

# Discipline, Disease, Dissent: The Pathologized Body in Mozambican Post-Independence Discourse

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**Abstract:** *In a series of speeches given across the northern reaches of newly independent Mozambique in 1983, president Samora Machel sought to encourage unity among his increasingly disenchanted populace by constructing a common enemy: a figure he often specifically frames as a threat to public health, whether parasite, infection or deformity. This article explores these uses of pathologization and public health by the state and pro-state media during the Mozambican nation-building period, and shows how Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's 2013 novel, *Entre as Memórias Silenciadas*, exposes and subverts these associations using the motif of the dissident dying or dead body.*

**Keywords:** Mozambique; Frelimo; media; corporeality; public health

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In July 1983, eight years after Mozambique achieved independence from Portugal, and as the new nation's initial spark of optimism dwindled, and age-old ethnic/political tensions became more visible, Samora Machel, the leader of Frelimo, gave a series of speeches in towns and cities across the country's historically disenfranchised northern territories of Sofala, Zambézia and Cabo Delgado (*A nossa força*). His aim was to foster national unity and heal ethnic divisions at a time when clandestine efforts to destabilize Frelimo, both within Mozambique and in its neighboring countries, had long relied on exploiting those old tensions. With each characteristically dynamic speech, Machel made his

strategy for achieving this improbable goal a little clearer: to stress the increasing threat of a common reactionary enemy against which the Mozambican people could unite. Given his staunch subscription to Soviet-style Marxist-Leninist political thought and praxis, and his public contempt for pre-colonial cultural practices and inter-tribal conflict, Machel's choice of composite parts for this multifaceted enemy are unsurprising. "Tribalists," sex workers, thieves, spies, gossips, alcoholics, drug addicts, and *candongueiros* (black market dealers), alongside the ever-present *bandido armado*, all number among them.

What is perhaps more remarkable about Machel's discursive production of Mozambique's national enemies is his repeated use of a particular semantic field in order to do so: that of public health and pathology. His use of this vocabulary underpins the rhetoric in each of the 1983 speeches, with medical images and references to public health frequently forming the starting point for his heavily analogical denunciations and exhortations. His engagement with these images, meanwhile, often slides between figurative and literal registers in a manner that is at times almost seamless. Having identified disease as a major obstacle to prosperity in Cabo Delgado during his speech in Pemba, for example, Machel moves into an extended analogy that links the bitter taste of the antimalarial drug chloroquine to the bitter struggle against tribalism in the region (*A nossa força* 4:10). In his address to the people of Montepuez, he ties up the promotion of breastfeeding among Mozambican women with a warning that tribalist sentiment might be passed down to infants through breast milk (*A nossa força* 4: 68-69).

In the present study, I seek to explore the implications of this intertwining of the language of pathology and public health with the construction of the internal enemy in the first years of post-independence Mozambican official discourse, and to offer a brief case study of one way in which a contemporary novel, Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's *Entre as Memórias Silenciadas* (2013), utilizes this association as part of its complex critique of Mozambican early post-independence political life. In particular, I aim to shed light on the Frelimo state's biopolitical triangulation of pathology and the enemy with corporealities, and on Khosa's use of dying and dead bodies as visceral and deeply affective motifs for exposing and dismantling that triangulation. I take as primary material Machel's public speeches, Frelimo policy documents, and articles published in the popular pro-Frelimo weekly magazine *Tempo* between 1974 and 1983. I focus on two specific targets of Frelimo's discourse of pathologization: prostitution and poor

corporeal discipline, with the latter exemplified by alcohol abuse and lack of personal hygiene.

While Machel's 1983 speeches reflect a particularly developed use of pathology as a rhetorical mechanism for construction of the enemy, his party's use of a pseudo-medical lexicon to frame and justify social and political exclusion reaches back to the early days of the Mozambican nation-building project, which began in earnest after the April 25, 1974 "Carnation Revolution" successfully toppled Portugal's imperialist Estado Novo regime and set decolonization processes in motion across the nation's African territories. Latent indications of Frelimo's gradual discursive imbrication of pathology, medicine, and dissent can be found in the way that public health challenges posed to the new nation of Mozambique are frequently juxtaposed with references to the nation that symbolically frame it in corporeal terms, thus implicitly aligning internal and external political threats with risk of disease or infection. In a speech following the September 1974 signing of the Lusaka Agreement between Frelimo and the Portuguese Armed Forces, bringing with it the end of the colonial war in Mozambique, Machel discusses the high rates of disease and mortality that have resulted from the colonial segregation of healthcare shortly after characterizing the relationship between state and nation as like that of a human arm and the rest of the body: if the arm is removed, he explains, "rapidamente apodrece e decompõe-se" ("Mensagem do Presidente" 36-40). Similarly, a February 1975 policy report produced during a Frelimo plenary in Mocuba underscores the responsibility of women to promote adequate bodily hygiene in line with their obligation to identify and expose corrupt or reactionary behaviors:

É também da sua responsabilidade orientar uma educação correcta para os nossos continuadores, promover a educação sanitária, para que as famílias vivam em condições de higiene necessárias. . . . A Organização da Mulher Moçambicana deve sensibilizar e aguçar o sentimento de vigilância, mobilizando as mulheres contra as espécies de corrupção, a bebedeira e a especulação, a infiltração de reaccionários no nosso seio. (Muiuane 297)

What is implicit here is the perception of a tightly intertwined link between vigilance, bodily hygiene, and (female) gender.

It is in Frelimo's vociferous campaigns against sex work, however, that these early associations between the figure of the enemy and pathologized corporeality can be seen most clearly. While the party's morally conservative stance on prostitution—a necessarily female occupation as far as Frelimo was concerned—is evident in even their earliest, clandestine publications, it takes center-stage after the end of the colonial war, featuring prominently in presidential speeches, party policy documents, and pro-state print media alike.<sup>1</sup> Emerging from this post-1974 rhetorical outpouring is a continual blurring of distinctions between the prostitute's body as vector for literal diseases, prostitution as a figurative disease, and prostitutes as the means by which enemy influence might “infect” the Mozambican nation, itself imagined as a living body.

A feature article by Albino Magaia, published in *Tempo* weeks after the signing of the Lusaka Agreement in 1974, clearly illustrates the prominence given to these discursive confluences and slippages in Frelimo discourse on sex work, in addition to highlighting the capacity of prostitution to engage the influential literate public of Mozambique with key elements of Frelimo ideology by appealing to more prurient curiosities.<sup>2</sup> Magaia begins with a fanciful account of an invented encounter with a sex worker he describes as “[uma] rapariga negra de peruca loira que não sabe ler nem escrever mas sabe dizer ‘I love you’” (19). This is accompanied by a double-page spread that features a smiling, prostrate black woman (courtesy of photographer Ricardo Rangel). After this, Magaia

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<sup>1</sup> Mentions of male prostitution in Frelimo documents and pro-Frelimo media are rare. Men are generally mentioned in relation to prostitution only as customers (in the case of foreign and white men) or as by-proxy victims (in the case of black Mozambican men), and very occasionally as pimps. I found only two mentions of a “prostituto” while reviewing all issues of *Tempo* between 1974 and 1986 available in the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique. One use of the term appears in a brief letter exchange in November-December 1983, where it is very clearly used to denote a man who purchases the services of a female sex worker (Nambora 44; Rachide 34). The other is a passing mention at the beginning of a 1976 article concerning the reeducation camps, and the term is not elaborated upon or mentioned again anywhere in the article: “Não é fácil . . . a um prostituto ou prostituta fazer com que ele assuma uma nova consciência no sentido de o tornar apto a viver na nova sociedade que se pretende em Moçambique” (“Centros de Reeducação” 32). One may also take as an example the 1966 special edition of the clandestine Frelimo newsletter *A Voz da Revolução*, produced to inform readers of the outcome of a meeting of the party's Comité Central, which states that “O CC constata que sob o regime colonial, a mulher moçambicana está submetida à mesma opressão que o resto da população. Mas, além disso, ela está também submetida à discriminação económica e social (em relação aos homens) forçando-a, por exemplo, à imoralidade da prostituição” (n.p.).

<sup>2</sup> For a recent critique of Frelimo's treatment of female sex workers, as well as women wrongly accused of engaging in sex work, see Azevedo; and Tavares.

begins the main report by asserting that “Eis que nos debruçamos diante de um problema que uma África pré-colonial não conhecia. Não existia prostituição em África antes da vinda dos europeus. A Europa exportou o meretrício bem como a maior parte das doenças venéreas que acompanham o tráfico sistemático do sexo” (20). Prostitution is thus established both as an alien import—symptomatic of the specific, concrete pattern of boundary invasion that colonization entails—and as carrying with it the danger of a more insidious invasive presence, in the form of literal disease.

The implicit conflation of invasion and infection is reinforced by the article’s subsequent characterization of prostitution as “uma das doenças crônicas do colonialism” and, twice, as “um cancro.” The sex worker herself, meanwhile, is “uma barreira terrível para o avanço da revolução,” possessing a mentality that is “ultra-burguesa de um modo quase doentio” (Magaia 20-24). The prostitute’s body here becomes not only essentially rotten, corrupt, and reactionary—the outward manifestation of an ideologically flawed psyche—but also implicitly contagious, with prostitution itself cast as infectious, uncontrollable, and spreading. Magaia upholds this framing with a spurious claim that fifty percent of black women in the Mozambican capital sell sex (21). In a brief follow-up article a month later that outlines Frelimo’s main objections to sex work, Calane da Silva summarizes the slippage of meanings attached to prostitution in a line that urges readers to bear in mind “o facto principal: a prostituição na rua Major Araújo é a boca escancarada e apodrecida—a montra feérica de toda a corrupção cidadina” (64).<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the association between prostitution, public health and threat to the nation is made official in the same February 1975 policy report referenced above, which describes one of the consequences of prostitution as the “alteração da saúde pública pela propagação das doenças que contribuem para o nascimento de crianças defeituosas e sífilíticas” shortly before warning that “[a]través da prostituição o inimigo pode infiltrar-se” (Muiuane 307).

By engaging with the language of pathology, and sliding between references to literal and figurative disease and to individual bodies and the nation-as-body, Magaia is able to frame prostitution as an invasive, contagious, insidious, and unpredictable threat that can nonetheless be curtailed or eliminated—with the

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<sup>3</sup> Rua Major Araújo was the most notorious red light district in downtown Lourenço Marques. As part of the same 1976 wave of toponymic alteration in changed “Lourenço Marques” to “Maputo,” Rua Major Araújo became Rua de Bagamoyo.

right “treatment.” It is this latent suggestion that, being a disease, prostitution might be “treated” that reveals the implication behind Magaia’s use of pseudo-medical analogies. In the face of disease, the solution is the stringent enforcement of practices of hygiene, vaccination, and quarantine. When transposed back onto the “disease” of prostitution, and seen alongside the repeated casting of the Mozambican nation as a body, these practices take the respective shapes of moral hypervigilance, ideological indoctrination and physical exclusion. Given that prostitution is here understood as a necessarily female practice, this specific use of medical language as a means of justifying exclusion is heavily gendered, with women cast as the natural carriers and vectors of contagion both literal and figurative. The pathologization of reactionary or deviant behavior, then, functions here as a mechanism of gendered othering that conveniently appeals to a nebulously scientific authority for its justification, allowing Frelimo and its supporters to uphold the egalitarian and developmentalist discourses at the foundation of their public vision of national unity.

In the immediate aftermath of independence, pro-state media frame prostitution as a disease and a mechanism of social exclusion in a particularly pronounced way. The intended effect was to consolidate Frelimo control by emphasizing the enforcement of ideological and moral homogeneity as a necessary measure for protecting the Mozambican populace. As Frelimo’s nation-building project continued into the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the threat posed to their sovereignty by internal dissidence and external machinations intensified, the use of the language of public health became ever more prominent in the party’s denunciations of other potentially problematic social elements. In a 1976 address to the *Organização da Mulher Moçambicana* in Maputo, Machel highlights the social phenomena perceived to impede the Mozambican people’s ability to “viver organizados” (“Definir o Inimigo da Mulher” 19). Machel presents alcohol abuse, long considered the scourge of Mozambican public health, as responsible for the “desvalorização do homem” since: “o álcool destrói o cérebro do homem. É o cérebro que fabrica as ideias. O álcool cria a preguiça, a ociosidade. Onde há ociosidade significa que existe enferrujamento das nossas

ideias. Não adquirimos ideias novas. Há ferrugem e onde há ferrugem significa que há corrupção ideológica” (“Definir o Inimigo da Mulher” 19).<sup>4</sup>

The alignment of corporeal deterioration with ideological nonconformity is reiterated in Machel’s subsequent indictment of poor personal hygiene. Having described his frequent encounters with “homens e mulheres com cabelos compridos e sujos . . . [e] unhas compridas e sujas, cheios de ‘mataquenas (fleas),” he assures attendees that Frelimo intends to launch campaigns against individuals “que andam de cabelo comprido, barbas sujas,” noting that such disregard for one’s hygiene betrays an attitude of “libertinagem e liberalismo” (“Definir o Inimigo da Mulher” 19). He goes on to argue that Frelimo did not fight the colonial war “para semear a anti-higiene no nosso país” (“Definir o Inimigo da Mulher” 19). In Machel’s words on both personal hygiene and alcohol abuse, a lack of corporeal “discipline” is correlated to the espousal of reactionary politics, and this in turn justifies the increased disciplining and instrumentalization of individual bodies. At the same time, however, his interchanging of explicitly political language and the discourse of public health serves to intertwine these condemned practices with the threat of enemy behavior in a manner that goes beyond this simple correlation, creating a logical framework wherein dissident beliefs are themselves implicitly pathologized and in need of treatment. While the pathologization of prostitution acts as a mechanism of specifically gendered othering, the alignment of political dissidence with addiction and poor hygiene provides a mechanism of exclusion for all political thought out of step with Frelimo’s Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy.

This implicit imbrication of dissidence with illness, lack of hygiene or the potential for infection also evokes a more affective, latent fear: that of corporeal disintegration and permeability. Hand-in-hand with the nation-as-body construct, this evocation can be seen as appealing to the subconscious desire to consolidate the boundaries of the physical self, thereby providing justification for a political culture of purges, hypervigilance, and lack of individual privacy against the state. The use of such imagery to appeal to an affective sense of *abjection*, an

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<sup>4</sup> Both colonial and post-independence regimes presented alcoholism as an obstacle to a productive Mozambican society. For an example of the former, see colonial High Commissioner António Ennes’s 1893 treatise advising the Portuguese government on Mozambique’s potential for commercial exploitation, which includes a lengthy passage on alcohol abuse among poor Mozambican men as one of many reasons for the country’s low agricultural production (43-50).

omnipresent but peripheral zone of deeply ambivalent, beseeching revulsion that must be “permanently thrust aside in order to live” (Kristeva 3), is particularly pronounced in a Machel speech delivered to the public in Inhaminga, Sofala province, in April 1981 (“Desalojaremos o Inimigo em Sofala”). As the title suggests, the speech is dedicated to enforcing ideological self-regulation and vigilance among the inhabitants of the province, and its opening passages warn of the threat posed by thieves, described as “[um] cancro,” and enemy loyalists, or “pioelhos,” living under the attendees’ very noses: “o infiltrado está em casa conosco, é nosso primo, é nosso sobrinho, é nosso cunhado, é nosso filho, é nosso marido, é nossa mulher” (30). This warning is followed by a condemnation of reactionary attitudes and a reminder that the enemy has infiltrated the populace and must be extricated through popular organization and compliance (31).

Having established the need for ideological vigilance and order in Inhaminga, Machel segues directly into a prolonged indictment of the dirtiness of the city, asserting that those living in such filth would be better off in “um curral de porcos” (31). He laments the public’s use of swimming pools as places to “lavar a sujidade do corpo,” noting that people enter the water with feet “cheios de bichos, micróbios que provocam a doença da pele,” making the pool “um reduto de doenças” (32). Finally, he addresses the Frelimo youth movement, noting that he sees before him “jovens sujos, com cabelo comprido” (32). At this juncture, Machel returns to an explicitly political discourse, raising the need for Inhaminga’s inhabitants to identify and denounce former pro-colonial paramilitaries, or OPVDCs, who have allied with post-independence anti-Frelimo factions:

[Vocês] convivem com os OPVDC’s. Aquele que apertou o pescoço do vosso marido, vosso irmão, vossa mulher, vosso sobrinho, vosso filho. Oiçam, OPVDC’s que estão aí: as vossas mãos estão sujas de sangue. Mataram. . . . Até morrer, há-de perseguir-te esse corpo que mataste. Esse cadáver está constantemente sobre as tuas costas. Não apodrece nunca. É um cadáver que está sempre fresco. (32)

The trajectory of this speech demonstrates, once again, an interchanging of the literal and the figurative, and of the political and the pathological, epitomized by the seamless slide between images of the disease-provoking parasitic infestations

and “dirtiness” of the general public, the lazy and undisciplined “dirtiness” of individual attendees, and the hands of paramilitaries, already characterized as parasites, as “dirty” with blood. Like the 1976 speech analysed above, then, here Machel’s linguistic slippage serves to implicitly pathologize dissident thought, justifying its elimination in part by appealing to a sense of abjection. In this 1981 speech, however, death — until now only a latent presence in this particular discursive framework — is invoked explicitly, bringing a further implication of Frelimo’s triangulation of pathology, dissent, and corporeality to the fore. If, as Kristeva affirms, the corpse is “the utmost of abjection,” the ultimate threat to the corporeal integrity of the subject (4), then Machel’s overlapping of disease, dissent and the corpse at once intensifies the perceived vulnerability of individual bodies to dissident thought, forecloses on any potential for accepting dissent as a healthy component of the nation-as-body, and offers discipline along the lines of Frelimo ideology as the sole path to optimal life for both individual and nation.

Machel’s focus on the optimization of life through politico-corporeal discipline and regularization takes on a particular significance when examined through the lens of Michel Foucault’s biopolitical framework, which posits a gradual historical shift in focus from “man-as-body” to “man-as-species” (242-43) and from “the right to take life or let live” to “the power to ‘make’ live and ‘let’ die” (240-41). For Foucault, this change manifested itself in the state’s desire to eliminate death discursively and instead “optimize a state of life” through a robust regulation and instrumentalization of the body (246). Scientific racism, meanwhile, emerges in his framework as a means for regimes to rationalize and justify state violence and killing against “the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) [as] something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer” (254-55). As Achille Mbembe argues, the term has limited usefulness for application to colonial regimes, where scientific racism, or “the creation of a biological caesura between the ones and the others” (17), is the rule rather than the exception. In such settings, those in power are effectively able to “kill at any time or in any manner” (25): a structure Mbembe aptly refers to as “necropolitics.” The case of late colonial Mozambique provides a clear example of this necropolitical power structure, with indigenous Mozambicans explicitly written out of citizenship and thus excluded from state protection with the introduction in 1926 of the Estatuto Político, Civil e Criminal dos Indígenas de Angola e Moçambique.

In the context of the post-independence Mozambique, it is the Portuguese colonial regime's very reliance on this necropolitical framework that makes a biopolitical focus on the optimization of life so useful for Frelimo's consolidation of power. Promoting and enforcing an ideology focused on the construct of life allows the party to create an illusory sense of absolute distinction from the colonial system, itself associated with death. Their engagement with a discourse of public health and pathology sharpens that distinction, evoking, by virtue of its veneer of scientism, a sense of rationality and progress that is superficially at odds with the Estado Novo's ostensibly faith-driven and traditionalist moral system. Meanwhile, that same discourse allows Frelimo to sustain the mechanisms of social exclusion and hierarchization deployed by the colonial regime. The "biological caesura" represented by the racialized body in colonial thought is, on this schema, merely substituted with one represented by the pathologized body of dissent and degeneracy (Mbembe 17). Through the pathologization of dissent and nonconformity, Frelimo maintains its self-image of egalitarianism, progressivism, and rationalism while it simultaneously justifies the exercise of exclusionary, disciplinary, and punitive practices often indistinguishable from those of the colonial administration.

The insidious continuity between the colonial and post-independence governments of Mozambique is the central theme of Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's 2013 novel, *Entre as Memórias Silenciadas*. Epic in scope despite its modest length, the text is structured around several fragmentary narratives loosely interconnected by the characters' genealogical ties. While the main events of the novel can roughly be identified as occurring in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Khosa eschews an explicitly linear chronology in favour of one that slides back and forth, often diverging into lengthy flashbacks describing the principle characters' pasts or narrating moments from the lives of their ancestors.<sup>5</sup> This sometimes disorienting sense of fragmentation, comparable with the feel of Khosa's first and best-known novel, *Ualalapi* (1987), is intensified by the author's frequent use of unattributed group dialogue that spans several pages,

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<sup>5</sup> The novel's main temporal setting is kept vague, but certain references make relatively clear that the narrative's "present" is between around 1978-79 and 1983-84. These include the construction of the city of Unango by reeducation camp inmates in the latter half of the novel, which occurred in 1979, and a conversation between Zé, Mário, Pedro and António during which the age of the first generation of children born into an independent Mozambique is predicted as being seven or eight years (Khosa 104).

rendering the speaker of each line unclear, and by his tendency toward minimally-punctuated, stream-of-consciousness narrative passages that recall António Lobo Antunes's similarly disenchanting seminal novel, *Os Cus de Judas*. The novel is richly intertextual, directly or indirectly referencing—and occasionally quoting—literary predecessors as diverse as Gil Vicente, José Craveirinha, Vladimir Mayakovsky, António Jacinto, Agostinho Neto, Viriato da Cruz, and Léopold Senghor, and borrowing significant quantities of material from Khosa's earlier works, most notably *No Reino dos Abutres* and the short story, "Fragmentos de um Diário," from his 1990 collection *Orgia dos Loucos*. Set across the sprawling cityscape of Maputo and the profound isolation of Frelimo's "reeducation" (penal labor) camps in Northern Mozambique, the text also displays a deeply-rooted sense of space, with references to real-life buildings, streets, markets, restaurants, and cafés triggering streams of consciousness through the city's history and its role in the lives of the novel's characters.

The theme of pathology, psychiatry, and anatomical abnormality is a significant undercurrent in Khosa's text, with multiple scenes taking place in the heterotopic space of the hospital. The urban hospital setting provides a starting point for Khosa's exposition of Frelimo's regulation and disciplining of the body, in addition to offering a point of contrast with the medical deprivation experienced by the characters transplanted into the northern camps. It is in the narrative threads and passages featuring dead or moribund bodies, however, that this dichotomy of medical practice and deprivation is most succinctly encapsulated, and Khosa's critique of life under Frelimo rule becomes most clearly intertwined with Frelimo's uses of the pathologized body as discursive tool. Two storylines in particular stand out in this regard. The first, established early in the novel and then sparsely referenced in later scenes, involves Josefa, a young student of medicine; her disillusioned boyfriend, Pedro; and his three friends, Mário, António, and Zé. Arriving late to an anatomy class (46), Josefa is horrified to discover that the cadaver to be dissected is that of Cabral, a friend of the group, who had been deported to a reeducation camp in the north (141). Hearing of the incident via Pedro, Mário asserts his suspicion that Cabral's murder, and the appearance of the corpse in Josefa's class, are intended as a warning to Pedro (172-73). Cabral's camp provides the setting for the second of these narrative threads, which follows Pedro's twin brother, Gil, and an elderly priest, Tomás—both prisoners in the camp—as they tenderly assist a third

prisoner, Armando (an erstwhile lover of Josefa), through the agonizing final days of a gangrene infection resulting from an untreated infestation of chigoe fleas. They then struggle to give his body a proper burial ahead of the chaotic relocation of the camp's inhabitants.

Tim Flohr Sørensen has stressed the importance of acknowledging the social role of the dead body "as an active and potent material agent" (129). He affirms that contrary to the conventional rationalist assumption that the corpse "does nothing" and that "dead people do not act" (111), dead bodies do, in fact, "act" through their ability to "move us, the living, as we react to the presence of death, its social and mental affinity and the materiality of the corpse" (130). Khosa's representation of these two spatially and affectively connected corpses provides a compelling example of the dead body not only as social agent, in line with Sørensen's assertion, but also as the embodied object and subject of politics, creating ripples in political life by its very presence. The author's achievement of this framing hinges on his visceral literalization of the political metaphors used by Frelimo, which allows him to posit the corpses of Cabral and Armando at distinct points on the spectrum of post-independence Mozambican political discourse.

The setting of the modern dissection laboratory—sterile, harshly lit, glass-walled and marble-floored (46)—immediately locates Cabral's corpse within the post-independence aesthetics of modernity and progress espoused by Frelimo. That the character who encounters his corpse is a black woman who is also a medical student deepens this association; the scientific and health education of Mozambican women as a means of emancipation was, after all, at the heart of the party's modernizing drive against tradition and "obscurantism" (Machel, "A Libertação da Mulher"). The cadaver itself is described in terms of its composite parts: "ombros largos, lábios grudados pelo silêncio das trevas, testa ampla, coiro pelado . . . , pés gretados, pernas atléticas, . . . pênis diminuído pela morte" (46); this makes explicit the absolute objectification of Cabral's body. Khosa's spotlighting of the corpse's frozen lips and shrunken penis are particularly significant here, as they speak to the dead man's immutable impotence and voicelessness, his complete passivity.

What the reader does not witness, however, is the ultimate fate of Cabral's body in the dissection laboratory. It is this implied aftermath, the omission of which serves only to highlight its concealment and thus heighten its inherent

horror, that cements the corpse's embodiment of the logical conclusion of Frelimo's discursive pathologization of dissent. The process of educational dissection is one of quiet violence, of ultra-hygienic mutilation devoid of the blood and emotional extremes that would ordinarily accompany such an act, and yet every bit as visceral.<sup>6</sup> Norman L. Cantor's study of medical students' experiences in the dissection room describes the participants "[c]racking open the chest cavity and extracting and minutely examining the viscera . . . , splitting the genital parts, sawing through the pelvis, and pulling the legs apart from the trunk," adding that "as the legs are manipulated and pulled apart from the sacral vertebrae, a tearing noise is heard like that produced by the wrenching of a turkey leg from a holiday turkey" (180). When the students reach the head, "the scalp must be peeled back over the face" and "ultimately the brain has to be freed from the skull and severed from the connective tissue in the neck" (180). He quotes one participant who compares the experience to "rending a person asunder," noting that by the end of the process the cadaver resembles "a shambles of muscle and bone, cut away and divided" (180). If Cabral's living body was one of pathologized dissent, then his corpse—sterile, bloodless, embalmed, and violently dismembered within the glass and marble confines of the laboratory—comes to represent the literal and figurative eradication of both pathogen and vector. Faceless and brainless, in death Cabral becomes the ultimate political instrument: an object of absolute corporeal discipline, weaponized against his affective relatives before being physically decimated in the service of the state's modernizing drive, with any semblance of individual identity or privacy extricated, sterilized and destroyed. Protected by a veneer of scientific progress made tangible by the laboratory's layers of glass, the silent violence of Frelimo's "treatment" of the disease of dissent is thus laid bare, while remaining unspoken in a manner that makes its insidiousness clear.

In stark contrast to this representation of Cabral, which relies in part on the menacing evocation of sterile, bloodless silence, Khosa's portrayal of the final days of Armando is couched heavily in terms of disgust and abjection. Unable to endure the agony of the parasitic infestation of his feet and legs, Armando is reduced to gnashing his teeth, "mostrando o amarelo da cárie destruindo os

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<sup>6</sup> The notion of the "quiet violence" of the dissection process is taken from a conversation with Ellie Rea, a final-year medical student at Imperial College London, for which I am most grateful.

dentes em crescente putrefacção” (63), until Tomás and Gil are able to bring him a daily cigarette of dried elephant dung, a carrier of “ervas diversas” that function as ersatz narcotics in the absence of cannabis (*soruma*) (63), a luxury reserved for the camp guards. His living body gives off “o odor pútrido de carne que se esfarelava” (64), the result of the necrosis that provides a surface reminder of the gangrene gradually poisoning his blood, drawing his body into a liminal space between life and death even before he succumbs to the infection.

Cabral’s sterile corpse embodies the moral hypervigilance and social hygiene that is the logical end of the Mozambican state’s discursive use of pathologization in the construction of the internal enemy. Beyond this, his unspoken dismemberment exposes the violence at the heart of that framework, and Armando’s body, putrefying even before his death, encapsulates on a figurative level the construct of “untreated” dissent itself. Seen in terms of the body-as-nation, the chigoe fleas—tropical parasites that penetrate and burrow into the host’s flesh and remain in place for weeks, swelling with blood—literalize the threat to corporeal boundaries used symbolically by Frelimo to frame the dangers associated with enemy infiltration and thereby to justify both the disciplining of individual bodies and the reinforcement of national borders. The gangrene Armando develops as a result of the chigoe infestation makes explicit the state’s implication that dissent and reactionary behavior are themselves contagious and spreading; his necrotic, disintegrating flesh, meanwhile, recalls Frelimo’s drive toward the elimination of harmful elements of the body politic, affectively consolidated through the invocation of the abject.

On a concrete level, however, it is that very engagement with the abject on Frelimo’s part that provides the means by which Khosa is also able to use Armando’s medically neglected body to shatter the state’s public image of modernity, progress and moral purity. Through literalizing the metaphors of infection, parasitism, and putrefaction used figuratively by Frelimo to contrast dissent and non-conformity with their own scientific façade of universal health and hygiene, Khosa reveals the government’s use of actual medicine to be little more than another biopolitical mechanism of social exclusion and othering: a means for Frelimo to “optimize” the lives of some at the agonizing and often fatal expense of many others. Meanwhile, the author’s use of abject imagery to frame Armando’s body locates it on Frelimo’s schema of pathologization while allowing it to appeal to a deeply affective sense of abhorrence which, when

juxtaposed with the narrative emphasis on Armando's emotional ties and with the other characters' tenderness and care toward him, exposes and disempowers the state's intended dehumanization of the dissident body. The end destiny of Armando's corpse intensifies this subversive use of abjection for the purpose of rehumanization. In contrast with Cabral's objectified and disciplined body, which will be reduced to a series of anonymous, unrecognizable parts and ultimately disposed of, Gil and Tomás take pains to wash, shroud, and pay respects to Armando's corpse (147-161), before fulfilling his wish to be buried in the camp cornfield with the other deceased inmates, where he will be assimilated into the food the camp produces and thus, in some metaphysical way, will continue to make his presence felt in life (123). The presence of Armando's dead body, then, allows Khosa not only to develop his deconstruction of Frelimo's fallacious use of pathologization and scientism begun with the body of Cabral, but also to reincorporate the dissenting body into the Mozambican body politic, returning it to a subjective role and allowing its essence to endure.

In the years following Mozambique's hard-won achievement of independence, and before the full force of the post-independence conflict had taken hold, the use of a discourse of pathologization and public health provided the country's new ruling party with a means of coating their public image with a veneer of modernity, rationality and progress, creating the impression of radical distinction from the colonial regime. Beneath this future-orientated gloss, however, the state's coupling of this scientific discourse with a corporealized imagining of the Mozambican nation enabled it to put into motion mechanisms of sociopolitical exclusion and othering that were often barely distinguishable from those that had dominated the country's populace during many decades of colonial rule. Through his narration, either explicitly or by implication, of the trajectories of two distinct dead bodies, Khosa turns Frelimo's pathologization of dissent on its head, exposing both its violent logical conclusion and its fictitious foundations while moving toward a recuperation and rehumanization of the pathologized dissident body. Within the author's choice of final resting place for Armando lies a message to the architects of the post-independence Mozambican state: that while the murderous enemies frequently alluded to in state discourse may indeed be haunted by a "cadaver [que] está constantemente sobre as [s]uas costas" (Machal, "Desalojaremos o Inimigo em Sofala" 32), those

killed by the state for no reason other than non-conformity will endure to haunt their murderers, too.

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