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4 The Many Returns to Wiriyamu: Audiovisual Testimony and the Negotiation of Colonial Violence

On 16 December 1972, several hundred people were killed in Wiriyamu and its surrounding villages during the the military operation ‘Operação Marosca’, carried out by the Portuguese Special Forces (Comandos), the Airforce and the secret police *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado / Direcção-Geral de Segurança (PIDE/DGS)* [International and State Defence Police / Directorate-General of Security]. The civilian villagers were suspected of collaborating with the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO)* [Mozambique Liberation Front] in the armed struggle against colonial rule by the Portuguese *Estado Novo* (Dhada 2015, 2013; Oliveira and Reis 2012). Though the incident remained unknown for some time, it became a media event when an article about the massacre was published in the *London Times* using information conveyed by padre Adrian Hastings, who had received reports from Burgos’ priests (Spanish catholic missionaries in Tete) smuggled out of Mozambique.¹ This happened in July 1973, shortly before Marcelo Caetano’s state visit to London. The massacre became a scandal and greatly influenced how the European powers perceived Portugal’s colonial policy in Africa at the time. In this way, the debate on Wiriyamu, the ‘My Lai’ of Mozambique (Hastings 1974), is part of a long process by which the Portuguese colonial domination of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea came to an end (MacQueen 1997; Pinto 2001).

According to the official FRELIMO discourse, the Wiriyamu incident is understood, above all, as a symbol for the excesses of colonial violence

1 The Burgos priests – Father José Sangalo and Vincente Berenguer – received the information about the killings from Father Domingo Ferrão (Dhada 2013: 56).

and the victims that the ‘povo moçambicano’ suffered under the Estado Novo. To a certain extent, the massacre also illuminates the military situation in the early 1970s, where the establishment of ‘liberated areas’ was only possible in the northern provinces of the country, shedding ambivalent light on the triumphalistic narrative of the independence movement. By describing the armed struggle against colonialism as the ‘luta nacional de libertação’ [national liberation struggle], the official narrative – that is, the ‘Liberation Script’ (Israel 2013) – focuses mainly on the Massacre of Mueda and its significance for the emergence of the ‘national liberation front’ (Cahen 1999, 2012). Thereby, iconic figures like Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel or Josina Muthemba are shaped as national heroes (Ribeiro 2005).

Rather than delving into the historiographical dimension of the Massacre of Wiriyamu, as discussed by Mustafah Dhada and others (Dhada 2013), the aim of this chapter is to explore the cinematographic negotiation of the massacre by analysing three documentary films from Mozambique and Portugal and focusing on the ways they employ audiovisual testimony: *25* (dir. José Celso Martinez Corrêa and Celso Luccas, 1977), *Mozambique or Treatment for Traitors* (dir. Ike Bertels, 1983) and *Regresso a Wiriyamu* (dir. Felícia Cabrita and Paulo Camacho, 1998). Specifically, although audiovisual testimony (Sarkar and Walker 2010) is crucial for addressing memories of colonial violence in these productions, as no photographic or cinematographic evidence exists, the question of an authentic testimony is not decisive. Rather, one has to question whether the testimonies provided by documentary films are not always disciplined, cinematographically formatted and functionalized to serve the ‘politics of history’ (Eze 2010; Coelho 2013; Loff 2010) suggested by the films. Therefore, ‘subaltern’ agents (Morris 2010) – in this case, former colonial soldiers or survivors of the massacre – provided with the opportunity to speak about their experiences in front of a camera might not be ‘liberated’ from their peripheral position, but again marginalized.

25: Silent Testimony and the Massacre of Wiriyamu

José Celso Martinez Corrêa and Celso Luccas, two Brazilian theatre directors and filmmakers, travelled to Mozambique to attend the Independence Day celebrations on 25 June 1975. They wanted to film the event and create a documentary for the Portuguese TV station RTP (Diatta 1977: 52). ‘We were in Portugal and the independence of Mozambique was approaching. [...] Me, Celso and three technicians of RTP. We went to Mozambique to shoot the liberation ceremonies’ (cited in Diatta 1977:52, my translation).² The title of their film, *25*, points to four important dates: the Independence Day; the official founding of FRELIMO on 25 June 1962; the beginning of armed struggle against the colonial regime on 25 September 1964; and the coup by the Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA) in Lisbon, which ended the Portuguese Estado Novo and its oppressive politics, on 25 April 1974 (Diatta 1997: 52–53, Newitt 1995: 520–523; MacQueen 1997: 43–49).

The production by Celso and Luccas is not a conventional documentary. It conveys an impression of the events in an experimental manner (Gray 2012: 145). Thereby, its scope is not limited to 1975, focusing instead on Mozambique’s colonial history and on the anticolonial struggle led by the FRELIMO (Silva 2006: 67–74). To realize such an encompassing endeavour, the filmmakers shot additional material in order to supplement archival footage. Furthermore, they travelled to the northern provinces of the country and visited Cabo Delgado and Niassa (Corrêa 1980: 12–13). These provinces were particularly affected by the guerrilla warfare in the 1970s. It was there, in the province of Tete, that the Massacre of Wiriyamu took place in 1972.

2 Original quote: ‘Estávamos em Portugal sentindo que a independência de Moçambique se aproximava, que estava esquentando. Saímos. Eu, o Celso e três operadores da televisão portuguesa. Fomos para Moçambique filmar a libertação.’

25 and the Representation of the Armed Struggle of FRELIMO

The film 25 is divided in several long sequences such as 'Invasão e Resistência' [Invasion and Resistance], 'Dominação' [Domination], 'A Revolta' [The Uprising], 'A Revolução' [Revolution] and '10 anos de Guerra' [10 Years of War]. Each section offers a critical vision of the colonial past, the slavery system, forced labour, economic exploitation, etc., using footage produced by the filmmakers, archival propaganda material from the Estado Novo, photographs and other materials. The Massacre of Wiriyamu is discussed in a long sequence that describes the War of Independence in Mozambique and problematizes resettlement programmes (Brendan 1974: 522–527; Coelho 1998: 62–64) intended to create a distance between local populations and the FRELIMO.³ The construction of the Cahora Bassa dam (Isaacman and Isaacman 2013: 94–122) and conventional military operations like the 'Gordian Knot' are also explored.⁴ The violent and asymmetrical style of Portuguese war making is most impressively conveyed by archival footage showing victims of napalm bombing (cf. Ribeiro 1999: 123–136). However, there are no photographs or footage of the Massacre of Wiriyamu.⁵

At the beginning of the scene, the voice-over relates some information about the massacre that coincides with press reports and Portuguese publications condemning the Colonial War and its excessive violence in the years after 1974. This description, as is often the case, both simplifies the incidents and serves as a solid base for exploration. However, the voice-over

3 25: 00:57:30–01:02:25.

4 Completed in 1970, the Operation Gordian Knot (Operação Nó Górdio) was the largest Portuguese military campaign in the Portuguese overseas province of Mozambique, East Africa. The objectives of the campaign were to seal off the independentist guerrillas' infiltration routes across the Tanzanian border and to destroy permanent guerrilla bases in Mozambique.

5 There are some images circulating in the internet that supposedly show a visit by Jorge Jardim to the crime scene. Cf. 'Jorge Jardim visita local massacre Wiriyamu (Tete), em 1973' (2010).

also provides a background for a filmic dramatization: the staging of silent witnesses might be understood as the filmmakers' response to the lack of visual evidence about the massive violence in Wiriyamu.

Silent Testimony of Colonial Violence

The description of the massacre given by the voice-over is illustrated with footage shot by the Brazilian directors at the crime scene and involves the display of human remains by anonymous men and children (25, 00:59.40–01:00.13). An improvised commemorative ceremony is enacted, where a simple wooden stage is shown in a barren landscape with no hint of what Padre Domingo Ferrão later called a 'mass grave' (cited in Guerra 2009: 63). At this time, there is already nothing left of the 'carbonized ruins of the villages Wiriyamu, Juwau or Chawola as well as the human skeletons, that covered the ground of this area, the undeniable witnesses of the bloody drama' ('Noch einmal: Das Massaker von Wiriyamu und Juwau': 23, my translation).⁶ A close up suggests that some of the remains were collected and stored in a wooden coffin like box (cf. 'Recordando os massacres coloniais', 1982). Two men on the stage take skulls out of the box and lift them up. Then, along with three children, they are shown looking straight at the camera, holding human bones towards it, saying nothing. It is not clear whether the people filmed are survivors or relatives of the victims, but the mute performance creates a strong relation between the living and the mortal remains.

The few bones shown in this scene symbolize the sheer number of people killed. At the same time, the staging goes beyond the memory of the independence war by invoking other aspects of colonial history and

6 Original quote: 'verkohlten Ruinen der Orte Wiriyamu, Juwau und Chawola sowie [von den] menschlichen Skelette[n], die den Boden dieser Gegend bedecken, die unbestreitbaren Zeugen des blutigen Dramas [...]' (Note that the spelling of the names of the villages differs in the various accounts and translations.)

violence. The commemoration of the victims staged by the film resonates with photographs of the Congo Reform Campaign that criticized the brutality of the reign of Leopold II (Grant 2001: 34). For instance, the formal composition of the scene in 25 resembles a particular image used in the Reform Campaign. It shows a worker, Nsala, who fled from a rubber plantation, sitting at the mission station staring at the remains of his daughter: one hand and one foot (Grant 2001: 27–28). The documentary gesture of the Reform Campaign photograph, however, gives way to theatrical dramatization and aestheticization in 25: the close ups of the skulls echo *Hamlet*, when he and Horatio encounter the gravedigger, particularly in relation to Eugène Delacroix's *Hamlet and Horatio in the Graveyard* (1839) (Young 2002: 246). Hence, the scene about the Wiriyamu Massacre in 25 reflects the themes of death and evanescence in a similar way to Delacroix, but now under the sign of anticolonial critique.

The Political Cult of the Dead in Post-Colonial Mozambique

After a rather euphoric response from film critics (among whom Diatta 1977), it became clear that the FRELIMO did not accept Celso and Luccas's filmic experiment. The independence movement and its conservative cultural politics focused more on conventional documentaries or newsreels like *Kuxa Kanema* to convey its political message to mostly illiterate populations (Gray 2012: 146–147). Given this, the way 25 deals with the memory of the Wiriyamu Massacre does not seem appropriate as it failed to meet the expectations for conventional, political documentaries. Thus, the film did not correspond to the 'Liberation Script' that FRELIMO was about to create in order to commemorate the 'national liberation war' (Corrêa 1980: 20). In addition, the comparison of the improvised ceremony at the empty ground of Wiriyamu with the monolithic monuments built in Maputo's Heroes square, makes obvious the dominance of the historical master narrative, of the 'Liberation Script' (Genoud 2012: ix). The latter is, among other things, characterized by an idealization of the past and a

glorification of the political leaders, as well as a romanticized relationship between FRELIMO and 'o povo' (the people). Also, it should be taken into account that the politics of history promoted by FRELIMO focuses on the elite and does not concede much attention to the civil victims of the 'liberation war' (cf. Bragança and Depelchin 1986: 165–166). Consequently, victims or survivors of massacres like the one in Wiriyamu, have often come to be marginalized or covered by the generic term 'people', which precludes recognition of individual experiences of suffering.

Images of a Show Trial: *Mozambique or Treatment for Traitors* (1983)

The documentary *Mozambique or Treatment for Traitors* (1983) consists of material produced by the Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC) [National Institute of Cinema] of Mozambique and directed by Ruy Guerra.⁷ The Dutch filmmaker Ike Bertels bought some of the footage from the INC and used it for *Treatment for Traitors*.⁸ Bertels had seen *Behind the Lines* (1971) by Margaret Dickinson, which portrayed the actions of FRELIMO and the 'liberated zones' in the early 1970s in northern Mozambique. She came to Mozambique at the beginning of the 1980s to make a documentary about women engaged in FRELIMO's armed struggle (Gray 2012: 143).

Treatment for Traitors gives a fragmented impression of the meetings with the 'compromised' organized by the Mozambican government in 1982. According to Hanlon they were called like this 'because they compromised themselves by voluntarily supporting the repressive colonial apparatus' (1984: 171). It should be pointed out that the discourse about the

7 Guerra's production, *Os Comprometidos. Actas de um Processo de Descolonização* (1984), is part of the collection of the *Instituto Nacional de Audiovisual e Cinema* (INAC) in Maputo. It is not clear when it will be identified or digitalized.

8 Probably only a few episodes of Guerra's *Os Comprometidos. Actas de um Processo de Descolonização* were broadcasted in the Mozambican television (Borges 2011: 58, 76).

'inimigos do povo (enemies of the people)' had escalated since 1978, when it was known that former members of the *Acção Nacional Popular*, the only existent political party in colonial Mozambique, had been accepted into FRELIMO (Wheeler and Opello: 2010: 274). To avoid such incidents, the identity of those who had 'collaborated' with the colonial regime was publicly announced. Former members of political organizations of the Estado Novo, African elements of the Portuguese armed forces and their special units – Grupos Especiais, Páraquedistas or Comandos – as well as agents of the secret police PIDE/DGS were considered 'compromised' (Christie 1988: 172; Mateus 2006: 659). These events were widely accompanied by the newspapers and culminated in meetings with the 'compromised' in Maputo, at the former Liceu Salazar, now Escola Secundária Josina Machel (Hanlon 1984: 170–174; Christie 1988: 172–174; Igreja 2010: 782).

Despite the fragmented character of *Treatment for Traitors*, and even considering that it was produced by a foreign filmmaker, its analysis allows us to see how FRELIMO sought to create an audiovisual representation that would legitimate its political agenda (Pasley 2009: 110; Loftus 2012: 162). The official character of the film becomes even more obvious as it shows the initial and final speech by Samora Machel. In order to give an impression of the interaction between Samora Machel, the sole interrogator at this event, and the 'compromised', the film includes the interrogation of former PIDE-informants and former members of the Comandos who report on the Massacre of Wiriyamu.

The Iconic Image of Samora Machel

The setting of the meeting is the ceremonial hall of the former Liceu Salazar in Maputo. Located between the tribune and the parquet, that is, between the FRELIMO politicians and the people designated as 'compromised', are microphones where the interrogated have to answer the questions. The positioning of the 'compromised' exposes them to the surveying look of Machel and observations by others in the audience waiting for their turn.

Moreover, in this way, those who are questioned are also forced to look up to the tribune where the political elite of the country was seated.

This configuration is particularly evident in a sequence where a former soldier of the Comandos answers questions posed by Machel to explain how the Massacre of Wiriyamu happened on 16 December 1972.⁹ The hierarchical relationship between interrogator and interviewed is cinematographically emphasized by an over-shoulder shot, a perspective often used in cinematographic constructions of dialogue. Here, the point of view shot shows Machel from the perspective of the accused. Consequently, there is no dialogue but a restricted space of questions and answers where the interviewed are fixed to their place at the microphone while Machel moves backwards and forwards and back to the tribune.¹⁰ Valeriano Baúlque, an ex-commando, recounts this situation in an interview with Dalila Cabrita Mateus:

We thought we were dead, that we would be executed. [...] President Samora spoke to us in a threatening way, which raised a feeling of hopelessness in us, because they had detailed information about the persons of all of the groups [...] At the same time, he repeated that we were instrumentalised by the colonial armed forces. (2006: 658, my translation)¹¹

Machel meanders on the tribune, fiddling with his sunglasses, asking questions, giving orders, and the camera shows him with the tribunal banner at his back stating 'Quando libertámos Moçambique os Comprometidos com o colonialismo também ganharam uma Pátria' [When we liberated Mozambique, the Compromised gained a homeland as well]. The camera shows the leader in low angle shots, seeming 'to highlight the grandeur of the head of state [...]' (Loftus 2012: 166) in a triumphalistic manner

9 *Treatment for Traitors*: 00:35:44–00:39:42.

10 *Treatment for Traitors*: 00:36:05–00:36:20.

11 Original quote: 'Pensávamos que estávamos mortos, que íamos ser fuzilados. [...] O presidente Samora dirigia-se-nos num tom de ameaça, o que só alimentava em nós o desespero, porque tinham informações pormenorizadas de elementos de cada um dos grupos [...] Ao mesmo tempo que dizia termos sido instrumentalizados pelo Exército Colonial.'

(Bragança and Depelchin 1986: 165). One might ask if this political performance articulates a ‘cult of personality wrapped in Marxist ideology and populism’ (Young 2010: 97).

The number of people killed is not addressed during the interrogation of the former *Comando*, although it was known at the time that several hundred had been murdered (Dhada 2013: 56–72). Equally, the question of guilt (cf. Mateus 2006: 653–654) is not addressed and no survivors were present at the meetings with the ‘compromised’. Instead of dealing with such questions, Machel uses the reports about Wiriyamu given by the former colonial soldiers to unmask the violence of Portuguese war making and point out the benevolent attitude of FRELIMO, who did not commit such atrocities (00:43:18–00:44:49). As Victor Igreja (2010) suggests, this politics of history was not directed towards a condemnation of the ‘compromised’:

[...] yet Machel showed only limited interest in the narratives of the ex-commandos. He asked for some details in relation to the massacres of Wiriyamu in Tete in 1972, but the discussion was superficial. Machel’s questions gave the impression that he had a keen interest in understanding the degree of courage the commandos had needed to kill and destroy [...]. (Igreja 2010: 797)

It thus seems that one of the pragmatic aims of meeting with the ‘compromised’ was to identify qualified cadres and convince them to fight against Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO) [Mozambican National Resistance] and other threats (Mateus 2006: 658). Such a motivation is obvious in Machel’s final statement: ‘[...] Let us all unite and stand together in defence of our freedom and independence and for the formation of a strong and wealthy independent state.’¹² Though not addressed explicitly, the subtext of the escalating civil war shines through. Consequently, the staged ‘mental decolonisation’, the officially praised transformation of the ‘compromised’ into a ‘Homem novo (new Man)’ and the catharsis of colonialism can also be understood as a pragmatic political strategy aimed at reintegrating military trained personnel at a critical moment of the

country’s history. It seems that forced testimony was a welcomed means to realize such a political-military project.

Perpetrators and Survivors as a Community of Victims in *Regresso a Wiriyamu* (1999)

The last case study focuses on the television documentary *Regresso a Wiriyamu* [Return to Wiriyamu, 1998], produced by Felícia Cabrita and Paulo Camacho. This film narrates the return of Antonino Melo, one of the perpetrators of Wiriyamu, to Mozambique, in order to meet some of the survivors. Felícia Cabrita is a well-known but also controversial figure in Portuguese journalism. In 1992, she wrote an article on the Massacre of Wiriyamu for the weekly magazine *Expresso* (Cabrita 1992, reprinted in 2008). At that time, little information about the incident was available in Portugal (Loff 2010: 73). Cabrita managed to locate some veterans from the 6th company of Comandos, who were involved in the massacres, and interview a few survivors of Wiriyamu in Mozambique. Nevertheless, it was not possible for her to speak with former agents of the PIDE/DGS or members of the air force, who also took part in the operation. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the massacre, Cabrita resumed her investigation on Wiriyamu. This time, she not only published an article in *Expresso*, but also made a documentary for the private television channel SIC that was to be broadcasted during the weekly magazine *Grande Reportagem* (Loff 2010: 101). The basis for both the article (Cabrita 1998) and the film was her cooperation with Antonino Melo. Cabrita describes him as an ‘homem sofrido’ [wretched man], who felt remorse for the violence he had committed in 1972.¹³ Melo agreed to participate in the documentary and wrote a diary that served as a basis for the newspaper article and the documentary.

12 *Treatment for Traitors*: 00.47.11–00.48.49.

13 Interview with Cabrita: 00:13:05–00:14:23.

While shooting the documentary in Mozambique, Melo was presented as a member of the film crew to prevent unexpected problems.¹⁴

The Double Victimization of the Perpetrator

The first half of the documentary is dedicated to Antonino Melo and his recollections of Mozambique. The film accompanies him returning to important places of his life. He speaks about his honeymoon in a hotel in Lourenço Marques and a visit to the Namaacha falls near the Mozambican capital, thus creating an image of the life of a settler in colonial Mozambique by descriptions of modern urban infrastructures and exotic nature. A further point of reference is the city of Beira, where Melo was born. Arriving at his former family home, the camera shows the veteran crying as Melo comments 'Não é fácil encarar o passado' [It is not easy to come to terms with the past] on the voice-over.¹⁵ By staging the protagonist in this manner, he is characterized as a returnee, a *retornado*, and therefore as a kind of a victim of the historical processes who lost his property and his home due to political decolonization (Loff 2010: 119; Keilbach 2010: 159–160).

The second aspect that furthers the victimization of the perpetrator regards the depiction of Melo's military education in Boane and the Comandos' training camp in Montepuez, Cabo Delgado. The film demonstrates how Melo returns to these places and uses archival images taken from propaganda films that were intended to create a heroic image of the Special Forces. In this context, the patriotic voice of God originally used (Ribeiro 2002: 178–179) is substituted with melancholic cello music, and Melo's comments on the images of the Comandos: 'Foi por isso que perdi a paz. Tinha vinte anos. Mandaram-me para os Comandos. [...] Foi aí que aprendi a matar [...]' [That is why I lost my peace. I was twenty years old.

14 Interview with Cabrita: 00:28:19–00:29:55.

15 *Regresso a Wiriyamu*: 00:15:50–00:16:30.

They summoned me to the commandos. [...] There, I learned to kill].¹⁶ By applying subjective voice-over to archival footage, the scene again suggests that Melo is a kind of victim. The veteran outlines the compulsory character of the military service and the ideological indoctrination with which the Estado Novo coerced tens of thousands of young men to take part in an absurd war (Pinto 2001: 48). Following the argument of the film, the veterans of the Portuguese Colonial War are to be conceived of as victims, especially those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Quintais 2001; Loff 2010: 109, 119). Paradoxically, the film introduces Melo as a victim both of the Estado Novo and of the decolonization. The figure of Melo portrayed in *Regresso a Wiriyamu* reveals how perpetrators are represented as a 'sort of complex victim and slaughterer simultaneously' (Loff 2010: 121). Following Manuel Loff, the staging of the protagonist hence symbolizes the discourse of a double victimization that can be observed in contemporary Portugal (ibid. 118).

In Front of the Monument: Apologizing for Colonial Violence and Reconstructing the Massacre

The second part of the film is dedicated to the reconstruction of the massacre. It begins with an encounter between Melo and some of the survivors at the monument for the victims of Wiriyamu. The veteran meets village headman Baera Gandara and his wife, Augusta Creya, along with Dukiria Makaje, Orário Kudenguirana, Vasco Tenente and António Michone.¹⁷ In this sequence, Melo apologizes for the past wrongs he was involved in. Here, three aspects are important: Melo's apology, the village headman's conciliatory reply and Vasco Tenente's rejection, since he was the only of his family to survive the killings.

16 *Regresso a Wiriyamu*: 00:10:01–00:10:36.

17 The spelling of the names corresponds to Cabrita (1992).

To reconstruct the massacre, the documentary only draws on the testimony of former Comando soldiers and survivors, and Melo is the only member of the Portuguese military represented (Cabrita 1998). The other three veterans are from Mozambique: Baúque, Freitas and an anonymous soldier. Only Melo visited Wiriyamu; the others were interviewed in Maputo.¹⁸ This is perhaps due to the fact that the African Comandos had already been confronted with their participation in the massacre around 1980 when the meetings with the 'compromised' took place. Although they do not question the violence committed per se, the interviewed veterans sometimes raise questions about different aspects. For instance, while Melo is not sure whether women were raped or children killed the testimony of survivors like Dukiria, who relates her rape in an emotional manner, removes all doubt (cf. Cabrita 1998: 166). She repeats several times: 'Eram cinco aqueles homens que estiveram comigo. Depois arrancaram-me as missangas e puseram-nas ao pescoço' [Five men were with me. Afterwards, they pulled of my necklace and put it on their neck].¹⁹

Likewise, the incidents in Chaworha (Jawola) and the testimony of António Michone provide evidence of the killing of children during the massacre. Michone confirms that:

I was shot [in] the right arm, I fell and was below the corpses [...] father and mother were above me. Having been there for some time under the dead, I realised that my sister was alive but her face was all destroyed, neither face nor eye or nose [...].²⁰

18 Interview with Cabrita: 00:37:41–00:38:32.

19 *Regresso a Wiriyamu*: 00:42:03–00:42:13.

20 Original quote: 'Eu fui abatido [no] braço esquerdo, logo caí e estive em baixo dos cadáveres [...] o pai e o mãe estava em cima de mim, depois do tempo que eu estive em baixo das pessoas morto eu vi a minha irmã que estava vivo corpo e quando na cara tudo foi destruído nem cara nem olho nem nariz [...]' (00:48:01–00:49:18, my translation).

For his testimony, Michone is positioned near a little wooden chapel that serves as a repository of the remains of people killed in Chaworha.²¹ This positioning endows the survivor with a high degree of credibility. This is heightened by the fact that he speaks directly into the camera, a form normally reserved for news presenters or journalists (Nichols 1981: 175–177). By allowing him to directly address the camera, the film emphasizes the importance of his testimony. This characterization is, however, accompanied by a sensationalizing representation when Michone takes off his shirt in front of the camera in order to display a scar that then serves as a symbol of the effects of colonial violence (Benthien 2001: 9–10).

In general, *Regresso a Wiriyamu* is dedicated to unravelling the truth about war crimes committed by the Portuguese Estado Novo, which was denied by politicians and the military elite for decades (Medeiros 2000: 209–210). Therefore, the film attempts to reconstruct the incident using testimony both by perpetrators and survivors. As it was shown above, the representation of the victims and perpetrators is highly problematic: former Comandos are characterized as rational and as having only acted on orders,²² and survivors are presented as emotional and by means of their scarred bodies. Moreover, although the documentary recognizes the survivors as victims, the film uses very few testimonies (Loff 2010: 120). Additionally, the victims are only portrayed as 'subaltern' villagers without biographies and confined to their status as victims of colonial violence. Moreover, the survivors have to share their status as victims with the perpetrator. To put it differently, *Regresso a Wiriyamu* shapes Melo not only as a decisive participant of the committed violence, but also as a victim of the Estado Novo and of decolonization. In blurring the distinction between perpetrator and victims, an ambivalent 'community of victims' emerges through the film's

21 The chapel was constructed after independence (Cabrita 1998: 166; Dhada 2013: 59–60).

22 In the interviews in the film, Baúque does not show a 'tristeza indescritível' [indescribable sadness], as he did in an interview with Dalila Cabrita Mateus (2006: 634).

argument.²³ In the end, *Regresso a Wiriyamu* questions whether all of the participants can be seen as victims of history, oppression and violence.

Audiovisual Testimony and Memories of Colonial Violence

Recent discussions demonstrate that the colonial past is not only of great importance for contemporary Europe, but also for African post-colonies. In the last decades, debates on colonial violence and atrocities have triggered innumerable public discussions. This process began in the 1960s and 1970s with the radical changes in African countries and has continued to impact former colonial powers. The above analysis discussed how this ongoing debate is negotiated in the context of documentary films from Mozambique and Portugal that are embedded in different field of politics of history. It was argued that audiovisual testimony is a 'shifting category' (Benzaquen 2012: 43) that changes historically and is formatted cinematographically in different ways. In an anticolonial, experimental manner, the film *25* mobilizes an artistically shaped performance of silent testimony to remember the victims of Wiriyamu. The form of testimony produced by *Mozambique or Treatment for Traitors* resonates with a juridical model in the context of transitional justice and show trials, where the 'compromised' under interrogation are coerced into the authoritarian hierarchies of post-independent Mozambique. In *Regresso a Wiriyamu*, testimony is functionalized to reconstruct the massacre from the perspectives of both veterans and survivors of the event. However, this dialogic mode blurs the boundaries between perpetrators and survivors, creating a community of victims. Consequently, the relationship between testimony, politics of history and documentary film is rather ambivalent. Whether

23 Judith Keilbach (2010: 229) analysed a similar media production of a 'community of victims' including perpetrators and survivors in television documentaries that discuss Nazi crimes.

these productions and others might contribute to the continuing process of cultural decolonization remains an open question.

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Filmography

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