

Part III

In the next part of this research, I am going to approach a selection of three Lusophone women writers, two from Cape Verde and one from Mozambique, applying to their texts the same binary frame of work as in part II, combining postcolonial and feminist critical perspectives. Again, the discussion will run on separate, though complementary, sections. Firstly, the texts are read according to the discussed postcolonial guidelines, and then from a feminist angle.

The term “Lusophone”, which I have just used, is inter-changeable with the expression “postcolonial writers in Portuguese”, even if “Lusophone” has been discussed in Portugal as a problematic term with its own imperialist connotations, invoking “Lusitania”²⁹⁶. On the other hand, “Lusophone” is quite an established term in literary criticism within the Portuguese-speaking world.

The promotion of such a critical term as “Lusophone” is not devoid of political connotations, but these have nothing to do with the ancient memory of the Roman empire. The issue is rather the more recent creation of the “Comunidade dos Povos de Língua Portuguesa” CPLP (Community of Portuguese Speaking Peoples) on July 27, 1996, which includes seven states (Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe) and whose aims are to increase co-operation and “*solidariedades horizontais*”²⁹⁷ (Horizontal solidarities). The discussion of the political and economic implications of this community is open, but its future seems problematic since all of these countries belong to regional international associations, the priorities of which cannot be ignored. For instance, in the case of Portugal, the definition of its commitments to African countries or Brazil has to be thought within the frame of the bonds of Portugal towards the European Community, which does not amount to say that a compromise between European international policies and the promotion of forms of horizontal solidarity among CPLP countries is impossible; nor should one abandon the potential for support and constructive co-operation within CPLP if all the intervenients feel they share certain affinities and sympathies that they want to preserve and nurture. The material worth of the affinities between the CPLP community could be translated, for example, into forms of co-operation and self-organisation intended to balance the dependency of African countries on the World Bank, whose programs seem to have contributed to increase poverty and widen the gap between poor nations and rich nations (currently, 46 per cent of the population of Africa lives below the so called “poverty level” being the GDP²⁹⁸ per capita negative, between 1987 and 1999²⁹⁹). It is a common

²⁹⁶ “Lusitani” was the name of the Iberian people who fought Roman occupation. There were also Celts in the NorthEast of the Peninsula and they united with the Lusitani against the Roman invader. After a long set of wars the Celtiberians (united Celts and Lusitani) were “pacified” and the Peninsula was occupied, becoming a Roman colony called Lusitania. So, it is curious that “Lusophone”, meaning “language of the Lusitani”, invokes an imperial origin (since it refers to the Portuguese history), but at the same time evokes the moment when Lusitania/Portugal itself was experiencing the fact of being a colony. (Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. VII: 570).

²⁹⁷ Adriano Moreira in the introduction to *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*, Almedina, Coimbra, 2001: 20.

²⁹⁸ GDP: Gross Domestic Product.

²⁹⁹ Adelino Torres e Manuel Ennes Ferreira, “A Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa no Contexto da Globalização”, *in op. cit.* Adriano Moreira, Coimbra, 2001: 33.

place in current economic theory that structural interference/support of the World Bank serves the interests of globalisation, which amounts to say that it serves economic interests, quite often at the expense of ethical thinking, ecological sustainability and social concern. With this information in mind, it is logic to look for alternative forms of international co-operation, and it is up to associations like CPLP to close ranks and look for means, solutions and ideas which may change the grim direction of “afro pessimism”, as if the repetition of disasters and misfortune would be a complacent justification to let things go on as they are³⁰⁰, accepting complacently the very active responsibility of developed nations in it (mind that Michel Camdessus, former general director of the IMF³⁰¹, declared in an interview to *Le Monde* that 90 per cent of the arms used in Africa are exported by the eight most developed countries in the world³⁰²). Hence, the strength of the word “Lusophone” could fall on an idea of solidarity, or productive affinities, connecting countries that share a language and several features of their cultures.

In this research, I will use both of the above mentioned critical terms. Although I prefer the more neutral “postcolonial literatures in Portuguese”, it is a fact that “Lusophone” is a handy expression to ease one’s writing style. Nevertheless, I want to make explicit that I use “Lusophone” without implying, with this critical term, any leadership role for Portugal in this network of multiple partners.

Alfredo Margarido³⁰³, a specialist in African Literatures in Portuguese, is quite particular in avoiding any term that does not signal the “de-colonisation” of the Portuguese language from the metropolitan Portuguese norm. In his book, *A Lusofonia e os Lusófonos: Novos Mitos Portugueses*³⁰⁴, Margarido expands on his motives to be uncomfortable with the term “Lusofonia”. In the first place, it may express a wish on the part of Portugal to control the use of Portuguese, posing as the norm; secondly, it seems to dismiss painful colonial memories “*das feridas e cicatrizes*”³⁰⁵ (of the wounds and scars) inflicted on others, as if one could decide to start again on a superficial, warm note, without handling these delicate historical matters.

I hope this research answers to these words of concern in a positive way. By “Lusophone” I refer to literatures that happen to be written in Portuguese, either in Portugal or in the appropriated, changed Portuguese of the variants of Africa and Brazil. Each Lusophone country has got its own literature and literary system, and any comparative study between these systems is comparing two diverse literatures, which share a language. As for the accusation of alienation in relation to the wounds of the past, I do not see how any serious critical approach would ignore whatever ideological reflection and historical discussion the studied literary piece may invite. However, I would not describe the modern and postmodern literatures of Portugal as postcolonial since their foundational context, historical heritage and represented senses of national identity are of a different sort. As

³⁰⁰ On this pessimistic attitude, Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger talk of “politics of the mirror” to describe a pervasive Africanism (like Orientalism) that makes experts and researchers look at Africa from certain biased points of view, feeding a set of prejudices and stereotypes which, in the end, justify the Western attitude of confining “Africa to the dustbin of history” (*Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, Zed Books, London and New Jersey, 1996: 45).

³⁰¹ IMF: International Monetary Fund.

³⁰² Henri Tincq, “Michel Camdessus, ancien directeur général du FMI: ‘Être Chrétien, c’est Rechercher le Bien Public’”, *Le Monde* (Paris), 16th January 2001.

³⁰³ Alfredo Margarido, *Estudos Sobre Literaturas das Nações Africanas de Língua Portuguesa*, A Regra do Jogo, Lisboa, 1980.

³⁰⁴ Alfredo Margarido, *A Lusofonia e os Lusófonos: Novos Mitos* : Edições Universitárias Lusófonas, Lisboa, 2000.

³⁰⁵ *Op. cit.* Margarido, 2000: 7.

Stuart Hall³⁰⁶ pointed out, postcolonial theories may be very productive to approach some facets of ex-imperial literatures, most specifically the work of those writers that look back on the imperial experience and the process of de-colonisation. That is why the explanatory abilities of such episteme (that is how Hall calls postcolonial theories) are certainly important to understand literary developments on both sides of old imperial dichotomies. Yet again, what is received in the West as postcolonial literature (and accepted by critics from these same literatures as a relevant topic for discussion, even if to reject the term) are the literatures from ex-colonies, which emerged from anti-colonial resistance and the independence struggle. Currently, these literatures are evolving into literatures attuned to social analysis, reflection on past historical memories and experimentation with current forms of collective allegiance, confronting both intra-national rivalries and international threats of neo-colonisation.

After having clarified my position, I would like to turn to a brief description of what is meant by postcolonial literatures in Portuguese, or, Lusophone literatures (being the “postcolonial” between the two words regularly omitted even if that is the implied sense). In 1975, Portugal recognised the independence of its five former colonies in Africa: Angola, Mozambique, Guiné-Bissau and the archipelagoes of Cape Verde and S. Tomé e Príncipe. Portugal also had a colony in India, Goa, until 1961 (when it was annexed by the Indian Union) and it held Macau, in China, until 1999. All the literary production in Portuguese ensuing from these former colonies is considered postcolonial literature in Portuguese. In this research, I am dealing with a continental case (Mozambique) and a Creole one (Cape Verde). Cape Verde is doubly interesting on account of the specific nature of its hybridity, but also because it had one of the highest rates of literacy in the universe of the Portuguese colonies of Africa - a factor which had obvious repercussions in the development of its literature. As for Mozambique, it is probably the most complex mosaic of pre-colonial cultures in the three continental (African) literatures in Portuguese, and it started from one of the highest rates of illiteracy.

In the universe of postcolonial literatures, I am not sure one can place Brazil. As I said above, I consider such a term as “postcolonial”, a relevant label to refer to modern literatures whose consolidation took place under the auspices of the independence struggle and whose recent post-independence history still implies reflection on the experience of colonisation, internal consolidation and on going self-assertion, in relation to a wider international world order. The case of Brazil is different. It became independent in 1822 and I think its process of consolidation and self-assertion is of a different nature. Hence, an approach to Brazilian literature would probably be more fruitful if it departed from its current popular heritage, whose colonial beginnings are already remote in comparison to the cultural exuberance of Latin America and the exchange of influences between regional cultures, without forgetting its component of black diaspora and Amerindian (first nation) influences. This amounts to say that there is simply too much going on inside the specific cultural sphere of Latin America to make postcolonial criticism the most sensible tool to understand its current literature, except if one considers the ambiguous position of Latin America vis-à-vis North America (which is neither an obsessive nor a primary topic in Brazilian literature, music or film). Still, from a postcolonial point of view, in the strict, concrete sense I meant above (and which is proving perfectly adequate to approach Indo-English and Lusophone literatures) one could research several aspects of Brazilian literature: for instance, current representations of Portugal and the colonial period, the nationalist struggle in the post-independence literature of the XIXth century, current resistance to the threat of US or European neo-colonialism and, finally, survey forms of hybridity and

³⁰⁶ *Op. cit.* in Chambers and Curti, 1996: 242-260.

Creolisation in the complex cultural universe of Brazil (much more unified and homogenising than one might expect). Yet, to define Brazilian literature primarily as a postcolonial literature strikes me as reductive, given its regional context, its history and its particular negotiation (actually successful integration) of Amerindian and African influences together with successive waves of European (mostly Portuguese, German and Italian) and Japanese emigration.

In the Lusophone world, I am working with postcolonial literatures from countries where Portuguese is the official language. In this case, Goa does not feature as a candidate, though a regional Indo-Portuguese literature exists. Still, the future of Portuguese in India is uncertain and a lot depends on the teaching of Portuguese and the emergence of a new generation of writers. The same could be said of Macau.

Before guiding the reader into the context of the postcolonial literatures of Mozambique and Cape Verde (the ones which concern this research), it is necessary to frame the main international influences that led to the emergence of these literatures as a form of cultural warfare. I will also defend a particular role for the reception of postcolonial literatures in the West.

III.1.1 The Place of the Colonial Empire in the Portuguese Imagination: Myth and National Identity

“For nationalists, history has always meant, in fact, selective history.

Nationalists, whose objective is to foster a sense of identity and solidarity, to establish a chain of heroes, or to prove their case for a certain historical boundary, pick up those raisins from the cake of history which support and rationalise their cause.”

Benyamin Neuberger³⁰⁷

The quote in epigraph is a good comment on what has been, for too long, the structuring principle of colonial histories told from a Euro-centric point of view.

In the case of Portugal, imperial expansion created a myth of greatness to balance Portugal’s uncomfortable self-image in relation to the main European powers, economically stronger and more powerful. This ambivalent position of Portugal, on the periphery of its continent, but at the heart of its imperial network³⁰⁸, consolidated a sense of national identity where myth makes up for the diminishing comparison to France and England the two strongest European influences in Portugal. One of the main constitutive myths in the definition of the Portuguese national identity was the interpretation of its long colonial past as a confirmation of its future destiny, making of Portugal the key middleman between Europe, Africa, Asia and Brazil. This view of history as destiny does not leave room for an easy reform of colonial practices, nor does it foster critical spirit and innovation. In fact, historical memory became a paralysing factor for the development of Portugal, since

³⁰⁷ Benyamin Neuberger, *National Self-determination in Postcolonial Africa*, Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., Boulder, Colorado, 1986: 43.

³⁰⁸ Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1985), “Estado e Sociedade na Semi-perifria do Sistema Mundial: o Caso Português”, *Análise Social*, XXI (87-88-89), p: 868-901.

national identity fell back on its past history to preserve autonomy and consolidate a positive self-image³⁰⁹.

The link I see between postcolonial literatures being reviewed in Portugal and current shifts in the traditional Portuguese self-image as a colonial nation (shifts that naturally happen together with the wider historical process that brought about the end of colonialism) depends on a particular view of literary discourse. As Carlos Reis would have it, “discourse” refers to the ability of texts to represent collective, social meanings which structure dominant principles, the articulation of which constructs an ideological system³¹⁰. A certain set of discourses is always located on one (or more) ideological basis instead of another (others), meaning their rooting is neither accidental nor spontaneous but rather institutional and corporate. If literary discourse is conceived of as a context of ideological assertion (“*discurso literário (é) entendido como contexto de afirmação do discurso ideológico*”³¹¹), as Carlos Reis thinks it is, then, postcolonial literatures in Portuguese are projecting a set of ideas and images which will be implicated in the construction of current senses of national identity, not only for the post-independence state but also for the former coloniser. In other words, apart from national, anti-colonial self-assertion, or intra-national critique (that is to say, the discourses that concern the postcolonial location itself), the constellation of postcolonial literatures in Portuguese will have an effect in Portugal as well, as far as they talk back to the former colonial partner at the moment it has been learning to think of itself as a postcolonial, post-imperial nation.

Through this claim, I am designing a very important role for postcolonial literatures (in Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, Spanish...) in the universe of XXIst century Europe, and one that has not been properly recognised. The most obvious connection between diaspora, emigrant writing and Europe’s multicultural self-images (and policies) is the one aspect of postcolonial literatures that has been taken as the most fruitful dialogue between hegemonic Europe and the displaced communities living in the West. But that is not the whole picture. Postcolonial literatures, deeply shaped by national or regional self-assertion and anti-colonial resistance provide a serious contribution (through confrontation) to re-think European histories, Western national identities and current international dialogues between nations. It is a matter of pointing out that not only what is being written “here” (in the West) is relevant to understand the inner city culture of Western urban spaces. What is being written “there” (in ex-colonies), about what happened, say, between “here” and “there” is very important for both sides, and it matters to fuel the revision of Western self-images started by postmodern artistic practices and the impact of post-structuralist theories. Without denying the role of postcolonial literatures for the consolidation and re-invention of diverse post-independence, postcolonial geo-political locations in former European colonies, I am (simultaneously) recognising the impact that these literatures are having in the West as the source of powerful revisionist discourses to re-assemble contemporary Western identities and adjust them to the endless changes of history.

In the particular case of Portugal, it is very important to review and promote Lusophone literatures in order to contribute to the renovation of a heavy, five centuries long memory, nostalgically focused on a Golden Age of the past. Portugal certainly has an amazing historical heritage to esteem and remember but that is not the key to live up to nowadays’ challenges as part of a postcolonial (hopefully more ethical and innovative than

³⁰⁹ Isabel Caldeira, “Identidade Étnica e Identidade Nacional”, in *Portugal: um Retrato Singular*, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (ed.), Edições Afrontamento, Centro de Estudos Sociais, Porto, 1993.

³¹⁰ Ideological discourse is: “(...) Todo o enunciado (verbal ou não verbal) de dimensão transindividual, capaz de representar sentidos de amplitude social, sentidos esses que traduzem as dominantes axiológicas de um sistema ideológico.” Carlos Reis, “Identidade e Discurso Ideológico”, in *Discursos*, 13, Outubro 1996: 35.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 1996: 32.

neo-colonial) Europe. The relevance of looking at the impact of postcolonial literatures in Portuguese has to be measured not only in terms of time (because it confronts the long colonial history of Portugal), but also in relation to the position of Portugal as a semi-peripheral nation in relation to Europe (geographically and economically) which, for centuries, had been translated into a collective fear that the end of the overseas empire would implicate the ending of Portuguese nation-hood in positive, powerful terms. Together with the peripheral position of Portugal, there is another factor that explains this mentality: Spain. Although historical relations between Spain and Portugal have been quite peaceful for most of their centuries long history as neighbours, there was always a very strong need to resist the centripetal power of Spain over the Iberian Peninsula. The sea adventure, its routes and the colonies compensated for the perception that smaller Portugal was indeed surrounded (except for its long coast line) by Spain³¹².

In current postcolonial times, the renovation of national self-images and the erosion of the credibility of the nation-state itself are at the centre of very lively scholarly discussions. The currency of mainstream debates focusing on issues of identity, history and “the nation” is best surveyed if one considers the sheer bulk of publications on these subjects, in several areas of knowledge like literary criticism, philosophy and cultural studies.

I owe to Paulo de Medeiros the provocation to reflect on the connection between postcolonial literatures and a general revision of national identities in the European context. On his introduction to the issue of *Discursos*³¹³ (devoted to literature, nationalisms and identity), Medeiros identifies a crisis in the conceptualisation of the nation-state, embodied in the widespread loss of its credibility as the most adequate model of collective organisation, its ability to provide universal progress and its reliability as the most effective guardian of civil freedom. In part, one of the motives for this crisis of credibility was, precisely, the international process of de-colonisation (which took place in the middle decades of the XXth century). De-colonisation necessarily implied a debate on the nation-state as a European model, since it proved ill fitted to accommodate the complex multicultural ethnic landscape of many African and Asian countries. The diverse “failures” of the postcolonial nation-state on non-Western locations shed light on the less positive aspects of this political model, revealing the inherent potential for segregation and violence on its patterns of distribution of power. At the same time, postmodernism promoted de-territorialised frames of reference, more flexible and fluid. The effect of these new patterns of thought, so different from the previous colonial, Enlightenment and modern epistemes, was to bring to the centre of scholarly debate the suspicious questioning of established Western notions, like national identity and the “nation-state”. The synchronicity of postmodernism with the process of decolonisation meant that the first was certainly not isolated from the backlash (against the superior, egocentric self-image of the West) implied by the latter, and it also encouraged the deconstruction of central historical myths like the functionality and necessity of the (imperial) nation-state.

In my opinion, the current and necessary reformulation of a mythical/mystifying idea of Portugal, whose glory exuded from the fact that it was an imperial nation, is already taking place. This process is re-vitalising, creative and fortifying. Portugal is currently re-discovering its (post)modernity, while embracing membership in Europe. Hence, the ideas

³¹² Valentim Alexandre, “A África no Imaginário Político Português, Séculos XIX e XX”, *Penélope*, 15, 1995, pages: 39-52.

³¹³ Paulo de Medeiros, “Em Nome de Portugal” and “A Questão da Nação”, *Discursos, Estudos de Língua e Cultura Portuguesa, Literatura, Nacionalismos, Identidade*, Universidade Aberta, number 13, October 1996.

discussed above become very interesting to look at postcolonial literatures in Portuguese, since they put out a re-reading of historical memory in which Portugal is confronted with a mutant, confrontational account of its past glory. Through these dissonant, resisting voices, the positive hold of colonial history is tainted through guilt and self-knowledge, moderating the excessive importance of past imperialism for Portuguese national identity.

To conclude, I believe postcolonial literatures, in this case the Lusophone ones, can contribute to make Portugal find an operative synthesis between the rich collective memories of Portuguese history (which include a long history branded by colonialism and “the black Atlantic”) and new, revised self-images and patterns to narrate Portuguese collective identity. Part of this renovation could come from a greater study and promotion of postcolonial literatures in Portuguese (and I hope to be able to contribute to that), such powerful sources of subversion to exorcise old imperial references.

III.1.2 Cultural Warfare

Postcolonial literatures in Portuguese certainly have an international audience, and that is why I believe they can contribute to renovate the obsolete self-images of former imperial Portugal. Nevertheless, regardless of the international impact of these literatures, it should be clear that this is, evidently, a secondary preoccupation in the order of factors that led to the creation of these “national canons”.

Historically, the consolidation of the postcolonial literatures of Cape Verde and Mozambique (the two locations that concern this part of the research) were deeply dependent on the struggle for independence and the corresponding growing awareness that cultural warfare was a very important front to mobilise colonised peoples. In this way, one could say that ideological and political de-colonisation were the main ideals inspiring a first generation of African postcolonial writers in Portuguese. The first steps were tentative and discrete: there was tight censorship in the Portuguese colonies and to write critically, implying a dissident point of view, would swiftly lead a writer to prison. Gradually, from a scenario where some few isolated writers only published either colonial texts or romantic, lyric pieces (politically inoffensive), a couple of ground-breaking movements emerged in Cape Verde (the generation of *Claridade* in 1936) and Angola (the “new intellectuals” and the magazine *Mensagem* in 1948). From these first seeds, clear (national) literary systems grew stronger and more sophisticated.

The ideologues behind the liberation struggles that inspired the consolidation of these literatures openly addressed the relevance of the role of literature in promoting a sense of national identity worth to fight for. I will follow the strategies of Amílcar Cabral (leader of the liberation struggle of Cape Verde), Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel (for Mozambique) in planning the liberation struggle and its respective dimension of cultural warfare. In the process, the general sketch of the circumstances surrounding the consolidation of these postcolonial literatures will become clear.

African postcolonial literatures in Portuguese emerged around the 1940s and 1950s³¹⁴, in the process of preparing the struggle for independence, as a form of consciousness raising and mobilisation. No one expected the Portuguese regime to give in through diplomatic contacts. Too much time had been wasted in trying an impossible

³¹⁴ Before the 1950s, *Claridade* (1936) and *Certeza* (1944) had already been published in Cape Verde, both of them expressing postcolonial awareness. However, considering the more general frame of the five Portuguese colonies in Africa, late 1940s and the 1950s are the real moments of consolidation, when a significant set of African writers started publishing.

dialogue with the fascist government, so, for the rebel leaders, it was perfectly clear that war was the only option, and it would be a long (guerrilla) one.

In this reasoning along historical lines, the next two questions to track down as a literary critic are the theoretical sources (apart from the clear experience of living in a colony and seeing abuse in front of your eyes) which inspired the intelligentsia of the Portuguese African colonies, and, secondly, the use of literature to promote nationalist feelings.

Naturally, the birth of post/anti-colonial awareness is regionally dependent on the articulation of several factors: the collaboration of local press, the ambition of middle class groups uncomfortable with colonial authority and the influence of certain international movements like Pan-Africanism, communism and Négritude. Another factor must have been the independence of neighbouring colonies, a strong encouragement to rebellion in the territories that remained dependent (and it must have been the more important, in the context of the late independence of the Portuguese colonies of Africa, in 1975).

In terms of activism, a key element to introduce the reader to the 1950s stage of postcolonial literatures in Portuguese (the decade when a new ideological commitment and a significant increase in literary productivity are noticeable) is that fundamental institution called Casa dos Estudantes do Império, CEI (Home of the Students from the Empire), where all the college students from the diverse colonies were gathered. Although there was a pole of this institution in Coimbra, the most active “Casa”, was the one in Lisbon. The “Casa” was a sort of club, with a bar, a small library and a newsletter called *Mensagem*³¹⁵ (“message”, 35 issues, 1949-1964), which became an important locus of political and artistic debate. The “Casa” was indeed the institutional home that fostered the bonds of friendship between the intelligentsia of different colonies, creating a real spirit of co-operation and co-ordination in the struggle against Portuguese colonialism. As Manuel Ferreira ironically put it, the “House of the Students of the Empire” soon became the “House of the Students Against Empire”³¹⁶. A curious aspect of this college “milieu” is that all those writers that later became towering figures in their own national literatures were then publishing, together, their first texts in this newsletter. Amílcar Cabral, for instance, is one of the names I often encountered when looking through different issues of this newsletter.

Amílcar Cabral, like Agostinho Neto (the ideologue of the struggle for the independence of Angola) and the activist Mário de Andrade, came to Lisbon to attend college, and soon were totally involved with the highly politicised student “milieu”, the cradle of a future important network of political influences in Africa. Since the CEI functioned as a marginal sort of ghetto in relation to metropolitan society, it actually managed to master a margin of freedom that was surprising in those repressive fascist years³¹⁷.

The diffusion and exchange of political and philosophical ideas among college students from the diverse colonies was a fundamental factor to politicise young elites from the colonies. From the internal dynamics of the CEI, political mobilisation spread “back home”, when each of these students returned to his own colony, with a developed postcolonial awareness. However, these activist students defined their political ideas under the influence of international movements that were circulating in the 1940s and 1950s. That is to say that Lusophone intelligentsia was not isolated from international theories defending

³¹⁵ This newsletter should not be confused with the magazine with same name that was published in Angola in 1948 (three issues) which was the forum for the movement of the “New Intellectuals”. Their project of “re-discovering Angola” voiced, for the first time, social critique against colonial abuses. Censorship did not allow more than three issues.

³¹⁶ Manuel Ferreira, in the introduction to a recent edition of *Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa*, Editora Africa, Lisboa.

³¹⁷ On this issue see *op. cit.* Alfredo Margarido, 1980: 18.

the self-assertive re-discovery of “black identities” (mind that you need political self-awareness before you can mobilise people for war). The influence came from far away, in English and French.

For Cape Verde and Guiné-Bissau, Négritude was the first ideological influence to encourage political self-awareness. “La Négritude” was a Francophone intellectual movement, suggested by the works of Aimé Césaire and Leopold Sédar Senghor. Jean Paul Sartre wrote the famous essay “Orphée Noire”³¹⁸ to present the project of “Négritude”, promoting a re-evaluation of black cultures to the eyes of the academy and established intellectual circles. “La Négritude” was an attempt by black scholars and artists to revive African cultures as a contribution to world humanism, while promoting a sense of racial pride among black people. It is, like Pan-Africanism, a general, supra-national movement, considering the whole of the African continent a cultural unity. It defended authenticity and the preservation/promotion of “*l’ensemble des valeurs de civilisation du monde noir*”³¹⁹ declaring the necessity of giving the world that which it lacked, namely, the contribution of black culture and philosophy to the world heritage. This philosophy creates a binary opposition between black and white people, turning the negative terms traditionally associated to black people into positive elements. The differences distinguishing black cultures from Western civilisation are presented as a sort of surplus or extra talent, so far misinterpreted because of the epistemological limits in the comparative models of “white Enlightenment”. The poet and playwright Aimée Césaire coined the word “Négritude”, in the 1930s, but Senghor is the author who developed “La Négritude” as a model of Negro-Africaine philosophy, with its own ontology, morality and aesthetics. This philosophy would be radically different from classical philosophy, hence the relevance of its innovative contribution. Négritude became a weapon in the fight for decolonisation precisely because of its attempt at decolonising the minds of colonised peoples from the assimilation of Western culture and its self-promoting colonial propaganda, creating a “locus” to develop a black “self”/subjectivity, entitled to rights and respect. It also created a basis of pride to resent white colonial oppression politically because it made black people stop alienation, that is to say, the tendency to imitate Western ways, behave “like the white”, covet an European identity. With Négritude, black people were encouraged to be themselves, and break with assimilated feelings of inadequacy or powerlessness. This was a key first stage in the road to the consolidation of political resistance.

Several of the scholars committed to Négritude were members of the French Communist Party, as well. However, party allegiance and race issues embodied different political priorities and the articulation of the two seemed to be tense, in spite of being fruitful. It is obvious that “La Négritude” is not the project that is going to make peasants and exploited proletarians unite. Négritude is rather a middle class, poetry reading, “collegemilieu” affair. Besides, the main problem with Senghor’s theories when assessed from a communist perspective is that they do not break totally with a certain complacency towards the colonial situation. Nowhere does Senghor offer an idea or a model for revolution. It just praises elements of a re-discovered black culture. After World War II, communism soon replaced these first intellectual movements via the organisation of separate (and more aggressive) national movements for independence.

While communism started political activity with national units, Pan-Africanism and Négritude were continental projects. Secondly, Négritude started decolonisation as a cultural project, working through intellectual elites for the renovation of black self-awareness.

³¹⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, “Orphée Noire”, in *La Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache*, Leopold Sédar Senghor, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1948.

³¹⁹ Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Négritude et Civilisation de L’ Universel*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1977: 20.

Communism, by contrast, was a popular political project that started with activism for independence among the oppressed population at large, including those with no direct connection to the cultural projects of an educated, intellectual elite, studying in French and Portuguese universities (Lisbon and Coimbra). Communist ideology offered revolution as a project to get free from colonial rule and gave the African people the means to understand their dispossession as class exploitation, equating “bourgeoisie” with white colonialism. This idea has a popular appeal beyond the self-assertive energy of Négritude poetry.

How did Amílcar Cabral use these ideas?

Amílcar Cabral was the ideologue of PAIGC (Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde), created in Bissau (Guiné), in 1956, as an underground organisation. Ten years before, Cabral had studied agronomy, in the University of Lisbon, in 1945-1946 (where he joined the anti-fascist student movements and the lively cultural milieu of the CEI. Later, after finishing his studies, Cabral moved to Guiné-Bissau³²⁰, in 1950, to work in experimental agriculture. There, he started to tackle popular neighbourhoods, spreading his political ideas among rural workers. Soon, his activities were noticed, and, in 1954, Portuguese authorities ban Cabral from Guiné-Bissau. In exile, Cabral established the headquarters of his party at Conakry (French Guiné) and started to organise it as a responsible political body, which would be in charge of the new country after independence. According to Cabral’s vision, the small continental territory of Guiné-Bissau would be united with the archipelago of Cape Verde³²¹ in order to form a unique state, but this unification never happened beyond the joint liberation fight. The independence war began in 1963, with a rural riot in Guiné. By contrast, in Cape Verde there were no popular riots, nor war. Cape Verdean co-operation came from sectors of small bourgeoisie, active in diplomacy, logistics and co-ordination.

Cabral turned to forms of “cultural warfare” in the initial stages of the struggle as a means to raise postcolonial awareness with slogans, short poems and speeches promoting “black culture” through appropriations of Négritude and Pan-African ideas. For example, in his amazing³²² speeches to the troops³²³ Cabral mentions the necessity of keeping good appearance, comb one’s hair and wash whenever one could (the troops were living in the bush). He also emphasises the importance of keeping a tidy camp, where gardening was not an activity to be looked down on. With an amazing insight on the psychological frame of his troops, Cabral sensed that a feeling of dignity and self-respect was the corner stone on which he was building his resentment against white colonialism. The circulation of these ideas among colonised peasants is the equivalent to the publication of anthologies of black poetry among the intelligentsia. Both provoke thought and inspire action.

For a sketch of the details of the war see Appendix I, a small descriptive text I wrote to be read as a companion piece to these introductory sections. I thought that it would be useful to provide a brief summary, especially for the Anglophone reader who may not be so familiar with this historical context.

Amílcar Cabral defined cultural warfare in the following terms:

³²⁰ We will follow events in Guiné-Bissau because the liberation fight of Cape Verde joined the struggle in this other continental colony. The idea was to emerge as a unique independent nation, joining the two territories.

³²¹ Note that Cabral attended primary school and high school in Cape Verde, so he had knowledge of the two territories.

³²² The adaptation of the speech to the realities (the reader guesses) of the peasants of Guiné-Bissau reveals a sensitive and pedagogically competent Cabral. What a contrast with the language of his theoretical essays or his literary interventions in *Mensagem*.

³²³ Amílcar Cabral, *Análise de Alguns Tipos de Resistência*, Seara Nova, Lisboa, 1975.

“When Goebbels, the brain behind Nazi propaganda, heard culture being discussed, he brought out his revolver. That shows the Nazis - who were and are the most tragic expression of imperialism and its thirst for domination - even if they were all degenerates like Hitler, had a clear idea of the value of cultures as a factor of resistance to foreign domination.”

(...)

“The more one realises that the chief goal of the liberation movement goes beyond the achievement of political independence to the superior level of complete liberation of the productive forces and the construction of economic, social and cultural progress of people, the more evident is the necessity of undertaking a selective analysis of the values of the culture within the framework of the struggle for liberation. The need for such an analysis of cultural values becomes more acute when, in order to face colonial violence, the liberation movement must mobilise and organise the people, under the direction of a strong and disciplined political organisation, in order to resort to violence in the cause of freedom – *the armed struggle for the national liberation.*”

(...)

“From all that has just been said, it can be concluded that in the framework of the conquest of national independence and in the perspective of developing the economic and social progress of people, the objectives must be at least the following: *development of a popular culture* and of all positive indigenous cultural values; *development of a national culture* based upon the history and the achievements of the struggle itself; constant promotion of the *political and moral awareness* of the people (of all social groups) as well as *patriotism*, of the spirit of sacrifice and devotion to the cause of independence, of justice, and of progress;”

Amílcar Cabral, “National Liberation and Culture”³²⁴

In the above quotes, Cabral explains the key connection between national liberation and cultural warfare, departing from an example (Nazi imperialism) that is only too clear for Europe, reminding one of this experience of colonisation and, by opposition, the basis of patriotism which fostered diverse resistance movements. Cabral rightly saw that without a clear sense of national culture and political awareness, a liberation war could not be fought, but beyond that, the sustained construction of the post-independence state needed these same mechanisms badly. Initially, cultural warfare was a matter of breaking alienation and connecting isolated feelings of rebellion to a national movement. After independence, cultural warfare was about transcending group (ethnic) rivalries, consolidate unity and inculcate allegiance to a Marxist state, de-centred from urban hegemonies and truly committed to improve the living conditions of a massive peasant population. In other words, Cabral believed that continued mobilisation, promoting political and moral awareness would be the backbone of a long lasting and effective de-colonisation. This perspective on the necessity of a clear cultural strategy to keep people motivated and actively engaged in de-colonisation, implies a project for the literary production of the future postcolonial state. Some writers followed the appointed script, others, just followed their inspiration. In the case of the women writers addressed by this research, none of them is dependent on party allegiance to write, but then, they also belong to a later, post-independence stage.

In the words of Arcília L. Barreto³²⁵, the main strategic error in Cabral’s vision for the independence of Guiné-Bissau was the attempt to unite the archipelago of Cape Verde and continental Guiné-Bissau as a unique nation. The idea certainly makes sense from a rational, practical point of view. However, cultural identity has emerged as a decisive

³²⁴ Amílcar Cabral, “National Liberation and Culture”, in *Postmodernism, a Reader*, Thomas Docherty (ed.), Columbia University Press, New York, 1993.

³²⁵ Arcília L. Barreto, “Africa, num Contexto de Busca e de Afirmação”, in *África Austral, o Desafio do Futuro*, Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais, Lisboa, 1991.

element in the successful creation of post-colonial states (generating either unity or fragmentation) and, in this case: (...) “*desde os primórdios da ocupação colonial, as relações entre Cabo Verde e a Guiné tinham sido sempre conflituosas. De Cabo Verde iam para a Guiné os senhores compradores de escravos, os lançados, e para Cabo Verde levavam-se os escravos*”³²⁶. Hence, the Cape Verdean *mestiço* was commonly identified with colonialism and power, and, logically, he/she would not easily be trusted or accepted.

Another point of divergence is that the guerrilla war for the control of the colonised territory was disputed in Guiné-Bissau alone. This difference in the terms of active participation in the liberation war further estranged Cape Verdeans and the people of Guiné. During the fight, the idea of an independent country became totally infused with symbols exclusively inspired by the ethnic groups of Guiné, not to mention their ethnic predominance in the leading positions of the army and in PAIGC, the party that was clearly going to create the first independent government.

At the time, the idea of united independences in the West coast of Africa was not as strange as it may look nowadays. Pan-Africanism is discussed below, but, meanwhile, I prefer to turn to the words of Manuel Duarte, lawyer and Cape Verdean scholar, who wrote the following quote in 1977 (two years after independence from colonial rule):

“Os mais lúcidos dirigentes africanos compreenderam bem cedo que a balcanização da África só serviria os interesses imperialistas e neocolonialistas no nosso continente.

No contexto da luta de libertação nacional das antigas colónias portuguesas, a orientação unitária seguida no seio da CONCP, foi um factor decisivo na derrota do colonialismo português. Já nos anos cinquenta, em que se fundou o Movimento Anti-Colonialista (MAC), precursor da CONCP³²⁷, proclamava-se que a unidade de todos os povos das colónias portuguesas era indispensável na luta contra o colonialismo português, e que a unidade de todos os povos africanos era fundamental para a libertação do nosso Continente e a consolidação da independência e liberdade das nações africanas.”³²⁸

(Manuel Duarte³²⁹)

Amílcar Cabral, probably one of the most famous and often quoted intellectuals in the context of the anti-colonial struggles of Africa, clearly saw this. A joined independence would strengthen both archipelago and continental territory.

Cabral equally deserves a word of praise for his amazing diplomatic abilities: a legal study on the process that led to the unilateral declaration of the independence of Guiné³³⁰ establishes the ample network Cabral had managed to assemble, lobbying everywhere, from the United Nations to the Vatican, so as to make sure that international support would not

³²⁶ From the very beginning of colonial occupation, the powerful slave buyers, the *lançados*, travelled from Cape Verde to Guiné, and the slaves were taken (from Guiné) to Cape Verde, *op. cit.*, Barreto, 1991: 123.

³²⁷ CONCP – Conference of the National Organisations of the Portuguese Colonies.

³²⁸ “The most lucid African leaders quickly understood that the balkanisation of Africa would help imperial and neo-colonial interests in the African continent.

In the context of the fight for national freedom in the former Portuguese colonies, the united option followed by the CONCP was a decisive factor in the defeat of Portuguese colonialism. Already in the fifties, when the anti-colonial movement was founded MAC (the forerunner of CONCP) it proclaimed that the union of all the peoples from the Portuguese colonies was indispensable in the fight against Portuguese colonialism, and that the union of all the peoples of Africa was fundamental for the freedom of our continent and the consolidation of the independence and freedom of African nations.”

³²⁹ Manuel Duarte, *Caboverdianidade, Africanidade e Outros Textos*, Spleen Edições, Cabo Verde, (1977) 1999: 121.

³³⁰ António E. Duarte Silva, *A Independência da Guiné-Bissau e a Descolonização Portuguesa*, Edições Afrontamento, Porto, 1977.

fail to the new, emerging state. Finally, his essays on cultural warfare³³¹ became key academic pieces to understand de-colonisation processes in Africa. Cabral connected the necessity of “de-colonising” the alienated black minds with the effort to “Africanising” them, following Négritude principles. This concern with culture and mentalities is a concrete example of the application of “cultural warfare” to politics, leading to the creation of nativist propaganda. Hence, Cabral can also be equated with the political facet of Négritude³³², which used artistic production as a means to search for authentic African symbols and worldviews.

It is a common feature to Guiné/ Cape Verde and Mozambique that a lot of effort was put into a solid and pervasive mobilisation of the population so as to make sure that the struggle, once it was started, could count on the effective co-operation of civilians. Mozambique was exemplary on that account, reaching a level of peasant mobilisation unmatched³³³ by any other African struggle against colonialism.

In Mozambique, the main source of ideological influences to think the liberation struggle came from communist activism, but, for the 1950s generation of emerging committed writers, Pan-African ideas, via English press from South Africa was a mind blowing influence.

Pan-Africanism was a movement promoted by black intellectuals in the United States, London and Africa. Five congresses were organised (1919, 1921, 1923, 1927, 1945) to discuss the necessity of freeing Africa from its colonial situation, and petitions and manifestoes ensued from these meetings. Dr. Du Bois, the soul of the movement, saw Pan-Africanism as a socio-political movement that would try to improve the status of the black population within the United States while supporting, at the same time, self-government for African peoples. He defended non-violent positive action, of the kind carried out by Gandhi, but this movement remained a middle-class, intelligentsia affair, and it did not tackle popular support. However it was an inspiration for those that were in a position to aspire to power and had the material means to promote the nationalist struggle, through the press and activist cells. After World War II, the Pan-African movement sponsored a series of publications (newspapers and magazines) that kept African intellectuals from Nigeria, Gold Coast and Francophone colonies, in contact. The West African National Secretariat, in London, was the association responsible for this co-ordination and exchange of information and its aims were the “*complete liquidation of the colonial system*”, and the independence of a united West Africa³³⁴. The emergence of specific national movements dissolved, through fragmentation, the relevance of the Pan-African movement. Still, “despite its chronic organisational weakness and its lack of intellectual balance, Pan-Africanism has had an enormous political

³³¹ Cabral, Amílcar, Nacionalismo e Cultura, Xosé Lois Garcia (ed.), Santiago de Compostela, Galiza: Edicións Laiovento, 1999. See also, from Cabral, Revolution in Guinea: Selected Texts, (translation Richard Handyside), New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969. Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writing, (translation Michael Wolfers), London, Heinemann, 1980. Verkundig Geen Gemakkelijke Overwinningen: over de Bevrijdingsstrijd in Guinee-Bissau, Amsterdam, van Gennep, 1973.

³³² This is also the opinion of Elleke Boehmer, Colonial & Postcolonial Literature, Oxford University Press, 1995: 187, 188, 189.

³³³ John S. Saul, Recolonisation and Resistance in Southern Africa in the 1990s, Africa World Press Inc., Trenton, New Jersey, 1993: 2.

³³⁴ Imanuel Geiss, The Pan-African Movement, Africana Publishing Co., New York, 1974: 412. See also, George Padmore, Pan-Africanism or Communism, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1971 and J. Ayodele Langley, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973.

and historical impact, in conceiving of, and circulating political ideas to strive for the decolonisation of Africa³³⁵.

Although some of the leading figures in the Pan-African movement, like George Padmore, departed from their membership in the communist party to envisage a socialist political project for Africa, there was a certain suspicion that Pan-African issues should not be dependent on communism. African intellectuals feared that any association with international communism would mean that the independence from capitalist imperialism would only achieve the substitution of white forms of domination over Africa, replacing Europe by Russia³³⁶. Eventually, Padmore clearly rejected communism as the solution for colonialism. One just has to consider the title of his book (Pan-Africanism or Communism³³⁷) to see how distant these two revolutionary projects are deemed to be.

Although the third Pan-African congress was held in London, Padmore claims that there was a second part of this congress in Lisbon, in the summer of 1923. This fact, would testify to the co-ordination and co-operation between Lusophone activists and the Pan-African movement. At the time, Lisbon was picked by the latter as a politically relevant location because of the Portuguese colonial dimension and on account of the commitment of the Pan-African movement to express international support for the *Liga Africana*³³⁸. At the time, this Lisbon based association was struggling to achieve reforms in the Portuguese colonies, especially in what concerns forced labour and the illegal practice of slavery. In his book, George Padmore³³⁹ claims that the Lisbon congress took place, but Imanuel Geiss³⁴⁰ seems more doubtful that a real congress happened, apart from a visit and a set of lectures by Dr. Du Bois.

In literary and ideological terms, the Pan-African movement inspired essentialist formulations of African culture, stressing a continental, racial identity. This cultural nativism is currently regarded as nothing more than an inversion of colonial racist discourse, attempting to heal the wounded sense of “self” of African peoples, after slavery and their colonial past. Though the need to assert a humiliated and alienated black identity is strategically undeniable (as a pre-condition to swell pro-independence, anti-colonial activism) the fact is that postcolonial intellectuals soon moved away from such an essentialist, binary logic, which still produces a sense of identity dependent on the gaze/aggression of the coloniser (in so far as the drive to “Africanise” yourself implies that your African identity has to have been snatched away, disrupted by the intervention of “an(white)other”). Nevertheless, in an initial postcolonial stage (when raising political awareness is the priority), nativism certainly made a lot of sense, and it just confirms the importance of forms of cultural warfare in the processes of decolonisation. First things first, and a self-aware, politicised black identity was the means to break popular political alienation and promote anti-colonial ideologies.

³³⁵ *Ibid*, Geiss, 1974: 428.

³³⁶ The Communist International (the ‘Comintern’) was actively engaged in anti-colonial movements from the 1920s onwards. The Red International of Labour Unions also attempt to co-ordinate an International Trade Union Committee for Negro Workers (ITUC-NW), and George Padmore was one of the activists in establishing and running this organization. He even wrote a book about it: The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers (1932). However, Padmore changed his point of view later on, claiming that Soviet foreign policy saw the oppressed Negro workers as a tool in the global fight against Western capitalism, disregarding African interests in the name of Soviet ones. This subject is one of the topics of his 1971’s book.

³³⁷ *Op. cit.* Padmore, 1971.

³³⁸ The *Liga Africana* was an association created by students, from any of the colonies, who were studying in Lisbon at the time. Its aim was to promote the necessity of carrying out reforms and revise patterns of Portuguese colonisation. It was active in the 1920s.

³³⁹ *Op. cit.* Padmore, 1971: 119.

³⁴⁰ *Op. cit.* Geiss, 1974: 255.

While promoting a continental black African identity, Pan-Africanism had the merit of creating bonds between different black communities that shared the need to assert their identity as a form of resistance against dominant colonial and racist discourses. The above-mentioned continental bonds also included an extension across “the Black Atlantic”, connecting the independence struggles of Africa to the oppressed black community of North America. As William E. B. Du Bois put it, the problem of Afro-Americans is that the displaced/diasporic black community of America is/was colonised, just like the African territories were.

There were other cultural movements, which happened in the United States but had Africa for referent, whose impact among African intellectual elites was quite strong. “Harlem Renaissance” (1920) or “Black is Beautiful” (1960s, at the same time independence wars in Angola, Guiné-Bissau and Mozambique were starting) are instances of such movements. In both cases, Afro-American artists and intellectuals invoked a mystifying “mother Africa” as the place of belonging, where a sense of origin, racial pride and distinctive identity combine with continental boundaries. On this subject, Fernando J. B. Martinho³⁴¹ traced references to famous Afro-American people in Lusophone poetry by African writers. Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Richard Wright, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Marion Anderson and the “boxeur” Joe Louis are some of the famous names, which are repeatedly mentioned in Lusophone poetry. The achievements of these successful black people are taken as a token for all the wonderful possibilities castrated by racism and imperialism³⁴².

While Négritude was the strongest influence in the cultural self-assertion and political mobilisation of Cape Verde and Guiné-Bissau, Pan-Africanism had more impact in Mozambique. Eduardo Mondlane was the ideologue who guided the independence struggle of Mozambique.

In his book *Lutar por Moçambique*³⁴³, Eduardo Mondlane deconstructs several false ideas internationally promoted by the Portuguese government in the 1950s and 1960s, in a carefully orchestrated campaign of misinformation, aimed at justifying the continued refusal of Portugal to decolonise its African territories.

One of these “political lies” argued that Portuguese colonialism was not racist, hence, welcomed by the local population. Another fallacy was the image of a well-established and long Portuguese presence: only after the conference of Berlin (1884-1885) did Portugal take a stronger hold of the territory with “the Pacification campaigns”. Besides, economically, Portugal needed foreign investment to explore the resources of its colony. Finally, Mondlane looks at the myth of “easy miscegenation” to conclude that few marriages (with all its implications of legitimacy) took place between different races. This carefully documented introduction to his book clearly reveals the aim of eroding the credibility of the “right” of Portugal to be in Moçambique: it denounces racism, forced labour, dependency on other potencies and structural weaknesses. By diminishing Portugal to the eyes of the international reader, Mondlane is expecting to gain much needed support to the liberation cause (mind

³⁴¹ Fernando J. B. Martinho, “Intertextualidade e Exemplum (O Negro Norte-americano Como “Figura Exemplar” na Poesia Africana de Língua Portuguesa)”, in *Actas X Encontro de Professores Universitários Brasileiros de Literatura Portuguesa. I Colóquio Luso-Brasileiro de Professores Universitários de Literaturas de Expressão Portuguesa*, Lisboa, 1984.

³⁴² On this issue, see also Ana Mafalda Leite “Contribuição para o Estudo de “Moçambicanidade”, in *Actas X Encontro de Professores Universitários Brasileiros de Literatura Portuguesa. I Colóquio Luso-Brasileiro de Professores Universitários de Literaturas de Expressão Portuguesa*, Lisboa, 1984.

³⁴³ Eduardo Mondlane, *Lutar por Moçambique*, Livraria Sá da Costa, Lisboa, (1969, English version) 1975.

that the original English version of this text, 1969, was written during the liberation war, 1964-1974).

As for the role of literature and poetry as a means of mobilisation, Mondlane considers the effort of poets like Craveirinha and Noémia de Sousa important, but not very useful, because they are too remote from the masses of peasant population (the population of Mozambique was 98% illiterate, in 1964). On this subject, less educated Samora Machel would have a better insight on the use of literature and propaganda texts among his troops, as the lavish distribution of FRELIMO anthologies of “literatura de combate” (“fighting literature”) would prove. Poems would be read aloud or turned into songs, easier to memorize.

In his speeches and writings, Eduardo Mondlane was keen on denouncing the destructive effects of the “assimilado” policy, insisting on the necessity of de-colonising African minds. By creating the “assimilados”, a more educated class of Lusophiles, who rejected its own culture and race in the name of integration and relative privilege, the Portuguese would be creating a network of reliable allies. Yet, against Mondlane’s dismissal of the assimilados, this more educated group was the very same class that first developed postcolonial awareness and launched the plan of an independent nation through their writings on the press, the available means to protest against colonial abuse³⁴⁴. Mondlane praises the urban, artistic effort of these “critical assimilados” to assert national identity. However, Mondlane’s strategic mind also circumscribes the impact of their action to the capital and a few other cities. In his texts, one can follow Mondlane’s struggle to reach the remote tribal villages ruled by the *régulo*³⁴⁵, totally unaware of the mechanics of colonialism. He is a pragmatic man, with diplomatic *savoir faire*, methodically organising a revolution while making sure he is playing the right cards in international politics.

When Eduardo Mondlane was assassinated by the Portuguese secret police (3 February 1969), Samora Machel took over the presidency of FRELIMO. After Mondlane, the politician, Samora Machel was another kind of leader: a military mind, with a powerful popular appeal, honestly committed to build a communist regime in Mozambique. Machel had been a male nurse in the biggest hospital of the capital (Lourenço Marques) and he met Mondlane when the latter came on a long visit to Mozambique to promote the independence cause. Young Samora Machel was so deeply impressed by the speeches of Eduardo Mondlane that in 1961 he joined underground activism. In 1963, when friends tipped him off that the Portuguese secret police was looking for him, Samora Machel escaped to South Africa, and from there, to Tanzania where the FRELIMO movement was organising itself to strike. Machel was sent to Argel to receive military training and he became the leader of the rebel army, from the very beginning of the war.

Samora Machel’s written speeches are very clear and simple, meant to be easily understood. Most of these speeches explain the plan of action of the government and reveal a serious commitment to the ideals of improving the living conditions of the people of Mozambique, “*working very hard, without taking advantage of a privileged position*”³⁴⁶ to paraphrase his straight-forward tone. The fear of nepotism, home colonialism and corruption are very clear in Samora’s presidential speeches (he became the first president of independent Mozambique) revealing an acute perception of the risks the postcolonial state would have to fear. Another problem addressed by Machel is tribal rivalry. He talks at some length of unity, and this is a subject he will keep coming back to. Finally, it is worth

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 1975: 111.

³⁴⁵ “Régulo” was the name of the traditional chief. Colonial authorities protected established African aristocracies as an effective form of undirect rule if they accepted to co-operate.

³⁴⁶ Samora Machel, *Unidade, Trabalho, Vigilância*, Lourenço Marques (Maputo), 1974.

remaking that has the leader of the transition government, Samora devotes a section of his acceptance speech to the emancipation of the women of Mozambique, and he declares his intention of breaking with both obsolete traditions and colonial exploitation³⁴⁷.

In the case of the Lusophone national literatures I am studying here, the highly politicised context framing the emergence of these postcolonial literatures did not create the probable tension between aesthetic quality and the requirements of “ideological propaganda”. Any talented writers who were active at the period of swelling nationalism and the subsequent liberation struggle (50s, 60s and middle 70s) did not feel limited by the expectations of activists, dealing with politics to the extent they wanted, but without compromising aesthetic creativity. However, it is notorious, say, in the work of Luandino Vieira (one of the main Angolan writers) the difference in quality between a text like Luuanda³⁴⁸ and A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier³⁴⁹ being quite obvious the broader audience Vieira was aiming at when he wrote the latter, less elaborate novel, being the deliberate and mature writer he was.

As far as poetry is concerned, the concrete materialisation of literary influences from Pan-Africanism and Négritude in postcolonial literatures in Portuguese has a particular beginning, the history of which is worth telling here, in the context of the search for an example of the combination of activism with literary quality. The first touchstone, in the universe of Lusophone literatures, is the ground-breaking anthology Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa, (1953) by Francisco Tenreiro and Mário de Andrade. This anthology (forbidden by censorship) soon became a success among African college students in Lisbon, who put it out in their home countries, when they returned. This was the first attempt at publishing together the voices of several Lusophone poets (and their shared rejection of Portuguese colonialism). By joining voices of poets from different places, the anthology consolidates the bonds between colonised peoples, who share the same experience of abuse and oppression. That is why the anthology is dedicated to Nicolás Guillén³⁵⁰, “*a voz mais alta da negritude de expressão hispano-americana*” (the greatest voice of Négritude in the Spanish-American world) connecting the situation of African peoples colonised by Portugal to the self-assertion of coloured people all over the world. In fact, this anthology means more than a beginning in postcolonial Lusophone poetry (which is important in itself), because it also represents further evidence of the co-ordination of international movements for the assertion of black identities and black culture, in the 1950s.

Among the pages of the 1953 anthology, I picked a poem to exemplify the presence of influences from international “black” self-assertive movements in Lusophone poetry. My selection fell on Noémia de Sousa, a woman poet from Mozambique.

³⁴⁷ See also Samora Machel, “Mensagem ao Povo Moçambicano por ocasião do ‘25 de Setembro’ Dia da Revolução”, 1974 and “Mensagem à XXIV Sessão do Comité de Libertação da Organização da Unidade Africana”, Dar-es-Salaam, 8th January 1974.

³⁴⁸ Luuanda (Eros, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1965; Edições 70, Lisboa, 1976) is the title of a polemic collection of stories by Luandino Vieira. When the text was published, Luandino Vieira was a political prisoner in a Portuguese jail. The fascist régime considered Vieira a vicious dissident. In the same year Luuanda succeeded in being published (1965), the Portuguese Association of Writers attributed the first prize to Luandino Vieira, for this text! Salazar, when informed of that year’s choice, dissolved the Association of Writers. Too late. Luuanda was already a symbol of the sympathy of the Portuguese metropolitan intelligentsia towards other political dissidents.

³⁴⁹ Luandino Vieira, A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier, Edições 70, Lisboa, 1988 (clandestine edition, 1961, em Luanda).

³⁵⁰ Nicolás Guillén was a Cuban poet who asserted the contribution of African elements to the Creole culture of Cuba. In his works he tries to re-discover “genuine” African influences, materialised, for instance, in the rhythm and style of his writing. In Manuel Ferreira, No Reino de Caliban, Seara Nova, Lisboa, 1975: 36.

“O *caderno* cumpriu a sua missão de revelar uma tomada de consciência negra de alguns de nós, no momento em que as vozes fraternais de Césaire, Senghor, Guillén, Langston Hughes, Depestre nos soavam já tão fortemente aos ouvidos que nos incitavam a *dizer* os nossos problemas específicos. O acolhimento reservado a essa primeira tentativa foi grande, sobretudo entre a juventude negra do ‘ultramar português’.”

Mário de Andrade, Paris,
Setembro de 1958: XV

“The *small anthology* fulfilled its mission, which was to reveal the awaking of a Black self-awareness among some of us, at the moment when the fraternal voices of Césaire, Senghor, Guillén, Langston Hughes, Depestre were loud in our ears and incited us to voice our own problems. The reception to this first attempt (at publishing “black” poetry) was very positive, especially among the youth of the “Portuguese overseas provinces.”

(my translation)

The second anthology was published in Paris, in 1958, by Mário de Andrade who had to escape to France to avoid imprisonment by the Portuguese state police (actually, Andrade became the head of one of the departments of *Présence Africaine*³⁵²). This second anthology includes all the poets of the previous edition (except the Cuban Nicolas Guillén), but it collects more poems from each of them. Besides some new names are presented. This second anthology is, again, an embodiment of the ideals of Négritude, in dialogue with Pan-African principles and “black” American cultural movements. As it happened with the first collection, the main themes of the collected poetry are centred on the bonds between African nations, their shared fight against colonialism and their shared history of colonial oppression. The poems construct a binary opposition between black and white people, reversing previous racist discourses and corroding colonial mythologies. The fact that poets from different colonies repeat the same feelings and themes provides ground for the argument of shared oppression, even if it is not mentioned explicitly. Another point worth is the invocation of “mother Africa” as a trans(national), continental cultural identity. At the time, this anthology was very important to promote international anti-colonial ideas among Portuguese speaking peoples, further encouraging literary contributions from other African writers.

In the Lusophone national movements of the 40s and 50s, a creative flux of committed literature emerged in the literary supplements of newspapers, the first available means to publish local writers regularly. Behind the press, supporting and probably manipulating it, was the Westernised, educated intelligentsia, and, at least in the case of Portuguese colonies, the group of Creole or “mestiço” middle-class administrators and businessmen who had been more easily accepted by colonial power than “local natives”. All of these half-privileged groups wanted to get free from metropolitan power and the press enabled them to discuss, and put out, the independence ideal and its corresponding political project, even if it was through the indirect assertion of local identity and culture, according to Négritude and Pan-African philosophies.

Among the main titles of the Mozambican press, an especial reference has to be made to *A Voz de Moçambique* (1961-1970s) and the legendary *O Brado Africano* (1918-1974). In Cape Verde, literary magazines and the press were, again, the mediums for literary activity and cultural warfare. Among the activist newspapers in the archipelago, one should mention

³⁵² *Présence Africaine* is the name of a magazine that became an important forum for artists and scholars committed to Négritude.

Ressurgimento, *O Eco de Cabo Verde*, and *Arquipélago*, together with an extensive list of magazines, which I will discuss in the section devoted to the literature of Cape Verde.

Later on, during the liberation war, many writers participated in the effort to mobilize the civilian population and keep the morale of the fighters high. Again, this was a form of cultural warfare, not only intended for consciousness raising but rather aimed at sustaining the effort of what were long independence wars (ten years for Mozambique and Guiné, thirteen for Angola). As an example of this cultural warfare, aimed at promoting the importance of the independence war, I picked a poem from an Angolan writer, Costa Andrade (previously, an active member of the CEI, the student club of Lisbon I mentioned above as the subversive “milieu” that fostered all these talents):

Emboscada	Ambush
O dia estranhamente frio	The day was unusually cold
O tempo estranhamente lento	Time was strangely slow
A vegetação estranhamente densa	The vegetation was uncomfortably lush
A estrada estranhamente clara	The road unusually lit
Todos estranhamente mudos	Everybody strangely quiet
Placados e estranhamente à espera.	Calm in their strange wait
Um tiro	A shot
E as rajadas uns segundos	The rattling of a machine gun for a few seconds
Até que estranhamente duro	Until, strangely sharp
O silêncio comandou de novo	Silence ruled again over
Os movimentos.	Our moves.
Talvez fossem homens bons os que caíram	Maybe the men who fell were good men
Mas cumpriam estranhamente o crime	But, strangely, they were committing the crime
De assassinar a pátria alheia que pisavam.	Of murdering the foreign land they were walking.
Costa Andrade, in <i>Poesia com Armas</i> , 1975	(my translation)

As it is clear, the defence of “the nation”, here equated with “the land”, is a matter of reacting against a crime that cannot be tolerated. Another point worth is that the defence against this crime certainly justifies violence, even if good men are sacrificed. Apart from the argument in the poem, the sensitivity to represent the ambush as the tense and unnatural wait it is, and the corresponding stress and numbness of the soldiers, succeeds in creating a heroic status for the freedom fighter.

After the liberation war ended, the Marxist regime of Mozambique kept investing in its mobilisation campaigns, publishing, together with the texts of achieved poets like Craveirinha, Rui Nogar and Noémia de Sousa, a selection of ideologically motivated poems, the authorship of which is simply “FRELIMO”, the party. The strategic aim of activating “cultural warfare” was quite open. The anthology I am using as an example of these mobilisation campaigns is simply called *Poesia de Combate* (“Fighting Poetry”)³⁵³. In the first post-war years, the liberation effort still is represented in epic terms, and a strong nationalist allegiance is clear. But the mood would change...

The sacrifices and effort implied in the independence fight were deemed acceptable because the civilian populations of the colonies were promised an improvement of their living conditions. Once the colonial invaders were expelled, people saw no reason to delay the fulfilment of the promised changes. Disappointment and bitterness replaced euphoria.

³⁵³ *Poesia de Combate*, Edição do Departamento de Trabalho Ideológico da FRELIMO, second edition, 1977.

III.1.3 Postcolonial Post-euphoria: Survival Kit to New Travellers

The concrete definition of particular national projects for African colonies, in the context of the 1950s, was developed either under the auspices of pro-soviet communist regimes (where the key idea is revolution, the overthrow of colonial exploitation and the creation of an equalitarian system, oriented towards the needs of the people) or inspired by pro-West “development” (in this case, the key idea is technological development, increased production, and the participation of the new country in a capitalist international economy. The idea of enlarged access to profit and wealth is expected to captivate “wide” public support). In either case, both revolutionary activists and local middle classes sought the power of cultural products to advertise their project and increase popular support for the nationalist cause.

Before there is agency there has to be subject-hood³⁵⁴ and a political sensitivity. In the context of colonisation, the assertion of local cultural traditions, social codes or belief systems amounted to the construction of an independent sense of identity which was a key element in the resistance against colonialism and the eventual organisation of each of the struggles for national freedom. That is why, regardless of the fact that one may be referring to the expansion of pro-communist or pro-“development” ideas, postcolonial awareness always starts from the recovery of a positive, collective, black selfhood, connecting this “collective self” to a project that opposes the white colonial system.

Ideas, abstract and immaterial as they may seem, do change the course of history when they become action. In the previous section, I followed several ideologues whose dreams became nation-states and, at the same time, I tried to make an itinerary of the role of culture, in particular literature, in this process. But, in a country where books did not circulate widely among an impoverished and often illiterate population, it is true that cultural warfare was mostly an urban affair. Still, I tried a cultural itinerary of mobilisation processes and their corresponding promotion of a “post/after/anti-colonial life” in the political contexts of African colonies struggling for its national liberation.

The fact that mobilisation was carried out in nationalist terms turned out to be unwise. As Patrick Chabal³⁵⁵ points out, the current general crisis afflicting several states of Africa may be related to the processes of African de-colonisation themselves. To begin with, African colonies emerged as independent states from the borders that were colonial territories. Thus, the colonial state was created and imposed on African populations before these territories had consolidated as “nations”, in the sense of affective imagined communities, as Benedict Anderson³⁵⁶ would have put it. In other words, three fundamental pillars of the state, namely the sovereignty, legitimacy and the (consented) right to represent all the people of a new national territory, are not established in the eyes of the new “national population”, at the independence moment. Independence was the goal of the struggle, but the concrete adjustment of the new nation to the reality of its territory and people is another challenge. Chabal concludes that the nation-state as we define it, according to a classical nineteenth-century European version, may not be the necessary future of African peoples.

I fully endorse Patrick Chabal’s ideas, but I would reinforce his suggestion that the nation-state may be the completely wrong model to accommodate multi-ethnic societies and different regional cultures. Is not the nation-state homogenic and uniform by definition? Even in Europe, where the nation-state had time to consolidate, only nowadays are we

³⁵⁴ On this subject see Frantz Fanon’s *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1971 (1952).

³⁵⁵ Patrick Chabal, *Power in Africa*, Macmillan, London, 1992, 1994.

³⁵⁶ Benedict Anderson, “Cultural Roots” and “The Origin of Consciousness” in *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 1991.

learning to experiment political arrangements with such ideas as “multiculturalism”, or the assertion of “minority platforms”, for the future of politics in the XXIst century. I agree with Chabal that a basic element to look at postcolonial African states is to assess the adequacy of such an institution as the nation-state and confront the limits of this model to organise diverse populations living in the same territory, taking into consideration the fact that most African nations are a multi-ethnic patchwork.

So, what happened after independence was negotiated with the former colonisers?

I will follow Patrick Chabal’s arguments a bit longer: the first problem facing the postcolonial African state is that it had to accommodate a section (or more) of the population, which supported the idea of independence, but not the state under the leadership of a nationalist party which did not represent sectarian interests or priorities. Apart from dealing with those groups of local people who were favoured by the colonial regime or profited from the colonial situation, there were other, older rivalries, to be translated to power arrangements. The nation-state, and its nationalist party, had few alternatives: collaborate and share power, deal with an opposition or try to suppress this last. The Ashantis in Ghana organised as an opposition³⁵⁷, the Marabouts in Senegal and the Baganda in Uganda got their share of power, but the situation was more complicated with Mandinkas in Senegal, Ovimbundus in Angola, Northerners in Chad and the Makua in Mozambique³⁵⁸. While mentioning these examples, Chabal is meticulous about keeping other factors of political fragmentation, like languages, religion, racist practices and natural (eco-systems and their life-styles) regional divisions as an important part of the set of tensions imploding the postcolonial nation-state. Ethnicity alone is a too easy and abused explanation.

Where the violence of war did not become the curse afflicting the newly independent state, clientelism (that is, home colonialism, the process by which local elites go on exploiting the country in a colonial manner, in the name of private greed), connected to bad management, a worsening economic crisis, natural disasters and the continuation of remote control colonialism, all fed civil disappointment. Poverty and violence were not the expected boons that led people to support independence. Given the general crisis of African people, which means difficult living conditions for the majority of the population, no wonder a post-utopia feeling is currently noticeable in the work of many postcolonial writers. In fact, civil society is resenting the events in the last decades, and the crisis of many postcolonial states has created a sort of divorce between the state apparatus and the people it rules.

As was the case with the promotion of postcolonial awareness, nationalist ideals and socialist utopias, again, it is literature that is leading the search for new projects and much needed healing meta-narratives. Patrick Chabal himself was keen to underline the role of literature in diagnosing the coming crisis and the failure of the independence projects such as they had been dreamed of:

“But perhaps the most lucid and trenchant critique of the early years of independence came from fiction writers, playwrights and poets. Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi, Mongo Béti and many others did more to reveal the reality of postcolonial Africa than most African scholars.”

(Chabal, 1994: 8)

I could not help wondering if the ability to voice a “*lucid and trenchant critique*” is the reason why writers tend to end up in jail...

I interpret the current crisis affecting several postcolonial African states (be it a political, natural or humanitarian, if not the three at the same time) as the social-historical

³⁵⁷ *Op. cit.* Chabal, 1994: 123.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1994: 124.

context that, in the process of being translated into literary representation, inspired a general change of tone, from pre-independence euphoria (so clear in “guerrilla poetry” and in nationalist, nativist literatures following Négritude models and Pan-African ideas) to the bitter, broken disappointment exuding from many current postcolonial literatures. This change of tone has taken shape in a backlash of socio-political critique, more obvious (in the case of Lusophone literatures) in the continental postcolonial literatures that suffered the trauma of war.

A clear difference between the literatures written by the first generation of postcolonial writers (1950s) and the 1980s and 1990s second generation is that national independence, the freedom fighter and the colonial presence of white people have been dropped as central themes. In its place, the new focus of this second generations of writers falls, for example, on the continuity of some problems and the emergence of new others, together with the salvaged dimensions of cultural self-assertion and political resistance.

In war ravaged scenarios, like Mozambique, the record of the suffering of the people, and the tentative recovery of routines, projects and a sense of confidence, across unbearable memories, are some of the challenges confronting these later (second generation) postcolonial writers. With them lies part of the responsibility in healing collective trauma and inscribe new hope in the horizon of their readers.

In the case of a Creole culture like that of Cape Verde, the socio-historical process inspiring literature is totally different. For the archipelago the transition to independence meant a negotiation of an uncomfortable proximity to Portuguese culture (Lusophilia) through a re-discovery of the repressed African element, together with a maturing critical eye attuned to the types, the life-style and the collective socio-symbolical references of the islands.

Although one should not generalise chronological references in postcolonial criticism, which is more adequately attuned to situated national or regional approaches, note that I claim as the first generation of postcolonial African writers, those that really lived through the independence war/struggle, approximately in the 1950s. Bear in mind that currently, Africa has got around 50 independent countries and only four of those were independent before 1950. That is to say that with the exception of Ethiopia (1936-41), South Africa (1934), Egypt (1922) and Liberia (1847)³⁵⁹, most African countries had to promote their struggle for independence precisely between the 40s and the 60s. Then, the time frame for the “backlash” after the initial euphoria of independence has been materialising in the postcolonial African literatures of the eighties and nineties, after one or two decades of deep crisis and civil suffering. It is out of this time frame, linked to a change in the hopeful mood that led to the fight for independence, that I looked up the African women writers I wanted to study (Dina Salústio and Paulina Chiziane, with a nomadic Orlanda Amarílis moving between generations and countries). Thus, I am not focusing on a first generation of postcolonial writers, although I have included, in this part III, some poems from a first generation of writers, deeply committed to mobilisation and to the promotion of the independence ideal.

³⁵⁹ *Op. cit.* Arcília L. Barreto, 1991.