

Original citation:

De Menezes, Alison Ribeiro. (2017) Out of the labyrinth? Television memories of revolution and return in contemporary Portugal. *Journal of Romance Studies*, 16 (2). pp. 76-95.

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Out of the Labyrinth? Television Memories of Revolution and Return in Contemporary Portugal

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Abstract

This essay examines Portuguese contemporary memories of the end of colonialism as represented in the 2013 television series, *Depois do Adeus*. It argues, first, that a popular series such as this can perform useful memory work in society, and, second, that the series' use of nostalgia can be regarded as a productive critique of prevailing views of the end of empire. The essay concludes by suggesting areas where a more critical discourse of cultural memory might contribute to a revision of Portuguese analyses of colonialism, postcolonialism and decolonization.

Keywords

Portugal, Portuguese television; *Depois do Adeus*; *retornados*; memory studies; postcolonialism.

In Defense of Nostalgia

Nostalgia, as is commonly noted, derives from the conjunction of the Greek verb, *nostos*, meaning to return home, with the suffix, *algia*, meaning pain. Originally denoting a longing to return home, nostalgia was first identified as a medical condition among seventeenth-century Swiss soldiers (Boym 2001: 3). No longer viewed as an illness, it has come to be associated with a Romantic and post-Romantic view of temporality. As the German critic of Romanticism Peter Fritzsche notes,

Nostalgia not only cherishes the past for the distinctive qualities that are no longer present but also acknowledges the permanence of their absence. It thus configures periods of the past as bounded in time and place and as inaccessible, and thereby adheres to notions of periodicity [...] fundamental to historical understandings of the early nineteenth century. (2001: 1592)

Nostalgia, then, relates closely to displacement, distancing and loss. Until recently viewed in a negative light as a melancholic attachment to an irretrievable past, and given an ideological-economic twist by Fredric Jameson (1991) in his critique of it as conservative and controlling consumer kitsch, nostalgia is now seen in some quarters as a prospective and potentially productive means of looking back in time in order to look towards the future. Fritzsche again:

There can be no nostalgia without the sense of irreversibility, which is often lost on those critics who simply deride its sentimentality. [...] If yesterday is different from today merely because disaster has occurred and misfortune has come to pass, the status of yesterday is not really challenged, and yesterday's fortune might well persist in some other place not afflicted by catastrophe. (2001: 1595)¹

In inscribing irreversibility as a central plank of the present's relationship to the past, nostalgia thus opens up a space for critical reflection. Picking up on Boym's proposal (2001: xviii) that there are two types of nostalgia, the restorative (which takes itself seriously and seeks to recreate the lost past) and the reflective (which can unite longing with critical thinking, for instance through irony or humour), I explore whether there are ways in which popular culture in Portugal today might tentatively examine the melancholic relationship to history that Eduardo Lourenço (2000) famously analysed as a *labirinto da saudade*.² Boym argues that nostalgia is not so much a longing for a place as a longing for a different sense of time. An intensely felt sentiment, it runs counter to the modern teleology of progress conceived as the forward advance of history. In this sense, nostalgia *can* look backwards in order to propose a different future. It thus connects with memory, drawing on the past in order to comment on the present and on hopes for the future. Boym also suggests that nostalgia can offer a sideways gaze, as if the nostalgic were able to step outside 'the conventional confines of time and space' (2001: xiv), a point I return to later.

These thoughts are relevant in the context of the television series that I consider here, the Portuguese national broadcaster RTP's production *Depois do Adeus* [After Saying Farewell], which was first broadcast between January and July 2013.³ 'Nostalgia,' says Boym, can be seen as 'an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming, and ethical and aesthetic failure' (2001: xiv). *Depois do Adeus* tells the stories of a series of *retornados*, or Portuguese 'decolonization migrants' (Smith 2002: 11),⁴ who 'return' to Portugal following the 1974 Revolution and instability in recently independent Angola.⁵ Some of them, as one of the younger characters points out, were in fact born in Africa and have never been to Portugal before, although the majority of the real-life *retornados* were first-generation settlers in the colonies.⁶ The central focus of the RTP series is on one family of *retornados*: Álvaro Mendonça, his wife Maria do Carmo, and their children, Ana and João. The parents are first-generation emigrants but their children were born in Angola. The family is initially given refuge by Álvaro's sister, Natália, before moving to a *pensão* and then becoming house sitters for an old couple who are keen to move from Lisbon during the political and social upheavals of what is known as the *verão quente* [hot summer] of 1975, but who wish to protect their house from possible squatters. They later move to *retornado* accommodation in Estoril. Events begin on 18 July 1975, and each of the twenty six episodes is clearly dated. The last covers 14-26 July 1976, and the series thus ends with the election of Ramalho Eanes as President of the Republic. Episode titles, however, seem counter-chronological, with the first entitled 'O Fim' [The End] and the last 'Começar de novo' [Beginning Again].

The production is highly intermedial at points, using remediated footage that is often blended into the contemporary dramatization, with the characters even inserted into the crowd in original images from political rallies and protests. For the reviewer of *Visão* (2013), the series' attention to detail meant that 'a identificação é imediata por quem viveu aquela época conturbada' [the sense of identification is immediate for whoever lived through that time of upheaval]. The use of remediated footage in *Depois do Adeus* is recognized as a technical innovation for Portuguese TV production – 'Os elementos reais são inseridos no croma para que o ator consiga, por exemplo, apoiar-se numa mesa que esteja na imagem de arquivo ou aparecer ao lado de um político da época' [Elements from reality are inserted into the frame so that the actor, for instance, can lean against a table which is in the original archival image, or appear beside a politician from the time] – and surely contributes to the construction of a nostalgic frame for the viewing public. It is perhaps not surprising

that the series, which has many of the qualities of a soap opera, appealed mostly to women (57.5% of viewers) and to those over the age of 45 (75% of viewers).⁷

It is the conjunction of notions of colonial return and revolutionary process that I focus on here. Nostalgia, understood as a backwards gaze, raises questions of time, teleology, community and belonging, all of which surface through RTP's dramatization of a colonial 'return' that is also a traumatic departure and a new start for all. The standard narrative of *o retorno* – the successful integration of approximately 600,000 people, or approximately 6.5% of the Portuguese population, without directly related conflicts – is substantially correct, but this does not mean that tensions were entirely absent (Lubkeman 2002: 76).⁸ The format of the television series, with its focus on family life and community spaces (the café or bar, the workplace, living rooms as a point of intersection between the public and private) is perfectly placed to explore on a micro-level familial and inter-generational frictions that the *retornados* faced and which their influx created for Portuguese society.⁹

Nostalgia viewed as a sideways glance offers the possibility of a new perspective, a slanted angle on events. In this instance, the focus of *Depois do Adeus* on the experiences of *retornados* entails a scrutiny of a Portugal in which they are interstitial outsider-insiders or, in Lubkemann's formulation 'internal strangers' (2002: 76), members of the nation who are not regarded as easily belonging to it.¹⁰ The Portugal to which they arrive is that of the *verão quente*, the point of greatest socio-political and economic upheaval after the Carnation Revolution and, as such, a key turning point in Portugal's democratization process. I use *Depois do Adeus* here, then, to explore the possibility that nostalgia – which characterizes Portuguese colonial memories in several media, from novels and coffee-table books to films and even philosophical essays – might not be simply restorative but also reflective. This opens up a productive discursive space in which an exit from the labyrinth of nostalgia, as Lourenço has labelled Portugal's relationship to its own history, can begin to be envisaged. Might this *saudade* for the mother country now be turned into an analytical gaze on that mother country? What are the implications of the fact that this new perspective is revealed through a successful television series broadcast into the nation's homes?

If Portugal's relationship to her colonial past remains a problematic legacy of the 1970s (Medeiros 2002; Ribeiro de Menezes 2011), it is also the case that the myths and meanings of the Revolution merit ongoing examination. The *retornados* thus offer a perspective that unites the colonial past with the revolutionary present (1975-76) of the Processo Revolucionário Em Curso, or PREC.¹¹ The use of remediated footage adds further temporal planes, as the viewers of 2013 are asked both to remember (the events portrayed are, after all, formative experiences of the current senior political generation) and to re-member, that is, to reconstruct those events with hindsight. These multiple temporalities – *retornados* who look back to a lost Africa against the background of utopian revolutionary fervour within the series, and the manner in which the viewer is also drawn into this retrospective gaze from the perspective of a post-millennium Portugal in deep economic crisis – create a layering of pasts that paradoxically inscribes the present and future as the focus of attention. Boym herself notes such mixing of temporalities in her study of nostalgia:

the nostalgia that I explore [she says] is not always for the ancien régime, stable superpower, or fallen empire, but also for the unrealized dreams of the past and visions of the future that have become obsolete. A history of nostalgia might allow us to look back at modern history not solely searching

for newness and technological progress but for unrealized possibilities, unpredictable turns and crossroads. (2001: xvi)

In this sense, part of the nostalgia of *Depois do Adeus* is not just for a lost imperial dream, or even for an unfulfilled imperial dream – indeed, a perpetually unfulfilled imperial dream as Lourenço’s interpretation of history might have it – but for the revolution itself, demythified when viewed through the lens of the human story of the colonial war refugee who might be unwelcome in certain leftist political quarters.

In Defense of Television Memory

A connection between the revolutionary period and present-day Portugal was stressed by Ana Nave (who plays Maria do Carmo) at the launch of the series; Hugo Andrade also noted that *Depois do Adeus* in some sense completed the 2006 series, *Conta-me como foi* [Tell Me What It Was Like], where the action concluded in April 1975.¹² RTP has also tackled the years after the events of *Depois do Adeus* in *Os Filhos do Rock* [The Children of Rock], which ran from December 2013 to June 2014 and, capitalizing perhaps on the nostalgia-evoking role of music in *Depois do Adeus*, explored the Portuguese rock scene of the early 1980s. Given this past summer’s domestic box-office hit, Leonel Vieira’s remake of Ribeirinho’s 1942 musical, *O Pátio das Cantigas/The Courtyard of the Ballads*, it appears there is a wave of popular culture nostalgia in Portugal at present, although such cinematic and televisual nostalgia is not an exclusively Portuguese phenomenon. *Conta-me como foi* was a Portuguese version of the Spanish *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (2001-) which explores the Spain of the late Franco dictatorship (beginning with the country’s Eurovision victory in 1968 with Massiel’s ‘La la la’) and the years of transition to democracy. *Cuéntame* has been seen as a Spanish *Wonder Years* (Rueda Laffond and Guerra Gómez 2009: 396), and one has only to think of the international success of *Mad Men* to note that DVD-boxed nostalgia has not only a global attraction, but can easily be regarded as fetishized through its commodification as ‘model’ that can be traded from one nation to the other (De Groot 2011).¹³ Memory and nostalgia, in this view, have certainly become Jameson’s commodified kitsch (1991). Nevertheless, De Groot has argued that *Mad Men* ‘plays fast and loose with nostalgia, quite deliberately invoking it to explode it’. *Depois do Adeus* achieves a comparable disruption of ‘the historical imaginary by undermining the sheen of nostalgia’ (De Groot 2011: 279). Key to this is the series’ use of layered temporalities, the seductiveness of visual and aural kitsch, and the greater role ascribed to the political background of the *verão quente* than the title and family-oriented plot initially suggests.

This proposition would seem to run counter to more traditional memory studies. As Holdsworth notes (2011: 1), ‘Television is not only the bad critical object in the academy, but is a bad memory object as well.’ It produces its own nostalgia, and can through repetition offer a safe vision of the past, what Holdsworth delightfully terms the ‘Abba-ification’ of history (2011: 101). Particularly notable in this regard is ‘the recurring visual motif of the cathode-ray television (CRT) set and its bulging rectangular frame, which litters the design and graphics of ‘television about television’ (2011: 124). The cathode-ray set certainly makes an appearance in *Depois do Adeus*. Nevertheless, Holdsworth’s analysis approaches television ‘not as a box in the corner of a room but embedded within the sensual aspects of the domestic environment, producing memories which are forged from a network of sense impressions and allowing television to be seen within a network of memories’ (2011: 7). In this sense, television need not necessarily reproduce nostalgia, or only nostalgia, since its recovery of the past, including via the CRT, positions old visual

and sound repertoires in new contexts, defamiliarizing them and thus turning them into the potential objects of an inquiring and more critical gaze.

A similar approach is proposed in Abigail Loxham's analysis of the Spanish series, *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. She regards the TV medium and series format as offering the potential for a dynamic negotiation of memory. There is skepticism, notes Loxham, towards television's ability seriously to engage with contentious pasts, especially in post-authoritarian societies. Nevertheless, television memory, she argues (2015: 2), is 'a process of making memory visible as an agent in the present that can negotiate something of the meanings, affective connections and inconsistencies of the recent past.' One of the valuable dimensions of the family-oriented mini-series is precisely its bridging of private and public realism. For Loxham,

Domesticity is central to the way in which memory is approached [by *Cuéntame cómo pasó*] as both intensely private and yet mediated by the television that becomes the nexus of the personal and the public in terms of the family's relationship to wider political issues, mirroring the imbrication of the personal and the political which has forced the issue of memory narratives to the fore in Spain. (2015: 7-8)

One can make a similar claim for *Depois do Adeus*. While domesticity runs the risk of an inherently conservative appeal, one of the dimensions of the *retornados* phenomenon was the potential challenge that these former colonial settlers posed for that post-dictatorship, revolutionary narrative of Portugal throwing off the shackles of authoritarianism in metropolis and colonies alike. As Ovalle-Bahamón notes, the *retornados* arrived in Portugal 'at or around independence from the former colony and their reception in continental Portugal, at a time when "postcolonialism" was being defined and debated, highlighted the ambiguity of their location in Portuguese nationness' (2002: 160). One might see the series based on their experiences as a wrinkle in time.

Remediated Images and Musical Nostalgia

Depois do Adeus takes its title and theme music from Portugal's 1974 Eurovision entry, *E Depois do Adeus* [And After Saying Farewell], sung by Paulo de Carvalho. The song tied for last place in the Eurovision competition. Its opening lyrics - 'Quis saber quem sou/O que faço aqui/Quem me abandonou/De quem me esqueci' [I wanted to know who I am/What I am doing here/Who abandoned me/Whom I forgot] - and nostalgic tone certainly suit the context of the *retornados*. However, there is another dimension to this choice of music that belies the interconnected nature of revolution and colonial return in the RTP series. The 25 April Revolution is famously assumed to have started with the playing of Zeca Afonso's *Grândola Vila Morena* on Rádio Renascença just after midnight to signal the beginning of the military intervention. But this was in fact the second musical signal used that night. At five minutes to midnight on 24 April, *E Depois do Adeus* had been aired in the capital by Emissores Associados de Lisboa, as a first signal of the imminent revolution (Costa, Pina e Cunha, and Vieira da Cunha 2009: 95). The song's title thus points in two directions, and the action of the TV series comes after two farewells: Portugal's farewell to the colonial era, and her its farewell to dictatorship. If, on a superficial level, the series indicates the phenomenon of a restorative nostalgia centring on colonial loss and dislocation, it later begins to cast a sideways glance at the revolutionary metropolis reconstructing its identity as postimperial.

The series certainly begins by acknowledging life in Angola as nostalgic, though in fact it makes little attempt to engage with events there. The remediated nature of the opening sequence, moving from black and white images of life in colonial Angola, with the insertion of characters Maria do Carmo and Ana, and then switching to colour as Álvaro films João and his friend playing football, leave the viewer in no doubt as to the reconstructed and manipulated nature of the images. From the start, Álvaro is associated with home movie making. This adds a self-conscious dimension to the series, and the fact that the actor who plays Álvaro, José Carlos Garcia, is the son of a *retornado* reinforces this metafictional dimension. However, we soon see another side to events, as the family is forced to leave Angola. Here, their forced migration and the end of the Portuguese empire are conveyed as a mere twist of fate, with scenes of smiling troops lowering the Portuguese flag and preparing to leave against the soundtrack of José Mário Branco's *Mudam-se Os Tempos, Mudam-se As Vontades* [As Times Change So Too Do Desires]. The music is ironic of course; the song is an adaptation of a sonnet by Camões, that great poet of, in Lourenço's terms, the imperial fiction,¹⁴ whose words are used here to narrate the 'happy' end of empire. Perhaps more concerning than this use of bathos, however, is the series' depiction of Angola's independence, for it is this, and not the colonial past, that seems to pose a threat to the future. The remediation of images of Agostinho Neto's speech and the cut from José Carlos Branco's lyrics to a sombre soundtrack with glints on steel machetes suggest a latent violence that seems to appear out of nowhere.

The Portugal to which Álvaro and his family return is one of chaos. Each episode of *Depois do Adeus* takes a political event as its starting point, depicting strikes and youth militancy, tensions in the north of Portugal, workplace purges, populist decision-making, and family upheavals. Some of these events poke fun at excessive populist democracy, such as a bus scene in episode two ('A balbúrdia' [Bedlam]) in which the passengers spend so long debating the route to be taken that one decides it would be quicker to walk. There is also a rather more serious moment in episode three ('Entre o desespero e a esperança' [Between Despair and Hope]) when a factory faces imminent closure because of non-completion of orders, but the workers hold a two-hour workplace debate on whether or not to engage in a half-hour stoppage. 'O desporto favorito deste país, o plenário' [the favourite passtime in this country, the plenary meeting], remarks the factory owner wryly as he sees that they will all lose their jobs if orders are not delivered on time. During the early episodes, we see Álvaro and his wife attempt to withdraw their savings from the Banco de Angola; receive documentation and a subsidy from the IARN, the Instituto de Apoio ao Retorno dos Nacionais;¹⁵ collect the belongings they shipped from Angola at Lisbon's docks, only to find they have been robbed; and find work.¹⁶ They struggle to maintain harmony with Álvaro's sister, Natália, who dislikes Maria do Carmo and her bright clothes but feels that she should support her brother. 'A família é sagrada' [family is sacred], she says in episode two. Some metropolitan perceptions of *retornados* are proposed and examined in these episodes: that they dressed differently, were accustomed to having servants and did not know the meaning of hard work, had exploited Africans, had barely maintained links with Portugal, and were returning to take jobs from those who had stayed in local communities. These issues have been recorded in sociological studies of *retornados*, such as that by Lubkmann, who quotes a man from a northern Portuguese village on the returnees:

The *retornados* did not want to work in Portugal with their families after a life of ease ('vida à larga') in Africa where the blacks did everything for

them... They went to where others would do the work for them because they did not want real work like my own in the factory for thirty years or in the field where life is hard... even in France they have to work long hours, but in Africa they could all have shops and sit and drink coffee. They would say to the blacks 'do this, do that' and then they would say 'we are working'... they were successful because they exploited the government and forgot about their families so they would not have to work... this is why so many have now become successful in commerce in the district, with grocery stores (*mercearias*) and clothing stores and in trade... but even now you do not see them lift a hand to work the land and they always have clean hands without any calluses. (2002: 83)

Depois do Adeus does seem to respond in certain respects to views of this sort, seeking to disprove them through the actions and behaviour of Álvaro and Maria do Carmo. Álvaro works hard in the metal-work factory where his brother-in-law is a manager, and Maria do Carmo finds work in a grocery store where she is more diligent than Natália's friend. Through characters such as Natália and her gossiping friends, *Depois do Adeus* poses ethical questions about the motivations and assumptions of those who went to live in the colonies when the 'wind of change' was already blowing across Africa. Nevertheless, the series in general presents the *retornados* as the victims of historical misunderstanding. Certain sociological studies suggest that *retornados* were better educated than metropolitan society and had more entrepreneurial experience.¹⁷ They were thus well placed to open small shops and businesses in early democratic Portugal, contributing to the economic advances of the 1980s. Cláudia Castelo notes,

The settler culture in the Portuguese territories of Africa was notable for its dynamics, boldness, and ambition, given that Portugal, during the years of strongest Portuguese migration to the colonies, was a country closed on itself, subject to an oppressive dictatorship which sought to instill in the Portuguese the values of work, discipline, and obedience. Instead of mimicking a rural, poor, and backward Portugal divided into small land parcels without much income or future, it aspired to create modern, progressive, and prosperous European societies in Africa. (2013: 122)¹⁸

Castelo thus argues that Portuguese colonial settlers have been the subjects of a double misrepresentation (2013: 123): 'The Portuguese who settled in Africa after the end of the so-called pacification campaigns did not correspond exactly to the ideal advertised in dominant discourses throughout the period under study, neither in terms of social origin nor in terms of cultural practices at the destination. They did not correspond either to the misleading portrait that a historiography committed to the anticolonial movement made of them: in loco agents for colonialism.'

If *Depois do Adeus* remediates images of the 1970s in order to query established assumptions about that time, it also uses its soundtrack to similar ends. Songs establish a nostalgic connection to the past, notably through the early use of *Muxima* as a hymn to a lost Africa. Yet the series goes further. Investing hindsight with considerable affect, it uses musical memory to pose questions that might perhaps be less easily asked of the PREC. Its jolly jingles, many the work of the Grupo de Acção Cultural - Vozes Na Luta [Cultural Action Group - Voices in the Struggle], which included José Carlos Branco, punctuate the action and are at times juxtaposed with more chaotic images of political demonstrations, politically motivated strikes, and

workplace purges. We hear *A Cantiga É Uma Arma* [The Song is a Weapon], for instance, or *Força Companheiro Vasco* [Stay Strong Comrade Vasco] as we reach the moment of the fifth revolutionary government under Vasco Gonçalves. 'Álvaro, saímos de um país em guerra para chegar a outro que vai a caminho' [Álvaro, we left one country at war only to arrive in another that's on the same road], remarks Maria do Carmo in episode eight. The jarring nature of sound and image uses the original objectives of these ditties, easily recognizable and memorable tunes to motivate support, to create an affective link between past and present for viewers. As Holdsworth has noted (2011: 102), 'the pleasures of nostalgia television are driven by curiosity and anticipation: will it be how I remembered? Is this how we once were?' Drawing the viewer in emotionally in this manner can move beyond nostalgia as mere leisure activity because of the temporal disjunctions that are established. In cases of the remediation of sounds and images, it is not a matter of, in Boym's words (2001: 49), 'the recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth' but rather a 'meditation on history and the passage of time.' Reflective nostalgia can retrieve the shattered fragments of memory and at the same time retain a critical distance through its stress on divergent temporalities, the 'then' and the 'now'. Portugal, to borrow a term from Peter Fritzsche (2004), has been not so much 'stranded in the present' as 'stranded in the empire', and has yet to fully confront the cultural implications of its ending. There is no reason why television cannot assist in that enterprise, especially with the 'irruption' of an unexpected colonial memory – the *retornados* – into the prevailing memory horizon.¹⁹

The Limits of Portuguese Cultural Memory

I am aware that the twenty six episodes of a popular television series are unlikely, in themselves, to offer a final exit from Lourenço's famous *labirinto da saudade*. Indeed, I do not mean to suggest that there is any easy solution to Portugal's 500-year riddle of empire. I do make the point, however, that memory work can be achieved in various ways and in diverse contexts, and that it is never entirely finished. There have been other recent cultural mediations of the question of the *retornados*, notably in fiction.²⁰ An exhibition entitled 'Retornar – Traços da Memória' [The Return – Traces of Memory] was staged between the Padrão dos Descobrimentos and the Galeria Avenida da Índia in Lisbon in 2015-16.²¹ Evoking Alfredo Cunha's 1975 photograph of packing crates belonging to *retornados* stacked up at the Padrão dos Descobrimentos, Ateliê Silva Designers installed at the riverside in Belém a series of stacked metal containers with fragments of Cunha's image emblazoned on their sides. In the introduction to their recent edited volume, *O Adeus Ao Império*, Fernando Rosas, Mário Machaqueiro and Pedro Aires Oliveira note that the chaotic return of thousands from the colonies in 1975 is one of the reasons why the Portuguese may now regard their handling of the vast effort of twentieth-century decolonization, which had initially been seen as somewhat exemplary, as in fact having been managed badly.²² The editors of *O Adeus Ao Império* go on to note that the question of the *retornados* has been given little attention in academic research and public discussion (Rosas, Machaqueiro and Aires Oliveira 2015: 7): 'permanece um campo de inquérito ainda pouco estudado, nomeadamente se atendermos à riqueza das suas ramificações em termos sociais e culturais' [it is a field that has been little researched, notably if we attend to the richness of its implications in social and cultural terms].

I conclude therefore with a consideration of the ways in which *Depois do Adeus* might point to limitations in Portuguese memories of empire. As Paulo de Medeiros has commented, in Portugal there is still:

uma certa hesitação em estudar as questões de traumas individuais e colectivos referentes ao passado político do país e a forma em como ele condicionou não só o quotidiano pessoal como a própria construção da identidade nacional. Numa sociedade onde a História e a historiografia assumem um papel determinante não deixa de ser curioso haver ainda tão pouca atenção para com os estudos de memória cultural entendidos de forma crítica, e não meramente como outra maneira de isolar e enaltecer pressupostas categorias essenciais dessa mesma identidade que se diria homogénea. (2012: 222)

[a certain hesitation in studying questions of individual and collective trauma with regard to the political history of the country, and the form in which this latter has conditioned not only individual daily life but also the construction of national identity. In a country where History and historiography play a determining role, it is curious to find so little attention paid to studies of cultural memory that take a critical stance, rather than those that simply identify and extol the supposed central categories of an identity that is assumed to be homogenous.]

In *Depois do Adeus*, Africa remains a notably absent, almost incidental, other.²³ Portugal's imperial history is displaced onto the *retornados*, with the result that the scrutinizing gaze of reflective nostalgia is both returned to, and turned towards, the metropolis. The series focuses on how Portugal treated former white colonial settlers in the context of revolutionary fervour. It thus offers – and, indeed, only aims to offer – a white colonizer gaze on a white imperial metropolis. As Machaqueiro notes, the recent historiographic interest in the *retornados* means that the question of decolonization 'se coloca em relação aos *portugueses* na metrópole e aos colonos *portugueses* que nele intervieram, que o viveram ou sofreram' [is viewed in relation to the *Portuguese* in the metropolis and the *Portuguese* colonists who were involved in it, lived through it, and suffered it]. As a result, decolonization becomes merely 'um tema próprio do descolonizador, simbioticamente associado ao ex-colonizador' [a theme belonging to the decolonizer, symbiotically associated with the ex-colonist] (2015: 232). Behind this lies the further problem of the confusion of imperial and colonial perspectives, of what might be considered postcolonial and what might more properly be regarded as postimperial. Omitted – in a series that begins with a recreation of an airbridge from Luanda to Lisbon – is any opportunity to engage with the limits of the notion of Portugal as a bridge between Africa and Europe. Still pending is scrutiny of what Cahen calls the Revolution's 'Third-Worldism [...] which fitted in perfectly with a modernised Lusotropicalism – Portugal could now have an "exceptional relationship" with Africa, because with fascism dead, Portugal's smallness would always prevent it from being imperialist' (2013: 310).²⁴ The series does not tackle that dubious idea of Portuguese colonial exceptionalism, articulated for instance by Sousa Santos (2002). Nor, with the theme of a migration of population, does it evoke other migrations and displacements that might be regarded as more pressing memory work: slavery, displacements from homelands and dislocations within Africa itself on independence.

It is perhaps unfair to evoke these wider issues of imperial history, but, if we widen our analytical scope, they do suggest that Portugal has much memory work to do as regards her 500-year colonial enterprise. Cultural memory studies are in relative infancy in Portugal, although the study of the literary legacy of the Colonial

Wars is well established.²⁵ Margarida Calafate Ribeiro may well be correct in arguing (2004: 234), 'Os estudos pós-coloniais têm vindo a mostrar que o colonialismo, na sua vastíssima extensão, não foi um movimento de sentido único, pois tanto os países que foram objecto de colonialismo como as metrópoles que o exerceram foram largamente tocados pelo fenómeno' [Postcolonial studies have recently proposed that colonialism, taken in the round, was not a singular process; both the countries that were colonized and the metropolises that exercised colonial power were affected by the phenomenon]. However, it is worth recalling T. J. Mitchell's comment, in an article on postcolonial culture and postimperial criticism, that the 'reversals of center and margin' that accompany decolonization must also include a process of 'deimperialization' (1992: 13). This reminder that the power structures and relationships of colonialism were real, and need to be accompanied by their conscious recognition by former metropolitan centres, is salutary. It casts Sousa Santos' reconfiguration of postcolonialism, through his notion of Portugal as a subaltern, 'semiperipheral' empire, as a nostalgic gesture that serves only to excuse an imperial history.

The question, fifteen years on from Portugal's celebration of the 'discoveries' at Expo '98, is whether or not the discourse of postimperialism has sufficiently recognized the unequal relation of colonialism. In his analysis of Lisbon's hosting of the 1998 World Fair, Sieber argues that the dominant narrative of the event was Portugal's place as intermediary between the Europe of which it was now, two and a half decades after the Revolution, a fully-fledged member, and the countries of America, Africa, and Asia, Portugal's 'discovery' of which was presented as a form of 'cultural brokerage and mediation' that had advanced 'global modernity and progress' (2010: 110). To a certain extent, this narrative still underpins Fernando Arenas' recent study, *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence*. Nevertheless, Arenas is keen to examine the pitfalls of a focus on multidimensional cultural exchanges in the triangular space of a 'Lusophone transatlantic matrix' (2011: 1) comprising Portugal, Brazil, and Africa, rather than on a binary view of colonial/postcolonial or pre- and post-independence relations. We need more of such critical perspectives on imperial legacies in the Lusophone world, and there remains a wider question to be addressed: whether or not Lourenço's melancholy labyrinth might now work to screen the need for a stark confrontation of the end of empire. As Gil notes, at present in Portugal, 'obsessive recall, nostalgia indulgence, melancholia, divisive memories and active discourses of disremembering come together in a complex and at times pathological regime of remembrance' (2014: 21). We ought to ask then, might it in fact be tempting for Portugal to remain culturally lost in the labyrinth of melancholy? Baucon identifies in modern English narratives of empire 'a postimperial discourse committed to the fiction of England's death, committed to a narrative of closure, to loss, ruin, mourning, and melancholy'. It draws its strength, he argues, 'not only to the odd pleasures generations of English men and women have taken in meditating the death of their nation, but to the joys contemporary Britons have added to the ash and sack-cloth of this tradition by meditating the traumas of the end of empire' (1996: 273). *Depois do Adeus'* focus on a concrete example of the limitations of the process of decolonization through the lens of reflective nostalgia does avoid the danger of a melancholy rumination on trauma, using television to project a different view into the nation's living rooms. But there remains more searching memory work to be done.

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Notes

¹ See also Boym (2001); Blunt (2003); Niemeyer (2014).

² It is almost impossible to translate *saudade*, which conveys sentiments of longing, melancholy, nostalgia, incompleteness, and the impossibility of return or the recovery of the lost love object. It is viewed stereotypically as a particularly Portuguese way of being in the world. Lourenço's quotation might be translated as 'labyrinth of nostalgia', but this misses the allusion to identitarian narratives that the word *saudade* conveys.

³ *Depois do Adeus* aired from 19 January to 28 July 2013. Initially screened on Saturday at 9pm, from 10 February 2013 it aired on Sundays at 9pm. From 10 April it moved to Sundays at 9.30pm (private communication with Nuno Vaz, RTP commissioning editor of the series, 24 February 2016). I should like to thank Nuno Vaz for his willingness to discuss the series with me and for providing the RTP viewing statistics cited later. I am also grateful to Vanessa Rato, whose family moved to Portugal from Angola in 1975, for her insights into so-called *retornado* experience and the contribution of *Depois do Adeus* in bringing it to greater public attention. Rato's story, written partly as a response to *Depois do Adeus*, was published in the main Lisbon daily, *Público*.

⁴ Smith estimates that between five and seven million people migrated to imperial metropolises as a consequence of post-Second World War decolonization (2002: 11).

⁵ Ovalle-Bahamón (2002: 147 n. 1) notes that the term *retornado* entered popular use in Portugal around 1975, at the time of the relocation of the bulk of those who returned from the country's former colonies in Africa.

⁶ Lubkemann (2005: 259) lists seventy percent of the European population in Angola as first-generation settlers at the time of decolonization. Nevertheless, on the question of *retornados* who had never been to Portugal, Rato comments from a personal perspective: 'Uma das primeiras coisas que os meus pais me ensinaram sobre a vida na metrópole foi "não tem sentido chamarem-te retornada porque tu nunca antes tinhas estado em Portugal. É uma estupidez. Não permitas. Explica-lhes"' [One of the first things that my parents taught me about life in the metropolis was "it does not make sense for people to call you a retornada since you have never been in Portugal before. It's silly. Don't let them. Explain to them"'].

⁷ *Depois do Adeus* reached 384,000 viewers and eight percent of audience share, and ranked as the second most popular prime-time series that year (figures provided in private communication with the series producer, Vaz).

⁸ The number of *retornados* is triple the influx of 850,000 *pièds noirs* (roughly two percent of the national population) who returned to France from Algeria between 1962 and 1964; see Clout (1972: 12). Dutch decolonization migrations from the East Indies were also traumatic, with approximately 300,000 people arriving in the Netherlands between 1945 and 1963 (Smith 2002: 13).

⁹ Lubkemann argues (2002: 81) that emigration to the Portuguese colonies was evaluated differently depending on destination, and interpreted in terms of the resulting apparent commitment (or lack of commitment) to local community. Those moving to Europe, sending remittances, and returning home regularly, were viewed as more engaged than those moving to Africa, since they could less easily visit Portugal, did not generally send remittances, and viewed their relocation as more permanent. The *retornados* were, he suggests, seen as having forsaken their roots by many who remained in Portugal.

¹⁰ Smith (2002: 12) also stresses the extent to which the European decolonization migrations posed questions for categories of national identity, race and ethnicity.

¹¹ Ovalle-Bahamón notes (2002: 151) that the repatriation of the *retornados* 'underlined the contradictions that were already visible during the colonial period and exacerbated the ambiguities of identity that plagued colonial Portugal'.

¹²The actors' comments are reported in 'Depois do Adeus: A Frieza do Verão Quente'. Vaz confirmed to me in a personal communication that *Depois do Adeus* was conceived by RTP as a loose follow on from *Conta-me como foi*, but drawing on Portuguese historical inspiration rather than using an imported format. The coincidence of the fortieth anniversaries of colonial independence, awareness of an open wound in national memory as regards the *retornados*, and the lack of an audiovisual memory of this event influenced the choice of the theme. A woman's view of the Revolution was also offered through the series, *Mulheres de Abril*, consisting of five episodes shown 21-25 April 2014.

¹³ *Man Men's* global success comes in spite of the enormous differences in national experiences in the 1950s.

¹⁴ Lourenço remarks, 'Da nossa intrínseca e gloriosa ficção *Os Lusíadas* são a ficção' [Of our essential and glorious fiction *The Lusíads* are the epic story] (2000: 26). Branco's song is ironic in various ways, including the fact that it was originally the titular track of a 1971 album launched in Paris, where the singer was in exile. The sense of change that the song conveys thus shifts with historical context.

¹⁵ Created in 1975 to assist *retornados*, the Institute for the Support of Returning Nationals struggled to cope with the numbers of people returning home.

¹⁶ Vilar Rosales highlights the trauma of lost possessions in her analysis of interviews with *retornados* from Mozambique in 'Retornos e recomeços: Experiências construídas entre Moçambique e Portugal'. Knowing that the objects they bring back are all they own in life now, all they can depend on, these possessions become symbolic of the ability to re-construct a home. One of Vilar Rosales' interviewees states (2015: 221), 'As pessoas preocuparam-se fundamentalmente em trazer o que tinham porque sabiam que chegavam cá sem mais nada. Houve gente que trouxe coisas porque sabia que não tinha dinheiro para comprar quando cá chegasse. Já bastava a preocupação de chegar a um país novo e ter que procurar emprego e casa' [People mainly tried to bring what they had because they knew that they would arrive here with nothing. There were people who brought possessions because they knew they would have no money to buy things when they arrived. It was difficult enough worrying about arriving in a new country and having to find work and somewhere to live].

¹⁷ Lubkemann notes (2005: 265) that 'whereas 51 percent of the total Portuguese population in 1981 had not yet completed at least a primary school degree, only 17 percent of the *retornados* had not. Although they comprised less than 6 percent of the total population, *retornados* represented 16 percent of all Portuguese with professional degrees and 11 percent of those with higher education degrees.' It may have been the case that life in the colonies afforded greater time and opportunity for study. Likewise, the numbers of *retornados* engaging in small businesses may simply be the result of the inaccessibility of other career paths combined with the fortuitous timing of economic development in these areas.

¹⁸ Castelo further distinguishes settler views in Angola and Mozambique (2013: 123): 'the settlers in Angola viewed themselves as entrepreneurial people, self-made men capable of facing adversity and deprivation to attain their goals, while the settlers in Mozambique tended to create a self-image of distinction in social and economic matters. The former emphasised achievement and merit; the latter, status and recognition. In addition, the image that each community projected of itself was built in opposition to the image that it made and disseminated of the other community. Thus, the Portuguese in Angola saw themselves as more tolerant on racial issues as opposed to the blatantly racist conceptions and practices they saw in the Portuguese in Mozambique (generalising the racial relations environment of southern and central Mozambique to the entire colony). The Portuguese in Mozambique, on the other hand, stressed their superiority over the Portuguese in Angola in educational and socioprofessional terms.'

¹⁹ I borrow Wilde's term (1999).

²⁰ These include Magalhães (2008), Cardoso (2011) and Valadão (2012).

²¹ See <http://www.retornar-tracosdememoria.pt>. The exhibition ran from 4 November 2014 to 29 February 2016.

²² On the limitations of the handling of Portuguese decolonization, see also MacQueen (1997).

²³ Reporting the launch of the series, Amaral Cardoso (2013) cited one *retornada*'s view of temporal differences between Africa and Europe: 'Em África tem-se o tempo, no ocidente tem-se o relógio' (In Africa, there is time; in the West, there are watches).

²⁴ Williams elaborates on the issue of Portugal as contemporary Euro-African (2013: 278).

²⁵ See Teixeira (1998), Calafate Ribeiro (2004) and Moutinho (2011).