

COLONIAL IMAGINARIES: PROPAGANDA, MILITANCY AND “RESISTANCE” IN THE CINEMA

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The fortieth anniversary of the independence of Portuguese-speaking African countries is the pretext for analysing how Portuguese colonialism has been *imagined* by means of the moving image. In this issue of *Comunicação & Sociedade*, the reflection proposed by the articles compiled under the title *Colonial imaginaries: propaganda, militancy and “resistance” in the cinema* aims to expand our knowledge of the men and women imagined via the cinema under (post-)colonialism, during and after the Estado Novo regime (1926-1974).

It should be noted that, both in Portugal and in other European countries, there are few studies on how the cinema has represented the former colonies. This scarcity is, however, counterbalanced by the fact that the research works that do exist are relatively recent, thus indicating a trend towards valorising such research.

In Portugal, the historical study of the cinematic representations of colonialism began under the coordination of Luís Reis Torgal in *O Cinema Sob o Olhar de Salazar* (Cinema under the Gaze of Salazar) (2000), a study that was furthered by Jorge Seabra in *África Nossa: o Império Colonial na Ficção Cinematográfica Portuguesa* (Our Africa: the Colonial Empire in Portuguese Cinematic Fiction) (2011). In the framework of anthropology, other published works include *Guia para os filmes realizados por Margot Dias em Moçambique* (Guide to the films made by Margot Dias in Mozambique), written by Catarina Alves Costa (1997), as well as Alexandre Oliveira's *Os Filmes de Ruy Cinnati sobre Timor 1961-62* (The Films of Ruy Cinnati about Timor 1961-62) (2003) and *A câmara, a escrita e a coisa dita...* (The camera, the written word and the spoken thing ...) (2008). The sparse literature on cinema in the former Portuguese colonies includes the films and writings conducted in Angola by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *La Collection Coloniale de la Cinemateca Portuguesa* (The Colonial Collection of the Portuguese Cinematheque), published by Joana Pimentel in FIAF n°. 64 (4/2002); the work of the Belgian researcher, Guido Convents, *Os Moçambicanos Perante o Cinema e o Audiovisual: Uma História Político-cultural do Moçambique Colonial até à República de Moçambique (1896-2010)* (The Mozambicans in Relation to Film and Audiovisual: A Political and Cultural History of Colonial Mozambique up until the Republic of Mozambique (1896-2010) (2011); and also the trilogy *Angola, o Nascimento de uma Nação. Vol. I O Cinema do Império; Vol. II O Cinema da Libertação e Vol. III O Cinema da Independência* (Angola, The Birth of a Nation. Vol. I Empire Cinema; Vol. II Liberation Cinema and Vol. III Independence Cinema) (Antonio & Piçarra, 2013, 2014, 2015) and *Azuis Ultramarinos. Propaganda e Censura no Cinema do Estado Novo* (Overseas Blues. Propaganda and Censorship in the Cinema of the Estado Novo) (Piçarra, 2015) - the latter focusing on the field of Communication Sciences.

In terms of still images, most existing research is related to photography and posters. There are relatively few studies that address other media, e.g. cartoons (e.g. Cunha, 1995). Recent publications include the study, by the anthropologist Leonor Pires Martins, *Um Império de Papel – Imagens do Colonialismo Português na Imprensa Periódica Ilustrada (1875-1940)* (A Paper Empire - Images of Portuguese Colonialism in the Illustrated Periodical Press (1875-1940) (2012), and *O Império da Visão: Fotografia no Contexto Colonial (1860-1960)* (The Empire of Vision: photography in the colonial context (1860-1960) (2014) coordinated by the historian Filipa Lowndes Vicente.

The call for papers for this journal was made in conjunction with the organization of the international conference *Liberation struggles, the falling of the empire and the birth (in images) of the African nations*, held on 27 and 28 January, 2016, in the Centre for Film Aesthetics and Cultures (CFAC), of the University of Reading, and at King's College London - Camões Centre for Portuguese Language and Culture. Organised in the framework of the post-doctoral project of Maria do Carmo Piçarra, under the guidance of Rosa Cabecinhas (CECS) and co-supervised by Lúcia Nagib (CFAC), the conference aimed to contribute to the promotion and internationalisation of Aleph - Network for Action and Critical Research into Colonial Images and, in addition to the aforementioned organisers involved as partners the Portuguese Cinematheque - Cinema Museum, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Comparative Studies Centre of the Faculty of Letters, University of Lisbon, the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation (FCT) and the Communication and Society Research Centre (CECS), of the University of Minho.

Several questions are focused upon in this issue: how was film production determined by colonial policies and how were these policies projected by the cinema? How were the colonial representations created by the Estado Novo regime (1926-1974) questioned by the Third Cinema movement, by the New Cinemas and by the liberation movements of the former Portuguese colonies? Within the framework of the projects to create and develop national film industries in the African Portuguese-speaking countries, which representations were created in "reverse-shot" to the official representations of Portuguese colonialism? And currently how, and to what extent, is auteur cinema and other artistic practices that use the moving image contributing - or otherwise - to decolonising the respective imaginary universes? How can we think about postcolonial cinema? Is there a kind of neo-colonialism underlying certain artistic practices and research works that use the moving image?

In *Mueda, Memória e Massacre* (Mueda, Memory and massacre), by Ruy Guerra, the Mozambican film project and the cultural forms of the Mueda Plateau", Raquel Schefer reveals the changes made to the film to ensure that it stood in conformity with the "Liberation Script", that FRELIMO was attempting to use to organize and codify the history of Mozambique. To this effect it examines the existence of elements of the collectivisation program and also analyses the influence of Makonde culture - and in particular of the Mapiko dance - on aesthetic forms and film narratives. In "How many nations are we capable of imagining?" Catarina Laranjeiro explores how the cinema has participated in the construction of Guinea-Bissau as a nation-state. The author analyses two films

made in 1973, in very different contexts: *En Nations Födelse / The Birth of a Nation*, by the Swedish filmmakers Lennart Malmer & Ingela Romare, and *X Marcha da Juventude na República Democrática Alemã* (10th Youth March in the German Democratic Republic), by the Guinean filmmaker, Sana N'Hada. While proposing different representations of the liberation struggle, both films retrospectively reveal the silences, absences and exclusions underpinning the utopia of the nation-state of Guinea-Bissau.

The article by Ana Balona de Oliveira, "Decolonization in, of and via the 'moving' archive images of artistic practice", focuses on several recent works by the artists Ângela Ferreira, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Délio Jasse, Daniel Barroca and Raquel Schefer. Sharing the same interest in colonial archives, the works in question contribute, suggests Balona de Oliveira, to an urgent epistemic and ethical-political decolonisation of archive footage, and of present day images. Contemporary artistic production thus emerges as a way to question the silences of memory and / or imperial nostalgias that characterise the post-colonial condition.

In "Images of Africa? Portuguese films and documentaries related to the former colonies in Africa (first half of the 20th century)", Patrícia Ferraz de Matos analyses "colonial representations" in the films and documentaries produced in Portugal during the Estado Novo regime. On the basis of a vast corpus of 38 films made between 1928 and 1965, the author presents us with a summary of the images and social roles assigned to the "whites" (colonisers) and the "blacks" (colonised), illustrating how these images crystallised dichotomies and reified asymmetries of power. In turn, in a critical analysis supported by the concept of "visual pleasure" and the idea of the "impossibility of the subaltern speaking", in "Gazes and representations: reflections on the construction of the female body in the documentaries *Africa in Lisbon – the Indigenous Peoples of Guinea in the Great Industrial Exhibition* and the *Indigenous Village of Guinea in Lisbon – 1932*", Francesca de Rosa discusses the cinematic representation of the black woman's body. The author concludes that otherness in Portuguese colonial cinema is produced through a strategy of domination, conveyed via a discourse that simplifies and generates stereotypes, refusing to consider diversity. She asserts, however, that no power system "is able to permanently eliminate subjectivity and the resistance of subordinates (Mellino, 2004, p. 76)" which she proves through film analysis.

In "Between memory and its deletion: Zézé Gamboa's *The Great Kilapy* and the legacy of Portuguese colonialism", Katy Stewart asks how Gamboa's latest film lends itself to a unique work of redemption of memory and decolonisation of the imaginary. Notwithstanding the film's production and distribution problems, it affirms itself as a means of oral transmission of alternative memories, in the vein of highly different proposals such as those of Walter Benjamin or Pierre Nora. Isabel Macedo, in her essay "Young people and Portuguese cinema: a (de)colonization of the imaginary", analyses the perceptions of youth concerning intercultural relations, based on the creation of focus groups that viewed and discussed the documentary *Li Ké Terra* (2010). Articulating the reflection on the obtained results with focus on the film's "narrative", the author argues that filmic literacy and the cinema may contribute to decolonisation of the imaginary

through reflective and critical transformation of self- and hetero-representations. In turn, in "Otherness and identity in *Tabu* by Miguel Gomes", Finally, Ana Cristina Pereira, using a multimodal semiotic analysis, reflects on how Portuguese identity was built, also in the cinema, through the relationship with the identity of an African "other". For this purpose she isolates dualities found in the film, which she classifies as "postcolonial", in order to highlight how the "racial" representations forged during colonialism still persist in contemporary Portuguese society.

The "Varia" section consists of two essays that deepen the debate on the cinema as a means of updating cultural memory and a form of identity-based expression. Valorisation of the importance of historical awareness and the need to break with silences and amnesia in order to foster recognition of the Other cuts across both studies. In "Post-memory as civic courage. Watchword: resist, resist, resist", Sheila Khan highlights the contributions of two recent Portuguese documentaries for Portuguese-language studies on colonialism and post-colonialism. Crossing the concepts of "civic courage" and the "duty of memory", Khan emphasizes the "duty of post-memory" that rescues and dignifies the experiences and stories of men and women whose "life stories" break with historical silences.

Pedro Andrade, in his essay "Transcultural cinema discussed in a knowledge network: hybrid postcolonial meanings in the cinema of resistance", presents the conceptual foundations and technological resources for the implementation of a *Transcultural Communication Knowledge Network*, organized in Archives, Knowledge Bases and Virtual Museums. The author discusses the challenges inherent to contemporary "hybrid cultures", highlighting the potentialities of collaboration between filmmakers, film critics and audiences in the fight against social inequalities.

This edition is completed by four book reviews of works from different subject areas that represent important contributions in order to strengthen the study of Portuguese colonialism and its relationship with still and moving images. In this context, experts from different fields present and contextualize the three aforementioned works: Paulo Cunha provides a critical review of the work of Maria do Carmo Piçarra (2015); Inês Vieira Gomes presents the work of Leonor Pires Martins (2012); and Drew Thompson presents the work coordinated by Filipa Lowndes Vicente (2014).

In the book review of *Azuis Ultramarinos... (Overseas Blues...)* Cunha critically analyses the device used by the author, "a reminiscent *shot / off-screen / reverse-shot* in which the representations of colonialism by the Estado Novo's propaganda newsreels, are contrasted to the gaze/ outlook of censored/banned authors in films about the former Portuguese colonies, in order to reveal – in the *off-screen* environment - via 'flash-images', an ethics of memory (and of forgetting)" (Piçarra, 2015, p. 13), concluding that this study contributes to the state of the art of various scientific fields.

Gomes suggests that in *Um Império de Papel (A Paper Empire)*, the images related to the former colonies published in the Portuguese periodical press between 1875 and 1940, have been studied, by Pires, as an object in their own right. Critical analysis of the images, their contexts of production, reproduction and manipulation, suggests Gomes, discusses the colonial iconography and questions a superficial reading thereof.

Thompson explains that the authors of *O Império da Visão* (The Empire of Vision) have proposed to examine the links between the image and Portuguese colonialism, the institutions and individuals that served it, and also the underlying policies of representation, noting that, in this context, the book not only presents new methodologies and concepts it also obliges reconsideration of the issues that have framed the study of the still image and colonialism.

Renné Oliveira França presents a critical review of the work by Rosa Cabecinhas and Luís Cunha, *Comunicação Intercultural. Perspectivas, Dilemas e Desafios* (Intercultural Communication. Perspectives, dilemmas and challenges) (2008), introducing the important issue of intercultural dialogue in contemporary societies, whose current challenges cannot be truly evaluated without taking into account the complex (post)-colonial situation in which we find ourselves today.

We have thus compiled contributions that articulate and deepen analyses concerning the use of colonial cinema for propaganda purposes, reflecting in parallel on gender representations, including approaches to the emergence of film industries in Portuguese-speaking African countries, which foster knowledge and reflection about political activism through the cinema. Apart from these studies, that provide a framework to understand the logic of advertising, there are analyses about which films - colonial, post-colonial, or neocolonial – through which cinema has told the story of these new countries in relation to its own history (Godard & Ishaghpour, 2005). The assembled texts attest to the idea that in the “urgency of the present,” a redemption of the past is achieved (Benjamin, 1940) through a “resistance cinema” (Deleuze, 1987), but also, in addition to photography, by other artistic practices that use the moving image. //

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