pensei que ia fazer o filme muito rapidamente, mas não foi nada assim. Demorou imenso tempo a fazer e foi extremamente complexo. Um dos aspectos complicados foi precisamente a voz, o discurso, a questão do testemunho. Lembro-me de ter dito a alguém, no início do processo de realização do filme, que queria fazer no som aquilo que tinha feito na imagem do *Natureza Morta*. A pessoa respondeu-me: “Mas que

ridículo, então agora vais pôr as pessoas a falar ao *ralenti*?” Não, obviamente que não era isso que queria fazer, mas o processo é, de algum modo, similar a outro nível: fazer aquilo que fiz às imagens, abri-las, estendê-las e poder penetrar nelas, abrir, estender e modelar o tempo, indo ao coração daquilo que é dito.

Novamente, isto passa também por um processo de consciencialização do que é mais importante. Neste caso, não é reproduzir a história que é contada — “Eu vim daqui, aconteceu-me primeiro isto, depois aquilo...” Trata-se antes de perceber como é que a história é contada, que palavras são ditas e que noções vão surgindo através delas. É preciso ouvir bem aquilo que é dito para além da história que é narrada. Isto foi a chave do trabalho sobre os testemunhos no *48*, que se prende com a desaceleração de que falava: é preciso desacelerar, abrir pausas; nalguns momentos são as pessoas que as fazem, noutros sou eu que as abro para que a articulação com a imagem possa ser devidamente trabalhada e para que possa haver tempo de integração e reflexão por parte do espectador. Ouvir bem um suspiro que foi emitido, ouvir bem o som que a pessoa fez quando vê pela primeira vez a fotografia de cadastro: tudo isto vai fazer com que a própria linguagem seja entendida de uma outra forma. A linguagem está ligada àquilo que revela. A linguagem não transmite apenas, ela própria é meio. É quase trabalhar a linguagem como gesto, no sentido de Agamben, tornando visível um meio enquanto tal. A desaceleração é assim fundamental para trabalhar não só a imagem, através do *ralenti*, mas também os próprios testemunhos e a sua articulação com a imagem, bem como a própria inserção de tempo dentro do filme para que o espectador possa pensar naquilo que está a ver e a ouvir.

Trabalhar desta forma traz duas implicações. Por um lado, uma mesma imagem, mediante a duração que lhe é dada e a respectiva interligação com os testemunhos, vai variando de estatuto dentro de um mesmo plano; tanto pode ser vista da forma mais imediata, como fotografia de cadastro, mas também como imagem de memória; como imagem familiar, mas também como imagem imbuída de estranheza. Por outro lado, formalmente, a condição do plano também se altera, modificando a percepção do espectador. Este tanto pode observar as imagens através do seu próprio olhar, como através da mediação das palavras dos prisioneiros; o espectador passa também de observador a observado, pois tentei criar momentos em que a imagem se transfigura de campo em contra-campo do espectador, tomando este o lugar do fotógrafo, um lugar incómodo pois corresponde ao olhar simbólico do carrasco. Procurei, desta forma, quebrar a sua neutralidade.

Há uma questão fundamental no testemunho: quem fala não ser despossuído da sua voz no processo de testemunhar. Como é que isso se passa na relação que tens com quem fala, especificamente no 48? Como é que a questão da autoridade — que tem evidentemente a ver com o Arquivo — é articulada com a questão da voz, nos seus vários sentidos? A quem pertence a voz de quem fala?

Sobre a questão da autoridade, não há nada a fazer: uma pessoa pode dizer que dá a voz ao outro, ter toda uma série de cuidados, mas no fim é o realizador que decide, é ele quem escolhe e monta os excertos. O problema, quanto a mim, coloca-se mais em relação à quebra de pactos entre realizador e deponente, à eventual desvirtuação dos sentidos da palavra que, dessa forma, deixa de ser pertença de quem a proferiu.

Eu tenho várias regras nas entrevistas: uma é nunca cortar a palavra, mesmo que a pessoa se desvie do assunto que mais me interessa. Mais uma vez, a questão do tempo e da desaceleração: a pessoa tem que ter tempo para ela própria falar, viajar. As minhas perguntas vão conduzindo, vão à procura de uma série de coisas, mas nunca cortando a palavra. Outra regra: se a pessoa diz alguma coisa que não quer que depois eu utilize, eu não utilizo. Isto é um pacto que faço com as pessoas: a partir do momento em que elas me “dão,” tem de haver uma troca. E, para mim, é fundamental esta relação de confiança. Diria que estas são as duas regras fundamentais.

A questão da relação é complexa, porque as pessoas são muito diferentes. No 48 há pessoas que nunca tinham falado e que expuseram as suas vivências pela primeira vez. Por exemplo, houve uma a quem eu fiz uma pergunta e a primeira resposta durou uma hora, o tempo da cassete. Por outro lado, há pessoas que já falaram muitas vezes e isso coloca outras questões: já têm um discurso, já não é a memória ao vivo, em acto, que está ali. E eu tento ir para além desse discurso construído. Como é que isso se faz? Tem de se perceber, pois é diferente para cada pessoa. Há depois pessoas que têm um discurso muito descritivo. Como é que se ultrapassa este tipo de discurso? Eu tento várias abordagens. Há o caso de uma pessoa cuja mãe já tinha morrido (era presa política) e eu perguntei — “Como é que era o rosto da tua mãe?” — e a pessoa começou a lembrar-se do rosto da mãe, a descrevê-lo, e a partir daí todo o discurso mudou. Ou, por exemplo, perguntar qual era o cheiro da prisão ou qual era a cor. Há uma pessoa que me respondeu, “era branca” e a resposta morreu ali. Outra pessoa referiu: “era branca — e aquele branco cegava...” e depois começou a elaborar toda uma série de ideias sobre essa brancura; no fundo, uma pessoa tem de encontrar a chave que destranca aquela memória.

É uma relação muito delicada porque começamos a indagar-nos se temos direito de perguntar certas coisas. Porque há limites. Por exemplo, eu entrevistei uma pessoa que nitidamente não queria falar, mas que por uma questão de generosidade, por achar que era importante transmitir a experiência, sentia-se obrigada a fazê-lo. Tudo isto coloca questões de foro ético: nesta nossa vontade de transmitir estas vivências a terceiros, até onde podemos ir? Quando estou em filmagens, estou sempre neste conflito interno. No *48*, a Alice conta que a mãe esteve à beira do suicídio e ela mesma afirma “eu não quero dizer.” E acaba por contar não contando, ou seja, ela não vai dizer as palavras todas que clarificam a história. E lembro-me que, quando estava ainda na fase de montagem, mostrei esta parte a algumas pessoas que me sugeriram que a eliminasse porque não se percebia nada. Mas é ao contrário, percebe-se tudo, precisamente através do que não se diz e de toda a comunicação paralinguística. Isto é que é a matéria, não a história estritamente narrada. Na altura da entrevista, ela disse-me: “Nunca contei esta história a ninguém, estou a contá-la pela primeira vez.” Nunca me disse que não a podia usar, mas trata-se de um material tão delicado que eu decidi telefonar-lhe a perguntar se o podia usar, uma vez que foi um episódio contado num estado de grande emoção. Ela disse-me que sim. Estes são limites que temos de ter sempre presentes. Não é só as pessoas dizerem uma dada coisa naquele momento, é depois perceber que tipo de material se tem e se temos o direito a usá-lo.

No 48, ficou muita coisa de fora?

Ficou imensa coisa de fora. E tenho coisas extraordinárias. Mas trata-se da questão da forma, do risco, das escolhas. No *Natureza Morta*, tive de fazer o luto das muitas imagens que não usei. Uma em particular, que me persegue e ainda não a consegui usar, foi particularmente dolorosa, porque estava na base do filme e acabou por não entrar. Pô-la era não dar o lugar justo àquela imagem. No *48*, num certo sentido, foi menos difícil, por já ter passado pelo processo do *Natureza Morta*. E também por saber que vou dar continuidade a alguns aspectos que não couberam no filme. No fundo, tenho estado, eu própria, a construir um arquivo e há aspectos que vão ser desenvolvidos noutros filmes.

Mas vais usar material que já recolheste, por exemplo, para o 48?

Sim, já falei com as pessoas sobre isso. Tanto é que no *48*, a última pessoa que fala é a pessoa de um outro filme meu, que é anterior ao *48*, mas que só agora é que vou conseguir

acabar. A primeira pessoa que fala também foi filmada para um outro filme, mas como já tinha em mente o *48*, fiz as filmagens a pensar nas duas coisas. As pessoas vão cruzando vários filmes. No fundo, percebi, como dizia, que neste processo estou a construir um arquivo. E isso dá-me liberdade. Posso ser muito estrita num filme, pois sei que há aspectos que posso desenvolver noutro.

Aliás, tenho uma regra: quanto menos, melhor. Poderia dizer que a minha ambição, no limite, é fazer um filme com uma imagem e a uma palavra. Porque acho que não é pelo excesso, mas pela rarefacção que se chega ao âmago das coisas. Essa é a questão das fotografias de cadastro, a que nunca ninguém tinha prestado verdadeiramente atenção. Aquelas imagens, na verdade, têm imensa coisa lá dentro: não são apenas imagem, não são apenas retratos; todo o tempo que elas contêm lá dentro, tudo aquilo que elas nos revelam é imenso. É preciso saber olhar essas pequenas coisas. É a questão da micro-história.

Mas essas regras, que resultam num método, são determinadas por ti enquanto realizadora. És tu que decides, não um produtor.

Sou eu. Isso é fundamental. Não há ninguém, neste momento, que me possa impor seja o que for. Tanto é que no *48* - e aí foi um risco assumido — eu não fui chamar ninguém para co-produzir, porque sabia que ninguém ia aceitar o filme. Lembro-me que estava com o Ansgar [Schäfer], que é o meu produtor e marido, a ver *As praias de Agnès* [de Agnès Varda] no Cinema [City] Alvalade e de lhe ter dito: “Podia estrear o *48* nesta sala,” ao que ele me respondeu: “Mas estás doida, achas que alguém vai querer ver este filme?.” E ele adorava o filme, e eu própria nunca teria feito o filme sem ele, mas de facto era um filme que podia ter ido directamente para a gaveta. Mas era aquele filme que eu queria fazer e não era outro.

Ainda em relação ao 48, como constróis a relação dos tempos? Como se articulam o passado e o presente e, por extensão, a imagem e a palavra? Tu chegaste a filmar as pessoas, mas só ficou a voz...

A ideia do filme era não mostrar o rosto das pessoas, apenas as fotografias, embora não soubesse se o dispositivo funcionaria ou não. Por outro lado, havia uma questão ética: tenho o direito de pôr as pessoas a falar sem mostrar o rosto delas? Por isso, mantive em aberto a possibilidade de usar a imagem. Ao longo do processo, fui percebendo que não precisava de incluir a imagem porque todo o som deixava adivinhar a presença do corpo. De início, pedia

às pessoas para não fazerem barulho, para não mexerem em nada, mas depois comecei a pensar que os sons que as pessoas faziam tinham uma motivação, que eram importantes. Então comecei a prestar atenção a todos esses ruídos e a perceber que a pessoa passava muita informação através deles, que eles eram indicadores duma corporalidade, duma sensorialidade, de um estar, que é aquilo a que um espectador não liga se estiver a ver o rosto da pessoa a falar. Todos estes sons, juntamente com o som ambiente, criam a espacialização do próprio filme, que é aquilo que faz com que o 48 seja um filme e não um álbum de fotografias comentado.

Este aspecto liga-se à questão da relação entre os diferentes tempos: eu queria que o espectador se confrontasse com o preso político e não com o ex-presos político. E a condição da pessoa que fala hoje é a de ex-presos político. Portanto, das duas, uma: ou mostrava ao espectador o ex-presos político que fala das histórias do passado tentando reproduzi-las no presente, ou não o mostrava de todo. Mostrá-lo implicaria que quando a imagem de arquivo aparecesse, ela seria automaticamente relegada para o passado, no sentido em que iria estar a funcionar como ilustração do que era esta pessoa na altura dos acontecimentos relatados. Palavra e imagem fechar-se-iam num tempo restrito. Ora, esta questão, que passa pela temporalidade, é também uma questão eminentemente política. Eu quero confrontar o espectador com o preso político e não com o ex-presos político e quero que ele perceba como é que estas memórias são actualizadas e pensadas no presente e não entendidas estritamente como histórias do passado. Há toda uma transversalidade com o que se passa na actualidade mas também com toda a construção daquilo que há-de vir, com o nosso futuro. Estamos perante uma série de temporalidades heterogéneas que se imbricam umas nas outras e os múltiplos sentidos políticos que daí advêm dependem da maneira como estas são trabalhadas. No 48, toda esta pregnância temporal, tanto das imagens como das palavras, vive porque o rosto da pessoa não aparece.

Neste momento, estou a ter um problema que tem precisamente a ver com o facto de estar a fazer um filme onde quero mostrar o rosto das pessoas. É um filme sobre os filhos dos presos políticos. Um preso político é a ponta dum iceberg. Por cada um deles, qual é a rede familiar que foi apanhada pelas malhas policiais do regime? Este projecto começou a ser pensado logo a seguir ao *Processo-Crime*, portanto ainda antes de *Natureza Morta* — comecei a trabalhá-lo em 2001, chama-se *Luz Obscura* — e na altura pensei quer iria fazer um filme observacional, precisamente para quebrar o modelo estanque do filme expositivo e como tentativa de fuga da entrevista: como é que vou resolver o problema dos *talking heads*, da narrativa

teleológica, dos usos limitados da imagem de arquivo? Entretanto, fiz o *Natureza Morta*, e quando comecei a filmar para o *Luz Obscura* tudo se tinha transformado. Eu já estava a trabalhar de uma forma completamente diferente, tinha-se dado um ruptura total com tudo o que fizera anteriormente. Retomei o *Luz Obscura* e não o consegui resolver. Passei então para o *48*, que foi um filme que naturalmente nasceu de *Natureza Morta*.

A questão, neste momento, é precisamente a de como articular palavra e imagem integrando os rostos, ou seja, como ultrapassar a dicotomia entre passado e presente. O que é curioso é que eu pensei que o filme ia ser sobre a vida dos filhos, mas os mortos começaram a irromper com grande força. É impressionante, porque os pais, mães, tios e tias que foram presos, e também os avós que tomaram conta destes filhos, estão mortos. E o que tenho agora são fotografias de cadastro destes prisioneiros, mas mediadas pela memória das pessoas que os conheceram. Como é que posso pôr uma pessoa a falar hoje, o rosto dela, e a imagem de arquivo de outra, sem relegar tanto palavra como imagem de imediato para o passado? Outro problema é o dos *talking heads*. Eu tenho um método, em relação à entrevista: quero que a pessoa esteja sentada no sítio que lhe pareça o mais confortável, e que fale descontraída e concentradamente, não quero que faça outras coisas ao mesmo tempo. Preferencialmente, o lugar é escolhido por ela própria. O que é que isto produz em termos de imagem? Produz uma *talking head*. Claro que poderia usar uma iluminação específica, colocá-la num determinado décor, etc., mas não quero criar um aparato que depois artificialize a situação. É um problema complexo, pois existe uma escolha metodológica que vai chocar com os próprios princípios estéticos do filme. Por outro lado, ainda há a própria condição da entrevista que encerra um paradoxo em si própria: por vezes, o facto de estarmos a ver o rosto de uma pessoa apaga aquilo que está a ser dito - não se está a ouvir tão bem aquilo que está ser proferido; por vezes, sucede o contrário, aquilo que está a ser dito é muito forte, apagando o que o rosto deixa transparecer. São estes problemas que estou a trabalhar de momento, que já extravasam a questão da imagem de arquivo em si (que foi o cerne de *Natureza Morta*), ou da própria voz (como em *48*). É um conjunto de questões que se tornou mais vasto.

Neste momento, pensei que tinhas concluído algumas questões: fizeste os filmes, acabaste a tese... mas na verdade, com este teu sistema, cada vez que fazes um filme, ficas com mais por fazer...

É exponencial e esse é o drama. Por cada filme nascem vários. Dos que nascem, escolho um e depois desse nascem outros tantos. E à medida que me vou consciencializando de

todas estas questões, vão nascendo outras. Ao resolver um problema, surgem outros que eu anteriormente não entrevira.

A natureza do que está a ser perscrutado por ti, ao nível do testemunho, não configura outro modo de palavra que não aquele que uma entrevista permite?

Claro. Eu uso a palavra entrevista mas acho que a palavra é mal empregue. Talvez “recolha de testemunhos” seja mais apropriado, embora em termos cinematográficos essa recolha se faça sob o aparato da entrevista. O que é uma entrevista? É provocar a palavra com um propósito. Eu não vou, com um microfone, como faz por exemplo o Wiseman, captar aquilo que é dito *in situ*. Há uma palavra que é desencadeada para o efeito.

Referiste já que há elementos muito específicos que permitem tornar possível o testemunho e que tens de instalar a pessoa num certo estado para que essa palavra, que não é uma palavra qualquer, possa nascer. Neste sentido, a questão não era tanto de terminologia, mas relativa à possibilidade de tal palavra transformar o próprio dispositivo da entrevista, o próprio dispositivo de filmagem. No teu caso, e até em relação ao que dizias sobre o carácter problemático da imagem que a entrevista determina, este modo da palavra não obriga a romper com o sistema da entrevista?

Rompe completamente e a contradição é essa: este método para mim é aquele em que eu consigo instalar e gerir todo este sistema para romper com a palavra típica da entrevista (mas não com a imagem, que de algum modo corresponde aos *talking heads* de que falámos). O fundamental é que o testemunho e as perguntas permitam que as palavras nasçam. A pergunta na verdade não tem uma resposta que se feche. Serve para desencadear outras coisas.

Falaste de algumas referências de natureza teórica que te tinham ajudado a pensar os teus problemas cinematográficos. Encontras algum tipo de interlocutor idêntico ao nível dos cineastas?

O Yervant Gianikian e a Angela Ricci Lucchi foram uma das grandes referências, sobretudo *Dal Polo All'Equatore (Do Pólo ao Equador, 1986)*. É claro que vi muita coisa, Ken Jacobs, Bitomsky, Farocki... Se me perguntas outros? O Chris Marker, sobretudo *La jetée (1962)*. E Godard, Tarkovski, até o Bill Viola pela questão do som, entre outros.

Há um caso interessante: uma vez fizeram uma programação em Orléans, com a *Natureza Morta* e o *Jaime (1974)*; eu fui aluna do António Reis, um dos professores que mais me mar-

cou — o amarelo mais belo que alguma vez vi num filme foi no *Ana* (1984) — e cheguei lá e senti uma conexão que para mim foi surpreendente, pela primeira vez senti uma pertença a alguma coisa. Porque, sobretudo até ao 48 ter sido reconhecido, sempre estive e sempre me senti de fora.

Como é que vês o teu próprio gesto no contexto do cinema português? Há certezas que se vão ganhando?

Não penso nisso. Quando comecei a ter algum reconhecimento, com o Grande Prémio do [Festival] *Cinéma du Réel* [2010], podia ter começado a sentir alguma segurança em relação ao trabalho. Há pessoas a quem um prémio desta natureza pode modificar. A mim não me modificou. Poderia ter-me dado certezas, mas não. Claro que ao longo de todo este processo se ganha uma mestria, uma destreza, uma organização de pensamento, mas as angústias, o não saber, são rigorosamente idênticos. A pessoa está sozinha com o seu próprio filme. Há aquele momento crítico, para um cineasta, em que se quer resolver um determinado ponto do filme, aquela peça que falta para o todo se formar, e se percebe que se está sozinho consigo próprio. Não há ninguém que possa chegar à solução a não ser o próprio e esse é um momento de uma solidão incrível. Acho que só quando se chega a esse momento é que qualquer coisa pode verdadeiramente nascer, e para isso é preciso ir muito ao fundo sabendo que se correm sempre riscos.

*CINEMA NO ESTADO NOVO:
A ENCENAÇÃO DO REGIME*

Sofia Sampaio (CRIA, ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa)

Patrícia Vieira. Lisboa: Colibri, 2011. 220 pp. ISBN 978-989-689-156-5.

O cinema produzido durante o Estado Novo tem sido motivo de vários estudos, contando já com uma vasta e importante bibliografia. Afinal, o período inclui a chamada “época de ouro” do cinema português, quando Portugal esteve prestes a ter uma indústria cinematográfica, o que por si só justificaria a atenção de críticos e historiadores de cinema. No entanto, falar de cinema e Estado Novo acarreta riscos difíceis de evitar — mesmo em autores avisados, como parece ser o caso de Patrícia Vieira, a autora da obra em revista. A adopção, como quadro de referência, de um termo eminentemente ideológico como “Estado Novo,” tende a produzir leituras ideológicas que, incidindo (ainda que para efeitos analíticos) sobre as lógicas do poder, arriscam-se a ficar encerradas nessas mesmas lógicas.¹ O cinema no Estado Novo torna-se assim, facilmente, no cinema *do* Estado Novo, um instrumento de propaganda que teria sido parcialmente responsável pelo sucesso prolongado de um regime que ainda hoje se nos afigura de difícil compreensão.

Com efeito, *Cinema no Estado Novo* cumpre o trajecto já conhecido deste tipo de estudos, que parte do des/interesse anedótico que Salazar terá tido pelo cinema até se fixar na questão da propaganda, com as já inevitáveis comparações (muitas vezes breves e superficiais) com a Alemanha nazi e a Itália fascista. A autora é rápida a rejeitar a existência, em Portugal, de uma indústria cinematográfica de “cunho manifestamente propagandístico” (19), já que apenas dois filmes (*A Revolução de Maio* e *Feitiço do Império*) são incluídos na categoria de filme de propaganda. Por outro lado, a não-ficção, vista como “menos multifacetada” e dada a uma “maior instrumentalização propagandística” (19), é excluída da investigação. O objectivo de Vieira é detectar a “mundividência estadonovista” no universo cinematográfico *ficcional*, partindo do pressuposto declarado de que “existe uma confluência entre a imagem do país representada nestas obras e o retrato do governo de Salazar elaborado pelos ideólogos do regime” (19-20).

Estas palavras não são encorajadoras. Em primeiro lugar, parecem constatar o óbvio: o postulado de que todas as produções culturais contêm marcas do momento da sua produção é hoje amplamente reconhecido — mesmo em leituras não materialistas, como parece ser o caso. Sendo assim, em que medida os filmes produzidos durante o Estado Novo divergem de filmes produzidos noutros momentos históricos? Não serão todos os regimes políticos de algum modo “encenados” pelos cinemas do seu tempo? A haver diferenças na forma como o cinema se relacionou com o regime estadonovista (e acredito que as haja) será esta a melhor forma de chegar até elas? Em segundo lugar, as palavras de Vieira fazem recriar um tipo de análise em que se procuram (e, conseqüentemente, se acham) correspondências mais ou menos directas entre as ideias que os “ideólogos do regime” formularam sobre o país e as representações deste nos filmes. Percorrendo o índice de conteúdos, saltam à vista os temas habituais da literatura sobre o Estado Novo: António Ferro e a política do espírito (cap. 1); a literatura como expressão da nação e fonte de nacionalismo (cap. 2); a defesa da ruralidade, por oposição à cidade (cap. 3); a importância da fé católica e suas extrapolações políticas (cap. 4); a secundarização e subordinação da mulher (cap. 5); o império como “suplemento” da metrópole e extensão da política do espírito (cap. 6 e 7).²

É certo que, no capítulo introdutório, a autora rejeita explicitamente que o cinema desta época possa ser visto como um mero reflexo da ideologia estadonovista (20) — aludindo criticamente (e, a meu ver, de forma pouco rigorosa) ao famoso modelo da base e da superestrutura da tradição marxista. Também é certo que, para além dos constrangimentos que o regime impôs à criação cinematográfica, a autora promete não esquecer factores como o diálogo dos filmes com as correntes cinematográficas contemporâneas e a visão artística de actores, realizadores e técnicos (21). A presença de “tensões, contradições e fracturas” (21) é igualmente notada. Reconhece-se o carácter não monolítico do regime e faz-se menção à capacidade da obra de arte de revelar, pelas suas lacunas, os desejos ocultos e reprimidos da sociedade, contando a autora com a psicanálise para os recuperar e examinar.

No entanto, estas importantes ressalvas não logram dispersar as apreensões iniciais. Com o avançar da leitura, constata-se que todos os tópicos são analisados à luz da ideologia do Estado Novo, que parece tudo absorver. A autora recorre de forma excessiva (no corpo do texto como nas notas) à voz dos ideólogos do Estado Novo, com destaque para Salazar, António Ferro e, nos capítulos sobre o império, Armindo Monteiro, Ministro das Colónias. A partir dos discursos de uns e de outros, num arco cronológico alargado de citações que esba-

tem diferentes temporalidades e perdem de vista tanto os contextos como os objectivos pragmáticos que estiveram na base desses discursos, Vieira chega a uma retórica coerente e auto-explicativa do Estado Novo, a partir da qual passa a abordar os filmes. As análises dos filmes são, deste modo, moldadas *a priori* quer pela retórica do Estado Novo (ou a retórica dessa retórica) quer por uma dada perspectiva teorico-filosófica, enunciada no início de cada capítulo e forjada num eclectismo por vezes desconcertante, que dialogam com os filmes de forma parcial e extremamente selectiva. Assim, recorrendo a Freud, Krakauer e Jacques Ellul, a análise de *A Revolução de Maio* (1937), no capítulo 1, centra-se nas imagens documentais de Salazar, que a autora considera o veículo de identificação do espectador com o ditador português, e que servem para ilustrar o conflito (que o filme tentaria reconciliar) entre uma visão de propaganda “racional” (a de Salazar) e uma visão de propaganda “irracional” (a de Ferro). No capítulo 2, as análises de *Bocage* (1936) e *Camões* (1946) confinam-se ao modo como a ideologia do regime é “subtilmente” difundida a partir da identificação “entre um herói individual e o destino colectivo do país” (53), tendo agora como referências teóricas Hegel, Carlyle e Nietzsche. No capítulo 3, a análise do filme de Brum de Canto, *A Cruz de Ferro* (1967), socorre-se da “muleta da dialéctica hegeliana” (92) para desenvolver uma leitura alegórico-sintomática de duas aldeias, tese e antítese de um capitalismo e de um “proto-comunismo,” cuja síntese resultaria na apologia do corporativismo estadonovista. No capítulo 4, o filme *Fátima, Terra de Fé* (1943) é interpretado através do binómio razão e fé, recorrendo a autora à filosofia política de Carl Schmitt para discutir a relação entre política e religião, à epistemologia e ética de Kant para abordar o conceito de razão de Salazar, e à dialéctica do iluminismo de Adorno e Horkheimer para interpretar um episódio do filme (109). No capítulo 5, a discussão da representação da mulher consegue estar mais centrada nos filmes; no entanto, a questão do desejo sexual é secundarizada (curiosamente, a psicanálise não é aqui invocada) e as ambivalências que caracterizam os estereótipos, e às quais o aparelho cinematográfico sempre foi sensível, merecem pouca atenção. Por outro lado, o capítulo 6 socorre-se da psicanálise (ou de uma versão *sui generis* desta, que junta Derrida, Freud e Donald Winnicott) para construir uma explicação do império português como “suplemento,” compensação e “fetiche” de uma nação “pequena e periférica,” dominada por um “sentimento de inferioridade” (104). Desta vez, o *Feitiço do Império* (1940) serve de pretexto para um comentário sobre a “psique nacional” (140), no qual a “nação” se vê dotada de características psicológicas como “receio,” “angústia” e “fantasia.” Por fim, o capítulo 7 regressa a Hegel e à política do

espírito para analisar *Chaimite* (1953), concentrando-se, uma vez mais, no “filtro” da ideologia do regime (173).

Cinema no Estado Novo tem o mérito de demonstrar os limites deste tipo de mobilização de teorias e conceitos na pesquisa cinematográfica. Os filmes nunca são confrontados enquanto objectos inteiros e autónomos que, apesar de permeáveis a uma ideologia dominante e sujeitos às imposições do regime, são também guiados por leis e práticas próprias relacionadas com factores tão diversos como as convenções narrativas e de género, a intertextualidade com outros cinemas, a criação de estilos autorais distintos e as expectativas do público. A promessa, anunciada na introdução (e que seria o grande contributo inovador deste estudo), de dar atenção à linguagem cinematográfica (19) não se concretiza. Os filmes não têm precedência sobre as ideias (nem as do regime nem as da autora), cabendo-lhes maioritariamente um papel de ilustração dessas ideias. A especificidade do meio cinematográfico não é identificada, muito menos explorada, favorecendo conexões e leituras algo forçadas. Com efeito, estabelecer relações directas entre a ideologia estadonovista e o recurso à literatura como “fonte preferencial de narrativas de filmes entre os anos 30 e 50” (51), os temas da corrupção de uma comunidade pelo dinheiro (72) ou a oposição entre campo e cidade — temas e características que atravessam o cinema narrativo mundial desde as suas origens — pouco contribui para um melhor entendimento destas matérias.

A possibilidade de leituras contra-hegemónicas está ausente deste estudo, mesmo quando se assinalam contradições e lacunas (como os ambientes operários ou certas figuras femininas — 85, 115). As análises sublinham a “sintonia” (109), a “coincidência tácita” (115) e os “ecos” (119) que se estabelecem entre os filmes e a ideologia do Estado Novo, ignorando os factores de perturbação que também encontramos nestes filmes. A título de exemplo, não seria possível ver nas imagens documentais de Salazar, em *A Revolução de Maio*, um obstáculo à identificação do espectador com o ditador (e, seguindo a lógica da autora, com a retórica do regime), e não o seu contrário, uma vez que interrompem a continuidade narrativa, pon-do em causa o “efeito de real” que sustenta a ficção? Por outro lado, não será a figura do Barata (interpretado pelo popular Ribeirinho), o funcionário público inconformista e espertalhão, um melhor candidato para a identificação do público? O tratamento cruel que esta personagem recebe (da mulher que corteja, do protagonista, da polícia secreta) poderá ter estado na base do fracasso do filme — afinal, ele é o “abaixo de cão” que um realizador como Charlie Chaplin soube reabilitar e popularizar com a figura do Charlot. Por fim, uma

análise do império como “suplemento” ou “fetiche” da metrópole não teria sido mais bem conseguida se, em vez de se reportar a um filme de propaganda colonial, tivesse procurado o “suplemento” imperial em filmes situados na metrópole, ao jeito das “leituras em contraponto” desenvolvidas por Edward Said em *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)?

Em conclusão, analisar o ideário e a ideologia do Estado Novo e como estes se manifestaram no cinema da época é importante, como o demonstra o número considerável de estudos publicados sobre o tema. Não menos importante, porém, é evitar ficar refém desse ideário e dessa ideologia, que devem ser inseridos em contextos mais vastos de produção e recepção. No caso do cinema, a influência de Hollywood sobre os realizadores e o público (que não viam apenas filmes portugueses, muito pelo contrário) não pode deixar de ser levada em conta. A autora alude a esta presença, de forma indirecta e muito breve, quando relaciona a figura da fadista à *femme fatale* e ao *film noir* (132-133), mas não lhe reconhece grande valor analítico, muito menos teórico. Por fim, é importante evitar reproduzir o conceito de público passivo e acrítico que terá informado alguns dos quadros superiores do regime (como António Ferro — 50). Uma análise crítica da relação entre cinema e Estado Novo terá necessariamente de se afastar deste pressuposto, reconhecendo que, apesar da elevada taxa de iliteracia e da infantilização a que o público estava sujeito, existiam discursos marginais e contra-hegemónicos que afectavam o modo como os filmes eram recebidos. Na ausência destes discursos, existia algo ainda mais forte: a realidade multifacetada e complexa, com a qual os espectadores estabeleciam inevitáveis comparações com o que viam no ecrã.

1. Para uma elaboração crítica desta tendência, veja-se a introdução de Nuno Domingos e Victor Pereira, *O Estado Novo em Questão* (Lisboa: Edições Setenta, 2010).

2. Seria cansativo e desadequado citar aqui os vários estudos que — com rigor e eficácia variáveis — abordaram estes temas a propósito da relação entre o cinema e o Estado Novo. Não é minha intenção questionar os temas em si, mas a forma como, nesta obra, estruturam uma interpretação ideológica previsível que por vezes, na expressão de Luís Reis Torgais, “força a nota.” Cf. Luís Reis Torgais, *O Cinema sob o olhar de Salazar* (Casais de Mem Martins: Círculo de Leitores, 2000), 21.

O CONTRA-PLANO DA MORTE:
ESPECTRES DEL CINEMA PORTUGUÈS CONTEMPORANI.
HISTÒRIA I FANTASMA EN LES IMATGES

Nuno Crespo (IHA, NOVA)

Glòria Salvadó Corretger. Palma de Mallorca: Lleonard Muntaner Editor, 2012. 322 pp. ISBN 8415592248/978-8415592242.

O ponto de partida deste estudo foi a descoberta que Glòria Salvadó Corretger fez de um artigo escrito em 1981 por Serge Daney. Nesse artigo, o crítico de cinema francês mostra que o cinema português não se caracteriza por ser um centro geográfico onde se reúnem imagens coincidentes, linguagens comuns ou proximidades estéticas. Pelo contrário, ele é constituído por um conjunto de linhas de fuga das quais emanam aquilo a que Glòria Corretger chama “poètiques de l’exili.”¹ Esta premissa é o que permite à autora encontrar uma singularidade na cinematografia portuguesa recente que não implica um afastamento do contexto do cinema, vendo as obras portuguesas numa espécie de magnífico isolamento, mas mostra como esta cinematografia é herdeira da história do cinema e pertence a uma larga família da qual fazem parte nomes como Godard, Dreyer, Murnau ou Tourneur. Se por um lado os guias fundamentais são as obras de Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro e Pedro Costa (ainda que sejam referidos João Pedro Rodrigues, Miguel Gomes, Sandro Aguilár, Teresa Villaverde, entre outros), por outro, o pensamento de Benjamin, Deleuze, Didi-Huberman e Warburg constitui a base reflexiva a partir da qual Corretger realiza a topografia do cinema português.

O texto tem a natureza de um retrato e, simultaneamente, de uma experiência de pensamento. Porque alia a síntese necessária à tarefa de caracterizar uma ‘cena’ cinematográfica ao risco de avançar com um conjunto de ‘teses’ sobre o que é esse cinema, as suas principais características quer do ponto de vista da estética cinematográfica, como das inquietações que alimentam esse cinema. A ideia de inquietação é central no modo como Corretger pensa o cinema português, por se tratar de um cinema a braços com os perigos e

traumas da história que o pensamento moderno, que descobriu um universo ilimitado e transformou a vida humana num acontecimento efémero e abismal, deixou como herança. E, neste sentido, o cinema português é um cinema moderno porque apesar das suas diferentes materializações, formas e maneiras, é um cinema que confronta a finitude humana, ou seja, é um cinema em confronto com a morte. O qual significa só o desaparecimento do corpo humano, mas também a finitude da visão o que, como Corretger mostra, é fruto do permanente confronto com o mar e o seu horizonte inabarcável. Esta é a herança das viagens marítimas e dos descobridores portugueses que não deixa de se inscrever e de actuar nas diferentes figuras do presente. Um regresso das dificuldades, dos perigos e dos exílios dos descobridores em alto mar e nas terras desconhecidas, dificuldades que não são conscientemente procuradas, mas surgem inconsciente e involuntariamente, ou seja, as imagens do passado são activadas pelas imagens do presente (94).

Nos filmes dos realizadores portugueses este universo marítimo materializa-se numa errância temporal que traduz a identidade ambulante do navegante, o “homoviator” (130) e cuja marca vital é o permanente movimento. Uma errância muitas vezes transformada em deriva sem fim e sem rumo e que é uma fuga indeterminada. Para Corregter são estes movimentos que ocupam os filmes portugueses e que constroem a sua singularidade e que, de algum modo, constituem, seguindo a leitura que a autora faz de Eduardo Lourenço, a singularidade da história de Portugal. Esta história de Portugal não surge directamente, mas tem a forma de um reencontro promovido por sugestões subtis: as figuras históricas são sugestionadas e nunca declaradas enquanto ícones ou símbolos do passado, ou seja, trata-se de reencontrar a história tal como ela se apresenta, fantasmática e espectralmente, nas coisas do presente. Um confronto e articulação de diferentes tempos históricos que cria uma fractura temporal (154) e que produz imagens

situades en un moment límit del relat i de l'existència del seus personatges, estableix un encontre amb la mort, s'obrencap a un temps suspès, cap a un “mésenllà,” cap a una certa idea d'infinít que està relacionada amb dos elements claus per a la història, la política, l'art i el pensament de Portugal: el mar i el navegant. Les imatges de Costa, Monteiro, Oliveira i Rodrigues apellen a l'abisme que s'obre davant del sulls de l'home medieval mésenllà del límit que ofereix la terra, l' *além-mar*. (32)

Portanto, o cinema português contemporâneo pensa a história como história de fantasmas latentes que emergem nas imagens enquanto espectros ou sombras.

Se, por um lado, o texto de Corretger é caracterizado pela apresentação de possibilidades de leitura em que a especulação é essencial, por outro o seu trabalho localiza-se no campo da história da arte. E é no campo autónomo desta disciplina que se encontra a metodologia deste estudo, mas é a nova historiografia da arte, aquela que segue a prática melancólica de Jean-Luc Godard na sua *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-98)² e na história dos fantasmas de Warburg, o modelo que a autora discute e que utiliza na sua análise da cinematografia portuguesa. E a primeira parte do seu estudo é dedicado a avaliar a pertinência e fundamento epistemológico da proposta de compreender a história da arte a partir das relações, ressonâncias e dialécticas entre diferentes imagens. A filiação deste modo de pensar em Didi-Huberman, e na sua poderosa síntese do pensamento sobre a história de Warburg e Benjamin, é inegável, sobretudo no modo como o filósofo e o historiador pensam a sobrevivência temporal das imagens a partir do conceito central de anacronismo. O qual implica uma dialéctica temporal fundamental entre o presente e o passado. Portanto, não se trata de uma abordagem cronológica, do estudo de influências ou da fixação das grandes famílias e linhagens da cinematografia portuguesa, mas ver neste cinema um pensamento cinematográfico capaz de formular conceitos próprios. Neste sentido este estudo

reclama l'operativitat d'una genealogia de les imatges del cinema portugués contemporari i, en conseqüència, explora el camp cinematogràfic amb una mirada arqueològica. Es tracta, no tant de fer emergir un passat fixat o indiscutiblement històric, sinó més aviat de provocar la manifestació de la memòria d'aquest passat tal com es mostra en les imatges del present. [...] Aquesta mirada arqueològica, aquesta perspectiva antropològica, ha de procedir necessàriament a partir de la correlació de fragments, de l'ampliació dels detalls i del seu estudi comparatiu que la memòria resideix en la mirada però sobretot en els gestos, les paraules i el rostres; també en els paisatges, el escenari i, finalment, en les tècniques, les empremtes i el llinatge (o l'herència). (15)

Esta história do cinema é o que a autora chama uma “contra história das imagens”:

Si aquests termes formen la base d'una contrahistòria de les imatges, sembla que podem reclamar els mateixos principis per a l'exploració de les imatges cinematoogràfiques. Sobretot en el cas del cinema portuguès contemporari que, com assenyala Daney, reafirma aquest diàleg amb la història. Aquesta contrahistòria reclama la noció de contraplà, de la mateixa manera que el cinema portuguès es pot rellegir partant d'un contraplà amb la mort. (18)

A intensa presença de fantasmas e espectros faz com que o cinema português se caracterize pelo modo como o fantástico é uma das suas marcas importantes e traduz-se num permanente movimento através de uma ténue linha de fronteira entre o imaginário e o real, a ficção e o documentário, ou seja, um vai-e-vem permanente entre a imaginação e o mundo. Uma localização incerta que não é uma indecisão, mas à maneira de Warburg, uma forma de inscrever o cinema português numa região "entre" diferentes categorias do cinema. E esta localização incerta é um dos pontos da sua fertilidade.

Se a relação dialéctica com a história e os seus fantasmas latentes e o confronto com o horizonte marítimo sem fim percorrem a cinematografia portuguesa, outra característica importante é o modo de incorporação da palavra dita. A qual não surge como lugar de significado e de narrativa, mas através do poder expressivo que a palavra dita e performada possui, ou seja, é a ligação com o teatro e com esse universo metareflexivo de jogo entre palavra e imagem. Mas não só o teatro, também a literatura marca as palavras ditas neste cinema:

El cinema i la literatura portuguesa mantenen un pont d'unió constantment obert entre la paraula (que evoca el passat; que decriu el mar) i la imatge (que reclama la paraula, la història). La paraula invoca la imatge; la imatge invoca la paraula; amb dues solliciten la història, el passat. S'estbleix un flux constantd el' une a l'altra. (75)

O caso de Oliveira é o mais claro e evidente desta relação, mas nos outros realizadores a tensão que a linguagem transporta e o saber que as imagens nunca podem ser totalmente ditas está presente e marca este universo estético e problemático: uma espécie de lição straubiana que, segundo Corretger, todos estes realizadores assumiram.

E a palavra é o meio que permite permanentes desdobramentos das imagens e a aparição das muitas histórias que estes realizadores contam:

En el cinema portuguès contemporani s'inclouen moltes històries explicades pels personatges en plans estàtics que sovint presenten una deliberada posada en escena teatral. Impostació, moviments mesurats com si extractés d'una scenari, certa auto consciència de pertànyer a una ficció. El cinema portuguès inclou directors que actuen, actires que no són actors, personatges reals que pronuncien diàlegs no improvisats, elements autobiogràfics, situacions distorsionades. Probablement es deu a la incorporació d'una forta carrega metarefexiva, que va més enllà de la temàtica dels films. (65)

E são estes mecanismos que permitem aos personagens dos filmes empreender numa espécie de viagem de recuperação da memória e da identidade (os personagens de Costa e Oliveira são os exemplos mais evidentes), mantendo um movimento errante que é uma das mais importantes chaves das estruturas dos filmes. Portanto, a deriva sem fim e o confronto com o infinito e a morte inserem-se numa lógica de recuperação do sentido da vida e da história. E, por isso, os seus protagonistas não pertencem a um único território, mas circulam indistintamente entre diferentes espaços e tempos.

Um estar à deriva resultante não só da experiência marítima originária (a qual tem relações formais importantes em grande parte da recente cinematografia portuguesa: a presença contínua do tema da água em César Monteiro, as viagens de Oliveira ou o modo como as Fontainhas estão próximas da claustrofobia e confinamento espacial de um navio, etc.), mas da realidade social. Não que estes filmes "documentem" a sociedade, mas eles são poderosas caracterizações (algumas vezes caricaturas) da sociedade:

El cinema portugués contemporani filma, ni que sigui de manera fragmentada, la realitat d'una societat i d'un país. És habitual que moltes pel·lícules siguin documentals o que inscriguin amb força la seva història en un context real. Paradoxalment, aquest marc que estableix estrets vincles entre personatges, situacions i realitats concrets és l'escenari que permet l'emergència de components fantàstics. D'aquesta manera, un entorn cinematogràfic properal documental es veu poblar d'elements propis d'una atmosfera irreal, imaginària. Amb tot, cada cineasta aborda aquest aspecte d'una manera diferente. (201)

O resultado mais immediato deste mapa estético da cinematografia portuguesa contemporânea é perceber que é na feliz convivência entre imagens com diferentes temporalidades e origens, conseguida através da “arte da montagem,” que se localiza a marca de nascença destes “cinemas.” Não está em causa a identificação de uma comum, mas a semelhança destas diferentes cinematografias está nas dicotomias e nos espaços que são capazes de gerar e isto permite a Corretger afirmar que, por exemplo, é o intervalo entre a dicotomia geográfica do Céu e do Inferno presente nos filmes de César Monteiro e o limbo de Pedro Costa que abre espaço para a obra de Oliveira. E, por isso, as obras destes cineastas emergem numa “atmosfera fantástica, geralment intangible, abstracta, imprecisa” (288). Tudo elementos inundados de um forte sentido histórico não linear ou didáctico, ou seja, nenhum dos realizadores quer contar a história de Portugal ou repor a verdade dos seus factos: o seu reino é o da ficção, mesmo estando os seus personagens envolvidos na mais real das acções que é o fazer face à morte. E aqui reside não só a modernidade deste cinema, mas também a sua radicalidade. Uma radicalidade onde a evocação dos espectros e dos fantasmas do passado mais recente ou mais longínquo forma um mistério: “un misteri que habita més enllà del pla i que es xifra en el contraplà: *el contraplà amb la mort*” (290).

1. “Daney no considera Portugal un centre sinó mésaviat un pol d’imantació en el qual convergeixen diverses línies de fuga; especialment poètiques de l’exili.” (7).

2. “Georges Didi-Huberman insisteix en el decurso de la seva obra en la idea que no hi ha una única història de l’art, sinó dues. Considera l’existència de dues tradicions que entenen la història de l’art de manera diferent. Una és la tradició dominant que recull i potencia Vasari durant el Renaixement, determinada pels principis de la visió i la idea de mimesi. Aquesta és la història visible que es constitueix com a tronc central — gairebé únic — sobre el qual ha evolucionat la història de l’art. Tanmateix, com destaca Didi-Huberman, la idea d’una història de l’art sorgeix molt abans, el llibre XXXVè de la Història Natural de Plini el Vell. Plini nega l’origen egipci de l’art de la pintura i reclama la seva filiació grega en el traçat de perímetres de l’ombra d’una persona. Però, per a Plini el Vell hi ha una altra tradició de la imatge pictòrica que el senti estetic (decoratiu) hauria acabat per desvirtuar. Plini privilegia un enfocament de l’activitat artística no abordada des de la idea de representació sinó des de la classificació de les matèries implicables en el procés de creació. Des d’aquest punt de vista, per Plini la pintura seria allò que resta, les ruïnes o el vestigi, d’una noble tradició antiga, d’un art totalment mort o en el procés de morir. Així, deixa veure una idea de naixement de història de l’art sobre la desaparició del seu objecte que estrobamolt a prop de la pràctica malencònica de Jean-Luc Godard a *Histoire(s) di Cinema*.” (17).