Journal of Lusophone Studies 8.1 (Spring 2023)

"A lança que o vento lascivo trilhou": Wind and the Quasi-Thing in Luís Carlos Patraquim's Mozambican City

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Abstract: Luís Carlos Patraquim's poetry often explores how bodily sensations blend with those of the natural world as they move throughout Mozambique, particularly the urban city of Maputo and the separate, rural Island of Mozambique. Rough winds breeze through both urban and rural spaces of the eastern coast of Africa, offering a fruitful area for atmospheric considerations of the poet's work. Wind is an irregular and transformative part of the natural, urban, and poetic worlds. In Tonino Griffero's conception, it is a "quasi-thing": an affect challenging to apprehend that has often been a peripheral object of desire, capture, and exploitation. Using wind to trace representations of Mozambique and Maputo in the postrevolutionary and postcolonial contexts of Patraquim's poetic oeuvre, I seek to elucidate how nature—and wind in particular—broadens sensations within the body as it moves through Patraquim's depiction of Mozambique and its cities as poetic sites of sensory appreciation and ancestral experience.

Keywords: Mozambique, poetry, atmospheric studies, bodily aesthetics

The opening lines of Luís Carlos Patraquim's 2008 poetry collection, *Pneuma*, explore how the body's sensations blend with those of the natural world as both move throughout the urban space of Maputo, Mozambique. On an untitled page preceded only by the sectional header "*Os Nomes*," he writes:

Boca a boca
— a humidade do vento —
Recompõem
A pele das casas

E no ar os nomes
Sua transfiguração (13)

Nature broadens as it moves through the body in Patraquim's depiction of the Mozambican city, a poetic site of sensory appreciation and ancestral experience. Promised names hang untold in the air as the "humidity of the wind" flows through those who comprise the urban space, softening the figurative "skin" that envelops the city's walls. This warm yet encroaching wind seeps into the mouths of these nameless architects, transforming—reconstructing—the poet's poetic metropolis.

Although the identities of the lyrical engineers are suppressed in the above verses, structurally, they do not remain anonymous for long. In the pages that follow, Patraquim evokes "the names" of several Mozambican poets widely considered to be at the crux of the country's poetic identity: Rui Knopfli, Alberto de Lacerda, José Craveirinha, Noémia de Sousa, and Rui Noronha figure among those recognized in the work. Patraquim lyrically constructs the city as he invokes each figure in their proper place. "Invoco-te os jacarandas no túnel da avenida alta," the poet writes for Rui Knopfli, while João Fonseca Amaral is found in "a neblina dos kioks perdidos / Depois da cidade paráclita" (*Pneuma* 25, 22). The poet carefully locates each comrade, situating them internally with symbolic intent and externally in relation to the country's historical lyricism. As Inocência Mata puts it, within the framework of postliberation African literature, "o discurso prevalecente era aquele que buscava sintetizar as diferentes vozes (afinal, as diferentes visões sobre o processo de afirmação anticolonial), partilhar memórias históricas e forjadas e colectivizar angústias e aspirações" (17). This collective impulse explains how and why the "skin of the houses" is mediated by the wind and through the names of easily identifiable poetic characters; the city, instead of reflecting some inner world, rather impresses on the affective sensibilities of those inhabiting its space (Griffero, "Atmospheric 'Skin'" 7), generating shared experiences that are not always penetrable or easily understood.

By no means are Patraquim's allusions to wind and the city exclusive to *Pneuma*; breezes, tempests, flight, sound, and air abound in *Monção* (1980), *Lidemburgo Blues* (1997), and *O osso côncavo e outros poemas* (2004) as well. In each of these works, the wind emerges as an irregular and transformative part of the natural, urban, and poetic worlds. In Tonino Griffero's conception, such capriciousness qualifies the wind as a "quasi-thing." Difficult to apprehend, quasi-things "differ from full-things because of their intermittency—they appear and disappear, but we cannot sensibly ask ourselves where they have gone and how they have existed in the meantime" (*Places* 33). In sum, a quasi-thing is an affective or atmospheric phenomenon that resists full comprehension. But it is precisely this resistance that makes the wind, as a quasi-thing, much like the formerly colonial port city of Maputo—both peripheral objects of desire, capture, and exploitation seeking release from prescriptive limits and borderlands. The purpose of this analysis is thus twofold: first, to examine the recurrence of wind as a quasi-thingly[1] leitmotif in Patraquim's lyrical works, and second, to elucidate the poetic tensions between this quasi-thing and the Mozambican city. Using wind to trace representations of Mozambique and Maputo in the postrevolutionary context of Patraquim's poetic oeuvre, I assess how the poet alludes to the natural world to negotiate bodily senses of affect and physicality, elucidate tensions between spatial and colonial histories, and destabilize central urban and poetic structures.

Maputo is an especially fruitful area for such considerations and is often the literary subject of contemporary works alluding to the city's atmospheric conditions; *Orgia dos loucos* (2016) by Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, *Crónica da rua 513.2* (2006) by João Paulo Borges Coelho, and *A canção de Zefanías Sforza* (2010) by Patraquim are just a few examples. Territorially, it is subject to intense natural conditions, and changes in the surrounding environment shape the urban space. For instance, westbound tropical winds in the Bay of Maputo carry intense marine sediments. These once prevented the linear growth of the city's communal structures, forcing most modern dwellings—housing primarily white Mozambicans[2]—to move increasingly inward toward the country's more predictable and arid plains (Dos Muchangos 20, 33). As a result, nature and its

[1] I borrow the term as coined by Griffero in *Quasi-Things: The Paradigm of Atmospheres* (2017).
[2] As Francisco Noa explicates in a Mozambican context, such elements lead to the creation of the suburb as "o lugar que, em África, superiormente concorreu para a gestação das elites e das transformações que determinaram o advento das nações-estado saídas das multi-seculares malhas coloniais" (Ribeiro and Noa 166).

processes are dimensionally transformed by the city's structure and somatic usage (Dos Muchangos 5). Atmospheric changes result from the ubiquitous presence of vehicular fumes and gases, leading to severe alterations in the quality of the air and surrounding sea. From highways and other open areas, cars and airplanes blow large quantities of dust and sand that are then released into the atmosphere, disturbing residents both in the city's center and in surrounding areas (Dos Muchangos 88). In this way, as part of the natural world, the wind regulates the socioeconomic disparities of the Mozambican capital; everyone must contend with the mercurial wind. For a country long at the mercy of colonial occupation, the wind thus becomes the harbinger of a welcome, if erratic, equality.

Indeed, it would be a misjudgment to conceive of wind as little else than a natural phenomenon. We need only think of the respite offered by a cool, gentle breeze on a warm summer's day or of how a striking gust of winter quickly lends itself to moments of anxiety and regret. Wind, as an atmospheric condition, engenders multiple pathic and aesthetic interpretations, or, as Griffero terms it, a "pathic aesthetics" (*Quasi-Things* vii). Each of these aesthetic interpretations, he argues, can be verified "through our felt-bodily and prereflexive communication with the world" (Griffero, *Quasi-Things* ix). These communicative moments often emerge from individual and collective understandings of the natural and urban worlds, spaces wherein multiple forms of bodily interaction impress on—and are impressed by—nearby phenomenological elements. I am intrigued by these aspects, as they ultimately generate affective sensations that allow us to experience the feeling of being both in the body and within our surroundings (Griffero, *Quasi-Things* 66–67). The idea of quasi-thingly entities is essential, as they become phenomenological "sounding boards" for the internal felt-bodily experience (Griffero, *Quasi-Things* 67). As Griffero explains:

> The expressive qualities that, radiating atmospheres, become quasi-things are both particular natural phenomena (twilight, luminosity, darkness, the seasons, *the wind*, the weather, the hours of the day, the fog, etc.) and relatively artificial phenomena (*townscape*, music, soundscape, the numinous, dwelling, charisma, the gaze, shame, etc.). These qualities are salient not *despite* being apparent and ephemeral, but precisely *because* of that. (*Quasi-Things* ix; emphasis my own)

Natural (wind) and artificial (townscape) coalesce in an elusive liminality that emphasizes the felt-bodily experience. It is precisely this intangibility that renders the quasi-thing affectively desirable as a way to understand the body's physical and emotional experiences. Crucially, Griffero adds, the quasi-thing places humans as "subjects of"—not "subject to"—the phenomenological experiences it encounters (*Quasi-Things* x). Sensed within and through the physical and affective processes of the human body, the quasi-thing becomes a valid component in the emancipation of the self.

As Ana Maria Martinho Gale insists, when all traditional senses of home and refuge grow intolerable, writing alone displaces logic to create new and generative borders and landscapes (119). *Monção*, the first of Patraquim's several collections of poetry, deals precisely with this aesthetic impulse. At the crux of the work is an existential undertone that outlines the poet's search for a national identity lost to centuries of oppression and fear (De Souza 1). "Mas não sei se canto / viajo no tempo / e se algo arrua / à matiz em movimento / faço e desfaço / parede nua parede nua," Patraquim writes, in a metapoetic exercise that seeks, in oneiric verse, to imbue "in moving hues" the "bare walls" of a Mozambique stripped by the Portuguese colonial empire (*Monção* 15). Cíntia Machado de Campos Almeida further reminds us that *Monção* is titularly a work of new beginnings and recharted paths: "monções são ventos oriundos da Ásia, favoráveis às navegações, que bafejam do mar para o continente e apontam para uma transição climática" ("O tempo" 93). José Luís Cabaço argues similarly, emphasizing the role played by the Island of Mozambique, a separate region to the north of the country, as a site for "conflito[s] dos ventos" that breezed all the way to the capital in the south (79). I have already mentioned that Maputo is often exposed to these eastern winds, influencing the geographical topology of the city. For Patraquim to craft his seminal work given this airy characterization is to recognize the poetic motion of these spaces as it is rather than as it was. At the same time, the poet uses this wind to carry songs and voices from the present into the past in an affective renewal of the Mozambican space. The wind thereby emerges as a crucial atmospheric and poetic component from its poetic onset.

The subjectification of the wind in *Monção* reminds us that the quasi-thing often, though not always, finds its meaning when deemed both affectively and aesthetically valuable. Consider the following verses from the poem "Canções":

"Repousa amor / que sobre o vento / alastra o som" (Patraquim, *Monção* 42). Within the characteristic eroticism of Patraquim's poetry,[3] we again find echoes of a yearnful song carried by the wind. A nameless lover is guided into repose as the wind is once more tasked with the cooperative embodiment of dreams and desires. As a physical and tangible *thing*, the body is emancipated because alone it lacks the metaphysical—and metapoetic—capacity to transpose the potential of the present onto the misplaced past. Still, the wind alone cannot transfigure the past or the future by its mere invocation or presence. "Quasi-things are not the continuation of something prior, but something always new and radically evenemential," Griffero clarifies, suggesting that affinities to the wind necessitate experience as opposed to mere speculation (*Quasi-Things* 11). But the fact that quasi-things are more "immediate and intrusive than *things*" (Griffero, *Quasi-Things* 11; emphasis my own) yet harder to pin down or perceive complicates direct interactions with the air. To cite Griffero once more, the wind "blows where it wishes" ("It Blows").

Such rules of engagement presuppose an aesthetic pull that rests on controversial degrees of proximity and defamiliarization. While an external representation of the body as a physically tangible thing might struggle to relate with the wind's ethereal displacement, it is nonetheless mediated—along with the internal felt-body—by these involuntary and unplanned encounters (Griffero, *Quasi-Things* 59). What happens, then, when the body attempts to regulate the quasi-thingly wind? We might examine this question in view of "A voz e o vento," another early poem in *Monção*. Just as Griffero has argued that the physical self can embody atmospheric sensations, advocating for an "intermodal analogueness" grounded in "existential and felt-bodily resonances" (*Quasi-Things* 60), so too does Patraquim explore the body's potential to generate airy phenomena:

> *Com palavras faço a voz*
> *e o vento*
> *de que viajam e são*
>
> *insistente desejo a lucilar*
> *sobre a pele morna*
> *de girassóis filtrando*

[3] See Leal.

teu rosto
seios
paisagem nua de ventre
com palavras a voz do que faço

estes dias infensos
a pendor de gume (Patraquim, *Monção* 16)

In these verses, the poet uses the felt, physical body as an intermedial space for affective considerations of the wind. The first stanza deals directly with this usage, performing and externalizing atmospheric feelings through the body's haptic authority; "Com palavras," the lyrical subject proclaims, "faço a voz / e o vento," focusing on the discrete action of speaking—or writing—words as a cognitive act of atmospheric expression (Patraquim, *Monção* 16). Notable is the authoritative tone with which the speaker affirms "faço," establishing the wind as representationally tied to their bodily actions. The wind emerges from the body to become the affective carrier of words, integrating within the speaker's physical, poetic, and pathic systems of knowledge.

Yet, what is most interesting about this poem is the specificity of the language it employs to track atmospheric routes. The lyrical wind breezes throughout the lexical body of the piece to evoke a female figure. Moved by "desejo," which is here somatically related to the natural world, the poem's airy words trace "a pele morna" on the figure's "rosto," moving down from the lone "seios" toward the "paisagem nua de ventre" (Patraquim, *Monção* 16). On the one hand, the body is rendered visible by the wind's existential salience. Each aspect of the female figure is sensually thematized through its inceptive relationship to the words on the page, which themselves are the result of a quasi-thingly impulse. On the other hand, the very positioning of these words, as well as their lyrical coherence, is presented as the product of a prereflexive and conceptually vague atmospheric sensibility. The suggestion of prereflexivity becomes apparent in the chiasmic construction at the end of the second stanza: "com palavras a voz do que faço," the lyrical subject writes, reversing the authoritarian tone of the first verse (Patraquim, *Monção* 16). In this moment, the speaker seems to again announce their power as creator—of words, wind, and body—only to relinquish their authority beyond the "infensos . . . / . . . gume" of that which they cannot reach (Patraquim, *Monção* 16).

The relative immateriality of the "edge" becomes a fundamental object of desire for the lyrical narrator, who is ultimately confined in a circumstance they created but cannot fully apprehend.

Negotiating these liminalities is one of the primary challenges in poetic considerations of the quasi-thing, for always there are multiple, and at times conflicting, elements to acknowledge. For the present argument, I here focus on two quasi-thingly aspects. First is the notion that the quasi-thing must always introduce something new or transcendental to the environment through which it moves or exists, in addition to doing so by way of a direct physical or emotional interaction with an object (often the body). But this point becomes controversial when we remember that quasi-things have their own distinct identities, regardless of whether they directly interact with other factual, bodily, or conceptual elements (Griffero, *Quasi-Thing*s 11). Which leads to the second point in this consideration: if the quasi-thing must, by its very presence, introduce something novel and unexpected, then it "is always necessarily followed by an involuntary experience, a pathic and felt-bodily involvement that is at least initially uncontrollable" (Griffero, *Quasi-Thing*s 11). The quasi-thing creates—and allows itself to be created or, at the very least, elaborated upon—knowing that it will shift and take on new meanings.

Patraquim approaches these ideas in "Os barcos elementaries," a short composite of poems included in *Vinte e tal novas formulações e uma elegia carnívora*. Through a series of dissonant metaphors and unusual images, the poet further blurs the already tenuous line between the natural and urban worlds, the body, and the poetic impulse. For instance, the poem begins by invoking the physical body alongside the Island of Mozambique to create a spatial duality: "Ilha, corpo, mulher. Ilha, encantamento. Primeiro tema para cantar" (Patraquim, *Osso* 96). This verse is another instance of Patraquim's reliance on voice (specifically, song) to carry thoughts and desires from one place to another. As we saw in "Canções," Patraquim often makes use of such atmospheric qualities to propose a renewed space while contending with a misplaced past. Moreover, the manifestation of a female figure in "A voz e o vento" serves to correlate the constancy of poetic words and intent with the irregularity of the winds, who together culminate in an immaterial and unactualized desire. In both cases, Patraquim emphasizes the wind's reproductive energy by associating its ephemeral

qualities with tangible acts of poetic production, invoking the wind in his poetic composites.

By way of example, the following verses in "Os barcos elementares" demonstrate an increased concern with the uncontrollable physicality of the wind within the historical framework of the Island of Mozambique: "De Calicut e Lisboa a lança que o vento lascivo trilou em nocturnos, espasmódicos duelos e a dúvida retraduzindo-se agora entre campanário e minarete" (Patraquim, *Osso* 97). Flowing between Calicut, India, and Lisbon, Portugal, the wind collects itself in the Island of Mozambique, a rural space and significant halfway point between the two cities. Metaphorically characterized as a "lascivo," punctuating "lança," the wind no longer embodies the generative potential of the poetic world and is instead imbued with destructive power. The wind's belligerence is further accentuated by its role in the "espasmódicos duelos" fought in the name of righteousness and "dúvida." As the allusion to "companário e minarete" suggests, Patraquim refers to the cultural-religious battles between Christian Portuguese and Northern African Muslims in the thirteenth century.[4] Allusions to these colonial cities as well as to their architectures help elucidate the precise ways in which the poet uses the quasi-thingly wind to transcend, critique, and engage with spatial and colonial histories.[5] To cite Ross Chambers in *An Atmospherics of the City*, such moments of reckoning underline "The destructive force of devastating events and violent change that are sometimes generated out of the unheeded, moment by moment, temporal process and recognized as history" (4).

Although quasi-things do not have full histories of their own, it is possible to establish parallels between the workings of the natural world and the examination of certain moments in human history. Just as narrative constructions of history rely on broader chronicles of events, the wind's intangible fragmentation signals its being part of a larger "thing." As such, returning to Patraquim's invocation of the wind in the above verses, it is crucial to examine the historical moments to which the quasi-thingly presence alludes but does not make explicit. I want to highlight, for example, that Calicut is close to the site where the Portuguese captain Vasco da Gama first landed in Asia, while Lisbon is the original port city of his departure;

[4] These references also evoke Vasco da Gama's struggles with Northern Africans in Melinde as well as in and around the Island. See Newitt, *A Short History of Mozambique*.

[5] The architectural landscape of the Island of Mozambique, or Muhipiti, reflects its colonial heritage as a space of capitalistic encounter and atmospheric conflict; brusque winds and monsoons often deterred travel that facilitated human enslavement. See Cabaço.

to perceive the wind from the Island of Mozambique is to draw the trajectory between the three port cities. Vasco da Gama certainly did stop in the island in March 1498 on his way to India, and in fact, was responsible for the first official "discovery" of this African space by the Portuguese, who transformed the land into a trading hub that would last approximately four hundred years. With this background, Patraquim's references to the wind are fraught, even accusatory in nature; the fickle wind, the poet seems to argue, led da Gama to the island, unleashing a series of events that would define the Mozambican country and its people for centuries to come.

In this vein, it is also important to remember the role played by (or, rather, thrust upon) the Island of Mozambique in the country's colonial history. Originally named Muhipiti by native Africans, the island was once an essential port town that facilitated travel, trade, and enterprise between Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia. Over the several hundred years of Portuguese expansion, the island developed into a complex urban community, though it never became a great metropolis—certainly not like Calicut or Lisbon (Chambers 109). As Malyn Newitt notes, the island became a preferred rest stop for ships that had missed "the favorable winds or the right monsoon" and would then have to wait for months for the winds to blow in the right direction ("Mozambique Island" 111). Still, the island had not been conceived as a space of repair, but rather as a port of trade. As Portuguese ships evolved and ceased to pause on the island, the port had no choice but to return to its status within the Arab and Indian Ocean trading worlds (Newitt, "Mozambique Island" 127). The island did not become a far-reaching center for the dissemination of the Portuguese empire in the Indies, which had been one of the primary reasons for its occupation. If anything, the history of the Island of Mozambique "demonstrates a long-term failure to adapt to the changing needs of oceanic commerce, as other port cities of the Indian ocean succeeded in doing" (Newitt, "Mozambique Island" 127). Recognizing the island's commercial history and its role in human enslavement is imperative if we are to fully apprehend the historically charged framework of Patraquim's poetry.

The Mozambican history of enslavement poses a significant piece of evidence in understanding the poet's drive to take ownership of the winds, both figuratively and poetically. At a further point in this work, Patraquim writes, "E dono me faço dos ventos. Sei as circunvalações das vidas que fui, cúmplice de senhores mas escravo, coral que me perderam" (*Osso* 99). In these lines, the poet directly alludes

to the Portuguese histories of trading and enslavement that define the island. Here, the lyrical narrator becomes the "dono . . . dos ventos," a statement with multiple implications. This verse suggests that the Island of Mozambique is again subsumed under hierarchies of enslavement, the timeless victim of its unwilling imperial past. Furthermore, these lines show that the wind—an irregular, ethereal, quasi-thing—has been captured and enslaved by the lyrical narrator. The multiple laws, logics, concepts, and structures that comprise the wind take on a seemingly uniform structure, though its phenomenic appearance precludes any form of edged or cohesive corporality (Griffero, *Quasi-Things* 10). But just as Patraquim's poetic voice notes, "Sei as circunvalações das vidas que fui, cúmplice de senhores mas escravo," so too does the wind instill doubt by, as Griffero argues, "having concealed sides, temporarily or eternally hidden inner strata" (Patraquim, *Osso* 99; Griffero, *Quasi-Things* 10). The wind's various meanings resist comprehension at variegated levels of signification precisely because its essence remains in a continual motion as it is cast and recast into multiple dynamic forms. In the same way, the lyrical narrator negotiates the broader scope of history by exposing their position as both enslaver and enslaved, in a poetic gesture that points at once toward the historical realities surrounding the text as well as its shifting symbolic elements. Moments such as these, which emphasize the ambiguous qualities of the wind as a poetic aspect, generate an atmospheric sense of place within the lyrical confines of the written city.

In light of this analysis, I hereby consider how Patraquim evokes certain affective atmospheres within his poetic spaces. Everyday life in the city thrives within the lines of his poetry, as he often passively observes the goings-on of the urban space. "Eles ficaram na cidade / um de tesoura aparando os arbustos / o outro sentado" (*Pneuma* 51), he writes in "By the way," noting the innocuous actions of a couple observed from an indistinct standpoint. Nearby, an elderly woman crouches down to look at the fallen leaves on the ground, while "as folhas se revolteiam ao primeiro sopro" and shadows pass to and fro around her (Patraquim, *Pneuma* 51). Different types of felt- and quasi-thingly movement are therefore perceived and rendered perceptible by others, as well as understood as part of the city's natural landscape. In another poem, the lyrical narrator takes similar note of the city's movement and sounds: "O papagaio onde se filtrou / sol / ao vento a infância de risos / na baía" (Patraquim, *Monção* 37). Sunlight streams through the tropical leaves of Maputo Bay; a parrot stands idly by as the wind carries the voices

and laughter of children. In these verses, the urban and natural worlds coalesce to draw a portrait of Maputo. Movement and sound, children and adults, plants and animals—all mold Patraquim's poetic image of the city.

More than a place of passive observation, this poetic Maputo is rife with lived experiences that define being not just inside but also part of the city. There is a comparable preoccupation with this affective territoriality in the verses of *Lidemburgo Blues*, which by its very title evokes a very specific representation of Maputo. The work draws inspiration from the Rua de Lidemburgo, a well-known address because it was populated by white families in an otherwise primarily Black neighborhood (Chabal 257). Crucially, the Rua de Lidemburgo no longer exists; it is a remnant of the names attributed to streets, avenues, and places in Maputo when it was known as Lourenço Marques, meaning, prior to the country's liberation from colonial Portuguese forces. *Lidemburgo Blues* is where the poet welcomes readers into his childhood home; as the son of two white migrants from Lagos, a city in the Algarve region of Portugal, Patraquim relays a perspective heavily marked by the mixed-race suburb of his childhood.[6] "Here," he seems to say, "is my Maputo":

> É onde a Ilha regressa por uma estrada de boieiros,
> a casa de caniço escorando-se, frágil e tão dúctil,
> na osteoporose de uma coluna que chia, tchaia
> entre occipital e cóccix; um rumor — bloody river! —
> e as rodas do grande trek. (Patraquim, *Lidemburgo Blues* 13)

Lidemburgo Blues begins with the emphatic conjugation of the verb *ser* (to be); "É" the poet declares, stating the existence of a clear position: the path of return from the Island of Mozambique, which is geographically located to the north of Maputo, a southern city. There also exists a unifying potential in this verb tense, as the stanza proceeds to describe various points of geographical identification through striking textual visuality. The lyrical narrator travels through the space, describing various things along the way: "uma estrada de boieiros" leads the way to a path marked by a single "casa de caniço," so "frágil" it seems like it could fall apart at any moment; "as rodas do grande trek" screech along the "coluna que chia,

[6] Patraquim's white, European Portuguese ancestry has not impaired his positioning and identity as a Mozambican poet. Alongside other poets with similar ancestry, Patraquim has "now been recognized and fully appropriated by the younger generation of Mozambican writers, who are happy to acknowledge their literary 'influences'" (Chabal et al. 35).

tchaia" of the railroad, as the long, "bloody river" Zambeze flows toward the ocean. By alluding to the Zambeze—one of the first bodies of water explored by Vasco da Gama in his travels around the African coast—the poet again shows a concern with the historical valences that characterize the country's national identity. References to the geographical spaces trailing the way to Maputo underline the poet's creation of a Mozambique beyond images of the urban capital, as understanding the broader scope of the country engenders a more pointed vision of the city. The locality becomes much more specific in the remaining verses of the poem: "Lydenburgh, dizias, sobre a nervura das palmeiras. / erguem-se alto, sustendo a aorta, / vergastas a pele de deus acariciando os pulmões" (Patraquim, *Lidemburgo Blues* 14) Far from fixed and static, Mozambique and its capital city emerge as living, breathing organisms. If in the first stanza the countryside is defined as a "uma coluna que chia, tchaia / entre occipital e cóccix" and therefore positioned as the figurative backbone of the country, in the above verses Maputo—and specifically, the suburb of Lidemburgo—becomes its core, vitally embodying the lungs and blood that pulse with life and air throughout the body. Furthermore, Maputo's palm trees become the figurative "nervura" encasing the city's life-giving organs, once more demonstrating the significance of the natural world as an important container for potentially destabilizing structures (Patraquim, *Lidemburgo Blues* 14). Ultimately, by personifying Mozambique and its capital, Patraquim highlights the city's positionality as something more valuable than a simple background for his work; the city is the poem, for without it there would be nothing of which to write.

Cíntia Machado de Campos Almeida takes this idea elsewhere when she states that "o processo de interiorização do olhar lírico na poesia de Patraquim convida-nos ao embalo de coreografias inspiradas no ritmo da respiração, ao sabor das monções íntimas e dos ares subjetivos" ("À procura" 50). While the poetic body of the city does become a semicartographic representation through which the lyrical voice can enter and meander, it here does so by enacting a collective and public spatial state, as opposed to exteriorizing a private psychic state (Griffero, "Atmospheric 'Skin'" 1). However, this idea merits pause: how does the city spur bodily senses—and an awareness of them—when its structures are already acclimatized within the public psyche? To answer this question, it might be helpful to briefly return to the productive tensions between the wind and city. Like any other atmospheric phenomenon, the wind can appear and disappear without anyone

noticing it was even there in the first place. As Chambers notes, "to become aware of an atmosphere . . . is to become bafflingly conscious of something that one had been already aware of, somehow, but without knowing it" (2). Patraquim's personification of the city-space functions similarly, crafting a poetic awareness of urbanity in a way that might not have been perceptive beforehand. By throwing into relief stable delimitations of what the poetic city *should* be, Patraquim (re)maps Maputo according to collective felt-bodily attachments to ordinary things and moments in everyday life. Resulting is a city-space whose affective sensibilities resist projective adaptations and transcendental conceptions of what the urban world should symbolize for any one person.

Though Patraquim's work at times eschews the specific in lieu of the symbolic and universal Mozambican experience, there are some intertextual moments where the poet's childhood figures as an essential confluence. When creating lyrical moments that take us through the city—with all its nooks and alleyways, backbones and aortas—Patraquim sometimes reveals the circumstances of his upbringing and the city's influence on his work. This tendency emerges in *Pneuma*, where the poet once more carefully crafts his vision of the Mozambican cit, as Patraquim writes in a poem dedicated to his father's memory: "E o teu silêncio, o teu silêncio, onde / Florescem, sangrentas, as acácias da Rua de Lidemburgo / E Lagos estremece em azul e punge" (49). Less ambiguous and more explicit in feeling, this work's use of second-person narration simultaneously dislocates and locates the audience within a context over which they have little command. Although the repetition of an all-pervasive "silêncio" suggests the emotional heft of spontaneous discourse, the poem originates in a determinate time and place; as mentions of "the Rua de Lidemburgo" imply, the poet speaks from the standpoint of his youth in Maputo, the city formerly known as Lourenço Marques. The punctuated segregation of the word "onde" underlines the enjambment into the next verse and its critical role as a spatial qualifier. Thus, the poem's action occurs on the streets of Maputo sometime in the poet's past—though its meaning resides elsewhere. I refer here to the liminality engendered by the summoning of Lagos; shivering in "azul e punge," the Portuguese city juxtaposes the illusion of red flowering in the bloody acacia trees on the Rua de Lidemburgo in Lourenço Marques. This duality likely emerges from Patraquim's personal relationship to the European and African cities, both of which represent different modes of thinking about ancestral homeland and the Portuguese colonial

enterprise. This interpretation rests on a historical point of view, wherein Lagos expresses the poet's identity as the descendant of white Europeans and the Rua de Lidemburgo represents a heterogeneous childhood marked by the tensions of the African liberation movement and, in time, an adulthood spent in uprising and exile against the Portuguese state. Nonetheless, Patraquim's evocation of the two contrasting cities of his youth serves to interrogate seemingly stable connections between the multiple poetic elements and histories composing both self and city, which he contends with by reaching toward the past, allowing memories of people, things, and feelings to reemerge and mutate in a new present.

In its flowing, shifting configurations, Patraquim's poetic depictions of the Mozambican city play on quasi-thingly forms whose patterns affect natural, urban, and human surroundings. Recognizable and varied across several poems, the wind's migrancy evokes a symbolic dimension that mirrors the multiple valences of these surroundings, at the same time as it generates the irregularity of affect in the city. The final verses in the first part of *Lidemburgo Blues* encapsulate the wind's positionality as a capricious and intangible entity that, by its very elusiveness, penetrates the felt-bodily consciousness: "Quando o barco se engolfa no sopro escuro / da Noite que há de vir," Patraquim writes, "E escrevo a Casa de fogo, a Ave terrível, / a curva da Sela, o voo em direcção ao Nome" (15). In a melancholy surrender to the wind—to the "Noite," to the "sopro" through which it moves and "há de vir"—the poetic voice heightens sensorial impressions that imply submission to pleasure and pain. At the same time, the body's exposure to the natural world renders them a willing participant in these phenomenological experiences, which form and accentuate the contours of the "Casa de fogo" and "Sela" surrounding and transporting the body. The wind unveils a contemplation of the physical and emotional landscapes, historical artifacts, and complex allusions that lead the poet toward the cyclical "Nome[s]" that compose the urban space through which he moves, but that he also, ultimately, constructs. In this way, the Mozambican poet lays bare the several places of desire and longing which breeze through his poetic work: Maputo, of course, is one of them, and the Island of Mozambique another, not to mention the many other spaces the author frequently broaches in his work, creating symbolic intersections that here remain unresolved. Patraquim's fabrications of the relationship between the wind and the city are thus complementary rather than absolute, for they offer different

communicative and perceptual spaces that can be interpreted along the same zones of exchange: the words in a poem.

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