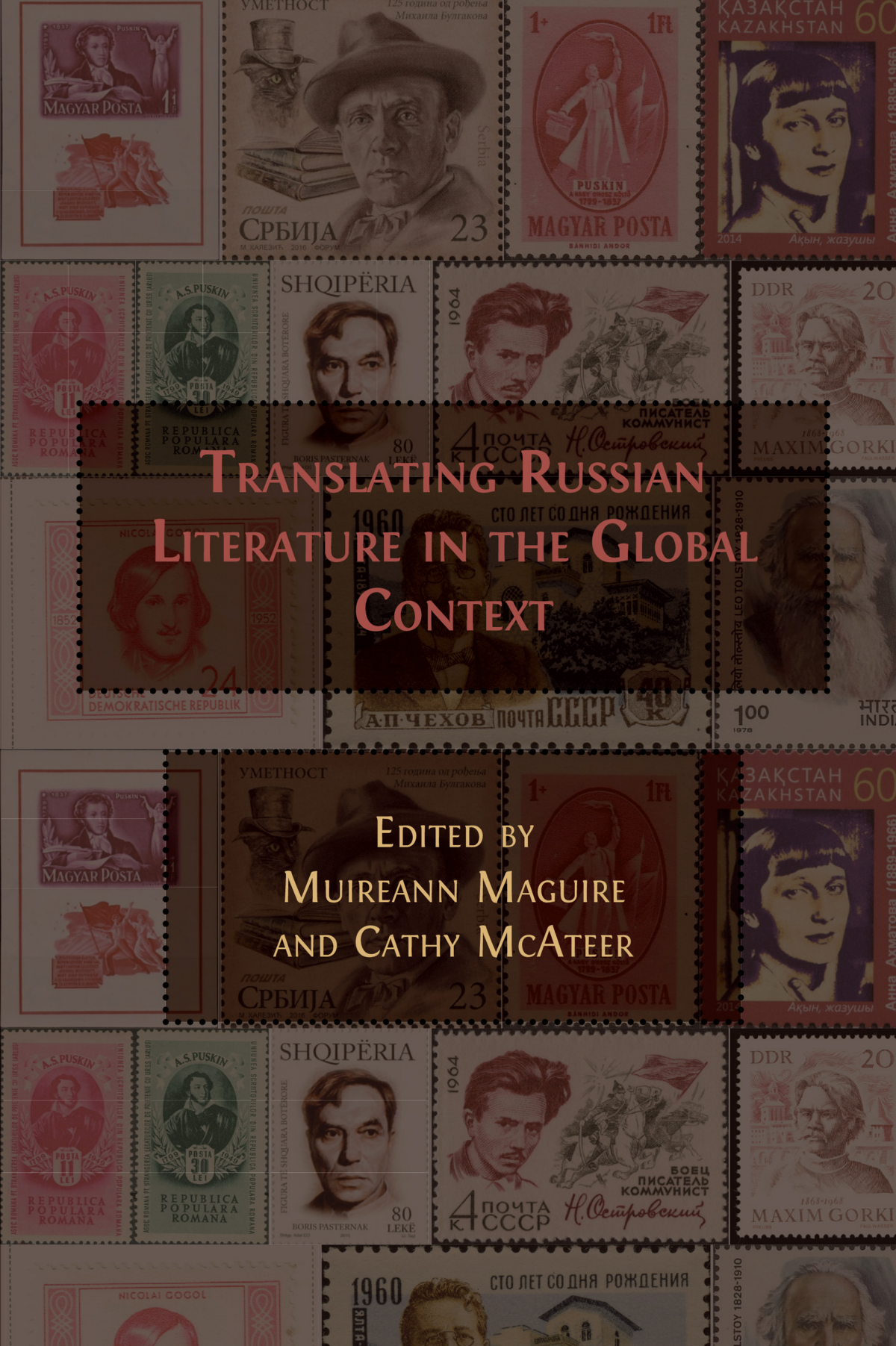

Translating Russian Literature in the Global Context

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Angola

The Spectre of Maksim Gorky: The Influence of *Mother* on Angola's Geração *Cultura*

Mukile Kasongo and Georgia Nasseh

In November 1957, the first issue of *Cultura*—a cultural bulletin edited by the Sociedade Cultural de Angola—was published in the Angolan capital of Luanda, then under Portuguese colonial rule. Its aim was to provide "[os] homens de Angola, e sobretudo [a] sua juventude, [com] um meio de abordar quantos problemas atormentam o seu espírito" ("the men of Angola, and especially its youth, with a means of addressing whatever problems plague their spirit") and to contribute to the "gestação de uma cultura angolana, nacional pela forma e pelo conteúdo, universal pela intenção" ("development of an Angolan culture, national in its form and content, universal in its intention").[1] It might, therefore, come as a surprise that the inaugural issue of *Cultura*, on its single double-page spread, and among such pieces as the Angolan author José Luandino Vieira's ode 'Canção para Luanda', featured a Brazilian Portuguese translation of Maksim Gorky's short story 'The Conclusion' ('Vyvod', 1895), under the title 'Acompanhamento'.[2] The Russian author's story—first published in the *Samarskaia gazeta* on 26 February 1895, and later republished in a revised version in the *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* on 8 March 1935—recounts the events of 15 July 1891, which the author himself witnessed in the village of Kandybovka, in

1 'Editorial', in *Cultura*, 8 (June 1959), pp. 1–2.

2 Máximo Górki, 'Acompanhamento', *Cultura* 1 (November 1957), pp. 6–7. While the translator of 'Acompanhamento' is not named in the first issue of *Cultura*, it is likely that the translation published therein is the work of Ukraine-born Brazilian translator Boris Schnaiderman. An earlier translation of 'Vyvod' was published under the title 'A Surtida' on 12 August 1902, in *Pacotilha*. For more on Schnaiderman's Brazilian career, see Bruno B. Gomide's essay in this volume.

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modern-day Ukraine: the public punishment of a woman accused of infidelity towards her husband.[1]

Yet, in its material context, Gorky's sketch of 'bytovaia kartina, obychai' (a picture from life, a custom) of nineteenth-century Ukraine speaks to the values—ethical and aesthetic—of Angola's nascent independence movement, which found intellectual expression in such spaces of 'conscienlização política nacionalista' (nationalist political consciousness) as the Sociedade Cultural de Angola.[2] On the double-page spread of the first issue of *Cultura*, the story 'Acompanhamento', which spans the lower half of both pages, is interrupted by a poem entitled 'Simples: poema aos meus irmãos' ('Simple: Poem to my brothers') by the Angolan poet João Abel. While the decision to print Gorky's story in itself suggests intercultural dialogue between Angola and Russia (then the Soviet Union) in the late 1950s, the fact that the story functions as a visual accompaniment—indeed, an 'acompanhamento'—to Abel's poem further invites the reader to consider the texts in relation to one another. When read together, Abel's poem seems to address, through the use of the intimate second-person pronoun 'tu', the punished woman of the Russian author's sketch:

1

Dá-me a tua mão,

E anda comigo à rua
a mostrar a toda a gente
que podemos andar no mundo de mãos dadas.[3]

(Give me your hand,

And walk with me through the street
that we may show everyone
that we can walk in the world hand in hand.)

The "rua"—or "street"—invoked in the opening stanza of Abel's poem parallels the "rua da aldeia, entre as casas brancas de taipa" ("village street, between rows of white-plastered cottages"), along which marches an "estranha procissão" ("strange procession"), described in Gorky's story.[4] Indeed, the speaker of

1 'Vyvod', *Samarskaia gazeta*, 44 (26 February 1895); 'Vyvod', *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* 35–36 (8 March 1935).

2 Fernando Tavares Pimenta, 'Representações políticas da cultura colonial dos brancos de Angola', *Estudos do Século XX*, 8 (2008), 293–304 (p. 302).

3 João Abel, 'Simples: poema aos meus irmãos', in *Cultura*, 1 (November 1957), pp. 6–7 (p. 6, ll. 1–4). All translations are our own unless otherwise indicated.

4 Górki, 'Acompanhamento', *Cultura*, 1 (November 1957), pp. 6–7 (p. 6); Maxim Gorky, 'The Exorcism', in *Orlóff and his Wife: Tales of the Barefoot Brigade*, trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 187–92 (p. 189).

the Angolan's poem, through their use of imperatives pervading the first four stanzas—"Dá-me a tua mão,/ E anda comigo à rua" ("Give me your hand,/ And walk with me through the street"), "Ouve…/ Não te cales sob a violência/ nem grites a tua inocência./ Reaje." ("Listen.../ Do not silence yourself in the face of violence/ nor scream out your innocence./ React.")—seemingly reaches out, across the printed page, to the woman described in 'Acompanhamento'.[5] The decision to print the Russian author's short story and the Angolan author's poem side by side is evidence of intertextual *and* intercultural dialogue. Their publication in the inaugural issue of *Cultura* illustrates the broader history of the transmission of Gorky's writing in mid-twentieth-century Angola. This transmission underpinned, crucially, the development of a *littérature engagée* during the country's struggle for independence from the Portuguese Empire in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

This chapter seeks to determine the ways in which Gorky's work influenced, through processes of translation, transmission, and adaptation, a critical moment in the emergence of an Angolan national literary culture. Through a case study of José Luandino Vieira—one of the most widely celebrated members of the Geração *Cultura*, a generation of writers committed to promoting an Angolan national identity, or *angolanidade*—drawing on extant scholarship of translation and ideology, this chapter analyses the "degrees of mediation" between Gorky's *oeuvre* and its instrumentalisation by the 1950s generation of Angolan authors through a comparative analysis of works by Gorky and Luandino Vieira.[6] The "degrees of mediation" traced in this paper fall into two main categories: first, both the translation of the Russian author into Brazilian Portuguese—with particular emphasis on his novel *Mother* (*Mat'*, 1906)—and its transnational dissemination across the Atlantic; second, in light of the translations then available to Angolan authors, the adaptation of aspects of Gorky's novel in the early writings of Luandino Vieira (*A Cidade e a Infância*, 1954–57; *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*, 1961; *Vidas Novas*, 1961–62).

Angola is a fruitful case study of Soviet entanglements in the African continent—a significant aspect of the Soviet Union's policy of anti-imperialist internationalism. According to Christopher Stevens's evaluation: "Angola is unique in the history of Soviet involvement in Africa. Never before has the USSR assisted an African liberation movement on such a grand scale".[7] The Soviet Union's investment in Angola—and, more specifically, in the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)—increased considerably during the Angolan Civil War (1975–2002). However, previous links between

5 Abel, 'Simples: poema aos meus irmãos', in *Cultura*, 1 (November 1957), 6–7 (p. 6, ll. 1–2, ll. 5–8).

6 Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 122.

7 Christopher Stevens, 'The Soviet Union and Angola', *African Affairs*, 75:299 (April 1976), 137–51 (p. 137).

the two countries dating back to the late 1950s meant that literary affiliations at the start of Angola's nationalist movement were inevitably measured alongside political affiliations. As the dates reveal, the development of these affiliations was contemporaneous with the formation of the MPLA and the outbreak of the anti-colonial struggle. The party's early history was deeply imbricated with the policies and influence of the Soviet Union. Poet and 'father of Angolan nationalism' Mário Pinto de Andrade (1928–90), for example, visited the USSR during his stint as president of the MPLA (1959–62). In August 1960, he travelled to Moscow to take part in the International Congress of Oriental Studies, "as [a] guest of the Soviet Writers' Union"; he returned to the USSR a year later with other MPLA leaders "at the invitation of the Solidarity Committee".[8] Similarly, in 1963, Agostinho Neto (1922–79), Pinto de Andrade's successor as president of the MPLA (1963–75, 1975–79) and first president of Angola (1975–79)—embarked on a tour of the Soviet bloc with the intention of publicising "o estado da luta contra a soberania portuguesa em Angola" ("the state of the struggle against Portuguese sovereignty in Angola").[9] That Neto would later win the Lenin Peace Prize for 1975–76, and indeed the fact that he died in the Soviet Union, attests to the inter-relationship between Angola and the Soviet Union. According to Rossen Djagalov, "[t]he appeal of Soviet anti-imperialism indirectly helped the stature of Russo-Soviet literature with readers and writers from the (semi-)colonial world".[10] It is this relationship that underpins the interest Angolan authors had in Russian literature in the decades leading up to independence, and helps to explain why they sought out both political and aesthetic affiliations with the USSR.

A new chapter in the history of the Portuguese-language transmission of Gorky's work, and of Russian literature more generally, remains to be written: one in which these texts' (often clandestine) circulation throughout Portuguese-speaking Africa, in either Brazilian or European translations, whether from the French or directly from the Russian, might more thoroughly be traced. That project extends beyond the scope of this present chapter, which nevertheless aims to begin work in this direction. For our purposes, it suffices that, on both shores of the Atlantic, Portuguese-speaking writers with emancipatory aspirations saw opportunities for political and aesthetic affiliation in Gorky's works. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will compare Gorky and Luandino Vieira, foregrounding the transposition of aspects of Gorky's *oeuvre*, and the novel *Mother* in particular, into the Angolan author's early writings. What emerges,

8 W. Martin James, *Historical Dictionary of Angola* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 6; Vladimir Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), pp. 7– 8.

9 Carlos Alberto de Jesus Alves, 'Política externa angolana em tempo de guerra e paz: colonialismo e pós-colonialismo' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universidade de Coimbra, 2013), pp. 44–45.

10 Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*, p. 36.

then, not only serves to confirm Djagalov's suggestion that "Moscow's realpolitik [...] did not straightforwardly translate into the imaginaries of leftist cultural producers" in the Third World, where "the vast majority of such intellectuals took the October Revolution and the Soviet cultural production it inflected and turned them into gigantic canvases onto which to project their own aspirations", but also to provide an opportunity to trace how material histories of translation, however *un*straightforward, have intersected with this projection.[11]

Reading Gorky in Angola

The influence of Gorky's work on the generation of Angolan writers active in the 1950s and 1960s has been explicitly acknowledged. In a 1977 interview, for instance, Luandino Vieira remarks that a close acquaintance, fellow poet António Jacinto, "pôs-nos a sua biblioteca à disposição e nós lemos muito" ("placed his library at our disposal and we read a lot").[12] Luandino Vieira proceeds with a description of Jacinto's private library and the volumes held therein:

> Ele tinha uma biblioteca muito boa, quero dizer: de muitos livros maus quanto ao papel, eram edições populares que naquele tempo circulavam nos anos 30, alguns mesmo eram edições de cordel, publicadas em fascículos. [...] Lembro-me que li o Górki em caderninhos, publicados em fascículos.[13]
>
> (He had a very good library: that is to say, with many volumes in cheap editions, they were popular editions that circulated at the time in the 1930s some were even serialised editions, published in fascicles. [...] I recall that I read Gorky in small notebooks, published in fascicles.)

Of particular significance among the volumes held in Jacinto's private library were Brazilian translations of "o que, na altura, chamávamos de literatura revolucionária, como a *Mãe* do Górki" ("what we, at the time, called revolutionary literature, such as Gorky's *Mother*").[14] Attesting to the pervasive influence of Russian literature and of Gorky's works, in particular on Angolan intellectuals of the 1950s and 1960s, other prominent writers of the period report similar

11 Ibid., p. 12.

12 'Encontro de 6 de abril de 1977', in *Luandino: José Luandino Vieira e a Sua Obra* (*Estudos, Testemunhos, Entrevistas*), ed. by Michel Laban (Lisbon: Edições 70, 1980), pp. 11–29 (p. 15).

13 Ibid., p. 15.

14 Débora Leite David and Susanna Ramos Ventura, 'Conversa com o escritor angolano José Luandino Vieira, que gentilmente nos recebeu na tarde do dia 27 de fevereiro de 2006, em sua casa no Convento de San Payo, Vila Nova de Cerveira', África*: Revista do Centro de Estudos Africanos* 27–28 (2006/2007), 175–97 (p. 175).

experiences to that of Luandino Vieira.[15] In a 1984 interview, Pinto de Andrade echoes Luandino Vieira's account:

> Foi o romance russo que verdadeiramente me formou. Em traduções brasileiras, comecei a ler, muito cedo, com dezasseis anos, [...] Gogol, Górki e Tolstói. *A Mãe* foi um dos primeiros romances revolucionários—e de que maneira—que li. Recordo-me muito bem do exemplar, num péssimo papel, e da capa da versão brasileira.[16]
>
> (It was the Russian novel that truly shaped me. In Brazilian translations, I began reading, at a very early age, at sixteen [...] Gogol, Gorky, and Tolstoy. *Mother* was one of the first revolutionary novels—and how revolutionary it was—that I read. I remember the copy well, printed on awful paper, and its cover that of the Brazilian edition.)

The two Angolan writers' accounts share similarities that merit further consideration. While Pinto de Andrade notes the significance of the encounter with "o romance russo" ("the Russian novel") to his intellectual development, he emphasises, in a manner similar to Luandino Vieira, the pre-eminence of *Mother* specifically mentioned by both Angolans. Pinto de Andrade, moreover, highlights that he read Gorky's novel in a Brazilian edition, printed on "péssimo papel" ("awful paper"), recalling Luandino Vieira's earlier description of the "muitos livros maus quanto ao papel, [...] edições populares que naquele tempo circulavam" ("many volumes in cheap editions, [...] popular editions that circulated at the time"), of which the Portuguese-language *A Mãe* was one.[17]

15 In the preface to the 1980 illustrated edition of poet and first president of Angola Agostinho Neto's *Náusea*, Antero Abreu describes it as "[u]m conto de escritor 'engagé'" ("a committed writer's story"), listing "os neo-realistas portugueses e de outros países europeus, e Gorki, e Jorge Amado, e Graciliano Ramos" ("the Portuguese neo-realists as well as those from other European countries, and Gorky, and Jorge Amado, and Graciliano Ramos") as significant influences. See Antero Abreu, 'Prefácio', in Agostinho Neto, *Náusea/O Artista* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 1980), p. 14. Similarly, according to Rubens Pereira dos Santos, writer Eugénia Neto considered her encounter with Gorky's work the most important consequence of her travels to the Soviet Union. See Rubens Pereira dos Santos, 'Gorki e Luandino Vieira: Relações Literárias', in *De* Luuanda *a Luandino: Veredas*, ed. by Francisco Topa and Elsa Pereira (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2015), pp. 111–20 (p. 112).

16 Mário Pinto de Andrade, *Uma entrevista dada a Michel Laban* (Lisbon: Edições Sá da Costa, 1997), pp. 33–34.

17 The seemingly idiosyncratic remark is, nevertheless, revealing of these editions' intended readerships. According to Bruno Barretto Gomide, Gorky's works, often printed by publishers associated with "intelectuais e gráficas de esquerda" ("left-wing presses and intellectuals"), were also read in Brazil, almost exclusively in cheap editions. Bruno Barretto Gomide, *Dostoiévski na Rua do Ouvidor: A Literatura Russa e o Estado Novo* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2018), p. 17, p. 29.

Pinto de Andrade expounds, albeit briefly, on this process of transmission: in Brazil, he observes, "[e]stava-se na época de Getúlio Vargas, uma época liberal, em que se traduzia muito, e vamos encontrar mais tarde diversas versões brasileiras dos clássicos marxistas, que foram distribuídos em Angola" ("it was the time of Getúlio Vargas, a liberal time, during which much was being translated, and later we will encounter several Brazilian editions of the Marxist classics, which were distributed in Angola").[18]

The clandestine nature of the distribution of such "clássicos marxistas" ("Marxist classics") during the decades leading up to independence in 1975 has unfortunately resulted in sparse, although still illuminating, accounts of the history of the transmission of Russian literature (often by way of Brazil) in Angola. In a 2006 interview, Luandino Vieira remarks that due to "ligações mais ou menos clandestinas" ("more or less clandestine connections") between the two Portuguese-speaking countries, "todo o material de natureza política, a formação política [...] veio do Brasil" ("all material of a political nature, all political development [...] came from Brazil").[19] This reflects the situation Pascale Casanova has described, whereby Brazil's influence—in particular its establishment of alternative centres of literary production to Lisbon—"made it possible for writers in other parts of the Portuguese-speaking area, less endowed in cultural and literary resources, to look to the São Paulo pole in attempting to overturn traditional political and literary norms".[20] Indeed, Angolan writers during this period "rel[ied] upon Brazilian literary resources", ranging from national Brazilian literature to Brazilian translations of literature from other national canons, "in order to counteract the influence of European models and to create their own literary genealogy and history"[21]

The translation and circulation of Russian literature in Brazil can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. However, the vast majority of these translations, Iulia I. Mikaelyan notes, did not use Russian originals as source texts, but rather what Mikaelyan terms "European" translations, particularly in English and—in the case of Brazil—French.[22] The 1930s, under President Getúlio Vargas (1930–45), saw the number of translations of Russian literature increase, as the first years of the decade were characterised by a "febre de eslavismo".[23] Significantly, however, there was also a rise in the number of direct translations

18 Andrade, p. 34.
19 David and Ventura, p. 176.
20 Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 123.
21 Ibid., pp. 123–24.
22 Iu. I. Mikaelian, 'Rossiia v Brazilii: vzaimodeistvie kul'tur (opyty perevoda)', *Kontsept: filosofiia, religiia, kul'tura* 3 (2017), 95–100 (p. 97). For more on the Brazilian reception of Russian literature in the late nineteenth century, see Bruno Barretto Gomide, *Da Estepe à Caatinga: O Romance Russo no Brasil (1887–1936)* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2011).
23 Gomide, *Dostoiévski na Rua do Ouvidor*, p. 17.

from the Russian: the consequence, according to Bruno Barretto Gomide, of a "forte cruzamento entre política, imigração e tradução de textos russos" ("strong overlap between politics, immigration, and the translation of Russian texts"), which took place during the period.[24]

The publication of Gorky's *oeuvre* in Brazil attests to this shift. If the earliest translations of Gorky to appear in Brazilian publications date to the first years of the twentieth century, it was in the 1930s and 1940s that interest in the Russian author's work became evident. Let us take *Mother* as an example. The first Portuguese translation of Gorky's novel was published in Brazil in 1931, under the title *A Mãe*, by the publishing house Marisa;[25] that same year, the translation (revised by Renato Travassos) was also published as an instalment of Companhia Editora Americana's Collecção de Obras Celebres. In 1932, another Brazilian edition of *A Mãe* was published, now by José Calvino Filho—founder of Calvino Filho Editor (later Editorial Calvino Limitada) and publisher of a number of 'clássicos marxistas' ('Marxist classics') in alleged response to such 'fenômenos sociológicos' ('sociological phenomena') of the time as the USSR. Still more editions followed: in 1935, *A Mãe* was published by Civilização Brasileira as part of their Collecções Econômicas SIP; in 1944, by the Brazilian Communist Party-affiliated Editorial Vitória; also in 1944, by Editora Pongetti, in a new translation by Araújo Neves. As suggested by the accounts of such Angolan writers as Luandino Vieira and Pinto de Andrade, it is likely that these editions were among those circulated clandestinely in pre-independence Angola. Increased politicisation has been shown to influence the circulation of symbolic goods.[26] In the Angolan case, this politicisation conditioned the reception of Gorky's *Mother* from the USSR to Angola via Brazilian translations. A question nevertheless remains: in what ways did Angolan intellectuals 'translate' Russian literature, and the work of Gorky in particular, in the 1950s and 1960s?

The emphasis within Translation Studies on the relationship between ideology and translation, and, in particular, the concept of mediation, is important here. Anthony J. Liddicoat argues that, in the context of Translation Studies, 'mediation' is often understood in two ways. First, as "an interpretive act", a "cognitive process that is central to the translator's coming to understand a text

24 Bruno Barretto Gomide, 'Estado Novo, José Olympio e Dostoiévski: por que uma "coleção" de obras completas?', *Anais do 38º Encontro Anual da Anpocs* [*Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais*] (27–31 October 2014), 1–28 (p. 3). https://anpocs.com/index.php/papers-38-encontro/gt-1/gt28-1. See also Gomide's essay in the current volume.

25 No translator was named in any of the earlier editions.

26 Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, 'Outline for a Sociology of Translation: Current Issues and Future Prospects', in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, ed. by Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007), pp. 93–107 (p. 97).

and representing it for a new audience".[27] Second, as a consequence of the fact that a "translator is an intermediary intervening in texts to achieve meaningful communication", and therefore occupies a position "between languages and cultures".[28] At the heart of this dual concept of mediation is Basil Hatim and Ian Mason's understanding of translation as "an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication (which may have been intended for different purposes and different readers/hearers)", and their view of the translator "as a processor of texts" who "filters the text world of the source text through his/her own world-view/ideology, with differing results".[29] Hatim and Mason stress both the "degrees of mediation" that intervene between source text and target text, and the role of the translator as mediator. Translation emerges from their analysis as a complex communicative function by which a text is processed, by which new ideological content is incorporated into it, and by which it is made to communicate with new audiences.[30]

The Influence of *Mother*

Maksim Gorky's novel *Mat'* was written in 1906 while the author was abroad, evading the threat of arrest in Russia following the events of 1905.[31] It was first published in (English) translation in the United States in seven instalments in *Appleton's Magazine* under the title *Mother* (1906–07); it finally appeared, with revisions, in Russian in 1907.[32] The novel has since been canonised as the first work of Socialist Realism—and its author as "the acknowledged 'father' of Soviet literature".[33] However, this classification has not elicited critical consensus. While critics such as Andrei Siniavskii have argued that *Mother* has been "rightly considered in Soviet historiography as the first example of socialist realism" ("spravedlivo priniatyi v sovetskoi istoriografii kak pervyi obrazets sotsialisticheskogo realizma"), others, like Evgeny Dobrenko, have more recently foregrounded the "artificial" nature of the endeavour to trace

27 Anthony J. Liddicoat, 'Translation as intercultural mediation: setting the scene', *Perspectives*, 24: 3 (2016), 347–53 (p. 348).
28 Ibid.
29 Hatim and Mason, p. 1, p. 122.
30 Ibid., p. 122.
31 Barry P. Scherr, *Maxim Gorky* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1988), pp. 8–9.
32 Sara Pankenier and Barry P. Scherr, 'Searching for the Ur-Text: Gorky's English "Mother"', *Russian Language Journal*, 51:168–170 (1997), 125–48 (p. 125); Richard Freeborn, *The Russian Revolutionary Novel: Turgenev to Pasternak* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 45.
33 Scherr, p. 19.

the "origins" of Socialist Realism to Gorky's novel.[34] Earlier critics, moreover, have associated Gorky with Critical Realism (*kriticheskii realizm*)—an important precursor of Socialist Realism, which, unlike the latter, does not necessarily pose Socialism as the solution to the issues it analyses.[35] It is nevertheless the case that *Mother*, on the basis of both its narrative structure and its dominant themes, became "a prototype for future socialist realist novels"—an ethical and aesthetic model seized upon by Angolan writers of the 1950s and 1960s.[36]

The novel depicts the process of revolutionary awakening among workers in tsarist Russia, balancing both a portrayal of the lives of ordinary people and an account of a transformative encounter with Socialism. It is divided into two parts: in the first, one of its two protagonists, Pelageia Nilovna Vlasova—a forty-year-old woman, mother to Pavel Vlasov—is depicted as a passive witness to unfolding events. Having suffered years of abuse from her late husband, Mikhail Vlasov, she clings desperately to her son Pavel, supporting him when he joins a group of Socialists. In the second part, Nilovna participates actively in the revolutionary struggle. She is transformed by contact with Pavel and his comrades, becoming an exemplary revolutionary and heroic figure. Both the novel's setting—a workers' settlement—and its privileging of working-class characters and issues, find echoes in the themes and settings of Luandino Vieira's early works. Many of the Angolan author's texts draw attention to locations—such as the "musseques" or the "sanzala", the Angolan cultural equivalents of the "slobodki" of Gorky's fictional world—associated either with labour or labourers, depicting characters that live at the margins of colonial society.

34 Andrei Siniavskii, 'Roman M. Gor'kogo *Mat'*—kak rannii obrazets sotsialisticheskogo realizma', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 29:1 (January–March 1988), 33–40 (p. 34); Evgeny Dobrenko, 'Socialist Realism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, ed. by Evgeny Dobrenko and Marina Balina (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 97–114 (p. 103).

35 A. Lavretskii, 'O sud'be literaturovedcheskogo termina' [About the Literary Term], *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR*, 16:1 (1957), 34–38 (p. 35).

36 The debate between 'Critical Realism' and 'Socialist Realism' has also featured in studies on Angolan literature. Soviet literary critic and translator of Angolan literature Elena Aleksandrovna Riauzova, noting a change in the literary methods and topics featured in Angolan literature between the 1950s and 1970s, argues that Angolan writers of this period used mostly Critical, as opposed to Socialist, Realism, as they sought to analyse social inequalities, urban and village experiences, and conflicts between social groups. Nevertheless, despite Aleksandrovna's accurate evaluation of texts like Luandino Vieira's *A Cidade e a Infância*, close attention to the development of his style more generally across his early career evidences a growing tendency to favour the themes and techniques of Socialist Realism. See Elena Aleksandrovna Riauzova, *Roman v sovremennykh portugaloiazichnykh literaturakh* (*problemy tipologii i vzaimodeistviia*) (*The Novel in Contemporary Portuguese Literatures: Problems of Typology and Reciprocal Action*) (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), p. 185.

While the similarities between Gorky's novel and Luandino Vieira's early works are clear, it is important to note that the Angolan author's portrayal of the "musseques" and the "sanzala" differs from Gorky's "slobodki" as a result of the racial dynamics that characterises these spaces. In *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier* (*The Real Life of Domingos Xavier*), for instance, the "musseques" and the "sanzala" are where the "operários e trabalhadores negros" ("black workmen and labourers"), such as Domingos Xavier, live. This location is contrasted with the "camaratas de alumínio" ("aluminium dormitories")—where the "operários brancos" ("white workmen") live—as well as the houses inhabited by the "empregados superiores da empresa" ("senior staff of the construction company"). The workers' settlement is, for members of the anti-colonial struggle, a site of racialised differences. This racial dimension is, of course, absent from Gorky's novel, where class represents the dominant means of social striation. Yet, both authors demonstrate how, in their respective contexts, characters begin to organise their discontent towards authoritarian regimes into meaningful collective action. The different emphases in each author's works do not obfuscate what is immediately comparable about the experiences and struggles of their characters. For instance, Angola, under Portuguese colonial rule, much like tsarist Russia, was characterised by political repression, censorship, arbitrary arrests, and torture. Whereas the Russians were subjected to the Okhrana, the Angolans were subjected to Portugal's International and State Defense Police (PIDE)—the colonial police—which was responsible for the arrests of those the regime deemed dangerous to its rule. While both authors depict struggles that take place in environments characterised by repression, both nevertheless depict the beginnings of struggles for liberation, which would eventually culminate, respectively, in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Angolan independence in 1975.

Within these contexts of repression, characters undergo important transformations. Nilovna and Pavel begin as passive victims of oppression and develop into heroes of revolutionary agency. According to Rufus Mathewson:

> *Mother* contains two formulas often found in later Soviet fiction: the conversion of the innocent, the ignorant, or the misled to a richer life of participation in the forward movement of society; and the more important pattern of emblematic political heroism in the face of terrible obstacles. The first theme is embodied in the figure of the mother, whose life is transformed by affiliation with the revolutionary movement, and the second in the grim figure of her son, Pavel.[37]

These two formulas are, however, harder to separate than Mathewson suggests. The politicisation of Nilovna through contact with her son and his comrades

37 Rufus W. Mathewson, Jr, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 167.

produces, beyond a mere "conversion", its own "pattern of emblematic political heroism". For instance, Nilovna's ability to take the revolutionary struggle forward after Pavel's arrest implies that the distribution of agency and exemplary behaviour between Mathewson's "two formulas" is more complex. What is clear, however, is the importance of the figure of the hero, of exemplary lives and actions, to the socially engaged literature read by Angolan intellectuals in the context of the struggle for national independence. As Emmanuel Nagra argues, speaking here of the African novel in general, "[s]ocialist realism is [...] orientated towards the future, towards the building of a happy, successful and socialist society", and this orientation is frequently concentrated in the action of characters like Nilovna and Pavel—characters who exemplify the manifold processes of conversion, participation, and political heroism Mathewson describes. These processes are, as Gorky himself suggests in a speech delivered at the first Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, in accordance with Socialist Realism's mythic qualities:

> Myth is invention. To invent means to extract from the sum of a given reality its cardinal idea and embody it in imagery—that is how we got realism. But if to the idea extracted from the given reality we add—completing the idea by the logic of hypothesis—the desired, the possible, and thus supplement the image, we obtain that romanticism which is at the basis of myth and is highly beneficial in that it tends to provoke a revolutionary attitude to reality, an attitude that changes the world in a practical way.[38]

Gorky here proposes an artistic scheme in which Mathewson's "two formulas" operate in conjunction: both the educative extraction of the "cardinal idea" of a given situation, producing a realism capable of converting "the innocent" and "the ignorant" by the force of its representation; and the infusion into this "reality" of "the desired, the possible", a "pattern of emblematic political heroism" which might provoke admiration and imitation.

The Making of Heroes

This combination of social critique and the 'romanticism' of heroism is essential to the political purposes of Luandino Vieira's writing. For instance, 'Quinzinho', one of the ten pieces included in Luandino Vieira's first collection of short stories, *A Cidade e a Infância*, tells—through a second-person address to Quinzinho—of

38 Maksim Gorky, 'Soviet Literature', in *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism in the Soviet Union* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), pp. 25–69 (p. 44).

the eponymous character's death at the hands of a factory machine.[39] Referred to as a "poeta do trabalho" ("poet of labour"), Quinzinho, we learn, has been "[d]espedaçado pela máquina que te escravizava e que tu amavas" ("torn apart by the machine that enslaved you and that you loved").[40] At the funeral, the narrator states:

> Eu também aqui no meio dos teus amigos. Mas eu não vou triste. Não. Porque uma morte como a tua constrói liberdades futuras. E haverá outros a quem as máquinas não despedaçarão, pois as máquinas serão escravas deles, que as hão-de idealizar, construir.[41]
>
> (I am here, too, among your friends. But I am not sad. No. Because a death like yours constructs future freedoms. And there will be others whom the machines will not tear apart, because the machines will be their slaves, who will envision them, construct them.)

Written on 8 February 1957—the same year in which the inaugural issue of *Cultura* was published—the short story gestures to concerns that will be considered in greater detail in subsequent works by the Angolan author, such as *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier* and *Vidas Novas* (*New Lives*). While Russell G. Hamilton, in his pioneering 1975 study on the literatures of Portuguese-speaking Africa, *Voices from an Empire*, notes that, in *Vidas Novas*, we are met with the (recognisably Gorkian) "idea of the hero or of the hapless victim who becomes the hero of the people", it is nevertheless the case that such heroic trajectories feature not only in Luandino Vieira's 1962 collection, but also in his earlier works.[42] Here, Quinzinho's death—at the hands of both a literal and, indeed, metaphorical 'máquina' ('machine'), the word's connotations extending past its immediate context (that is, the factory), towards what was often referred to as the 'máquina colonial' ('colonial machine') of Portuguese administration under António de Oliveira Salazar—functions much like Pavel's arrest in *Mother*. Quinzinho's death is regarded as a means through which other workers—"outros a quem as máquinas não despedaçarão" ("others whom the machines will not tear apart")—might develop class consciousness, enabling the construction of "liberdades futuras" ("future freedoms"). The future-oriented stance of 'Quinzinho', like that of *Mother*, can be seen to permeate much of Luandino Vieira's *oeuvre*.

This is particularly true of the novella *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*. The protagonist, Domingos Xavier, is a tractor driver, husband to Maria and

39 José Luandino Vieira, 'Quinzinho', in *A Cidade e a Infância* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 1977), pp. 147–53 (p. 149).
40 Ibid., p. 150.
41 Ibid.
42 Russell G. Hamilton, *Voices from an Empire: A History of Afro-Portuguese Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), p. 138.

father to Bastião—a man described as "muito amigo, nunca faltando com seu ordenado" ("very affectionate, never missing his wages"), a detail that serves to underline his sense of responsibility; a man described, moreover, as someone "[que] nunca fez mal a ninguém" ("who never did anyone any harm").[43] An ordinary man who, in a manner similar to *Mother*'s Pelageia Nilovna, undergoes a process of revolutionary awakening through his conversations with Silvestre, the white engineer stationed at the construction site. For this, Domingos Xavier is arrested, tortured, and killed by agents of the PIDE, transformed into a "corpo martirizado" ("martyred body"); into an "herói mítico angolano" ("mythical Angolan hero"), an ideal of national liberation.[44] Mussunda, in the novella's closing speech, proclaims:

> — Irmãos angolanos. Um irmão veio dizer mataram um nosso camarada. Se chamava Domingos Xavier e era tractorista. Nunca fez mal a ninguém, só queria o bem do seu povo, e da sua terra. Fiz parar esta farra só para dizer isto, não é para acabar, porque a nossa alegria é grande: nosso irmão se portou como homem, não falou os assuntos do seu povo, não se vendeu. Não vamos chorar mais a sua morte porque, Domingos António Xavier, você começa hoje a sua vida de verdade no coração do povo angolano...[45]
>
> (— Angolan brothers. A brother came to say that they have killed one of our comrades. He was called Domingos Xavier and he was a tractor driver. He never did anyone any harm, he only wished for the good of his people, and of his land. I have stopped our festivities, not to put an end to them, for our joy is great, but to say this: our brother carried himself like a man, he did not talk about the affairs of his people, he did not sell himself. We will no longer cry over your death because, Domingos António Xavier, today you begin your real life in the heart of the Angolan people...)

Here, the future-oriented stance of the short story 'Quinzinho' is once more made manifest. In both works, life does not end with death. Just as Quinzinho's death marks less an end than it does a starting point for "liberdades futuras" ("future freedoms"), that of Domingos Xavier marks the beginning of his "vida de verdade" ("real life"). Both narratives subscribe to the "formulas" Mathewson identifies in *Mother*, adapting them for Angolan audiences. If, in the former, we see Quinzinho (however inadvertently) become consecrated as a representative of the "emblematic political heroism" embodied by Pavel, in the latter we see the

43 Luandino Vieira, *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*, p. 35, p. 128.
44 Ibid., p. 104; Heleno Godoy, 'Dizer/não dizer: por que é verdadeira a vida de Domingos Xavier?', *Scripta*, 1:1 (1997), 196–203 (p. 196).
45 Luandino Vieira, *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*, p. 128.

"innocent" Domingos Xavier—and other characters, such as the "misled" Xico Kafundanga—undergo a "conversion [...] to a richer life of participation in the forward movement of society", following, like Quinzinho, "the more important pattern of emblematic political heroism in the face of terrible obstacles".[46] Both works, like much of Luandino Vieira's early writings, contain a "general presentation of an awakening consciousness within previously ignorant people", a "depiction of the seemingly inexorable growth of the revolutionary movement", and an "ending, which in one sense is a defeat [...] but also contains the seeds of future victories".[47] Barry Scherr's evaluation of Gorky's novel is also a surprisingly adequate description of the Angolan writer's texts.

Gendered Revolutions

While the narrative trajectory popularised in *Mother* finds expression in *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*, Luandino Vieira adapts this trajectory—or the agent of this trajectory—to the expectations of an Angolan readership. Scherr's phrase, "seeds of future victories", is particularly evocative of the generative potential of Nilovna as "mother". Many critics have commented on the relationship between gender and revolutionary agency in Gorky's novel. Angela Brintlinger has argued that "[b]y naming the novel after his secondary character, the mother Nilovna [...], Gorky offers a generative model for future revolutionary action."[48] Indeed, Nilovna extends the support she offers Pavel to other characters, particularly Andrei Onisimovich Nakhodka, her son's Ukrainian comrade. In a sense, she becomes a mother to Andrei, and adapts a maternal role to encompass extra-familial support and care. As the novel progresses, Nilovna is transformed into the "Mother" of the revolutionary movement. She considers all fighters her children: as she herself points out, "Voistinu, vse vy—tovarishchi, vse—rodnye, vse—deti odnoi materi—pravdy!" ("In very truth we are all comrades, all kindred spirits, all children of one mother, who is truth!").[49] Gender plays an essential role in this transformation. By reconfiguring motherhood, Nilovna discovers a revolutionary vocation. As Brintlinger says: "'Mother' with a capital *M* defines Gorky's attitude toward revolution: not only can the older generation be reformed, but they can 'give birth' to more and more youth willing to work and fight for changes in society."[50]

46 Mathewson, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*, p. 167.
47 Scherr, *Maxim Gorky*, p. 47.
48 Angela Brintlinger, *Chapaev and His Comrades: War and the Russian Literary Hero Across the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2017), p. 39.
49 Maksim Gor'kiĭ. *Mat'* (Moscow: Detskaia literatura, 1936), p. 171; Maxim Gorky, *Mother*, trans. by Margaret Wettlin (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), p. 377.
50 Brintlinger, p. 39.

Yet, women in pre- and post-independence Angolan literature are rarely—if, indeed, ever—portrayed as heroes.[51] Despite Angolan "[w]omen's involvement in the struggle for independence [in] response to the ideals of the MPLA to fight for the 'equality of all Angolans, regardless of ethnicity, religion, regional origin and sex'", and despite the active participation of the Organization of Angolan Women (OMA)—the women's wing of the MPLA—in this struggle since its establishment in 1962, women have largely been sidelined in narratives, both fictional and official, of national liberation.[52] As such, the models of heroism available in *Mother* are adapted to reflect the MPLA's ideological line. As we learn from Mussunda's speech, Domingos Xavier's perceived heroism is attributed to the fact that "nosso irmão se portou como homem" ("our brother carried himself like a man"). This is echoed in the story 'O Exemplo de Job Hamukuaja', written in 1962 and included in the collection *Vidas Novas*. The story concerns two characters, ultimately deemed "dois bons angolanos" ("two good Angolans"): Job Hamukuaja, a man being tortured by agents of the PIDE, accused of having "entregado o pacote com os panfletos para distribuir na 'industrial'" ("delivered the package with the pamphlets to be distributed in the industrial zone"); and Mário João, a comrade who, unable to withstand torture, reveals Job's name.[53] On realising that Job is steadfast in his silence, Mário João smiles: "Sabia bem que ia aguentar, o companheiro tinha-lhe mostrado como fazem os homens de verdade."[54] ("He knew he would be able to bear it, his comrade had shown him how real men carry themselves.")

Once more, a masculinised image of heroism is invoked. Here, the term "real man"—"nastoiashchii muzhchina"—is reminiscent of the longstanding Soviet model of hegemonic masculinity.[55] The translation of the gender associated with the "seeds of future victories" represents one important degree of mediation in the reception and circulation of Russian writing in Angolan contexts. Indeed, in portraying the gender politics of pre-independence Angola, Luandino Vieira

51 For a more extensive discussion on the erasure of women in Angolan literature, see Dorothée Boulanger, *Fiction as History: Resistance and Complicities in Angolan Postcolonial Literature* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2022).

52 Henda Ducados, 'An all men's show? Angolan women's survival in the 30-year war', *Agenda* 16:43 (2000), 11–22 (p. 15).

53 José Luandino Vieira, 'O Exemplo de Job Hamukuaja', in *Vidas Novas* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 1976), pp. 139–54 (p. 143).

54 Ibid., p. 154.

55 Elena Zdravomyslova and Anna Temkina note that, in the early Soviet period, "a real man was first and foremost someone who participated in the industrialisation of the country and in the Great Patriotic War, and his image was replicated in Soviet movies, literature, and art as a positive socio-anthropological type". They note, moreover, that "[h]eroism was a substantial trait" of such "real men", whose "vocation [...] was to serve his motherland"—a service which, as seen in *Domingos Xavier*, "was well rewarded by his heroization". See Elena Zdravomyslova and Anna Temkina, 'The Crisis of Masculinity in Late Soviet Discourse', *Russian Studies in History*, 51:2 (2012), 13–34 (esp. pp. 21–22).

translates the "formulas" popularised in *Mother* in accordance with the MPLA's expectations regarding the participation of women in the struggle for national liberation.

The Pedagogy of Example

These heroic figures, moreover, convey a sense of pedagogical purpose central to both *Mother* and Luandino Vieira's early writings, in terms of an investment in the representation of exemplary lives, and also in explicit forms of teaching and instruction. For Vladimir Lenin, the "importance" of Gorky's *Mother* is bound up with its educative function: "many workers," he suggests, "who have joined the revolutionary movement impulsively, without properly understanding why, will begin to comprehend after reading" it.[56] Lenin's enthusiasm reflects a much broader faith in the transformational power of fiction—a faith that modulated Soviet interest in cultural movements across the African continent. "Down to its very bureaucracy," Djagalov notes, "the Soviet state, as an heir to the 19th-century Russian intelligentsia, believed in the power of literature and culture to change hearts and minds, heavily invested in this belief, and projected it onto societies, including postcolonial ones, structured very differently from its own".[57] In this context, it is hardly surprising that aspects of Luandino Vieira's writing reflect the themes and tropes of Gorky's. In *Mother*, for instance, Pavel's encounter with Socialism allows him (and his mother) to escape the influence of his alcoholic and violent father; an educative exposure to new ideas is central to the novel's narrative.

A similar mentoring relationship is expressed in Luandino Vieira's *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*. Xico Kafundunga follows a comparable trajectory:

> Com essas conversas de sábado à tarde ou domingo de farra no clube, Xico foi verificando que a vida não é só de calça estreita, brilhantina avulso, camisa americana. E mais tarde, num dia de grande chuva de Abril, amigo Mussanda tinha falado umas conversas que lhe abriram nos olhos: mostrou que não havia branco, nem preto, nem mulato, mas só pobre e rico, e que rico é inimigo do pobre porque quer ele sempre pobre.[58]
>
> (Through their conversations on Saturday afternoons or at the Sunday festivities, Xico started to understand that life wasn't only tight-fitting trousers, oil-slicked hair, and American shirts. And later, on one of those days during the heavy April showers, his friend Mussunda said things

56 Boris Bursov, 'Preface', in Gorky, *Mother*, trans. by Margaret Wettlin, pp. 5–11 (p. 10).

57 Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*, p. 11.

58 Luandino Vieira, *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*, p. 46.

> that had opened Xico's eyes: he showed him that there weren't whites, blacks, or mulattos, but only the poor and the rich, and that the rich were the enemies of the poor because they wanted the poor to remain poor.)

This sense of didacticism—emphasised by the use of verbs like "mostrar" ("to show"), "abrir" ("to open"), "verificar" ("to verify")—reflects themes and intentions conventionally attributed to Socialist Realism, which Hamilton associated with Luandino Vieira's early writings. For Hamilton, "Luandino has adopted an artistic technique and a stylistic approach appropriate to the didactic optimism of the social reformer".[59] This combination of "artistic technique" and social reform is nowhere clearer than in the blurring between the speech of the novella's characters and the stances of the MPLA. For instance, Mussunda, the tailor, educates his comrades and fellow workers, like Xico Kafundunga, stressing the importance of overcoming racial divisions and adopting instead political opposition along economic lines. The relegation of racial politics to the background of this ideology—a relegation the novella encourages, as one of the main agitators is a white engineer—helps to advance a model of Socialism that remains in accordance with the MPLA's line.

What connects Gorky's novel with Vieira's, then, is their sensitivity to the ways in which an individual life can—as a result of an educative encounter—begin to correspond to, and influence, collective social forces and political movements. Both texts foreground these encounters alongside an effort to represent lives that are politically and socially exemplary, lives which carry over the effect of educative encounters between characters into the encounter between text and reader. Individuals are confronted with collective questions within these narratives, just as the reader is confronted with the collective significance of the heroic activity and behaviour of specific characters. As Maria Lúcia Lepecki argues, this stress on the collective is at the heart of the narrative's force. "Em todas as suas páginas," she observes, "a narrativa da vida verdadeira de um e de muitos Domingos Xavier transporta a vitalidade funda que ultrapassa, de muito, a experiência colectiva e individual do lugar onde foi escrita"[60] ("In all its pages the narrative of the real life of one and many Domingos Xavier transmits the deep vitality that greatly surpasses the collective and individual experience of the place where it was written). The same applicability to experiences beyond "the place where it was written" characterises *Mother*, in which we are told that "the life of working people was the same everywhere", and in this sense it is the universality of the heroic trajectory of Nilovna that provides a model to Angolan writers narrating the anti-colonial struggle—a narrative that itself "ultrapassa, de muito, a experiência colectiva e individual do lugar onde foi

59 Hamilton, *Voices from an Empire*, p. 134.

60 Maria Lúcia Lepecki, 'A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier, ou o sinal da verdade', in *Sobreimpressões: Estudos de Literatura Portuguesa e Africana* (Lisbon: Editorial Caminho, 1988), pp. 165–173 (p. 167).

escrita" ("greatly surpasses the collective and individual experience of the place where it was written").[61]

Conclusion

According to M. Keith Booker and Dubravka Juraga, "the Russian writers whose historical situation most resembles that of postcolonial African writers are not nineteenth-century figures such as Pushkin and Dostoevsky, but post-Revolutionary Socialist writers such as [Maksim] Gorky, [Mikhail] Sholokhov, and Alexei Tolstoy. After all, Soviet literature is itself in a sense postcolonial".[62] Though a contentious claim, this strong sense of affiliation between postcolonial and post-revolutionary writing goes some way to explain why Angolan writers in the 1950s and 1960s, in precisely the decades leading up to independence, found attractive models of literary expression in such works of Socialist Realism as Maksim Gorky's *Mother*. For Angolan authors like José Luandino Vieira, these works constituted—to recall the title of Gorky's short story, published in translation in the first issue of *Cultura*—a vital "*acompanhamento*" ("accompaniment") to the developing struggle for national liberation, and, as in *Cultura*, they suggested the possibility of a mutually enriching dialogue, a relationship of engagement and imaginative response, capable of simultaneously accentuating what is universal about this struggle, and stressing what is particular to it. As such, they provide a means of answering the editors of *Cultura*'s call for the "gestação de uma cultura angolana, nacional pela forma e pelo conteúdo, universal pela intenção" ("development of an Angolan culture, national in its form and content, universal in its intention").[63]

This dual emphasis—on what is shared internationally and on what distinguishes the local contexts in which works like *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier* were written—is reflected in the two aspects of Russian literature's influence in Angola discussed above. First, the material channels—acts of translation, transmission, and adaptation connecting transnationally agents in Russia, Brazil, and Angola—which underpinned the efforts of writers like Luandino Vieira to develop a *littérature engagée* are capable of both inspiring resistance to colonial rule, and dramatising alternatives to it. Second, the degrees of mediation that characterise Luandino Vieira's translation and adaptation of Gorky's techniques and themes into the terms of an anti-colonial struggle. Indeed, for Luandino Vieira, as well as for Angolan intellectuals more generally, Gorky's *Mother* represented, in the words of Djagalov, a "gigantic [canvas] onto which to project

61 Gorky, *Mother*, trans. by Margaret Wettlin, p. 17; Lepecki, p. 166.

62 M. Keith Booker and Dubravka Juraga, 'The Reds and the Blacks: The Historical Novel in the Soviet Union and Postcolonial Africa', *Studies in the Novel*, 29:3 (Fall 1997), 274–96 (p. 284).

63 'Editorial', in *Cultura*, 8 (June 1959), pp. 1–2.

their own aspirations" of national liberation.[64] But it also came to represent this only by virtue of specific histories of translation, transmission, and adaptation, by virtue of significant places, such as the library of António Jacinto, and by virtue of the widespread enthusiasm for Russian literature, and in particular its models for the production of radical and socially-engaged narratives, in the wake of 1917.

64 Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*, p. 42.