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FROM ALBANIA TO BRAZIL: ISMAIL KADARÉ'S *BROKEN APRIL*
AND ITS FILMIC ADAPTATION, WALTER
SALLES' *ABRIL DESPEDAÇADO*

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of the present study is to analyse how issues of Albanian national identity are portrayed in Ismail Kadaré's novel *Broken April* (*Prilli i Thyer*), and how such features have been appropriated and translated onto the screen into a Northeastern Brazilian context. I depart from the premise that, even though Brazilian elements are indeed shown in the film, the non existence of the *Kanun* in Brazil, and the use of narrative techniques different from the ones employed in the novel render the story of the blood feuds in the film more universal than the genuinely Albanian reality depicted in the novel. In sum, the appropriation transcends the Albanian reality into a universal context, showing, at the same time, elements which are typical of the Brazilian culture.

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RESUMO

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O objetivo do presente estudo é analisar como questões sobre a identidade nacional Albanesa são retratadas no romance *Abril Despedaçado (Prilli i Thyer)*, de Ismail Kadaré, e como tais questões foram apropriadas e traduzidas para a tela num contexto Nordeste-Brasileiro. O estudo parte do princípio que, embora elementos tipicamente Brasileiros sejam mostrados no filme, a não existência do *Kanun* no Brasil, e o uso de técnicas narrativas diferentes das empregadas no romance ajudam a deixar a história das brigas de família no filme com um aspecto mais universal do que a realidade genuinamente Albanesa representada na romance. Em suma, a apropriação transcende a realidade Albanesa para um contexto mais universal, sem deixar de mostrar também elementos típicos da cultura Brasileira.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

Ismail Kadaré's novel *Broken April* (1978) describes the brutal blood feuds in the High Plateau in Northern Albania. The novel depicts an endless cycle of deaths in which sometimes entire families are exterminated in the name of honor. The plot describes the last days of the male protagonist—Gjorg Berisha—and his impending death. He has just killed a man (Zef Kryeqyqe) in order to avenge his older brother's death, and waits for the day he will be killed by a member of Zef's family. Gjorg's death is due at some time soon in the month of April, thus the title *Broken April*. As the narrative unfolds, several rules that govern all human relations and the *vendettas* in the High Plateau are presented. Such rules are compiled in a centuries-old book of honor, the *Kanun*,¹ which the characters that dwell in the Northern Albanian mountains follow strictly.

The aim of the present research is to establish a comparative dialogue between the aforementioned novel and its filmic adaptation, *Abril Despedaçado*² (*Behind the Sun*) by Brazilian filmmaker Walter Salles. Therefore, the scope of this work is rooted in the study of filmic adaptations of novels, and the study of the confluence of the two forms of art involved in the process of adaptation from literature to film, through a comparative study of the narrative techniques³ used in the literary and filmic text. More precisely, the intention is to verify how the very specific Northern Albanian context of

¹ The *Kanun* is the book of honor that rules all aspects of human life in the Albanian mountains. Most of the rules of the *Kanun* are related to the *vendetta*, and life in the Albanian Alps revolves mostly around the issue. A more thorough explanation of what the *Kanun* represents in Albania is presented in chapter I.

² The film premiered in 2001 in the 58th Venice Festival, and was awarded a “*Leoncino d’Oro*” in the event. Kadaré attended the first screening of the movie and compared transposing a literary text into the screen to a perilous surgery. Happy with the final result of the surgical procedure of his novel, he complimented *Abril Despedaçado* as being a “magnificent” adaptation (Pedro Butcher and Anna Luiza Müller 189).

³ By narrative I mean “the recounting of two or more events (or a situation and an event) that are logically connected, occur over time, and are linked by a consistent subject into a whole” (Burgoyne *et al* 69).

the blood feuds was transposed to the screen onto a Northeastern Brazilian context. I depart from the premise that the novel shows Albania as a society attempting to assert its national identity through the perpetuation of the centuries-old tradition of the blood feuds. The novel, therefore, portrays a genuinely Albanian reality. However, even though the transposition of the novel to the screen shows elements of the Brazilian culture, it also shows a more universal reality of the blood feuds, which could occur anywhere in the world. In the film, therefore, the characters' entanglement to tradition seems less an assertion of the Brazilian national identity than a matter of preservation of their personal honor, as opposed to what happens in the novel.

In general terms, adapting a novel onto the screen means appropriating a previous text. As Robert Stam claims, “[f]ilm [...] is a form of writing that borrows from other forms of writing” (“Theory” 1). In the comparison between one medium (novel) and the other (film), there is a tendency to emphasize how different/similar the two texts are, often with an overt focus on how faithful/unfaithful the adaptation is in relation to the so-called “original” text. Thus, fidelity discourse has its roots on prejudice which tends to judge which is better, the novel or the film. In the judgment, the film is often seen as inferior to the novel in several ways. Interestingly, fidelity discourse is often disguised as “comparative approach”.

Within this context, as Stam points out, in the game of fidelity, the adaptation seems never to be able to win. For instance, if the adapter updates the text for the present, he/she is severely accused of not respecting the period of the source; if the adapter does not update the text, he/she is upbraided for not contemporizing the text. If the adapters portray the sexual passages of a novel literally, they are accused of vulgarity; on the other hand, if they do not do so, they are accused of cowardice. Also, commentators almost always focus on what has been lost in the transition from novel to

film, to the detriment of what has been gained, and such comments frequently reveal a certain amount of prejudice (“Theory” 8).

The aim of the present work is not to evaluate which aspects of the two media are better (due to the subjectivity of the act, such a pursuit would be impossible), but rather to compare the specificities of each medium. This study treats each medium involved in the process of adaptation (novel/film) as independent works of art that have some aspects in common—chiefly the narrative aspects of the story of the blood feuds—and explores the intertextual relationships between the two texts. The premise is that in the process of adaptation, “the second work obtains autonomous meaning through its inevitable and necessary divergences from the original work” (Johnson qtd in Brandão 3). Therefore, the present thesis aims at a more contextualized analysis, thus focusing on how the narrative techniques employed in the narratives of the two media help advance different aspects of the national identity in Albania and in Brazil.

Disregarding fidelity discourse to study and compare the specificities of each medium involved in the process of adaptation (literature and film) is congruent with Robert Stam’s proposal for the study of adaptation. In “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation”, Stam asserts that in the adaptation of a novel onto the screen, fidelity is not possible, since “an adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium”. Given that, Stam suggests that, instead of discussing whether the adaptation of a given novel is “faithful” to its source or not, which is irrelevant in his opinion, one should rather study the specificities of each medium. By specificity Stam means “specificity deriving from its respective materials of expression” (“Fidelity” 59). The novel’s material of expression is words, whereas the film has not only written material as its way of expression, but also sound effects, music, phonetic sounds, and moving photographic image.

Fidelity is also impossible due to the fact that the reading of a novel can lead to “a plethora of possible readings”, and an adaptation is just one form of reading (“Fidelity” 57). Stam points out that in a novel the words have a “virtual, symbolic meaning” (“Dialogics” 55): it is the reader’s job to imagine the fictional world portrayed in the novel. Such act is embodied in subjectivity. An example regarding one aspect of the narrative—character presentation—will suffice to illustrate the point. A hundred different readers are likely to portray a hundred different protagonists of any given novel. For instance, Walter Salles’ interpretation of Kadaré’s text is only one of the infinite possibilities that the novel allows for.

The director of a film, thus, must choose a specific actor, which will certainly not allow for the viewer’s imaginative construction, due to the fact that the presentation of the character as such is visually ready-made. In a filmic adaptation, therefore, spectators are confronted with someone else’s imagination, as Christian Metz pointed out in the 1970s (qtd in Stam “Theory” 12). Rodrigo Santoro’s interpretation of Tonho, for example, is likely to be fossilized in a similar way in the minds of all viewers, since, as Stam points out, we are faced with an embodied actor, with a nationality and an accent (“Theory” 15). Nonetheless, the presentation of Tonho’s corresponding character in the novel (Gjorg Berisha) is not embodied visually, allowing for infinite creations of the physical character.

The description of a character in a film is, in this sense, more straightforward and not open to a viewer’s subjective interpretation, especially regarding the character’s physical description. For this reason, most viewers are frustrated after having seen an adaptation of a novel: as mentioned earlier, very unlikely what is portrayed in the film will coincide with the fictional world imagined by the reader of the novel (“Dialogics” 54). Thus, the specific value of using Stam’s theorization in the present study is that it

explains why the focus of the research is not on fidelity, or on establishing a comparison guided chiefly by judgmental reasoning such as “Which is better? The film or the book?” Rather—it must be emphasized—the study treats each of the media as independent works which have some intertextual elements possible of being scrutinized and compared without moral judgments.

Attempting to shift away from the focus on fidelity, Stam aptly refers to film adaptation as “translation”. According to him, the term may be able to depict the “inevitable gains and losses of a translation” (“Fidelity” 62). No neutral translation is possible, and therefore, referring to film adaptation as a translation, one may at least try to avoid the judgmental words associated with the discourse of fidelity, such as “betrayal, deformation, violation, vulgarization, and desecration”—the adjectives proliferate endlessly—to refer to the process of film adaptation from novels (“Fidelity” 54).

Having presented the main theoretical frame regarding film adaptation, the theoretical parameters of nation/national identity that will guide the present study will be presented. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson wisely observes that the nation (and consequently national identity and nationalism) is a social construct, i.e., it is not a natural occurring phenomenon. Anderson argues that, “nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are *cultural artefacts* of a particular kind” [my emphasis] (4). In other words, the nation is a cultural construct. Due to the elusive nature of the term “nation”, scholars such as Hugh Seton-Watson have long struggled to provide a definition of it. Seton-Watson concludes that, “no ‘scientific definition’ of the nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists” (qtd in Anderson 3). One of the tentative

definitions provided by Anderson is that a nation “is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6).

As Seton-Watson (qtd in Anderson 6) explains, even if a nation is relatively small, the members of it are aware of each other’s existence, but none will ever be able to be in contact with most of their fellow-members even in a lifetime. It is in this sense that a nation is an imagined community: the communion—which, according to Anderson, is propagated through a number of media—is in the citizens’ minds, yet precisely this imaginary communion amalgamates a nation. Even though a nation is a human and imaginary construct, its power is pervasive over the individuals, since all individuals have the sense of belonging to a given nation: “in the modern world everyone can, should and will ‘have’ a nationality, as he or she ‘has’ a gender” (5).

For Anderson, the concept of nation emerged due to the decline of other types of imagined communities. The nation as it is imagined to the present date was first conceived with the advent of industrialization and print, which coincides with the development of Western capitalism. Anderson goes on asserting that “one of the earlier forms of capitalist enterprise, book-publishing”, or the rise of “print-as-commodity”, made it possible for nations to assert their identities and for the propagation of discourses regarding nationalism⁴ (37).

Another scholar of nation/national identity/nationalism, Anthony Smith, argues that the territory is an important factor in the making of a nation. However, Smith remarks that the territory cannot be any piece of land. It has to be “[a] ‘historic’ land, the ‘homeland’, the ‘cradle’ of our people”. It must be the same territory of the individuals’ ancestors, being thus charged with historical memories. Smith goes on remarking that for a group of people to be considered a nation, “[p]eople and territory

⁴ For a more thorough discussion on how the notion of the nation was propagated with the advent of print, see especially chapter “The Origins of National Consciousness” (37-46).

must, as it were, belong to each other” (9). Thus, a nation is made up of individuals who share a sense of belonging to a historic land which is part of the same political territory and which is demarcated by boundaries (imagined constructions) which are common for all the inhabitants of the group.

Since boundaries are essential to the development of a collective, national identity, I would like to elaborate a little further into the issue. The existence of a collective identity delineated by boundaries explains, for instance, why people feel injured when other members of the nation are injured, or why some people are willing to sacrifice their lives in the name of their nation, such as the Palestinian suicide bombers or even soldiers at war. Well demarcated boundaries allow individuals to identify themselves as contrasted with people that belong to other nations. Thus, the individual only perceives him/herself as a member of a given group if his/her identity is confronted with that of an outsider, a foreigner, of one that does not belong to the in-group, i.e., that lives outside of the borders of the individual’s nation.

Therefore, for a community to be a nation, its individuals must share some common elements. Anthony Smith states that the individuals of a given nation must share historical facts (such as the memories of battles), characteristic customs, and the same homeland and language (or languages). Moreover, for Smith a nation can only be labeled as such if it is autonomous, and if its surroundings are somewhat hostile (i.e. if the boundaries are well demarcated). For him, a nation can be defined as “*a named population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members*”⁵ (14). Thus, a nation is a group that can be distinguished from the other groups by its geographical location which is embodied with a history, traditions, laws,

⁵ Italics by Smith.

politics, and national ideology, where individuals share a common identity and sometimes even a common origin. All these preconditions for a nation to be devised as so create a sort of mythic homeland, where the national heritage is passed down from generation from generation.

The aforementioned remarks related to the rather elusive concept of nation show how the term can be confusing at times, thus revealing its multifaceted and complex nature, for it can assume multiple meanings. The concepts of national identity and nationalism derive from this web of complex structures. In rough terms, national identity can be defined as one's identification with a given nation or a collective identity. As Smith explains, this bond of identification is fostered through the cultivation of common nationalist symbols such as flags, anthems, and national heroes. People sharing a common national identity are expected to follow certain rules and to have certain responsibilities towards the rest of the nation, as well as to follow certain conducts of behavior which are more or less the same for all individuals belonging to that group. Furthermore, the members of the same nation may also be identified for sharing common traits such as language, culture, religion, descent, economy, history, but not necessarily all of these features. In some cases, some of these traits are essential features in the making of a national identity.

Nationalism is interconnected with the idea of national identity. Smith defines nationalism as "*an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation*"⁶ (73). In other words, nationalism refers to an individual's identification with a nation and a conscious effort to maintain tradition and to assert patriotism or love for one's nation. Or, to be concise, above all it is one's sentiment of

⁶ Italics by Smith.

love for his/her nation. In the introduction to *National Identities*, Smith states that nationalism comes in various forms and arises chiefly from differences in the myths of national identity, which, as mentioned earlier, can refer to territory or ancestry, or sometimes to both. Many of the most severe international conflicts derive from these two factors that lay bare the differences in national identity (territory and ancestry) (viii).

Drawing on the previous remarks about the term nation (and consequently national identity), one can conclude that theories of the nation tend to disregard the fact that nations are heterogeneous, i.e., not necessarily do all individuals belonging to a given nation share the aforementioned common traits necessary for the making of a nation. Issues of gender, race, and class cannot be set aside. Therefore, a seemingly tendency to generalize is one of the major points of contention raised by theories of the nation/national identity. Furthermore, because nations are heterogeneous, the concept of national identity can become problematic, since the concept does not include the different kinds of national selves that belong to the multifaceted nation. Nonetheless, it is beyond the scope of the present investigation to mention the hazards of overstated generalizations regarding the concept, since it is the notion of the all inclusive national identity fostered by Kadaré's novel and its appropriation by the film that is the focus of my thesis.

To recapitulate and clarify what has been reviewed so far, I once again recall one of the possible explanations for nation/national identity and nationalism proposed by Smith. According to him, national identity involves some sense of political community that can be identified as sharing the same national ideas. The members of a given nation must share some common institutions and certain codes of rights and duties. Moreover, the idea of the nation also suggests the existence of a definite social space, a demarcated

territory (9). Summing up, first, the space can be identified as the nation; secondly, the cultural practices common to the individuals belonging to the nation refer to their national identity; and finally, a sentiment of love for and individual's nation and national customs (or for an individual's national identity), which may compel the individual to fight and die for the nation, refers to nationalism.

Hence, a group's attempt to keep the features which are essential in the making of a nation (sharing and maintaining common myths, language, religion, economy, history and nationalist symbols such as flags, anthems, national heroes) refers to the group's willingness to perpetuate tradition. In a famous lecture delivered at Sorbonne and entitled "What is a Nation?", Ernest Renan provided a seminal definition of nation as it is associated with tradition. He states that a nation is made up of past and present situations, in which the past refers to a nation's *possession* of memories and tradition, and the present refers to the desire to *cherish* these memories and tradition. It is worth quoting Renan at length:

[a] nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which are in truth but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form (...).The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are (...). A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. (19)

Renan goes on arguing that "[m]an is a slave neither of his race nor his language, nor his religion, nor of the course of rivers nor of the direction taken by mountain chains"

(20). Instead, man is a slave of tradition—or rather—the impossibility to escape tradition.

The preservation of Albania's national identity emerges as an important concept in *Broken April*. The novel portrays Albanian individuals who share an identity and history which are common to all members of the group, and who have a bond of solidarity towards their nation and the other members of their community. All of these features are essential components in the making of a nation. Above all, the Albanians portrayed in the novel are willing to perpetuate the blood feuds in the name of tradition and apparently seeking to assert the Albanian national identity, chiefly connected with the feuding system. The characters' effort to maintain the traditional customs according to the *Kanun* suggests, thus, an attempt to keep the nation integrated. In the filmic adaptation of the novel, the honor that the characters seek to maintain seems to be on a more personal and family level, rather than on the national level, even though the film indeed displays several elements which are typical of the Brazilian culture, as will be discussed in chapter II.

Issues of national identity and tradition are already a main concern within the critical reception of Kadaré's work. Critics see in the writer's work—*Broken April* included—an interest in the depiction of Albania and the preservation of the country's national identity. Stephen Schwartz⁷ states that Kadaré's works fall into two main categories, both of them depicting the writer's native Albania. On the one hand, novels such as *Doruntine*, (1990), *The Three-Arched Bridge* (1997), *Broken April* (first published in 1980 as *Prilli i Thyer*), and *Spring Flowers, Spring Frost* (2002) revive old Balkan legends, and are more, thus, of a sociological, historical type. Schwartz explains

⁷ Schwartz, Stephen. "Not-So-Great Pretender; Fiction Can't Hide the Truth About Ismail Kadare". *The Weekly Standard*. Jan 23, 2006. V11. <<http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0RMQ/is_18_11/ai_n16114785>> April 5, 2006

that these novels center on the woeful but enduring tradition of the blood feud, which up until today remains a serious problem in Northern Albania. On the other hand, works such as *The General of the Dead Army* (1990), and *The Concert* (1998) display a political narrative of Socialist Albania⁸ under the dictatorship created by Enver Hoxha,⁹ who ruled the country from 1944 until his death in 1985.

British literary critic John Carey, who chaired the judging panel when Kadaré was awarded the prize “The Man Booker Prize for literature”,¹⁰ corroborates the

⁸ In “How Dissident was Ismail Kadaré”, David Bellos explains that some of Kadaré’s work criticizes Hoxha’s dictatorship with subtle allegories. However, he explains, some critics such as Arshi Pipa understand Kadaré’s work as Socialist Realism, which promotes exactly the opposite of a critique of the government (8). According to *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Socialist Realism is a genre devoted to propagating Marxist ideology. The genre is defined as “the official artistic and literary doctrine of the Soviet Union, promulgated in 1934 [...]. The doctrine [...] required writers to affirm the struggle for socialism by portraying positive, heroic actions. These principles were condemned by major Marxist critics and writers (Brecht, Lukács, Trotsky) for propagandist optimism and aesthetic conservatism, and many writers sympathetic to communism found them an embarrassment. Under Stalin’s tyranny, the doctrine was employed as a pretext for the persecution and silencing of non-conformist writers (Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Pasternak)” (601-602).

⁹ Even though this is not in the scope of the present thesis, it is interesting to make a few remarks regarding Hoxha’s brutal dictatorship, since writers such as Kadaré struggled not to have their books banned during this period. Peter Gran explains that during the forty years when Albania was ruled by Hoxha, (1944-1984), the dictator withdrew Albania from the world market. Moreover, it is well-known that, in order to enforce a radical program of development for his country, Hoxha resorted to brutal Stalinist strategies. As Gran explains, Hoxha’s regime was known for the incarceration of innocent individuals under the assumption that they might become potentially dangerous to the government. What calls attention, according to Gran, is the fact that in Albania this practice was even more devastating than in the Soviet Union. In Albania, not only the individuals assumed to be dangerous to the regime were arrested, but also members of their families, and even their neighbors might be imprisoned (196-197). Tactics other than imprisoning included executing or exiling thousands of landowners, clan leaders, Muslim and Christian clerics, as well as peasants resisting collectivization and disloyal party officials. Moreover, private property was confiscated by the state, religious institutions were closed, and all cultural and intellectual manifestations were put at the service of Socialism and the state. As Isa Blumi explains in “The Politics of Power: The Roots of Hoxha’s Postwar State”, the fierce methods of the dictator included, for instance, the barbarism of forcing bishops to clean public bathrooms and wear clown outfits with paper sign across their chest that read “I have sinned against the people”, simply because the state discouraged religious practice (Albanian Catholic Bulletin qtd in Blumi par 30). Steven Schwartz recalls that Hoxha declared Albania the first officially atheist state on earth in 1967 (“Winner”). Summing up, Hoxha excoriated any practice that he believed would threaten his sovereign power of Albania. Within this context of constant fear and surveillance, Kadaré’s writings emerged, as John Murray explains in “The Orphan’s Choice”.

¹⁰ According to the article “Albanian Writer Beats off Top Contenders”, “The New International Man Booker Prize” is open to authors of any nationality whose work is available in English and will be awarded every two years. Unlike the Man Booker Prize, which is awarded annually to a British or Commonwealth author for a particular work, “The New International Man Booker Prize” is awarded for a writer’s body of work and not just a single book. Kadaré won the prize in 2005.

statement that Kadaré's fiction is a portrayal of the Albanian nation. In interview for *The Independent* (London), Carey states that,

Ismail Kadare is a writer who maps a whole culture - its history, its passion, its folklore, its politics, its disasters. You really get to know about Albania - he's extraordinarily informative about that part of the world. (...). ("Contenders")

Accordingly, Robert Elsie comments that Kadare's fiction "invite[s] the reader on many a fascinating journey into curious episodes of Albanian history and into the more exotic aspects of its little-known culture".

Like Kadaré's works, Salles' films show the filmmaker's interest in his native country. In films such as *Central do Brasil* (1998) and *Terra Estrangeira* (1996), he explores Brazilian themes and scenarios, akin to a trend of the New Brazilian Cinema (Cinema da Retomada, which began in the early 1990s), from which he is one of the most prominent representatives. Agreeing that showing Brazilian issues is a recurrent concern of the New Brazilian Cinema, Salles adds that, "[i]f there is a unifying factor in the new national cinematography, it resides in the desire of talking about a country called Brazil". Also, with an eye in the international market, Salles admits that, "[t]he more intrinsically Brazilian our movies are, the greater chances to become universal and reach a public beyond our borders" (qtd in Dalevi).¹¹ Michael Korfmann¹² speculates on the success of Salles' films abroad. According to Korfmann, the director's success "is certainly due to his unique combinations of regional landscapes, atmospheres and faces with narratives of universal appeal, along with a filmic sensitivity of international standard".

¹¹ Dalevi, Alessandra. "Coming Soon to a Theater Near You". *Brazzil* (online magazine). March 1998 (Cover Story). <<http://www.brazzil.com/cvrmar98.htm>>> Jan. 09, 2007.

¹² Korfmann, Michael. "On Brazilian Cinema: from Mario Peixoto's *Limite* to Walter Salles". *Senses of Cinema* (online journal). Issue 40 - Jul-Sept. 2006. <<<http://esvc001106.wic016u.server-web.com/contents/06/40/brazilian-cinema.html>>> January 9, 2007.

After having presented the theoretical framework about film adaptation and nation/ national identity, as well as a brief comment on Kadaré's and Salles' interest in their native countries, Albania and Brazil, respectively, it still remains to present the ancillary theory about the study of narrative that will guide the present research. The theoretical concepts regarding the formal study of narrative systems applied to the investigation is informed by Burgoyne *et al*'s review of Gerard Genette's categories of tense (which encompasses order, duration, and frequency), mood, and voice, scrutinized in his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Genette's framework, although initially used in the study of novels, can also be applied in the analysis of any narrative system, including film.

As Burgoyne *et al* observe, tense refers to the temporal relations between narrative discourse and story.¹³ Order has to do with the order in which events happen in the story and the sequence in which they are narrated (118). Duration refers to "variations of speed and rhythm between the constant pace of the story and the variable tempo of the discourse" (119). Frequency is "the relation between the number of times something occurs in the story and the number of times it is represented in the discourse" (121). Mood is "the study of focalization in terms of perspective and distance" (which character sees or perceives the action) (96). Readers/viewers see the events happen from the perspective of that character; we look at what that character is looking at. Voice, finally, refers to the relationship between the narrator and the audience. In other words, voice has to do with the way the story is recounted, if from inside or outside the text, and with how many narrators operate in the text.

¹³ According to Burgoyne *et al*, story (story time or what Victor Shklovsky calls *fabula*) "is usually understood as the raw material or basic outline of the story prior to its aesthetic organization" or prior to its formulation as a plot or discourse. Narrative discourse (plot or what Shklovsky calls *syuzhet*) is the story organized "in aesthetically satisfying form through the use of artistic devices" (71).

Thus, the present thesis seeks to investigate how the aforementioned fictional devices (tense, voice and mood), which are employed in the narrative of Kadaré's *Broken April*, are transposed to *Behind the Sun* by Walter Salles'. The narrative devices help advance our understanding of the characters and their tragic development in the plot as they are entangled by the blood feuds, which, as stated earlier on, suggests an attempt to assert the national identity of Albania (novel) and in Brazil (film), an attempt to assert personal honor.

Having positioned the analysis in its context of investigation, a final acknowledgement referring to the possible relevance of the present study must be made. A large number of publications have attempted to discuss the issue of novel adaptations into film, and enriching this vast volume of publications responds partially for the significance of this research. Furthermore, the investigation should also be useful in exploring the work of a yet unknown novelist in Brazil. In addition, my investigation should contribute to the discussion of issues of national identity related to the blood feuds both in Albania and in Brazil.

This thesis is divided in three chapters. Chapter I offers a narrative analysis of *Broken April* and discusses the fact that the following of the *Kanun* on part of the characters suggests an attempt to assert an Albanian national identity. Chapter II provides a comparative analysis of the narrative of Walter Salles's film *Behind the Sun* and Ismail Kadaré's novel *Broken April*. The focus of the discussion is on how the national identity of the inhabitants of the High Plateau in Northern Albania was transposed to the screen and contextualized in a Northeastern Brazilian context. Finally, chapter III provides concluding remarks of this research work, and offers suggestions for future research in the area. It also presents the general and specific conclusions of the study carried out.

CHAPTER I
THE PORTRAYAL OF ALBANIA IN ISMAIL KADARÉ'S
BROKEN APRIL

The story of *Broken April* begins on March 17, in an imprecise year around the 1920s/1930s, during winter time in the Northern Albanian mountains, when the protagonist, Gjorg Berisha, kills Zef Kryeqyqe in an ambush. The murder happens as an act of revenge because Zef had killed Gjorg's brother, Mehil Berisha, a year earlier, to avenge the life of yet another member of the Kryeqyqe's, who by his turn had killed a member of the other family, and so on, in a cycle of deaths that has been going on for generations, and which started fatalistically.

The Berishas and the Kryeqyqes got involved in the feud in a rather ironic way, about seventy years before the time of the story itself, when an unknown traveler knocked at the Berishas' door and asked for shelter. In Albania, a guest "represents the supreme ethical category", and is "more important than blood relations" (Kadaré 76). Therefore, it is the Albanian tradition to welcome anyone who knocks at their door and to offer the traveler the best hospitality possible. The host is also responsible for the guest's safety, and is only allowed to set free of such responsibility after escorting the guest to the limits of his/her own boundaries. The unknown traveler who knocked at the Berisha's door about seventy years ago was killed within the limits of the Berishas' property. If the guest is killed during the stay in the host's house, it is the host's duty to avenge the guest's death, which will consequently lead to the host family's involvement in an endless blood feud. In sum, "[a] knock at the door can bring about the survival or the extinction of whole generations" (Kadaré 78).

Gjorg kills Zef according to the prescriptions of the *Kanun*, the book of honor that rules the blood feuds in the High Plateau in Albania. He warns the victim before he fires, he turns the victim on his back; he puts the dead man's rifle near his head, and so forth, according to the rules. Because of his obedience to the customary law, he is granted a one-day truce, which is extended to the longest truce possible, a 30-day-truce. After the longest truce, he can be murdered at any time, and is only protected in the towers of refuge spread along the Plateau, where men marked to die may choose to hide, and where the enemy is not allowed to enter. Caught in an endless cycle of deaths that has been going on for several generations (22 people of the Berisha and 22 of the Kryeqyqe family have been killed so far), Gjorg knows that after the truce, he will be killed.

Gjorg then sets on a journey to pay the blood tax (the money that has to be paid every time a murder is avenged) to the *Kulla* of Orosh, the castle where the prince of Orosh lives with his family. After his departure on his first journey outside his own neighborhood, he passes several villages and sees other mountaineers in the same situation as his. He notices a world akin to his own reality. In the villages he passes, from conversations he eavesdrops on, and from talks to the local people, he realizes that everything revolves around the blood feuds. Also, he notices that several other men have black ribbons around their arms, indicating that they are under the protection of the *bessa* (30-day-truce), and therefore are also involved in the feuds. After he pays the blood tax, he starts wandering around the Plateau. In the journey he meets the most famous mediator who acts like a sort of judge of the blood feuds, Ali Binak. Along with his helpers, Ali Binak travels in the High Plateau dealing with possible misunderstandings of the rules of the *Kanun*, as well as with situations in which the

rules of the code are not so clear, therefore needing to be interpreted by a specialized person.

The story of Bessian and Diana, newly-weds from the capital Tirana spending their honeymoon in the Albanian Plateau, is told in parallel to Gjorg's life during the *bessa*. Bessian is a writer who is interested in the mechanisms of the blood feuds in the mountains, and as they travel, he explains the system of the Albanian *vendetta* to his wife Diana. The lives of Gjorg and of the honeymooners intersect when Gjorg is coming back from *Orosh*, and Diana and Gjorg become highly attracted to each other. The travelers proceed on their journey, and Gjorg is willing to spend his last days of wandering (before his truce is over) in search of Diana. Gjorg and Diana never end up together, however, and the novel ends with the tragic assassination of Gjorg, who had been officially marked for death for thirty days, "like a tree marked for felling" (John Kolsti 153). The protagonist dies on the 17 of April, exactly one month after the murder of Zef.

The characters that dwell in the Albanian Alps in *Broken April* are thus trapped in an endless cycle of deaths that has been going on for centuries, and seem unable to break the cycle, since the force of tradition speaks louder than their own personal wishes. As Kolsti observes, in the "kingdom of death" (the Albanian Alps) portrayed in *Broken April*, the "time-honored and unspoken rules [of the *Kanun*] go on twisting themselves around these people's legs throughout their lives, until the day comes when they inevitably trip them up" (153). And, when people eventually trip over the rules, it is impossible to set free. As Gjorg reasons, "[t]he mechanism of the blood feud was such that even as it freed you [i.e. if eventually the two families came to an agreement to quit the fights], it kept you bound to it in spirit for a long time" (Kadaré 49).

Critics of *Broken April* agree with the fact that the practice of the blood feuds shown in the novel reflects the reality of the Albanian culture. Robert Newman¹ argues that *Broken April* is “a vivid, dark novel that [...] captures the details of highland Albanian life”. David Bellos² states that “[i]ndirectly, it [the novel] is an oblique assertion of the permanence of Albanian civilization”. Writing for the Times Literary Supplement, Savkar Altinel claims that the novel is a “sad and beautiful tale but also a powerful allegory about pre-Communist³ Albania with its downtrodden masses, its blood-sucking ruling class, its ineffectual men of science in the service of feudal institutions, and its cloistered intelligentsia ignorant of social realities” (qtd in Anëtar).⁴

Altinel’s observation about the novel is pertinent. One can associate what the critic calls downtrodden masses to the mountain people. One of the reasons why they are caught in the blood feuds is the lack of a powerful judicial system. Such lack seems to result in an apparently careless state that, as portrayed in the novel, leaves the population unattended and without support to deal with the feuds. Therefore, due to the lack of state control, the mountain people continue following the customary law, and are thus downtrodden because the force of tradition is so strong that they follow the code without even questioning why they are doing so. The family who lives in the *Kulla* of Orosh, namely, the prince of Orosh and his extended family, may represent the blood-sucking ruling class, who make a profit out of the mountaineers’ misfortune. They

¹ Newman, Robert. “The Ultimate Novel of the Blood Feud in Albania”. December 21, 1999. <<<http://www.amazon.com/Broken-April-Ismail-Kadare/dp/1561310654>>> Nov 21, 2005.

² Bellos, David. “Adventures in Kadaria”. The Independent, London June 24, 2005. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20050624/ai_n14679582>. April 14, 2006.

³ Some argue that from 1945 to 1991 Albania was a Communist nation, whereas others state that the regime of the country in that period was Socialism. Commentators of Kadaré have used the terms interchangeably, and, since this is not the focus of the present thesis, I will not discuss whether the country was Socialist or Communist.

⁴ Anëtar., Tani. “Kadare- Biografi Letrare sipas ‘New York Library’” Sept 13, 2004. <<<http://www.edsh.org/diskutime/post.php?action=reply&fid=71&tid=2811>>> July 17, 2006.

literally suck the blood of the mountain people, who, besides suffering because of so many violent deaths in their families, also have to pay the blood tax to the *Kulla* of Orosh.

The ineffectual men of science in the service of feudal institutions are represented by Ali Binak and his crew. Some of Binak's helpers have studied extensively, but do not have the chance to apply their knowledge in occupations related to what they have studied. Take, for instance, the doctor who was sent by the monarchy to study surgery in Austria, and is now Binak's helper. The doctor's knowledge in surgery is never used, since all he has to do is count the wounds of the victims of the feuds who survive the attacks. The doctor himself admits that his duty can be performed by "anyone at all who has a rudimentary knowledge of the anatomy of the human body" (191). Therefore, the doctor's expertise is being wasted and could be used for something more useful. The novel, thus, confronts two realities: one of the feuds and the other is that which is available outside the mountains, respectively, a feudal society and a modern one.

Finally, Bessian seems to represent the cloistered intelligentsia who is ignorant of social realities. Bessian is a learned man who has theoretical knowledge of the problems of the mountain people. Yet, he assumes a somehow detached posture, acting as a mere observer of the difficulties of the mountaineers. He never takes any kind of attitude in order to stop the suffering of the mountain people. The protagonist, representing the mountain people and the feudal society, never interacts directly with Bessian, representative of the modern society. They only see each other as Bessian and Diana travel in the High Plateau. The fact that they never interact suggests that modernity and old times do not intersect in Albania.

Altinel's remarks about *Broken April* point out to the fact that the novel depicts a retrograde society, and the major cause of backwardness lies in the characters' reliance on the customary law. But, if relying on the customary law leads to backwardness, then why does the population insist on following the code? The reliance on the *Kanun* by the pre-communist society shown in the novel seems to be an attempt to assert the country's national identity. By following the code, the maintenance of centuries-old customs is guaranteed. Newman corroborates the statement, adding that the Albanian Plateau largely kept its own identity throughout the long period of Turkish rule (1385-1913) and still keeps old traditions, thanks to perpetuation of the customary law. Even during the strict years of the communists' rule, the following of the *Kanun*, and consequently the killings from the blood feuds, were only slightly suppressed (therefore not completely banned), as Susan McClear points out (Chapter 3). Over the last years, the feuds have reemerged, and are now alive and well. Anti-feud campaigns have been launched, and even a Committee of Nation Wide Reconciliation has been established in order to stop the fights.⁵

Broken April, therefore, portrays the life and feuds of the mountaineers in the area that Newman calls "the lawless region" of Albania. But, as Newman wisely observes, despite the fact that blood feuds have existed all over the world throughout history, "nowhere (that I [he] heard of) did the system evolve into such an intricate traditional code of laws as in the mountainous highlands of Albania". The code, as portrayed in the novel, is an important factor in the community life and it crucially determines the Albanian identity. In effect, the *Kanun* as shown in *Broken April* instigates revenge, one feature of the Albanian identity— perhaps the most outstanding one—that the country is internationally known for up until today. The preservation of

⁵ "Komiteti i Pajtimit Mbarëkombëtar" (Committee of Nation Wide Reconciliation). <<<http://www.pajtimi.com/index.php>>>. September 26, 2006.

the ancient customs that encourage revenge and death in the *Rrafsh*⁶ suggests, therefore, a collective effort to maintain Albania's national identity.

The revengeful identity of the Albanians is presented in *Broken April* from the point of view of four different characters: Gjorg, Bessian, Mark Ukacierra, and Diana. Each of them perceives the Albanian *vendetta* according to their own experience in relation to it. Gjorg is a character who is involved in the *vendetta* and who plays the role of the main actor in it. Even though he struggles to keep up with the *Kanun*, he is nevertheless a victim of the system that imposes that blood be avenged according to the traditional commandments dictated by Albanian national hero Leke Dukagjin, who wrote the *Kanun* centuries ago; Mark, also known as the steward of the blood due to his duty (he is the man in charge of collecting the blood tax at the *Kulla* of Orosh) is involved in the feuds indirectly, as an employee, and does not run the risk of getting killed in the *vendetta*. Bessian is a mere spectator of the blood feuds, who only observes the cycle of deaths, not being involved in the feuds in any way. Diana is also a spectator of the feuds, and the plot is told from her point of view only on rare occasions. More precisely, from the point of view of Gjorg and Mark, and from Diana and Bessian's perplexity *vis-à-vis* the feuds, the *sui generis* culture of the blood feuds in the North is contrasted with the life in the South of the country.

It is possible to notice that the High Plateau differs from Southern Albania in several aspects. From the characters' attachment to the customary law, the novel shows that the mountainous area of the country resists progress and the infiltration of Western ideas, and is not ruled by state regulations. The state appears not to be able to control the region, nor to be able to stop the local population from following the rules of the

⁶ In the novel, the translator explains in a footnote that the *Rafsh* is the High Plateau in Northern Albania. In "'Shadow States'? State Building and National Invention Under External Constraint in Kosovo and East Timor (1974-2002)", Raphaël Pouyé states that the term refers both to the Northern Albanian mountains and to Western Kosovo, in the Balkans (the regions border one another) (12).

centuries-old law book. As a result of the reliance on the *Kanun*, the region seems to not have developed economically along the years, and is shown as extremely backward in the novel. The South—where the communist movement began in the early 1940s—appears in the novel as welcoming foreign influence and progress, seeming thus more developed than the North. Also, the South does not follow the laws of the *Kanun*. It is as if two Albanias, or, to borrow Anderson's expression, two "imagined communities" demarcated by non-established, imaginary boundaries, coexist within the same political territory. Northern Albania cherishes tradition, whereas South Albania is more modern than the North.

According to Janet Byron, the distinction between tradition and modernity is recurrent in Kadaré's fiction. For the critic, the follower of the ancient customs invoked in Kadaré's writings and symbolizing an Albania and Europe haunted by the ghosts of a backward past is the "old man"; the "old man" is, therefore, the Northern man. The Albanian "new man", on the other hand, is less attached to tradition and more willing to welcome progress; the "new man" is the Southern man (40). In *Broken April*, the dichotomy between Albanian tradition and modernity is embodied in the figures of two groups of characters: in the figures of the mountain people—the Kryeqyqes and the Berishas—and all the other secondary characters that dwell in the High Plateau; and in the figures of the newly weds spending their honeymoon in the mountains, Bessian and Diana.

Although the "old man"—to borrow Byron's term—seeks to maintain the revengeful Albanian identity by following the customary law, doing so is nevertheless not an easy task, since it requires putting his life at risk in the name of tradition. The old man's struggle to keep the tradition of the Plateau is shown right in the first chapter, at the start of the novel. The chapter is recounted by a third person extradiegetic

omniscient narrator, and focalized through Gjorg's perception.⁷ It shows Gjorg's hesitation in avenging the death of his older brother Mehil. Immediately after he shoots the man, he regrets his actions and wonders, "[w]hat am I doing?" and grips the dead man's shoulder as if wanting to bring the corpse back to life (9). The other characters, however, do not seem to be surprised by the man's death. On the contrary, they behave as if the business of killing were just another ordinary activity of the daily life in the mountains.

Like in the episode of Gjorg's murdering of Zef, the protagonist's hesitation in following the customary law is demonstrated in several other moments, but he always surrenders to the rules of the *Kanun*. Gjorg's behavior shows a problematic relationship *vis-à-vis* the concept of the nation itself. Gjorg's hesitation is shown, for instance, during Zef's funeral, which the protagonist is forced to attend, when again he feels the necessity to escape that absurd situation. Yet he knows he cannot run away, "no more than his grandfather, his great-grandfather, his great-great-grandfather, and all his ancestors five hundred, a thousand years before him could run away" (16). Therefore, the act of keeping with the custom, and thus respecting the effort of the nation's ancestors in order to maintain the Albanian identity (chiefly connected with the blood feuds) is the cause of Gjorg's personal suffering. However, for a nation to exist, the wishes of the collectivity must triumph over those of the individual.

As the narrative unfolds, the peculiarities of the life in the Plateau are shown as contrasted to the life in Tirana. One realizes that even though Bessian has academic knowledge about the Alps, when he experiences *in loco* what he has read in books about the Highlands, he cannot help being dazzled as he learns that the world he read about

⁷ Extradiegetic, omniscient, focalization: according to Burgoyne *et al*, an omniscient narrator knows more than the characters; an extradiegetic narrator is not a character in the story, being thus, outside the diegesis; focalization refers to the characters' perception of the facts, i.e. which character in the story "sees" the facts (See chapter III: "Film-Narratology" 69-122). The terms heterodiegetic and omniscient fall into Genette's category of voice, whereas focalization refers to mood.

really exists and is even more peculiar than he could imagine. Similarly, his wife Diana sees the mountains as a place of exoticism and otherness, thus different from her native Tirana. The couple's friends warn Diana about the exoticism of the *Rafsh*, by saying, “[y]ou’ll be escaping the world of reality for the world of legend, literally the world of epic that scarcely exists anymore” (63). The couple's friends warning as well as Diana and Bessian's behavior illustrate the fact the Plateau seems a society as yet untouched by—and isolated from—modern civilization. The idea that Albania, and especially the North of the country, is totally isolated from other nations, having a pure homogeneous identity untouched by foreign elements, is a stereotype many Albanians believe in. The preservation of centuries-old customs fostered by the *Kanun* has led scholars to refer to Northern Albania as “the land of living past”, as Edith Durham observes. Durham argues that the Balkans “could be approached as an in vivo tableau of a society functioning on the basis of tribal customary law, a sort of laboratory of reservation of the origins of European civilization” (Durham qtd in “Back to the Torn out Roots”).⁸

Likewise, life outside the High Plateau is also perceived as alien by the mountaineers. For instance, as Talmor Sascha reminds us, Gjorg had never left his home on the High Plateau, although once he had visited a small town (within the boundaries of the Plateau, and before his wandering during the *bessa*) with houses, carriages, and a market. From this little experience outside of his village, Gjorg best remembers the words of an innkeeper: “It seems that the young women in the city kiss you on the lips” (Kadaré 164). The world of strangeness outside of the High Plateau was certainly an “alien, different world” to Gjorg (Sascha 122).

⁸ Unknown author. “Back to the Torn Out Roots” << http://www.kodolanyi.hu/szabadpart/szam5/tnt/back_to_the_torn_out_roots.htm>> (Paper Presented at the conference on *The History of Vendetta*, organised by the International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice, in Bad Homburg, Germany in June 1999). Nov 14, 2006.

Thus, from the perception of the characters, the *Rafsh* in the novel is depicted as being exotic, isolated, and backward, as compared to the capital Tirana. Another point worth remarking regarding the backwardness of the *Rafsh* is that which refers to schools (or lack of schools). In *Broken April* schools and formal education are mentioned only once regarding the High Plateau. Furthermore, this is done in a depreciative way, when the steward of the blood, Mark Ukacierra, worries about the possibility of losing his job for someone who has attended school. Absorbed in his thoughts, he says to himself: “Take on a steward of blood who is educated, and when your little effeminate steward goes mad in his third week, then you’ll remember Mark Ukacierra” (151). Needless to point out, in a patriarchal society such as the one depicted in *Broken April*, calling a man “effeminate” means calling him inferior to the other men, and means, therefore, to deeply insult him. Moreover, from Ukacierra’s comments, one may imply, therefore, that few (if any) dwellers of the mountains have had formal schooling, and even the steward of the blood himself seems not to be formally educated. Furthermore, there seems to be a suggestion that an educated man would not stand the violence of the blood feud imposed on people. The visitors from Tirana, on the other hand, have had access to school. Diana has attended an institute for young ladies called “The Queen Mother” (*Broken April* 63), and Bessian is a successful writer and researcher, having therefore attended school.

The Plateau is also portrayed as patriarchal and sexist in relation to the treatment of women in the novel, who are far from the discourse of emancipation. The feuds revolve mostly around the men of the *Rrafsh*, and women do not take direct part in the feuds. Only men can kill and die in the fights. Women are confined to the domestic boundaries and to doing chores around the house. They have no power of decision, and are bound to have arranged marriages, like the young girl to whom Gjorg was once

engaged and whom he had never seen. Moreover, it is expected that a woman will respect her man's will, be faithful to him on all occasions, and never try to flee him. As we learn from Gjorg, in one of the moments in which the narrative is fossilized⁹ through his perceptions, on the day of a man's wedding, he receives a "trousseau bullet", with which, according to the Code, the bridegroom ha[s] the right to kill the bride if she should try to leave him" (28). That is, besides not being able to choose the man whom she wants to marry, she cannot even leave him, otherwise she is killed.

In the novel, female figures in general play only secondary roles; they are only extras, whereas the men are the main characters. Often in the plot it is possible to notice that women seem only pieces of decoration in the setting, which stages the drama of a male-dominated society. One example of a passage in which women function as mere decoration is Zef's funeral feast. Like the setting of a play, the environment is all prepared for the staging of the funeral scene. Even professional mourners have come from afar, and have been hired to scratch their faces and tear their hair according to the custom (which seems purely to serve the purpose of entertainment, it must be said in passing). Other women are around as well, but apparently only to fill the environment. The few dialogues happen only between men, and the figures of the mourners, along with the figures of all the other women, seem to function as a kind of frame, decorating the setting for the men to act.

In spite of the fact that they play only secondary roles in the novel, women are nevertheless important in the maintenance of tradition and pride, by doing their own job in helping perpetuate the century's old customs. Women are responsible, for instance, for instigating vengeance by crying and constantly celebrating the late member of the family who has proudly died in the name of traditional honor. Also, they frequently

⁹ As explained earlier on, fossilization refers to which character in the story perceives the facts. If the narrative is fossilized through the perception of a given character, it means that the reader sees the facts through the eyes of that character.

remember the good deeds of the dead until his blood is finally avenged. Therefore, even though the novel portrays Albania as a nation ruled by men, and a place where women do not have much room to express their opinions, the role of the women is also important in the preservation of the customs, no matter how peripheral their part may be.

Diana, conversely, is quite independent and critical. She has a more prominent position in the plot also because she arouses desire in Gjorg, the protagonist. The laws of tradition, however, impede the mountaineer to stay with her. The first impediment refers to the fact that Diana is already committed. In addition to that, she is a Southerner, and therefore a threat to the maintenance of the tradition of the *Kanun*. More importantly, however, even if her commitment to Bessian, and the danger that Diana represents to tradition were disregarded by Gjorg, he would still not be able to stay with her, since he is marked to die in the feuds. Therefore, the first solution for Gjorg to concretize his platonic love for Diana would be to break the rules of tradition and the code of honor and to run away from the feuding system. However, that would mean to break the tradition of hundreds of years, which would lead to consequent offense to Gjorg's family and to the rest of the population willing to maintain Albania's national identity. Thus, Gjorg's desire to Diana may allow us to see him as a victim of the system.

Also, the women from the mountains are never portrayed as breaking the pre-established rules, which shows, thus, how much the maintenance of tradition is cherished in the Plateau. The female figure representing the South, however, behaves in morally unacceptable ways at times, as will be discussed in the sequence, which may symbolize the lack of preoccupation with the perpetuation of tradition in the South.

The reader is never exposed to the feelings of any woman of the High Plateau in particular. Only Southern Diana has a slightly more prominent position in the plot, which assumedly shows that in the South women's opinions are more valued than women's opinions in the North. It may even suggest that the South is more alert to issues of women's liberation, and is therefore less backward than the North. Still, the reader only has access to Diana's feelings in a restricted fashion, since the narration is rarely focalized through her perception. Only from her behavior can one infer her feelings. For instance, even though she seems interested in Gjorg, one cannot assure that she is in love with him. The reader has access to the same amount of information available to her husband, who seems suspicious but not totally sure of his wife's love for the mountaineer. Diana's secret feelings toward Gjorg are only finally revealed when she goes into the place where the *Kanun* allows only the men marked to die to enter, the tower of refuge, a place "where no stranger had ever set foot" (198). One can foretell the locals' surprise when, not only a stranger, but worse than that, a woman, breaks into the tower.

Interestingly, the fact that she is from the capital is emphasized,¹⁰ perhaps to reinforce that the natives of the mountains would never indulge in such condemnable behavior. Committing such a sacrilege could only come from an outsider, from someone who disrespects tradition. What makes matters even worse is the fact that she—a married woman—goes into the tower searching for Gjorg, the man that—now the reader confirms previous speculations—she is in love with, and who, it must be reinforced, is not her husband. She thus commits a double sin: she enters a forbidden place (the tower of refuge) and does so looking for the man she is in love with (who is not her husband). Diana's betrayal only never officially happens because she has the

¹⁰ "[N]ot at that time nor afterwards, then, could anyone establish precisely how the young woman from the capital had managed to get into the tower (...)" (198).

misfortune of never meeting Gjorg again. Her attitude goes against the code, which preaches that one needs to respect the *Kanun* without questioning its rules, and which cherishes fidelity to the spouse on all occasions. Her behavior thus enhances the fact that in the South tradition is not a concern.

Therefore, the distinction between the identity of what Byron calls the “new man” and that of the “old man” is ubiquitous in *Broken April*, however stereotyped this portrayal may be. One is presented with rigid and straightforward characterization, from costumes to the presentation of the habits of the population of the two distinct regions of Albania portrayed in the novel (North/South). The wealth of the couple representing the South and the “new man” is apparent since the couple’s first apparition in Chapter II.

The chapter, also recounted by a third person extradiegetic omniscient narrator, but now focalized mostly through Bessian’s perception, introduces the reader not only to the honeymooners, but also to the socio-economic status of the inhabitants of Tirana. The couple’s wealth is seen initially in their hearse-like horse-drawn carriage, a great luxury for the highlanders, and which is not a simple carriage. It is “a rubber-tired vehicle of the kind used in the capital for excursions, or as a hackney coach” (61). With its opulent seats upholstered in black velvet, the vehicle contrasts with the simplicity of the horses, the most luxurious means of transportation for the mountaineers, who most of the time go on their journeys on foot. In chapter V, focalized through Gjorg’s perception, the protagonist thinks of Diana’s carriage. He compares the carriage’s “gloomy appearance, bronze door-handles, and complicated lines” to a coffin (163).

The wealth of Tirana as opposed to the more conspicuously crude life of the mountaineers is also possible to be perceived in the costumes. The male mountaineers are often portrayed as wearing plain clothes, carrying sacks of provisions, and some of those who are involved in the feuds have black ribbons on their right sleeves. The heavy

sacks may symbolize the heavy burden one has to carry in keeping with the custom, whereas their arms tied up by the ribbon seems to be a metaphor for their entanglement to tradition. On the other hand, the couple from Tirana is always wearing apparently fancier clothes, which subtly reveals their richer background.

Thus, through the presentation of the dichotomy between the characters who are followers of the *Kanun* (North) versus the characters who are non-followers of the *Kanun* (South), some facts about the identity of the two clans emerge in the plot. As explained in this thesis, the identity of the Northern community differs chiefly because of their following the *Kanun*, and consequently engaging in the blood feuds. Southerners Bessian and Diana do not take part in the feuds, but understand, respect, and even fear the concept. For instance, Bessian and Diana joke about what would happen to them according to the *Kanun* if they violated their marriage vows, and then Bessian regrets having invoked the code in a playful manner. Also, in one of the very few moments in which we have access to Diana's feelings, she remembers that "[t]he *Kanun* is never a laughing matter" (76).

Besides fear, a certain amount of admiration for the differences of the region that represents "the other" within the same nation, to the place Bessian calls "death's kingdom" (69), can be perceived when Bessian brags about the Plateau's staging of what he calls a "genuine constitution of death" (72). Somewhat resignedly he goes on exposing his fascination and explaining that,

[t]he *Rrafsh* is the only region of Europe which—while being an integral part of a modern state, an integral part, I repeat, of a modern European state and not the habitat of primitive tribes—has rejected the laws, the legal institutions, the police, the courts, in short, all the structures of the state. (72)

Moreover, Bessian later endorses that the North of Albania is a place "of a very special kind, [whose regime is] [...] unlike any other regime in the world". He reinforces that

“neither police nor government ha[s] any authority over the High Plateau” (119). Thus, from Bessian’s comments, it is possible to notice that the *Rrafsh*’s resistance to foreign influence and its people’s effort to maintain the ancient customs disseminated by the *Kanun* inspire admiration and national pride even in the characters from the South.

In *Broken April*, the tradition of the *Kanun* can be noticed through Genette’s category of “order”, which refers to the order the events of the story are recounted in the diegesis. The linearity of the one-month lasting story is broken with several flashbacks (also called analepses by Genette), which are presented from the perception of Gjorg, Bessian, Diana, and Mark Ukacierra. The flashbacks are mostly references to events that happened before the plot officially begins, on the 17 of March. They are mostly sad memories associated with the suffering because of the cycle of deaths. Also, rare flashforwards (called prolepses by Genette) occur in the narrative, chiefly as predictions related to issues of the blood feuds. Two examples of flashbacks and one flashforward associated with the impossibility of getting rid of the *Kanun* (and consequently the impossibility of getting rid of tradition) and the suffering caused by the code in chapters I and II, respectively, should suffice to illustrate the narrative pattern of the entire novel.

Chapter I opens with Gjorg’s murdering of Zef, then his attending the funeral, his preparation to depart to *Orosh*, and ends with Gjorg already on his way to the *Kulla* of *Orosh* to pay the blood tax. The events are thus told chronologically. One of the flashbacks of the chapter shows the first time Gjorg tries to murder Zef six months before, not succeeding, and having only wounded the victim. The wound causes a lot of trouble to Gjorg’s family, who was almost ruined having to use all their savings to pay the fine prescribed by the *Kanun* (9). The payment would not have been necessary had Gjorg killed Zef at the first time, since he would only have to pay the blood tax. Having only wounded Zef, Gjorg’s family had to pay the fine, and the worst thing is that the

enemy was still alive, and would have to be killed sooner or later. It must be said in passing that the blood fine does not exclude the blood tax. Thus, if a family wounds the victim several times, they have to pay the fine to the family of the wounded man as many times as he has been wounded. Strangely, some men have become masters in surviving attempts of murder, making a living out of the wounds, as the doctor hired to accompany Ali Binak later points out (193). Gjorg's flashback, which is by the way repeated other times in the story, recalls the protagonist's feeling of guilt for failing to do what his family expected him to do. After having wounded Zef, Gjorg fell ill, "sick at heart", and "pale as wax", as we learn in another flashback of the episode (51). Therefore, the flashback shows a moment of suffering and impotence caused by the rules of the *Kanun*.

Another episode told in flashback which shows the characters' suffering because of the *Kanun* is Gjorg's memories of the day his father calls him for a serious talk, and to call for revenge. The flashback occurs in chapter II, when Gjorg has already killed Zef and is on his way to Orosh. In the flashback, the father reinforces that Gjorg is putting off his obligations, and risking the honor of the family. The father shows Mehil's shirt and says: "Look [...] The blood is turning yellow [...] The dead man cries out for revenge" (45). According to the Albanian tradition, the shirt of the man who has been murdered must be hanged in a visible place, and when the blood of the shirt turns yellow, the family must avenge the man's death. From that moment on, Gjorg cannot have peace of mind due to the pressure for him to avenge Mehil's death. Gjorg keeps reciting the words of the code that his father had recited to him that day: "It is up to you to be a man or not" (46). This flashback shows Gjorg's awareness of the fact that his father could subject him to infractions if he decided not to murder Zef; yet, his father's punishments would be nothing if compared to the risk of losing his honor. The

flashback, thus, portrays Gjorg's anxiety and suffering with having to cope with the *Kanun*, and consequently, a problematization of the concept of the nation itself.

Flashforwards are rare in *Broken April*, and when they occur, they are mostly predictions related to the characters' suffering with putting up with tradition, similarly to the aforementioned instances of flashbacks. For instance, in chapter I, observing the professional mourners in Zef's funeral, Gjorg sadly wonders how his own funeral would look like. He also wonders which of the people present in Zef's funeral would attend his own. Aware of the absurdities imposed by the *Kanun*, such as his impending death, but unable to change the tradition of hundreds of generations, Gjorg reasons that "the lives of all the generations to come in the two families would be an endless funeral feast, each side playing host in turn" (17). Flashforwards can thus anticipate future events. Gjorg's flashforward arouses the curiosity on part of the reader, who wonders whether the protagonist will manage to escape his doomed fate. Thus, from the flashbacks and flashforwards, we have access to Gjorg's consciousness of being overwhelmed by the code, and his despair as he is aware of his impossibility of getting rid of tradition.

With regards to Genette's category of frequency, which is "the relation between the number of times something occurs in the story and the number of times it is represented in the discourse" (Burgoyne *et al* 121), it is also possible to notice that the memories which are recounted more than once are mostly traumatic episodes, most of them associated with the *Kanun*. For instance, Gjorg constantly thinks about the harsh rules of the code, as if to remind himself that one cannot escape tradition. On one of the many occasions in which the rules of the code are recalled, he remembers the penalties an Albanian may be imposed on for not respecting the *Kanun*:

The punishments were many [depending on what rule of the Kanun is disrespected]: ostracism—the guilty man was segregated forever (debarred from funerals, weddings, and the right to borrow flour); withdrawal of the right to cultivate his land, accompanied by the

destruction of his fruit trees; enforced fasting within the family; the ban on bearing arms whether on his shoulder or at his belt for one or two weeks; being chained or under house arrest; taking away from the master or mistress of the house his or her authority in the family. (44)

The thoughts of what may happen when the laws of the code are not respected appear several times within the plot. Thus, the novelistic treatment of the *Kanun*, and the frequency in which the code is mentioned, reiterates the cycle of deaths in which the characters are involved.

Another traumatic event that Gjorg constantly brings to mind is the death of his fiancée, whom, to Gjorg's frustration, he had not been able to marry because of her illness (28). By remembering his dead fiancée, he automatically remembers his own terrible fate: since he is marked to die, he is likely to never again have any other love. Whenever Gjorg witnesses events related to weddings, he remembers his dead fiancée. The frequency the events are recounted thus plays a significant role in the depiction of the society unable to escape tradition in the High Plateau. The repetition of the traumatic events occurring because of the *Kanun* may be a stylistic device used to reiterate the cycle, since the recounting of the events is arguably circular itself.

The duration of the events in the plot also play a crucial role in the unfolding of the narrative of the blood feuds. Burgoyne *et al* explain that Genette's category of duration in the study of narrative systems can be split into scene, descriptive pause, summary, and ellipsis. The scene describes events that are recorded without temporal manipulation, or, in Burgoyne *et al*'s words, "when the discourse-time and the story-time are equal"¹¹ (120). In *Broken April*, the passages that depict more relevant events are told in form of scenes. Some of the scenes are for instance, the moment in which Zef is murdered, and the moment Gjorg dies.

¹¹ The difference between discourse-time and story-time has been discussed in the introductory chapter.

However, some other important passages are ellipses, that is, they are never explicitly described in the novel. An ellipsis happens when “time passes in the story while no time elapses in the discourse” (119). In other words, an ellipsis hides events in the plot, but the reader implies that that event has occurred. One important passage that is not described is Gjorg’s visit to the *Kulla* of Orosh. The reader follows Gjorg’s trip until he gets to the *Kulla* and is kept waiting to pay the tax. The chapter ends and the final outcome of his visit is kept suspended. The reader only learns about Gjorg again when Bessian and Diana are on their way to Orosh and meet the mountaineer, already on his way back from the *kulla*. By leaving part of the story at Orosh unfinished, the plot places more emphasis on Gjorg’s sudden appearance and his first encounter with Diana. Other minor events are also never explicitly told in novel, but certainly the most important one is the aforementioned ellipsis in relation to the payment of the blood tax.

Other techniques of manipulation of narrative time can be seen in the novel. For instance, the technique of “summary”—another of Genette’s subdivision of the category “duration”—is used to summarize the passing of time. Often, minor events in the narrative of *Broken April* are summarized, i.e., condensed in a brief passage, so that the narrative develops more smoothly. Also, what Genette calls “descriptive pause” occurs when the narrative freezes so that information about the place or important features of the characters or things that surround them can be presented.¹² Descriptive pauses happen when “time stands still in the story while the description is carried out at length” (119). One of the instances of a descriptive pause is in chapter II, during Gjorg’s trip to Orosh. As the mountaineer goes up and down valleys and mountains, the narrative freezes in descriptive pauses of the *Kanun*:

¹² It has been argued that a descriptive pause does not advance the narrative, since the information in it is meant to be descriptive only. Descriptive pauses are especially problematic in film, and at least two critics discuss the issue. See for instance Seymour Chatman’s “What Novels Can Do that Novels Can’t (and vice versa)” and Brian Henderson’s “Tense, Mood, and Voice in Film: Notes After Genette”.

[T]he rules of the blood feud were only a small part of the code, just a chapter. [...] [T]he other part, which was concerned with everyday living and was not drenched with blood, was inextricably bound to the bloody part, so much so that no one could really tell where one part left off and the other began. The whole was so conceived that one begat the other, the stainless giving birth to the bloody, and the second to the first, and so on forever, from generation to generation. (27)

The other descriptive pauses in the novel provide the reader with information of the details about the setting in which the blood feuds happen, as well as details about the characters' clothing and body language.

It is also important to mention the historical period in which the novel is set. Since the novel can be understood as a piece of harsh criticism of the seemingly irrational and inhumane practice of the blood feuds in which the Albanian nation engages, its setting in the past may be seen as an ideological choice of the author.¹³ Criticizing the nation was not allowed during Enver Hoxha's rule, but criticizing the *past* of the nation could be a way of reinforcing the alleged deeds of Socialism (the official regime in Albania from 1945 to 1991). In other words, criticizing the past was more or less the same as proclaiming: "That backward Albania is finally extinguished. Now that the Socialists have finally taken over the country, everything is better". The explanation may be useful for the understanding of why *Broken April* was not banned by the socialist regime. It is true that the Socialists managed to suppress the following of the *Kanun* during their rule, but achieved little success in the task, as McClear points out. Furthermore, especially after the end of socialism, the *Kanun* emerged as powerful as ever. Northern Albania still resists any form of law other than the *Kanun*. As Susan McClear explains, the feuding and feudal system—therefore alive and well up until

¹³ The reference to time is not very precise in the novel. Even though both Robert Elsie (343) and John Kolsti (154) argue that the historical context of the plot is the 1930s, this reference is never explicitly mentioned. When Mark Ukacierra shows his concern with the decline of deaths of the blood feuds, one can only infer that the historical period is sometime around the 1920s or 1930s (139). The plot is, in effect, set in the past, beginning on the seventeenth of March, when Gjorg murders Zef, and ending on the seventeenth of April, when Gjorg is murdered.

today—of the North of the country as depicted in *Broken April*, has never been totally abolished, embarrassing the government *vis-à-vis* the international community (Chapter 3).

From what has been discussed so far, it is possible to conclude that the *Kanun* renders the High Plateau *sui generis* as compared to the South of Albania in terms of moral, political and communal behavior on part of the characters. Moreover, one can infer that in *Broken April*, above all, it is the preservation of the customary law that seems to have held the national identity of the mountaineers together for generations. Therefore, the uniqueness of the Northern Plateau in Albania is mostly due to the mountaineers' resistance to extinguish the *Kanun*.

Furthermore, the characters' respect for the *Kanun* can be understood as an act of national reverence for their hero, Lekë Dukagjin, who dictated the *Kanun* hundreds of years ago. Dukagjin (1410-1481), along with Skanderberg (1405-1468), struggled all his life to set Albania free from the Ottoman Empire, having become a national hero and “the angel prince who appeared with dignity and wisdom to ensure a continuity of the Albanian character”.¹⁴ Susan McClear comments that Dukagjin's and Skanderbeg's attempt to free Albania from foreign domination became highly significant to the Albanians, “as it strengthened their solidarity, making them more conscious of their national identity, and serving later as a great source of inspiration in their struggle for national unity, freedom, and independence” (Chapter 3). Even though Southerners Bessian and Diana do not follow the *Kanun*, and at times they even display a sort of veiled criticism in relation to the code, they nevertheless show respect for the book of honor followed by their counterparts in the North.

¹⁴ Çobani, Tonin. “Leke Dukagjin and his Code (*Kanun*)”. Komiteti i Pajtimit Mbarëkombëtar (Committee of Nation Wide Reconciliation). <<
<http://www.pajtimi.com/faqebrenda.php?newsID=30&lang=eng>>>. September 26, 2006.

Agron Alibali corroborates the fact that the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjin has helped shape the Albanian national identity. Based on perceptions of the Albanian High Plateau, Alibali comments:

Its [the *Kanun's*] contribution was indeed enormous as it helped preserve the Albanian ethnos in a very difficult and complex historical and geographical context. This system of oral customary law operating since time immemorial comes to our days as a clear evidence of the strong and evolved sense of justice of the people who use[] it. (Alibali qtd in McClear chapter 3)

A strong sense of justice is a characteristic Albanians are known for possessing, and it is closely associated with the *Kanun*. Like Leonard Fox explains, “the *Kanun* is the expression and reflection of the Albanian character, a character which embodies an uncompromising morality based on justice, honour, and respect for oneself and others” (qtd in “Back to the Torn Out Roots”).¹⁵

Moreover, the existence of two Albanias within the same political territory puts at stake homogenizing theories of the nation/national identity. As discussed in the introductory chapter, such theories tend to disregard the fact that in the same nation, not all individuals necessarily share the same factors necessary to distinguish them as being members of other nations. Thus, at the same time that the cultural practices of people from different areas in the same country may differ, in *Broken April* it is also possible to argue that the imaginary boundaries of a nation may operate in a smaller proportion, delimitating not only nations, but also tribes within the same nation.

Nevertheless, it is also possible to conclude that the two regions depicted in the novel do share some of the common elements that Smith argues are necessary for the making of a nation. The characters share the same historic homeland as their ancestors,

¹⁵ Unknown author. “Back to the Torn Out Roots <<http://www.kodolanyi.hu/szabadpart/szam5/tnt/back_to_the_torn_out_roots.htm>> (Paper Presented at the conference on *The History of Vendetta*, organised by the International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice, in Bad Homburg, Gemany in June 1999). Nov 14, 2006

such as Dukagjin and Skanderberg, and also their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so forth. The characters frequently reason that they cannot disappoint their ancestors, the ones who had died in the name of the honor of their homeland. Another important element in the making of the nation according to Smith is well demarcated boundaries. The well-established boundaries of the country allow the characters to differentiate their nation from other nations. Mark Ukacierra reasons, for instance, that the years of 1878, 1879 and 1880 were years of revolution against people who lived beyond the borders of the country, and the number of blood feud killings fell because the nation could not waste lives when they were needed to fight foreign opponents (139). Fights against foreigners show the union of the nation, which may be experiencing internal disagreements or even civil wars. However, when there is a foreign opponent, the nation forgets the internal problems and gets together to fight, in spite of any national struggle that they may be facing.

The characters in *Broken April* also have a common history, which can also be noticed in Ukacierra's reasoning about why the death rate in the Plateau has declined. As Mark tries to find an explanation for the decline, he examines several documents, from old books to notations. The documents—arguably the foundation of history—show that Albania has a past, and thereby a history. According to Michel Foucault, documents are the central question of history, and “[h]istory is that which transforms documents into monuments” (7). The steward of the blood feels anxious with the responsibility of having the history of the nation literally in his hands, and for fearing that the other members of the nation may not be respecting the tradition and history of the *Kanun* as they did in the past, as the documents show. The decline of deaths indicates that the tradition of the *Kanun* is not being followed. Ukacierra feels

overwhelmed by the fact that he cannot perpetuate tradition by himself, yet, from his point of view, the rest of the nation seems not to be so much worried about the issue.

Above all, the characters in *Broken April* share the tradition of their ancestors, which, for Renan is one of the most important aspects for a nation to be devised as so.

Summing up, two main conclusions can be drawn about the society depicted in Kadaré's *Broken April*. First, the characters' following of the *Kanun* seems an attempt of assertion of Albania's national identity. As discussed along this chapter, Albanians are known for being a people who cherish revenge, and, by following the customary law, a sense of communion is perpetuated, even if in problematic and repressive ways. Secondly, because the code has not been adapted to the several cultural, economical, and social transitions the Albanian society portrayed in the novel has gone through, relying on the customary law inevitably leads to backwardness. Nevertheless, there is a problematization of the concept of the nation in the novel itself, since the three major characters' ideals (Bessian's, Diana's, and Gjorg's) expose their problematic relation to the *Kanun*: Gjorg does not want to be a victim of the *Kanun*, and Bessian and Diana are shocked and paralyzed by the inevitability of death imposed by the book of honor on "innocent" people. All things considered, it is possible to notice that the cycle of deaths and the consequent burden of tradition that the characters are compelled to carry on in *Broken April* will only be broken when the *Kanun* is extinguished. However, Gjorg's death in the end may suggest that the extinction of the *Kanun* will not happen soon, and the long lasting cycle of deaths and suffering will still go on.

CHAPTER II
THE TRANSPOSITION OF *BROKEN APRIL* TO THE SCREEN:
WALTER SALLES' *ABRIL DESPEDAÇADO*

In the present section, I will compare and contrast the perpetuation of tradition in the narrative of the blood feuds portrayed in Kadaré's *Broken April*, and its free adaptation to the screen by Walter Salles, the film *Abril Despedaçado*. The film was released in 2002, and produced by Arthur Cohn. I depart from the premise that, even though Brazilian elements are indeed shown in the film, the non existence of the *Kanun* in Brazil, and the use of narrative techniques different from the ones employed in the novel render the story of the blood feuds in the film more worldwide than the genuinely Albanian reality depicted in the novel. By worldwide I mean to argue that the movie has characteristics of cinema that are common to the Classical Hollywood style, which has inundated the whole world. Therefore, international audiences are familiar with Hollywood cinema. Also, some specific sequences that illustrate the impossibility on part of the characters to set free from tradition, and that depict the Brazilian reality through cinematic conventions allegedly meant to please international audiences, will be analyzed in terms of the specificities of the medium, (sound effects, music, phonetic sounds, and moving photographic image, but not necessarily all of them).

Abril Despedaçado is set in the Brazilian Northeastern baldlands (*sertão*), a place that is well-known for its poverty and ruggedness, in 1910. The duration of the story is slightly longer than that of the novel. The film begins in February, and ends in April. The film tells the story of two families, the Breves and the Ferreiras, who are caught in the blood feuds for land. Tonho Breves' older brother, Inácio (Caio Junqueira), has been killed by a member of the Ferreiras, and Tonho (Rodrigo Santoro)

murders Isaiás Ferreira (Servílio de Holanda) in order to avenge the blood of his dead brother. According to the custom, Tonho is granted a truce, which may last 30 days, or until the blood of Isaiás' shirt turns yellow, whatever happens first. When his truce is over, he can be murdered by a male member of the Ferreiras at any time. The cycle of deaths in which the male characters are trapped has been going on for several generations, all in the name of honor and tradition.

The cycle starts to break when a circus made up of two artists—Salustiano (Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos), a clown, and his fire-eater stepdaughter, Clara (Flavia Marco Antônio)—arrives in town. Menino (Ravi Ramos Lacerda), Tonho's younger brother, tells Tonho about the artists. When Tonho goes downtown to sell the family's *rapadura*, he sees the artists, and decides to take Menino to their show the next day. After the show, Salustiano gives Menino a name, Pacu. Clara and Tonho fall in love with each other, and Tonho departs with the couple of artists on his first longest journey ever, to the nearby city of Ventura, on their horse-drawn carriage. However, aware of the severe moral punishments imposed on the ones who flee the duty of the blood feuds (i.e., refusing to murder or running away from the murderer), he returns to his village, Riacho das Almas, and impatiently waits for his murderer to come. Contrastingly with the end of *Broken April*, Tonho's avenger mistakenly kills the protagonist's brother, Menino. The cycle of deaths is finally broken by Tonho, who rebels against tradition after his little brother's unfair death. When Pacu dies, Tonho disobeys his father, who demands: "*Pega a arma, Tonho. Já! Não tem trégua, cobre o sangue já, cobre o sangue desses porco! Vai, meu filho! Cobre o sangue!! Já!!*" (Pedro Butcher and Anna Luiza Müller 227). Tonho does not utter a word, and with a decisive expression in the face, he leaves the house towards the sea. His behavior indicates that he has decided to stop the cycle of deaths.

Hence, in relation to characterization, the major differences between *Broken April* and its translation to the screen can be summarized as follows: Gjorg is Tonho, one of the three sons of the Breves family. Mehill becomes Inácio, and both are already dead by the time the narratives begin. Gjorg's little sister does not exist in the movie. Instead, Tonho has a younger brother, Pacu. Whereas in the novel the sister plays only a minor role and is only mentioned once, in the film Pacu plays a very important role. He is the narrator, and the one who questions the absurdity of keeping up with tradition. Moreover, he turns out to be the sacrificial lamb, dying to save his beloved brother's life, therefore crucially determining the denouement of the screenplay.

The adaptation keeps the most outstanding characteristic of the father (whose name is not mentioned in any of the media, and who is played by José Dumont in the film). He is the patriarch who speaks very little and who is supposed to keep the feuding system alive at any cost, so that the pride and honor of the family are maintained. With his serious, dry, rough face, he is, according to Salles, "*o orgulho em estado bruto*" (Butcher and Müller 84). The father's presence is extended in the film, and he becomes one of the main actors in it. Also, the mother's participation (Rita Assemany) is sparse in the novel, whereas in the film her figure is shown many times, and she is almost always suffering with pain because of the deaths. In the novel, one barely knows about the mother's existence, and her role is only secondary. As for the travelers, Bessian becomes Salustiano, a circus artist, and Diana becomes Clara, Salustiano's goddaughter, his partner in the circus, and apparently also his lover.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, in the process of adaptation from page to screen, the filmmaker has to make choices in relation to the elements of the narrative that will be adapted, what actor would be more appropriate for a certain role, and so forth. The process inevitably leads to changes. Therefore, the film differs from

the novel in several aspects other than characterization. But, as Kevin Thomas explains, *Abril Despedaçado* was produced with “Kadaré’s blessing”¹. In other words, the writer of the novel gave Salles creative flexibility and allowed him to adjust the story so that the screenplay could fit the Brazilian reality (Butcher and Müller 79). “We needed to understand the character of the wars between families in Brazil,” Salles noted in an interview.² After a long period of research about the blood feuds in the Northeast of the country, Salles and the crew working in the making of the film were very surprised to learn of the many similarities between the Albanian feuding system and the Brazilian *vendetta* (79). One of the similarities is the shirt that the dead man was wearing when he was assassinated, which is hung outside of the house in order to remind the family that the dead man’s blood needs to be avenged. In the past, the ritual existed in Northeastern Brazil, according to Butcher and Müller (80). Other elements needed to be adapted or added, for instance, the sugar cane crusher, which plays an important metaphorical role in the film (as will be discussed along the chapter) and which does not exist in the novel. Similarities and differences considered, several changes were made, not only due to the change of medium, but also in relation to the appropriation of the theme and to the social milieu in which it happens: from Northern Albania to Northeastern Brazil.

The major aspect that needed to be considered—and the most important for the argumentation of the present thesis—is the non-existence in Brazil of anything equivalent to the *Kanun*. The *Kanun* is a compilation of ancient written laws developed by Albanian national hero Lek Dukagjin (1410-1481), and passed down through generations. Dukagjin’s laws were only compiled and written down in the 19 century, by Shtjefën Gjeçov. The laws are followed by Albanians as an act of reverence to their

¹ Thomas, Kevin. “A Brazilian Family’s Long-Running Vendetta Fuels *Behind the Sun*”. Los Angeles Times. December 12, 2001. <<http://www.abrildespedacado.com.br/en/imprensa_en02.htm>> Nov. 12, 2005.

² Non identified author/date/title. <<<http://www.writingstudio.co.za/page195.html>>> November 12, 2005.

hero. The *Kanun* was created in order to regulate disputes over several issues in Albania, as well as to dictate a code of behavior for the Albanian population. Even though the *Kanun* dictates the principles and moral of Albanians, it does not have a religious basis. The code has helped shape the Albanian identity, connected with the practice of the blood feuds. In Brazil, however, the blood feuds occurring at the time the movie is set (1910) happened due to the lack of a powerful state to control the fights, and not as reverence to a national hero. The fights were regulated by powerful individuals in the *sertão*, who passed the verbal laws according to their own needs. In Albania, the rules of the *Kanun* were the official code of law until 1912. From 1912 to 1941, when the Communists took over, the code was not the official constitution adopted by the state. During the Communists' rule, the *Kanun* was suppressed, and from the 1990s on it has been more powerful than ever in the Highlands of the country. Summing up, even though the *Kanun* is not the official code of laws in Albania anymore, the state laws do not have enough power to extinguish the book, especially in the North. The non-extinction of the customary law is akin to the Albanian custom that betrayal should be avoided at any cost. Not following the code would mean betraying the nation's most beloved hero: Dukagjin.

Like in any other places in the world where people engage in family fights (for instance in Sicily or even in Verona, which staged the feud of the Montechios and Capuletos in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*), family feuds have indeed occurred in Brazil, despite the lack of a regulating code to control the fights like the *Kanun* in Albania. Long-lasting feuds as the one depicted in *Abril Despedaçado* were especially common in rural areas of the country in the Colonial period (when the country still belonged to Portugal), especially in the Northeast, as Luís de Aguiar Costa Pinto observes. During the period, courts judged crimes in very few parts of the country, and

the *sertão* was too far away from all judging courts. Given the geographical distance, the crimes that happened in the area were hard to judge and the process was so slow that a crime could take months to be solved, and sometimes was not solved at all.

Thus, since the state was ineffective to prevent and judge the crimes, some sort of order other than that of the state needed to be established amidst the chaos of nobody's land, the *sertão*, and, according to Pinto, the family fights happened with that purpose (XII). Pinto observes that not only vengeance was normal, expected by the locals, and even encouraged so that order reigned over the *sertão*, but it was also the first of all social duties:

Não exercer a vingança—como hoje, o Estado não impor a obediência à lei—seria, além de expor-se a novos atentados, desrespeitar a norma, infringir a regra, ir de encontro ao costume, ameaçar a própria sobrevivência e o equilíbrio social. (11)

The picture started to change in the Imperial period in Brazil. By then, family power had allied itself with state power, which consequently suppressed the feuds and led to the quasi-extinction of the fights. The state's job was, thus, to stop the fights, and not to regulate them. Therefore, in the film there is no written code or anything equivalent to the regulations of the *Kanun* portrayed in the novel, which culminates in an important change in the way the national identity is portrayed in the film, as will be explained presently.

Like the novel, *Abril Despedaçado* depicts a society that cannot get rid of the tradition of the blood feud. The peasants in the film have lost many of their family members already; nonetheless, they are unwilling to stop the cycle of deaths because doing so would mean to disrupt their honor. Differently from the novel, however, the characters in the film seem to engage in the feuds more in an attempt to preserve the honor of their families, and not in an act of assertion of their national identity, which has very little, or perhaps nothing to do with revenge. Blood feuds are not common in

Brazil to the extent that one can argue that they are a typical feature of the country. Therefore, the fights in which the characters engage in *Abril Despedaçado* do not show a concern with the preservation of the country's national identity. In fact, the feuds depicted in the film suggest two things: an attempt to maintain family honor, and the lack of a powerful regulating state, capable of stopping the fights.

I will return to the discussion of how the characters in Salles' appropriation do not engage in the feuds attempting to assert their national identity, but do so rather in order to preserve their family honor. For now, I would like to endorse that in spite of the fact that the film indeed portrays characteristics of the Brazilian culture, several aspects of the adaptation reveal a reality of the blood feuds that could be typical of any place in the world. Like Jonathan Romney argues, "this certainly looks and feels a quintessentially Brazilian film", but many elements of it, such as the "reconstructions of the hard rural life [...] make the film somehow less specific". As Romney explains, "[t]he setting is an arid patch of land situated 'somewhere on earth, behind the sun'". The reconstruction of the hard rural life shown in the film is not specific of Brazil, and is, therefore, not tied up to a geographical location. One realizes it is set in Brazil when the Portuguese language with a heavy Northeastern accent is spoken for the first time. The setting *per se* could be, thus, anywhere in the world. Romney goes on arguing that, moreover, *Abril Despedaçado* "plays too easily into marketable ideas of world cinema". Among other examples of the film's marketing strategies of reaching the international public, choosing handsome Santoro—who over the years has achieved considerable worldwide prominence as one of the sexiest Latin American actors, and already famous from Globo's soap operas at the time *Abril Despedaçado* was made—may illustrate Romney's statement.³ Still according to Romney, *Abril Despedaçado* fits perfectly into

³ It is true that Santoro was mostly famous in the domestic market when he was chosen to work in *Abril Despedaçado*, but Brazilians had it that the actor would soon achieve international recognition. The

Miramax's aesthetic of "solid narrative, high production values, with nothing too culturally specific that might alienate an international niche audience". Obviously, when high budgets are involved in the production of films, like in commercial Hollywood films, the director can rely on a combination of elements to make the film more appealing to a large audience, such as good acting and cinematography, and special effects. A solid narrative, on the other hand, is likely to follow the Classical Hollywood style. I draw on David Bordwell's definition of Classical Hollywood Cinema. According to the film theoretician, classical refers to a dominant mode of filmmaking because of its "lengthy, stable, and influential history". Bordwell refers to Hollywood because "the mode assumed its definitive shape in American studio film. The same mode, however, governs many narrative films made in other countries" (Film 108). *Abril Despedaçado* has features of Hollywood Cinema, as will be discussed in the sequence, but it also gives audiences a taste of the "local flavor".

Other critics corroborate the statement that *Abril Despedaçado* was produced with an eye on the international market and shows popular international clichéd-features of filmmaking, and not only the Brazilian reality of the feuds. For instance, Kevin Thomas argues that the character Pacu "is in the perilous Hollywood tradition of the awesomely precocious—and often annoying—child". Alexander Walker⁴ adds that the film "resembles Hollywood's idea of what a 'primitive' story should be—gorgeous to look at, top-heavy with fatalism, tragic in outcome, but painless to watch". The film displays, thus, both aspects of the Brazilian culture and Classical Hollywood cinema, and, as Matthew Sweet wisely points out, the film has "foreign but not too foreign

predictions were right: two years later, in 2003, Santoro starred in *Love Actually* (Directed by Richard Curtis, distributed by Universal Pictures). His international career now includes *Lost* (American TV series), and *300* (directed by Zack Snyder and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures - 2007).

⁴ Walker, Alexander. "Tale of Murder, Revenge and a Ritual of Assassination". *The Evening Standard*, London. March 7, 2002. <<http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4153/is_20020307/ai_n11997967>> April 12, 2006

qualities”.⁵ The film’s mix of elements of the Brazilian culture with elements which are allegedly more easily understandable and therefore appreciated by an international public is in conformity with Salles’ beliefs, as discussed in the introductory chapter. The filmmaker claims that the more the Brazilian reality is shown in the screen (in a way that an international audience would understand), more chances the film will have of being appreciated by a worldwide audience.

Abril Despedaçado is part of a project within Cinema da Retomada (New Brazilian Cinema). As Alcides Freire Ramos observes,⁶ filmmakers from the Retomada have Hollywood as a parameter. Ramos’ argument is based on the fact that Brazilian filmmakers strive to have their films in the American Oscar nominations. Ramos points out that the critical nationalism of Cinema Novo⁷ (1960s) was abandoned in the Retomada to give place to a pursuit of the international market. This can be noticed in *Abril Despedaçado*. The costumes, the lighting, the camera movements, the editing and montage in Salles’ adaptation of Kadaré’s novel are all in conformity with the tastes of foreign audiences, who are used to the Hollywood filmmaking style.

Other characteristics of the traditional Hollywood style (according to Bordwell “Cinema” 278-283) seen in *Abril Despedaçado* are characters with a well defined personality (e.g. one can easily spot the “good” and the “bad” guy). Also, in the Hollywood style, what motivates the characters is presented right in the first moments of the film, and the motivation is always very clear to the viewer. Moreover, in classical

⁵ Sweet, Matthew. “Everything Under the Sun?”. The Independent, London. January 15, 2002. <<http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20020125/ai_n9669640>> April 5, 2006.

⁶ Ramos, Alcides Freire. “Apontamentos em torno do cinema brasileiro da década de 1990”. Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos (online magazine). Issue 7, January 2007. <<<http://nuevomundo.revues.org/document3378.html>>> March 10, 2007.

⁷ Cinema Novo was political and aimed at showing the crude Brazilian reality on the screen. The narrative was almost surreal; there was no preoccupation with linearity. The characters were often lyrical, miserable, and prophetic. Cinema da Retomada, on the other hand, displays a concern with linear narratives, and filmic language that can be easily understood by big audiences.

Hollywood filmmaking, an obstacle (or several obstacles), an opposing force that creates conflict always tries to impede the characters to achieve their goals. In *Abril Despedaçado*, early in the film one learns that what motivates Tonho is his desire to survive the feuds. However, to achieve his goal he has to fight several opposing forces. The spectator then seeks the resolution of the story. Will the hero survive? In the end his fate is finally resolved: like in a Hollywood film, he survives, but his brother dies in his place. The traditional Hollywood style in *Abril Despedaçado* is thus employed to show the Brazilian reality of the feuds. The film draws on the traditional Hollywood style to convey a message that has a Brazilian flavor.

A sense of Brazilianism can be noticed right in the opening sequence, when the viewer is exposed to the *mise-en-scene*⁸ of a landscape which is typical of the Northeast of Brazil. The shadow of a boy wearing a *cangaceiro* hat (typical of the Northeast) and walking along a path surrounded by the Northeastern *caatinga* can be seen. The low angle shot shows the boy from below, contrasting his figure against the *caatinga* bushes and the bluish landscape in the background. The language also helps render the film Brazilian. The first time the national language is used is when the young character-narrator, Pacu, sets ground for the narrative, and speaks in voice-off, in his Brazilian Portuguese with his heavy Northeastern accent: “*Meu nome é Pacu. É um nome novo. Tão novo que nem peguei costume.*” However, consonant with Salles’ eye on the international market, the Portuguese dialogue was minimized.⁹

⁸ According to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *mise-en-scene* refers to the staging of the events to be filmed, and “includes those aspects of film that overlap with the art of the theater: setting, lighting, costume and behavior of the figures” (169).

⁹ Focus on the dialogues is then deviated to other aspects of the narrative, especially the visuals that are metaphors for the characters’ entanglement to tradition (more about the visuals in the sequence).



Figure 1: Opening sequence: the young narrator walks against the caatinga bushes in his cangaceiro hat

Pacu then begins to narrate the story, which is almost entirely a flashback, and of which he is a homodiegetic¹⁰ narrator: “Tô aqui tentando lembrar uma história. Às vezes eu alembro...às vezes eu esqueço. Vai ver que é porque tem outra que eu não consigo arrancar da cabeça. É a minha história, de meu irmão...e de uma camisa no vento” (Salles *et al* 192). A lot of the story is, thus, a flashback narrated a few moments before Pacu is killed. Flashbacks, as Bordwell observes, are typical of Hollywood filmmaking. Flashbacks are “usually motivated as mental subjectivity, since the events we see are triggered by a character’s recalling the past” (*Film* 106). The opening sequence of *Abril Despedaçado* is at odds with the opening sequence of Kadaré’s novel, where Gjorg is shown in the ambush in the cold winter time in the Albanian Alps, waiting for the appropriate moment to kill Zef. Chapter I is recounted by a third-person narrator, and the focalization happens through the eyes of the protagonist, thus differing drastically from the opening sequence in *Abril Despedaçado*, which does not even show the protagonist at this point in the narrative.

As Pacu proceeds narrating the story, many national habits and symbols are shown. Some examples include the cultivation of sugar cane (a plant representing Brazil for centuries), the making of the products that derive from the sugar cane, e.g. *rapadura* and *cachaça*, as well as the sugar cane crusher, the carnivalesque conception of the beating of Brazilian drums in the party downtown, to name only a few instances. The

¹⁰ Genette calls homodiegetic narrator a narrator who appears as an actor in the story he/she is narrating (Burgoyne *et al* 97). The term falls into Genette’s category of voice, which refers to who narrates the story. The adaptation has thus changed the third-person, extradiegetic omniscient narrator into a homodiegetic narrator, who tells the story in voice-off.

change of the setting—from the iced, backward Albanian mountains to the hot, backward Brazilian baldlands—is particularly important in the evocation of the national ethos. The *sertão*, “the antithesis of the stereotypical image of the country: a lushly green paradise whose expansive rainforest seemingly never ends”,¹¹ has called the attention of Brazilian filmmakers lately and attracted Brazilian audiences. Larry Rohter¹² observes that, even though the devastating majority of the population of Brazil lives in urban areas, films set in the poorest and most backward region of the country enjoy enormous popularity among Brazilians. Rohter speculates that the popularity is because Brazilians regard the Northeast as “the cradle of their national culture and identity, the most authentically Brazilian part of their sprawling nation”.¹³

In the filmic adaptation, therefore, elements of the Brazilian nation are shown. However, only the portrayal of Brazilian elements *per se* is not enough to carry on the argument that the film shows a concern with the preservation of the national identity, differently from what has been argued so far about *Broken April*. As has been argued,

¹¹Unknown author/date. “Love and Hatred in Brazil’s Sertão”. <<<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0000640VQ/104-437240168316?=:glance&n=130&v=glance>>> Nov.17, 2005.

¹² Rohter, Larry. “Brazilians love their Wild West (Northeast). Popularity of Films Depicting Rural Areas and Characters of Brazil). The New York Times. March 6, 2001. <<<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/06/arts/06ARTS.html?ex=1144555200&en=f4252b3969403935&ei=5070>>> Nov. 17, 2005.

¹³ The desire to show the Northeast of Brazil started with Cinema Novo, Rohter argues, as he mentions several films, from Nelson Pereira dos Santos’ *Vidas Secas* to more recent box-office hits such as *Auto da Compadecida* (2000). Rohter goes on arguing that it was probably Salles who, after the Cinema Novo movement, restarted the pilgrimage to the Northeast with *Central Station* (1998). Rohter also cites Salles’ fascination with the “desolate beauty, arid soil and stunted vegetation” of the Northeast of the country. The other side of the argument shows critics like Ivana Bentes, who argue that films that show poor areas of the country, like the Northeastern region of Brazil, foster what she calls “cosmetics of hunger”. Bentes accuses Brazilian filmmakers of using the most arid region of the country only to produce spectacles. In other words, contemporary Brazilian filmmakers with an interest in the Northeast allegedly masquerade the ugliness of the poverty in that area with appealing cinematography in order to attract audiences, instead of showing social and political preoccupation with the region, like the directors from revolutionary Cinema Novo. (Korfmann, Michael. “On Brazilian Cinema: from Mario Peixoto’s *Limite* to Walter Salles”. Senses of Cinema (online journal). Issue 40 – Jul-Sept. 2005. <<<http://esvc001106.wic016u.server-web.com/contents/06/40/brazilian-cinema.html>>> January 9, 2006.). *Abril Despedaçado* has been target for criticism similar to Bentes’. Commentators have argued that the overtly beautiful photography seems to clash with the sadness and poverty the film displays.

Gjorg's surrendering to the fatality of the rules imposed by the *Kanun* shows a desire to preserve Albania's national identity, which has been shaped by the book of honor dictated by Albania's national hero.

We shall now return to the issue of how the characters in the film struggle yet refuse to set free from the feuds, only to preserve their family honor (and not to preserve their national identity). Several narrative and especially filmic devices are used in order to show the characters' suffering with coping with tradition to consequently maintain their honor. Lighting is an example. As David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson observe,

in cinema, lighting "is more than just illumination that permits us to see the action"; it "create[s] the overall composition of each shot and thus guide[s] [one's] attention to certain objects and actions (178)". In *Abril Despedaçado*, the device has been carefully



Fig 2: The yellow photography emphasizes the harshness of the setting

chosen to fit the general theme of the story, that is, that of apathy and lack of perspective in relation to breaking the rules imposed by the oral code of honor that governs the blood family feuds portrayed in the film. A yellowish tone appears throughout the film, as well as the presence of a sharp contrast between darks and lights. Along with other cinematic devices, such as appropriate costumes and makeup, the yellowish tone reflects the harshness and dryness of the almost lifeless place staging the lives of the main characters. The harshness of the place can also be seen as a symbolism for the characters' almost lifeless situation. They are all bound to die soon, caught in the cycle of deaths, and therefore are practically dead.

The lighting in *Abril Despedaçado* reinforces a typical feature of the Brazilian baldlands that is widely known by Brazilians: the fact that the sertão is a dry, arid, and

inhospitable landscape, where hopeless people fight for life in extreme conditions of weather. The lighting in the film helps advance the portrayal of the harshness in a sparsely populated Brazilian region, with its thorny bushes and cactus. However, the portrayal of the Brazilian reality is mixed with features of Hollywood filmmaking. The light in *Abril Despedaçado* draws on convention of American Westerns, for instance, which uses harsh, bright lights to give films a desolate look. The mix of Brazilian elements with conventional lighting does not scare off audiences with narratives that might be too unfamiliar for them, therefore helping keep the spectator in their comfort zone of expectancy.

Also, the realism of the *chiaroscuro* effect (contrastive tones in terms of dark and light patterns) is especially present in the scenes shot in the inside of the Breves' house as well as in the night shots. The purpose of *chiaroscuro* colors inside the house is to highlight the bodies of the characters. By highlighting the bodies, our attention is guided to the rudeness, sadness and worry in their facial expression, and to the poverty and backwardness of the figures, noticed in the costumes and makeup.

Some specific scenes in *Abril Despedaçado* deserve special emphasis regarding lighting. This is the case of the scenes in which the Breves are inside the room where they heat up the sugar cane juice to obtain the *rapadura*. The walls of the room are made up of boards that are not totally nailed together, which allows the light that comes



Fig. 3: The light passing through the holes on the wall symbolizes the characters' imprisonment to tradition

from the outside to infiltrate through the empty spaces between the walls. The room itself does not seem to have any source of light in the inside. The light that comes from the outside forms what is known as *cast* shadows, which

happens when an object blocks the source of light impeding it to illuminate the environment evenly. The reflections of the boards in the room have the shape of bars that seem to imprison the characters. The reflection of the boards, thus, seems to represent the characters' jailing by the endless cycle of deaths they are doomed to experience.

Another scene in which the use of light is worth commenting, and which shows the characters' fear of disrespecting the tradition, occurs when Tonho gets out of bed, just after Menino dreams about their late brother, Inácio. After Menino goes back to sleep, Tonho leaves their room carrying a candlelight. No sound is heard throughout the scene, which lends the moment a somber aspect. A medium shot shows Tonho's face, lit by the candlelight: he seems fearful and respectful. The whole environment is dark, except for the light that comes from the candlelight that scarcely lightens the place. Tonho walks towards the wall of the house on which the pictures of the male figures of the family that died in the blood feud are hanging. We only have access to their faces through Tonho's candlelight. He walks in front of the pictures lighting one by one. The contrast between the dark room and the light that spreads from the candlelight into the faces in the pictures emphasizes the importance of these figures in the narrative. Such lighting seems to place the men in the pictures on a higher level than the ones who are still alive, leading Tonho to a state of awe in relation to the men. They are to be feared but, at the same time, admired; they have ascended into a position of demigods for struggling and losing their most precious possession—their lives—to maintain the honor of the family. Tonho finally stops in front of a picture of Inácio. "*A chama surge exatamente sob o rosto do irmão: é Inácio no inferno, à espera de justiça*" (Butcher and Müller 151). Devices such as lighting help unfold the narrative and the idea that the

family seems unable to stop the feuds, although they suffer utterly for having to cope with tradition and honor.



Fig. 4: Tonho's candlelight



Fig. 5: Tonho lights up picture by picture, and places the candlelight in front of Inácio's frame



Fig. 6: The reflection of Tonho's candlelight shows Inácio in hell, claiming for revenge

Also, since dialogue is relatively little in the film, several visual elements were added (such as the sugar cane crusher, the oxen, and the swinging rope), or simply transferred from the novel to the film (the shirt and the ribbon in the arm of the one who is marked to die) in order to help the development of the narrative and to emphasize the characters' trapping to tradition and struggle to keep up with family honor. The aforementioned elements represent time, which is a recurrent theme both in the novel and in the film. However, perhaps because the possibility of visualization in the film is astounding given the nature of the medium, attention to references to time seems to be more easily drawn in the adaptation.



Fig. 7: The *bolandeira*

In the interview featured in the DVD, Salles remarks that the *bolandeira* (sugar cane crusher), if seen from above, resembles a huge clock. Another example of a metaphor of time is the scene in which circus actress Clara invites Tonho to go to a *quermesse* (popular party) downtown, where she shows Tonho a huge rope hanging on a crane. The protagonist wonders what the rope is for. Clara then climbs up the rope and asks Tonho to swing it. Tonho obeys Clara, who not yet satisfied with the speed, asks Tonho to swing it even harder: "*Balança mais forte, Tonho*". The frenetic movement of the rope resembles a

metronome, an instrument used to beat musical tempo. Even though the to and fro movement of the rope resembles a metronome, seeming therefore to be telling time, during the moments Clara and Tonho are entertained with the rope, time seems to freeze for the couple. Apparently, they play with the rope for hours and hours, and by the time Clara climbs down it is night already. During the time Tonho is with Clara swinging the rope, he seems to be numbed and to forget his almost certain fate.



Fig. 8: Tonho swings Clara

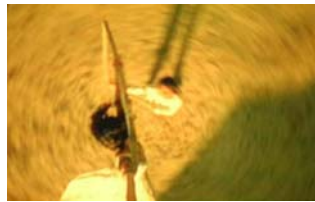


Fig. 9: The movement of the rope resembles a metronome



Fig. 10: Clara in the rope

Other references to time in the film emphasize the fact that Tonho, the character who is the next in line to be killed, has little time left and that his life is coming to an



Fig. 11: The shirt of the dead man

end soon. The shirt that is exposed outside of the house every time someone is killed, an element present both in the novel and in the film, also functions as a time-measurer.

After the blood in the shirt becomes yellow, the avenger-to-be is allowed to kill the enemy. Therefore, the shirt keeps not only reminding the avenger of his duties, but it also disturbingly reminds the one who is going to be killed that his days are being counted and his life



Fig. 12: The patriarch of the Ferreras shows Tonho the clock on the wall

is coming to an end. Another reference to time is explicit, when Tonho leaves Isaiás' funeral and asks the patriarch for a truce. The patriarch asks: "*Tá vendo aquele relógio na parede? Toda vez que ele marcar mais um, mais um, mais um, pra você ele vai estar marcando menos um, menos um, menos um.*"¹⁴

The swing outside the Breves' house is also a reference to time. The screenplay informs that, when Menino is in the swing, he "*entra e sai de quadro como um pêndulo de um relógio (...) As cordas que prendem o balanço no seu equilíbrio instável rangem—o relógio caminha rápido demais*" (Salles et al 197).



Fig. 13, 14, 15: Menino's movement in the swing is like a pendulum



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16: The oxen pulling the crusher by themselves

An obvious, yet very important, metaphor in *Abril Despedaçado* is the one concerning the oxen, which shows the characters' ridicule trying to maintain tradition in the name of their honor. The two

¹⁴ Butcher and Muller point out that the dialogue between Tonho and the patriarch (played by Everaldo de Souza Pontes) is Salles' homage to Brazilian filmmaker Mário Peixoto. According to Butcher and Müller, Salles visited Peixoto in 1990. The meeting was supposed to happen at 4:00. When Salles arrived, Peixoto told him to look at the clock on the wall and asked "What time is it?", to which Salles, bewildered, replied: "It's 4:03:20something seconds". Peixoto said that was not the answer he wanted, and asked Salles to look at the hands of the clock again. Peixoto then uttered precisely the words that Salles incorporated in the dialogue between Tonho and the patriarch of the Ferreiras in *Abril Despedaçado*. The dialogue seems to reveal Peixoto's fear of death (he was already old and very sick at the time), but it also condenses the essence of *Limite*, Peixoto's masterpiece about time (88-89).

animals work non-stop pulling the sugar cane crusher, just like the characters themselves. The work is so repetitive that when the sugar cane crusher is not working, the oxen keep walking around it, for they are completely conditioned to the circular movement. Menino is the one who sees the mechanical movement of the oxen, and calls Tonho's attention to it: "*Tonho, os boi tão rodando sozinho*". The oxen's behavior is certainly a metaphor for the behavior of the characters involved in the family feuds. Visionary Menino later reasons that "*A gente é que nem os boi: roda, roda e nunca sai do lugar* (Salles et al 207). Both families suffer with the death of the male members of their family, which will eventually lead to complete extinction of the clan. Still, such suffering is not enough for the fights to come to an end. Furthermore, the families involved in the feuds do not seem to question the apparent nonsensical oral rules that govern the fights. Like Menino points out, they seem to behave just like the oxen, whose habits are so deeply rooted in their daily lives that when it is time to stop, they keep on pulling the crusher.

Comparing the film and the novel, one can notice that some differences in relation to Genette's categories of tense (order, frequency, duration), voice and mood were made in the adaptation. However, it is beyond the scope of the present thesis to compare all the scenes in relation to all the categories proposed by Genette. As explained in the introductory chapter, Genette's framework is only ancillary, and the intention is, therefore, not to apply the terms thoroughly in the two media, but instead, to apply the proposed theoretical framework in specific passages that are important for the advancement of the argument of the present work. Here, changes from the novel to the film in relation to Genette's category of order are particularly important to mention in order to illustrate how the national honor of the novel was transposed to a more personal level of honor in the film.

In the novel, the events are told linearly, but the linearity is occasionally interrupted with many flashbacks. After the flashbacks occur, the linearity of the plot is reestablished. In the filmic adaptation of the novel, almost the whole story is a flashback. Menino begins to narrate the story in voice-off, but he disappears in many moments, and the camera takes on the role of the narrator. Having the camera narrate some passages is a solution for the narration of the moments Menino did not experience. For instance, how can Menino so accurately narrate Isaías' funeral, if he did not attend it?



Fig. 17: Camera narrator: Tonho arrives at Isaías' funeral



Fig. 18: The mourners stop praying. Sepulchral silence invades the place, and all the attention is deviated to Tonho, the killer

The camera can thus do Menino's job. Menino's flashback ends only almost in the end, in the moment Mateus (Wagner Moura) arrives at the Breves' house, and, in the ambush, starts looking for Tonho. Pacu, in voice off, says "*Agora tu já sabe minha história, mas eu continuo sem lembrar da outra...A sereia...os navio...e...diacho! O menino veio buscar a sere...Não, não era isso...Droga!*" Menino's last words are finally uttered: "*No mar, eles vivia tão feliz, mas tão feliz, que não conseguia parar de dar*



Fig. 19: The story returns to the initial sequence, which turns out to be the resolution of the plot

risada" (Salles *et al* 227). Short-sighted

Mateus then kills the narrator, and the story

thus goes back to the present time. The circular quality of almost the entire story (the

flashback is circular—it begins in a moment, is expanded, and ends in that very first moment) is an intelligent narrative device employed by Salles that refers metaphorically to the cycle of deaths the family is entangled to.

After Menino dies, and the plot returns to the present, the camera proceeds as the narrator until the end, when Tonho finally takes the right



to

on the bifurcation, the road no one from his

Fig. 20: Tonho takes road on the right

family has ever taken. The final scenes show the protagonist appearing from behind a dune in a medium shot. Next, there is a cut, and a deep focus shot of Tonho and the dune. Tonho starts moving to the left of the screen, and the camera follows him 180 degrees, until the ocean can be seen, and until Tonho has his back to the camera. Another cut occurs and then Tonho is shown in a medium shot again, looking upfront, with an expression of sadness but also relief in this face. The camera closes the medium shot and stops in a close-up of Tonho's face. After another cut, Tonho's back is shown, with the sea in the background. The scene fades in and the credits are shown. The end, therefore, only shows what happens after the resolution of the plot (Pacu's death), and officially announces the end of the cycle of deaths, which has decimated many of Tonho's male ancestors. The redemptive end is thus totally different from the end in the novel, which does not offer a possibility of liberation from the cycle of deaths.



Fig. 21: Tonho appears behind the dune



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Fig. 25



Fig. 26



Fig. 27



Fig. 28



Fig. 29

Other flashbacks happen, all of them embedded in the bigger flashback of Menino's narrative. An example is when, in his dreams, Menino remembers precisely how his brother Inácio died. This specific flashback is a technique used to clarify a piece of information that, at this point, seems to be missing in the narrative: after all, whose life does Tonho need to avenge? The answer comes in Menino's dream.



Fig. 30, 31, and 32: Menino remembers Inácio's death in a dream

Therefore, even though different narrative techniques are employed in the novel and in the film, in both media the flashbacks show the characters' suffering because of events related to the attempt to perpetuate tradition.

The final issue that I want to raise in this chapter is that, like the novel, the adaptation shows a retrograde society. However, the cause of the backwardness of the society depicted in the novel seems to be the characters' following of the *Kanun*. In the film, the backwardness seems more related to the isolation and also to the terrible physical conditions of the place. The setting is portrayed as dry and therefore improper for agriculture, which inevitably leads to poverty, since the cultivation of the land is the only means of survival of the family. In the adaptation, however, the *mise-en-scene* as a whole creates an atmosphere in which poverty seems to be much more outstanding than in the novel.



Fig. 33: Seu Lourenço's store

Also, in the film, the dichotomy between two places—the village and the place the travelers come from—so important in the presentation of the setting in the novel, (which is contrasted with the place Bessian and Diana come from) is never shown in the film.

Actually, we do not even have a clue where the travelers come from. Therefore, in the film we do not have the portrayal of two distinct places within the same nation, symbolizing tradition and modernity, like in the novel. In the film, the only reference to modernity happens in the episode when the father and Tonho go to the store to sell their *rapadura*, the owner of the store, seu Lourenço pays less than the *rapadura* is worth, to which the father complains. Seu Lourenço then explains, “[p]ois então, os preços baixaram, com as usinas a vapor. É o progresso. Eu acho que o senhor devia seguir

esse exemplo, seu Breves (Salles *et al* 206). The passage differs from the novel, since modernity is arriving in the village, whereas in the novel modernity is only seen as something distant from the mountaineers' reality.

Another feature that shows the backwardness of the place is the characters' lack of formal instruction. Menino, for instance, does not even know how to read. Moreover, the possibility of breaking free from tradition that the encounter with different ways of life formal education and books allow for is highly feared by the father and the mother, the ones who, above everybody else, are supposed to carry on with the old habits. The mother, especially, seems to unconsciously foretell that access to other worlds (represented by the circus' artists and by the book Clara gives Menino) can be an obstacle to the maintenance of old customs and family honor. Her fear that the cycle of deaths will be disrupted is already expressed when the artists first pass by the Breves' house. Worried, she warns Menino: “*Ô menino, não quero ver você metido com esses andarilho não, viu?*” (Salles *et al* 204). When Menino is analyzing the pictures in the book given by Clara, and creating his own story based on the pictures, the mother approaches the boy: “*Tu não larga mais isso não, Menino? Oxe! Não tá vendo que esse negócio aí faz mal pra vista?*” Menino explains: “*Tô tentando me alembra a história, mãe. Às vezes eu alembro, às vezes eu esqueço*”, to which the mother replies: “*Pois, esqueça*” (Salles *et al* 206).



Fig. 34: Menino is delighted at the pictures in the book



Fig. 35: Menino creates his own story of the pictures in the book



Fig. 36: The patriarch violently takes the book from Menino

The angry father, perhaps also fearing the danger the book represents to tradition, a few moments later walks up to Menino and violently takes the book out of the boy's hands.

Finally, the film does not appear so backward in relation to the treatment of women, as compared to the portrayal of women in the novel. In the film, the mother's role is extended and her presence is more prominent than her role in the novel. Also, in the film, perhaps because the medium demands concision, we are not shown details that

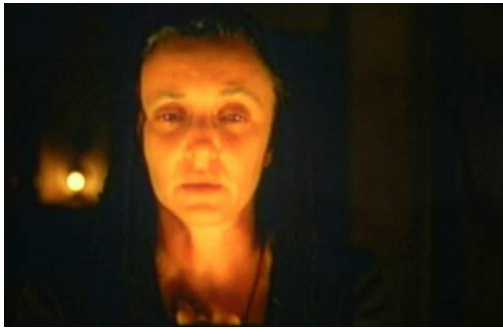


Fig. 37: The mother prays for Inácio's soul

might allow for the judgment of women as being suffocated and not having power of decision, like the arranged marriages and the trousseau bullet depicted in the novel. It is true that women are oppressed by the necessity to

keep up with the feuds, and also by the inhospitable environment. However, the men are oppressed by the same causes just the same. Like in the novel, the female figures do not take part in the blood feuds. Also, similarly to their role in the novel, the mother is responsible for instigating vengeance and for reminding the family that the dead is burning in hell and will remain there until his blood is avenged. For instance, when Menino asks Tonho not to kill Isaías, the mother explains: “*A alma de teu irmão Inácio não encontrou sossego*” (Salles *et al* 196). In front of Inácio's picture, which has candles below it, the mother prays for revenge: “*Que a alma de Inácio, meu primeiro filho, encontre sossego ao lado dos seus. Que cada gota de seu sangue seja duas do inimigo*” (Salles *et al* 198).

From what has been discussed so far in the present chapter, some conclusions in relation to the main changes in the adaptation of *Broken April* can be drawn. Salles' *Abril Despedaçado* makes important changes in characterization. A Brazilian spectator

can associate the characters' language, accent, and habits, to the Northeastern culture. Moreover, the very specific practice of following the *Kanun* was adapted to a Brazilian reality. Also, the narrative techniques employed in the film contribute to the depiction of a people who cannot get rid of tradition. But, differently from the novel, the impossibility to escape tradition in the film is not associated with a desire to maintain the characters' national identity. Rather, the characters seem to engage in the feud more as a matter of preservation of personal honor, and due to the lack of a powerful regulating state, in which individual power supersedes state power. Although the adaptation does not show individuals concerned with the preservation of their national identity, several elements which are typical of Brazil are shown, along with elements easily recognizable as aesthetics characteristic of Hollywood filmmaking, which seems to demonstrate that the international market was not disregarded in the production of the film. Like Jonathan Romney argues, *Abril Despedaçado* looks exactly what American audiences would imagine a western in the Brazilian baldlands to look: "everything looks sun-parched and burnished, earth and bodies alike, and the film is full of the standard imagery of folk-vendetta cinema—earth stained shirts and grizzled beards, headscarves tautly knotted over concerned brows". It evokes "torrid weather and torrid sentiments".¹⁵

To conclude, the film offers a redemptive solution for the problem of the blood feud, thus differing drastically from the resolution of the plot in the novel. Menino's death, and Tonho's consequent rebellion against tradition suggests that the cycle of deaths have come to an end, whereas in the novel, the circular quality of the narrative is maintained—in the novel, the protagonist's death indicates that the circle of deaths will continue.

¹⁵ Romney, Jonathan. "Review of *Behind the Sun*". The Independent, London. March 10, 2002.<<http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20020310/ai_n12605706>> April 5, 2006.

CHAPTER III

FINAL REMARKS

As discussed in this thesis, *Broken April* portrays the Albanian nation and the cultural contrast between the North and the South of the country. The contrast between the two regions is presented when two travelers from the South of the country, the honeymooning couple Bessian and Diana, visit the Northern Alps. From the contrast, Albania is portrayed as a divided country, and two different Albanias within the same political territory are shown: the South of the country symbolizes modernity, and the North symbolizes an old Europe haunted by the ghosts of the past, unwilling to accept change and progress. Moreover, the novel shows that the North differs from the South in terms of moral, political and communal behavior. The differences between the two regions are due to the *Kanun*, the code that the Northern population follows, and whose rules revolve mostly around the issue of the blood feuds. The Southern population does not follow the *Kanun*, and therefore does not engage in the feuds, but they respect the code and display a veiled admiration for the courage of the mountaineers, as can be perceived in my analysis of Bessian and Diana's behavior, as discussed in Chapter I. Bessian regards the written code of honor of the mountains as a "great thing", not passive of negative criticism, for it is neutral in its nature: "Like all great things, the *Kanun* is beyond good and evil, It is beyond..." (Kadaré 73).

Moreover, *Broken April* portrays the idea that Albania is isolated from other nations and maintains a "pure" identity, as yet untouched by foreign influence. This idea can be noticed especially when Bessian teaches Diana about the peculiarities and exoticism of the Plateau. On the other hand, the South symbolizes an Albania tainted

with foreign influence, which is expressed in the progress and wealth that the characters from Tirana show.

As argued in Chapter I, if Kadaré's novel portrays the existence of two Albanias within the same political territory, it also shows that the two regions share some common factors that Smith argues are necessary for the making of a nation. The characters of both regions share the same national heroes (Skanderberg and Dukagjin). They also share the same historic homeland as their ancestors, such as Dukagjin and Skanderberg, and also their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so forth. The historic homeland is connected with well demarcated boundaries, another element which, for Smith, is important in the making of the nation. The well-established boundaries of the country allow the characters to differentiate their nation from other nations. From Mark Ukacierra's reasoning, for instance, one can notice the union of the nation when a revolution against people who lived beyond the borders of Albania occurred. Mark remembers that during the warring years (1878, 1879, 1880), the number of blood feud killings fell because the nation could not waste lives when they were needed to fight foreign opponents. Even when a nation is facing civil wars, when fights against foreigners arise, the whole nation is likely to set the civil war apart, and get together to fight and defend their land.

Another common factor that the members of a group must possess for a nation to exist, according to Smith, is a history. The characters in *Broken April* have a common history, which can be best noticed in Ukacierra's reasoning about why the death rate in the Plateau has declined. As Mark tries to find an explanation for the decline, he examines several documents, from old books to notations. The documents—arguably the foundation of history—show that Albania has a past, and thereby a history. According to Michel Foucault, documents are the central question of history, and

“[h]istory is that which transforms documents into monuments” (7). The steward of the blood feels anxious for having the history of the nation literally in his hands, and for fearing that the other members of the nation may not be respecting the tradition and history of the *Kanun* as they did in the past, as the documents show.

Also, the characters share the same cultural practices, even though they may differ slightly from region to region. Above all, the characters in *Broken April* share the tradition of their ancestors, which, for Renan is one of the most important aspects for a nation to be devised as so. The characters follow the *Kanun*, which demonstrates their concern with the perpetuation of tradition. However, following the ancient customary law inevitably leads to backwardness.

The backwardness of the setting can be noticed in the story as a whole, but it is particularly more easily perceived in the words of Mark Ukacierra, the steward of the blood. From Mark’s worries, we have more access to the mechanism of the blood feud in the Plateau, and to the retrograde thoughts of the mountain people. Mark reasons, for instance, that the prince of *Orosh* might unfairly blame him for the decadence of the feuds over the last years, and might replace him for another steward with formal education (Mark can barely read). If this happens, the prince will have to pay a high price for hiring an “effeminate” scholar. In the male-dominated society of the Northern Albanian Alps, calling someone effeminate is a terrible insult. Mark’s reasoning reveals his prejudice both toward women and education. Therefore, Mark’s behavior illustrates the backwardness of the High Plateau: How can a society unveil the masks of backwardness when education is feared, and women are deliberately regarded as inferior to men?

As has been pointed out, during the dinner offered to the couple from Tirana at the castle of *Orosh*, Mark shows his fear of women, and especially his fear of Diana.

Not only does Diana's position as a woman naturally represent lust, but the woman from the capital also symbolizes the irresistible temptation to surrender to the infiltration of Western ideas, representing therefore the danger to the perpetuation of Albania's national identity. The danger is perhaps best expressed in the passage in which she goes into the tower of refuge searching for Gjorg. By entering the tower, she outrages the tradition of the mountains twice: she enters a forbidden place looking for the man she is in love with, and who is not her husband. The women from the mountains, on the other hand, are never shown as breaking the rules. However, they have no power of decision whatsoever, which is perhaps best represented by the arranged marriages they are bound to. Their prominence in the plot is also secondary, which reinforces the depiction of the Plateau as male-dominated.

Another issue raised in the thesis is that, even though the novel shows a people highly concerned with maintaining the country's national identity, perpetuating the old customs is not always easy. On the contrary, the mountaineers (represented by Gjorg) deeply struggle to maintain the old habits. They nevertheless always perform their duty, so that their honor, which as a matter of fact reflects an attempt to preserve their national honor and identity, is not stained. The narrative techniques employed in the novel help the advancement of the characters' suffering to maintain tradition. The linearity of the one-month lasting plot is broken with several flashbacks, which refer to sad memories of traumatic events that happened before the beginning of the plot, and were caused by the necessity to cope with the *Kanun*. Flashforwards are rarer, but do occur, and refer to anxieties in relation to coping with the code, and to what the characters' future will be like. Also, the memories that are repeated, that is, that are recounted more than once, are related to the *Kanun* and the harsh penalties applied to the ones who may disrespect the code. As for duration, the most relevant passages are

shown in the form of scenes, and some less important facts are ellipsed so that the plot can move on. However, an important event (Gjorg's payment of the blood tax at the *Kulla* of Orosh) is ellipsed. The use of the technique (ellipsing the payment of the blood tax) helps place more emphasis on Diana and Gjorg's first encounter. Moreover, whenever descriptive pauses happen, they are mostly descriptions of the *Kanun*. The narrative techniques employed in *Broken April*, therefore, advance the fact that the characters cannot set free from the *Kanun* and, consequently, from the tradition of the blood feuds, in spite of all the suffering the act may cause.

In sum, three major conclusions can be drawn about the society depicted in Kadaré's *Broken April*. The first conclusion is that the characters follow the *Kanun* as an attempt to assert Albania's national identity. As has been discussed, Albanians are widely known as a people who cherish revenge, loyalty, and honor. By following the customary law, these three aspects of their culture are preserved. Another important conclusion is that, since the *Kanun* has not been adapted to the transitions the Albanian society portrayed in the novel has gone through, relying on the customary law inevitably leads to backwardness. Finally, a problematization of the concept of the nation can be noticed in the novel itself, since the three major characters' ideals (Bessian's, Diana's, and Gjorg's), and Mark Ukacierra's reasoning expose their problematic relation to the *Kanun*. Gjorg falls victim of the *Kanun*, despite his mixed feelings in relation to respecting the code. Bessian and Diana are astonished by the inevitability of death imposed by the book of honor on the mountaineers. Mark Ukacierra feels overwhelmed when he examines the documents that attest that the blood feuds have declined, and therefore the mountaineers seem not to be following the *Kanun* the way they did in the past. Even though Ukacierra has the documents, and therefore the history of the nation literally in his hands, he cannot guarantee the

perpetuation of the customs. For the maintenance of the national identity fostered by the *Kanun*, the whole community needs to continue working united, since each member of the nation has a part in perpetuating the old customs.

When all is said and done, the message implied in the novel is that the cycle of deaths and the consequent burden of tradition that the characters in *Broken April* are compelled to carry will only be broken when the *Kanun* is completely banned. However, Gjorg's death seems to suggest that the *Kanun* will not be extinguished soon, and the cycle of deaths will continue.

Chapter II provided a comparative analysis between Kadaré's novel and Salles' film. From the analysis, one can argue that the novel provides a detailed construction of the Albanian life in the mountains, whereas the depiction of Brazilian life in the film is not so detailed. A possible explanation refers to the fact that the filmmaker has to be concise when adapting a literary work, selecting the parts that he/she believes are important to transpose to the screen, and discarding information that is not of central importance. Otherwise, as Stam observes, following the novel line by line might lead to a one-hundred-hour adaptation of a novel ("Fidelity" 51).

The film was transplanted to the Northeast of Brazil, but its narrative is not genuinely Brazilian as the narrative of *Broken April* is genuinely Albanian. The film depicts an arguably more universal reality of the blood feuds, even though several elements of the Brazilian culture are shown. The film shows, for instance, the traditional landscape of the Northeast of Brazil, the *sertão*. Other national symbols are seen in the film, such as the cultivation of sugar cane (a plant representing Brazil for centuries), the making of the products that derive from the sugar cane, e.g. *rapadura* and *cachaça*, the carnivalesque conception of the beating of Brazilian drums in the party downtown. However, the Brazilian elements shown in the film are mixed with filmmaking that

might not alienate an international audience. The preoccupation with reaching a big audience is reflected, for instance, in Salles' choice of Brazilian sweetheart Rodrigo Santoro as the protagonist. As has been observed, at the time *Abril Despedaçado* was made, Santoro was already very famous in the domestic market, and Brazilians could foretell his soon-to-be international success. Another feature of traditional filmmaking is having Pacu perform the role of a precociously intelligent child, something typical of Hollywood. The adaptation thus advances Salles' filmic tactics (which are in conformity with Cinema da Retomada) of mixing local culture with features that worldwide audiences are used to seeing in order to go beyond the domestic market and attract international audiences as well.

The Brazilian problem of the blood feuds is shown through the lenses of American filmmaking conventions, and traditional Hollywood cinema. This can be noticed in the lighting, the camera movements, the costumes, and the editing and montage. The characters are individuals who are made up of a collection of evident features. They have clear motivations, and the narrative unfolds as the characters seek to achieve their goals. Also, there is a strong sense of closure in the end of *Abril Despedaçado*, as in traditional Hollywood filmmaking. The Hollywood style, nevertheless, conveys a message about a Brazilian reality, lending the film a local flavor.

Also, in the transplantation of the story of the blood feuds from Albania to a Northeastern Brazilian context, an important aspect was considered: the fact that in Brazil the families involved in feuds do not follow a specific code of honor. In *Abril Despedaçado*, the lack of a written code of honor like the *Kanun*, that would instigate the fights in a somehow controlled manner, suggests that the characters' involvement in the fights in the film is not an attempt to preserve their national identity. Rather, their

engagement in the feuds only reveals the lack of a powerful state controller and the chaos of the Brazilian baldlands of the 1910s, which as shown in the film seems like nobody's land.

The set of rules followed by the characters in relation to the blood vengeance were established by their ancestors, but, differently from *Broken April*, it seems that the rules are more an attempt for survival and to keep the social order than an attempt to secure the characters' national identity. Therefore, the major difference between the novel and the film are due to the existence of the *Kanun* in *Broken April*. Perhaps due to this major difference, some have argued that the political overtone of the novel was lost in its transposition to the screen, or, in David Bellos' words, the film "abandons the political subtext" of the novel ("Adventures in Kadaria").

As for the novel, personal pride is part of a feeling of national pride. In the film, however, the attempt to keep tradition seems more a personal desire to maintain the honor of the family, and not so much a concern with the preservation of the national identity, even though the movie does show elements of the Brazilian culture.

One of the provisos encountered in the analysis of *Broken April* was the lack of criticism of the novel in the Portuguese and English speaking world. Few commentators have written about the novel, and most of what has been written is summaries of the book, which, needless to state, is of little or no help at all. Therefore, the analysis of the novel relied heavily on my own insights. *Abril Despedaçado*, on the other hand, received worldwide publicity, and, therefore, many critics have written about it.

A suggestion for further research is to compare two other filmic adaptations of Kadaré's *Broken April* with the Brazilian production, and contrast the three films with the novel. One of the adaptations is an Albanian production that did not receive much

attention from the worldwide press, according to Butcher and Müller (79). This is the only information available about the film. The other adaptation of Kadaré's novel is French, was directed by Liria Bégéja (Butcher and Müller 79), and is entitled *Avril Brisé*. Issues that might be interesting investigating may arise from questions such as: How do the three adaptations of *Broken April* deal with the Albanian context of the blood feuds? Does the French adaptation contextualize the novel into the French, or are the family feuds depicted in the movie more focused on portraying the Albanian culture *per se*? Is the Albanian adaptation concerned with being faithful to the novel both in form and content, or are different narrative techniques and cultural elements inserted in its plot? If yes, what are such techniques and elements? Is the issue of national identity present in all the adaptations? If yes, to what extent, and how is it portrayed? Other questions may flourish as the three movies are watched and contrasted.

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