

"E eu, que não conhecia nada": The Representation of Today's Goa in Catarina Mourão's *A Dama de Chandor*

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Abstract: Catarina Mourão's *A Dama de Chandor* gently depicts the life of one of Goa's last Lusophone aristocrats, Aida de Menezes Bragança, and shows her struggle to maintain her home and way of life as globalisation and the integration of Goa into India's mainstream sweep it away. Using the documentary typology developed by John Corner, I argue that *A Dama de Chandor* is structured so as to make the viewer identify with Aida and her struggle. There follows an in-depth discussion of some of the issues present and an interrogation of how expanding the contextual frame of reference of the film affects the pattern of identification *A Dama de Chandor* attempts to impose.

A Dama de Chandor (1998) is a moving, poignant documentary by Portuguese filmmaker Catarina Mourão. The film revolves around the life and experiences of Aida de Menezes Bragança, who is presented as ostensibly one of the last representatives of Goa's Portuguese-speaking rural aristocracy. Aida's existence is structured around the fight to preserve her home and way of life in the face of the great changes that have swept Goa since its annexation by India in 1961. The embodiment of her identity and the focus of her struggle is her family home, a 300-year-old Indo-Portuguese mansion at Chandor in the *taluka*, formerly *concelho*, of salcete, which she maintains as a tourist attraction. Encompassing a fusion of Indian and Portuguese elements, featuring chinaware from Macau, heirlooms from the former metropole and photographs

and portraits of prominent ancestors, the Menezes Bragança mansion is the perfect representation of an idealised Indo-Portuguese identity.

Aida's experiences are offset by the testimony of another Goan woman named Maria Azevedo. While Aida is associated with the aristocrats of the territory's vanishing Indo-Portuguese culture, Maria represents Goa's current ongoing direction, a more demotic, democratic and India-focussed present in which the territory, like the country as a whole, forges towards a globalised, Anglophone future. As *A Dama de Chandor* progresses we realise that Maria and Aida do share, to an extent, a common past, and the film ends back at the mansion with a reunion between these two figures. The film's central opposition between the two women is supplemented with some general footage taken in the course of filming: Christmas time in Goa, the territory's shoreline during the monsoon season, tourists relaxing on the sands and staving off persistent beach vendors.

In the construction of *A Dama de Chandor*, Mourão employs a particular narrative strategy, one that allows the film to stand alone as a universally recognisable portrait of an old lifestyle being swept away by new developments. The presentation of this poignant process implicitly encourages the viewer to sympathise with the decaying Indo-Portuguese culture (represented by Aida) over the now pre-eminent, global-oriented, Anglophone Indian present (celebrated by Maria) that dominates Goa today. Whereas Aida is shown at the end pressing the keys of a crumbling, decrepit piano, a beautiful if contrived metaphor for the way she enacts her superannuated identity, before mumbling an awkward "obrigada" to the camera, we see Maria at the beginning tutoring a young student who has just before read out a composition in English on the subject of India. "India is my country" he says, posed gawkily before the lens. Throughout the film, Portugal and Portuguese continually stands out by their absence in the present, as much as they suffuse everything shown to be connected with the past.

Here I will analyse Mourão's strategy with reference to the ideas developed by British documentary theorist John Corner in his work *The Art of Record* (1996). For Corner there are three evidential modes of the image in documentary films (plus one associative mode) and three modalities of speech. The suasive intentions of a documentary can be elucidated by analysing how a particular film omits or includes these modalities within its rhetorical structure.

There is a significant difference between the manner in which *A Dama de Chandor* deals with its two main figures, Aida and Maria. In the strand featuring

the Indo-Portuguese aristocrat, Mourão's film is for the most part in the mode Corner calls *reactive observationalism*, or what is commonly referred to as "fly-on-the-wall" documentary. For Corner "it is an indirect mode, placing the viewer in the position of vicarious witness to ongoing events, often requiring of them a high level of interpretative work in converting the particularity of what is seen and heard into significance" (28). The principal modality of speech in these sections is "overheard" verbal material. Even when it is likely that Aida is being interviewed, her opinions are presented as naturally occurring. The scenes featuring Maria, on the other hand, are more in the vein of what Corner terms *proactive observationalism*. This is similar to the reactive mode, except that "[h]ere, a scene or sequence adopts the basic mode [...] but with management of the pro-filmic" (28). Thus the main regime of transmitting verbal information is what Corner labels "testimony," mainly in the form of an interview.

Reactive observationalism is an open form of documentary, one that formulates no clear overarching questions and provides no complete answers. Yet, despite a propensity for meandering and unpredictable structures, this type of documentary does almost always adopt a clear, if implicit, position in relation to its subject. There would seem to be, in *A Dama de Chandor*, a clear identification with and sympathy for Aida. Despite her privileged origins, she is shown now as an underdog, besieged and beset by a gaudy modern world that has supplanted a refined past, the relics of which continue to line the Menezes Bragança mansion at Chandor.

In its treatment of the daily round of Aida's domestic life, *A Dama de Chandor* takes full advantage of the observational-style documentary's ability to "include movements representative of lived time itself, rather than what we might call 'story time'" identified by Nicolas (40). This theorist defines lived time as "time propelled by the cause/effect logic of classical narrative where an economy of carefully justified and well-motivated actions prevail," wherein "dead or empty time unfolds where nothing of narrative significance occurs but where the rhythms of everyday life settle in and establish themselves" (40). The inclusion of Aida's lived time highlights the arduous nature of her struggle and invites the viewer to marvel at her fortitude and feel sympathy for her plight.

As it appears in Mourão's film, Aida's life is a constant struggle. Her days are dedicated to the upkeep of her house and the orientation of groups of visiting tourists through the history of her home. Whilst the viewer cannot really appreciate the full scale of the Menezes Bragança mansion in Chandor from the intimate sequences captured in *A Dama de Chandor* (where the camera,

in its angle, scope and position, acts almost like an additional member of the groups visiting), the task facing the elderly lady in maintaining her property is obviously an enormous one. Gilberto Freyre once commented that the Menezes Bragança mansion was so long that a bullet shot from one end would fall to the floor before reaching the far wall. Just walking the mansion's corridors is a tiring prospect for an elderly lady, let alone ensuring the upkeep of the whole property. There are extended sequences of Aida engaged in her domestic routine, aided only by an elderly maid. Maintaining the mansion seems to be a Sisyphean task, the housework equivalent of painting the Forth Bridge on one's own. The first domestic activity in which we see Aida engaged, in the *chiaroscuro* of her huge home, is letting in the light. This chore involves lifting up the heavy sash windows that punctuate the walls of the house and swinging back the creaking shutters of the other windows. It is an enormous task for a woman who would have been in the eightieth decade of life at the time of filming.

Although it is not mentioned in the film, we can surmise that Aida, as a Menezes Bragança from Chandor, belongs to the *Chardó* caste, roughly the Goan Christian equivalent of the Hindu Kshatriya grouping. The *Chardó* origins of Aida's forbear, Luís de Menezes Bragança, were often invoked in reference to his tireless campaigning on behalf of his countrymen, a reference to the ancestral duty of the Kshatriyas' to defend the land and homes of their people. Aida, we can say, in her tireless resistance to the forces undermining her home and her way of life, discharges this duty on a household scale. It is one of the strengths of Mourão's film that it conveys the magnitude of Aida's task and the indefatigability of its undertaker.

Acting as a tourist guide seems to be no less a chore, a grinding daily round that exacerbates the exigencies of house maintenance. *A Dama de Chandor* was made and released at a critical moment in the development of tourism in Goa. Negligible under the Portuguese administration, mass tourism to the territory was fostered in the 1980s by an Indian government in need of foreign exchange. By 1998, the year of *A Dama de Chandor's* release, the annual number of visitors outstripped the population of Goa for the first time, according to Óscar Pereira (92). Furthermore, of the 1,228,259 tourists that entered the territory, 275,047 were foreigners. Of this figure, around 50 percent were British, mainly package tourists. The English visitors to Chandor that we see in Mourão's film are almost certainly a representative part of this number.

Tourism is shown to be a mixed blessing. As a result of the general changes in Goa that have disestablished the privileges that once underpinned the

Menezes Bragança's, only paid visits of their home in Chandor now allow the house to persist into the future, albeit more frozen in time as a heritage site than as the scene for a living, breathing tradition. It is in these sequences that the viewer overhears exchanges that bring home the passing of Aida's "Goa Dourada" culture into the dusty realm of history. We see groups of British visitors tramping around her family home, viewing the fine if faded relics and heirlooms of the Menezes Bragança's illustrious past with an uncomprehending enthusiasm. As one Briton says, faced with an overload of fragile antiques and historical references, "there's too much to see!" Without a context within which to understand what is shown, at times the viewer of Mourão's film feels the same way. During these visits, an explicit contrast is established between the fragile delicacy of the mansion and the past that it represents, and the good-natured boorishness of these working-class Britons who strain to understand Aida's accented English and tired explanations.

Later, we see the old and physically frail Aida bargaining with two Indian television producers over the fee she would charge to use her house as a set. The two men haggle in a grasping manner, which jars with Aida's patrician disdain for bartering, an attitude that in contrast renders the men's behaviour petty and slightly callous. In such scenes, the camera is an ever-present, but non-participating observer. For Nichols, in these situations "[t]he presence of the camera 'on the scene' testifies to its presence in the historical world; its fixity suggests a commitment or engagement with the immediate, intimate and personal that is comparable to what an actual observer/participant might participate" (40). The camera is firmly on Aida's side, remaining after the men have left to record the old lady's relief at their departure, and induces the viewer to adopt a similarly biased position towards events. In Mourão's film, the commitment in these sequences seems to be more towards what Aida experiences and feels. The constant impression given is of a woman embattled, a representative of an older, finer civilisation, hanging on in a modern world of budget-obsessed film crews and gawping tourists.

Extrapolating her findings concerning the declining use of the Portuguese language in Goa, American linguist Irene Wherrit predicts that the last Goan speaker of Portuguese will be an elderly lady drawn from the old aristocracy, and that the setting for the last instance of language use will be the domestic sphere (389). Symbolically at least, Aida can be viewed as the territory's last lusophone. At one point, Aida tells us "dentro da casa não me sinto cansada, mas se eu vou para qualquer parte fora do portão, já me chega." The same

seems to hold for the Portuguese language itself, judging by *A Dama de Chandor*. In view of her seeming commitment to Lusophony and the vestiges of the high Indo-Portuguese culture of Goa—which even her extended family seems not to share—and her fortitude and frailty in the face of tawdry, alien pressures, the Portuguese-speaking viewer is almost ineluctably led to identify with Aida. Furthermore, in the sections where we see the Menezes Bragança family, the sense of the decline of this culture, stealing in with the English language, is palpable in the cheap Christmas tree hung with flashing lights and the replica football jerseys in which the children are clad.

It is commonsensical to regard the primary function of a documentary as bearing witness. However, any documentary testifies not just to a particular historical situation but also to a situated gaze. For Nichols, “[i]n documentary, we see how filmmakers regard, or look at, their fellow humans directly. The documentary is a record of that regard” (80). *A Dama de Chandor* is a Portuguese-language documentary, made primarily for a Portuguese-language audience: the affinity for its Portuguese-speaking, Indo-Portuguese-cultured subject is inevitable. Maria also speaks Portuguese, but she is less fluent and the language is obviously less integral to her life. When Aida’s son Cláudio visits her, he and his wife are Portuguese-speakers. If Aida’s extended family is shown to have abandoned Portuguese, her branch of the Menezes Bragança family is seen to have clung on to this aspect of their heritage. On the other hand, when Maria is shown with the next generation we see her speaking English, and teaching French and Konkani.

This process of identification with Aida and her culture reaches its zenith near the end of the film. Over the course of *A Dama de Chandor*, it becomes apparent that the aristocratic culture of Goa’s once Lusophone elite has been supplanted, at least within the symbolic economy of the film, by a gaudy, mass-produced Anglophone way of life. Aida attends the wedding ceremony of seemingly distant relatives. In an excruciatingly corny speech, the priest presiding over the occasion, speaking in English, recalls a lyric from a film he had seen in the course of what he calls his “Portuguese education.” The film was *Gado Bravo*, and the lyric ran “a saudade é a dor que vai matando e não dói.” Assuming that the audience amassed before him is not proficient in Portuguese, the priest gives a quick gloss of the phrase’s meaning. In the prolix, word-heavy manner stereotypical of Indian English, he translates “the longing or yearning for happy days of yore is a poignant yet painless experience.” The depiction of this travesty of Portugal’s most fetishised emotion contains the poignant view of

Goan society's fall from Lusophone grace that dominates the Portuguese imagination. This sequence ends with a close-up of a haggard, weary and very still Aida, alone with her memories as the tacky celebrations unfold around her to the strains of a *pimba*, or Portuguese folk-pop, version of "Ó Malhão, Malhão."

Maria Azevedo is presented in a quite distinct fashion. Before we meet Maria, we see the apartment block in which she lives in long shot. The contrast between her shabby flat and Aida's magnificent, if dilapidated, dwelling could not be more stark. Even in terms of architectural spaces, Maria is clearly aligned with the post-1961 shifts in the territory, whilst Aida is presented as a remnant of the past. At first the section featuring Maria is in the same observational style as that involving Aida. Maria is shown tutoring local school pupils in French through the medium of English. The students' encomia to India in awkward French, and Maria's sniping corrections in English, stress the recession of Portugal and the Portuguese language from the everyday life of Goa. After this point, for the most part, the footage we see of Maria when she is not being interviewed fits better into Corner's mode of *proactive observationism*. An example of this is Maria's visit to a Hindu shrine, obviously at the instigation of the filmmaker. Maria comments "sempre senti uma atração pela cultura Indiana," but seems if anything to be performing this for the camera, sidestepping detail with bravado, and claiming for the presumed Portuguese viewer an affinity for Hindu culture that she might not feel as comfortable expressing in the same terms for an Indian audience.

Within these sequences prevails the speech format Corner refers to as *testimony*. Herein lies one of the major differences between the treatment of Aida and that of Maria. Whilst on occasion information is directly solicited from Aida, for the most part the camera merely observes her existence. In the sequences of her daily life, we do hear Aida speak in voice-over, but her testimony seems less constrained by questions and more related to the events we see on screen. Maria, on the other hand, is continually interpellated and asked for historical explanations. At one point we see hands presumably belonging to the filmmaker passing old photographs to Maria and inciting her to critique them. It is as if Aida's Indo-Portuguese identity is taken for granted and considered as self-evident, whereas Maria's apparently pro-Indian stance requires justification. There seems to be a degree of ambiguity in the way that Maria is presented. She is granted ample time to explain the iniquities of the *Estado Novo* stage of Portuguese colonialism in India, but this freedom at times leads her to hoist herself by her own petard. Wells writes of "a general

tendency for the documentary to be treading a thin line between education and exploitation" (qtd. in Nelmes 118). This ambiguity, which never touches Aida, although it is present, for instance, in the depiction of the tourist visits and the wedding ceremony, also tinges Maria's statements. Aida's comments are always terse and elliptical, whereas Maria is allowed not just to inform but also to prate. In the sequence where she visits the roadside shrine, Maria gives a bumptious explanation as to the significance of the complex array of Hindu deities. Her explanation of the *lingam* shades into the double-entendre and she makes wild claims about how the syncretism involved in the representation of Ganesh testifies to the respect of the pre-historic Aryan invader for Dravidian culture. It is obvious that Maria is repeating received ideas rather than speaking from sound knowledge. The effect is much as if we were to hear someone, say Aida, asked to talk about the proverbial Portuguese lack of colour prejudice, in the manner of one of the characters in the viscerally anti-colonial Goan writer Lambert Mascarenhas's play *The Greater Tragedy*.

Corner describes the testimonial mode of documentary speech as being bound up with "the recording of solicited information, opinion or information by witnesses, experts and relevant participants in relation to the documentary subject" (qtd. in Nelmes 198). American documentary theorist Bill Nichols provides an interesting slant on the problems raised by the use of the interview format. If this form of verbal exchange means "[t]extual authority shifts towards the social actors recruited," the use of interviews also "gives rise to ethical questions of their own: interviews are a form of hierarchical discourse deriving from the unequal distribution of power, as in the confessional and the interrogation" (47). In *A Dama de Chandor*, the viewer is not made privy to the questions asked of Maria Azevedo. We only witness her responses. Textual authority may shift to the side of the interviewee, but only inasmuch as the scope of the questions allow. When the viewer does not hear the question, it is impossible to gauge the extent to which the interaction between interviewer and interviewee has compelled the respondent to reply in a certain way and to provide certain data. In *A Dama de Chandor* we hear Maria's at times naïve view of history, but not the prompting that presumably spurred her to answer in the fashion she did. We also hear Aida commenting, it appears, on the footage of her carrying out aspects of her daily life, but the effect of the way speech and image track are juxtaposed is to create a trickling stream of commentary, enough to enable the viewers' emotional response to what is shown, but not always enough to grasp its full import.

Apart from the section in which Maria describes her experiences of Portuguese colonialism and expresses just how privileged and Europeanised she found the Menezes Braganças to be when she lived with the family, we are given very little background knowledge about either Goa or Aida, the documentary's principal focus. In Mourão's film there is nothing in the way of voice-over, Corner's third and final modality of documentary speech. As I have tried to argue, *A Dama de Chandor*, even if it allows space for a recognition of the iniquities of the *Estado Novo* and Portuguese colonialism (though the focus is on the former), sets up a particular pattern of identification and sympathy that still encourages the viewer to regret the passing of an era and a class. The absence of any explicit, in-depth contextualisation can be seen as an aesthetic option allowing the documentary-maker to imbue her film with a rhythm and plastic beauty that might have been marred by the intrusiveness of overt, verbal commentary. It could also be seen as an attempt to allow the universality of the situation depicted to emerge for a free, or freer, analysis on the part of the viewer.

However, the lack of further development means that aspects of the lives of Aida and Maria pass unanalysed, aspects that could challenge the strict division between Aida, as a representative of Portugal and Europeanised Goan ways, and Maria as embodying the resurgence of Indian-ness in the wake of Portugal's expulsion. What must be borne in mind here is that this sort of analysis can justifiably be considered beyond the remit of a documentary like *A Dama de Chandor*, which can be seen as being more concerned with recording aspects of its subjects' lives (precious, transient documents) whilst the window of opportunity is open. The sort of analysis I refer to here is possible at any time and, indeed, can be seen more as the province of an article such as the present work. Nonetheless, in light of the sort of rhetorical pattern that can be detected in Mourão's film, it is legitimate to question to what extent the absence of context vitiates the general points that *A Dama de Chandor* makes.

The Goan historian Teotónio de Souza makes the important observation that, in considering Goan society, one must take care not to confuse *lusophony* with *lusophilia*. Aida's espousal of the Portuguese language and Europeanised ways of life must not be equated with an unconditional affiliation with Portugal and the Portuguese colonial past. The film may open with Aida's elegiac recounting of an incident when, as a young girl at her boarding school in Paris, she told friends who wanted to know about Ghandi that "eu que não conhecia nada e dizia-lhes: eu não sou daquela Índia, sou da Índia Portuguesa." Yet one must be careful not to label Aida "uma portuguesa Indiana," inevitably a

temptation for the unwitting Portuguese viewer. The other half of the story, which is touched on only incidentally, is that Aida comes from a family made illustrious by its resistance to Portuguese colonialism, through emblematic antecedents such as Luís de Menezes Bragança and T. B. de Bragança Cunha.

In fact, the house at Chandor, as well as being emblematic of a syncretised Indo-Portuguese identity, is also closely associated with the struggle for Goan liberation. At one point, Aida mentions “A nossa família lutou [...] contra a ditadura e em defesa da Índia,” but there is far more to their story than this statement suggests. Richards writes that the Menezes Bragança family “was unusual amongst educated Catholic families in favouring independence from Portugal, and in 1950 the present owner, following the family tradition, became in time an active freedom fighter and had to ‘flee’ Chandor” (99). Richards adds, “The Braganzas [the anglicised, post-1961 spelling of the family name] returned in 1962, after the union with India, to find the rich content of their house intact notwithstanding that it had been unoccupied for a dozen years, but sadly deteriorated, a condition that they have not since had the resources to remedy” (100). Thus the Menezes Braganças were forced into exile in the final years of Portuguese rule and could only return to their home, the mansion epitomised by *A Dama de Chandor* as being so redolent of Indo-Portuguese identity, once the Portuguese had been expelled from Goa.

This back-story is obscured in Mourão’s film, though there is indirect reference to it on occasion. At one point, when Aida is showing the first group of tourists around her property she refers to a plaque affixed above the entrance to the mansion commemorating a famous journalist that once lived there, not named, but an informed viewer knows this to be “o maior de todos,” as Luís de Menezes Bragança was known to his contemporaries. Later, Aida does mention in a muttered aside that her family had fought the dictatorship and been forced to leave Goa, but she is not asked to expand on this, and quickly moves on to other subjects. Aida may represent the last of a deeply rooted lusophone aristocracy, but she also belongs to a family that contested Portuguese colonialism to the point of being forced to leave the territory. This telling paradox goes completely uninvestigated.

In another scene, we see Aida attend her local church, a trip that shows the extent to which her traditional seigneurial privileges have been eroded. As we witness Aida standing amongst the mass of churchgoers, in voice-over she explains how her family practically built the church, adding “antigamente tínhamos lugares reservados na frente. Minha mãe se sentava naqueles assentos.

Era um privilégio da família.” Her voice, speaking Portuguese, contrasts with the Konkani used in the mass. Later, leaving the church, as she is almost jostled by a fellow member of the congregation, she continues, “tempos mudaram e agora é a igualdade. Acabaram com os privilégios e agora é igualdade para todos. Concordo, mas acho que deve haver um certo respeito.” Aida, here as throughout, is clinging to the memory of former privileges. Yet, at another point, Aida mentions that she spent thirty years away from Chandor and that, when she returned, she found the house in a lamentable state. How did this exile sit with her aristocratic background?

The pattern of identification with, or alienation from, both Portugal and India on the part of both women could well be far more complex than the film depicts. Yet Aida’s comments are not developed or pushed further: Aida is never called upon to justify or explain herself in the same way that Maria is. The manner in which Aida and Maria’s lives are juxtaposed suggests that Maria is the nationalist, yet in fact it would seem to be Aida who had the most direct contact with the political struggle against Portuguese colonialism.

Dovetailing with the identification of Maria as a representative of Indian nationalism and the suggestion that Aida represents some sort of lusophilic position is the fact that Aida appears European (always appearing in a dress, like the women in the old photos, except at the wedding), whilst Maria explicitly appears to reject the European in favour of her indigenous heritage (e.g., her insistence on using a sari). Yet a sharp division between Maria as Indian and Aida as (Indo-)European would seem to be difficult to defend in Goa and perhaps more widely in India, due to the characteristics of the sub-continent’s post-colonial condition. Whilst it is impossible to second-guess the psychological motivations underlying Aida’s and Maria’s attitudes to their own identities, from the little we see it would seem that caste plays a role. For Robinson, the attachment to the Portuguese language and the European ways of the Catholic *Bamonn* (Brahmin) and *Chardó* aristocracy of Goa has constituted a way for these groups to continue the segregation of the caste system within the Catholic dispensation imposed by the Portuguese. For Robinson, “the upper castes distinguish themselves from the other social groups in part on the basis of association with the cultural attributes and language of their (former) rulers. It may, therefore, be possible to argue that the adoption of these attributes could become diacritical marks by means of which status between different caste-groups could be expressed” (310). Aida’s attachment to the Portuguese language and her Europeanised ways could in this light be seen as both an

attachment to the former privileges enjoyed by her family and to the caste cachet traditionally enjoyed by the *Chardó* Menezes Bragança family, assets that are now being uncomfortably swept away, as Aida's visit to the church testifies. Rather than having a family pew, Aida now has to mix in with the obviously lower-caste Konkani-speaking parishioners. Aida's attitudes and her attachment to her house can be seen as a way of preserving a psychological buffer zone between her inherited sense of self and the fast-changing realities of Goa.

If anything, Aida could be said to have a spontaneous but traditionally Indian view of the historical developments that are driving Goa and undermining her way of life. The Goan intellectuals João da Veiga Coutinho and Teotónio de Souza, though approaching this question from differing positions, have both posited a traditional Indian conception of history that mixes cyclical and linear time, wherein, for instance, "each cycle represented a decline in moral standards and consequently an historic change. The final cycle represented a total chaos in the moral order and only the tenth incarnation of Vishnu could restore mankind back to its original state" (Souza 185). When Aida is shown seated at the wedding, alienated and alone, the tacky gaudiness of the present nauseates in comparison with the imagined finery of past ceremonies, and the temptation, as one watches *A Dama de Chandor*, is to imagine that Aida hopes not for Vishnu but some Luso-Indian Dom Sebastião to return and restore the status quo to the Lusophone privilege of yesteryear.

Maria, on the other hand, gives no outward indication of *saudade* whatsoever. At one point she listens to an old Goan fado, obviously at the filmmakers' instigation. The camera fixes on her face to gauge any reaction. Maria fields the camera's gaze with forbearance, and, if she feels any emotion before the saccharine Portuguese lyrics, she does not betray it. Similarly, her final visit to Chandor, her former home, leaves her seemingly unmoved. On the contrary, she shows a triumphal pride in the Indian (re)conquest of Goa and every faith in the present direction of the territory. For her, history has been progress.

It seems possible that her enthusiasm for the effects of the Indian invasion are due not only to the consequent extension of Indian sovereignty to Goa but also to the way in which this event allowed Goa to enter a modernity that has at last weakened the structures of traditional caste privilege and superiority by the constitution of the Indian Union. Lúcio Rodrigues explains the role that caste plays within the hierarchy of Goan society thus: "[a]n individual's place in this [...] is determined solely by an accident of birth. The gods decide it all for you: you are born into a family that belongs to one of the social tiers, and

there you 'belong,' there you stay. Like the fixed star on the heavens, you have your fixed status in the social firmament, and your set orbit" (146). Under the Portuguese, who had tolerated the caste system as amenable to the furtherance of their rule, this system would have been far more rigid. The stories of Aida and Maria are both, to an extent, narratives of these traditional orbits going awry. We learn that Maria had been raised by the Menezes Bragança family, but that she is not of their caste. She is, she tells us, the illegitimate daughter of a Brahmin and a *Sudra*, the lowest of the four castes. This is a short but very moving sequence. We learn that Maria only found out who her father was when his death knell sounded in Chandor and one of her adoptive family informed her that the bells were tolling for her father. The reasons for Maria being taken in by the Menezes Braganças are not discussed in the film, though it seems unlikely that Maria would have been on an equal footing with the other members of the family. She may even have been expected to remain unmarried and tied to the mansion as an unofficial domestic aide, a not uncommon situation in that period and one dramatised in D'Souza's *Angela's Goan Identity*. Maria's life, then, can be taken as an example of emancipation, to an extent, from caste, the most Indian of social constrictions. Rodrigues writes, "there is social mobility today. People from all castes are now landowners and have taken up professions as clerks, doctors as well as aspiring to be lawyers and engineers. Some years ago this was all denied by social stratification" (274). Whilst Maria remains unmarried (the name board in the entrance to her house reads "Miss Azevedo"), she seems to have her own home and an independent income from using the education she received to tutor students in French and Konkani. If history had panned out differently, perhaps Maria could have been expected to remain at Aida's side, unpaid and helping to maintain the Chandor mansion. Instead, Aida, the aristocrat, is reduced to a life of drudgery that, in centuries gone by, would have been undertaken by an army of liveried servants and household help.

Since Goa's integration into the Indian Union, those Goans who would identify themselves as belonging to a Luso-Indian culture have voiced concern that this way of life is endangered. In view of such clear indicators as the death of the Portuguese language in the territory, this claim would seem to have a certain validity. Certainly, her son Cláudio aside (and he resides in Brazil), the extended Menezes Bragança family is shown to have shifted away from the language Luís de Menezes Bragança cultivated to such renown and to have adopted English. In recent Portuguese-language literary engagements

with Goa, such as Eduardo Agualusa's *Um Estranho em Goa*, the passing of this Indo-Portuguese culture and the Portuguese language is taken as an index of what we could call, ironically, "the denationalisation of the Goans." T. B. Cunha wrote, in English, "the artificial culture acquired by educated Goans through languages other than their own is the reason for their complete lack of intellectual personality" (qtd. in Cabral e Sá and Bravo da Costa Rodrigues 119). If, for T. B. Cunha, the Goans had been de-nationalised by the Portuguese, for contemporary Portuguese observers, the Goans have now been "de-nationalised" by Indian indifference and the rising havoc of globalisation.

A Dama de Chandor critically records the current lifestyle of the Goan middle-class, but only shows it as a product of late capitalism, not as a process with deep roots in the former Portuguese presence in Goa. The Portuguese reaction to modern Goa is often one of pique, for the perceived rejection of their language, and a sort of *schadenfreude* at the identity problems that today beset some sections of the Goan population. In *A Dama de Chandor*, we see the worn remnants of what evidently had been a rich and refined Portuguese-speaking culture and its substitution by what is portrayed as a tawdry mish-mash of tourist-borne globalised English and tourist-based local Indian. The concentration in Maria's testimony on the mistakes and attitudes of the *Estado Novo* suggest that it was this stage in Luso-Indian relations that set up the decline that Portuguese-speaking culture has since suffered. In one particular sequence, we see some hideously garish Christmas decorations and hear some trashy Christmas carols, which are then juxtaposed with some vibrant footage of a Hindu ceremony. Next comes a sequence in which we see Aida listening to some classical music. As the strains swell, Mourão's camera lingers over the black and white family photographs that adorn the wall of the mansion. The sense of *saudade* at the irrevocable passing of an age is palpable.

Yet monochrome prints are notorious for obscuring blemishes and defects, whereas the harsh Betacam colours that dominate Mourão's documentary exacerbate the garishness of contemporary life in Goa in a way that is somewhat unfair. Perhaps what *A Dama de Chandor* lacks is the recognition of or some allusion to the fact that the Portuguese-speaking lifestyle of the thin veneer of lusitanised aristocrats was based on the perpetuation of an unfair system of land ownership and social organisation, an inequity that has only now been remedied, however imperfectly, by the social shifts involved in India's takeover and the economic growth occasioned by global tourism, however ultimately destructive this activity may prove to be. The mansion at Chandor

would formerly have been staffed by the sort of people who nowadays have far better opportunities, and its upkeep would have been financed by the rents from land that has now been more fairly distributed (or at least, re-distributed, whether fairly or unfairly). The Lusophone culture to which Chandor was once home was an exclusive one that left the majority of Goa's population untouched and based on an exceedingly unfair economic system that, by contrast, hampered the whole territory.

The Portuguese are now long gone, as, to a great extent, is their language, a fact that always preoccupies Lusophone observers. *A Dama de Chandor* is a finely wrought film and a valuable document that provides a sad and eloquent record of the final demise of aristocratic Lusophone culture in Goa. Perhaps now it is time to turn to the future and to consider what manner of relationship can now be established between modern Goa and modern Portugal. Furthermore, if we, like Victor Anand Coelho or Carmo d'Souza, consider that Goan identity has always been based on uprooting and assimilation, we can only wait, with interest, to see the next configuration the future holds for the people and the territory of Goa.

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