

African Literary Journals in French and Portuguese, 1947-1968: politics, culture and form

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SHORT ABSTRACT

This is a study of two literary journals published in Europe in the years around African decolonization: *Présence Africaine* in Paris, and *Mensagem* in Lisbon. Drawing on close reading, archival research and work in postcolonial and critical theory, the thesis offers the first substantial engagement with the connections between the two journals.

The study considers how the body of thinking these journals represent can inform contemporary literary-critical postcolonial scholarship and makes a number of theoretical propositions. First, the study argues for the significance of the literary journal as a key form in the conjuncture of African decolonization. Second, it proposes (and demonstrates) a historically and geographically contingent understanding of the relationships between literature, culture and politics. Third, through its interrogation of multi-scalar anti-colonial literary geographies, the study makes an empirical and theoretical contribution to comparative, multilingual and ‘transcolonial’ scholarship in francophone and lusophone postcolonial studies. Finally, I make a further empirical contribution to the study of African and anti-colonial literary history by bringing forward the place of women at both institutions and analysing their writing.

Very little academic work has treated French and Portuguese language anti-colonial literary practice comparatively. If anything, postcolonial work in both languages has been more concerned to delineate the historical and theoretical distinctiveness of francophone and lusophone literary histories from a dominant body of anglophone postcolonial theory. As this research emphasizes, however, much anti-colonial African publishing and writing in French, Portuguese and English deliberately deployed translation and multilingual modes of ‘lateral and associative’ (Boehmer, 2005) intertextuality as a way of countering state-backed exceptionalist arguments about the French and Portuguese languages and colonial projects. This intertextuality is manifest in literary journals.

Methodologically, this study both compares the two journals and also figures them as part of shared transnational literary and anti-colonial networks. I propose modes of comparative reading capable of dealing both with the specificity of Portuguese and French colonial and anti-colonial histories *and* with the continuities between European colonial-capitalist practices. This comparative mode addresses both the particularities of African writing in French and Portuguese and the multilingual intertextuality these journals display.

LONG ABSTRACT

This is a study of two literary journals published in Europe in the years around African decolonization: *Présence Africaine* in Paris, and *Mensagem* in Lisbon. Drawing on close reading, archival research and work in postcolonial and critical theory, the thesis offers the first substantial engagement with the connections between the two journals.

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The study is divided into four sections.

THE FORM OF ANTI-COLONIAL THOUGHT

In my introduction, I present the journals in their critical context and set out the stakes of the project. I focus on how it is possible to activate and re-engage the intellectual history of African decolonization today.

In Chapter One, I argue that we should understand the significance of *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* not only in terms of the linguistic or literary merits of the individual texts they contain but in terms of their polyphonic and comparative form. In particular, I argue that both journals established a comparative, connective ontology in two key ways: the first was geographical, in bringing together writing from different places; the second was between the naturalized divisions in social life, bringing together ‘the literary’ and ‘the political.’ I return throughout the thesis to these two dimensions of the journals’ comparative sensibility. *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*, partly thanks to the possibilities of the journal form, point to an anti-colonial history of comparison. This takes on particular

significance in light of debates in comparative literature about the alliance between comparison and colonialism. Taking the literary journal as a form and a creative practice in its own right – and as a major part of the growing interest in African writing, national creative production and literary independence that characterized the decolonizing years of the twentieth century – brings into view a densely packed terrain of creative literary practice that a sole focus on book-publishing obscures.

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF THE LITERARY

In the second section of the thesis, I discuss how ideas about the relationship between politics and literature changed at both *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* during the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1950s there was a shift in emphasis. An interrogation of how reading literature could be part of a critical pedagogy that unsettled colonial education gave way to a focus on how writers should balance political commitments with aesthetic freedom. I also discuss how to interpret the political significance of poetry published in *Mensagem* in the context of repression and censorship under the *Estado Novo*.

In Chapter Three, I consider how the ideas discussed in Chapters One and Two fit into a growing body of scholarship about African Modernism. This scholarship has interrogated the relationship between art and politics, but mainly in relation to English-language African writing. Part of my contention in this chapter (and in the thesis as a whole) is that it is not possible entirely to separate out the different linguistic threads of African literary histories: a reality that journal culture makes particularly clear. I consider what kind of comparative strategies are required to take seriously the shared questions that underpinned writing in different language-contexts. In this way I trouble the critical opposition between English-language ‘modernist’ work and French and Portuguese-language ‘engaged literature.’

In Chapter Four, I put the histories discussed in Chapters One to Three into conversation with a contemporary body of critical work on the relationships between literature, politics and theory in postcolonial studies. I argue that we should understand the relationship between literature and politics dialectically rather than hierarchically and that we must attend to the plasticity not just of ‘literature’ but also of ‘politics.’ I discuss why and how we should read the literary texts of African anti-colonialism not as subordinate to theoretical work but as forms of thought in themselves. In this sense the chapter acts as a bridge between my argument about the changing resonance of the literary and my ensuing discussion of literary contestations of the political: the third part of the thesis.

LITERARY CONTESTATIONS OF THE POLITICAL

The two chapters in this third section build on the arguments set out in Chapter Four. In Chapter One I laid the necessity of reading the journal form with an attention to ‘cracks’ and non-dominant voices. In these chapters I mobilize that way of reading. In Chapter Five, drawing on discussions, adoptions and adaptations of negritude in *Mensagem* as well as *Présence Africaine*, I give an account of the changing significance of negritude in the context of changing conceptions of politics during the 1950s and 1960s. Rather than take negritude as the theoretical preserve and responsibility of its early architects Damas, Senghor and Césaire, I suggest that the post-war history of negritude is characterized by multilingual receptions, misreceptions, mishearings, adaption, adoption and critique. These are legible not only in, but outside, the texts of negritude’s three canonical protagonists. I treat negritude as a polyphonic (it was articulated by many people), diachronic (it evolved), and multilingual (its protagonists were not only French-speaking) cultural and social phenomenon that was underpinned by journal culture.

In Chapter Six, I argue these journals offer a highly suggestive archive from which to bring

forward women in (literary) anti-colonial histories. They render women partially visible and draw attention to the divisions of labour that go into the production of literary work. In the context of the paucity of women authors at both journals in the 1950s and 1960s, I discuss questions of historiography, archiving and the (non-representative) significance of existing women's literary writing. I argue that even when not acknowledged as authors, women were involved in connective and comparative work which the journals undertook as translators and in other crucial para-literary roles. Finally, I turn to the texts in both journals that were authored by women, arguing that in some of this work we can see an attempt to expand and rewrite gender-neutral anti-colonial paradigms. In particular, I argue that in several writers' work we see a multi-scalar anti-colonial sensibility that writes gendered experience and domestic space into anti-colonial politics.

MULTI-SCALAR ANTI-COLONIAL COMPARISON

In the final section of the thesis, I apply this call for a multi-scalar anti-colonialism to the question of comparison itself. In Chapter Seven, drawing more broadly on poetic ideas of space, scale and connection in both journals, I discuss how this body of thought can inform thinking about comparison in literary studies. I ask how we can use anti-colonial poetic thought to inform our comparative paradigms and strategies in postcolonial studies. In my conclusion, drawing on the arguments of Chapter Seven, I offer some final thoughts about language worlds in contemporary 'francophone' and 'lusophone' postcolonial scholarship.

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS, ARCHIVES AND REFERENCING

TRANSLATIONS

All translations, except where noted, are my own. Because this is a comparative piece of work, I have translated both French and Portuguese citations into English in the footnotes. This is intended to make the thesis accessible to an English-language audience whether or not they speak both French and Portuguese.

ARCHIVES

During the course of this research I have used several archives. These include the *Présence Africaine* archives at the *Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine* (IMEC) in Caen; the archives of Mário Pinto de Andrade and the *Casa dos Estudantes do Império* at the *Fundação Mário Soares* in Lisbon; the PIDE and Salazar files at *Torre do Tombo* in Lisbon and the *Arquivo Diplomáticos Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros* in Lisbon. Where archival material has been used in the thesis, I have referenced it accordingly in the footnotes.

REFERENCING

Mensagem in particular used erratic dates and series numbers. For simplicity, I have limited references to series number and date published. For the same reason, I have listed all editions as '*Mensagem*,' although some editions of the journal have "Boletim" ("bulletin") or "Circular" ("circular") on the cover. Several editorials in *Présence Africaine* were signed off either P.A or PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE. These were mostly written by the editor, Alioune Diop. I have used capitals to signify attribution and italics to signify the journal itself.

INTRODUCTION: CREATIVE WORK, INTERNATIONALISM AND ANTI-COLONIAL THOUGHT

In February 2015, *Foreign Office*, a solo show by the Franco-Moroccan artist Bouchra Khalili, opened at the *Palais de Tokyo*, a gallery in Paris.¹ The *Palais* describes itself as an “anti-musée.”² It stands 400 metres across the river from the *Musée du Quai Branly*, a museum founded by the former French president Jacques Chirac, containing artworks and artefacts from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. The 370,000 objects in the *Branly*’s collection include the contents of eighteenth-century cabinets of curiosities, anthropological spoils from the nineteenth century, and the collection of the now-dissolved *Musée des Colonies*,³ founded in concert with the *Exposition Coloniale Internationale*⁴ held in Paris in 1931. That exhibition, which drew tens of millions of visitors, included a human zoo. Today, the *Branly* describes itself as “un forum ouvert sur le monde,”⁵ which allows “un dialogue inédit entre les cultures.”⁶

The next year, in 2016, a film entitled *Conakry* by the Portuguese artist Filípa César appeared at the *Galeria Avenida da Índia* in Lisbon.⁷ Like Khalili, César was born in 1975, lives in Berlin and works with archives of anti-colonialism. The *Galeria* was bought in 2015 by the cultural arm of the Lisbon council – EGEAC – as part of its ambition to regenerate Lisbon’s western waterfront. The opening of the gallery was part of a contested urban

¹ *Foreign Office*, Palais de Tokyo, February 18th – May 17th, 2015.

² “Anti-museum.” PALAIS DE TOKYO, ‘Notre ADN’, <http://palaisdetokyo.com/fr/notre-adn> [accessed 25 June 2018].

³ “Colonial Museum.”

⁴ “International Colonial Exhibition.”

⁵ “A forum open to the world.” QUAI BRANLY, ‘MISSIONS: Une passerelle entre les cultures’, <http://www.quaibranly.fr/fr/missions-et-fonctionnement/le-musee-du-quai-branly/> [accessed 25 June 2018].

⁶ “A new dialogue between cultures.” Ibid.

⁷ The installation appeared as a part of the touring show “Red Africa” and appeared between 7 December 2016 and 12 March 2017. The film can be accessed online here: Filípa César, ‘Conakry’, <https://amara.org/en-gb/videos/CZZB4xG9RRWo/info/conakry-by-filipa-cesar-with-grada-kilomba-and-diana-mccarty-engport/> [accessed 25 June 2018].

politics of gentrification in the context of the tourism boom Lisbon experienced following the 2008 financial crisis. However, the *Galeria*'s inauguration also coincided with the 40th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution, which brought an end to the Portuguese empire. EGEAC intended the space to function as a conduit for “diálogo e questionamento da herança e memória colonial”⁸ in a part of the city heavily freighted with imperial history. This history also includes a human zoo, set up as part of the *Exposição do Mundo Português*⁹ in 1940 in what is now the *Jardim Botânico Tropical*,¹⁰ five minutes from the *Galeria*. Scenes from *Conakry* were shot in the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*¹¹ in Berlin, an institution whose self-styling is uncannily close to the *Branly*'s anaesthetized brand as a bridge between different cultures of the world.

Thinking comparatively about these artists' interventions, and their conditions of emergence, brings forward the continuity across Europe and its former empires of colonial logics and anti-colonial struggles both historically and today. Taking César and Khalili's work together gives us a way into thinking about what it means – now, in Europe – to engage the intellectual history and praxis of the earlier anti-colonial moment. ‘Anti-colonial’ is not itself a historic category: clearly, anti-colonial struggles continue. To return to the anti-colonial imaginaries of 1950s and 1960s African decolonization – as I do in this thesis – is also a mode of thinking about politics, culture and form today. Khalili's show invited its audience to engage with the processes by which histories warp as they are handed down, rewritten and partially forgotten. Her main focus in *Foreign Office* was on memories of anti-colonial resistance. Khalili's mixed media installation comprised photographs, maps, a digital film and a silkscreen print. It focused on the period between 1962 and 1972, when

⁸ “Dialogue and questioning of colonial legacies and memories.” EGEAC, ‘Galeria Avenida da Índia’, <http://www.egeac.pt/equipamento/galeria-avenida-da-india/> [accessed 25 June 2018].

⁹ “Exhibition of the Portuguese World.”

¹⁰ “Tropical Botanical Garden.”

¹¹ “House of the Cultures of the World.”

the Algerian capital Algiers hosted delegations from liberation movements from all over the decolonizing world. These included members of the International Section of the Black Panther Party (BPP), the African National Congress, the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO), the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA), the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC), the *Frente Portuguesa de Libertação Nacional* (FPLN), the Eritrean Liberation Front, the *Front de Libération du Québec*, the *Front de Libération de la Côte des Somalis*, the *Movimiento por la Autodeterminación e Independencia del Archipiélago Canario*, the *Front national de liberation du Sud-Viêt Nam*, the South-West African People's Organization, the Zimbabwe African People's Union, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf, the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.¹²

Recently taken photographs of empty spaces hung on the *Palais* walls. Among them was the hotel that had been the BPP residence during the 1969 Pan-African Festival of Algiers; the cinema that had been the PAIGC headquarters; a flight of stairs at the MPLA headquarters; and the FPLN's lobby in the Meissonnier area of the city. A silkscreen print entitled *The Archipelago* stood out [see Appendix One, Fig. 1 and 1.1]. According to a wall caption, it drew on Édouard Glissant's conception of a 'Tout-Monde.' The print mapped the shape and geographical positions of the movements' buildings throughout the city, recasting them as islands in a blue sea. In Khalili's print, the presence of these projects of social and

¹² Translations of listed names in French, Portuguese and Spanish: "The Mozambique Liberation Front, The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, the Portuguese National Liberation Front, the Quebec Liberation Front, the Front for the Liberation of the Somali Coast, the Movement for the Independence and Self-determination of the Canaries Archipelago, The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam." *Bouchra Khalili* (Paris: SAM Arts Projects, 2015), pp.51-3.

political transformation created their own world, separate but connected, a local, particular and already transnational space.

César's film – a collaboration with the author Grada Kilomba and the artist-journalist Diana McCarty – addresses the role of cinema in Guinea-Conakry during the 1960s when the PAIGC was headquartered there, led by Amílcar Cabral. As archival video footage rolls, Kilomba's voice speaks of her reaction, constructing a relation to that half-forgotten militant history. For César and Khalili, the appeal of the anti-colonial moment to which their work returns has to do with the place of creative work in political projects for social transformation. Both artists figure this earlier anti-colonial period as a richly generative moment in intellectual and artistic history that remains extremely important today. Yet they also engage with what mode of historiography can adequately bring this past forward. For both, the 'thought' of this earlier moment can be approached not through an attempt to produce an objective history but rather by re-engaging with its ideas and working them through themselves: César and Khalili do not passively bring forward the archives they deploy but conjugate them anew with the present. This reconjugation takes on an explicitly gendered dimension in their construction of dialogues with the 'Great Men' (Cabral, Fanon, etc) of anti-colonial history through women's voices.

Neither artist's work, then, figures time as hermetically categorizable. Place is also multi-layered and multi-scalar. Both approach anti-colonial histories with a sense of transnational space. Their work reminds us of the nodal and peripatetic nature of the internationalist anti-colonial struggles of the post-war period, that convened in different cities at different times. Yet in Khalili's attention to the particular physical spaces that staged moments of transnational solidarity, and in César's representation of the city of Conakry as a space of political solidarity that crossed imperial-linguistic lines, both remind us that

transnationalism was always situated and specific. This unsettles the temporal-spatial sequencing it might be easy to rely on when talking about transnationalism: that the ‘local’ comes before the ‘national,’ which itself precedes the ‘transnational.’ They also unpick the convenience of mind of a close alliance between place and singular language. Khalili presents 1960s Algiers as a Portuguese- and English-speaking as well as Arab-Franco time-space, just as César figures 1960s Conakry as not only a Susu-, Fulani-, Malinké- and French-speaking but also a Portuguese-speaking space.

The important point here is not to emphasize that these African cities were polyglot and culturally cosmopolitan, though they were, but rather to situate French-speaking, Portuguese-speaking and English-speaking anti-colonial histories as spatially overlapping rather than entirely distinct. Attending closely to this overlap – as I seek to do in this thesis through close attention to literary journals – helps to bring a constitutively multi-lingual and comparative strand of anti-colonial thought and praxis into view that, in form as well as content, developed a comparative, connective and structural critique of European colonialisms in their various declinations. In so doing, they disrupted the language-frontiers that French and Portuguese colonialisms sought to establish, and that, in some ways, continue to inflect postcolonial studies today.

*

This thesis takes up the question of the place of anti-colonial thought in the present of postcolonial studies through a close attention to two literary journals published in Europe by African writers against the backdrop of mid-twentieth-century African decolonizations. Journals proliferated in African twentieth century letters. Of these, two of the most influential and with the widest international reach were *Présence Africaine*, launched in

Paris in 1947, and *Mensagem*, published between 1948 and 1964 in Lisbon. They published poetry and fiction alongside essays, news items and historical writing and became key platforms for writers and activists central to African independence struggles. The relationship between these two journals represents only one set of connections in broader networks of print culture I will discuss in the next chapter. *Présence Africaine*, which translated and published work in many different languages, however, was a particularly significant conduit connecting anti-colonial movements fighting against French and Portuguese colonialism,¹³ and in important ways we can understand *Mensagem*'s role in the Portuguese-language anti-colonial struggle as equivalent to that of *Présence Africaine* in the French-language context.

The journals fostered transnational networks for leaders and fighters of independence struggles, a group characterized by a remarkably dense concentration of poet-activists (often later poet-politicians). These individuals not only read each other's work in the pages of *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine*, but also met at the conferences and events both institutions convened. *Mensagem* was the newspaper of the *Casa dos Estudantes do Império* (*Casa*) – literally, the 'House of the Students of the Empire' – a centre founded by the Portuguese government after World War Two with the intention of preparing overseas students studying in Lisbon for future imperial duties. It became a crucial anti-colonial nexus. Many protagonists of later independence movements met there, thrust together by their shared interest in decolonization as well as the particularly uncompromising response of the Portuguese fascist *Estado Novo* regime to the anti-colonialism growing throughout European empires in the 1950s. *Mensagem* ran on and off for sixteen years under extremely difficult conditions. Writing in Portugal was highly policed, and anti-colonial writers faced

¹³ Patrick Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.42.

censorship and imprisonment. The regime surveilled *Mensagem*, which was run by successive generations of students. Between 1952-57, the regime installed a “Comissão Administrativa”¹⁴ at the *Casa* in Lisbon. During this time, *Mensagem* was not published. The journal began to run again in 1958. The PIDE, the Salazarist secret police, became particularly wary of the *Casa* in the 1960s because of the independences elsewhere in Africa but also because of the clearly anti-colonial ‘*Mensagem ao Povo Português*’¹⁵ that was distributed in 1960, and that the PIDE determined had been photocopied at the Coimbra *Casa*.¹⁶ The ‘*Mensagem ao Povo Português*’¹⁷ enjoined the Portuguese public to anti-colonial and anti-fascist solidarity with university students from Portugal’s African colonies, and to oppose ongoing Portuguese colonialism. Administrative oversight of the *Casa* was reinstalled on the 30 December 1960, though the new committee all but surrendered in July 1961 in the face of the ensuing protests.¹⁸ In January 1963, the regime cut all funding to the *Casa*.¹⁹ When they finally shut down the *Casa* and *Mensagem* in 1965, it was after years of mounting anxiety about the subversive politics the *Casa* and *Mensagem* were fostering.

Students at the *Casa* in Lisbon read and contributed to *Présence Africaine* [see Appendix Two]. Marcelino dos Santos, one of the founders of FRELIMO and sometime editorial committee member of *Présence Africaine*,²⁰ later described the journal as a “janela aberta para o mundo.”²¹ Though *Présence Africaine* was also financially precarious, the looser

¹⁴ “Administrative committee.” Several essays in the special anniversary edition of *Mensagem* discuss this but see for example: Fernando Rosas, ‘A CEI no contexto da política colonial portuguesa’ in Maria do Rosário Rosinha and Aida Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem: cinquentenário da fundação da Casa dos Estudantes do Império, 1944-1994* (Lisboa: Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império, 2015, 2nd ed), 15-23, p.20.

¹⁵ “Message to the Portuguese People.”

¹⁶ Rosas, ‘A CEI’ in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, p.21.

¹⁷ This document can be found in the Arquivo PIDE, Torre do Tombo, in the files PT/TT AC PIDE/DGS Del C SR 3767 NT4480 and PT/TT AC PIDE/DGS Del P P I 27366 N3875.

¹⁸ Rosas, ‘A CEI’ in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, p.22.

¹⁹ Rosas, ‘A CEI’ in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, p.22.

²⁰ See masthead on inside cover of *Présence Africaine*, 24-5 (1959).

²¹ Marcelino Dos Santos, ‘Janela aberta para o Mundo: o caso das Colónias Portuguesas,’ *Présence Africaine*, 181-2 (2010), 149-56, p.154.

censorship environment within which *Présence Africaine* operated allowed Portuguese-speaking African writers and others to develop their critiques of Portuguese colonialism in ways that they were not able to in Portugal, speaking more critically about nationalism, lusotropicalism and Portuguese brutality.²² The role of *Présence Africaine* reminds us that a lot of the history of the textual struggle against Portuguese colonialism did not happen in Portuguese. However, the involvement at *Présence Africaine* of figures such as Marcelino dos Santos and Mário Pinto de Andrade – a founder of the MPLA who worked as an editor at the journal between 1954-8 – also unsettles the idea that *Présence Africaine* was only a francophone publication. Andrade in particular played an important connective role within the French publishing world as well as between French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking groups. The influential publisher François Maspero's has said that "it was thanks to Mario de Andrade that I entered into contact with Fanon,"²³ whilst the Senegalese writer and filmmaker Ousmane Sembène also said that it was due to Andrade that his work was published in *Présence Africaine*, despite the editor Alioune Diop's hesitations: "If it weren't for him [Andrade], my work would have been refused."²⁴ Lilian Pestre de Almeida has pointed out that a poem by Andrade appears in Césaire's *Une Saison au Congo* and that Andrade corrected the 1956 edition of the *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*.²⁵ These examples are not meant to absorb the lusophone into the francophone but rather to argue that the received understanding of *Présence Africaine* as a francophone publication is a

²² Ruth Bush notes: "Lilyan Kesteloot claims that the journal 'fut victime, jusqu'en 1958 encore, de mesures de filtrage et d'une obstruction systématique encore voilée, de la part du gouvernement français: pression sur les libraires pour les empêcher d'accepter la revue, censure, retards postaux parfois considérables' (Kesteloot, 1963: 270)" ("Was victim, certainly until 1958, of filtering measures and systematic obstruction on the part of the French government that remains shrouded in mystery: pressure on booksellers to prevent them from accepting the review, censure, sometimes considerable postal delays") Ruth Bush, 'Notes' in *Publishing Africa in French: Literary Institutions and Decolonization 1945-1967* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp.234-57, p.244.

²³ Mike Watson, 'An interview with François Maspero: 'A few misunderstandings'', 13 April 2015 <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1937-an-interview-with-francois-maspero-a-few-misunderstandings> [accessed 17 July 2018].

²⁴ Samba Gadjigo, *Ousmane Sembène: The Makings of a Militant Artist*, trans. Moustapha Diop (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), p.144.

²⁵ Lilian Pestre de Almeida, *Césaire hors frontières: poétique, intertextualité et littérature comparée* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015), p.130 and p.54 respectively. On Andrade, see Inocência Mata and Laura Padilha org. *Mário Pinto de Andrade, um intelectual na política* (Lisbon: Colibri, 2000).

synecdoche which ignores its commitment to routinely publishing work in English as well as French, and to frequently publishing the work of Portuguese-language African writers in French translation.

As a journal and a publishing house, *Présence Africaine* has long occupied an important place in English-language African and postcolonial studies. V. Y. Mudimbe, whose 1992 edited volume *Surreptitious Speech* remains the major critical work on the review, argues that “unanimity on the historic role of *Présence Africaine* is striking;”²⁶ Paul Gilroy asserts that the formation of the journal “was an important moment in the developing awareness of the African diaspora as a transnational and intercultural multiplicity;”²⁷ Nick Nesbitt argues that *Présence Africaine* “instigated one of the signal interventions of African diasporic thought of this [twentieth] century;”²⁸ Ruth Bush calls the journal and publishing house “groundbreaking;”²⁹ one scholar has even suggested that “it is hard to imagine what African and black cultural studies in general would be without *Présence Africaine*.”³⁰ The possibilities of research on *Présence Africaine* have been greatly expanded by the journal’s recent digitization. Though this digitization is not comprehensive, omitting some editions as well as important paratexts such as cover pages and mastheads, it remains an extremely important resource.

²⁶ V. Y. Mudimbe, ‘Introduction’ in V.Y. Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious Speech: Présence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness, 1947-1987* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.xvii-xxvi, p.xxvi.

²⁷ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.195.

²⁸ Nick Nesbitt, *Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature* (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), p.100.

²⁹ Ruth Bush, ‘Introduction’ in *Publishing Africa in French*, pp.1-26, p.9.

³⁰ Donald E. Herdeck, *African authors: a companion to black African writing* (Washington, D.C.: Black Orpheus Press, 1973), p.576. See also Bennetta Jules-Rosette, *Black Paris: The African Writers’ Landscape* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p.xii; Bernard Mouralis, ‘Présence Africaine: the Geography of an Ideology’ in Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious Speech*, pp.3-13, p.3; and Sarah Frioux-Salgas, ‘Présence Africaine. Une tribune, un mouvement, un réseau’, *Gradhiva*, 10 (2009), 4-21, p.5.

There exists very little English-language work on *Mensagem*³¹ and as such, outside Portuguese-language scholarship there is much less consensus about the place of *Mensagem* in African and postcolonial studies. A wave of re-assessments of *Mensagem* and the *Casa* began in the 1990s, linked to commemorations in 1994 of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the *Casa*. Several former members published novels and memoirs around that time. In particular, the Angolan author Pepetela published *A Geração da Utopia*,³² a fictional account of life at the *Casa*. An organization comprised of former *Casa* members, the *Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império*³³ arranged for the reprinting of collected editions of poetry anthologies the *Casa* published. Further, they edited a special ‘50th anniversary’ edition of *Mensagem*, collating scholarly essays, documents and testimonials from former members. A second wave of work has been in motion since 2014, this time associated with commemorations of the *Casa*’s closure by the PIDE. The *União das Cidades Capitais da Língua Portuguesa* (UCCLA)³⁴ paid for updated reprints of the volumes republished in 1994 and held further seminars, meetings and an exhibition. UCCLA describes itself as a “uma associação intermunicipal de natureza internacional, criada a 28 de junho de 1985.”³⁵ Furthermore, an online archive of documents pertaining to the *Casa* was launched at the *Fundação Mário Soares* in Lisbon in 2017. The scope of this archive is limited due, among other things, to the fact that many documents were destroyed or

³¹ There is almost no work in anglophone scholarship. Key lusophone work includes: P. Borges et al., *Cinquentenário da fundação da Casa dos Estudantes do Império 1944-1994* (Lisbon: Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império, 1997) and António Faria, *Linha estreita de liberdade: a Casa dos Estudantes do Império* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 1997).

³² “The Utopia Generation.” Pepetela, *A geração da utopia: romance* (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1992). Other notable books include: Sócrates Dáskalos, *A Casa dos Estudantes do Império. Fundação e primeiros anos de vida* (Lisbon: Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 1994); Carlos Ervedosa, *Era no tempo das acácias floridas* (Linda-a-Velha: Edições ALAC, 1990); and Orlando da Costa, *Os Netos de Norton* (Lisbon: Edições Asa, 1994).

³³ “Association of the House of the Students of the Empire.”

³⁴ “The Union of Portuguese-speaking Capital Cities.”

³⁵ “An intermunicipal and international organization, founded on 28 June 1985.” UNIÃO DAS CIDADES CAPITAIS DE LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA, ‘UCCLA’, <https://www.uccla.pt/uccla> [accessed 10 August 2018].

confiscated during the final PIDE raid on the *Casa* in 1965. Nevertheless, it a rich source of previously unavailable material.

In Portuguese-language postcolonial scholarship, the work of Inocência Mata, Pires Laranjeira and Manuel Ferreira³⁶ in particular have contributed to position *Mensagem* as an undisputedly significant landmark in the history of African writing in Portuguese. Even in Portuguese, however, there has been a lot more focus on the *Casa* as an institution than on *Mensagem* specifically.³⁷ This is particularly the case with regards the recent proliferation of work about the *Casa* precipitated by commemorations surrounding the 50th anniversary of the *Casa*'s closure. The UCCLA framed its memorials in terms of a shared history – and present-day consolidation of — a Portuguese-speaking community: “um desígnio comum dos povos de língua oficial portuguesa e não é possível conceber-se o futuro sem a preservação da memória.”³⁸ This trope of seeing the *Casa* – and by extension *Mensagem* – in terms of a lusophone community is also palpable in Darlene J. Sadlier's recent discussions of this history.³⁹ In some ways, it could be possible to see *Mensagem* as offering historical basis for current deployments of the idea of a ‘lusophone world,’ and especially ‘lusophone Africa,’ with an anti-colonial rather than lusotropical genealogy. Certainly it is true that one important dimension of *Mensagem*'s charge was that it brought together writers from different parts of the Portuguese empire. However, this angle obscures the extent to which,

³⁶ See Inocência Mata, *A Casa dos Estudantes do Império e o lugar da literatura na consciencialização política* (Lisbon: União das Cidades Capitais de Língua Portuguesa, Coleção Autores da Casa dos Estudantes do Império, 2015) and Pires Laranjeira, ‘Introdução: Uma Casa de Mensagens Anti-Imperiais’ in *Mensagem: Boletim da Casa dos Estudantes do Império*, Vol.1 (Lisbon: Edições ALAC, 1996), pp.XI-XXXI. Ferreira played an instrumental role in collecting dispersed editions of *Mensagem* for the 1996 facsimile volume.

³⁷ See for example, Helder Martins, *Casa dos Estudantes do Império: Subsídios para a História do seu período mais decisivo (1953 a 1961)* (Maputo: Textos Editores Moçambique, 2017).

³⁸ “A common purpose of Portuguese-speaking peoples. It is not possible to imagine its future without preserving its memory.” Vitor Ramalho, Secretário-Geral da UCCLA, ‘Casa dos Estudantes do Império’, <http://www.uccla.pt/casa-dos-estudantes-do-imperio> [accessed 25 June 2018].

³⁹ Darlene J. Sadlier, *The Portuguese-Speaking Diaspora: Seven Centuries of Literature and the Arts* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), Chapter 5. For a counter-narrative, see Cláudia Castelo and Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, eds., *Casa dos estudantes do império: dinâmicas coloniais, conexões transnacionais* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 2017), though not all essays discuss *Mensagem*.

as I will argue, writers at *Mensagem* sought to break out of the ‘lusophone’ and ‘lusotropical.’

By the same token, the presence of Portuguese-speaking editors and writers at *Présence Africaine* has been generally ignored, as have the connections between *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine*. Ruth Bush’s recent work on book publishing at the *Présence Africaine*, for example, for all its rich exposition of the ways the publishing house had a “structural impact on the French literary field,”⁴⁰ does not address the Portuguese-language presence and connections at the journal at all. Discussions of transnationalism at *Présence Africaine* have often focused on its connections with African-American writers,⁴¹ and have focused on moments of transnationalism such as the two *Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs*⁴² the journal convened in Paris in 1956 and in Rome in 1959 rather than seeing internationalism, translation and transnationalism as constitutive to the project of the journal. More broadly, no work exists that treats the journals comparatively, or seriously considers how they constructed a wider, shared, transnational network.

Despite many calls for a comparative and translated approach to postcolonial studies,⁴³ to date, very little academic work on anti-colonial thinking has treated French-language and Portuguese-language anti-colonialism comparatively. In the case of African twentieth-

⁴⁰ Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.10.

⁴¹ See, for example, Frioux-Salgas, p.8.

⁴² “Congresses of Black Writers and Artists.” For James Baldwin’s reportage about the schisms between American and French participants in 1956, see James Baldwin, ‘Princes and Powers’, reprinted in James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964), pp.24-55. See also Hortense Spillers, ‘A transatlantic Circuit: Baldwin at midcentury Opening Keynote Address,’ *Callaloo*, 35.4 (2012), 929-38.

⁴³ See for example: Francesca Orsini and Neelam Srivastava, ‘Translation and the Postcolonial’, *Interventions* 15.3 (2013), 323-31; John McLeod, ‘Introduction’ in *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. John McLeod (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp.1-18, pp.10-12; and Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, ‘Introduction: Situating Francophone Postcolonial Thought’ in Forsdick and Murphy, eds., *Postcolonial Thought in the French-speaking World* (Liverpool University Press: Liverpool, 2009), pp.1-27, throughout but particularly p.9.

century writing, some ambitious comparative projects exist as edited volumes that juxtapose scholarship about different places.⁴⁴ This thesis builds on existing comparative work but is also underpinned by the claim that French- and Portuguese-language anti-colonial thought, praxis and writing are not entirely distinct, and cannot stably be kept apart for the purposes of comparison. I discuss further how anti-colonial histories can inform strategies of comparison in Chapter Seven and my conclusion, but for now suffice it to say that I adopt both a comparative and a transnational approach to bringing forward the connections between *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*: whilst keeping a sense of the particularity of both journals, I also consider the overlaps and influences between them. In this sense I take seriously both what was specific about the struggle against Portuguese and French colonialism, and its literature, and what Claire Joubert has called “la continuité constitutive entre toutes les séquences historiques qui s’échelonnent des colonialismes, [...] anticolonialismes, décolonisations.”⁴⁵

Like Khalili and César, my consideration of anti-colonial thought is informed by a sense that the ideas and praxes forged in the years around decolonization represent an extremely rich moment in intellectual and artistic history, particularly about the connections between creative work of various kinds and socio-political change. One of my central preoccupations is how to re-engage with this body of thinking and writing from the perspective of the present. More specifically, I ask what *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* of the 1950s and 1960s can say to postcolonial studies today. The last edition of *Mensagem* was in 1964, but

⁴⁴ Albert S. Gérard, ed., *European-language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986); Prem Poddar, Rajeev S. Patke and Lars Jensen eds., *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures: Continental Europe and its Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) and more recently Ana Paula Coutinho, Maria de Fátima Outeirinho and José Domingues de Almeida, dir., *Nos & leurs Afriques: constructions littéraires des identités africaines cinquante ans après les décolonisations = Áfricas de uns e de outros: construções literárias das identidades africanas cinquenta anos após as descolonizações* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2012).

⁴⁵ “The constitutive continuities between the historical periods that span colonialisms, [...] anticolonialisms, decolonisations.” Claire Joubert, ‘Le “postcolonial” à la différence des langues: culture, politique et enjeu de monde’ in Claire Joubert, ed., *Le Postcolonial comparé: anglophonie, francophonie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2014), pp.9-42, p.23.

I consider the period from the foundation of *Présence Africaine* until 1968 to take into account the important interventions by Portuguese-language writers in *Présence Africaine* in 1966 and 1968.

Though I draw on archival material and seek to bring new connections and texts into view, this is not a comprehensive historical account. Rather, to reprise Anne McClintock, it represents “an engagement – motivated, selective”⁴⁶ with *Présence Africaine*, *Mensagem* and the “insurgent geographies of connection”⁴⁷ writers associated with both established between them, to see how they can speak to us today. As such, I interweave chapters more focused on close readings of the journals with chapters more focused on their connections to bodies of contemporary work on African and postcolonial writing. The argument that postcolonial studies should draw on anti-colonial thought forged before the historico-political specificities of the field’s 1980s adolescence⁴⁸ is not new. The question of what that ‘thought’ was, however, has not been exhausted. My particular focus in this work is on how to read the literary journal as a form of writing and thought comprised of – rather than compromised by – its dissonances, polyphony and comparisons. That is, I take the journals themselves, not just the texts they enclose, as literary forms in their own right. This inflects my broader argument that we should take literary texts as thought: part of, not subordinate to, an anti-colonial intellectual history.

In a modest and limited way – working in only three, and only colonial, languages – I hope to make a contribution to comparative and multilingual postcolonial studies. *Mensagem* and

⁴⁶ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York; London: Routledge, 1995), p.17.

⁴⁷ The phrase is David Featherstone’s in *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2012), p.62.

⁴⁸ Neil Lazarus, ‘Introducing postcolonial studies’ in Neil Lazarus, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.1-16, p.5. Also Timothy Brennan, ‘Subaltern Stakes,’ *New Left Review*, 89 (2014), 67-87, p.75.

Présence Africaine have a lot to tell us about the historically and geographically contingent relationships between literature and politics. Sophisticated geographical imaginaries underpin them that disrupt and nuance the divisions by nation, language and empire that continue to shape postcolonial work. The ambiguous nature of both *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* – comprised and read by many African contributors but published in Europe – neatly captures the limits of applying to African and European anti-colonial thought too topographical a geography. Perhaps the least interesting or important of all the questions we could direct at these journals would be whether they should count as European – on account of their publishing location, the inclusion of European canonical thinkers as objects of discussion, and given many contributors were educated in Europe – or as African, on account of the birthplace, imagined homeland, and affirmed nationality of the same contributors. In fact, we do not have to choose. The paradox that, as Mudimbe puts it, *Présence Africaine* (and, I would add, *Mensagem*) “faces Western culture in the name of an absolute alterity; yet this very alterity seems to spring from the Western space”⁴⁹ is not as important as emphasising the idea that geographical categories such as “the West,” “Europe,” “France,” “Portugal” and “Africa” are not monolithic spaces, but contain dissonance and dissent. If, as Vijay Prashad has argued, the Third World was not a place but a political project, there is a need to remember that “(Pan-)Africa,” “Europe” and the “West,” might also be political projects, but not the only ones to be found within the geographical boundaries they often supposedly designate.⁵⁰ By emphasising the political plurality contained by categories such as “Europe,” “France” and “Portugal” to which histories such as those of *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* on French and Portuguese soil testify, we retrieve a counter-hegemonic tonic to what Robbie Shilliam calls colonial

⁴⁹ V.Y. Mudimbe, ‘Finale’ in Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious Speech*, pp.435-45, p.436.

⁵⁰ Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York; London: New Press, 2007), p.xv.

amnesia⁵¹ – the forgetting not only of violences of empire, but the histories of resistance to it.⁵²

The structure of the thesis is as follows. In Chapter One, I argue for the formal significance of *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* in terms of the comparative, connective ontology they established between places and between writing and politics. In Chapter Two, I discuss changing ideas in both journals about the role of reading and writing in the context of anti-colonial politics. In Chapter Three, I consider how these ideas and how the journals connect to a growing body of mainly English-language scholarship about African Modernism. In Chapter Four, I bring this history to bear on a contemporary body of critical work focussed on the relationship between literature and politics. I discuss why and how we should read the literary texts of African anti-colonialism not as fundamentally different from theoretical work but as thought in themselves. I argue that we should understand the relationship between literature and politics dialectically rather than hierarchically and that we must attend to the plasticity not just of literature but also of politics. In that sense the chapter acts as a bridge between my argument about the changing resonance of the literary and my ensuing discussion of literary contestations of the political. The next two chapters build on the arguments set out in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, I discuss the changing significance of negritude in the context of changing conceptions of politics over the 1950s and 1960s. In Chapter Six, I consider how women writing in both journals sought to expand and rewrite single-scale and gender-neutral anti-colonial paradigms. Chapter Seven and my conclusion take up this call for a multi-scalar sensibility. Drawing more broadly on poetic

⁵¹ Robbie Shilliam, 'The Crisis of Europe and Colonial Amnesia: Freedom Struggles in the Atlantic Biotope' in J. Go and G. Lawson, eds., *Global Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp.124-41.

⁵² As Margarida Calafate Ribeiro has argued, decolonization was not just a movement in the south, but a process that affected Europe as well as Africa. See Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, 'A Casa da Nave Europa – miragens ou projeções pós-coloniais?' in António Sousa Ribeiro and Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, eds., *Geometrias da Memória: configurações pós-coloniais* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2016), pp.15-42, p.25.

ideas of space, scale and connection in both journals, I discuss how this body of thought can inform thinking about comparison in literary studies today. Finally, I offer some concluding thoughts about language worlds in contemporary postcolonial scholarship.

Fundamentally, I suggest we should conceptualize these literary journals as practices of critique in the sense proposed by Nick Nesbitt: “writings [...] that cry out in insubordination and aversion to the state of their world [...] and that seek to articulate the promise that another world is possible.”⁵³ To register this critique, however, we need to listen to, to properly hear, the polyphony, dissent and modulations in tone and scale enclosed in the constellations of writing these journals present. It is to these particularities of the journal form represented by *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* that I turn to first.

⁵³ Nick Nesbitt, *Caribbean critique: Antillean Critical Theory from Toussaint to Glissant* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p.xi.

CHAPTER 1: THE LITERARY JOURNAL AS FORM: LATERAL AND ASSOCIATIVE THINKING IN *PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE* AND *MENSAGEM*

*Some people are so like eternal pointsmen lying in wait by the line,
to shunt one's train of thought from one rail to another.*
Rabindranath Tagore, 1916¹

*VASTEY (ironique) – [...] Avez-vous remarqué qui l'Europe nous a envoyé
quand nous avons sollicité l'aide de l'Assistance technique internationale ?
Pas un ingénieur. Pas un soldat. Pas un professeur. Un maître de cérémonies!
La forme, c'est ça, mon cher, la civilisation!*
Aimé Césaire, 1961²

*Por maior que seja a similitude dos casos em presença e a identificação
dos nossos inimigos, infelizmente ou felizmente, a libertação nacional e a
revolução social não são mercadorias de exportação.*
Amílcar Cabral, 1966³

A pointsman pulls a lever to direct a train from one track to another. The critic Elleke Boehmer suggests that Tagore's metaphor encapsulates the "effort of lateral and associative thinking, of moving between and across parallel tracks"⁴ that emerging anti-colonial movements were making in different places in the early twentieth century. Boehmer's idea of "lateral and associative" modes of thought both describes a process of recognizing the parallels and continuities between colonial situations around the world as well as of asking which, how and to whose benefit theoretical frameworks, analyses, concepts and (social,

¹ Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World*, trans. Surendranath Tagore (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p.58.

² "Vastey (*ironically*): [...] Have you not noticed whom Europe has sent us, upon our request for help from the International Technical Guidance? Not an engineer. Not a soldier. Not a professor. A master of ceremonies! Form – that, dear boy, is civilization!" Aimé Césaire, 'La Tragédie du Roi Christophe', *Présence Africaine*, 39 (1961), 125-53, p.135. Translation from: Aimé Césaire, *The Tragedy of King Christophe: A Play*, trans. Paul Breslin and Rachel Ney (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015), p.17.

³ "However similar our cases and our enemies, unfortunately or fortunately, national liberation and social revolution are not exportable commodities." Amílcar Cabral, 'A Arma da Teoria' in *Obras Escolhidas de Amílcar Cabral: Unidade e Luta I*, Mário de Andrade, coord. (Lisbon: Seara Nova, 1976), pp.199-220, p.201-2.

⁴ Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890-1920: Resistance in Interaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.18.

literary and political) forms could, in Edward Said's sense,⁵ travel. In short, Boehmer's concept describes a comparative mode of thinking. These questions remained extremely important to anti-colonial movements in the post-Second-World-War period. They are palpable in literary texts such as Aimé Césaire's *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* (first serialized in *Présence Africaine* from 1961) and in Cabral's insistence that Bissauan independence movements needed to draw both on a world-scale structural analysis of colonialism and on a close attention to their own particularity.

My focus in this chapter is on the ways that *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* undertook this mode of lateral and associative work in two ways. The first was their formal oscillation between writing from different places. The second was their juxtaposition of different forms of writing, especially, to use a crude distinction that I will discuss further later, 'literary' and 'non-literary' forms of writing. As such, we should understand the significance of these journals not only in terms of the linguistic or literary merits or otherwise of the individual texts they contain but in terms of the comparative, connective ontology that they established between places and spheres of social life. More fundamentally, I suggest that taking the literary journal as a form and a creative practice in its own right – and as a major part of the growing interest in African writing, national creative production and literary independence that characterized the decolonizing years of the twentieth century – brings into view a more densely packed terrain of creative literary practice that a sole focus on book-publishing obscures, especially in Portuguese.

A vast array of literary reviews and periodicals appeared – sometimes fleetingly – in Africa, Europe and around the Black Atlantic⁶ before and after independence, often engendering

⁵ Edward Said, 'Travelling Theory' in *The World, The Text and The Critic* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp.226-247. See particularly pp.226-7.

⁶ This now well-known term was brought to prominence by Paul Gilroy (1993).

fragile, though highly self-conscious and allusive, networks of literary practice. For instance, the editors of *Black Orpheus* talked of wanting to continue the “excellent work” begun by *Présence Africaine*,⁷ whilst the editors of *Mensagem* in Lisbon wrote of their “imenso regozijo” at seeing the “transcrição de artigos de ‘MENSAGEM’ em alguns jornais e revistas do Ultramar.”⁸ The Ugandan journal *Transition* published comments on the Ghanaian journal *Okyeame*,⁹ set up in 1964. *Présence Africaine* published articles from *Transition*¹⁰ and advertized in the Brazilian journal *Quilombo*.¹¹ *Mensagem* published translated material from the South African *Drum*.¹² Later, Rui Knopfli and J. P. Grabato Dias (António Quadros) inaugurated their journal *Caliban* in 1971 with an excerpt from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in English, followed closely by a translation into Portuguese of T.S.Elliot’s ‘Ash Wednesday.’ It is hard not to read this self-fashioning in relation to *Présence Africaine*, which had published Aimé Césaire’s anti-colonial reworking of *The Tempest* in 1968,¹³ or to *Transition*, whose first edition in 1961 also began with a discussion of Elliot. Though the many translations that appeared as part of this intertextual exchange were often more focussed on French and English texts than on Portuguese texts,¹⁴ writers were published in translation across the continent in the highly intertextual milieu of journal culture, a culture often allied to the formation of national, pan-African and internationalist sentiment. Abdellatif Laâbi, editor of the Moroccan journal *Souffles*, explicitly connected

⁷ Janheinz Jahn, ‘World Congress of Black Writers’, *Black Orpheus: A journal of African and Afro-American Literature*, 1 (September 1957), 39-46, p.40.

⁸ “Immense joy [...] [at] the reprinting of articles from MENSAGEM in magazines and newspapers in the colonies.” ‘CEI. Relatório e Contas. Parecer do Conselho Fiscal’, c.1963, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império, File: 11123.001.004, 1-28, p.8.

⁹ Lewis Nkosi, ‘On Okyeame’, *Transition*, 12 (1964), 28-9, p.28.

¹⁰ Pierre Van Den Berghe, ‘Les Langues Européennes et les Mandarins Noirs’, *Présence Africaine*, 68 (1968), 3-14.

¹¹ *Quilombo*, 1.1 (1948), p.42. Reprinted in facsimile form in Abdias do Nascimento, ed. *Quilombo: vida, problemas e aspirações do negro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34: Fundação de Apoio à Universidade de São Paulo, 2003).

¹² Richard Rive, ‘No sítio que acaba o arco-íris’, trans. Luandino Vieira, *Mensagem*, 16.1 (1964), 100. The poem had appeared in the May 1955 edition of *Drum* magazine as a preface to Richard Rive’s ‘Black and Brown Song’, *Drum* (May 1955), 50-1, 53, p.50.

¹³ Aimé Césaire, ‘Une Tempête’, *Présence Africaine*, 67 (1968), 3-32.

¹⁴ This is certainly the case in well-known journals such as *Black Orpheus*, *La Revue du Monde Noire* and also, to a degree, true of *Présence Africaine*.

“la sclérose des formes”¹⁵ which he hoped *Souffles* could disrupt with a growing Third World sentiment.

Literary journals partly effected their “lateral and associative” work through their networks of stockists, events and conferences. Nevertheless, it is important not to exaggerate or over-generalize about the mobility of literary journals.¹⁶ *Mensagem*, for example, did sometimes travel in people’s suitcases to Mozambique and Angola, but the journal had no network of stockists. In Lisbon, the journal was free to all members of the *Casa*. Non-members could purchase it.¹⁷ *Présence Africaine* must also have travelled in the same way, but most of their official stockists were in Europe and West and Central Africa [see Appendix One, Fig. 2]. The geographical and conceptual agility *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* effected through transposition, translation and comparison at the level of their editorial composition assumed its significance in the context of the constraints to physical mobility.¹⁸

CONNECTING PARTS OF THE WORLD

Mensagem and the Casa Dos Estudantes do Império

The magazines that students at the *Casas* in Lisbon and Coimbra set up – *Meridiano* (1947, Coimbra), *Momento* (1950, Coimbra), and *Mensagem* (1948, Lisbon), were, fundamentally,

¹⁵ See Abdellatif Laâbi, ‘Prologue’, *Souffles*, 1 (1966), 3-6 [not individually paginated] <http://clinet.swarthmore.edu/souffles/s1/1.html> [accessed 3 August 2018].

¹⁶ Eric Bulson warns of fetishizing the mobility of literary journals in *Little Magazine, World Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), p.16.

¹⁷ Private correspondence with Aida Freudenthal.

¹⁸ Pan African and Third World histories are full of transnational ambitions that never happened and people that didn’t get to where they wanted. Mário Pinto de Andrade missed Kwame Nkrumah’s 1958 Accra conference because the Air France ticket Nkrumah’s assistant George Padmore made available for the MPLA was made out in the name of a pseudonym for which they had no matching passport. [Michel Laban, ed., *Mário Pinto de Andrade: uma Entrevista dada a Michel Laban* (Lisbon: João Sá da Costa, 1997), p.149.] W.E.B Du Bois missed the 1959 Rome conference because his visa was refused. George Padmore was ill [Philippe Verdin, *Alioune Diop: le Socrate noir* (Paris: Lethieulleux, 2010), p.242.] A follow-up to the Black Artists and Writers Conferences was meant to take place in Rio de Janeiro. [Lynda Morris and Christoph Grunenberg, eds., *Picasso: peace and freedom* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), p.67]. W. E. B. Du Bois also discusses plans for a pan-African conference in Tunis, as well as to charter a ship for a moving Fourth Pan-African Congress in the West Indies in 1925 in ‘Africa and the American. Negro intelligentsia’, *Présence Africaine*, 5 (1955), 34-51, p.44.

campus magazines, akin to *Penpoint* (1958, Makere) and *The Horn* (c. 1957, Ibadan) that later appeared in Uganda and Nigeria. Where *Momento* and *Meridiano* appeared for only a few editions, *Mensagem*, which ran between 1948 and 1964, became a much more substantial and influential journal than other campus magazines, partly because, owing to the lack of universities in Portuguese Africa, it emerged in Lisbon itself, where students from across the Portuguese colonies were able to contribute to it, publishing mainly student news, essays, short stories and poetry. Campus magazines have the potential advantage of a prefabricated constituency or even captive audience. The nature of the *Casa* meant that *Mensagem*'s was international. Under the *Estado Novo*, physical and conceptual mobility was highly policed, and the readership of Portuguese language journals beyond the Portuguese empire was limited. Within the empire, censorship, distribution obstacles and illiteracy repressed audiences.¹⁹ Given these restraints, the structure and location of the physical *Casa* itself in Lisbon was crucial to the journal's import in that it brought together writers from different colonies. The journal also published supplements focussed on the national poetries of different countries.²⁰ Nevertheless, the journal, often referred to as a "Circular"²¹ or "Boletim,"²² rather coy although presumably prudent ways of describing its project, was published with very limited resources. Articles in the journal, as well as in the accounts of the *Casa*, refer to its financial precarity. For all that it operated with constrained resources and limited scope, *Mensagem* was informed by a self-conscious creative commitment. The first editorial poignantly muses on its contributors' desire and inability to improve the form and scope of their magazine, to create "uma verdadeira revista, perfeita na forma e no conteúdo."²³

¹⁹ Manuel Ferreira makes the interesting point that where books were censored after their publication, journals were censored before they were printed. See Manuel Ferreira, 'Portuguese Africa: The new militancy' in *European-language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, pp.395-433, p.395-6.

²⁰ These focussed on Angola in 1959 and 1962; Mozambique in 1951, 1960 and 1962 and on São Tomé in 1963.

²¹ "Circular."

²² "Bulletin."

²³ [no named author], [untitled], *Mensagem*, 1 (July 1948), 1-2, p.1.

Mensagem assumed a particular significance in the context of the *Estado Novo*'s lusotropicalist arguments about the exceptionalism of the Portuguese empire. The regime's discourse about its African colonies relied on the assertion of an undifferentiated unity within the Portuguese empire: of a Portugal "uno e indivisível."²⁴ Cláudia Castelo argues that the regime was increasingly concerned that what it saw as the *Casa*'s "tendências segregativas"²⁵ were obstructing their project of dissolving difference into absolute assimilation. By 1960, advisors to the *Estado Novo* had become concerned that overseas students "seja rodeada dos cuidados materiais e espirituais necessárias à sua real integração no espírito de unidade nacional."²⁶

One way in which *Mensagem* rejects the *Estado Novo*'s claim to undifferentiated unity is through its conception of building an *ultramarino* movement. The journal repeatedly characterizes this as its central project. A 1958 editorial declared that we are a group "de diversas províncias ultramarinas, desejosos de trabalharem em comum para constituírem presença e força das terras de África e do Oriente na capital do Império."²⁷ The *ultramar*, the Portuguese noun for the place over-the-sea, which came to describe Portugal's overseas empire, has long enjoyed a special imaginative freight in a country that even today

²⁴ "One and indivisible." This Salazarist slogan began to circulate in the early 1950s. Vítor de Sousa & Moisés de Lemos Martins, 'A "portugalidade" no discurso parlamentar português: Assembleia Nacional (1935-1974) e Assembleia da República (1976-2012)' in Z. Pinto-Coelho and J. Fidalgo, eds., *Comunicação e Cultura: II Jornada de Doutorandos em Ciências da Comunicação e Estudos Culturais* (Minho: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade, 2003), p.93. Rosas, 'A CEI' in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, esp. p.15.

²⁵ "Segregating tendencies." Cláudia Castelo, 'Casa dos Estudantes do Império (1944-65): uma síntese histórica' in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, pp.25-31, p.29.

²⁶ "Furnished with the material and spiritual tools needed for their real integration into the spirit of national unity." Castelo, 'Uma síntese histórica' in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, p.29.

²⁷ "From different *ultramarino* provinces, keen to work together to embody the strength of Africa and the Orient in the capital of the Empire." Benedito Gomes, 'Pequeno História da Casa dos Estudantes do Império', *Mensagem*, 1.4 (1958), 6-8, p.6.

remembers, in a generally anaesthetized version, its lengthy seafaring history.²⁸ In calling themselves *ultramarinos*, students writing in *Mensagem* reclaimed the word from the Salazarist vision of a single, indivisible Portuguese empire and redeployed it as a way of expressing a conception of unity-in-difference. Building an *ultramarino* movement involved fostering “entre nos uma maior coesão e entendimento, aquele que tende a pugnar pelos nossos interesses.”²⁹ In this formulation, the tension between singularity and diversity is central. The construction of the *ultramarino* movement was always ongoing: a motivating ideal more than an achieved reality, an “eterno ‘tornar-se,’”³⁰ as one editor wrote in 1959, which aspires for a “uma síntese suprema”³¹ of communality and particularity. Perhaps the most comprehensive elaboration of what it meant to develop an idea of *ultramarino* identity came in one of the final essays that *Mensagem* published, ‘Pelo que lutamos,’³² in which Alberto Rui Pereira, the vice-president of the *Casa*, sets out what he called the “rara visão ultramarina.”³³ He argues that “contacto permanente com actividades multilaterais e de interesse frontalmente cultural”³⁴ will “lapidar-nos funcionalmente para uma vida de mais saber, de mais humanismo e fraternidade.”³⁵ The journal itself was central to this aspiration. As an anonymous editorial in the previous edition declared, “reunindo nos seus temas as essências das diferentes províncias ultramarinas, ele [*Mensagem*] será um instrumento de concatenação das diferentes expressões de cultura no sentido duma visão mais ampla e

²⁸ For more on this Portuguese brand of colonial amnesia, see, for example, Marcus Power, ‘Exploding the myth of Portugal’s ‘maritime destiny’: a postcolonial voyage through EXPO’98’ in Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, eds., *Postcolonial Geographies* (New York; London: Continuum, 2002). See also António Pinto Ribeiro, ‘O Impossível Museu’, Newsletter, MEMOIRS, 18 May 2018: http://memoirs.ces.uc.pt/ficheiros/4_RESULTS_AND_IMPACT/4.3_NEWSLETTER/MEMOIRS_newsletter_03_APR_pt.pdf [accessed 25 June 2018]

²⁹ “Greater understanding and cohesion between us which will help us fight for our interests.” [no named author], ‘Editorial’, *Mensagem*, 2.3 (1959), 4-5, p.4.

³⁰ “Eternal becoming.” Ibid, p.4.

³¹ “Supreme synthesis.” Ibid, p.4.

³² “What We Are Fighting For.” Alberto Rui Pereira, ‘Pelo que lutamos’, *Mensagem*, 15. 2 (1963), 6-10, 43-4.

³³ “Precious *ultramarino* vision.” Pereira, p.6.

³⁴ “Ongoing exposure to multilateral activities and with a head-on interest in culture.” Pereira, p.43.

³⁵ “Will refine and prepare us for a life of more knowledge, more humanism and more brotherhood.” Pereira, p.43.

aberta das realidades ultramarinas.”³⁶ The *Casa*’s annual report and accounts that year noted that the journal had been “um elo de ligação entre todos os estudantes ultramarinos.”³⁷ Where the *Estado Novo* emphasized unity without difference within the Portuguese empire, *Mensagem* advanced a vision of unity with difference, played out in its formal juxtaposition of writers from all over the Portuguese colonies.

The *Estado Novo* also claimed that the experience of Portugal’s African colonies was incomparable to those of any other European empire. In this context, it is also important to emphasize that contributors to *Mensagem* were explicitly interested in expanding their analytical optic – whether in pan-Africanist or in Third Worldist directions – to make the case that what was going on beyond the Portuguese empire was relevant to what was happening within it. This dynamic became clearer after the mass African independences in the French and British African colonies after 1960, when *Mensagem* became bolder in terms of the non-fictional material it published.³⁸ Repressive censorship made the publication of explicitly political material extremely risky, but the publication of news and statements about happenings beyond the Portuguese empire increased. After 1962, for example, the magazine published several prose statements of an internationalist or ‘one worldist’ nature – for example, reminders of positions taken by UN bodies on universal human rights and anti-racism,³⁹ and also reports about happenings in other parts of Africa, such as news of African student unions⁴⁰ and statements from international student conferences.⁴¹

³⁶ “By thematically bringing together the essences of the different colonies, *Mensagem* has been an instrument of concatenation of different cultural expressions, offering a broader and more open view on *ultramarino* realities.” [No named author], ‘Editorial’, *Mensagem*, 15.1 (1963), 3-4, pp.3-4.

³⁷ “A link that has connected all students from the colonies.” ‘CEI. Relatório e Contas. Parecer do Conselho Fiscal’, c.1963, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império, File: 11123.001.004, 1-28, p.6.

³⁸ See also Ana Maria Martinho, ‘Reflexões em torno dos contributos literários na *Mensagem* da CEI,’ in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, pp.53-63, p.58, in which she argues that after 1960 *Mensagem* registers a “uma componente mais claramente opinativa.” (“A more clearly opinionated dimension.”)

³⁹ [No named author], ‘Proclamação da UNESCO de 1950’, *Mensagem*, 14.4 (1962), 35-7.

⁴⁰ [No named author], ‘Uniões nacionais de estudantes em África’, *Mensagem*, 16. 1 (1964), 59-65 and 82-6.

⁴¹ [No named author], ‘Noticário Estudantil Internacional’, *Mensagem*, 14.4 (1962), 29-34.

These articles are often presented in an extremely dispassionate way, but the fact of introducing this material was highly charged in the context of the regime's emphasis on the particularity of the Portuguese imperial case. This expansive and comparative optic is also discernible in the translations *Mensagem* published of work from outside the Portuguese context, including work by the African American poets Gwendolyn B. Bennett⁴² and Langston Hughes,⁴³ the Guinean composer and writer Keïta Fodéba⁴⁴ and the Cuban Nicholas Guillén.⁴⁵ A “visão panorâmica dum movimento mundial” is needed, wrote the poet and future Angolan president Agostinho Neto in 1960 “para compreendermos os caminhos que as nossas tentativas poéticas têm seguido.”⁴⁶

The last edition of *Mensagem* in 1964 illustrates the oscillation between luso-African comparativism and the more internationalist strand I have been discussing [see Appendix One, Fig. 3]. The issue brings together writers from different Portuguese colonies, juxtaposing writers from Mozambique (José Craveirinha), Angola (Antonio Jacinto), São Tomé (Alfredo Margarido), Cape Verde (Pedro Corsino Azevedo), and so on. But the edition is a case in point of these glimpses of happenings beyond the Portuguese empire bubbling through the cracks. There is news of student union activity in Africa,⁴⁷ which talks in a comparative mode about situations in Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Morocco, South Africa, France and Algeria, and the testimony of James Musa Sadika, a black Malawian migrant worker, a herbalist, who had been picked up by one of the South African Police

⁴² Gwendolyn B. Bennett, ‘Nocturno’, *Mensagem*, 3.5/6 (1960), 29, p.29.

⁴³ Langston Hughes, ‘Proémio’, *Mensagem*, 14.1 (c.1961), 22, p.22.

⁴⁴ Keita Fodéba, ‘A dança. Expressão da vida africana’, *Mensagem*, 14.3 (1962), 12-20.

⁴⁵ Nicholas Guillén, ‘La Muralla’, *Mensagem*, 14. 2 (1962), 65-6.

⁴⁶ “A panoramic vision of a global movement [...] [is needed] to understand the paths that our poetic attempts have followed.” Agostinho Neto, ‘Introdução a um colóquio sobre poesia angolana’, *Mensagem*, 3.5/6 (1960), 45-51, p.51.

⁴⁷ ‘Unões nacionais de estudantes em África’, pp.59-65 and 82-6.

‘ghost squads’ in October 1958 and condemned to hard labour. Sadika’s case caused international outrage when the appalling conditions of his labour came to prominence in the media in 1959.⁴⁸ There is also a translation, by Luandino Vieira, of ‘Where The Rainbow Ends,’ a poem by Richard Rive, a black South African poet that had appeared in the South African magazine *Drum*.⁴⁹ The poem addresses the power of music and words to draw connections across racial lines; even to dissolve racial difference: “nós vamos cantar juntos, mano, | Tu e eu, tu branco e eu não.”⁵⁰ Indeed, Vieira’s translation itself invites the question of how writing and translation can help make connections across racial as well as linguistic and geographic lines.

Mensagem holds these different registers in suspension, moving between them as different ways of knowing the world, each tempering the authority of the other. Thus, in this magazine, we do not see a bounded lusophone African imagination, nor a closed nationalistic sentiment, but a collection of Portuguese language texts that, read alongside one another, seek to address the different situations across the Portuguese empire and beyond. *Mensagem*’s power lay precisely in the new combinations that the journal was able to forge, and the different spheres of life and the world it was able to connect. Though the *readership* of the magazine was restricted to Portuguese-speakers, it inserted itself into a global, pan-African context which challenged the *Estado Novo*’s isolationism.

Présence Africaine

Alioune Diop, at the time the senator for Senegal in the French senate and a member of the French Socialist Party, founded *Présence Africaine* in Paris in 1947. From 1949, he

⁴⁸ James Musa Sadika, ‘Um documento’, *Mensagem*, 16. 1 (1964), 16-24.

⁴⁹ Rive, ‘No sitio’, p.100.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.100. Rive’s original reads: “we’re going to sing together, brother, | You and I, | though you’re White, and I’m not.” Rive, ‘Black and Brown Song’, *Drum* (May 1955), p.50.

expanded *Présence Africaine* to include a publishing house and bookshop at 25bis Rue des Écoles in the centre of Paris, where it still exists today. Diop remained the editor until his death in 1980, overseeing the publication of over a hundred volumes, disseminated throughout France as well as in Africa, the Caribbean and elsewhere in Europe. *Présence Africaine* was, in many ways, a much more substantial publication than *Mensagem*, in terms of length as well of breadth of contributions. Given its publication location, it was capable of more explicit political statements. Though many have emphasized the assimilationist spirit of its early editions,⁵¹ the leading lights of the anti-colonial literati published on its pages. From the beginning, but especially after a change of editorial board, launch of a new series and an adoption of an explicitly anti-colonial position after Bandung in 1955, *Présence Africaine* was marked by a pan-African, and sometimes *tiersmondiste* editorial logic.

This logic was clear in its publication of the proceedings of the Third World and pan-African conferences, including the Bandung Conference (18-24 April 1955), the all-African peoples' conference in Accra (5-15 December 1958), the Afro-Asian people's solidarity conference in Cairo (26 December 1957-1 January 1958), the non-Aligned movement conference in Belgrade (1-6 September 1961) and the *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*⁵² in Dakar (1-24 April 1966). More fundamentally, it was clear in the journal's juxtaposition of work from and about many different countries in Africa and around the black Atlantic. Though published in Paris, and mainly in French, *Présence Africaine* also translated material from and included material in English, Portuguese and Spanish. From its first edition, it renounced any intention to be a 'French' journal: "Dépassant le strict plan de la colonisation française,

⁵¹ Meadow Dibble-Dieng, 'When the Medium was the Message: Editorial Practice in the First Series of *Présence Africaine*' in Charles Forsdick and Andy Stafford, eds., *La Revue: The Twentieth-Century Periodical in French* (Bern; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), pp.209-24, p.210.

⁵² "First World Festival of Negro Arts."

elle veut poser et étudier le problème général des rapports de l'Europe avec le reste du monde, mais en prenant pour exemple l'Afrique.”⁵³ Rather, the journal sought to consider “questions qui se posent sur le plan mondial [...] afin de nous retrouver un jour parmi les créateurs d'un ordre nouveau.”⁵⁴ *Présence Africaine*, then, explicitly wrote itself into a project of world transformation that crossed linguistic boundaries.

Diop's editorial policies that underpinned the comparative and connective form of the journal were initially inflected by his humanist commitments. In 1947, these were, as Salah Hassan has argued, deeply influenced by liberal and Christian humanism and informed by a commitment to resuscitating and reclaiming a European humanist tradition.⁵⁵ Despite Diop's stated intention to go beyond the French context, his opening editorial also referred to the “idéal héroïque”⁵⁶ of France. Although open to all men of goodwill, he wrote “notre revue se félicite-t-elle d'être française.”⁵⁷ Diop's opening editorial has been much commented on. Christopher Miller and Meadow Dibble-Dieng have sought to rehabilitate Diop's editorial from subsequent charges of assimilationism by drawing attention to the constraints under which Diop wrote as well as the irony that underpins this writing.⁵⁸ Their qualifications are important, but it is also hard entirely to erase Diop's francophilia. However, his ideas changed in the decades that followed and the journal's register itself became more radical. There was a notable change in editorial direction from the first series

⁵³ Alioune Diop, ‘Niam n'goura. Ou les raisons d'être de *Présence Africaine*’, *Présence Africaine*, 1 (1947), 7-14, p.12. The English translation published in the same edition ran: “reaching beyond the confines of French civilization, it intends to raise and study the general problem of Europe's relations with the rest of the world, taking Africa as an example.” Alioune Diop, ‘Niam n'goura. Or *Présence Africaine*'s Raison d'être’, trans. Richard Wright and Thomas Diop, *Présence Africaine*, 1 (1947), 185-92, p.190.

⁵⁴ Diop, ‘Niam n'goura’, p.14. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “questions of world importance [...] in order that we might one day find ourselves among the creators of a new order.” p.192.

⁵⁵ See: Salah D. Hassan, ‘Inaugural Issues: The Cultural Politics of the Early *Présence Africaine*, 1947-55’, *Research in African Literatures*, 30.2 (1999), 194-221, p.200 and Ruth Bush, ‘Book-publishing at *Présence Africaine*’ in *Publishing Africa in French*, pp.56-91, p.61.

⁵⁶ Diop, ‘Niam n'goura’, p.12. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “heroic ideal.” p.190.

⁵⁷ Diop, ‘Niam n'goura’, p.12. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “our review is pleased with being French.” p.190.

⁵⁸ Christopher L. Miller, ‘Alioune Diop and the Unfinished Temple of Knowledge’ in Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious speech*: pp.427-34, p.431 and Dibble-Dieng, p.215.

of 1947, imagined as politically neutral,⁵⁹ and the second series beginning in 1955, which was explicitly anti-colonial.⁶⁰ The first series had a *Comité de Patronage*⁶¹ that included André Gide and Jean-Paul Sartre.⁶² They left at the start of the second series to make way for a new committee comprised entirely of men of colour. This committee included Mário Pinto de Andrade.⁶³ By mid-1963, the appeal to universal-scale perspectives represented by Diop's early humanism was couched in the cadences of Marxist internationalism.

The particularizing, even atomizing dimensions of nationalism always presented some problems for *Présence Africaine*. Indeed, Jacques Howlett has argued that one of the central tensions of *Présence Africaine* was its commitment both to universalism and to African anti-colonial nationalism.⁶⁴ The editorials of the second series supported individual countries' nationalist aspirations, but also warned against "balkanisation"⁶⁵ and "un nationalisme étroit, limité aux frontières arbitraires de leurs patries respectives."⁶⁶ Its more-than-nationalist point of view is also inscribed in a tendency to move between particular national cases and frame them as part of broader projects of emancipation. By 1958 *Présence Africaine's* editorials tended to present nationalism as a transitional step to wider forms of

⁵⁹ Ruth Bush notes that the journal had initially been imagined as a journal called "DÉCOUVERTES" that "ne se rattacherait à aucune obédience littéraire ou philosophique" ("Would not conform to any philosophic or literary order"). Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.63.

⁶⁰ Jacques Howlett and Salah D. Hassan also emphasize the importance of the change in editorial board in Jacques Howlett, 'Présence Africaine 1947-58', *The Journal of Negro History*, 43.2 (1958), 140-150, pp.145-6 and Hassan, throughout but, for example, p.194.

⁶¹ "Steering committee."

⁶² The Committee of Patrons in the first series included "André Gide, Paul Rivet, Father Maydicu, Emmaniel Mounier, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Paul Hazoumé, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Leiris, Albert Camus, Aimé Césaire. On the board of editors of the journal were, among others, Bernard Dadié, Cissé Dia, Georges Balandier, F.D.Cissoko, Mamadou Dia, Roger Mercier, Hughes Panassié, Abdoulaye Sadj, Tidjani Serpos." Christiane Yandé Diop, 'Foreword' in Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious speech*, pp.xiii-xvi, p.xiv.

⁶³ The first edition of new series listed the new editorial committee as: MM. A. Adandé, A. Biyidi, A.-K. Busia, Aimé Césaire, B. Dadié, A. Diop, B. Fele, A. Franklin, J. Ki, S. Kuo, D. Mandessi, Nyunai, Owona, K. Paulin, Ray Autra, A. Sadj, A. Wade." *Présence Africaine*, n.s. 1-2 (1955), [unpaginated, inside cover].

⁶⁴ Howlett, p.146.

⁶⁵ "Balkanisation." PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, 'Balkanisation et unité', *Présence Africaine*, 23 (1958), 3-5.

⁶⁶ "A narrow nationalism, limited to the arbitrary borders of their respective countries." P.A., 'Leur voix', *Présence Africaine*, 34-5 (1960), 3-4, p.4.

union at a pan-African or Third World scale: “une étape indispensable”⁶⁷ and “une condition première”⁶⁸ rather than “une fin.”⁶⁹ The journal was committed to nationalism in Africa despite acknowledging that independence “n’est pas une panacée”⁷⁰ because, Alioune Diop wrote in 1958 in his write-up of the 1958 All-African People’s Conference in Accra, organized by the pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, “notre expérience de colonisés nous apprend que rien, absolument rien, n’est possible sans elle.”⁷¹ Even in this statement of profound support for the nationalist cause, Diop couches the ‘us’ of his political community not in terms of the experience of one nation or continent but in terms of the wider ‘we’ of colonized peoples. Diop presents the Accra conference as the reversal of the 1885 Berlin Conference, when Africa was divided into imperial possessions. The two dates, Berlin 1885 and Accra 1958, he argues, should be thought of together. In the former, European countries came together to ensure their “domination”⁷² through the imposition of “frontières absurdes.”⁷³ The latter was when “les peuples africains”⁷⁴ came together with the intention of “réorganiser autrement l’espace politique de leur continent.”⁷⁵ Anti-colonialism for Diop involved an editorial and political commitment to overcoming European divisions. As I discuss further in Chapter Five, Diop, and *Présence Africaine* more broadly, preferred the broader, transnational categories of pan-Africanism, Third-World solidarity, negritude or even ‘the world,’ although the relations between these categories were variable and sometimes fraught.

⁶⁷ “An indispensable stage.” PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Le sous-équipement et les leçons du Caire’, *Présence Africaine*, 17 (1957), 3-8, p.4.

⁶⁸ “A first condition.” P.A., ‘Indépendance, sécurité, paix mondiale’, *Présence Africaine*, 20 (1958), 3-4, p.3.

⁶⁹ “An end point.” PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Le sous-équipement’, p.4.

⁷⁰ “Is no panacea.” P.A., ‘Accra: le rendez-vous de l’Unité’, *Présence Africaine*, 22 (1958), 3-4, p.3.

⁷¹ “Our experience as colonized peoples teaches us that nothing, absolutely nothing, is possible without it.” P.A., ‘Accra’, p.3.

⁷² “Domination.” P.A., ‘Accra’, p.3.

⁷³ “Absurd borders.” P.A., ‘Accra’, p.4.

⁷⁴ “African peoples.” P.A., ‘Accra’, p.4.

⁷⁵ “Reorganise the political space of their continent.” P.A., ‘Accra’, p.4.

Indeed, whilst the journal was, from 1955, explicit in its support for anti-colonial nationalism, its adoption of an anti-colonial editorial policy that year came in the context of the Bandung conference, and the collective, more-than-nationalist spirit the event represented.⁷⁶ One article in the first edition of the new series described this spirit as “cet effort planétaire des peuples de couleur pour liquider l’oppression coloniale.”⁷⁷ Their anti-colonial vision was centrifugal and crossed colonial boundaries. In 1962, celebrating Algerian independence, they emphasized the continuing need to work towards “wholesale, radical and final decolonization”⁷⁸ across Africa as a whole. Given most French African colonies were independent by then, this declaration inscribes solidarity for Portuguese, English and Dutch African colonies, as well as a growing awareness of emerging neo-colonial dynamics in some new independent nations.

Meadow Dibble-Dieng has argued that the journal “medium offered [*Présence Africaine*] [...] a persistent framework for thinking unity dialogically.”⁷⁹ Certainly, in the constantly moving back-and-forth between specific cases that *Présence Africaine* staged, we can see an attempt dialogically to construct broader analytics and solidarities than only nationalist ones. This is also true of the recursive comparison-in-solidarity represented by *Mensagem*’s “visão ultramarina.”⁸⁰ More specifically, the editorial pan-Africanism of *Présence Africaine* was explicitly geared towards moving past linguistic divisions in Africa in the service of a polyglot pan-Africanism. This is closely related to publishing work in translation, as the editors wrote in a preface to the English parallel edition that began around 1960: “by employing English and French languages, we hope to assist our friends elsewhere to

⁷⁶ On Bandung, see Prashad, pp.31-50.

⁷⁷ “This planetary effort by peoples of colour to liquidate colonial oppression.” J.K.Z., ‘La Conférence de Bandoeng’, *Présence Africaine*, 3 (1955), 28-44, p.42.

⁷⁸ P.A., ‘Greetings to an Independent Algeria’, *English Series*, 12, 40 (1962), 5-6, p.6.

⁷⁹ Dibble-Dieng, p.212.

⁸⁰ “*Ultramarino* vision.” Pereira, p.6.

understand the legitimacy of the African aspiration to Independence and Unity.”⁸¹ The role of translation as part of a pan-African politics was very important at *Présence Africaine*. The historian Frank Gerits notes that, reflecting on his experience at the All-African People’s Conference in Ghana, “Alioune Diop told the American ambassador to Paris that the conferences had been a political event of ‘immense importance’ but he felt that the French Africans had been ‘crushed’ by British Africans. With no translators on site it had been difficult to participate.”⁸² Alioune Diop’s dismay at the lack of interpreters brings into relief his own emphasis on a polyglot pan-Africanism. Photos of the *Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs*⁸³ *Présence Africaine* arranged in Paris in 1956 and in Rome in 1959 show delegates receiving simultaneous translations through headphones [see Appendix One, Fig. 4].

A sense that these Congresses’ significance lay in the theoretical productiveness of coming together to compare their particular situations is palpable in the recollections of many who attended them. For all that *Présence Africaine* prioritized translation into English rather than into Portuguese, the often also French-speaking Angolan and Mozambican attendees attested to the role the journal and the congresses played in giving them access to anti-colonial writing otherwise denied to them by the obscurantism and repression of Salazar’s Portugal.⁸⁴ Manuel dos Santos Lima, an Angolan writer, claimed that the 1956 *Premier Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs*⁸⁵ marked “uma etapa extremamente importante na minha vida intelectual

⁸¹ ‘Independent Guinea’, *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 1, 29, [undated], p.1. The English series is erratically dated and this edition is undated, but given the subject matter and the dates when the translated articles in the English edition appeared in the French main series, it seems likely to have been published in or around 1960.

⁸² Frank Gerits, *The Ideological Scramble for Africa. The US, Ghanaian, French and British Competition for Africa’s Future, 1953 – 1963* (Doctoral thesis, European University Institute, 2014), p.135. (Though official resolutions from the conference printed in *Présence Africaine* stated that both English and French should be working languages of the conference: [no named author], ‘Conférence des peuples africains. Accra, 13 au 15 décembre 1958’, *Présence Africaine*, 22 (1958), 137-8, p.138.

⁸³ “Congress of Black Writers and Artists.”

⁸⁴ Chabal, *Amilcar Cabral*, p.42 .

⁸⁵ “First Congress of Black Writers and Artists.”

na medida de que, pela primeira vez, estou em contacto com uma ‘intelligentsia’ negro-americana que reflete as minhas preocupações.”⁸⁶ In particular, Mário Pinto de Andrade regarded the 1956 conference as a high point and politicizing moment in the struggle against Portuguese colonialism. Andrade talked about the conference afterwards as animated by a push and pull between different ideas about nationalism and unity, a dialectical tension about the boundaries of community: “sem prejuízo, naturalmente, da grande fraternidade universal o do internacionalismo,”⁸⁷ he said “era preciso não asfixiar o particular, o específico, num quadro universal. O universal não devia abafar o específico.”⁸⁸ This back-and-forth between specificity and universalism, though particularly manifest at the conference, might be seen as a mode of thought developed more generally by *Présence Africaine* in its journal. Indeed, one key argument Andrade made in his articles for *Présence Africaine* was for the need to bring the Portuguese colonial context into conversation with other colonial contexts in Africa and the world, to break out of the “obscurantisme”⁸⁹ of Salazarist propaganda and shatter the “zones de silence”⁹⁰ that isolated Portuguese African colonies. It was in *Présence Africaine* – outside the ambit of the official vision of a Portuguese-speaking world – that Andrade published, in French, some of the first trenchant critiques of lusotropicalism, and the idea of “une civilisation luso-tropicale véhiculée par la langue portugaise.”⁹¹ Whilst it was important

⁸⁶ “An extremely important step in my intellectual life as for the first time, I was in contact with a black American ‘intelligentsia’ who shared my preoccupations.” Manuel Dos Santos Lima, ‘Recordando a CEI’ in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, pp.153-4, p.154.

⁸⁷ “Without prejudicing, of course, the great universal fraternity or internationalism.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.136.

⁸⁸ “It was necessary not to asphyxiate the particular, the specific, within a universal framework. The universal should not stifle the specific.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.136.

⁸⁹ “Obscurantism.” Buanga Fele [Mário Pinto de Andrade], ‘Massacres à Sao Tomé’, *Présence Africaine*, n.s. 1-2 (1955), 146-52, p.152.

⁹⁰ “Zones of silence.” See, for example, Buanga Fele [Mário Pinto de Andrade], ‘Ghana et les Zones de Silence en Afrique Noire’, *Présence Africaine*, 12 (1957), 71-2.

⁹¹ “A lusotropical civilisation driven by the Portuguese language.” Mario de Andrade, ‘Littérature et Nationalisme en Angola’, *Présence Africaine*, 41 (1962), 91-9, p.94. On lusotropicalism, see Cláudia Castelo, ‘Uma incursão no lusotropicalismo de Gilberto Freyre’, *blogue de História Lusófona*, Ano VI, September 2011, 261-80, p.275:

http://www2.iict.pt/archive/doc/bHL_Ano_VI_16_Claudia_Castelo_Uma_incursao_no_lusotropicalismo.pdf [accessed 25 June 2018]; Cláudia Castelo, “O modo de estar português no mundo”: *O luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Coimbra: Afrontamento, 1998) and Fernando Arenas,

“não asfixiar o particular,”⁹² Portuguese-language writers used *Présence Africaine* to insist that their situation was commensurate, not incomparable to, other situations around the colonized world.

In this sense, *Présence Africaine* itself, like *Mensagem*, demonstrates the limits of applying static national or singular linguistic lenses to histories of African anti-colonialism. The comparative emphasis of *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*, partly enabled by the possibilities of the journal form, points to an anti-colonial history of comparison that takes on particular significance in light of the alliance between colonialism and comparison many scholars have emphasized. As Ania Loomba and others have argued, comparison “as a perspective and a method, has historically served to shore up Eurocentric and discriminatory ideologies and practices.”⁹³ Comparative literary studies in particular have often been criticized for perpetuating colonial standards of ‘civilization;’ for using comparison as a way of arbitrating literary value in often racist and exclusionary terms. The concern is that rather than comparing in order to illuminate the particularity of the object under study, comparative literature has tended to select texts based on their similarity to those texts already legible as culturally valuable. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, for example, argues that in the history of comparative literature, “comparison implicitly referred to the standards of the French eighteenth century.”⁹⁴ These journals offer a different tradition from which to think about connection and comparison itself. The anti-colonial comparison I discuss here sought to

‘Reverberações lusotropicalais: Gilberto Freyre em África’, 16 May 2010 <http://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/reverberacoes-lusotropicalais-gilberto-freyre-em-africa-1-cabo-verde> and 28 June 2010, <http://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/reverberacoes-lusotropicalais-gilberto-freyre-em-africa-2> [accessed 25 June 2018].

⁹² Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.136.

⁹³ Ania Loomba, ‘Race and the Possibilities of Comparative Critique’, *New Literary History*, 40.3 (2003), 501-22, p.501.

⁹⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Rethinking Comparativism’, *New Literary History*, 40.3 (2009), 609-26, p.609. The intersections between supremacy, racism and comparison has been a topic of extensive discussion. See also Loomba (2003); Natalie Melas, *All the difference in the world: postcoloniality and the ends of comparison* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007); Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman, *Comparison: theories, approaches, uses* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); and Joubert, ed., (2014).

bring into view relational histories and presents that colonial optics sought to sever and to obscure.

CONNECTING LITERATURE AND POLITICS

Up to this point I have been arguing for the “lateral and associative” dimension of these journals in terms of the connections they establish between writing from different parts of the world. Now I turn to a second dimension of their “lateral and associative” charge: the connections they establish and interrogate between different spheres of social reality, and particularly between literature, society and politics. Writers in French and in Portuguese for *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* often wrote for many other journals in Africa and in Europe. Existing work on *Présence Africaine* has, because of its early steering committee, often been conceptualized in relation to Gide’s *La Nouvelle Revue Française* and Sartre’s *Les Temps Modernes*.⁹⁵ Pires Laranjeira argues that *Vértice* and *O Novo Cancioneiro* were important influences on *Mensagem*.⁹⁶ More broadly, existing scholarship has often categorized African and anti-colonial journals along colonial-linguistic lines, with different attendant timescales. Scholarship on French-language journals has often focused on the interwar period as the *belle époque* of journal culture, with its imbrications to *négritude* and internationalism.⁹⁷ By contrast, the anglophone African ‘little magazine’ is seen as a post-war modernist phenomenon.⁹⁸ Furthermore, both French- and English-focused scholarship

⁹⁵ See Mouralis, ‘Geography of an ‘Ideology’’ Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious Speech*, p.4; Dibble-Dieng, p.214 and p.217; and Nesbitt, *Voicing memory*, p.100.

⁹⁶ Laranjeira, ‘Introdução’, p.XXIII.

⁹⁷ See, for example: Brent Hayes Edwards, *The practice of diaspora: literature, translation, and the rise of Black internationalism* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2003) and Gary Wilder, *The French imperial nation-state: negritude & colonial humanism between the two world wars* (Chicago, Ill.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Wilder’s *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015) moves onto the post-WW2 war period.

⁹⁸ Eric Bulson examines *Black Orpheus* and *Transition* under the framework of the modernist little magazine in Bulson, *Little Magazine*, pp.189-228.

tends to present the form itself in slightly exceptionalist terms. Eric Bulson figures the “little postcolonial magazine”⁹⁹ as emerging out of the Anglo-American proliferation of modernist little magazines. Charles Forsdick and Andy Stafford argue that there is a “quintessentially French and Francophone culture of the revue.”¹⁰⁰ Yet given the long culture of Portuguese-language reviews, it is hard initially to see what might be “quintessentially French and Francophone” about review culture. Indeed, it might only be possible to make such a particularist claim in comparative perspective. Though *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* were obviously influenced by wider publishing contexts in France and Portugal, from a multilingual and pan-Africanist perspective they appear much more part of a rising tide of African anti-colonial consciousness which began before, though was certainly charged by, the two ‘world’ wars. In this sense we also need to take account of the long African print traditions that shaped them.¹⁰¹ Understanding *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* as evolving from African print traditions as well as from European literary journals allows us to see the ways their lateral and associative logic involved not just a geographical and linguistic roving but also an intervention into the relationship between ‘the literary’ and other parts of the social whole.

This intervention into the nature and function of the literary becomes clearer if we consider these journals alongside newspapers. Literary journals always formed part of broader print cultures, and their editors deploy many of the same techniques that newspaper editors do. These include “cutting-and-pasting, summarization, citation, excision, juxtaposition [...] to

⁹⁹ Bulson, *Little Magazine*, p.189.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Forsdick and Andy Stafford, ‘Introduction’ in Forsdick and Stafford, eds., *La Revue*, pp.1-23, p.2.

¹⁰¹ Mário Pinto de Andrade highlights the importance of journalism to African writing in Portuguese in ‘La poésie africaine d’expression portugaise: évolution et tendances actuelles’, *Présence Africaine*, 65 (1968), 51-84, p.56.

make connections.”¹⁰² As the first African literary journals emerged, they existed in an ecosystem with, though sometimes in counterpoint to, a growing newspaper press which often included space for literary writing.¹⁰³

My point here is not to claim the literary journal as an entirely stable category, sealed off from book publishing at one end of the spectrum and newspapers on the other. Like newspapers, literary journals have a responsive, diachronic¹⁰⁴ relation to the world around them. To repurpose Roberto Schwarz’s phrase, they are one of the “gêneros públicos.”¹⁰⁵ Yet the literary journal and the newspaper do assume a different posture with regards to the nature of their response to social reality, and with regards to their mode of discourse. This relationship with newspapers – one of genealogy and counter-point – reminds us that genres are never hermetic categories but are constantly in flux and revisable. But this is also an important distinction in the context of rising national consciousness in the twentieth century. The connection between newspapers and nationalism has been much discussed, not least by Benedict Anderson, whose claim for the connection between print culture and nationalism has been very influential.¹⁰⁶ Critics have stressed that many prominent figures in the African struggle against British colonialism were, among other things, journalists: Jomo Kenyatta,

¹⁰² Derek R. Peterson and Emma Hunter, ‘Print Culture in Colonial Africa’ in Derek R. Peterson, Emma Hunter and Stephanie Newell, eds., *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and their publics in the 20th century* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2016), pp.1-45, p.1.

¹⁰³ For example, the *Correio de Cabo Verde* (1879), for example, kept space for both politics and literature in its weekly editions in Praia, as did the relatively critical monthly *Revista de Cabo Verde*, founded by Luis Loff de Vasconcellos in 1899. This remained the case in the century to come: the Mozambican newspaper *O Brado Africano* had an important literary supplement, whilst in its later years the *Jornal de Angola* also privileged cultural topics. See CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL POLÍTICA E CULTURA NA IMPRENSA PERIÓDICA COLONIAL, ‘Jornal de Angola’, http://expocomum.org/ang#jornal_de_angola [accessed 25 June 2018].

¹⁰⁴ On the relationship between journals and time, see: Eric Bulson, ‘Little Magazine, World Form’ in Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.267-87, p.269. See also Forsdick and Stafford, ‘Introduction’, pp.7-12.

¹⁰⁵ “Public genres.” Roberto Schwarz, ‘Cultura e Política, 1964-69’ in Roberto Schwarz, *O Pai de família e outros estudos* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1992), pp.61-92, p.80.

¹⁰⁶ Anderson connects nationalism to the development of what he calls “print capitalism” in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp.37-46.

Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Obafemi Awolowo, George Padmore¹⁰⁷ (Azikiwe, Nkrumah and Padmore all published in *Présence Africaine*). Yet the high concentration of poet-activists in the struggle against French and Portuguese rule is remarkable: to name only some of the most well-known, Léopold Senghor in Senegal and Aimé Césaire in Martinique, Marcelino dos Santos in Mozambique, Mário Pinto de Andrade and Agostinho Neto in Angola. The materialist, revolutionary figures Amílcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau and Patrice Lumumba in the Congo also wrote poetry in their early years. Cabral talked about the importance of poetry in his own coming to political consciousness,¹⁰⁸ and the importance that anti-colonial thought placed on the literary and the cultural reminds us of the plurality of oppressions on which they understood imperialism to rely: aesthetic and cultural as well as economic, racial and political. As Simon Gikandi has argued, nationalism “was a redemptive project that needed an aesthetic dimension in order to fulfil its mandate.”¹⁰⁹ The written and linguistic forms of creative practice were not the entirety of the ‘creative’ or aesthetic dimensions of anti-colonial praxis. Different voices sought to emphasize the place of dance, sculpture, painting, music, film, radio, performance – even, as I will discuss in Chapter Three – political organizing itself as creative practices with important relationship to anti-colonial politics. But the rich terrain of literary journals in the African anti-colonial landscape makes visible part of that creative practice that was intrinsic to material resistance against empire.

Présence Africaine and *Mensagem* gave a particular prominence, that newspapers typically did not, to self-consciously creative responses and to the aesthetic articulation of anti-colonial resistance. They also differed from the many underground and militant journals and

¹⁰⁷ Peterson et al, p.3.

¹⁰⁸ Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral*, p.42.

¹⁰⁹ Simon Gikandi, ‘The Short Century: On Modernism and Nationalism’, *New Formations*, 51 (2004), 10-25, p.25.

pamphlets published that gave no space to explicitly literary or cultural matters, privileging the terrain of day-to-day struggle.¹¹⁰ At the same time, a lot of material *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* printed was not in any sense ‘literary.’ The articulation between politics and literature evinced in *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* stressed the interrelation of literary work with other parts of the social whole. In Chapter Four I address how the journal form’s juxtaposition of the ‘literary’ with the ‘non-literary’ complicates the appeals to literary specificity recently made by postcolonial critics. Here I want to consider how these journals formally interrogate the place of literary forms of thinking.

As an example, let us briefly consider the composition of the first edition of the new 1955 series of *Présence Africaine*, mentioned above [see Appendix One, Fig. 5]. In this edition, the foreword announces the journal’s adoption of an explicitly anti-colonial editorial line in French and English. All articles would be published, the editors wrote, as long as they “ne trahissent ni notre volonté antiraciste, anticolonialiste, ni la solidarité des peuples colonisés.”¹¹¹ The edition then included anthropologically leaning essays discussing religion, masks and women in Africa, an essay about nineteenth-century African history, and current affairs-style analysis of the situation in the Belgian Congo and the economic plans for France’s overseas territories. Following this, the edition included several poems by Nicolas Guillén and Aimé Césaire, a chapter of a novel by Mongo Beti and a literary essay by the same author,¹¹² Buanga Fele [Andrade]’s ‘Massacres à Sao Tomé’ and a number of other articles discussing cinema, books and the European and student press. Most editions of *Présence Africaine* began with a titled editorial, often written by Alioune Diop,

¹¹⁰ There was a large clandestine press, of which some examples include *A Voz da Revolução: Órgão oficial da Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO)*; *Boletim Anti-Colonial*; *Cadernos Anti-Coloniais (Secretariado dos Encontros dos Estudantes Portugueses no Estrangeiro)*.

¹¹¹ PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Liminaire’, *Présence Africaine*, n.s. 1-2 (1955), 5-7, p.5. Translated in the same edition as: “are faithful to our anti-racist and anti-colonialist purpose and to the solidarity of colonized peoples.” PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Foreword’, *Présence Africaine*, n.s. 1-2 (1955), 8-10, p.8.

¹¹² The Cameroonian author wrote the novel under the name ‘Eza Boto’ and the essay under the style ‘A.B.’

that set out the journal's current preoccupations. In contrast, *Mensagem* had few internal editorial divisions – it rarely made spatial distinctions between poetry and prose, between reporting on the daily life of the *Casa* and fiction or poetry.

Yet Diop's editorials do not marshal all the texts *Présence Africaine* includes under its auspices. Rather, the different individual texts exist in recursive relationship to one another. In this edition, as we proceed through the journal, the degree to which we read the individual pieces in relation to the foreword that announces the magazine's anti-colonial editorial line expands and contracts. The connection seems more obvious in the essay talking about nineteenth-century African republicanism, but in practice it is impossible to read poems such as Césaire's *Va-t-en Chien des Nuits* or *Réponse à Depestre Poète Haïtien (Eléments d'un Art Poétique)* in any easy relation to a predetermined political posture. Rather, despite the journal's obviously engaged editorial line, these poems – surreal, lyric texts that hold a lot back – seem more “autonomous” in the sense proposed by Theodor Adorno: texts “whose language jolts signification and by its very distance from ‘meaning’ revolts in advance against positivist subordination of meaning.”¹¹³ The inclusion of ‘literary’ material is not only to be read in relation to the opening prose profession of anti-colonialism. The later material also ‘revolts against’ and changes our sense of what that ‘anti-colonial’ statement comprises. Part of the critical charge of *Présence Africaine* derives from this jolting back and forth. Where, in an earlier decade, writing in *Tropiques*, Césaire described scientific and poetic forms of knowing as antithetical – “La connaissance poétique naît dans le grand silence de la connaissance scientifique [...] [qui] nombre, mesure, classe et tue”¹¹⁴ – *Présence Africaine* holds these different registers in suspension alongside each other,

¹¹³ Theodor Adorno, ‘Commitment’, *New Left Review*, I 87-88 (1974), 75-89, p.77.

¹¹⁴ “Poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge [...] [which] numbers, measures, classifies, kills.” Aimé Césaire, ‘Poésie et Connaissance’ in *Tropiques*, 12 (1945), 157-70, p.157. From the facsimile in Jacqueline Leiner et al., eds., *Tropiques: 1941-1945: Collection Complète* (Paris: Ed. Jean-Michel Place, 1978) [unpaginated].

moving between them as different ways of knowing the world, each tempering the authority of the other. This suspension, in both *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine*, proved a particularly powerful manipulation of the journal form and another dimension of the form's lateral and associative charge. Meadow Dibble-Dieng, in her discussion of *Présence Africaine*, suggests, rightly, that "editing a journal is [...] a distinct form of writing, one we must increasingly learn to read."¹¹⁵ We also need, however, to move beyond simply understanding these journals from their editorial intentions, to also consider them from the reading and writing practices they encourage, and the significance of their form.

CRACKS AND UNSTABLE COMPOUNDS

Taking journals as form raises the question of how to read them, given that in the collections of writing they present, *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* enclose internal tensions. Their pages are the site of disagreement, contestation, and (gendered) inequalities. Far from neutral repositories, the journals stage a dialogic relationship between part and whole, which inflects and changes the individual texts they comprise. Those texts in turn change and create the journal as whole. Fiona Green, writing about the form of the American journal the *New Yorker*, calls that magazine an "unstable compound," emphasising the "contingencies that arise from its internal workings (decisions over acceptance and rejection, procedures for editing, checking and production)" and in its "published form (juxtaposition of editorial, cartoons, and advertising, arrangement into 'departments,' visual constituents and page layouts)."¹¹⁶ Green's observations encourage us to think of the work of suturing that the assembly of each individual edition of *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* required – the calls for submissions, the reception of pieces, the layout, the arrangement of the contents, the sending of a mock-up to the printers, the sending of editions to stockists, and so on. In

¹¹⁵ Dibble-Dieng, p.224.

¹¹⁶ Fiona Green, 'Introduction' in Fiona Green, ed., *Writing for the New Yorker: Critical Essays on an American Periodical* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp.1-13, p.4.

particular, “unstable compound” is an extremely useful image for capturing the ambivalent conversations the journals’ forms establish between the different types of text they comprise. These conversations are particularly fluid because, whilst connections between the individual pieces are always suggested by their juxtaposition, they are rarely articulated explicitly. Furthermore, in the course of any one edition, each piece could be read – or not – in any combination of comparisons with the other pieces the edition includes. These journals are curated wholes, aggregations of different voices and registers, and lists of stand-alone texts and forms. Reading them involves zooming in and out between interconnection and open-endedness. As a whole, these journals often exceed or miss the intentions of their editors or their constituent writers, and the fiction and poetry interpellate the prose statements of fact.

Neither *Présence Africaine* nor *Mensagem* were homogenous. Both are better conceptualized as sites of contestation. *Présence Africaine* has been criticized for its conservatism, not least because of Diop’s early Christian humanism, the involvement in the journal of divisive figures such as Léopold Senghor and for its deployment of the “discreet arts of persuasion, preferring euphemistic language.”¹¹⁷ But to read the journal is also to encounter counter currents and moments of more radical militancy: tributes to Fanon, Um Nyobe, the radical U.P.C and One Kamerun; the founding documents of the C.O.N.C.P, among others.¹¹⁸ As Ruth Bush has rightly suggested, even in its early years *Présence Africaine* did “not reflect a singular ideology or set of aesthetic or moral guidelines.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Dibble-Dieng, p.210.

¹¹⁸ Bakary Traore, ‘Les damnés de la terre’, *Présence Africaine*, 45 (1963), 197-204; ‘IX CONGRES DE L’UNION NATIONALE DES ETUDIANTS KAMERUNAIS: DECLARATION DE POUTIQUE GENERALE’, *Présence Africaine*, 22 (1958), 138-41; P. A., ‘IIE CONGRES DES ÉCRIVAINS ET ARTISTES NOIRS — IN MEMORIAM: UM NYOBE’, *Présence Africaine*, 20 (1958), 144; Marcelino dos Santos, ‘Déclaration de principe de la Conférence des Organisations nationalistes des colonies portugaises (C.O.N.C.P.) adressée au Comité spécial de l’O.N.U. pour les territoires administrés par le Portugal’, *Présence Africaine*, 42 (1962), 214-7.

¹¹⁹ Ruth Bush, *Publishing sub-Saharan Africa in Paris 1945–67* (Doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2013), p.100.

Mensagem also often dealt in veiled arguments. Its editorials, where they existed, were generally unattributed. In this context, juxtapositions and partially visible opinions became highly freighted. For example, in the last edition of *Mensagem* I have already discussed, the different contributions are not are not sutured together with an explicitly anti-colonial thread: ‘nationalism’ and ‘anti-colonialism’ are not explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless, the juxtapositions between an article on student unions in Africa and José Craveirinha’s incendiary ‘Grito Negro,’¹²⁰ or between his poem ‘Sonho’¹²¹ and the document about James Musa Sudika, were pointed enough for the PIDE to close the journal down.¹²²

My point here is that these moments of dissidence and dissonance comprise the texture of both journals. As such, reading for cracks and fragments, as well as consensus, becomes an important part of parsing the journals’ form.¹²³ Especially in the case of *Présence Africaine*, the journal has often been conceptualized as the preserve of its editor Alioune Diop, most often couched as a moderate and moderating “federator.”¹²⁴ One of his biographies refers to him as “le Socrate noir.”¹²⁵ This framing, however, makes it hard to see both the changes at the journal and its increasing radicalism in the 1960s, as well as the extent to which *Présence Africaine*, as well as *Mensagem*, exceed and escape the marshalling intentions of its editorial vision.

Reading for cracks and fragments becomes important in the context of (self) censorship. From the perspective of the present, it is also one way to retrieve the dissensus and

¹²⁰ “Black Cry.”

¹²¹ “Dream.”

¹²² *Mensagem*, 16.1 (1964).

¹²³ There is some affinity here with John Holloway’s suggestion that we understand structures of power in terms of their cracks as well as their dominant logics in John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism* (London: Pluto, 2010).

¹²⁴ In Valérie Kanza dir, *Présence d'esprits* (Paris: Ateliers Varan [prod., distrib.], 2008), Diop is referred to as a “federateur” (federator).

¹²⁵ “The black Socrates.” Verdin (2010).

contingency in the evolution of once-polysemic ideas that have today become concretized, such as negritude, as I argue in Chapter Five. Reading between the lines and with close attention to fragments that render women partially visible might be one way to partially recover some sense of the absences that structured both journals, and the gendered dimensions of both journals' partially liberatory discourses, as I discuss in Chapter Six.¹²⁶

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Beyond treating the texts within them, and the journals themselves, as formal objects, I am working with a broader understanding of form. In making the argument for the importance of the journal form in anti-colonial writing of the twentieth century, I draw on a tradition of literary critics influenced by Marxist and Frankfurt School critical theory who have emphasized attention to form. John Brenkman argues that “the social and the aesthetic problematic of literature thus meet in the problem of form itself.”¹²⁷ Roberto Schwarz also sees form as a key way in which texts manifest themselves as social, understanding literary form as dialectically related to social processes.¹²⁸ Though historical accounts exist, formal attention to journals is relatively uncommon in scholarship about African anti-colonial literature.¹²⁹ The very number of journals that appeared in many languages [see Appendix

¹²⁶ Mata, *A Casa dos Estudantes do Império*, pp.32-3.

¹²⁷ John Brenkman, ‘Extreme Criticism’, *Critical Inquiry*, 26.1 (1999), 109-27, p.113.

¹²⁸ Roberto Schwarz, ‘Pressupostos, salvo engano, de “Dialética da malandragem” in Roberto Schwarz, *Que Horas São?* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989), pp.129-55, p.129. See also Emilio Sauri, ‘Presuppositions — if I am not mistaken — of Two Girls and Other Essays’, *Mediations*, 28.2 (2015), 129-38.

¹²⁹ For Portuguese-language journals, George Alao, ‘The Development of Lusophone Africa's Literary Magazines’, *Research in African Literatures*, 30.1(1999), 167-83, provides a detailed history. The website <http://expocomum.org> is a useful resource giving histories and sometimes digitized editions of many parts of print culture, not limited to literary journals. For broader discussions, see, for example, Mathias Irero Orhero, *Little Magazines and African Literary Development* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 2015); Bernth Lindfors, ‘African Little Magazines’ in Anne V. Adams, ed., *Mapping intersections: African literature and Africa's development: [12th annual meeting of the African Literature Association held at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York from April 9-12, 1987]* (Trenton, NJ [u.a.]: Africa World Press, 1998) and Bulson, *Little Magazine, World Form* (2017). Bulson and Lindfors’ focus is largely on English-language journals. Forsdick and Stafford, eds., *La Revue* has useful commentary on French-language journals.

Two], especially in the years before and around national independences, increases the need to take the form seriously though it makes it harder to generalize. This proliferation also reminds us that form is not fixed. The “horizons of the expectable”¹³⁰ of a given form are always disappearing with each new iteration, as Hans Robert Jauss has argued in relation to genre. *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* represent particular reinterpretations of the journal form, but even they do not exist in the abstract, but rather exist multiply in its particular editions, with the particular writers and juxtapositions that each edition involves. The repeated printing of editions is both accretive and disjunctive: the iteration establishes a continuity but also engenders a sense that each edition is starting anew. This, too, makes it hard to generalize too broadly.

I have suggested that in the years before and after African independences, editors and writers worked on, developed and published literary journals not only to showcase creative endeavours but as a creative endeavour in itself, and that *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* reinterpret the form to undertake what Boehmer, in another context, has called “lateral and associative thinking.”¹³¹ The connective comparison these journals formally undertook reached across geographical and linguistic lines but also interrogated the category of the literary itself. Part of the point, however, of emphasising form as an important site of critical attention is as a reaction to a critical method that emphasizes a text’s value in terms of its abstracted content. Terry Eagleton characterizes such an approach as a futile “raiding [of] literary works for their ideological content.”¹³² This is because form and content are inseparable; both mutually instantiated.¹³³ In the chapters that follow, I take up many of the

¹³⁰ Hans Robert Jauss, ‘Theories of Genre and Medieval Literature’ in Wlad Godzick and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, eds., *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), pp.76-109, p.79.

¹³¹ Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial*, p.18.

¹³² Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p.23.

¹³³ See also Roberto Schwarz’s discussion of Malcolm Löwy in Roberto Schwarz, ‘Aos olhos de um velho amigo’ in Ivana Jinkings and João Alexandre Peschanski, eds., *As utopias de Michael Löwy: Reflexões sobre um marxista insubordinado* (São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial, 2007), pp.154-60, esp. pp.155-6.

questions I have raised in this chapter and consider how particular writers discuss them at different moments to build a broader picture of the journals' content alongside their form. In the next section, I discuss changing conceptions about literature.

CHAPTER 2: TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF CHANGING IDEAS ABOUT LITERATURE, 1947-64.

Dans un tel univers, comment concevoir que la culture et la politique appartiennent à deux mondes radicalement distincts?
Alioune Diop, 1956¹

In the previous chapter, I suggested that the formal connections *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* establish between literary and socio-political concerns are part of their critical charge. More broadly, I would suggest that the years around African decolonization are an extremely rich period in intellectual history in terms of the thinking they engendered about the functions of reading, writing and critique and about the connections between these practices and other parts of social life. Different journals expressed different articulations of literature, the social and the political. Many explicitly connect the writing they publish to social and political concerns. The editors of *Légitime Défense*, for example, announce that “ceci n’est qu’un avertissement [...] Nous tenons à nous engager complètement.”² In particular, they address themselves to other young people who oppose “ce monde capitaliste, chrétien, bourgeois.”³ For Aimé Césaire, presenting *Tropiques* in 1941, it was the darkness gathering in the world outside that created the context for the journal: “où que nous regardions, l’ombre gagne. L’un après l’autre les foyers s’éteignent [...] Pourtant nous sommes de ceux qui disent *non* à l’ombre. Nous savons que le salut du monde dépend de

¹ “In such a universe as this, how could we imagine that culture and politics belong to two radically separate worlds?” Alioune Diop, ‘Discours d’ouverture’, *Présence Africaine*, 8-9-10 (1956), 9-18, p.13.

² “This is just a warning [...] we want to engage fully.” Etienne Léro, Thélus Léro, René Ménil, Jules-Marcel Monnerot, Michel Pilotin, Maurice-Sabas Quitman, Auguste Thésée, Pierre Yoyotte, [Untitled], *Légitime Défense*, 1 (1932), 1-2, p.1.

³ “This capitalist, Christian, bourgeois world.” Léro et al, [Untitled], p.1.

nous aussi.”⁴ At *Black Orpheus*, which published mainly poetry, the editors responded to the fact that “it is still possible for a Nigerian child to leave a secondary school with a thorough knowledge of English literature, but without even having heard of such great black writers as Léopold Sédar Senghor or Aimée [sic] Césaire.”⁵ In all these cases, the editors characterize their desires to publish journals as part of a desire to engage with and change the world beyond the literary, but through the literary. This attitude was not monolithic. Another *Casa* journal, *Momento*, emphasized its project of forging a space for “uma poesia pura, da “Poetry for Poetry’s sake.”⁶ As well as *Black Orpheus*, journals such as *Claridade*, *Msaho* and *Caliban* focused purely on poetry.

In this chapter, I discuss the changing ideas about reading and writing from the founding of *Présence Africaine* in 1947 to the closure of *Mensagem* by the Salazar regime in 1964. In the early years of both journals, there was a high level of consensus about the connections between literature, pedagogy and questions of epistemology. After 1955, writers in French and Portuguese attempted to take up and take further debates about militant aesthetics that had unfolded in the USSR. African writers sought to move beyond what one contributor to *Présence Africaine* called the “querelle historique du Réalisme et du Formalisme,”⁷ to steer a middle path between political engagement and individual artistic freedom. *Présence Africaine* published a lot of literary criticism and theoretical prose writing and in the second half of this chapter I focus on a major debate about these questions printed in the journal in 1956. *Mensagem* printed less literary-theoretical writing, and the few texts that they did

⁴ “Wherever we look the shadows are gaining ground [...] One after the other the hearths are going out [...] but we are among those who say *no* to the shadows. We know that the salvation of the world depends on us too.” Aimé Césaire, ‘Présentation’, *Tropiques*, 1 (1941), 5-6, p.6 in Leiner et al., eds., *Tropiques* [unpaginated].

⁵ [no named author], ‘Editorial’, *Black Orpheus: A journal of African and Afro-American Literature*, 1 (1957), 4, p.4.

⁶ “A pure poetry, a ‘Poetry for Poetry’s sake.’” Vitor Matos e Sá, ‘A Poesia e os seus actuais problemas’, *Momento*, 1 (1950), 3-5, 16, p.3.

⁷ “Historic quarrel between Realism and Formalism.” Jacques Stéphen Alexis, ‘Du Réalisme Merveilleux des Haïtiens’ *Présence Africaine*, 8-9-10 (1956), 245-71, p.259.

publish, notably by the future Angolan president Agostinho Neto, could be very prescriptive. As such, I consider how we might read the poems the journal printed as themselves a body of thinking about the practice of writing. I argue that under the weight of censorship and repression, some poets at *Mensagem* developed a poetics of constraint and obliqueness that itself redefined what ‘political poetry’ might comprise.

READING, CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES AND QUESTIONS OF EPISTEMOLOGY,

1947-54

Présence Africaine

Alioune Diop’s first editorial for *Présence Africaine* in 1947 was particularly engaged with philosophical questions of how it was possible to know the world. He was sceptical about “la fidélité du vouloir à certains principes rationnels”⁸ that he had seen in Europe, insisting that “la vérité [...] n’est pas définie par les règles traditionnelles: elle n’est pas saisie exhaustivement par l’intellect.”⁹ Diop argues that knowing truth is both rational and felt: one must “faire éprouver à l’esprit les contours même de ce qui ne peut être nié par la raison critique.”¹⁰ For Diop, then, *Présence Africaine* planned to publish literature because it was art and the “sensibilité”¹¹ of artists “qui manifeste le mieux notre personnalité [...] Elle nous élève au niveau des dieux.”¹² Diop’s writing is infused with an almost Romantic admiration for a creative “volonté”¹³ that he describes as more powerful than the artist themselves. Art – he refers to music, poetry and novel-writing – becomes for Diop an expression of the best

⁸ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.4. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “The faithfulness with which the will adhered to rational principles.” p.187.

⁹ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.10. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “Truth is not defined by traditional rules; it is not exhaustively grasped by the intellect.” p.188.

¹⁰ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.10. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “Making the spirit feel the very outlines of what cannot be denied by critical reason.” p.188.

¹¹ “Sensibility.” Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.10.

¹² Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.10. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “that best reveals our personalities [...] It lifts us to the level of the gods.” p.187.

¹³ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.10. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “will-power.”

of human capacity and connected to his project of rebuilding, with black voices, a discredited European humanist tradition.

Diop's style and preoccupations changed considerably in the four decades he edited the journal. His early writing feels very dated today. He repeatedly speaks in the name of a homogenized "nous, Africains."¹⁴ His tenor is extremely emotive – at times hyperbolic – and his argument proceeds in huge, sometimes very generalizing, steps. Moreover, he is palpably influenced by Léopold Senghor's now much-criticized association of emotion as a particularly black capacity, shades of which can be seen in his arguments about literary writing.¹⁵ However, Diop does not disavow reason, and nor is he only talking about Africans. Rather, he rejects a categorical separation between reason and feeling and argues that what counts as objective reason in Europe is actually contingent: "cette raison est une réalité mouvante, complexe, à laquelle on n'adhère pas une fois pour toutes."¹⁶

In so doing, Diop positions literary work as a valuable mode of understanding the world, because it disrupts the rationalist norms he criticizes. Moreover, literary work can offer records of African thinking and history that Europeans had often denied: "brutalement, cette poésie fait surgir un passé que les monuments n'avaient pas conservé."¹⁷ Publishing literature is part of bringing African voices to bear on contemporary political and social reality. Diop establishes a causal link between cultural and political presence: "En Europe [...] d'aucuns vont jusqu'à estimer que l'homme n'est réel que dans la mesure où son humanité est ou peut être exprimée. [...] Et la littérature devient elle-même une institution

¹⁴ Diop, 'Niam N'goura', p.13. Wright and T. Diop trans.: "we Africans." p.188

¹⁵ See Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Ce que l'homme noir apporte' in S.E. le Cardinal Verdier ... [et al.], *L'Homme de couleur* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1939), pp.292-314, p.295.

¹⁶ Diop, 'Niam N'goura', p.9. Wright and T. Diop trans.: "But reason such as this is a complex and moving reality to which one cannot adhere once and for all." p.187.

¹⁷ "Brutally, this poetry evokes a history that monuments have not conserved." PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, 'Poètes noirs', *Présence Africaine*, 12 (1951), 146-7, p.146.

aussi utile que le Parlement.”¹⁸ In his view, voice is a prerequisite to social inclusion – a reflection that he argues applies both within Europe and beyond. Diop insists that they are expecting “des services bien précis”¹⁹ from their cultural activities, which can preface meaningful social transformation.

The journal, he wrote, was primarily directed “à la jeunesse d’Afrique. Elle manque d’aliment intellectuel”²⁰ and would seek to “mettre la jeunesse africaine au courant des diverses formes de l’humanisme en Europe.”²¹ In this sense, Diop also envisaged a pedagogical role for literary texts and the journal itself in developing critical perspectives about the global status quo. In subsequent lead articles, Diop positioned *Présence Africaine* as a way of disrupting the “civilisation militante”²² that “l’homme blanc [...] impose au reste du monde, ses modes de penser, d’agir ou de vivre.”²³ In particular, colonial education, Diop argued in 1953, normalized colonial relations and sought to weaken African students in the world: “nous semble-t-il illogique et inévitablement périlleux que l’Europe nous éduque [...] Dirigée d’une certaine manière, elle nous accule à l’impuissance et peut faire de nous des infirmes dans le monde moderne.”²⁴ *Présence Africaine*’s publication of African writers was a mode of moving past the passive admiration and servile attitude that Diop associated with “la méthode assimilationniste.”²⁵ This argument was analogous to Aimé Césaire’s call,

¹⁸ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.12. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “In Europe [...] some people go so far as to think that a man is real only in the degree that his humanity is or can be expressed [...] And literature itself becomes an institutions [sic] as useful as Parliament.” p.190.

¹⁹ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.13. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “Expecting concrete results from these cultural activities.” p.191.

²⁰ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.8. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “To the youth of Africa who has long hungered for intellectual food.” p.185.

²¹ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.8. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “There will be a column dedicated to informing young Africans of the diverse forms of humanistic thought in Europe.” p.185.

²² “Militant civilization.” Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.9.

²³ Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.9. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “The white man [...] imposes upon the rest of the world his modes of thought, actions and life.” p.186.

²⁴ “It seems to us illogical and unavoidably dangerous that Europe should educate us [...] Directed in a certain way, education drives us to impotence and makes us invalids in the modern world.” Alioune Diop, ‘On Ne Fabrique Pas Un Peuple’, *Présence Africaine*, 14 (1953), 7-14, [unpaginated].

²⁵ “The assimilationist method.” Diop, ‘On Ne Fabrique Pas Un Peuple’, [unpaginated].

at the 1959 *Deuxième Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs*²⁶ in Rome to move past the “hiérarchie créateur et consommateur [original emphasis]”²⁷ that existed in colonial society. As such, by deploying literary writing alongside other forms of writing, *Présence Africaine* sought to offer a critical education to de-normalize colonial optics, and to empower, rather than weaken, their black and African readers.

Mensagem and the Centro de Estudos Africanos

Early editions of *Mensagem* also insist on the connection between literary texts and social change. This position is palpable in early texts such as Amílcar Cabral’s 1949 discussion of “o dever de o destruir, de destruir a atroz actualidade de que o texto refere”²⁸ and Agostinho Neto’s 1951 assertion that “há facetas da vida que é preciso melhorar. Não devemos aceitar a vida como ela é. Porque ela é muito má, às vezes; e sempre para certas pessoas.”²⁹ More particularly, pedagogical questions, and the importance of developing new analytical frameworks, are particularly palpable in the accounts of *Centro dos Estudos Africanos* (CEA). The CEA was a reading and discussion group set up in October 1951 by African students associated with *Mensagem*.³⁰ Regular attendees included Mário Pinto de Andrade, Alda Espírito Santo, Noémia de Sousa, Humberto Machado, Francisco José Tenreiro, Agostinho Neto, Viriato da Cruz, António Domingues and Amílcar Cabral. The group met mainly on Sundays, at the Espírito Santo residence, a wealthy São Tomense family whose daughter Alda was a poet and prominent member of the group. In 1953, the CEA published

²⁶ “Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists.”

²⁷ “Hierarchy of creator and consumer.” Aimé Césaire, ‘L’homme de culture et ses responsabilités’, *Présence Africaine*, 24-5 (1959), 116-122, p.118.

²⁸ “The obligation to destroy, to destroy the atrocious reality to which the text refers.” Amílcar Cabral, ‘Comentários’, *Mensagem*, 1.7 (1949), 7-9, p.9.

²⁹ “There are parts of life that we need to improve. We should not accept life as we find it. Because life is very bad, sometimes, and for some people, it always is.” António Neto, ‘A decadência na poesia’, *Mensagem*, 3.12 (1951), 6-10, p.9.

³⁰ Alda also established women’s meetings with the poet Noémia de Sousa, the agronomist Maria Helena Vilhena Rodrigues (married, for a while, to Amílcar Cabral), and Rute Neto (Agostinho’s sister), among others. ‘Entrevista com Alda Espírito Santo’ in Michel Laban, ed., *S. Tomé e Príncipe: Encontro com Escritores* (Porto: Fundação. Eng. António de Almeida, 2002), pp.64-104, p.77.

a volume generally considered the first anthology of African poetry in Portuguese. Notably, however, the group did not begin as a principally literary endeavour but rather as a discussion group about Africa in general. Different students took turns to present subjects they knew about, as a basis for discussion. These topics encompassed agronomy, history, language and geography.³¹ Recalling the activities of the CEA in a later interview, Mário Pinto de Andrade stressed the comparative element to the students' programme of study, both in terms of the disciplines covered and in terms of the knowledge and experience of country contexts they – students from different colonies – drew upon and juxtaposed: “Era uma auto consciencialização da cultura africana na sua globalidade, da civilização africana e das diversas culturas no quadro continental, e do mundo negro e para lá do mundo negro.”³²

In this endeavour, literary writing and study were part of a broader programme of political coming to consciousness. Nevertheless, within this scope, reading writing by black authors played an important role: Andrade lists the African American, Brazilian and Caribbean authors the students read, as well as emphasising French-language authors such as Sartre, Senghor and Césaire.³³ This vignette testifies to the role that *reading* literary texts played at the CEA, not in establishing facts about the world, but as part of a practice of critiquing the official education they had been receiving. Moreover, this programme of reading attests to a process of affiliation with a broader black diaspora that went beyond Portugal or the Portuguese-speaking world.

³¹ Mário de Andrade and Christine Messiant, ‘Sur la Première Génération du MPLA: 1948-1960. Mário de Andrade, Entretiens avec Christine Messiant (1982)’, *Lusotopie* (1999), 185-221, p.194.

³² “It was a process of making ourselves more aware about African culture as a whole, about African civilization and the different cultures within a continental framework, and about the black world and beyond the black world.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.71.

³³ Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.77-8.

The CEI's partially literary activities could be read as an epistemological experiment in auto-didacticism and critical pedagogy. Andrade explained that: "o objectivo era estudar África [...] era preciso dar a conhecer, conhecemo-nos a nós próprios [...] De África nós tínhamos a vivencia, a vivencia material, a vivencia social, mas não tínhamos reflectido sobre a nossa própria cultura."³⁴ In the sense that the existing knowledge of the students was used as a basis on which to build, the CEA's method could be compared to the process Paulo Freire would outline in his 1968 *Pedagogia do Oprimido*.³⁵

The CEA's interest in critical education is also palpable in Mário Pinto de Andrade's early and somewhat heavy-handed short story, *Bicho de Mato*, published in the Mozambican journal *Itinerário* in 1952. The story is set in a school, and narrates the life of a schoolchild from the Angolan bush who rises to do better than his white classmates.³⁶ This elision of critical pedagogy and reading extended to running literacy classes at *Clube Marítimo*³⁷ for ship workers in Lisbon.³⁸ Later, Andrade wrote that for young intellectuals organizing in nationalist and regionalist groups, campaigns against illiteracy were an important part of nationalist practice.³⁹ That is, keeping populations illiterate was so much part of colonial practice that literacy itself constituted a danger for colonial administration. Continuing the

³⁴ "The objective was to 'study Africa' [...] we had to get to know it, to know ourselves [...] We had experience of Africa, material and social experiences, but had not reflected on our own culture." Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.71. There are clear parallels between this and the situation Alioune Diop describes in 'Niam N'goura', p.8.

³⁵ In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), Freire's concern was with developing emancipatory pedagogies for (mainly) Brazilian adults. This begins with levelling student-teacher hierarchies so that both students and teachers "intervene critically in the situation which surrounds them and whose mark they bear" (Chapter One, pp.27-56, p.54). Freire later established explicit links with the PAIGC. See for example Paulo Freire, *Cartas a Guiné-Bissau: registros de uma experiência em processo* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1984).

³⁶ Mário Pinto de Andrade, 'Bicho de Mato', *Itinerário* (January 1952), 9, p.9. The Coimbra-based *Vértice* rejected it, writing to Andrade to say they would not publish his short story. The story had the same "error velho" ['old mistake'] as so much of the material they were receiving at that time: demagoguery and banality, the editor wrote in the rejection letter. "'Raízes culturais do nacionalismo [africano] (Textos)" de Mário Pinto de Andrade', undated, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 04334.001.001, 1-282, p.269.

³⁷ "Maritime Club."

³⁸ Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.81 and Andrade and Messiant, 'Sur la Première Génération', p.200.

³⁹ Andrade, 'Littérature et Nationalisme en Angola', p.97.

theme of education, they also put on *O Mestre-Escola*, a short theatre piece adapted and translated by Noémia de Sousa from the Guinean playwright (and polymath) Keïta Fodéba's *Le Maître d'Ecole*.⁴⁰

By this point, the students at the CEA had begun to correspond by post with Alioune Diop. At the CEA, they read *Présence Africaine* together: “acrescentávamos a nossa própria vivência e confrontávamo-la com as leituras que nos chegavam de Paris, da *Présence Africaine*.”⁴¹ As a result of their correspondence, Diop invited the members of the CEA to contribute an article for a special edition of the journal in 1953. The piece was entitled ‘Les Étudiants Noirs Parlent’⁴² and focused on the problems with university education in the Portuguese African colonies. Given the already repressive situation in Portugal (*Mensagem* was banned at the time), the article was anonymous, but its authors included Francisco José Tenreiro, Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto, Mário de Andrade and Alda do Espírito Santo. They call for the establishment of African universities (non-existent in the Portuguese empire), as part of a project of African independence. The article argues that “le Nègre ne reçoit que [...] [des] notions rudimentaires qui ne pourront pas lui permettre de mener une vie indépendante sur sa propre terre.”⁴³ The literary endeavours of the CEA, then, as well as their early contact with *Présence Africaine*, was bound up with questions of critical pedagogy.

⁴⁰ “The School-Master.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.82. See the manuscript at the Fundação Mário Soares, “‘O Mestre-Escola’ de Keita Fodeba”, [undated], Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 04355.009.005.

⁴¹ “We put our own experiences together and then confronted them with readings that arrived from Paris, from *Présence Africaine*.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.74.

⁴² “Black Students Speak.”

⁴³ “The black man receives only rudimentary notions which will not allow him to live an independent life on his own soil.” DES ÉTUDIANTS D'AFRIQUE PORTUGUAISE, ‘Situation des étudiants noirs dans le monde’, *Présence Africaine*, 14 (1953), 221-40, p.233.

In 1953, members of CEA published *Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa*,⁴⁴ edited by Francisco José Tenreiro and Andrade. The volume shares Diop's probing of the politics and possibility of knowledge itself: epistemological questions inflect several poems it includes. In Alda Espírito Santo's text, the poetic voice speaks about a distant scene "lá no Agua Grande,"⁴⁵ where she describes black women washing clothes on the rocks, laughing and singing. It portrays life: children are playing, "felizes,"⁴⁶ and the river water "canta."⁴⁷ They are speaking, but the women's words cannot be heard. Their stories are "arrastadas pelo vento"⁴⁸ and, as they return to the plantation at the end of the poem, the women "ficam mudas."⁴⁹ In offering us a glimpse of a world she cannot access, the poet positions herself and her readers as partial voyeurs, unable to hear or see the full reality, but aware there is something they cannot access. The poem speaks to the power of stories in bringing new worlds into view, but also registers uncertainty about the authority and scope of the narrative voice.

In António Jacinto's 'Monangamba,'⁵⁰ the poet invites his readers to look at a "roça."⁵¹ This time, the poet assumes the perspective of a plantation worker himself and so is positioned much closer to the scene, to the point that his body blurs into and feeds the plants: "é o suor do meu rosto que rega as plantações,"⁵² he writes; the ripe red coffee flowers "são gotas do meu sangue feitas seiva."⁵³ The poem resists a positivist optic, bringing forward the social

⁴⁴ "Black poetry of Portuguese expression."

⁴⁵ "Over there in *Agua Grande*." *Agua Grande* is a district of São Tomé. This is also the title of Espírito Santo's poem, and can be found in the facsimile reprint of the 1953 volume: Alda Espírito Santo, 'Lá no Agua Grande' in Francisco Tenreiro and Mário Pinto de Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa* (Linda-A-Velha: África, 1982), pp.58, p.58.

⁴⁶ "Happy." Ibid., p.58.

⁴⁷ "Sings." Ibid., p.58.

⁴⁸ "Snatched by the wind." Ibid., p.58.

⁴⁹ "Become silent." Ibid., p.58.

⁵⁰ Monangamba is a Kimbundu word for porter, servant or contract-worker. António Jacinto, 'Monangamba' in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, pp.63-5.

⁵¹ "Plantation." Ibid., p.63.

⁵² "It is the sweat from my face that waters the crops." Ibid., p.63.

⁵³ "Are drops of my blood made sap." Ibid., p.63.

processes behind naturalized outcomes. The poem is structured around a series of questions: “Perguntem às aves [...] | aos regatos [...] | e ao vento [...] | Quem faz o milho crescer | [...] | Quem faz o branco prosperar?”⁵⁴ There are nine “quem?”⁵⁵ questions. The process of questioning emphasizes that things are not all as they seem on the surface. End products – flowering orange trees, rich white men, grown corn – obscure the labour that went into them. On the other hand, the questions have an answer, offered by the birds and the river and the wind: “Monangambééé.”⁵⁶ Jacinto’s poem raises the questions both of how we can know, and of how knowledge that everyone shares can nevertheless be ignored.

Francisco José Tenreiro’s poem ‘Coração,’⁵⁷ takes the form of a long, polychromatic testimonial of the “caminhos trilhados na Europa [...] por mim, negro de coração em África.”⁵⁸ Images flash up paratactically: a newspaper seller on a European boulevard, a snapshot of a black man in an electric chair in America, yellow, blue, green, red flowers, a watch whose cord is going to snap, people passing in the street. Everything is in motion, and the tone is by turns journalistic, meditative, angry, and elated. It is a poem dense in allusions to artists and musicians – Guillén, Diop, Senghor, Armstrong, Portinari, Pomar, Tazlitzki, Rivera, Neruda, Picasso – and the poetic voice grapples with what these artists offer. At the heart of the poem is the question of whether artists can produce change or whether they are merely ornamental. The poem is intermittently paced by the repetition of “de coração em África.”⁵⁹ The homophony between “de coração” and “decoração”⁶⁰ raises the question whether these arts represent visceral integrity or merely ornament. The closing lines of the

⁵⁴ “Ask the birds [...] | ask the rivulets [...] | ask the wind [...] | Who makes the corn grow? | [...] | Who makes the white man rich?” Ibid., pp.64-5.

⁵⁵ “Who?”

⁵⁶ This is a distortion, as though by the wind, of the word “monangamba.”

⁵⁷ “Heart.” Francisco José Tenreiro, ‘Coração’ in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, pp.66-9.

⁵⁸ “Paths trodden in Europe [...] by me, a black man with a heart in Africa.” Ibid., p.66.

⁵⁹ “With [my] heart in Africa.” Ibid., pp.66-9.

⁶⁰ “Decoration.”

poem take up this concern: “deixa-me acreditar que do desespero másculo de Picasso sairão pombas | que como nuvens voarão os céus do mundo de coração em África.”⁶¹ The hesitation inscribed in “deixa-me acreditar” – as though the voice does not really believe it – registers an anxiety about what role art, and perhaps, as I will discuss in the next chapter, modernist art, can play in Africa. Nevertheless, this poem cannot be read as a text that disavows literary forms of knowledge but rather deploys them to express its own ambivalence about them. Read together, these poems take on the questions of what forms of knowledge were possible or constructive that informed the CEA’s activities more broadly.

The CEA met for a last time on 11 April 1954. That year, Andrade travelled to Paris and began to work at *Présence Africaine* as an editorial secretary. During his time at the review, he wrote literary journalism and history, including important accounts about African writing in Portuguese, denunciations of Salazarist colonialism and lusotropical propaganda. The first long article he wrote for *Présence Africaine*, ‘Massacres à Sao Tomé,’⁶² under the pseudonym Buanga Fele, was a discussion of the Batepá massacre in 1953, when more than a thousand São Tomense died in brutal Portuguese repression linked to labour conflicts. The Portuguese attempted to hush up the massacre, but Alda Espírito Santo, in Sao Tomé at the time, informed Andrade about events.⁶³ Andrade’s article is clearly inflected with the questions of the politics of knowledge with which writers at the Centro had been engaged. The piece opens by hiding its object: “de Juin à Septembre, un voile de brume qui plane au-dessus d'une atmosphère pesante et paisible, un halo de café et de cacao, voilà l'île de Sao Tomé, vue de l'Océan.”⁶⁴ As such, the island emerges at the beginning as a place we cannot

⁶¹ “Let me believe that from Picasso’s powerful despair, doves will take off | that, like clouds, will fly across the skies of the world with a heart in Africa.” Ibid., p.69.

⁶² “Massacres in São Tomé.”

⁶³ Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.98.

⁶⁴ “From June to September, a veil of mist hovering overhead with a heavy and peaceful atmosphere, a halo of coffee and cocoa: this is the island of São Tomé, seen from the ocean.” Fele, ‘Massacres’, p.146.

see clearly, and about which Fele seeks “un autre genre d'objectivité.”⁶⁵ The posture the piece develops is bitterly denunciative of the massacre of over 1000 black workers, of the forced labour on the island and of the broader “tradition colonialiste portugaise: violence, pillage, racisme et misérables provocations policières.”⁶⁶ But the piece can also be read as a meditation on how to establish counter-narratives, based on historical work and testimony, to the false ‘truths’ broadcast by the Salazar regime. Fele’s piece critiques the colonial tourist press’ perception of the island as a “paradis tropical”⁶⁷ as well as what he calls a “campagne démagogique d'obscurantisme [qui] a été menée dans la presse portugaise”⁶⁸ in the aftermath of the massacre. Elsewhere in his writing for *Présence Africaine*, Fele [Andrade] repeatedly characterizes Portugal’s African colonies as “zones of silence,”⁶⁹ about which the Salazar regime has suppressed almost all information. In his 1955 article’s move from the blurry vision of the island he first summons to a robust critique of “‘leur’ vérité,”⁷⁰ we see the CEA’s conviction that some forms of reading and writing can provide critical modes of seeing and understanding to disrupt the normalization of colonial optics.

POLITICALLY ENGAGED BUT AESTHETICALLY FREE: THEORIZING WRITING, 1955-64

Présence Africaine : beyond the “querelle historique du Réalisme et du Formalisme”

So far in this chapter, by returning to the activities of the *Centro de Estudos Africanos* in Lisbon, and to Diop and Andrade’s writing in the first series of *Présence Africaine*, I have sought to bring forward the connections between reading, writing, education and

⁶⁵ “Another kind of objectivity.” Ibid., p.146.

⁶⁶ “Portuguese colonial tradition: violence, pillage, racism and miserable police provocations.” Ibid., p.152.

⁶⁷ “Tropical paradise.” Ibid., p.146.

⁶⁸ “Demagogic and obscurantist campaign [which] has been waged in the Portuguese press.” Ibid., p.151.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Fele, ‘Ghana et les Zones de Silence en Afrique Noire.’

⁷⁰ “‘Their’ truth.” Fele, ‘Massacres’, p.151.

epistemology – the question of how to know what was really going on – that animated the writers I have discussed between 1947 and 1955. In those years, the important question was the process of questioning and critique that literary writing – and the literary journal itself – enabled. After 1955, questions of writerly social engagement – of how a writer should write – became more prominent, connected to the explicitly anti-colonial stance that *Présence Africaine* adopted that year. With the new series, an extensive debate unfolded about the responsibilities of the anti-colonial writer.

These debates were precipitated by a public debate between Aimé Césaire and the Haitian poet René Depestre. Depestre's 'Lettre au poète Charles Dobzynski'⁷¹ had been published in Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Lettres Françaises*.⁷² Depestre agreed with Louis Aragon's support of the Communist Party's embargo on surrealism, and his support of the Alexandrine. Césaire objected to Depestre's support of realism and the Alexandrine and characterized Depestre's interest in debates about the future of French-language poetry in metropolitan France as assimilationist. The poetic voice in a poem Césaire wrote in response urges Depestre to forget the "maîtres d'école"⁷³ and the embargo on surrealism, telling him "marronnons-les Depestre marronnons-les."⁷⁴ 'Marronner' was a verb used to describe the action of slaves who ran away from the plantations in Haiti and elsewhere. Here Césaire calls on Depestre to escape the dictats of Aragon and the Communist Party. In Césaire's poem, freedom lies in escaping, not obeying, prescription. The text is sceptical that form can be marshalled to predetermine the political content of a text: "Camarade Depestre | C'est un problème assurément très grave | des rapports de la poésie et de la Révolution | le fond conditionne la forme || et si l'on s'avisait aussi du détour dialectique | par quoi la forme

⁷¹ "Letter to the poet Charles Dobzynski."

⁷² René Depestre, 'Lettre au poète Charles Dobzynski', *Lettres Françaises*, 573 (16-23 June 1955), 1-5.

⁷³ "School masters." Aimé Césaire, 'Réponse à Depestre poète haïtien (Eléments d'un art poétique)', *Présence Africaine*, n.s. 1-2 (1955), 113-5, p.113.

⁷⁴ "Let us escape them, Depestre, let us escape them." Ibid., p.113.

prenant sa revanche | comme un figuier maudit étouffe le poème.”⁷⁵ Ironically, however, the poem’s flair lies in its ability to demonstrate the ways that meaningful communication and social engagement do not have to be expressed in realist terms.

Depestre and Césaire were both heavily engaged in communist politics. In 1946 Depestre had helped found the Haitian Communist Party. In 1955 Césaire was still a member of the French Communist Party and travelled to Moscow in March that year to attend Stalin’s funeral.⁷⁶ It is impossible to understand the freight of this debate without taking into account the context of prominent Russian debates about formalism and socialist realism that informed them.⁷⁷ Stalin’s regime developed highly prescriptive attitudes regarding which kinds of aesthetics were appropriate to the ‘revolutionary’ cause of the Soviet Union. Socialist realism was encouraged and formalism, or works considered formalist, was “silenced as a heresy.”⁷⁸ Formalism was most commonly associated with an understanding of literature as defamiliarization from, rather than reflection of, the world, that emphasized not linguistic referentiality but dislocation.⁷⁹ To differing degrees, formalists also defended the “self-contained meaning of art and its ‘autonomy’ from extra-artistic goals.”⁸⁰

In 1938, André Breton, Diego Rivera and Leon Trotsky had published a manifesto denouncing Stalinist attempts to reduce Soviet artists and writers to mouthpieces for party

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.115. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith’s translation: “Comrade Depestre | It is undoubtedly a very serious problem | the relation between poetry and Revolution | the content determines the form || and what about keeping in mind as well the dialectical | backlash by which the form taking its revenge | chokes the poems like an accursed fig tree” in ‘The Verb “Marronner” / For René Depestre, Haitian poet’, *Aimé Césaire, The Collected Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1983), pp.369-71, p.371.

⁷⁶ Daniel Delas, ‘Repères chronologiques’ in Aimé Césaire, *Poésie théâtre essais et discours*, A. James Arnold, coord. (Paris: CNRS: Présence Africaine, 2013), pp.35-43, p.39.

⁷⁷ For an account of postcolonial studies that locates Russian debates about aesthetics as an important context see: Carrie Noland, ‘Red Front/Black Front: Aimé Césaire and the Affaire Aragon’, *diacritics*, 36.1 (2006), 64-84.

⁷⁸ ‘Russian Formalism’ in Chris Baldick, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.297, p.297.

⁷⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, p.297.

⁸⁰ See: Peter P. Steiner, *Russian Formalism: a metapoetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p.26.

positions through their advocacy of socialist realism and suppression of formalism. Breton and Trotsky's manifesto accused the USSR and its cultural organizations of reducing intellectuals and artists to paid producers of propaganda.⁸¹ They excoriated the over-proximity between artist and political regime⁸² and called for the “*opposition* [original emphasis]”⁸³ (rather than the support) of writers and artists as a constructive force, and for the “*complete freedom of art* [original emphasis].”⁸⁴ For Breton and Trotsky, this freedom should accompany political commitment. For them, “political indifference,”⁸⁵ and “a so-called pure art which generally serves the extremely impure ends of reaction”⁸⁶ were also odious. As such, they still defend the relative autonomy of the artist, but the significance of their argument lies in their anticonsequentialist attention to the process of achieving a deferred, ultimate freedom. That is, they argued freedom must be promoted in the present as well as in the future: “the artist cannot serve the struggle for freedom unless [...] he [sic] feels in his [sic] very nerves its meaning and drama and freely seeks to give his [sic] own inner world incarnation in his [sic] art.”⁸⁷

In 1945, a younger Depestre had celebrated Breton's nonconformism. As editor-in-chief of *La Ruche*, he dedicated the front page of the first edition of the new student newspaper to celebrating – with a banner headline that read “Bienvenue au grand poète surréaliste André Breton”⁸⁸ – the arrival in Port-au-Prince of a writer whose poetry he hailed as having set alight “tous les milieux non conformistes du monde.”⁸⁹ Surrealist writers in *Tropiques*,

⁸¹ Leon Trotsky [signed André Breton and Diego Rivera], *Partisan Review* (Autumn 1938), reprinted as ‘Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art’ in Paul N. Siegel, ed., *Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), pp.115-21, p.118.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.118.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.118.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.119.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁸⁸ “Welcome to the great surrealist poet André Breton.” [no named author], *La Ruche*, 1 (1945) (Port au Prince, Haiti), p.1.

⁸⁹ “All the non-conformist places on earth.” [no named author], ‘André Breton’, *La Ruche*, 1-2, p.1.

notably Suzanne Césaire, had also advocated for a free aesthetic practice in combination with political engagement.⁹⁰ In 1956, championing dissidence and independence from party prescription was freighted by the wider scepticism from high-profile figures such as Aimé Césaire about European ‘school masters’ and about the role of Marxism and communist parties in the anti-colonial struggle. These questions were charged by further revelations about atrocities in the USSR that followed Stalin’s death in 1955. In his resignation letter from the French Communist Party, published by *Présence Africaine* in 1956, Césaire insisted that Marxism and communism needed to be “mis au service des peuples noirs, et non les peuples noirs au service du marxisme et du communisme.”⁹¹ Césaire’s intervention reflects a broader scepticism about the place of outside prescription as a constructive force in liberation movements. Debates in *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* took up this question in terms of how artistic freedom could co-exist with political commitment.⁹²

The debates at *Présence Africaine* that followed Depestre and Césaire’s disagreement placed emphasis not so much on defending surrealism but rather on a dual attachment to ideas of poetic engagement and a rejection of aesthetic prescription. The Haitian Jacques Stéphen Alexis argued that it was necessary to surpass the “querelle historique du Réalisme et du Formalisme.”⁹³ At the same time, he is strongly against the idea of an “art pur”⁹⁴ – which he

⁹⁰ See for example Suzanne Césaire, ‘Alain et l’esthétique’, *Tropiques*, 2 (1941) in Suzanne Césaire, *Le Grand Camouflage: Écrits de dissidence (1941-1945)* (Paris: Seuil, 2009), pp.41-53, esp. p.51. See also Suzanne Césaire, ‘1943: le surréalisme et nous’, *Tropiques*, 8-9 (1943), in Césaire, *Le Grand Camouflage*, pp.76-83, p.82. Also, Robin D.G. Kelley’s discussion of her ideas in ‘Introduction: a poetics of anticolonialism’ in Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), pp.7-28, p.15. Walter Benjamin also discusses the merits of a surrealist practice free of “any kind of pragmatic calculation” in ‘Surrealism - The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia’ in W. Benjamin, *Reflections*, trans. E. Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), pp.177-92, p.189.

⁹¹ “Put to the service of black people, and not black people to the service of Marxism and communism.” Aimé Césaire, *Lettre à Maurice Thorez* (Paris: *Présence Africaine*, 1956), p.12.

⁹² Ruth Bush also discusses the relative autonomy from party politics Diop sought to maintain at the publishing house through a discussion of *Présence Africaine*’s book publishing catalogue. See Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, pp.57-8 and 66.

⁹³ “Historic quarrel between realism and formalism.” Alexis, ‘Du Réalisme Merveilleux des Haïtiens’, p.259.

⁹⁴ “Pure art.” Ibid., p.260.

associates with “expériences intellectualistes et cosmopolites”⁹⁵ – because the idea of freedom on which such an artistic practice relies unacceptably reduces an expansive notion of human liberty to the liberty only of a “mince frange d’artistes liés à des classes sociales décadentes.”⁹⁶ In introducing what he called the “réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens,”⁹⁷ he insists that “l’artiste doit prendre parti, il doit être un combattant.”⁹⁸ Alexis wrote that it was important to be “réalistes infiniment”⁹⁹ and to reject art without “contenu réel et social.”¹⁰⁰ At the same time, the ways that Alexis outlines this realist practice are repeatedly articulated in terms that privilege the imaginary, the magic and the subjective, insisting “nous sommes rêveurs”¹⁰¹ and that the writer should seek to capture not “l’ensemble de la réalité sensible, mais ce qui le frappe.”¹⁰² The realism he defends is a sensuous social realism animated by wonder: “vive un réalisme vivant, lié à la magie de l’univers, un réalisme qui ébranle non seulement l’esprit, mais aussi le cœur et tout l’arbre des nerfs!”¹⁰³

Another contributor to the debate, the Senegalese poet David Diop, also insists on aesthetic freedom. Like many of his fellow contributors, Diop is dismissive of “exercices de style”¹⁰⁴ and “discussions formelles.”¹⁰⁵ Like Alexis, he argues that poetry must be “militante”¹⁰⁶ and withers if it is not “en contact avec le réel.”¹⁰⁷ However, he is opposed to prescribing the aesthetics in which any given poet should write. For him, the important claim to defend is

⁹⁵ “Intellectual and cosmopolitan experience.” Ibid., p.260.

⁹⁶ “A peripheral group of artists linked to the decadent social classes.” Ibid., p.260.

⁹⁷ “Marvellous realism of the Haitians.” Ibid., p.245.

⁹⁸ “The artist has to take part, he [sic] has to fight.” Ibid., p.247.

⁹⁹ “Realists to the bone.” Ibid., p.259.

¹⁰⁰ “Real and social content.” Ibid., p.268.

¹⁰¹ “We are dreamers.” Ibid., p.259.

¹⁰² “The whole of reality, but that which strikes you.” Ibid., p.265.

¹⁰³ “Long live a living realism, linked to the magic of the universe, a realism which shakes not only the soul, but the heart and the nervous system itself!” Ibid., p.24

¹⁰⁴ “Exercises of style.” David Diop, ‘Contribution au débat sur la poésie nationale’, *Présence Africaine*, 7 (1956), 113-5, p.115.

¹⁰⁵ “Formal discussions.” Ibid., p.115.

¹⁰⁶ “Militant.” Ibid., p.113.

¹⁰⁷ “In contact with reality.” Ibid., p.113.

“ce que Césaire appelle le droit à l'initiative, c'est-à-dire la liberté de choix et d'action.”¹⁰⁸

For Diop, this liberty is important because of the way that cultural and material liberties have historically been denied to Africans. Again, Diop steers a middle path, suspicious both of an unthinking adherence to a preconceived idea of negritude and of the danger of “l'originalité à tout prix.”¹⁰⁹ He refuses a stark choice between the two, writing that “le poète africain, conscient de sa mission, refuse à la fois l'assimilation et l'africanisme facile.”¹¹⁰

Diop's dual affirmation of the importance of the 'real' and an unprescribed aesthetics helps us to parse his poems in the review. Texts such as 'Aux mystificateurs' and 'Les Vautours,' reprinted after his death in 1966 from his 1956 *Coups de Pilon*,¹¹¹ develop their critique of colonialism through what Lewis Nkosi calls a mixture of “surrealist images amidst austere blank verse.”¹¹² 'Les Vautours'¹¹³ is set in a world built by vultures. It is a terrifying place, a “sanglant monument de l'ère tutélaire,”¹¹⁴ and cast under “l'ombre de leurs serres.”¹¹⁵ It is a place filled with “hommes étranges qui n'étaient pas des hommes,”¹¹⁶ machine guns; extorted kisses; dying laughter; hell. The poem pivots between a “you” (the vulture) and a speaking “us.” The “you” who sings “chants d'orgueil au milieu des charniers,”¹¹⁷ is book-learned but cannot recognize “les mains qui fécondent le ventre de la terre.”¹¹⁸ The “us” is found in “les mines du Souaziland” and in the “usines d'Europe.”¹¹⁹ Diop constructs his critique of

¹⁰⁸ “What Césaire calls the right to initiative, that is to say, freedom of choice and action.” Ibid., p.114.

¹⁰⁹ “Originality at any cost.” Ibid., p.115.

¹¹⁰ “The African poet, conscious of their task, refuses both assimilation and easy africanisation.” Ibid., p.115.

¹¹¹ “Hammer blows.” David Diop, *Coups de Pilon* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1956). Diop died in 1960 in a plane crash.

¹¹² Lewis Nkosi, *Tasks and Masks: Themes and Styles of African Literature* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981), p.139.

¹¹³ “The Vultures.” David Diop, ‘Les Vautours’, *Présence Africaine*, 51 (1966), 106-7.

¹¹⁴ “The bloody monument of the tutelary era.” David Mandessi Diop, *Hammer Blows and other writings*, trans and ed. Simon Mpondo and Frank Jones (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973), p.5.

¹¹⁵ “The shadow of their claws.” Mpondo and Jones, p.5.

¹¹⁶ “Strange men who were not men.” Ibid., p.5.

¹¹⁷ “Hymns of pride among boneyards.” Ibid., p.5.

¹¹⁸ “The hands that fertilize the womb of the earth.” Ibid., p.5.

¹¹⁹ “The mines of Swaziland” and “Europe's factories.” Ibid., p.5.

the exploitation of black labour through a sequence of nightmarish and literalized metaphors, like the vulture itself, that embody predatory extraction. This is clear too in his ‘Aux Mystificateurs,’¹²⁰ a poem in which “monstres cyniques”¹²¹ parade a “cage de fer”¹²² and dispatch swooping “mantes démentes.”¹²³ In ‘Les Vautours,’ natural resources and the body of the earth elide with the bodies of those that cultivate them, in a cacophony of the uneven registers of a shared modernity. Christian pieties and mechanized weaponry incompletely muffle the groaning soundscape of the plantation: “le rythme monotone des Pater-Noster | Couvrait les hurlements des plantations à profit | [...] Les promesses mutilées au choc des mitrailleuses.”¹²⁴ Diop’s attempt to articulate the real exceeds conventional ‘realist’ aesthetics.

The commitment to artistic autonomy can be seen in the fact that despite the many critiques of formalism published on their pages, *Présence Africaine* also published work whose aesthetics were explicitly ‘literary,’ difficult and oblique. In 1960 and in 1962, for example, the review published poems by the Congolese poet Tchicaya U’Tamsi.¹²⁵ In his ‘The Farewell’s Pardon,’ published in English, the poetic voice declares “I am leaving the misery | of being matter-of-fact” an ironically matter-of-fact explanation, perhaps, of why his poems evade easy interpretation, demanding, in Theodor Adorno’s approving phrase, that their “incomprehensibility [...] be comprehended.”¹²⁶ Another series of poems, entitled ‘Intérieur I’ and ‘Intérieur II,’¹²⁷ published in 1962 shortly after Patrice Lumumba’s assassination,

¹²⁰ “The Bamboozlers.” David Diop, ‘Aux Mystificateurs,’ *Présence Africaine*, 51 (1966), pp.107-8.

¹²¹ “Cynical monsters.” Mpondo and Jones, p.17.

¹²² “Iron cages.” Ibid., p.17.

¹²³ “Mad mantises.” Ibid., p.17.

¹²⁴ “And the monotonous rhythm of Paternosters | Covered the groans on plantations run for profit | [...] Promises mutilated by machine-gun blasts.” Ibid., p.5.

¹²⁵ Tchicaya U’Tamsi, ‘Poems,’ *Présence Africaine*, 30 (1960), 55-8.

¹²⁶ From *Aesthetic Theory*, cited in Ross Wilson, *Theodor Adorno* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), p.55.

¹²⁷ “Interior I and Interior II.” Tchicaya U’Tamsi, ‘Intérieur I et II: Two poems by a French-Speaking African,’ *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 12, 40 (1962), 62-3.

never quite reach the subject, Lumumba, whose presence stalks the text. U'Tamsi was a friend of Lumumba and his poems were published close to a prose memorial of the murdered leader of the *Mouvement National Congolais*.¹²⁸ U'Tamsi's text does not, however, perform the same straightforward memorial function as that obituary. The first poem closes with the image of a man reading a page with everything crossed out except Lumumba's name: "Il tourne une page où tout est hachure | Excepté | Le point d'orgue sur un nom | Lumumba."¹²⁹ In this image, 'Lumumba' is both centrally important and meaningless in a context where nothing else is comprehensible. In the second sequence of the poem, U'Tamsi introduces the bathetic figure of a "sicaire sans pécule à cause de la cause."¹³⁰ This image figures a certain kind of political militancy as both venal and absurd, because of the desacralized register of "sans pécule"¹³¹ but also because of the self-referential and empty quality of the formulation "à cause de la cause."¹³² Indeed, U'Tamsi's lines might suggest that the logics that killed Lumumba are connected to the impulse to step in line with telegraphic and institutionally endorsed modes of understanding "la cause." In U'Tamsi's poem, the word "Lumumba" does not function as the cipher for a general cause but as a complex riddle in a particular context. The poem ends on an ominous note: "On avale sa langue on se tait | Lumumba."¹³³ As such, U'Tamsi's poem addresses the theme of commitment with scepticism about the notion that loyalty to a cause is emancipatory. In the ways the poems seem to dramatize the question of how to approach the subject of politics, but also how to avoid a poetic reduction to political conclusion, U'Tamsi's texts also play out the critique put forward in 1956 by Georges Desportes, of political poetry in which "la propagande est

¹²⁸ Pierre Clément, 'Patrice Lumumba', *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 12, 40 (1962), 71-90.

¹²⁹ "He turns a page where everything is crossed out | Except | The highlight of a name | Lumumba." Tchicaya U'Tamsi, 'Intérieur I', p.62.

¹³⁰ "Hitman short of cash because of the cause." U'Tamsi, 'Intérieur II'. p.63.

¹³¹ "Short of cash." Ibid., p.63.

¹³² "Because of the cause." Ibid., p.63.

¹³³ "Swallow your tongue and shut up |Lumumba." Ibid., p.63.

dans le poème aussi voyante qu'une affiche.”¹³⁴

Mensagem: “os poetas formalistas são raros entre nós.”

Where French-language surrealist writing – that aimed to access the unconstrained and un-predetermined expression of an artist’s full creativity – had been an important influence on French-language debates in *Présence Africaine*, many critics have highlighted the influence of Portuguese neo-realism on African writing in Portuguese in the 1950s and 1960s and on *Mensagem* in particular.¹³⁵ Helgesson asserts neo-realist work tended towards a rejection of the subjectivism popular in the 1930s and 1940s; a focus on the relationship between art and society; and an insistence on the “referential function of language at a time when numerous avant-garde movements had declared the primacy of the sign and of the solipsistic subject.”¹³⁶

Mensagem published few theoretical interventions about the relationship between politics and writing as such, though those that were printed repeatedly assert a close relationship between writing and social concerns. Agostinho Neto, perhaps the literary critic *Mensagem* published who most insisted on the close relationship between poetry and politics, emphasized the social role of the poet at a colloquium on Angolan poetry reprinted in the journal in 1960. Neto argued that the Angolan poet “quase sempre toma uma posição perante a realidade social. Vemo-lo revoltado, ansioso, jubilante por contribuir para a construção de

¹³⁴ “The propaganda in the poem is as clear as on a poster.” Georges Desportes, ‘Points de vue sur la poésie nationale’, *Présence Africaine*, 11 (1956), 88-99, p.97.

¹³⁵ Stefan Helgesson, ‘In Search of newness’, *Scrutiny*2, 10.2, 15-23, p.17. In particular, Portuguese journals such as *Vértice* and *O Novo Cancioneiro* played important roles in championing neo-realism in the 1940s and, as Pires Laranjeira argues, influenced *Mensagem*. Laranjeira, ‘Introdução’, p.XXIII. See also Francisco Soares, ‘Mensagem, Neo-realismo e Negritude’ in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, pp.47-51. See also Martinho, ‘Reflexões’ in Rosinha and Freudenthal, eds., *Mensagem*, pp.53-63.

¹³⁶ Helgesson, p.17. It is important to emphasize that surrealism wasn’t only a French-language phenomena just as neo-realism didn’t only exist in Portuguese. Indeed, the first explicitly surrealist art exhibition in sub-Saharan Africa was opened in Luanda on October 1953, organized by Artur do Cruzairo Seixas. Franklin Rosemont and Robin D. G. Kelley, eds., *Black, Brown and Beige: Surrealist writings from the diaspora* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), p.144.

uma vida harmoniosa entre os homens.”¹³⁷ As such, Neto argues, “os poetas formalistas são raros entre nós.”¹³⁸ Francisco José Tenreiro’s essay ‘Processo Poesia,’ which had appeared in *Mensagem* in 1963, also argues that poets should not indulge in escapism or imaginative flights of fancy. Rather, Tenreiro writes, the true poet “reflecte os próprios aspectos da vida;”¹³⁹ the poet is “um político.”¹⁴⁰ This explained, Tenreiro argued, why the *Estado Novo* had imprisoned so many African poets.

Neto’s 1960 intervention was already remarkably prescriptive compared to his earlier interventions. Writing in *Mensagem* in 1952, Neto had singled out as a “poeta autêntico”¹⁴¹ the Goan poet Orlando da Costa, a poet Neto describes as influenced by Césaire, Camões, Whitman, Lorca and others. One of Costa’s poems that accompanied Neto’s commentary was “Canção do petit matin.”¹⁴² The central refrain of Costa’s poem – “Au bout du petit matin” – is taken from Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier de retour au pays natal*, a poem that repeatedly uses and appropriates a range of registers and forms to great effect in its critique of European colonialism. In its allusions to Greek epic and modernist writing (the “Ulysses”¹⁴³ of Homer and Joyce) and Caribbean poetry (Césaire), Costa’s poem activates the question of influence and of how form and figures can be transposed to other contexts. It is not a dogmatic text. Its lines register a proliferation of songs and voices – “Césaires e suas canções,”¹⁴⁴ – and a sense of fading off into incomprehensibility. Its last lines convey a sense of wistfulness, of sentimentality, a certain lyricism, and an inconclusive repetition: “Au bout du petit matin | Girassóis girassóis amor.”¹⁴⁵ Neto’s appreciation of Costa’s poem

¹³⁷ “Angolan poets almost always position themselves in social reality. Whether in disgust, anxiety or joy, they contribute to the construction of a harmonious life between men.” Neto, ‘Introdução a um colóquio’, p.47.

¹³⁸ “Formalist poets are rare amongst us.” Ibid., p.47.

¹³⁹ “Reflect aspects of life itself.” Francisco José Tenreiro, ‘Processo Poesia’, *Mensagem*, 15.1 (1963), 5-11, p.6.

¹⁴⁰ “A politician.” Tenreiro, ‘Processo Poesia’, p.6.

¹⁴¹ “Authentic poet.” António Neto, ‘Crítica Literária’, *Mensagem*, 3.13 (1952), 19-21, p.20.

¹⁴² “Song of the first light.” Orlando da Costa, ‘Canção do petit matin’, *Mensagem*, 3.13 (1952), 24, p.24.

¹⁴³ “Ulysses.” Ibid., p.24.

¹⁴⁴ “Césaires and their songs.” Ibid., p.24.

¹⁴⁵ “At the end of first light | Sunflowers sunflowers love.” Ibid., p.24.

suggests that, in 1952, these were also themes and moods that animated Neto at a time when he was denouncing decadence and personal self-indulgence in poetry. We might infer that Neto retained, at that point, a certain conceptual openness towards the boundaries of committed aesthetics.

In deploying ‘formalista’ as a category in 1960, Neto refers to the distinction between socialist realism and formalism that I have argued was a key context to French-language debates about engaged aesthetics. Although Neto did not advocate socialist realism, by 1960 his increasing emphasis on the social function of poetry and involvement in party politics led Neto, along with Andrade and Tenreiro, to distance himself from the earlier poetry he had played a role in publishing at the CEA in the 1950s. In 1960, he characterizes this poetry as exoticist and alienated.¹⁴⁶ Though it had played a role in developing political consciousness about race amongst students from the colonies studying in Europe, Neto argued “é a poesia do desenraizamento [...] Poesia pensada nos gabinetes de estudo, apenas tinha longínquas ligações com os verdadeiros problemas da realidade social.”¹⁴⁷ Neto’s suggestion here is that writers displaced from African publics cannot produce truly meaningful cultural interventions as they are uprooted from the true guardians of African culture. At the same time, referring to ‘formalism’ in the Portuguese context was itself a way of signalling an involvement in a debate about the function of literature that was neither only Portuguese nor African. As well as signalling Neto’s Marxism, it represents a rejection of an only-national frame of understanding literature.

Yet, if we only attend to those pieces of prose writing obviously about the role of literature as such, it might seem that where in French language contexts there was a debate, in Portuguese-language work there was a whole-hearted embrace of realism and commitment.

¹⁴⁶ In 1963, Francisco José Tenreiro also described the poetry volume he had edited with Mário Pinto de Andrade in 1953 as “poesia do exótico.” (‘Poetry of the exotic.’) Tenreiro, ‘Processo Poesia’, p.9.

¹⁴⁷ “This is the poetry of uprootedness [...] Poetry thought up in studies had only distant links with the true problems of social reality.” Neto, ‘Introdução’, p.50.

Attending, rather, to the formal polyphony of *Mensagem* brings into view the dissensus about the extent to which writerly social responsibility should be accompanied by strict aesthetic prescription.

The São Tomense writer Tomas Medeiros, then editor of *Mensagem*, chose to print in the same edition as Neto's intervention several Harlem Renaissance poems, including 'Negro Spiritual,' a sonnet by Claude McKay first published in 1922. The sonnet reflects on the popularization of black slave songs in the United States and their transposition from plantations to concert-halls. McKay is ambivalent about the displacement of "thee" – either the song or the singer – from the "simple soil" to a "garish marble hall."¹⁴⁸ The "liquid lyric moans" of the earlier songs are now at risk of being drowned in "orchestral thunders." The thundering of the orchestra suggests the change in effect when a creative work is transposed from its original context but also raises the question of whether a moan might be more powerful than a thunder; of whether a lighter touch might be more powerful than a heavy-handed aesthetic. McKay's poem does not settle the question. Perhaps the thundering concert hall is better than the original context: a place where only "scenting bloodhounds" heard the sounds made by a "choking throat."

McKay's poem certainly registers anxiety about the ossifying consequences of decontextualizing art from its original context. Read alongside Neto's rejection of the "poesia do desenraizamento,"¹⁴⁹ however, McKay's transposition of the European sonnet into a vehicle for expressing the anxiety about displacement he felt in 1920s America testifies to the expressive potential of the poetry of being-out-of-context. Indeed, the poem's

¹⁴⁸ Claude Mac Kay, [sic] 'Canto Espiritual Negro', *Mensagem*, 3.5/6 (1960), 30, p.30. *Mensagem* published the poem in Spanish. The English in my text is taken from the original 1922 English in Claude McKay, *Complete Poems* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p.148.

¹⁴⁹ "Poetry of uprootedness."

very appearance, forty years after it was first written and in Spanish translation, suggests more than anything the editor's faith in the mobility of art. What Neto dismisses as "poesia pensada nos gabinetes de estudo"¹⁵⁰ appears in McKay's text as a dialogue with a legacy of histories of protest.

As Charshee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre has argued, slave spirituals encoded double meanings and veiled communication designed to escape censure from slave masters.¹⁵¹ As such, Claude McKay's spectre of slave spirituals brings forward the place in black resistance histories of critique delivered in language that must, to some audiences, disguise its own force. In the context of Salazarist repression, many writers in Portuguese were obliged to harness a dissembling aesthetic and to work within the constraints of not being able to publish everything they wanted to say. Obviously declamatory poems occasionally appeared in *Mensagem*, such as Craveirinha's 'Grito Negro,'¹⁵² published in the last edition of 1964. Craveirinha's critique connects the mineral extraction that underpinned Portuguese colonialism in Africa with the extractive labour of African workers by eliding the speaking subject with coal, such that the distinction between the material and the person disappears: "Eu sou carvão!"¹⁵³ Throughout the poem, there is doubt about the extent to which we are meant to understand 'I am coal' as a factual or a figurative statement. The coal-person appears completely abstracted from place, a piece of coal talking in a void. Like David Diop's 'Les Vautours,' that also deals with extractive economies, Craveirinha's literalized metaphors here cannot be read as 'realist.' Nonetheless, its tone and charge are explicit. Craveirinha himself was imprisoned the following year. My question here, however, is how to read the political charge of other poems whose tone is less obviously incendiary.

¹⁵⁰ "Poetry thought up in studies."

¹⁵¹ Charshee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre, 'The Double Meanings of the Spirituals', *Journal of Black Studies*, 17.4 (1987), 379-401.

¹⁵² "Black Cry." José Craveirinha, 'Grito Negro', *Mensagem*, 16.1 (1964), 66, p.66.

¹⁵³ "I am coal." Craveirinha, 'Grito Negro', p.66.

This question becomes particularly pressing in dealing with poems published after 1960, when other imperial regimes gave in or lost to anti-colonial movements, or had made arrangements to leave on neo-colonial terms. By contrast, there was no let-up in the pro-colonial stance of the Salazar regime. As a result, many of the texts *Mensagem* published grapple with the ongoing frustrations of their situation in terms that do not explicitly refer to anti-colonialism but that we can only speculate *Mensagem*'s readers must nevertheless have understood as comments on the imperial situation. This aesthetic of constraint and obliqueness is palpable in 'Nocturne' by the Harlem Renaissance poet Gwendolyn B. Bennett, published in Spanish translation in the same edition of *Mensagem* as Claude McKay and Agostinho Neto's texts in 1960:

Nocturne

This cool night is strange
Among midsummer days [...]
Far frosts are caught
In the moon's pale light,
And sounds are distant laughter
Chilled to crystal tears.¹⁵⁴

Bennett's text is predicated on images of immutability and gathering stasis: frost is "caught," laughter becomes "crystal." Where change does happen, it is regrettable: laughter gives way to tears. The poem lingers on themes of inaccessibility and dissimilarity: a cold night amidst summer light, the inability fully to hear distant sounds, a state of strangeness. Bennett's lament is not construed explicitly to engage in 1960s Portuguese politics. Nevertheless, we can read the reprinting of Bennett's work in the African 'annus mirabilis' of 1960 as a reflection on the on-going stagnation of the colonial attitudes of the *Estado Novo*. Read from

¹⁵⁴ Bennett, 'Nocturno', p.29. *Mensagem* published the poem in Spanish. The English in my text is from the original published in New York in *The Crisis*, 27.1 (1923), 20, p.20. *The Crisis* is the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

this angle, Bennett's lament of a state of particularity could be read as an allegory for the particularity of the Portuguese colonies' situation amidst the independence celebrations taking place across the continent. Furthermore, the decision to print Bennett and McKay's work at this time – to situate a diasporic black literary tradition as pertinent to *Mensagem* in the full flush of African decolonization – was itself a bold, if not incendiary, editorial posture in the context of 1960s Portugal that *Mensagem*'s readers would surely have recognized.

Though, in *Présence Africaine*, Alioune Diop himself was only cautiously optimistic about the African independences of that year, talking of “la balkanisation [...] l'émiettement de l'Afrique,”¹⁵⁵ a sense of optimism about the possibility of change is palpable in poems such as Annette Baye's ‘Silhouette,’ published in the journal in the same edition:

Silhouette

A Henriette Bathily

Soleil derrière, ombre devant!
Unealebasse sur une tête fière,
Un sein, un bout de pagne qui frémit,
Deux pieds qui effacent le dessin sur le sable.¹⁵⁶

Monochrome and stark, ‘Silhouette,’ offers a snapshot of a form rendered in a series of moments. In the context of an address from one Senegalese writer to another,¹⁵⁷ the disappearance of the calabash, breast and wrapper speaks to a changing image of an African woman. Like Bennet's poem, Baye's text focuses on a fleeting moment. Where Bennett's text's appearance in *Mensagem* can be read as a meditation on inertia, Baye's images are

¹⁵⁵ ‘The balkanization [...] the fragmentation of Africa.’ P.A., ‘Faisons confiance à l'Afrique’, *Présence Africaine*, 32-3 (1960), 4-7, p.7.

¹⁵⁶ “Silhouette | To Henriette Bathily | Sun behind, shadow in front! | A calabash on a proud head, | A breast, a quivering loincloth | Two feet erasing the drawing on the sand.” Annette M. Baye, ‘Trois Poèmes’, *Présence Africaine*, 32-3 (1960), 143-4, p.144.

¹⁵⁷ Henriette Bathily was the director of the cultural department at the French Cultural Centre and a cultural activist according to Ruth Bush in ‘Mesdames, il faut lire!: Material contexts and representational strategies in early francophone African women's magazines’, *Francosphères*, 5.2 (2016), 213-36, p.217.

mutable to the point of dissolution. Bennett's despondency contrasts with Baye's defiance. Despite the threat of shadows ahead, the poem embraces the possibility of change represented by the agency of the woman's own feet to shape her image.

In *Mensagem*, Costa Andrade's 'Caminhada'¹⁵⁸ of 1960 and Arnaldo Santos' 'Poema'¹⁵⁹ of 1961, which echo Baye's trope of fading steps, vary dramatically in tone and mood from hers, telling a story of a lack of achievement, of dashed ambitions and gathering darkness. Here the footsteps that open both poems express a sense of failed progress, an inability to move forward. Where Baye's footsteps vanish, in Andrade's text "a forma estática dos meus passos"¹⁶⁰ becomes "mais uma pedra,"¹⁶¹ as the whole poem petrifies into a nightmare of constraint and isolation: "Dobrei as esquinas todas | Que há no mundo | E o mundo | Tem pra dar-me | Muros e barreiras | Invisíveis."¹⁶² Meanwhile, the "marcha lenta dos teus passos"¹⁶³ that opens Santos' poem also calcifies, tracing "uma funda linha enviesada."¹⁶⁴ This line becomes the vehicle for torturous images of twisting and repression: "Linha torta | Esmagada | [...] Tresandando a sangue a força."¹⁶⁵ The line, the poet repeats, sows devastation: under it, "o capim jamais cresceu."¹⁶⁶ Both poems are signposted in nonchalant terms – 'a stroll,' 'a poem' – which suggest a levity the texts fail to deliver. The terse restraint of Santos and Andrade's lines sags under the weight of the dark images to which they obliquely allude.

Luandino Vieira's two poems, 'Buganvília' and 'Girasóis,' written from prison and

¹⁵⁸ "A Stroll." Costa Andrade, 'Caminhada', *Mensagem*, 3.3/4 (1960), 27, p.27.

¹⁵⁹ "Poem." Arnaldo Santos, 'Poema', *Mensagem*, 14.1 (1961), 31, p.31.

¹⁶⁰ "The static form of my steps." Ibid., p.27.

¹⁶¹ "One more stone." Ibid., p.27.

¹⁶² "I have turned every corner | In the world | And all the world | Has to give me | are invisible walls and barriers." Ibid., p.27.

¹⁶³ "The slow progress of your steps." Santos, 'Poema', p.31.

¹⁶⁴ "A deep, skewed line." Ibid., p.31.

¹⁶⁵ "A crooked line | Crushed [...] | stinking of blood and power." Ibid., p.31.

¹⁶⁶ "The grass never grew." Ibid., p.31.

published in *Mensagem* in 1963, are also suffused with the inflammatory pressures of stagnancy and torpor.

Buganília

Branca a buganília explode
no odiado muro em frente

à volta a vida berra crente
e o negro sangue estanca

vermelha a buganília
rompe o muro da frente¹⁶⁷

Girassóis

Tem girassóis amarelos
o meu quadrado de sol

a vida espancada passa

mas no quadrado de sol
aberto sobre o jardim
os girassóis amarelos
velhos
mostram o fim¹⁶⁸

Published a few pages after Francisco José Tenreiro's 'Processo Poesia' which disparages the "poesia do jardim das flores que imaginaram,"¹⁶⁹ Vieira's almost-still-lives draw attention to themselves in their contrast to the energetic, cacophonous stories Vieira also published in the magazine. Where those texts make a virtue of volubility, these muffled poems achieve their expression by conveying a sense of building tensions in the context of inertia. As prison poems, they might be read as reflections on a personal situation; more broadly, the references to hated and broken walls and to black blood obviously refer to a wider situation, caught between rupture and stagnation. The poems adopt the focus on the ephemeral characteristic of a certain kind of imagism to deal with lack of transformation in a torturously slow situation.

¹⁶⁷ "Bougainvillea | White the bougainvillea explodes | onto the hated wall in front | nearby life cries believer | and black blood stems | red the bougainvillea | Breaks the wall in front" Luandino Vieira, 'Buganília', *Mensagem*, 15.1 (1963), 18, p.18.

¹⁶⁸ "Sunflowers | Yellow sunflowers | my square of sunlight | battered life passes | but in the square of sunlight | open onto the garden | the old yellow | sunflowers | are ending" Luandino Vieira, 'Girassóis', *Mensagem*, 15.1 (1963), 18, p.18.

¹⁶⁹ "The poetry of imagined flower gardens." Tenreiro, 'Processo Poesia', p.5.

The heavy weight of censorship and the sense of frustration about a lack of progress that I am arguing we read into these poems was visible in the student movement as a whole. In particular, from January 1963, the *Estado Novo* was squeezing the *Casa*'s funding and repressing student activity in general as much as it could. *Mensagem* describes itself as not having fulfilled its full expressive potential. For example, in 1963, the editors wrote a note apologising that the quality of the previous editions had been disrupted: "Concebemos cada exemplar como um todo uno, coerente e equilibrado, que, no conjunto, se apresenta como uma criação artístico-literária do jornalismo. Deste conjunto deverá sair uma mensagem, a mensagem que procurámos transmitir. E é neste sentido que sentimos não termos realizado totalmente o fim a que nos propusemos."¹⁷⁰

In his discussion of how early readers of Gramsci sought to reckon with the weight of censorship under which *The Prison Notebooks* were produced, Peter D. Thomas has argued the new concepts Gramsci develops in his texts should not be read as code words for something else.¹⁷¹ Rather, Thomas argues that under the pressure of his particular circumstances, Gramsci produced distinctive and particular ideas and his readers should attend closely to how he did write, rather than reading him simply to imagine what he would have written given more autonomy. Thomas' reflection helps in thinking about how to parse these short, imagistic poems published in *Mensagem* between 1960 and 1963, in the context of their surrounding literary critical discourses that disavowed the detachment from political life the poems seem to figure. They show that poets writing in *Mensagem* appropriated many different tones, registers, forms and strategies, including those associated with formalism,

¹⁷⁰ "We conceive each edition as a coherent and balanced unity, which, as a whole, should be a piece of artistic and literary journalism. From this whole, our message should emerge. It is in this sense that we feel we have not fully achieved our objectives." A DIRECÇÃO DE MENSAGEM, [Untitled], *Mensagem*, 14.3 (1963), 61-2, p.61. This was neither the first nor last time that *Mensagem*'s various editors expressed such frustrations. See for example the editorials in *Mensagem*, 1.2 (1958), p.3 and *Mensagem*, 15.1 (1963), p.3.

¹⁷¹ In particular, Thomas is arguing that Gramsci's idea of a "philosophy of praxis" should not simply be read as "Marxism" by another, less inflammatory name. Peter D. Thomas, 'Gramsci's Marxism: the Philosophy of Praxis' in Mark McNally, ed., *Antonio Gramsci* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp.97-117, p.97.

to produce poems that, among other things, reinscribe the question of what aesthetics could be politically powerful. In their articulation of an experience of political incarceration as well as in their images of rupture and repressed force, Luandino Viera's poems show that the poetry 'of flowers' precisely can be powerful, in particular contexts and with particular readerships. This polyphony also reminds us that, for all the 1963 editors lament the plurality of "messages" in *Mensagem*, this plurality is part of the journal's actually-existing form.

Understanding the aesthetic debates in *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* in the context of Russian aesthetic history allows us to see the extent to which writers in both journals emphasized a non-aligned poetics that refused outside (Russian, American, European, party) prescription.¹⁷² From the perspective of what David Diop calls the "puristes,"¹⁷³ the terms of the debates I have sketched might seem to be heavy-handed in their emphasis on social engagement. These poets share an emphasis on engaging critically with an imperfect – sometimes horrific – social reality, and on articulating the experience of living in such a world. They insisted, however, that the choice of how aesthetically and textually to mobilise that critique was individual. Seen in the context of Soviet and Marxist aesthetic debates, however, their libertarian streak stands out. In important ways, the theoretical contribution these discourses make to histories of militant aesthetics is to re-emphasize individual, artistic liberty within a defence of collective social and political freedoms.

¹⁷² Ruth Bush also highlights the relative autonomy from party political positions that Diop sought to maintain at *Présence Africaine* in Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.90.

¹⁷³ "Purists." David Diop, 'Contribution au débat', p.115.

CHAPTER 3: AFRICAN MODERNISM IN A MULTILINGUAL FRAME

*I am leaving the misery
of being matter-of-fact*
Tchicaya U'Tamsi,
'The Farewell's Pardon'¹

*Ogun is today's god of precision technology, oil rigs and
space rockets, not a benighted rustic cowering at the "iron bird"*
Wole Soyinka, 'Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition'²

In the two decades since Okwui Enwezor's exhibition *The Short Century* opened, a collaboration with the Berlin *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, a growing body of critical work has focussed on African modernist practice, mainly in English, in the anti-colonial and early postcolonial years. My question in this chapter is how the histories I have been discussing of thinking about politics and literature in French and Portuguese fit – and do not fit – with existing conceptions of African modernism. What kind of comparative strategy is needed to take into account the similarities *and* differences between writing in different language-traditions, as well as within them?

The Short Century encompassed painting, photography, film, architecture, graphics, theatre, literature and the political documents of liberation movements. It emphasized the place of modernism in the period from 1945 to the end of the Apartheid regime in 1994 during which “the peoples of Africa won their independence.”³ As Enwezor wrote in the accompanying catalogue, this modernism was not “dispatched by some colonial envoy and assimilated by Africans,” but rather “the African systematization, deployment, and usage of modern forms,

¹ Tchicaya U Tam'si, 'Poems', *Présence Africaine*, 30 (1960), 55-8, p.55.

² Wole Soyinka, 'Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition', *Transition*, 48 (1975), 38-44, p.44.

³ HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT, 'Press release: The Short Century', May 2001, <http://u-in-u.com/en/specials/2001/the-short-century/press-release/> [accessed 13 June 2017].

values and structure.”⁴ The forms, values and structures were not only literary and artistic, but also of the state and society: Enwezor argued that “négritude and pan-Africanism sought their meaning and viability in relation not to a canon but to a political and social process (contemporary African society).”⁵ For the literary critic and historian Simon Gikandi, Enwezor’s “heretical”⁶ and “revolutionary”⁷ insistence on the “essential connection between modernism and African nationalism”⁸ was groundbreaking.

According to Gikandi, one particularly attractive heresy of Enwezor’s gesture was the disruption it caused both to commonplace understandings of modernism as well as to postcolonial amnesias about the anti-colonial moment. Contradictory definitions of modernism abound. Sometimes these insist on the place of particular forms or techniques in defining modernist practice. For Gikandi and Enwezor, the important dimension of modernism to emphasize is the separation between art and politics that modernist practice inscribes. Indeed, associating modernism with what Gikandi calls “affirmative nationalism” seems counterintuitive because “the culture of high modernism acquired its almost ecumenical status by insisting on the separation of art and politics in general and the consciousness of modernism and the political claims of nationalism.”⁹ Nevertheless, Gikandi argued, Enwezor understood that despite the primitivism ascribed to Africans by the pens and paintbrushes of some European modernists, and despite the role of colonial institutions in imposing particular ideas of modernization on Africans, modernism also “provided the

⁴ Okwui Enwezor, ‘The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994: An Introduction’ in Okwui Enwezor, ed., *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994* (Munich; London: Prestel, 2001), pp.10-6, p.12.

⁵ Ibid., p.12.

⁶ Gikandi, ‘The Short Century’, p.16.

⁷ Ibid., p.15.

⁸ Ibid., p.15.

⁹ Ibid., p.16.

space – and the tools – with which Eurocentricism could be deconstructed”¹⁰ and with which “to imagine and will into being new nations.”¹¹

Gikandi’s position is surprising because of the scepticism towards modernist writing associated with prominent critics of postcolonial writing. For example, in *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy reads “black countercultures of modernity” as a “philosophical discourse which refuses the modern, occidental separation of ethics and aesthetics, culture and politics.”¹² More generally, it seems tricky to couple modernism with anti-colonial politics because of the conservative, even fascist, politics of prominent modernist writers. Georg Lukács’ response to Theodor Adorno when he argued that modernist writing could be redemptively resistant to commodification – Lukács suggested that Adorno had “taken up residence in the ‘Grand Hotel Abyss’”¹³ – captures a concern that rather than critique, texts often considered modernist offer comfort; rather than visions of change, pretention; rather than engagement, nihilism. ‘Often considered’ is telling, and points to the lack of consensus over what modernism even is. What, then, is to be gained by pushing African literature into an already much contested and inherently amorphous critical category?

As I have mentioned, the vast majority of scholarship about African modernist practice in the context of independence centres on African and Caribbean writing in English.¹⁴ There

¹⁰ Ibid., p.16.

¹¹ Ibid., p.25.

¹² Gilroy, pp.38-9.

¹³ Quoted in Timothy Brennan, ‘Edward Said as a Lukácsian Critic: Modernism and Empire’, *College Literature*, 40.4 (2013), 14-32, p.27.

¹⁴ See for example: Neil Lazarus, ‘Modernism and African Literature’ in Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.228-45; Ato Quayson, ‘Modernism and Postmodernism in African Literature,’ in Abiola Irele and Simon Gikandi, eds., *Cambridge Companion to African Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.824-852; Peter Kalliney, ‘Modernism, African Literature and the Cold War’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 76.3 (2015), 333-68; and Bulson (2017). Bulson does look at work in several languages, but his discussion of “postcolonial” little magazines is mainly focused on *Black Orpheus*, though he does mention the influence of *Présence Africaine*. Salah M. Hassan also mentions *Présence Africaine*, though his focus is on the South African artist Ernest Mancoba in Salah M. Hassan, ‘African Modernism: Beyond Alternative Modernities Discourse’, *South*

are cogent reasons to talk about modernism in relation to this body of writing. Gikandi, Jahan Ramazani and others have drawn attention to the “emulation”¹⁵ of and explicit references to canonical modernist authors such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and William Butler Yeats in the work of writers such as David Rubadiri, Christopher Okigbo, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, Okot p’Bitek, and others, who leveraged, as Ramazani puts it, “Euromodernism against British Romantic, Victorian, and other imperial norms calcified in their local educational and cultural establishments.”¹⁶ Similarly, the rationale for reframing English-language African magazines such as *Transition*, *Drum*, *The Horn* and *Black Orpheus* as modernist little magazines¹⁷ is bolstered by even a brief glance, for example, at the first page of *Transition*, published from 1961 in Uganda, which includes a reference to T. S. Eliot in its mission statement, alongside an advertisement for Coca-Cola. Against this backdrop, the question of how these magazines sought to position themselves in relation to modernism seems a reasonable one to ask. One of the few pieces of scholarship that positions Portuguese-language African magazines as modernist – in this case, *Itinerário*, founded in Mozambique in 1941 – emphasizes its English-language influences.¹⁸ Critical thinking about African modernism has also been influenced by Nigerian critical debates in the 1970s in which Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike attacked African writers – especially Wole Soyinka, John Pepper

Atlantic Quarterly, 109.3 (2010), 451-73. For more categorical exceptions see Elizabeth Harney, ‘The Densities of Modernism’, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 109.3 (2010), 475-503 and A. James Arnold, *Modernism and negritude: the poetry and poetics of Aimé Césaire* (Harvard, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981).

¹⁵ Simon Gikandi, ‘Modernism in the World’, *Modernism/modernity*, 13.3 (2006), 419-424, p.420.

¹⁶ Jahan Ramazani, ‘Modernist bricolage, postcolonial hybridity’, *Modernism/modernity*, 13.3 (2006), 445-463, p.447.

¹⁷ See Kalliney (2015) and Bulson (2017).

¹⁸ Stefan Helgesson argues that the Mozambican journal *Itinerário* was imbricated in developing a “modernist rhetoric of newness” in Mozambique. That journal, with close ties to the Coimbra-based *Vértice*, drew on Portuguese neo-realist practice and African-American influences, publishing Mozambican and Angolan authors. *Itinerário* became an important literary presence in Lourenço Marques until it closed in 1955. See Helgesson, throughout but especially, pp.15-8. Notably, however, Norman Araujo argues the earlier journal *Claridade* was fêted in Portugal by the writers of the modernist magazine *Presença* as “the first manifestation of an enthusiastic Portuguese spirit of modernism outside continental Portugal.” Norman Araujo, ‘The West African Area: Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé e Príncipe’ in *European-language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, pp.267-89, p.273.

Clark and Christopher Okigbo – whom they characterized as “euromodernists, who have assiduously aped the practices of 20th century European modernist poetry.”¹⁹ As Neil Lazarus has argued, those debates became stymied because of the extent to which they relied on a territorially hermetic approach to intellectual and artistic work: Chinweizu et al set up a reductive choice between essentialized Afrocentric traditionalism and an essentialized Eurocentric modernism.²⁰

The question of engagement is central to Gikandi’s argument for expanding the historical and geographical boundaries²¹ of what counts as modernist work to include the writing developed by those “at the forefront of the international struggle against colonialism and racism in the first half of the twentieth century.”²² For Gikandi, Enwezor’s emphasis on art represented a riposte to the more explicitly committed idea of culture preferred by later cultural nationalists who were dismissive of the ambivalences of works they saw as “apolitical, decadent, and an extension of what were considered to be ill-advised theories of artistic autonomy at odds with notions of Sartrean commitment popular in the 1960s and 70s.”²³ Gikandi underlines the role of aesthetic critique, rather than just affirmative cultural nationalism, in the anti-colonial and early postcolonial years. This is an extremely important point. Neil Lazarus echoes Gikandi’s emphasis on critique, admiring the “disconsolation”²⁴

¹⁹ Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike, *Toward the decolonization of African literature: African fiction and poetry and their critics* (London; Boston: KPI, 1985), p.163. These arguments were first set out in the journals *Okike* and *Transition*. See: Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike, ‘Towards the Decolonization of African Literature’ *Okike*, 6 (December 1974) 11-27 and 7 (April 1975), 65-81. Also: Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike, ‘Towards the Decolonization of African Literature’, *Transition*, 48 (1975), 29-37, 54, 56-7. Also, Chinweizu, ‘Prodigals Come Home!’ *Okike* 4 (1973), 1-12.

²⁰ Lazarus, ‘Modernism and African Literature’, esp. pp.230-2.

²¹ For more on periodization, see: Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies’, *Modernism/modernity*, 13.3 (2006), 425-43, pp.431-2.

²² Gikandi, ‘Modernism in the World’, p.423.

²³ Gikandi, ‘The Short Century’, p.15.

²⁴ Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.31. See also Neil Lazarus, ‘The Politics of Postcolonial Modernism’, *The European Legacy*, 7.6 (2002), 771–82, p.778.

of canonical European modernist writing. In Lazarus' view, modernist work "says 'no,' refuses integration, resolution, consolation, comfort; protests and criticizes."²⁵

Gikandi is correct that "notions of Sartrean commitment" were influential amongst some African writers and artists, particularly those working in French. The binary he sets up, however, requires nuancing to capture the extent to which, as I have argued, many writing in French and Portuguese in the 1950s and 1960s did not treat artistic autonomy and commitment as radically opposed. Rather, they sought precisely to escape the binary and articulate new modes of artistic autonomy in the context of anti-colonial engagement. Certainly, Sartre's idea of *une littérature engagée*²⁶ influenced writers at *Mensagem* – in Mário Pinto de Andrade's words "tout ce qu'a écrit Sartre, nous le savions par cœur"²⁷ – and at *Présence Africaine*, where Sartre was a member of the journal's founding editorial committee. In particular, his journal, *Les Temps Modernes*, was an important precedent to *Présence Africaine*. In introducing the journal in its first edition in October 1945, Sartre argued for writerly commitment and against writerly "irresponsabilité."²⁸ He outlined his journal's project in terms of wanting to "produire certains changements dans la Société qui nous entoure"²⁹ specifically by juxtaposing literary with non-literary forms of writing. For Sartre, the possibility of changing society and putting different spheres of reality together was part of an effort to think of "notre propre temps comme une synthèse signifiante."³⁰

²⁵ Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, p.31.

²⁶ "An engaged literature."

²⁷ "We knew everything that Sartre wrote by heart." Andrade and Messiant, 'Sur la Première Génération', p.199.

²⁸ "Irresponsibility." Sartre's 'Présentation des Temps Modernes' is reprinted in *Situations II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), pp.9-30, p.9.

²⁹ "In summary, our intention is to contribute to produce some changes in the Society around us." Sartre, *Situations II*, pp.16-30.

³⁰ "To consider our own times as a meaningful synthesis." Sartre, *Situations II*, p.29.

In important ways, this has clear parallels with the formal project of *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*. Nevertheless, it is important to understand *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* not just as passive receptors of Sartre's influence, but see the ways in which they adopted and adapted the plural influences that shaped their projects. Theodor Adorno's influential critique of Sartre's argument, published in German in 1962,³¹ argued that 'commitment' was problematic because, to avoid becoming dogma, it always needed to remain "politically polyvalent."³² As such, "committed art in the proper sense is not intended to generate ameliorative measures, legislative acts or practical institutions [...] but to work at the level of fundamental attitudes."³³ Adorno advocated a more distanced, "autonomous"³⁴ art, rejecting "commitment" because the "the notion of a 'message' in art, even when politically radical, already contains an accommodation to the world."³⁵ 'Accommodation' does not quite capture the uncompromising quality of Adorno's German: "Im Begriff des 'message,'" he wrote, "steckt schon das weltfreundliche Moment:"³⁶ the notion of message is already infected, he writes, with the moment of being-friendly-to-the-world. This abhorrence of "das weltfreundliche Moment" is important because of Adorno's repeated warnings that art, "which even in its opposition to society remains a part of it,"³⁷ was always vulnerable to losing its bifurcated ability to stand apart from the world even as it stood within it. For Adorno, for art to have any socially critical dimension, it "must close its eyes and ears against"³⁸ the world. Whilst they provide a vocabulary for articulating some of the issues at stake in these debates about commitment and detachment, Adorno and Sartre render these

³¹ 'Engagement,' originally a talk on Radio Bremen, 28 March 1962, was subsequently published under the title 'Engagement oder künstliche Autonomie' in *Die Neue Rundschau*, 73.1 (1962). Reprinted as Theodor Adorno, 'Engagement' in Theodor Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp.409-30, p.429.

³² Adorno, 'Commitment', p.76.

³³ Ibid., p.78.

³⁴ Ibid., p.75.

³⁵ Ibid., p.88.

³⁶ Adorno, 'Engagement', *Noten zur Literatur*, p.429.

³⁷ Adorno, 'Commitment', p.89.

³⁸ Ibid., p.89.

questions in terms of stark binaries that do not easily correspond to either *Mensagem* or *Présence Africaine*, in which threads of both positions coexist.

Présence Africaine and *Mensagem* also differ from the anglophone publications Eric Bulson describes as modernist little magazines such as *The Horn* and *Black Orpheus*, which included no commentary on news, current affairs or state policies.³⁹ As Wole Soyinka later described it, “Black Orpheus was literally non-political. It published poetry and plays, it reproduced artworks, the plastic arts, reported on performance arts. Its mission was to link the diaspora culturally with Africa without getting involved in politics.”⁴⁰ Peter Kalliney’s work raises doubts as to how much this was actually the case, demonstrating that Ulli Beier’s publication was “fastidiously apolitical”⁴¹ partly because of the constraints of the funding it received from the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a CIA front. Nevertheless, there is an obvious difference in emphasis here, all the more remarkable given that *Black Orpheus* declared itself to be continuing the important work of *Présence Africaine*. As I have argued, both *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* explicitly set up connections between the literary and other spheres of life in their juxtaposition of literary work with political commentary (*Présence Africaine*) and notices from the day-to-day of the *Casa* (*Mensagem*). They did not close their eyes and ears against the world, but nor did they simply accept Sartrean commitment. Although both journals rejected a *radical* and *complete* separation between aesthetics, politics and culture (the separation that Gilroy sees as the “modern [...] separation,”⁴²) many of their contributors sought to grapple with ways of finding space for individual artistic concerns to co-exist within a broad commitment to social and political change and to articulating the experience of living in a colonial world. Debates in *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* do not refer by name to *modernismo* or *modernisme*, but the same

³⁹ Bulson, *Little Magazine*, pp.189-218.

⁴⁰ Kalliney, p.354.

⁴¹ Kalliney, p.354. Kalliney’s discussion of the CIA draws on many others’ work.

⁴² Gilroy, pp.38-9.

questions underpinned them about individual creative liberty versus collective social freedom that animated English-language debates about modernism.

In particular, the ways that formalism is discussed and rejected bears a striking resemblance to the modernism that, in an anglophone context, Gikandi, Soyinka and Chinweizu later admire or disparage. This similarity is particularly clear in an intervention by Tom Théobalds in *Présence Africaine*, who sets out explicitly to defend the idea of writerly engagement.⁴³ His essay is hostile to the idea of art as “un petit monde autonome, qui n’a de compte à rendre qu’à ses propres lois,”⁴⁴ an argument he associates with the writers Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco. The tone of “indifférence”⁴⁵ that attends work of this kind, Théobalds argues along Jacques Stéphen Alexis’ lines, renders it fit only for “le délassement d’une minorité cultivée.”⁴⁶ The tonal deficiency troubles him the most, as well as the lack of almost any “sentiment de protestation,”⁴⁷ and the tendency for “espiègleries agréables mais irresponsables”⁴⁸ that he identifies in the work of V. S. Naipaul and Sam Selvon. Théobalds does not refer to modernism by name, but even amidst the protean scholarship on both writers, it would be uncontroversial to understand Beckett and Ionesco’s appearance in his text as ciphers for modernist work. The vocabulary of ambivalence and artistic autonomy Théobalds deploys to criticize formalism also anticipates the terms used in the later anglophone debates about modernism. Even more explicitly, the Martinican writer George Desportes links his critique of formalism to the role of the “*poète nègre moderne* [original emphasis].”⁴⁹ In contrast to those later Nigerian debates, however, and for all their excoriation of formalist work, both Desportes and Théobalds stop short of defending realism

⁴³ Tom Théobalds, ‘La Littérature engagée et l’écrivain antillais’, *Présence Africaine*, 27-8 (1959), 27-36.

⁴⁴ “A little autonomous world, accountable only to its own laws.” *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁴⁵ “Indifference.” *Ibid.*, p.29.

⁴⁶ “Entertainment of a cultivated minority.” *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁴⁷ “Sense of protest.” *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁴⁸ “Agreeable but irresponsible mischief.” *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁴⁹ “*Modern black poet.*” Desportes, p.88.

or traditionalism. Théobalds states explicitly that he is opposed to socialist realism and disavows any automatic connection between engagement and realism. For Théobalds, some “écrivains ‘réalistes’ [...] veulent tout simplement tremper les doigts dans un pâté de boue.”⁵⁰ Desportes, in stronger terms, argues that modern black poets must innovate to refuse both exoticism and formalism, to achieve “à la fois un contenu nouveau et un style neuf. Révolutionnaire intégralement, savoir anticolonialiste, antiexotique, antiformaliste.”⁵¹ As I have also shown, poets in *Mensagem* moved past realism in the development of a new aesthetics of constrained critique. In thinking about ‘African modernism’ in different language-contexts, then, we need to take seriously that shared questions might be expressed in different lexicons.

My point here is not to collapse the differences between African critical currents in Portuguese, English, and French, but nor do I want to posit irreconcilable differences. We need to take account of both similarities and differences. Dominant aesthetic debate in journals such as *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* in the 1950s and 1960s, was not calibrated along the same lines as those defined by Chinweizu and the “euromodernists” in the following decade; nor along the lines defined by European academic philosophy or English-language scholarship. Though debates in French and Portuguese did deploy engagement and writerly responsibility as useful concepts along the lines of the Nigerian modernist detractors like Chinweizu, formal experiment was often not seen, as I have shown, as excluding this commitment. It is important for multilingual comparison to attend to these syncopations about and between concepts.

⁵⁰ “Realist writers [...] want simply to wallow in the mud.” Théobalds, p.29.

⁵¹ “At once a new content and new style. Revolutionary through and through, anti-colonial, anti-exotic, anti-formalist.” Desportes, p.89.

The lexicon of formalism and socialist realism in French and Portuguese pitched prominent debates about appropriate aesthetics as a struggle between elite writing and writing that was orientated towards society more broadly rather than in territorial terms as a struggle between European modernism and African traditionalism. The introduction to Portuguese-language poetry that Virgílio de Lemos wrote in the important poetry anthology *Présence Africaine* published in 1966, the *Nouvelle Somme de Poésie du Monde Noir*,⁵² asserted that lusophone poets did not take up “uma atitude puramente intelectual,”⁵³ but assumed a (to Lemos, distinctive) posture of “fusão com o povo.”⁵⁴ It is important to emphasize, however, that the aesthetics this fusion could take were broad, as evinced by Jose Craveirinha’s poem ‘Mamana Saquina,’ never published in *Mensagem*, but which appeared in the 1966 collection Lemos introduced. Whether or not a modernist poem, it is a poem that addresses the nature of modernity in an aesthetic that clearly exceeds realism. The poem’s title character, a woman, is living in the aftermath of her son João’s failure to return home from working in the mines.⁵⁵ In obvious ways, this poem returns to the theme of extraction Craveirinha had developed in other texts. The poem unfolds in the “mirage deslumbrante da cidade cosmopolita,”⁵⁶ a place where boundaries between different states of matter and different epistemologies blur into one another. Mamana Saquina has spells in her heart – “Ficou cheia de feitiço no coração”⁵⁷ – and a train in her memory. Her memory, the train, its noise and its movements become completely intertwined: “Ficou cheia de comboio na recordação | Embrulhada na cantiga do aço contra o aço.”⁵⁸ The line “João Tavasse-foi-nas minas”⁵⁹ is repeated three times until it begins to distort aurally into the sound of a train

⁵² “New Sum of Poetry from the Black World.”

⁵³ “Purely intellectual attitude.” Virgílio de Lemos, ‘Poesia Africana de expressão portuguesa, breve nota explicativa’, *Présence Africaine*, 57 (1966), 433-4, p.434.

⁵⁴ “Fusion with the people.” Lemos, p.434.

⁵⁵ “Mama Saquina.” José Craveirinha, ‘Mamana Saquina’, *Présence Africaine*, 57 (1966), 479, p.479.

⁵⁶ “The dazzling mirage of the cosmopolitan city.” Craveirinha, ‘Mamana Saquina’, p.479.

⁵⁷ “She was full of spells in her heart.”

⁵⁸ “Her memory was full of the train | wrapped in a song of steel against steel.” Craveirinha, ‘Mamana Saquina’, p.479.

⁵⁹ “João Tavasse-went-in-the-mines.” Craveirinha, ‘Mamana Saquina’, p.479.

moving on the tracks. In this world, the “mirage deslumbrante da cidade” and the “feitiço” are not opposed, but part of a whole reality. In Craveirinha’s poem, the city’s dazzling quality is itself spell-like, and the disappearance of João is almost itself like magic – an unexplained, haunting, play of appearance and disappearance.

The Warwick Research Collective’s recent discussion of the aesthetics of postcolonial modernism and modernity calls for greater attention to literary registrations of the “unevenness”⁶⁰ of capitalist modernity. With this in mind, it is significant that, for Craveirinha, modernity is not only the dazzling city, but also the man who works in the mines, and the woman making sense of it all with spells and steel. This is not a poetics of neo-traditionalism, but a treatment of co-existence between different and uneven elements of colonial capitalism. For all their emphasis on social responsibility, neither Craveirinha nor Lemos’ writing calibrate, like Chinweizu’s, a sense of social concern with a simple traditionalist or essentialising posture. Lemos’ anti-traditionalism is explicit in 1966 when he writes that for the poets he is presenting “não era suficiente revelar uma cultura tradicional negro-africana, mas de impor um enquadramento social onde, o homem negro possa dialogar no mesmo plano com o homem branco.”⁶¹ Lemos sees the poet’s role not as bringing traditionalism into view, but rather as introducing frameworks that allow meaningful social transformation. This anti-traditionalism had also been clear in *Mensagem* in Francisco José Tenreiro’s writing, which is dense with allusions to European literature and art. This allusive strand of Tenreiro’s writing never dissolved completely – even in his 1963 essay, the year of his death, he celebrates the new African literatures as “enriquecidas pela diversidade de contribuições culturais.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Warwick Research Collective [WReC], *Combined and uneven development: towards a new theory of world-literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), p.12.

⁶¹ “It was not enough merely to reveal a traditional black African culture, but rather to establish a social framework within which a black man could speak to a white man on an equal footing.” Lemos, ‘breve nota explicativa’, p.434.

⁶² “Enriched by a diversity of cultural contributions.” Tenreiro, ‘Processo Poesia’, p.10.

Responding to the stark choice posed by Marxist literary critics such as Georg Lukács between “an aesthetically appealing, but decadent modernism, and a fruitful critical realism,”⁶³ Michael Löwy makes the case that, formally speaking, incisive literary critiques of reality under capitalism exceed conventional realist aesthetics. Löwy puts forward the concept of “critical irrationalism,” not as an alternative to realism, or as an ‘anti-realism’ – in Lukács’ phrase – but as a complement to “critical realism.” For Löwy, by “creating an imaginary world, composed of fantastic, supernatural, nightmarish, or simply nonexistent forms, [critical irrationalism can][...] illuminate aspects of reality.”⁶⁴ The examples Löwy gives in his essay are concentrated on the dissident critique of “totally mechanized life”⁶⁵ in Europe that he reads in the work of E. T. A. Hoffmann, Franz Kafka, Aldous Huxley and Fritz Lang. The critiques by African writers of (colonial) capitalism I have been discussing also couple a commitment to social realities with the “logic of the imagination, of the marvelous, of the mystery or the dream.”⁶⁶ In both journals, writers suspicious of the prescriptions of socialist realism sought to find new ways to articulate the reality of capitalist colonialism, in which a stark separation between the weird and the realistic did not hold.

Virgílio de Lemos’ prison diary, published in *Présence Africaine* in 1965, the year before Craveirinha’s poem appeared, illustrates this point. The diary is a record of Lemos’ experience in the PIDE cells of the civil prison in Lourenço Marques (Craveirinha, whose trial Lemos mentions,⁶⁷ was also there in PIDE custody at the time). On 4 July 1962, Lemos notes that he and many other inmates have been selling their blood to finance the lawyers

⁶³ Georg Lukács (1971), quoted in Michael Löwy, ‘The Current of Critical Irrationalism: “A moonlit enchanted night”’ in Matthew Beaumont, ed., *Adventures in Realism* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp.193-206, p.205.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.205.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.200.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.194.

⁶⁷ Virgílio de Lemos, ‘Journal de Prison’, *Présence Africaine*, 54 (1965), 203-20, p.210.

for their trials.⁶⁸ Though written in the same precise prose that records the prison routines, torture procedures and conversations that comprise the rest of the diary, this detail stands out. The macabre power of Lemos' vignette of colonial modernity derives from its dissonant registers: the image of prisoners selling their blood in the hope of freedom is both documentary and melodrama. Meanwhile, the historian Walter Rodney mobilizes the language of insanity to describe the vengeance of the French bureaucrats in Guinea in the aftermath of the independence referendum in 1958. French officials looted Conakry, stripping the light bulbs⁶⁹ from the administrative buildings, destroying documents and damaging the railway lines before they left. "The French administrators," Rodney writes, "literally went crazy and behaved like wild pigs before sailing from Guinea."⁷⁰ If this was the register of the reality of life under Portuguese and French colonialism, it is not surprising that earlier forms of what Löwy calls "irrealism" proved so expressive for socially engaged poets to articulate that experience, not as a mystification or an escape, but as a mode of approaching the real. In this context, the articulation of reality is not opposed to critique: it is critique.

In thinking about how existing concepts of 'African modernism' apply to *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*, it is also important to bear in mind that English-language 'modernist' writers such as Christopher Okigbo were also published by *Présence Africaine* in the 1960s. Okigbo, whom John Pepper Clark situates relation to "his acknowledged master and model"⁷¹ the modernist poet Ezra Pound, disavows political responsibilities. At the 1962 Kampala Writers' Conference Okigbo provocatively rejected the idea that his texts should

⁶⁸ Lemos, 'Journal', p.216.

⁶⁹ Paul Nugent, *Africa since independence: a comparative history* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition, 2012), p.49.

⁷⁰ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1981), p.278.

⁷¹ J. P. Clark, 'A note on Nigerian Poetry', *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 30, 58 (1966), 55-64, p.59. Clark's essay also appeared in French translation: John Pepper Clark, 'Note sur la Poésie Nigérienne', *Présence Africaine*, 58 (1966), 56-66.

have wider social import, claiming that he did not “read my poetry to non-poets.”⁷² In Okigbo’s ‘The Limits,’ the broader struggle is reduced to a lonely struggle of the writer:

& the mortar is not yet dry [...]
Then we must sing
Tongue-tied without name or audience,
Making harmony among the branches.⁷³

Okigbo is not as cut-and-dried in the poem as he was in Kampala. As well as affirming the place of a poetry that people can listen to like birdsong, without understanding its meaning, his lines also register an anxiety about failing to speak in the absence of an audience. Birdsong is sometimes, after all, only background noise. Nevertheless, Okigbo’s “we” refers to a community that is not a political, social or national but rather a poetic grouping, and locates itself strictly in the context of a poetic project. Okigbo’s vision of poetic autonomy here differs in important ways from the ideas of autonomy within commitment I have argued were dominant in *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*, that imagined not only the liberty of the isolated poet but also a political and artistic autonomy that disavowed handed-down prescription.

Accordingly, this kind of writing, which John Pepper Clark associates with “the moderns” and in which “we come to a traumatic break in the line of communication that prevailed all along between poet and public”⁷⁴ was not, in Raymond Williams’ typology, the “dominant” strand of writing in *Présence Africaine*. However, from the early 1960s, it became an “emergent”⁷⁵ strand of the magazine’s whole.⁷⁶ Writers such as Okigbo, Gabriel Okara and

⁷² J. P. Clark, ‘A note’, p.59.

⁷³ Extended from the Okigbo quotation that appears at: J. P. Clark, ‘A note’, p.60.

⁷⁴ J. P. Clark, ‘A note’, p.56.

⁷⁵ See Raymond Williams’ chapter ‘Dominant, Residual and Emergent’ in his *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.121-7.

⁷⁶ See for example, Irele’s mention of T.S Eliot in Abiola Irele, ‘Les Livres’, *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 234-50, p.234.

John Pepper Clark, then, were occasionally published in *Présence Africaine* and also appeared in the *Nouvelle Somme de Poésie du Monde Noir*. *Présence Africaine* also engaged with English-language African debates under the auspices of a pan-Africanist optic, including, for example, a lengthy report on the Kampala Conference.⁷⁷ This serves as an important reminder, again, that it is not possible entirely to separate out the different linguistic threads of African literary histories. Across Portuguese, French and English-language African literary work around independence, there were disagreements between and within these groups centred on the question of how individual artistic freedom related to collective social and political freedoms.⁷⁸ Literary journals such as *Présence Africaine* make this particularly clear.

In his preface to the English-language (though not African-American) section of 1966 *Nouvelle Somme de Poésie du Monde Noir*, the editor Abiola Irele emphasized that African writing in English did not necessarily share more than the English language, and that it was not radically different from African writing in other languages.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Irele wrote, introducing Okigbo, Soyinka and Clark, “the transformation of African society makes their poetry in the final analysis an exploration of the reality of the African experience as it presents itself at the present moment.”⁸⁰ Rather than intractably opposed, this reading sounds remarkably close to the aesthetically open-ended commitment to rendering reality that I have suggested underpinned French and Portuguese-language African work, that aimed, as Mário Pinto de Andrade put it, for “la meilleure appréhension esthétique du réel.”⁸¹

⁷⁷ Bernard Fonlon, ‘Report on the Kampala Conference’, English Series, 17, 45 (1963), 130-44.

⁷⁸ See also Abiola Irele, ‘African Poetry of English Expression’, *Présence Africaine*, 57 (1966), 263-5, p.263 and [no named author], ‘Resolution on Literature’, *Présence Africaine*, 24-5 (1959), 423-8, p.425.

⁷⁹ A call for prospective poets to send their work to Abiola Irele at *Présence Africaine* in Paris to be considered for inclusion into the anthology appeared in the Ugandan magazine *Transition*. In it, Irele referred to “the need for a strong and healthy dialogue across language barriers at the cultural level to match as well as complete the political and social rapprochement” Abiola Irele, ‘English/French Anthology’, *Transition*, 11 (1963), 33, p.33.

⁸⁰ Irele, ‘African Poetry of English Expression’, p.265.

⁸¹ “The best aesthetic apprehension of the real.” Andrade, ‘La poésie africaine d'expression portugaise’, p.51.

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My argument, then, is not in any simple sense that *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* are modernist journals. Rather, I have been suggesting that we need to move away from a binary categorization of African work as ‘modernist’ or ‘engaged,’ to see the questions and preoccupations shared by writers and editors in different languages. We are not faced with a stark choice between similarity and difference. Comparison between African writing in different languages needs to work with a sense of syncopation, an attentiveness to different vocabularies, and to the spatial overlaps between writing from different contexts that we see on the pages of literary journals that assumed such an important role in African letters in the 1950s and 1960s.

In this last section, which addresses evolving ideas about literature in the late 1960s, I want to return to Neil Lazarus’ suggestion that modernist work “says ‘no;’ refuses integration, resolution, consolation, comfort; protests and criticizes.”⁸² Clearly, there were strands in both *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* that do not correspond to the type of refusal Lazarus has in mind, and that we might think of more as representative of the cultural nationalism Gikandi opposes to modernist work. In the early years of independence from the French empire, for example, there was often a tangible optimism about where the political and cultural changes in Africa would lead in the future. The columns about cinema by the film director and historian Paulin Vieyra – originally from Benin but who settled in Senegal – published in *Présence Africaine* from the 1950s to the 1970s typify this optimism. As the review’s cinema correspondent-at-large, Vieyra wrote several articles discussing the role of

⁸² Lazarus, *Postcolonial Unconscious*, p.31.

cinema in modern Africa and also wrote reports and criticism from the state-sponsored film and cultural festivals held in post-independence African states.⁸³ His articles evince huge faith in a future flourishing of African culture and cinema. Vieyra imagined the new states that anti-colonial movements were engendering in Africa to have the potential to galvanize social and artistic change, in which cinema would play a decisive role in modernizing and rationalizing African societies and in forging a sense of national consciousness.⁸⁴

This thread of cultural nationalism certainly exists more broadly in *Présence Africaine*, both at the national and the pan-African level, as evinced by the ‘Manifeste Culturel Panafricain’⁸⁵ published in the journal in 1969. The manifesto, agreed at the pan-African cultural festival in Algiers that year, ended with a forty-point list of proposed actions that would promote “l'utilisation dynamique dans la vie actuelle des peuples africains des éléments de la culture africaine.”⁸⁶ The list is ambitious, including the aspiration to create a Pan-African cinema institute⁸⁷ and to effect massive adult literacy campaigns.⁸⁸ It is also explicitly aimed at supporting and furthering the anti-colonial cause.⁸⁹ The scale of these futurist ambitions – and of Vieyra’s faith in culture and cinema – is deeply utopian given the scale of the work needed to be done, and the scale of the revolution required, in order to achieve success. Though it would be unfair to characterize cultural nationalism as opposed to critique – these ideas and projects also represent a critique of the global status quo – the tone of these texts is a far cry from the modernist “disconsolation”⁹⁰ Lazarus underlines.

⁸³ Including Alger 1969, Carthage 73, 75 and 78, FESPACO 1976, 1979, 1987, and Senegal 1976.

⁸⁴ See: Paulin Vieyra, ‘Propos sur le cinéma Africain’, *Présence Africaine*, 22 (1958), 106-17 and Paulin Vieyra, ‘Responsabilités du cinéma dans la formation d’une conscience nationale Africaine’, *Présence Africaine*, 27-8 (1959), 303-13.

⁸⁵ “Pan-African Cultural Manifesto.”

⁸⁶ “The dynamic use of elements of African culture in the present life of African peoples.” [no named author], ‘Manifeste culturel panafricain’, *Présence Africaine*, 71 (1969), 115-23, p.121.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.121.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.123.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, ‘Manifeste culturel panafricain’, p.122.

⁹⁰ Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, p.31. See also Lazarus, ‘The Politics of Postcolonial Modernism’, p.778.

Their register also is in a different key to the poems such as Okigbo's and U'Tamsi's that I have discussed.

To pitch the debate as an opposition between modernism and cultural nationalism, however, would be to occlude an important strand of African thinking about literature and politics in the 1960s and 1970s: the place of literature in the ongoing armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism. This body of thinking is not accurately described as culturally nationalist because it evolved in a pre- rather than post-independence context. The question at hand was not how culture could be deployed in the service of the nation, but in the service of the struggle. FRELIMO and the PAIGC in particular placed much emphasis on the place of culture in the liberation struggle.

In his writing about this topic in the late 1960s and 1970s, Mário Pinto de Andrade grows increasingly ambivalent about the political value of the poetry of critique he earlier championed. Although he continued to see literacy and writing as more broadly emancipatory, and to emphasize the close connection between cultural and national development, he becomes less confident that writing is itself a particularly important part of culture. He repeatedly refers to, and develops, the argument he listened to Frantz Fanon set out at the 1959 *Deuxième Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs*⁹¹ in Rome that political struggle itself was the true cultural expression of a people: “a praxis política era uma obra cultural por excelência. Eis um pensamento de Fanon, que o nosso grupo vai aprofundar.”⁹² For Andrade, the political expression of a people through political resistance was itself an expression of culture just as important as anything to be found on the page. His conception

⁹¹ “Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists.”

⁹² “Political praxis is cultural work par excellence. This is an idea of Fanon's, on which our group built.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.155. See also Iwiyé Kala-Lobé, Mário Pinto de Andrade et al, ‘Palabres’, *Présence Africaine*, 65 (1968), 156-65, p.162. Also Mário de Andrade, ‘Prefácio’ in Mário de Andrade, ed., *Antologia Temática de Poesia Africana, Vol II: O Canto Armado* (Lisbon: Sá da Costa 1979), pp.1-14, p.8.

of culture here is broad, focussed on collective and everyday practices. Nevertheless, he also celebrates the *guerrilla* poetry that had developed, a poetry that was no longer the preserve of an educated élite, whose authors were often collective and anonymous.

Where in the 1950s, the CEA's encounter with literary work led them to question the ontological and epistemological frameworks they had been taught, Andrade's attitude to the role of poetry in the struggle became increasingly utilitarian. Writing about the use of poetry on the ground as part of the armed struggle in *Souffles* in 1969, he wrote that "la poésie assume en outre une tâche de mobilization directe s'adressant à ceux qui n'ont pas encore rejoint la lutte armée."⁹³ By the time he drafted the preface to the last volume of his thematic anthology of lusophone African poetry *O Canto Armado*,⁹⁴ written in Bissau, the capital of Guinea-Bissau, in November 1978, he hails this new poetry's ability to communicate "confiança no Partido, certeza na libertação, vitória do poder das armas [...] referências ao passado para melhor sublinhar as mutações do presente, enunciados da acção a empreender com toda a urgência [original emphasis]."⁹⁵ Where, during the "noite colonial,"⁹⁶ poetry had been marked by "um carácter alusivo e mergulhava num clima de clandestinidade,"⁹⁷ now, in emancipated places, the key characteristic of – mainly oral – poetry is its "linguagem clara e directa."⁹⁸

Andrade is writing from a newly post-independence context almost twenty years after most French African colonies' independence. In some ways, Andrade's position can be read as

⁹³ [No named author], 'Intervention commune des mouvements de libération des colonies portugaises M.P.L.A. - FREMILO - P.A.I.G.C.: culture et combat de liberation', *Souffles*, 16-7 (1969-70), 23-5. [Not individually paginated] http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/deanhum/langlit/french/souffles/S1617/23h_16.HTM [accessed 3 August 2018]

⁹⁴ "The Armed Song."

⁹⁵ "Confidence in the party, certainty of liberation, victory of the power of weapons [...] [and includes] references to the past to better underline changes in the present, statements of action to be urgently undertaken." Andrade, 'Prefácio', p.9.

⁹⁶ "Colonial night." Ibid., p.8.

⁹⁷ "An allusive character, immersed in a climate of secrecy." Ibid., p.8.

⁹⁸ "Clear and direct language." Ibid., p.8.

the revolutionary counter-response to the colonial practices of using literature to assimilate élites, which also relied on a certain confidence in the link between culture and socialization. Certainly, for a university-educated intellectual from a country with an overwhelmingly illiterate population (99% of Angolans could not read or write in 1978), there is much to agree with in Andrade's impulse to decentre the written word and to celebrate popular creativity. What is problematic in Andrade's suggestion that poetry can play an almost causal role in ensuring people arrive at a prescribed political position is that it downgrades not only the nuance of the poetry in question, but also the sophistication of the guerrillas as readers and critics. In as much as Andrade figures these new audiences as passive receivers of ideas, his celebration of this new poetry is coloured by a striking disregard for the independence of thought of the guerrillas from a man who professes commitment to their emancipation.

In 1978, Andrade imagines that poetry can hand down pre-determined certainties – he talks of “a necessidade de comunicar o justo, o prático, o belo.”⁹⁹ In contrast, he and his comrades saw poetry differently in their own coming to consciousness two decades earlier. They used poetry to question received conceptions of justice and beauty. In 1978, however, Andrade seemed uninterested in the question of whether the “*maquis* [original emphasis]”¹⁰⁰ should be developing the critical faculties he himself found so politicising in his youth. Perhaps this was because, in a political climate when parties such as the MPLA or FRELIMO relied on popular support for legitimacy at home and abroad, certainty and loyalty were more expedient than the shades of grey that critical pedagogies risked engendering.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ “The need to communicate what is just, what is practical, what is beautiful.” Ibid., p.11.

¹⁰⁰ “*Maquis*.” Ibid., p.9.

¹⁰¹ Significantly for Andrade, who had been one of the founders of the MPLA, factionalism had engulfed the party. On 27 May 1977, under Agostinho Neto's leadership, the MPLA executed many supporters of Nito Alves, who had led an uprising against Neto. (See Lara Pawson, *In the Name of the People: Angola's Forgotten Massacres* (London: I.B. Tauris: 2014), p.5.) The exact death toll is unknown and disputed, though some estimates are as high as 30,000. Andrade, a former ally but by then long-standing critic of Neto, was not

When he addressed the Angolan Writers' Union as president of Angola in 1979, Agostinho Neto still denounced socialist realism as he had done in *Mensagem* in the 1950s.¹⁰² In that speech, however, he had begun to disparage what he saw as "imported aspects"¹⁰³ in Angolan literature, in a way redolent of Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike's traditionalist discourse. The changes in Andrade and Neto's modes of talking about poetry bring into relief the different ideas of the earlier decades, that had so productively theorized and practiced a recursive relationship between critique and commitment.

In thinking about how to compare these different texts, groups of texts, and literary critical debates alongside one another, then, it is important to take seriously both the distinctiveness of their propositions, intellectual trajectories and conclusions as well as the shared questions about freedom and commitment that animated them. Unlike in later English-language work, the question of whether African writers' work counted as modernist, or related to writers later claimed as modernists,¹⁰⁴ was not at the forefront of *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* in the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, animated by the relationship between individual and social liberty, French- and Portuguese-language critics and writers sought to rethink received understandings of political aesthetics, rejecting pure formalism and prescriptive ideas of socialist realism as well as what Soyinka called "Neo-Tarzanism."¹⁰⁵ an attachment

involved in the 1977 purge. He had resigned from the MPLA in 1974 and moved to Bissau to serve as Minister of Culture in the post-independence PAIGC government led by Amílcar Cabral's brother, Luís. Nevertheless, as an architect of the MPLA and advocate of the guerrilla struggle across the continent, he remained heavily implicated in these dynamics.

¹⁰² Agostinho Neto, 'On National Culture', *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 11.2 (1982), 13-18, p.15.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.17.

¹⁰⁴ Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London; New York: Verso, 1989, 2007), p.32: "Modernism has been retrospective as a general term since the 1950s."

¹⁰⁵ Soyinka, 'Neo-Tarzanism', p.44.

to a post-fabricated idea of tradition. Perry Anderson has argued for a conjunctural¹⁰⁶ understanding of European modernism in the early twentieth century couched mainly in terms of the social and historical dynamics that made the work possible.¹⁰⁷ While the conjuncture of the anti-colonial years was different to that which Anderson outlines, it was also characterized by radical upheaval that was fundamentally connected, not separate, to social developments in European capitalism. We can see the ways that writing in different languages and from different places responded to these changes in particular and sometimes analogous ways without insisting they are all part of a modernist tradition that passes via English 'Victorian' culture, or through James Joyce or Frantz Kafka. What comes into view is a changing and a formally, linguistically, historically and geographically contingent set of ideas about the relationship between politics and literature. The form of the journal makes this contingency particularly visible, but the point stands more broadly. In the next chapter I discuss the implications of this contingency for contemporary arguments about politics and literature in postcolonial studies.

¹⁰⁶ Perry Anderson, 'Modernity and Revolution', *New Left Review*, 144 (1984), 96-113, p.104. For a discussion of conjunctural analysis, see Stuart Hall and Doreen Massey, 'Interpreting the Crisis', *Soundings*, 44.1 (2010), 57-71, p.57.

¹⁰⁷ Perry Anderson, p.104.

CHAPTER 4: A DIALECTIC OF LITERATURE AND POLITICS

Far from dragging politics into my art, art has dragged me into politics
John Berger¹

Je n'ai pas de message [...] Les messages ne m'intéressent pas
Sarah Maldoror²

In a review published in the academic journal *Comparative Literature*, Chris Bongie reflects on the marginality of literary texts to Robert Young's *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Bongie describes Young's book as a "theory-philic and literature-phobic historical introduction to a postcolonialism that has little or nothing to do with texts as we understand them [original emphasis]."³ Though Bongie's italicized *we* seems, at best, oddly optimistic in its evocation of a shared consensus in literary studies as to how to ground the concept of literature, the formulation he establishes interests me here because of the oppositional relationship he sets up between literature and theory.

Though Bongie reprised his argument, almost word-for-word, several years later,⁴ it is worth noting that this review was published sixteen years ago. I do not want to arbitrate Bongie's contretemps with Young or suggest that the review itself has been particularly important. Rather, I start with Bongie because his text so clearly sets out some of the stakes of an extensive debate about the relationship between politics and literature which I see as the

¹ Quoted in Geoff Dyer, 'Editor's Introduction' in Geoff Dyer, ed., *John Berger Selected Essays* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), pp.ix-xiii, p.xi.

² "I have no message [...] Messages don't interest me." 'Sarah Maldoror répond à Martiniklité,' 23 May 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcmFhzkByFk&list=PL4F9F4AA95C2690A6&index=25> [accessed 13 February 2017], 3.18mins.

³ Chris Bongie, 'Review Essay: What's Literature Got to Do with It,' *Comparative Literature*, 54.3 (2002), 256-67, p.267.

⁴ Chris Bongie *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), pp.15-24. See esp. pp.20-1.

inheritor of the debate about anti-colonial politics, literature and aesthetics I have been discussing, albeit reframed to centre the role of the reader, the critic, and the scholar rather than the writer. The literature-theory debate in postcolonial studies is profoundly bound up with questions of the function of literature, and the relationship of literature to politics.

My aim in this chapter, then, is to bring the earlier bodies of thought I have discussed, and the connections between politics and literature that *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* inscribe, to bear on this debate in postcolonial studies. Fundamentally, I make two arguments: first, that we should think of literary writing not as subordinate to theoretical writing but as a form of thought in its own right. Second, I suggest that we cannot settle the question of the relationships between politics and literature in the abstract. Rather, we need to see both ‘the literary’ and ‘the political’ as mutable, historically and geographically contingent categories, that are in a dialectical, rather than hierarchical, relationship. This chapter serves as a bridge between the previous two chapters, which have dealt with changing ideas about the politics of the literary, and the next two chapters, that address literary contestations of the political.

Young’s history of revolutionary and anti-colonial praxis is particularly concerned with the “everyday practices and material conditions”⁵ of colonialism. In this frame, Young suggests, cultural and literary works have to be understood not as central to histories of (anti-) colonialism but “as an unofficial, secondary body of texts,” in disjunctive relation to official colonial discourse.⁶ Although it is important to ask whose perspectives a primary focus on “official” history occludes, Young’s argument that literary texts mostly have some distance from state colonial discourse is relatively uncontroversial. In response, Bongie does not

⁵ Bongie, ‘What’s Literature Got to Do with It’, p.265.

⁶ Robert J.C.Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2016), pp.409-10.

argue for a more central role for literature in postcolonial studies, but instead moves to different ground, arguing that critics working on postcolonial literature:

need to come to terms with the fact that if literature matters, it matters first and foremost as literature [...] literary studies is *not* postcolonial studies, and that is nothing to be ashamed of, even if to acknowledge a primary commitment to literature necessarily entangles one in a rather different, and quite probably more bourgeois and elitist, set of ideological assumptions and discursive practices than postcolonialism has to offer. Those of us whose paramount charge is literature would do well not to wish away the relative autonomy of literary practice when it comes to both colonial and postcolonial discourse.⁷

This statement raises several questions. What does it mean to have a “primary commitment” or “paramount charge?” Where might a defiant embrace of “bourgeois and elitist” practices lead? Most fundamentally, the statement raises questions about the disciplinary boundaries that Bongie erects (or perhaps, resurrects) around a conglomeration of work – postcolonial studies – that has not been confined to a single discipline or field of knowledge, and, if anything, has called these separations into question. Because postcolonial studies is not a discipline, nor, as Bongie rightly argues, a label, but rather a critical perspective, we could easily imagine the literary studies that preface Bongie’s “is not postcolonial studies” replaced with any another discipline in which work informed by postcolonial theories has emerged: history, political philosophy, geography, history of art, cultural studies, and so on. Indeed, a “primary commitment”⁸ to any one of those academic disciplines might risk entangling a scholar in sets of “ideological assumptions and discursive practices”⁹ that are “bourgeois and elitist.”¹⁰ Of course, Young and Bongie are right that not everyone who takes up political questions is particularly interested in reading or writing literature, but abandoning the contested politics of postcolonial perspectives in favour of a disciplinary commitment does not settle the question of how to read literary work in that context.

⁷ Bongie, ‘What’s Literature Got to Do with It’, p.266.

⁸ Ibid., p.266.

⁹ Ibid., p.266.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.266.

Part of the problem is Bongie's notion of "primary" and "paramount" concerns. What are these, and who has them? Bongie's single-issue approach to commitment recurs: he suggests that while much "so-called postcolonial literary criticism," is undermined by an "unhelpful anxiety" about the place of literature in "a world of transnational social injustice," the "authors themselves, primarily intent on their craft as writers"¹¹ are unlikely to be distracted by these postcolonial-theoretical questions. Yet the histories I have discussed of writers struggling precisely with the question of how to connect their craft with an awareness of "a world of transnational social injustice," belies this conception of primary intent. These histories speak to plural, not singular, commitments. Certainly, writers and editors at *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* did seek a place for specific attention to the literary and to writerly craft, but not as a primary commitment; rather, as an articulated and dialectical commitment. For many, as I have argued, their literary writing practice was not an escape from the political or the social, but an attempt to capture, to powerfully express, real experience. Their work, then, might share the questions posed by work we call theoretical, albeit expressed in forms which allow more space for idiosyncrasy, disjunction, contradiction, irrationality and sentiment. Real experience, of course, can include all of these.

Bongie's concern with salvaging literary forms of thought from annihilation under the wheels of a theoretical juggernaut has also come from some critics positioned outside postcolonial studies. Monika Albrecht, for example, claims that "postcolonial literary criticism is in most parts an instrumental reading"¹² and characterizes postcolonial studies as rejecting "literariness as downright reactionary."¹³ Similar, though more nuanced critiques of the ways that theory and literature have been put into conversation come from Deepika

¹¹ Ibid., p.266.

¹² Monika Albrecht, 'Comparative Literature and Postcolonial Studies revisited. Reflections in Light of Recent Transitions in the Fields of Postcolonial Studies', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 10.1 (2013), 47-65, p.52.

¹³ Albrecht, p.53.

Bahri and Neil Lazarus. Bahri draws on postcolonial theory and Frankfurt School Critical Theory to express a concern with the “devaluation of the literariness of literature in the politically correct classroom.”¹⁴ Lazarus also distinguishes between literature and theory, claiming “I am sure I am not alone among scholars who read and teach ‘postcolonial’ *literature* as well as postcolonial *theory* in deploring [...] the sheer opportunism of so many of the critical readings currently being produced [original emphasis].”¹⁵ Lazarus’ concern here is that the conversation established by critics between forms of writing considered literary and those considered theoretical is actually a one-way discussion: the foregone conclusions of theoretical texts are “staged through reference”¹⁶ to subordinated literary texts. This position is analogous to the concern expressed by poets such as David Diop in 1956, who argued that poetic militancy did not just involve treating poems as a stage for predetermined political agendas.

Bahri’s appeal to “literariness”¹⁷ stems from a similar concern with the potential foreclosures she associates with “a critical approach based on the approximation of the aesthetic to the thematic kernel and its political import.”¹⁸ Clearly, the concept of literariness is freighted here not least because one of the key interventions of postcolonial studies in its earlier years was to call into question received understandings of the literary and to fracture restrictive definitions of literary value and the exclusions they engendered. Some critics continue to equate the literary with merit, notably Bongie, who argues unconvincingly that literature as such “has a *value* other texts [...] quite simply do not possess.”¹⁹ By contrast, Bahri here is not talking about literariness as a barometer of excellence, but rather as a way of describing

¹⁴ Deepika Bahri, *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p.14.

¹⁵ Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, p.22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹⁷ Bahri, p.14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹⁹ Bongie, *Friends and Enemies*, p.14.

the norms and aesthetics that characterize the modes of expression she considers literary.²⁰ In particular, she gestures to the suspension of norms of logic and rational argument in (some) literary forms of expression and to a certain distance from “the logic of instrumental and exploitative rationalism.”²¹ Although not all literature *necessarily* stands back from rationalism or instrumentalism, Bahri’s point remains significant in its emphasis that the rationalist, formal codes of (some, especially political) theory are only one of many different textual postures to strike, and only one of the postures that we should take seriously as a mode of expression.

This return to ideas of literariness, literary specificity and literary indeterminacy in connection to postcolonial studies²² should not be read as an advocacy of the social or political merits of indeterminacy and detachment as such. The genealogy of this particular appeal to the literary specificity should be distinguished from, for example, what Rita Felski calls the “sangfroid [...] of New Criticism.”²³ We can understand this postcolonial appeal to literary specificity as a response to a period of reading texts as composed of an easily reflectivist language or as over-determined by their context. Michèle Barrett has described such a critical attitude as one that treats texts as “passive and innocent terrain on which ideological armies go about their usual battles.”²⁴ As I discuss in Chapter One, the significance of reading form as one way that texts ‘speak’ is that it moves away from a

²⁰ See also: “‘Literary value’ is only one of the reasons to read literary texts” in Nicholas Harrison, ‘Review Essay: Life on the Second Floor’, *Comparative Literature*, 59.4 (2007), 332-48, p.344. Also Sorcha Gunne, ‘Mind the Gap: An Interview with Neil Lazarus’, *Postcolonial Text*, 7.3 (2012), 1-16, p.6.

²¹ Bahri, p.16.

²² See, for example: ‘Who needs an idea of the literary?’ in Nicholas Harrison, ed. *The Idea of the Literary (Special edition of Paragraph: the journal of the Modern Critical Theory Group, 28.2)* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2005), pp.1-17; and Eli Park Sorensen, *Postcolonial Studies and the Literary: Theory, Interpretation, and the novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), especially ‘Returning to the Literary’, pp.26-51.

²³ Rita Felski, ‘Suspicious Minds’, *Poetics Today*, 32.2 (2011), 216-34, p.220.

²⁴ Michèle Barrett, ‘The Place of Aesthetics in Marxist Criticism’ in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), pp.697-713, p.699.

content-distilling mode of reading. This motive underpins Deepika Bahri's call for a revived Adornian "immanent criticism"²⁵ as well as Roberto Schwarz's emphasis on the dialectical relationship between literary and social forms.²⁶ Eagleton explicitly defends formal attentiveness as a rejection of "the notorious question which some Marxist criticism has addressed to literary works [...] is its political tendency correct?"²⁷ Rather, Eagleton argues, "we find the impress of history in the literary work precisely as *literary*, not as some superior form of social documentation."²⁸

I am focussing on literature here, but this attention to formal specificity could – with due attention to their specific norms – be transposed to musical, artistic, cinematic and other forms of expression. Indeed, this is where Sarah Maldoror's interpellation in the epigraph to this chapter that "les messages ne m'intéressent pas"²⁹ should give us pause. Maldoror is a militant film-maker. She was trained in the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Political movements – the MPLA, the FLN,³⁰ the PAIGC – funded her work. It would be easy to see her films as freighted with political messages. But such a reading is complicated if we are to take seriously her disavowal of her work as a vehicle for political conclusions. If we re-watch a film like *Sambizanga* with an eye for everything but 'message,' what do we see? I return to the question of how militant women's work has often been read as document rather than art in Chapter Six.

²⁵ Bahri, p.29.

²⁶ See Roberto Schwarz, *Ao vencedor as batatas. Forma literária e processo social no início do romance brasileiro* (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1977), p.51.

²⁷ Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, p.52. See also: "the interpretive method which is governed [...] by the arbitrary correlation of the economic situation and the subject of study, leads very quickly to abstraction and unreality." Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1990), p.281. See also Raymond Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', *New Left Review*, 82 (1973), 3-16 and Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and form; twentieth-century dialectical theories of literature* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1971).

²⁸ Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, p.23.

²⁹ "Messages don't interest me."

³⁰ The Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale*.

The most persuasive reason to reemphasize a sense of literary particularity is to defend the position that valid and important forms of expression and thought, including political thought, come in more formally diverse manifestations than rational or argued prose,³¹ as I have argued in particular in relation to *Mensagem*. These forms of socially and historically important expression need to be read on their own terms, with attention to disjunction, idiosyncrasy and indeterminacy, if we are to understand, to properly hear, what people were trying to register or say in terms that might not already be familiar, rather than translating the content into recognizable categories. If we take form seriously as crucial to a text's expression, distilling the text's 'content' into theoretical conclusions changes that content too.

Understanding literary texts as thought is different from the cause-and-effect model inscribed in Peter Hallward's reprisal of a familiar justification of the literary in terms of linguistic alchemy. He asserts "what is distinctive about literature is its capacity to invent new ways of using words [...] in other words, its capacity to provoke people to *think* [original emphasis]."³² However, we cannot generalize to say literary expression is particular because it makes people think (though, often, it might) nor because literature finds new ways with words (some literature is highly formulaic, and in any case an encounter with a literary text is not a purely linguistic encounter). The point is that particularity cannot be adjudicated at the level of the mutable category of "literature." Whether literature makes us think or finds new ways with words, or does not, depends on the specific text. All we can say about the category as a whole is that particular conventions and norms apply to it. In Bahri's terms, we

³¹ See also Nicholas Harrison, 'Assia Djebar: 'Fiction as a way of "thinking"' in Forsdick and Murphy, eds., *Postcolonial Thought*, pp.65-76.

³² Peter Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial: writing between the singular and the specific* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.xx.

do not expect literary writing, unlike some other forms of writing, necessarily to follow the “the logic of [...] rationalism.”³³

My suggestion, then, is that we think of literary texts not as subordinate to theory but as thought themselves, whose significance is largely diluted if they are simply paraphrased in the terms of a regime of discourse with more social authority, namely, political discourse.³⁴ It is in this sense that the contemporary debate has the strongest echoes of anti-colonial debates about the function of literature – though clearly the terms and conditions of possibility differ – because it hinges on the question of how texts and writers should relate to preexisting political agendas. As I argued in Chapter Two, many writers sought to carve a middle path between artistic freedom and political commitment: to insist on an abrasive and sometimes syncopated relationship between the world of political discourse and the world of literary writing.

To break down the opposition between literature and ‘theory,’ to understand both literature and theory as forms of thought and expression, moves us into different territory in terms of justifying the place of literary work amidst non-literary histories. It also makes more legible the rich history of theorists drawing on literary work. As Brenkman argues, perhaps there is something “beyond idealization at work in the fact that Derrida crystallized a theoretical project through a reading of Mallarmé, Kristeva through Lautreamont, Said through Conrad, Jameson through Balzac, Gilbert and Gubar through the Brontës, Baker through Ellison,

³³ Bahri, p.16.

³⁴ Nicholas Harrison touches on this question in his discussion of the notion that “that the ‘most literary’ texts are the ‘most political.’” Harrison writes that: “to ‘defend’ the literary in such terms is to risk continuing to subordinate it to the political (or to a conventional notion of the political) in a way that again may render it ultimately indefensible, if to do so means accepting tacitly that ‘distance’ from the political is something that always needs to be justified politically.” Harrison, ‘Who needs an idea of the literary?’, p.13. See also an “idea of the literary as both deeply politically involved and as irreducible to any determinate critical or political agenda.” Nicholas Harrison, ‘Preface’ in Harrison, ed., *The Idea of the Literary*, pp.iii-vi, p.iv.

Deleuze through Proust, Lacan through Sophocles, Barthes through Racine, and on and on. These crystallizations of theory [...] found their own indispensable resources and sources in literature.”³⁵ And of course, when Bongie asserts that “literary studies *are not* postcolonial studies,”³⁶ it is hard entirely to be convinced by his occlusion of the history of academic postcolonial studies as emerging from literature departments. When we look at journals such as *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine*, we also see an anti-colonial project, part of broader anti-colonial movements, deeply imbricated in the study and production of letters and literature.³⁷ Both journals register the sentiment made explicit by Aimé Césaire at *Présence Africaine*’s 1959 *Deuxième Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs*³⁸ in Rome that in colonial society, artistic and writerly creativity was itself disruptive because European colonialism operated not only with master/servant dichotomies but also with hierarchies of creators and consumers.³⁹

The histories that these literary journals bring into view also fundamentally destabilize the sharply delineated sense of a primary commitment to literature. Many writers were also activists. Writing was one of many different practices in which they were involved and, whilst at the moment of writing their craft was their focus, it is not easy to predetermine how this focus was separate from their other preoccupations. In some cases, we might speculate that it was more of a temporary delimited focus than an essential state of being. To transpose this history to the present, no-one is *only* a literary critic or writer: reading and writing are

³⁵ Brenkman, ‘Extreme Criticism’, p.111.

³⁶ Bongie, ‘What’s Literature Got to Do with It’, p.266.

³⁷ See also Jane Hiddleston, ‘Fanon and the Uses of Literature’, *Nottingham French Studies*, 54.1 (2015), 38-51.

³⁸ “Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists.”

³⁹ Césaire, ‘L’homme de culture’, p.118. The importance of the aesthetic to broader resistive agendas is made in strong terms by Bahri, who argues that “aesthetic activity remains necessary for the full emancipation of the human senses, without always yielding a transparently political program.” Bahri, p.119. This has echoes of John Brenkman’s appeal to “overcoming the subordination of consciousness to the economy through the transformation of the economy and of consciousness.” John Brenkman ‘Theses on Cultural Marxism’, *Social Text*, 7 (1983), 19-33, p.28. Bahri in particular seems strongly influenced by the conception of aesthetically productive work articulated, for example, by Marx in ‘On James Mill’. See ‘On James Mill’ in David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx, Selected Writings* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp.124-33, p.132.

practices that accompany other practices and commitments in peoples' lives. We need to understand the import of those practices connectively.

The form of the journals I have been discussing, that placed different modes of writing alongside one another, and juxtaposed literary writing with reports about political and state practice, sport, travel, and science – in other words, writing not conventionally categorized as literary – resonates strongly with Walter Benjamin's sense of the interrelation of literary praxis with other kinds of praxis. For Benjamin, "true literary activity cannot aspire to take place within a literary framework; that is, rather, the habitual expression of its sterility. Significant literary effectiveness can come into being only in a strict alternation between doing and writing."⁴⁰ Benjamin's point is that other practices 'outside' writing are not irrelevant to, or a distraction from, writing but comprise its meaning. Yet, an alternation between literary and other forms of doing takes us back to the specificity of writing as a particular practice of resistance. For example, Ousmane Sembène both participated in the French West African railway workers strike of 1947 *and* wrote a novel about it, begging the question of what particular thing he thought he was doing in addition when he wrote the novel? We might ask the same about Pepetela's experiences in the forests of Cabinda with the MPLA and his novel *Mayombe*. The plurality of forms that many writers deploy also requires us to attend to what specifically they are doing in any one case. To take another obvious example, that Césaire sometimes did write rational prose requires us to dwell on the specificities of the work – and the interrogation of rationality itself – that his surreal, irrational verse takes up at other times.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Walter Benjamin, quoted in Edwards, *The practice of diaspora*, p.8.

⁴¹ Though we might also consider the limits of this rationality. See also Jane Hiddleston's discussion of the irrational in Fanon's *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, and his "resistance to editor Francis Jeanson's suggestion that he might tidy up the text: 'I'm trying to touch my reader affectively, or in other words irrationally, almost sensually.'" Hiddleston, 'Fanon and the Uses of Literature', p.39.

Benjamin's separation of "writing" and "doing," "*Schreiben*" and "*Tun*," could be read as a disavowal of writing itself as a real practice, or type of doing. Yet given Benjamin's own writing habits in texts such as *The Arcades Project*, which brought together writing and walking as part of a shared praxis, this reading seems implausible. Rather, Benjamin raises the question of what kind of doing, what kind of practice, reading and writing are in their different manifestations. Reading and writing are real activities, something which is important to note since many critiques of cultural politics rest on the assumption that reading and writing make nothing happen.⁴² If we see reading, writing and thinking as practices, we can read them, at a particular and often modest scale, as happenings themselves. Understanding, for example, literary writing as a practice also helps us articulate how that practice has historically been, and continues to be, raced and gendered. Indeed, one of the interesting things about literary journals is the particular kinds of (sometimes collective) reading and writing practices they produced. It is somewhat baffling that in Chris Bongie's appeal to find space for "political *action* [original emphasis]"⁴³ rather than "cultural politics," he italicizes the *action* and not the politics.

As Jane Hiddleston has argued, the debates about politics and literature have been charged by "the pressure on postcolonial studies to offer some concrete form of anti-colonial resistance."⁴⁴ Yet in these debates, much critical energy has been directed not towards the postures of postcolonial literary critics in relation to ongoing anti-colonial struggles but rather towards the question of whether the criticism and production of literature count as a

⁴² See for example: "But metapolitics—to abuse a phrase of Auden's—makes nothing happen. This is not a failing in itself: most intellectual activity is not an attempt to (in the relevant sense) make something happen. The objectionable element comes when intellectuals delude themselves that what they are doing in their intellectual activity is, somehow, 'really' politics." Stefan Collini, 'Defending Cultural Criticism', *New Left Review*, 18 (2002), 73-97, p.89.

⁴³ Bongie, *Friends and enemies*, p.341.

⁴⁴ Jane Hiddleston, 'Introduction' in Patrick Crowley and Jane Hiddleston, eds., *Postcolonial Poetics: Genre and Form* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), pp.1-10, p.4.

form of political practice.⁴⁵ These discussions of the relationship between culture and politics have turned (sometimes in circles) on questions of sequence and hierarchy. Does culture preface or follow politics? Is culture subordinate to politics? If so, why? Several critics have argued that texts' capacity to be socially representative or politically agential has often been exaggerated and that the category of the literary is a slippery one.⁴⁶

Some, such as Peter Hallward, have called for an absolutist break between the two concepts. Hallward argues that "we need to make and preserve a sharp conceptual *break between culture and politics*"⁴⁷ and that "incisive political invention" must be distinguished from "all forms of culturalist *dépassement*."⁴⁸ Hallward's concern is that postcolonial literary critics might fool themselves (or have already) into thinking cultural work is the whole of politics. His argument should be taken in its historical and geographical context of Britain in the early 2000s, but his position does not particularly help us to make sense of the evident overlap between political activity and literary criticism and publication before African independences. These seem more obviously to point to a history of close connection between the spheres that Hallward wants to treat as distinct.⁴⁹ Insisting on complete separation would render the projects of *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* illegible, as well as the plural preoccupations of many of their contributors. Indeed, Hallward's premises are very distant from Alioune Diop's argument that the "caractéristique essentielle du colonialisme" was "la séparation délibérée des deux concepts (politique et culture)."⁵⁰ How do we weigh Hallward's injunction against Diop's conviction that fragmenting the important connections

⁴⁵ As Bongie puts it, "exactly what sort of resistance has postcolonial studies been offering over the past several decades, and to what extent does it really qualify as political?" Bongie, *Friends and enemies*, p.3.

⁴⁶ See Hiddleston, 'Introduction' in Crowley and Hiddleston, eds., *Postcolonial Poetics*, p.1.

⁴⁷ Hallward, p.xix [his emphasis].

⁴⁸ Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, p.132, quoted in Bongie, *Friends and Enemies*, p.350.

⁴⁹ See also Jane Hiddleston, *Decolonizing the intellectual: politics, culture, and humanism at the end of the French empire* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), p.30: "There was, from the 1930s to the 1960s a phase of intense intercommunication between politics and literature."

⁵⁰ "The essential characteriztic of colonialism' is the deliberate separation of the two concepts (politics and culture)." P.A., 'Le Combat Continue', *Présence Africaine*, 31 (1960), 3-7, p.5.

between these two spheres of reality was simply a colonial illusion? My argument in the remainder of this chapter is that we should understand the ‘cultural’ (of which the ‘literary’ is a subsection) and the ‘political’ as dialectically connected and so in a changing, and contingent, relationship to one another. Moreover, rather than fix hermetic and absolutist definitions of ‘culture,’ ‘literature’ and ‘politics,’ we need to take seriously the plasticity of these concepts, and their changing significance in broader social contexts.

For Diop, culture was connected to other parts of the social world. Sometimes this is tinged with sequence and instrumentalization, because he sees cultural action as a conduit to constructing “la solidarité politico-économique entre peuples sous-équipés.”⁵¹ More fundamentally, Diop argues for the interconnection of categories colonial-capitalist society naturalized as separate such as politics, science, culture, art, geography, and literature. He wants to move beyond the “fausse tradition qui consiste à trop nettement séparer l’art de la science.”⁵² Formally speaking, *Présence Africaine* connects what it sees as politically paralyzing separations between spheres of reality in order to expand the ambit not only of culture but also of politics. Diop emphasizes the importance of a change in the dynamic between politics and culture, as well as of expanding the category of politics. In particular, politics should not be understood only as parliamentary politics or the action of states. The global anti-colonial project could not be achieved if “l’action politique [...] est réduite à des querelles électorales.”⁵³ In thinking about how these historical debates speak to current interrogations of the relationship between literature and politics, we need to treat not just the

⁵¹ “Politico-economic solidarity amongst under-equipped peoples” in PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Le sous-équipement’, p.7. See also: PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Après le Congrès’, *Présence Africaine*, 11 (1956), 3-6, p.4: “la volonté d’unité culturelle [...] se profile en traits de plus en plus nets une volonté d’unité politique” (“the desire for cultural unity [...] becomes in characteristics more and more like a desire for political unity”). See also P.A., ‘Diffuser’, *Présence Africaine*, 70 (1969) 3-6, p.6: “En fait l’action culturelle est révolutionnaire dans la mesure où elle est entreprise de politisation” (“Cultural action is revolutionary in the sense that it is a politicising undertaking”).

⁵² “False tradition that consists in separating art and science too neatly.” P.A., ‘XX Anniversaire’, *Présence Africaine*, 64 (1967), 3-5, p.4.

⁵³ “Political action [...] is reduced to electoral disputes.” PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Le sous-équipement’, p.6.

literary but also the political as contested. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, this insight that “what gets to be counted as politics [...] [was] not in any sense given”⁵⁴ was often brought by women writers associated with, and often marginalized by, both *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*. Their work registers an effort to expand and problematize dominant understandings of the anti-colonial.

In an essay discussing the boundaries of the academic field of international politics in the 1980s, Robert Cox argued that “academic conventions divide up the seamless web of the real social world into separate spheres” and that these, though necessary, were “at best a convenience of mind” and always geographically and historically contingent. For Cox, a scholar’s attitude towards these divisions was a “major question of method and purpose.”⁵⁵ He argued that politics as a field of study needed to accept the parameters of the existing world and academic order, and to call those parameters into question “by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing.”⁵⁶ For Cox, this was the difference between “problem-solving” approaches in politics and “critical” approaches. “Critical” work did not just preface real political inquiry, it constituted it.

The literature/politics debate in postcolonial studies⁵⁷ is important because it is also a debate about what John Brenkman calls the “question of a separation of realms in the modern

⁵⁴ Jenny Edkins, *Poststructuralism and international relations: bringing the political back in* (Boulder, Colo.; London: Lynne Rienner, 1999), p.2.

⁵⁵ Robert W. Cox, ‘Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory’, *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 10.2 (1981), 126-55, p.126.

⁵⁶ Cox, p.129.

⁵⁷ Notably, this debate has not been so pronounced in Portuguese-language postcolonial scholarship, where attention to the diversity of creative forms in contemporary Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau has engendered approaches to literary study influenced by cultural studies, anthropology and sociology that inherently call into question the centrality of ‘the literary.’ For example, Ana Mafalda Leite, Sheila Khan and Jessica Falconi argue for the “need for methodological approaches and positions that go beyond those of a literary nature and for greater openness to the integration of perspectives and contributions from supplementary sources [...] To analyse and critically interpret what today is Angolan and Mozambican literature forces us into an ecology of knowledge (Santos 2002: 250).” Ana Mafalda Leite, Sheila Khan and

world.”⁵⁸ As such, the literature/politics debate is not “unhelpful” and “anxious” but an important metadisciplinary conversation that asks questions at both “the level of concepts” and “at the level of the politics of knowledge,”⁵⁹ in Ania Loomba’s phrase. Nevertheless, it is a debate that could be enriched by further consideration of the historical and geographical contingency of politics as well as literature, by reading them dialectically rather than hierarchically. Harrison argues “in order to assess a literary text’s politics [...] one needs to understand the shape and weight of ideas of the literary for particular readers.”⁶⁰ Yet we also need to understand the changing weight and shape of ideas about the political for particular readers, and about the literary-political relation. These ideas clearly change in time and space, can be different for author and for reader and any interpretation will be a mixture of these factors, delimited by the conditions of production of the critic as well as the text.⁶¹

Diop’s anticipation of this argument for the mutability of divisions between different compartments of social reality was freighted by the changing nature of politics that characterized the anti-colonial years. Politics were molten in those decades and what they meant was repeatedly called into question. Significantly, as Benedict Anderson has pointed out, new words for politics were coined throughout Africa and the Middle East as liberation movements emerged.⁶² Some of those movements were also fighting for new forms of relationship between society, state and citizen – for closing the gap between bureaucratic state and the people – not just for a reproduction of the colonial-liberal states of European countries. At least some anti-colonial movements aimed at more than an “alternative *ruling*

Jessica Falconi, eds., *Speaking the Postcolonial Nation: Interviews with Writers from Angola and Mozambique* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), p.1.

⁵⁸ Brenkman, ‘Theses on Cultural Marxism’, p.23.

⁵⁹ This is Loomba’s injunction in Loomba, p.515.

⁶⁰ Harrison, ‘Who needs an Idea of the Literary?’, p.7.

⁶¹ As Bahri argues, interpretation as well as “creative production” is “defined and delimited by the conditions of production.” Bahri, p.21.

⁶² Benedict Anderson, *The spectre of comparisons: nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the world* (London: Verso, 1998) p.32.

class”⁶³ – to repurpose John Berger’s phrase. In the cocktail of socialism and communism that infused anti-colonial politics, there was at least a rhetorical commitment to the emancipation of the exploited, and to a revisioning of the bureaucratic rationalist state.⁶⁴ How we characterize the relationship between literature and politics depends on both our conception of literature and what we count as political. Raymond Williams understands culture as a historically and socially contingent placeholder for what societies think important.⁶⁵ This understanding could fruitfully be transposed to the concept of politics, and more specifically to the relationship between culture and politics.

Most fundamentally, histories of anti-colonialism de-naturalize the commonplace elision of politics with state action, and emphasize the limits of taking parliamentary politics as a synecdoche for all politics, especially under capitalism. The anti-colonial movements that fought for African decolonization were movements of stateless people, whose most resonant visions of freedom and justice have not yet been realized by states either in the formerly colonized or colonizing world. As such, the dialectic between politics and writers was not a dialectic between writing and government. It was a dialectic between writing and forms of collective struggle that aspired to statehood even whilst prescient about what Fanon called the “*mésaventure de la conscience nationale*.”⁶⁶ This is a key distinction between the pre-independence and post-independence years in terms of the politics/literature relation both in the former colonies and in the colonizing countries. As Margarida Calafate Ribeiro has argued, decolonization should be understood as one of the most important moments of

⁶³ Geoff Dyer, ed., *John Berger*, p.4.

⁶⁴ The PAIGC and FRELIMO are particularly good examples here.

⁶⁵ Williams writes that “the development of the word *culture* is a record of a number of important and continuing reactions to [...] changes in our social, economic and political life, and may be seen, in itself, as a special kind of map by means of which the nature of the changes can be explored [original emphasis].” Williams, *Culture and Society*, p.xvi-ii.

⁶⁶ “The misfortunes of national consciousness.” Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), p.87.

political rewriting in twentieth-century history in terms not only of bringing into being new states, but of changing the nature of European nation-states.⁶⁷ Independence engendered a change both in terms of writing and in the political forms in relation to which that writing emerged. Edward Said grasped the importance of taking seriously the social and political forms in relation to which a writer writes when he wrote that, even as he fought for a Palestinian state, he would be its first critic when it emerged.⁶⁸ More fundamentally, politics is not a content-less form. Direction and institution matter. The relationship between politics and literature changes if the politics we are talking about is associated with a social movement or a state, because the relationship between individual and institution, and between the institution and the broader world order differs in each case. In the history of decolonization around the black Atlantic, many writers who before had been associated with private publishing institutions, or student movements, or labour movements, later took up state positions. Alda Espírito Santo, Mário Pinto de Andrade, Agostinho Neto, Marcelino dos Santos, René Depestre, Aimé Césaire, and Léopold Senghor are famous examples. These shifts in the connections between particular writers and changing institutions also again affects question of the literature-politics relation.

The decolonizing years were not only about deferred liberation. Anti-colonial movements, including in the literary groups they engendered, also staged and created modes of sociality that were themselves immediately emancipating to some of their adherents, often mainly men, as evinced by the language of freedom, mobility and self-discovery articulated by figures such as Mário Pinto de Andrade in relation to the struggle. We might think here of Jean Genet's characterization of the Fedayeen in Lebanon in the 1980s: "les feddayin ne

⁶⁷ Ribeiro, 'A Casa da Nave Europa', p.17.

⁶⁸ Gayatri Spivak, 'Thinking about Edward Said: Pages from a Memoir', *Critical Inquiry*, 31 (2005), 515-25, p.522 and Emmanuelle Santos, 'Postcolonial Theory Meets the Portuguese-Speaking World: An Interview with Robert J. C. Young', *ellipsis* 11 (2013), 293-315, p.302.

voulaient pas le pouvoir, ils avaient la liberté.”⁶⁹ Genet writes that the new sociality young Palestinian men enjoyed in refugee camps was itself emancipating because they had broken away from the constraints of their normal domestic lives. His portrayal of the struggle as freedom in and of itself is a masculinist romanticization. Nevertheless, Genet speaks to the restructuring of sociality that militancy can engender, creating new modes of sociality for the people directly involved. Many figures involved with both *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* later celebrated how those literary institutions brought people into contact with one another, materially and conceptually. Part of what they were doing when they wrote was trying to join or form particular groups. Many anti-colonial groups fought not only for nationalism and a transformed world but also for collective experiences in the present. This again changes what politics means when we talk about literature and politics. Close attention to the gender, race and class dynamics of these new socialities reveals the new exclusions these movements allowed, or at least failed to interrogate. Notably, I discuss the gendered divisions of labour both journals relied on in Chapter Six.

My point here is not to redraw the terms of a mammoth debate in political theory about the nature of the political⁷⁰ but rather to suggest, from the perspective of literary studies, that in order to take seriously the conjuncture of African decolonization as an overlooked period in literary and intellectual history, we have to reckon with the intertwined nature of shifting understandings of both the literary and the political during those years. In doing so, it is impossible to take politics as a fixed object and see how it applies to a contingent understanding of literature. As Nick Nesbitt suggests, “we must move beyond any abstract

⁶⁹ “The fedayeen didn’t want power; they had freedom.” Jean Genet, ‘Four Hours in Shatila’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 12.3 (1983), 3-22, p.22; Jean Genet, ‘Quatre heures à Chatila’, *Le Grand Soir*, republished 21 September 2012, <https://www.legrandsoir.info/quatre-heures-a-chatila.html> [accessed 5 May 2018].

⁷⁰ For one influential intervention into this long-standing debate, see, for example, Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005). For a more recent intervention see Lorna Finlayson, *The political is political: conformity and the illusion of dissent in contemporary political philosophy* (London; New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, Ltd, 2015).

opposition of culture and politics.”⁷¹ More than that, we need to take both categories as mutable and understand their dialectical relationship at different points in the context of the particular form of society and state in which they emerged and from which we read them. If literature and politics are delimited slices of a social whole, interrogating their historical relation does not just reproduce their enclosures but allows us to think against and past those closures from the perspective of the present. Indeed, understanding literature, politics and their relation as contingent opens the door to other questions and categories such as the relation of both to modes of production, to consumer culture, to science, economics, ecology, and time.

Drawing on the dialectical – rather than hierarchical – nature of the relationship between the literary and the political we see in the very form of *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* reorients the debate away from a paralyzingly stratified vision that reads culture and literature as secondary. But to argue that we should read literary texts as thought *alongside* theoretical texts rather than *under their authority* is not an argument for relativism or obscurantism. Franco Moretti argues that “we always pay a price for theoretical knowledge: reality is rich, infinitely rich; concepts are abstract, are poor. But it’s precisely this ‘poverty’ that makes it possible to handle them, and therefore to know.”⁷² Peter Hallward writes that postcolonial theory has disparaged the idea that theory should be distinguished by its generalizability: “postcolonial theory often seems to present itself precisely as a sort of general theory of the non-generalizable as such [...] [but] a theory which does not offer some general degree of clarity and distinction is no theory at all.”⁷³ My suggestion is not to abandon theoretical knowledge and *only* to understand texts and the world through the

⁷¹ Nesbitt enjoins us to “remain faithful to a single césairean imperative: “ne pas céder sur le verbe!” (“Do not give up on the word”) in Nick Nesbitt, ‘The Incandescent I, Destroyer of Worlds’, *Research in African Literatures* 41.1 (2010), 121-41, p.132.

⁷² Franco Moretti, ‘Conjectures on World Literature’, *New Left Review*, n.s.1 (2000), 54-67, p.54-8.

⁷³ Hallward, pp.xi-xii.

worlds the texts inscribe. Only by doing this *as well* can we “know” anything new from literary texts. Rather than just zooming out to categorise the literary-particular under the auspices of general-theoretical categories, different forms of expression and thought can be put into productive dialogue and allowed to modulate and illuminate each other. In so doing, we bring into view much more thought than is visible if we look only for the theoretical.

In Chapters Two and Three, I discussed changing conceptions of literature. In Chapters Five and Six, I discuss literary contestations of the political, first through the prism of changing conceptions of *négritude*, and then with an eye to how the writing of anti-colonial women in both journals sought to prise open the category of anti-colonial politics. In these chapters, I mobilize an attention to cracks, dissonance and fragments that in Chapter One I argued was an important part of reading the journal form. In so doing I aim to bring forward not the dominant but rather the contesting voices in both institutions: the critiques of male-sponsored emancipation⁷⁴ from often-marginalized women writers, and, in the next chapter, conceptions of *negritude* unhooked from Senghor and Césaire.

⁷⁴ “Male-sponsored emancipation” is Priyamvada Gopal’s phrase in ‘Speaking with Difficulty: Feminism and Antiracism in Britain after 9/11’, *Feminist Studies*, 39.1 (2013), 98-118, p.99.

CHAPTER 5: A POLYPHONIC HISTORY OF AN ARTICULATED NEGRITUDE: 1953-1968.

*Il y a douze ans, le premier congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs tenu à Paris, sous l'égide de la revue "Présence Africaine" déclarait déjà avec force que "l'épanouissement de la culture est conditionné par la fin de ces hontes du XXe siècle: le colonialisme, l'exploitation des peuples faibles, le racisme." Le congrès de La Havane procéda, dans ce domaine, à une amplification tricontinentale de la question culturelle abordée alors par ces intellectuels [...] Nous voici donc à l'heure du dépassement de la négritude.*¹

Mário Pinto de Andrade, *Présence Africaine*, 1968

In *Présence Africaine* in 1968, the Angolan writer Mário Pinto de Andrade figures the 1956 *Premier Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs* in Paris,² and the discussions of negritude it staged, as an important prehistory to the 1968 *Congreso Cultural de la Habana*³ and the tricontinentalist sympathies of its participants. One question raised by this construction is why Andrade bothers to articulate a commitment to tricontinentalism in terms of negritude at all. Critics have frequently characterized the reclamations and affirmations of black identity in some negritude poetry as essentialising, nostalgic and even mystificatory in their exploration of racial rather than only class-based solidarities and experience. As a result, it is startling to return to a moment when an Angolan Marxist in the midst of the armed struggle could position negritude as central to the genealogy of tricontinentalism, a revolutionary internationalist movement born in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution and particularly at

¹ "Twelve years ago, the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists held in Paris under the aegis of the review *Présence Africaine* had already forcefully declared that "the flourishing of culture requires the end of these twentieth century disgraces: colonialism, exploitation of weak peoples, racism." The Havana Congress undertook a tricontinental amplification of the cultural question those intellectuals posed [...] So here we are at a moment of moving past negritude." Mário Pinto de Andrade et al, 'Réflexions autour du Congrès culturel de la Havane', *Présence Africaine*, 65 (1968), 161-5, pp.163-4.

² "First Congress of Black Writers and Artists."

³ "Cultural Congress of Havana."

the 1966 Tricontinental Conference. Notably, Andrade's close collaborator Amílcar Cabral had argued at that conference that the revolution's particular achievement was its creation of new selves that moved beyond territorially, historically or biologically determined conceptions of identity: what Cabral called the "homem novo, plenamente consciente dos seus direitos e deveres nacionais, continentais e internacionais."⁴ Yet, for all that Andrade is announcing a going-beyond, even a leaving-behind of negritude, *dépassement* constructs a metaphor of development, not rupture. This chapter builds on my argument that literature and politics exist in a changing relation through a discussion of negritude, revisited through the polyphony and dissensus of the journal form.

To many tricontinentalists, Andrade's position may already have been startling in 1968, by which point negritude's detractors had established several lines of critique. For the prominent pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, for example, reprising some of most well-rehearsed criticisms in 1963, negritude consisted in "mere literary affectation and style which piles up word upon word and image upon image with occasional reference to Africa and things African."⁵ Nkrumah saw negritude in fixed terms: as a literary movement whose seminal texts were characterized by declamation and affect. As a politics (and this is what he was interested in establishing), negritude had little to recommend it. Negritude represented "a vague brotherhood based on a criterion of colour, or on the idea that Africans have no reasoning."⁶ By contrast, his own idea of African genius, Nkrumah argued, was "something positive [...] [a] socialist conception of society."⁷ Nkrumah's words gesture to

⁴ "A new Man, fully conscious of his national, continental and international rights and obligations." Cabral, 'A Arma da Teoria' in *Unidade e Luta I*, p.199. The anti-colonial interest in 'new selves' was not only a Portuguese and Spanish phenomenon. For a discussion of 'new selves' in other contexts see Priyamvada Gopal, 'Concerning Maoism: Fanon, Revolutionary Violence, and Postcolonial India', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 112.1 (2013), 115-28.

⁵ Kwame Nkrumah, 'Speech at the Opening of the Institute of African Studies, Accra, 25 October 1963', quoted in 'An African Voice in World Affairs' in *Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Panaf Books, 1974), pp.140-65, p.144.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.144.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.144. For an important study of the similarities between Nkrumah and Senghor's thought, see Abiola Irele, *The African experience in literature and ideology* (London; Exeter, N.H: Heinemann, 1981), pp.89-116.

a familiar Manichean division between negritude and socialist politics. Seen through this prism, Andrade's position makes little sense.

It is worth pausing over Nkrumah's coded reference to the Senegalese poet-politician Léopold Senghor's infamous comment that "l'émotion est nègre, comme la raison est hellène."⁸ The idea of negritude as "the idea that Africans have no reasoning" speaks to an understanding of Senghor's work as synonymous with, rather than as one strand of, negritude. This synecdoche flattens a polyphonic field of literary and political thinking hooked around the word 'negritude' into a patrilineal account of the word's intellectual history that takes Senghor as its source. This chapter is partly an attempt to trouble that elision. Certainly, and as the classic story goes, négritude was forged in the 1930s in literary texts written by the poets Senghor, Césaire and Damas. They themselves continued to write and talk about negritude all their lives, but such was the influence of the word, that it exceeded and ran away from them too. Rather, I suggest, the history of negritude in the 1950s and 1960s is characterized by multilingual receptions, misreceptions, mishearings, adaption, adoption and critique which we see not only in, but outside, the texts of these three canonical protagonists. Focussing on the connections between negritude and the journal form unhooks the history of negritude from Senghor, Damas and Césaire alone. Like the journal itself, negritude became an "unstable compound"⁹ that included dissent and contestation.

My emphasis here is not on the theoretical evaluations of these individuals' work that have characterized critical discussions and re-evaluations of negritude, such as whether or not

⁸ "Emotion is black, just as reason is Hellenic." Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Ce que l'homme noir apporte' in S.E. le Cardinal Verdier ... [et al.], *L'Homme de couleur* (Paris: Librairie Plan, 1939), p.295.

⁹ Green, 'Introduction', pp.3-4.

negritude is essentialising or a form of “primitivism;”¹⁰ a stage on a dialectic;¹¹ or too much interested in the past. In this chapter, rather than take negritude as the theoretical preserve and responsibility of its early architects, I treat negritude as a polyphonic (it was articulated by many people); diachronic (it evolved); and multilingual (its protagonists were not only French-speaking) cultural and social phenomenon that was underpinned by journal culture. In understanding negritude in this way, I also draw on Abiola Irele’s view of negritude (Irele himself worked at *Présence Africaine* as a student in Paris) not as “the philosophical idea of a Negro essence, which appears to me not only abstract but quite untenable [...] but rather an historical phenomenon, a social and cultural movement closely related to African nationalism.”¹² However, I also aim to broaden Irele’s account of negritude’s political articulations to show how they extended beyond nationalism. Indeed, in the account I give here, negritude was rarely used to signify national as much as a more-than-national sensibility and solidarity whose significance changed in time and space.

As such, I treat negritude not as a literary-cultural phenomenon with fixed political implications, but rather as *articulated* to the changing political visions of the 1950s and 1960s. I use the concept of articulation here in Stuart Hall’s sense of “the form of the connection that *can* make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time [original emphasis].”¹³ It is important to underline Hall’s sense of articulations as contingent and breakable connections: negritude, a cultural phenomenon, did not represent a determined or

¹⁰ Margaret Kohn and Keally McBride, *Political theories of decolonization: postcolonialism and the problem of foundations* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.27.

¹¹ This is Jean-Paul Sartre’s thesis in *Orphée Noir*, the preface to Senghor’s *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948), reprinted: (Paris: Quadrige, 2011), pp.IX-XLIV, p.XLIII.

¹² Abiola Irele, ‘Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3.3 (1965), 321-48, p.322.

¹³ L. Grossberg, ed., ‘On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall’, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10.2 (1986), 45-60, p.53. Hall draws on the ideas of Ernesto Laclau, Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. See also Stuart Hall, ‘Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance’ in UNESCO, *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris: Unesco, 1980), pp.305-45.

standalone politics, but over its history, I argue, was articulated to different political projects and resistance affiliations. These articulations were mutable, sometimes fleeting, and changed over space and time.

In 1966, the editors of *Présence Africaine* stated this explicitly, as they introduced Senghor's 1966 *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*:

Au départ, la négritude désignait essentiellement le génie littéraire du poète noir qui aspirait à une originalité comparable à celle de ses confrères européens. Plus tard, s'est dégagée et affirmée la négritude comme revendication politico-culturelle de la dignité des peuples noirs. Elargissant son domaine, la négritude embrasse alors la lutte du monde noir contre la colonisation et le racisme. Ici la négritude est une attitude à résonnance d'autant plus politique que ses exigences sont plus profondément culturelles. Ce sont les assises culturelles même du monde occidental que la négritude remet en cause dans leur ambition universalisante'.

Cette phase de la négritude est la plus passionnée, la plus contestée, la plus glorieuse peut-être¹⁴

Though it should not be read as a definitive account of *Présence Africaine*'s understanding of negritude, this is a useful text because it insists on the mutability and dynamism of negritude as a concept, and on the alliances between negritude and various different political projects.

Gary Wilder's study, *Freedom Time*, which tracks the afterlife of 1930s negritude into a 1950s politics of self-determination, presents francophone federalisms as negritude's

¹⁴ "Initially, negritude essentially referred to the literary genius of the black poet who aspired to an originality comparable to that of his fellow Europeans. Later, negritude pulled away and affirmed itself as a politico-cultural demand for the dignity of black peoples. Expanding its domain, negritude thus embraced the struggle of the black world against colonization and racism. Negritude here is an attitude whose resonance is all the more political in that its demands are more deeply cultural. It is the very cultural foundations of the Western world and its universalising ambitions that negritude called into question. This phase of Negritude is the most passionate, the most disputed, perhaps the most glorious." P.A., 'Le langage du cœur', *Présence Africaine*, 58 (1966), 3-7, p.3.

political manifestation. Central to Wilder's argument is the decoupling of freedom from nationalism. Césaire and Senghor, Wilder writes, "refused to accept the *doxa* that self-determination required state sovereignty."¹⁵ However, federalism was neither negritude's only political articulation nor the only one that rejected the "*doxa*" Wilder discusses. For example, the politics of non-alignment, Bandung and tricontinentalism, as Vijay Prashad has argued, represented not narrow nationalism but "internationalist nationalism."¹⁶ Rahul Rao situates later Third World protest in a "space between cosmopolitanism and nationalism."¹⁷ These visions did not simply correlate freedom to the state. They understood state sovereignty as necessary but insufficient to the wider cause of freedom.

Because Wilder takes negritude as a proprietary and an exclusively francophone phenomenon – the brainchild of Senghor and Césaire – the range of corollary political visions he presents are limited. In a recent critique of Wilder's book, Musab Younis has argued that Wilder risks "painting imperial federalism as the only visionary project going"¹⁸ rather than presenting "an accurate view of the range of possibilities."¹⁹ Younis' sense of the "range of possibilities" is important because there was no *necessary or determined* political project associated with negritude. Thinking polyphonically and diachronically about negritude through the journal form in the years before and after decolonization allows us to see a broader range of connections between the cultural idea of negritude and ideas about state and more-than-state politics as ideas about culture, politics and the ideas between them changed. In particular, it brings into view attempts to connect ideas of negritude to different kinds of class politics at an international scale in the 1950s and 1960s.

¹⁵ Wilder, *Freedom Time*, p.2.

¹⁶ Prashad, p.12.

¹⁷ Rahul Rao, *Third World protest: between home and the world* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.8.

¹⁸ Musab Younis, 'Letters,' *London Review of Books*, 38.18 (21 September 2017), p.5.

¹⁹ Younis, p.5.

Because different voices articulated different conceptions of what negritude meant to them, it is necessary for now to proceed with a loose definition of what tied distinct conceptions together. In an interview in 1967, Césaire described negritude as a concrete “coming to consciousness,” an assertion of the value of black and African culture and history, and an “affirmation of [...] [black] solidarity.”²⁰ His definition is general enough to apply to the successive waves of negritudinist thinking that developed after the Second World War, though each took negritude in different directions, using the term to signify particular implications and emphases at various scales. More broadly, we can say that the deployments of negritude in the 1950s and 1960s that I discuss here were largely uninterested in the idea of black un-reason and much more interested in working with and worrying at the racialized solidarities that the concept of negritude had also named.

Returning to my argument in the previous chapter that we should read literary texts as thought, it is important to note that though negritude was initially developed in poetry, particularly in French and in Portuguese, negritude was never only about writing. As a body of poetic thought, it theorized black experience and ways of being in a racist world. Notably, Césaire himself does not characterize negritude simply as a type of poetry, but as an attitude: one that, in the *Cahier*, the lyric voice describes as having been “debout”²¹ for the first time in Haiti.

The history I will set out in this chapter is only part of the history of negritude. A more ‘official’ version, particularly associated with Leopold Senghor, continued to be expounded, including in *Présence Africaine*. By the time Andrade announced its *dépassement* in Havana, and certainly by the 1969 Pan-African Conference in Algiers, the idea became too

²⁰ René Depestre, ‘An Interview with Aimé Césaire’, trans. Maro Riofrancos in Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (2000), pp.81-94, p.92. Originally published in Spanish.

²¹ “Standing upright.” French reference: Aimé Césaire, ‘Cahier d’un retour au pays natal’ in Eshleman and Smith, eds., pp.34-84, p.47.

associated with the divisive figure of Senghor to be contested any further. The controversy that calcified around Senghor was to do with his politics in government, which could not be separated from his theoretical writings. The Ghanaian novelist Ayi Kwei Armah, writing in *Présence Africaine*, complained of the “tremendous gulf between theory and practice”²² of Senghor’s behaviour in government: “while all this logomachy goes on, Senghor uses in his practical politics techniques taken directly from the authoritarian colonial past: army, police, manipulative alliances with old power constellations, and the support of a huge detachment of French advisers, experts, administrators.”²³ The Tricontinental Conference also issued a declaration denouncing “the neo-colonial regime of Senghor.”²⁴ Mário Pinto de Andrade later described him as one of a group who “étaient des amis et qui plus tard sont devenus des ennemis.”²⁵ The concept of negritude became too caught up with this to continue to be the subject of contestation. Nevertheless, the full significance of the concept in the 1950s and 1960s even to Senghor’s later detractors cannot be grasped without a sense of the ways the concept was received, redeployed and contested in those years. In the text that follows, I focus on particular moments of articulation in a multilingual history of negritude. This episodic structure will, I hope, draw attention to the geographical and historical contingency of the concept, which functioned as a currency of interaction in many conjunctures, in French, English and, as I discuss first, in Portuguese. First, I further introduce my conception of negritude as a dynamic and politically articulated body of creative thinking, writing and practice, underpinned by journal culture.

²² Ayi Kwei Armah, ‘African Socialism: Utopian or Scientific?’, *Présence Africaine*, 64 (1967), 6-30, p.20.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp.19-20.

²⁴ ‘Resolution on Senegal’ in EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF SOLIDARITY OF THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA, ASIA, AND LATIN AMERICA, *First Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America: [proceedings]* (Havana: General Secretariat of the O.S.P.A.A.L, 1966), pp.101-2, p.101.

²⁵ Andrade and Messiant, p.204.

POLYPHONIC NEGRITUDE AND JOURNAL CULTURE

The history of negritude – a word first coined in the journal *L'Étudiant Noir*²⁶ in 1935 – is inseparable from journal culture. Though, as I will argue later, writers associated with the Portuguese-language journal *Mensagem* should be understood as central protagonists in the development of negritude, *Présence Africaine* merits some initial discussion given the particularly important place the review occupies in existing accounts of negritude's post-war history. Though Diop himself only rarely used the word 'negritude',²⁷ as a publishing house and in its journal, *Présence Africaine* published not only debates and theorizing about negritude but also creative work by authors who understood themselves to be writing in a negritude tradition. A wide consensus exists about the connections between the journal and the development of negritude. The African-American writer W.A. Jeanpierre called *Présence Africaine* "la revue officielle de la Négritude."²⁸ Ezekiel Mphahlele, the South African writer, talked of "that French-speaking thing called *négritude*, whose shrine and priests are based in the offices of *Présence Africaine* in Paris."²⁹ Senghor himself celebrated that "*Présence Africaine* [...] has been the primary instrument of the Négritude movement."³⁰ Gary Wilder has written that "negritude evolved from a loosely organized cultural project into a quasi-institutionalized movement sustained by widely read books, the journal *Présence Africaine*, and international conferences."³¹

Importantly, however, for many of those who have more recently characterized *Présence*

²⁶ "The Black Student." See Christopher L. Miller, 'The (Revised) Birth of Negritude: Communist Revolution and "the Immanent Negro" in 1935', *MLA*, 25.3 (2010), 743-9.

²⁷ Verdin, p.169.

²⁸ "Negritude's official review." W. A. Jeanpierre, 'La "Négritude", vue par un Afro-Américain', *Présence Africaine*, 39 (1961) 102-117, p.104.

²⁹ Ezekiel Mphahlele, 'The cult of *négritude*', *Encounter*, 16.3 (1961), 50-2, p.50.

³⁰ Letter from Léopold Senghor to Valentin Mudimbe, 17 June 1988, in Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious speech*, pp.xi-xii, p.xi.

³¹ Wilder, *The French imperial nation-state*, p.298.

Africaine as a platform for negritude, the observation serves to emphasize a relative conservatism at the journal, in comparison to other publications. David Macey, for example, who refers to *Présence Africaine* as “the main journal of negritude,”³² emphasizes with some disapproval that the review was “simply not a revolutionary political journal.”³³ In some ways this is justified. *Présence Africaine*’s coverage of trade union and student struggles was limited. They were slow to back revolutionary militancy in the French-speaking African colonies. There was limited support for the FLN in Algeria³⁴ and almost no mention of the Cameroonian militant liberation front the UPC, for example.

But this also speaks to the ways that the journal has been read as though its ideas are coextensive with its most well-known contributors, and with little attention to dissent or to the contestation of their ideas that the journal also printed. As part of his insistence that the journal should serve as a forum for black creativity and expression *per se*, Alioune Diop’s editorial policies were not doctrinaire and writers in the review often disagreed with one another. Senghor did have close connections to the journal. After he became President of Senegal, Senghor provided funding to the journal, often about to run out of money.³⁵ Letters to Alioune Diop at the *L’Institut mémoires de l’édition contemporaine* testify to Senghor’s attempts to push particular authors with threats about funding cuts.³⁶ But after 1948 he was

³² David Macey, *Frantz Fanon: A Biography* (London: Verso, 2012), p.154.

³³ Macey, p.280; See also Branwen Gruffydd-Jones, ‘From rupture to revolution: race, culture and the practice of anti-colonial thought’, *African Identities*, 2.2 (2014), 211-24, p.215: “*Présence Africaine* [...] in its early period (1947–1954) was perhaps an embodiment of the practice of *négritude*,” and Andy Stafford, ‘Tricontinentalism in recent Moroccan intellectual history: the case of Souffles’, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 7.3 (2009), 218-32, p.221.

³⁴ Though Ruth Bush notes that one of the “solid backlist of books that would be regularly reprinted in order to finance short-term projects” at *Présence Africaine* was *Le Sang de Bandoeng* (1959), a short book by African students expressing their solidarity with the Algerian independence movement. Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.71.

³⁵ Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.82.

³⁶ Letter 21 September 1967, From L.S.S. Senghor to Alioune Diop, IMEC: PAE/78: “Si je ne peux pas faire imprimer de jeunes écrivains sénégalais [...] ce n’est vraiment pas la peine de continuer à subventionner ‘*Présence africaine*.’” (“If I can’t get young Senegalese writers published [...] there’s really no point in continuing to subsidise *Présence Africaine*). *Présence Africaine* did not publish the author in question.

not officially editorially involved,³⁷ and *Présence Africaine* printed critiques of his work and policies as well as enthusiastic articles about Senghorian negritude and his own work. Indeed, as Abiola Irele has pointed out, the first substantial Marxist critique of negritude, by Albert Franklin in 1953, appeared in *Présence Africaine*.³⁸ The journal also published the work of Marxist critics of negritude such as the Senegalese writer Ousmane Sembène, the Benin-Senegalese film director and critic Paulin Vieyra, the Guinean poet Nene Khaly and the American Socialist Workers Party member Raya Dunayevskaya. It also gave front cover, headline space to the pan-African socialists Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. It printed Césaire's *Discours Sur le Colonialisme*, calling for a "Révolution [original emphasis]" of "le prolétariat."³⁹ It printed highly complementary articles about Sékou Touré in his early years.⁴⁰ And, for all that David Macey has argued that Fanon distanced himself from *Présence Africaine*, the journal printed the major speeches it had invited him to give, and homages to him after his death.⁴¹ Writing by, and appreciations of, Mphahlele appeared several times. So did David Diop's work, as well as a scathing critique by Simon Mpondo of Senghor's "condescending remarks"⁴² about David Diop. In an homage to Alioune Diop in 1979, René Depestre wrote: "tu m'as accepté tel que je suis dans ma fidélité à tous crins aux positions du mouvement ouvrier international [...] tu n'as jamais posé comme condition à la publication de mes textes que je cesse d'attaquer la *négritude* de Senghor."⁴³ Depestre's words testify both to his conception that negritude was wider than Senghor alone and to a

³⁷ Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.66. Bush also notes that he published most of his work at *Le Seuil*. p.71.

³⁸ Irele, *The African experience in literature and ideology*, p.83. Albert Franklin, 'La Négritude: réalité ou mystification?', *Présence Africaine*, 14 (1953), 285-303.

³⁹ "Revolution" of 'the proletariat.' Aimé Césaire, *Discours Sur le Colonialisme* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955), 4th edition, p.72.

⁴⁰ See Aimé Césaire, 'La pensée politique de Sékou Touré', *Présence Africaine*, 29 (1960), 65-73 and Alioune Diop, 'Impressions de voyage', *Présence Africaine*, 29 (1960), 3-7.

⁴¹ Bush also affirms Fanon's links to *Présence Africaine* in Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, pp.78-9.

⁴² Simon Mpondo, 'David Mandessi Diop: An Assessment', *Présence Africaine*, 75 (1970), 97-107, p.97.

⁴³ "You accepted me as I am in my unwavering fidelity to the international workers' movement [...] You never posed as a condition for the publication of my texts that I stop attacking the negritude of Senghor." René Depestre, 'Lettre à Alioune Diop' in *Hommage à Alioune Diop: fondateur de Présence africaine* (Rome: Editions des amis italiens de Présence africaine, 1977), pp.59-62, pp.59-60.

certain pluralism at *Présence Africaine*.

Indeed, given that *Présence Africaine*'s writers did sometimes strike revolutionary tones, it is more correct to say that *Présence Africaine* was not simply, rather than simply not, a revolutionary journal. Alioune Diop's idea that he did not want the review to become "un organe socialiste"⁴⁴ is perhaps most precise. If *Présence Africaine* was a mouthpiece for negritude, it also gave approving space to critiques of negritude, to discussions of militant resistance, especially outside the French colonies; of pan-Africanism, pan-Africanist figures and African party politics; and to calls for African socialism; discussions of student radicalism, trade unions, Marxism, socialism, communism and the USSR; and to critiques of economic extraction in Africa and of de Gaulle's vision of a Franco-African federation. The journal engaged in day-to-day politics on the ground, covering the majority of the Third World conferences, nationalist developments in Africa, and the civil rights struggle and Malcolm X in the United States.

My intention is not to dissolve real political differences nor to idealize *Présence Africaine* in particular as a site of unconstrained free speech. The point of these lists is to show that negritude developed not in simple opposition to more strident expressions of black militancy, but as part of a constellation articulated to the internationalist left but in counterpoint to the communist parties of France and Portugal, who were reluctant to take questions of race and colonialism seriously.⁴⁵ The journal form makes particularly visible the ways that different political positions were relationally produced, rather than developed

⁴⁴ "A socialist organ." Quoted in Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.66.

⁴⁵ Aimé Césaire's critique of the *Parti Communiste Français*' (PCF) shortcomings on issues of colonialism and race following the PCF's 1956 Le Havre conference were set out in his *Lettre à Maurice Thorez*. The same year, in 1956 in Estoril, factions in the *Partido Comunista Português* (PCP) also criticized the PCP's position on African nationalism. 'Entrevista concedida a Costa Andrade sobre Agostinho Neto e a fundação do MPLA, Mário Pinto de Andrade', 29 May 1982, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 04356.005.001, 1-25, p.17.

in isolation. This might illuminate the histories of African anti-colonialism more broadly, that were not so sharply delineated as they might now seem. For example, as David Murphy emphasizes, Senghor's 1966 *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*, sometimes understood as "the apotheosis of Negritude,"⁴⁶ fêted the Marxist Ousmane Sembène's work. Senghor himself gave concrete support to Amílcar Cabral's PAIGC.⁴⁷ Thinking with the journal form is one way of holding on to these fractures and juxtapositions rather than neatly constructing an account that falsely concretizes dynamic and polysemic intellectual histories.

Reframing the history of Marxism-negritude as a shared space that enclosed dissonance and dissidence allows us to see the roles that negritude, and literary and cultural work more broadly, played in the introduction of race and culture as critical categories in Marxist and socialist thought. Césaire endorses this idea in the 1967 interview, when he emphasized that negritude was "part of the left"⁴⁸ but emerged from a conviction that a sole focus on class and economics would not solve racism and colonialism. In his suggestion that the "the economic question is important" but would not alone solve "the black question,"⁴⁹ Césaire positions negritude as a body of theorized practice that sought to nuance (along racial, but rarely gendered or generational lines) a singular idea of class-exploitation and oppression.

The horizon of this intervention was wider than the nation. Significantly, *Présence Africaine* did not link all of the political programmes they championed and discussed between 1957 and 1964 to negritude. Though *Présence Africaine* later characterized negritude's alliance

⁴⁶ David Murphy, 'Culture, Development, and the African Renaissance: Ousmane Sembene and Léopold Senghor at the World Festival of Negro Arts (Dakar 1966)' in L.J. Vetinde and A.T. Fofana, eds., *Ousmane Sembène and the Politics of Culture* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2015) pp.1-16, p.11.

⁴⁷ Interview with Amílcar Cabral, Secretary-General of the PAIGC, *Tricontinental*, October 1967, Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Fundação Mário Soares, 04322.005.001, 1-24, p.21.

⁴⁸ Depestre, 'An Interview with Aimé Césaire', p.94.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.94.

with black anti-colonial nationalism as a phase that was “la plus glorieuse peut-être”⁵⁰ of its history, negritude was most explicitly connected to broader-scale political postures such as tricontinentalism and humanism. Negritude was not connected, for example, to the French-language regionalist project discussed at the 1957 Conference in Bamako of the *Rassemblement Democratique Africain* (RDA).⁵¹ Nor was negritude discussed in relation to the *Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas* (CONCP), an organization unifying the dominant fronts fighting Portuguese colonialism. Neither was negritude explicitly connected to pan-African federalism, a project that aimed, to different degrees, to establish not a continent of hermetic African states but a federated union of African states that Kwame Nkrumah, perhaps its most well-known advocate, called a “United States of Africa.”⁵² This selective application brings into view how, in the 1950s and 1960s, negritude was deployed as a counterpoint to nationally bounded conceptions of affiliation. In 1950s Lisbon this represented a resistance to Salazarist isolationism. In the context of newly-independent African states in the 1960s, negritude served as a critique of neo-colonialism and as a reminder of a broader political imaginary than the one inscribed in the new state logic. In Cuba in the late 1960s, negritude came to stand for the hope that racial categories might themselves be dissolved by socialist revolution. In this sense, Mário Pinto de Andrade’s account, in this chapter’s epigraph, of the genealogy between negritude and tricontinentalism is highly suggestive. For Andrade, internationalist tricontinentalism is not opposed to negritude, but rather represents its “amplification” to a new scale that encompasses not only Africa and the black diaspora, but also the whole of the formerly colonized world. In 1956, Césaire declared that the “commun denominateur”⁵³ of the assembled delegates at the *Premier Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs* was colonialism.

⁵⁰ “Perhaps the most glorious.” P.A., ‘Le langage du cœur’, p.3.

⁵¹ The R.D.A. was a regional, transnational political party in French West Africa that was agitating for decolonization and that had been in alliance with the French Communist party.

⁵² Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Heinemann, 1963), p.142.

⁵³ “Common denominator.” Aimé Césaire, ‘Culture et colonisation’, *Présence Africaine*, 8-9-10 (1956), 190-205, p.190.

In 1966, Andrade suggests, the spirit of Fidel Castro's Tricontinental Conference had properly expanded that constituency. Christopher Miller has argued convincingly that negritude was "born not in categorical opposition to Marxism or to the idea of a general communist revolution but rather as an engaged corrective to these ideas."⁵⁴ Journals provided a form in which this relationship of engaged corrective continued. The *dépassement* Andrade hails marks a shift in analytic from an idea of black solidarity to a wider conception of a political grouping of peoples of colour around the world.

ARTICULATIONS

Lisbon 1953: humanism, solidarity and the globe

Adopting and adapting ideas of negritude, as many Portuguese-speaking African writers and activists later testified, became very important to writers associated with *Mensagem* and the *Centro dos Estudos Africanos* in Lisbon.⁵⁵ Amílcar Cabral wrote in glowing terms about his experience of reading Senghor's 1948 *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*. He experienced:

Coisas que nem sonhava; poesias maravilhosas escritas por negros de todas partes do mundo francês, poemas falando da África, dos Escravos, dos Homens, da Vida e das aspirações dos Homens. Versos como isto:

Nègre colporteur de révolte
Tu connais les chemins du monde
Depuis que tu fus vendu en Guinée...

[...] Muito me traz este livro e, entre muito, a certeza de que o Negro, o tão explorado Negro está acordando em todo o Mundo [...] Um acordar universal, de braços abertos, para todos os Homens de boa vontade.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Miller, 'The (Revised) Birth of Negritude', p.747.

⁵⁵ See Pires Laranjeira, *Negritude Africana de língua portuguesa: textos de apoio (1947/63)* (Braga: [s.n.], 2000) and Pires Laranjeira, *A Negritude Africana de Língua Portuguesa* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1995).

⁵⁶ "Things I had never dreamed of; marvellous poetry by black writers from all over the French world, poems speaking of Africa, of Slaves, of Mankind, of Life and of the aspiration of men. Verses like these: "black peddler of revolt / You know all the ways of the world / Since you were sold in Guinea..." [...] This book

Cabral's writing here is deeply romantic, but it is significant that negritude confirms for him a sense of – and this remained an important trope in Cabral's thinking – an open-armed, connective subject who looks out to other black men as well as to other political allies. Cabral's words, which record a moment of theorizing about negritude and a moment of reception, suggest that, to him, negritude signified a sense of political solidarity emerging from an identifiable, if locally instantiated, experience of economic and political oppression and the disavowal of black culture, experience and authority around the colonial world. In that time and place, negritude represented, notably, a mode of *dispersed* and *affiliative* community at a moment before the development of brands of territorialized and often statist political filiations: notably, nationalism.

Eighteen years later, this sense of negritude standing for a dispersed community remained palpable in the Portuguese-language context. The editor of the Brazilian journal *Quilombo*, Abdias do Nascimento, wrote an open letter to *Présence Africaine* when he and the Teatro Experimental do Negro⁵⁷ he had founded in Rio de Janeiro were not invited to Senghor's 1966 *Festival Mondial*. Nascimento argued that negritude, for him, represented the chosen unity of the dispersed African diaspora: “négritude, c'est l'omniprésence elle-même pour tous ceux qui l'assument et l'aiment. Au-delà des différences de langue, au dessus des distances et des nationalités, les filons de la diaspora se retrouvent, par d'immenses mouvements concentriques, dans l'immense océan noir de cette négritude magique qui nous a gardé unis et frères dans l'espace et dans le temps.”⁵⁸ Nascimento's tone is also romantic,

brings me so much, and among other things, it gives me the certainty that the black man, so much exploited, is waking up all over the world [...] A universal awakening, with open arms, for all men of goodwill.” Letter sent by Amílcar Cabral in 1949, cited in Manuel Ferreira's preface, ‘Metamorfose e premonição’ to Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, pp.13-39, p.30.

⁵⁷ “Black Experimental Theatre.”

⁵⁸ “‘Negritude’, for all those who love and embrace it, represents omnipresence itself. Beyond linguistic differences, above distance and nationality, the veins of the diaspora meet through immense concentric

though his idea of negritude as “magique” is different from Cabral’s more historically grounded idea of diaspora. However, Nascimento’s letter stages a sense of long-distance connection analogous to Cabral’s earlier engagement with negritude writing. Both Cabral and Nascimento wrote from contexts of political repression – Cabral, from Salazarist Portugal, and Nascimento in the context of a military dictatorship in Brazil (a dictatorship that had sent, in Nascimento’s view, a bogus delegation to Dakar, falsely claiming “l’essence du concept de négritude”⁵⁹). In both contexts, negritude offers a mode of connection, a “janela aberta no Mundo”⁶⁰ to repurpose the Mozambican writer Marcelino dos Santos’ later characterization of *Présence Africaine* itself. More categorically for Nascimento, negritude had become unmoored from its francophone and literary starting points: “nous autres qui avons été exclus physiquement de Dakar, nous ne nous sentons pas absents [...] Nous sommes la négritude.”⁶¹ Negritude, here, is no longer to do with literature, but becomes a quality Nascimento imagines himself physically to embody, and to which Senghor is not a gatekeeper.

These moments of reception are only accessible to us as vignettes, but they are nevertheless important in helping to build a picture of how ‘negritude’ as a word and as a sentiment was lived and reinterpreted. Mário Pinto de Andrade, talking about Lisbon in the 1940s, also characterizes ‘negritude’ in terms of a lived community and a posture:

no quadro da negritude – não se falou ainda da negritude – era preciso cortejar as mulheres negras, para se ser inteiro [...] que tinha um carácter, não digo racial mas negrista, era uma afirmação um pouco negrista [...] a negritude não

movements, in the immense black oceans of this magic negritude which has kept us united as brothers across space and time.” Abdias Do Nascimento, ‘LETTRE OUVERTE AU PREMIER FESTIVAL MONDIAL DES ARTS NEGRES’, *Présence Africaine*, 58 (1966), 218-28, pp.227-8. For more on Brazilian negritude see Roger Bastide, ‘Variations sur la négritude’, *Présence Africaine*, 36 (1961), 7-17.

⁵⁹ “The essence of the concept of negritude.” Nascimento, p.223.

⁶⁰ “Window open onto the world.” This image is taken from Santos, ‘Janela aberta’, p.154.^[1]_{SEP}

⁶¹ “We, the others who have been physically excluded from Dakar, we do not feel absent [...] we are negritude.” Nascimento, p.227.

excluía os mestiços, longe disso, integrou-os; excluía era os brancos⁶²

Here again, negritude stands both as a way of writing poetry as well a mode of sociality, a way of being in the world, albeit a starkly macho and heteronormative one in figuring black women as ‘completing’ the male subject of negritude rather than as agents or subjects of negritude themselves. Another striking thing about Andrade’s words is that he is describing his behaviour in the framework of negritude in retrospect even though, as he says, the word itself was not yet current in Portuguese in the 1940s. The word ‘negritude’ names and charges, for Andrade, a sentiment that existed before the word. Indeed, though the word only became current amongst Portuguese-speaking Africans in Lisbon in the 1950s, discussions of negritude in Portuguese commonly apply the term retrospectively to Portuguese-language writing and poetry from the 1930s. In particular, in their 1953 poetry anthology *Poesia negra de expressão portuguesa*, which announced the emergence of negritude writing and an “atitude consciente”⁶³ in Portuguese, Andrade and José Francisco Tenreiro retrospectively identify (as is now widespread) Tenreiro’s *Ilha de Nome Santo* as the first expression of Portuguese-speaking negritude.⁶⁴

In introducing that anthology, a high-water mark in the history of Portuguese-language negritude, Andrade and Tenreiro referred both to Aimé Césaire and to the Cuban and African-American poets Nicolas Guillén and Langston Hughes as key influences. In particular, they positioned Guillén, to whom they dedicated the anthology, as “a voz mais

⁶² “Within the framework of negritude – though we weren’t yet talking about negritude – it was necessary to go out with black women, to be whole [...] this had a – well, I wouldn’t say racist, but *negrista*, it was quite a *negrista* affirmation – negritude didn’t exclude mestiços; far from it, it included them. Whites were excluded.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.83.

⁶³ Francisco Tenreiro, ‘Nota Final’ in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, pp.81-2, p.82.

⁶⁴ Mário Pinto de Andrade, [untitled preface], in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, pp.47-52, p.50. Other antecedents are often identified in Delfim de Faria, ‘Caboverdianidade’ *Boletim da Sociedade Luso-Africana do Rio de Janeiro*, 3 (1935), 113-5 and Gabriel Mariano, ‘Negritude e cabo-verdianidade’, *Cabo Verde* 9, 104 (1958), 7-8.

alta da negritude da expressão hispano-americana.”⁶⁵ That is, influences for Portuguese-language writers did not all come via French-language literature. This point is important to make because there is sometimes a sense in English and French-language contexts that negritude was only, in the words of Mphahlele, “a French-speaking thing.”⁶⁶ The pluridirectional processes of diffusion that accompanied the development of negritude mean that canonical negritude texts in French cannot accurately be conceptualized as overarching, central, fixed or ‘sacred’ texts at the centre of this landscape with their influence radiating outwards into a void.

The anthology is prefaced with an epigraph from Nicolás Guillén’s ‘Son Número 6.’⁶⁷ Guillén’s poetic voice celebrates his Afro-Cuban heritage, drawn from both sides of the Atlantic: “Yoruba soy, soy lucumí, | mandinga, congo, carabalí.”⁶⁸ Guillén’s declarative tone builds to an energetic insistence on continued action rendered in a sequence of imperatives: “mire y no pare, | oiga y no pare, | beba y no pare, | coma y no pare | viva y no pare, | ¡que el son de todos no va a parar!”⁶⁹ In as much as Andrade and Tenreiro position this poem as emblematic of their understanding of negritude, this seems to be because of the poetic voice’s proud declaration of his mixed identity; the conception of pan-Atlantic black solidarity Guillén’s poem mobilizes; the insistence on agency carried by the accretion of verbs; because of the celebration of sound and collective voice that the poem’s final injunction registers; and its tonal confidence.

⁶⁵ “The greatest voice of hispano-american negritude.” Andrade, [untitled preface], in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, p.53. Guillén’s work also appeared in *Présence Africaine* and Andrade interviewed him for the journal in 1955.

⁶⁶ Mphahlele, ‘The cult of négritude’, p.50.

⁶⁷ “Sound N.6.” Also printed in Guillén’s *El son entero*, en *Obra poética 1920-1972* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1952), pp.61-63.

⁶⁸ “I am Yoruba, I am lucumí | mandingo, congo, carabali.”

⁶⁹ “Look and don’t stop | listen and don’t stop | drink and don’t stop | live and don’t stop | That the sound of everyone may never stop!”

Beyond this “atitude consciente,”⁷⁰ Tenreiro and Andrade emphasized an alliance between negritude and humanism, writing that their anthology was dedicated to those who “sabem encontrar-se reflectidos nesta poesia, e aos que, compreendendo a hora presente de formação dum novo humanismo à escala universal, entendem que os negros exercitam também os seus timbres particulares para cantar na grande sinfonia humana.”⁷¹ This emphasis on humanism was clearly influenced by Alioune Diop, who had declared that the rehabilitation of a discredited European humanistic tradition was central to his review’s *raison d’être*: “le noir qui brille par son absence dans l’élaboration de la cité moderne pourra, peu à peu, signifier sa présence en contribuant à la création d’un humanisme à la vraie mesure de l’homme.”⁷² Where Diop’s early focus was on interrogating ‘the human,’⁷³ Andrade and Tenreiro’s deployment of this lexicon is more geographically, than philosophically or psychologically, orientated.⁷⁴ Andrade and Tenreiro seem particularly drawn to the “escala universal” that discussions of humanism mobilized. For example, Tenreiro wrote that they had excluded Cape Verdean writing from their collection on the grounds that the submissions they had received were too mired in singularity and regionalism to count as negritude. As a body of writing “de características regionais bem vincadas,”⁷⁵ Cape Verdean writing deserved particularized study, but did not represent the “sentimento da negritude que é a razão-base da poesia negra.”⁷⁶ As such, it was less useful for “a compreensão global do mundo negro.”⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Tenreiro, ‘Nota Final’ in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, p.82.

⁷¹ “This collection is fundamentally intended for those people who know how to see themselves reflected in this poetry, and for those who, recognizing that a new humanism at a universal scale is currently being built, understand that black people are deploying their particular tones to sing in the great human symphony.” Andrade, [untitled preface], p.52 and Tenreiro, ‘Nota Final’ in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, p.82.

⁷² Diop, ‘Niam N’goura’, p.13. Wright and T. Diop trans.: “the black man, conspicuous by his absence in the building up of the modern city, will be able to signify his presence little by little by contributing to the recreating of a humanism reflecting the true measure of man. It is indeed certain that a genuine universalism cannot be attained if, in its formation, only European subjectivities are utilized,” p.191.

⁷³ For a discussion of how Senghor, Césaire and Fanon also took up this question, see: Wilder, *The French imperial nation-state*.

⁷⁴ This comparison between psychology and geography could be developed too in a consideration of Fanon and Cabral’s thought.

⁷⁵ “With clear regional characteristics.” Tenreiro, ‘Nota Final’ in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, p.82.

⁷⁶ “Negritude sentiment, which is the fundamental logic of black poetry.” Ibid., p.82.

⁷⁷ “A holistic understanding of the black world.” Ibid., p.82..

By the same logic, Andrade suggested, Tenreiro's earlier *Ilha de Nome Santo* counted as negritude precisely because of the poem's emphasis on "o homem negro de todo o mundo."⁷⁸ As I discuss below, this emphasis on universality and world-scale analysis that negritude stood for in Portugal took on a particular significance in the context of the exceptionalist claims the *Estado Novo* made about the Portuguese empire. Negritude provided a way of connecting the experience of Portuguese-speaking Africans to the broader anti-colonial movement growing in those years.

The year the anthology appeared, Andrade, Tenreiro and others published the anonymous article in *Présence Africaine*, 'Les Étudiants Noirs Parlent'⁷⁹ whose rhetorical posture was also global:

Tous les hommes réellement progressistes vivent aujourd'hui l'heure de la rencontre universelle. Aussi les étudiants africains cherchent à rattraper le temps perdu, dans la construction d'autres mondes et essentiellement, ils aspirent à être les porte-paroles de la libération de toutes les chaînes que entravent la marche du progrès [...] en servant ainsi l'humanité.⁸⁰

In this vision, the African struggle is united in a revolutionary goal that will change both their own situation and that of humanity as a whole. Albert Franklin's article that critiqued negritude as "une mystification"⁸¹ appeared in the same edition as the students' article. Franklin argued that negritude offered an inadequate vision of solidarity:

aujourd'hui, devant le front uni des exploiters, les opprimés de tous les pays doivent, à travers le monde entier, créer et renforcer une solidarité effective. C'est un crime quand, à la faveur d'un nationalisme légitime (et même souhaitable ici) certains veulent amener les Nègres à repousser la main tendue du prolétariat blanc, la théorie de la Négritude

⁷⁸ "The black man all over the world." Andrade, [untitled preface], in Tenreiro and Andrade, eds., *Poesia Negra*, p.50.

⁷⁹ "Black Students Speak."

⁸⁰ "All truly progressive men [sic] now live at a time of universal meeting. African students also seek to catch up for lost time in the construction of other worlds. Essentially they aspire to be the spokesmen for the liberation of all the chains that obstruct the march of progress [...] to serve humanity." DES ÉTUDIANTS D'AFRIQUE PORTUGUAISE, p.229.

⁸¹ "A mystification." This is taken from the title of Franklin's article.

aboutit expressément à cela.⁸²

Franklin understands negritude as a form of solidarity, just not a politically viable one. Given that ‘Les Étudiants Noirs’ is infused with the imagery of militant class politics, however, it seems that the Portuguese-language writers in question here did not feel the need to choose between a racial and class solidarity. Rather, in Lisbon, mobilizing the concept of negritude signified affiliation with a broad and open-ended resistance community beyond the Portuguese empire.

This Portuguese-language interest in broad and world-scale categories continued. In the most substantial commentary about negritude published by the *Casa, Negritude e humanismo*, the author Alfredo Margarido, engaging with texts from *Présence Africaine*,⁸³ argued that negritude was a “humanismo negro”⁸⁴ that should aim for the “criação de uma humanidade nova.”⁸⁵ This humanist discourse was clearly influenced by French-language discussions, as I have suggested. In the Portuguese context, however, this humanism specifically rejected the *Estado Novo*’s isolationism and exceptionalism. This was what Andrade called “l’élargissement de la négritude”⁸⁶ in the Portuguese language context.

Notably, this was very different to the ideas about language and negritude espoused by Léopold Senghor, who hyperbolized about the French language, but also admired lusotropicalism and the idea of language-worlds as such. He encouraged those struggling

⁸² “Today, in front of the united front of the exploiters, the oppressed of all the countries must, throughout the whole world, create and reinforce an effective solidarity. It is a crime when, in favour of a legitimate (even desirable) nationalism, some want to get black people to repel the outstretched hand of white proletariat, the theory of Négritude expressly leads to that.” Franklin, p.303.

⁸³ Margarido himself published an article in *Présence Africaine* the following year: Alfredo Margarido, ‘Processus de domination fondant un empire: Cas des Lunda’, *Présence Africaine*, 55 (1965), 100-18.

⁸⁴ “Black Humanism.” Alfredo Margarido, *Negritude e Humanismo* (Lisbon: CEI, 1964), p.47.

⁸⁵ “Creation of a new humanity.” Margarido, p.39.

⁸⁶ “Broadening out of negritude.” Andrade, ‘La poésie africaine d'expression portugaise’, p.63.

against Portuguese colonialism to embrace the Portuguese language⁸⁷ and travelled to Lisbon the year after the *Estado Novo* collapsed to give a speech that celebrated the affinities between “lusitanidade” and negritude.⁸⁸ In that speech he celebrated the Portuguese language as well as the culture of “mestiçagem”⁸⁹ which he asserted, drawing on Gilberto Freyre, that the Portuguese had spread around the Portuguese-speaking world. By contrast, the Lisbon negritudinists’ embrace of French, English and Spanish-language influences was an explicit riposte to the lusotropicalist idea of a world built on the Portuguese language.

Even the *Estado Novo* understood that. In a secret report sent to the *Ministério do Ultramar*⁹⁰ in 1965, the PIDE took a late edition of *Mensagem* as an example of how the *Casa* had become a hub of subversion against the regime that was stoking up agitation in the student body. Its perceived negritude was an area of real concern. Discussing *Mensagem*, they wrote: “como era de esperar, converteu-se num instrumento de propaganda dos elementos anticoloniais [...] Característica dos poemas e da prosa: o elogio da negritude.”⁹¹ This quotation is revealing not only in demonstrating the regime’s attention to the political charge carried by the poetry *Mensagem* published, but because they understood negritude as signifying a practice of conceptual and physical exchange they deemed threatening to the Portuguese imperial project. Though the articulation of negritude and humanism did not represent a political project as such, it represented an ontology and a sense of community that was politically charged in that time and place. After the report was sent, registering the subversion the regime associated with this process of associative intertextuality, the government permanently shut down the *Casa* and *Mensagem*. Most of the writers associated

⁸⁷ Léopold Sédar Senghor, ‘Latinité et Négritude’, *Présence Africaine*, 52 (1964), 5-13, p.9

⁸⁸ Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Lusitanidade e Negritude* (Lisboa: Academia das Ciências, 1975), p.31.

⁸⁹ Senghor, *Lusitanidade*, p.55.

⁹⁰ “The Overseas [Colonial] Ministry.”

⁹¹ “As is to be expected, the magazine became an instrument of propaganda for anti-colonial elements [...] The poems and prose are characterized by celebrations of négritude.” Ministério do Ultramar, Secret report on the Casa dos Estudantes do Império, Arquivo PIDE, Torre do Tombo, PIDE/DGS/SC/SR3529/62/NT2252, 1-33, p.13.

with the expressions of negritude in Lisbon in the early 1950s left Portugal, and, with the exception of Francisco Tenreiro, became involved in the burgeoning nationalist movements. In the years that followed, the early emphases on negritude and humanism came up against concrete political tests. Though both proved difficult to transpose into a parliamentary or state form, they continued to influence anti-colonial thought in Portugal's African colonies.

1963-4: The Third World Project

During the high years of nationalism in French, Dutch and British African colonies, *Présence Africaine* did not explicitly talk about negritude in relation to nationalism. Nevertheless, these years of disarticulation throw into relief the conscious re-articulation of negritude to political projects that emerged later, after the halcyon years of African independences from French and British imperial rule. In 1963, after national independence in many countries and the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity, discussion of the term negritude re-emerged as the review began more explicitly to express support for African socialism and *tiersmondisme*.⁹²

That year, 1963, an important edition was published, which included Senghor's 'Négritude et Civilisation de l'Universel',⁹³ the transcript of a courtroom speech by Nelson Mandela,⁹⁴ a homage to Frantz Fanon⁹⁵ and the third instalment of Césaire's *La Tragédie Du Roi Christophe*, which the review serialized.⁹⁶ Along with Césaire's other plays,⁹⁷ *Christophe*

⁹² See P.A., 'Confiance au Peuple d'Afrique', *Présence Africaine*, 45 (1963), 3-4.

⁹³ "Négritude and Universal Civilisation." Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Négritude et Civilisation de l'Universel', *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 8-13.

⁹⁴ [No named author], 'L'Etat Sud-Africain contre Nelson Mandela', *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 126-47; Nelson Mandela, 'Discours de Mandela à la Cour avant le jugement', *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 148-62.

⁹⁵ Gonsalv Mainberger, 'Mythe et réalité de l'homme noir', *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 78-92.

⁹⁶ "The tragedy of King Christopher." Aimé Césaire, 'La Tragédie du Roi Christophe', *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 163-83.

⁹⁷ The other plays were: *Et les chiens se taisaient*, *Une Tempête* and *Une Saison Au Congo*. ("And the Dogs were Quiet; The Tempest; A Season in the Congo.") All except *Une Saison* were published by *Présence Africaine*. Ruth Bush claims *Une Saison* was published by Seuil not *Présence Africaine* because the state funding *Présence Africaine* received from Zaire was incompatible with that play's critique of Mobutu's government. See Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.66 and p.82.

can be read as an evolution of Césaire's own thinking about negritude. The play tells the story of a slave king who becomes a dictator. By raising the question of black oppressors, the play re-introduced a class emphasis into the question of black emancipation. As early as 1963, this topic chimed with the already-fading lustre of independence. Indeed, in an interview with Mário Pinto de Andrade, Césaire connected the story of *Christophe* to evolutions in African politics and to his idea of negritude:

A.C – Mobutu c'est dans le cadre du néo-colonialisme. Christophe [...] se prenait pour un roi-nègre mais égalitaire des autres souverains.
M.A. – Autres dimensions actuelles de la tragédie: ce problème de l'assimilation, le mimétisme royal.
[...]
M.A. - Il y a quand même de la négritude avant la lettre...
A.C. - C'est moi qui l'ai mis [...] C'est un peu senghorien; la négritude oui, mais il y a le palais présidentiel, le protocole de l'Elysée, etc.⁹⁸

Notably, Césaire here expresses a sense of negritude as articulated. Césaire characterizes what he calls the "senghorien" combination of negritude with the Elysée as, in Hall's terms, "a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time."⁹⁹ Rather, by retaining a sense of the political possibilities of negritude beyond the constrained achievements of national parliamentary politics, this fragment therefore inscribes negritude as a persistently productive imaginary for post-independence politics.

The editorial of the edition in which the final installment of *Christophe* appeared was entitled 'Culture économique et Tiers-Monde.'¹⁰⁰ In it, Diop returned to the topic of negritude, declaring that the concept could be revived by an economic revolution of the

⁹⁸ "A.C – Mobutu is neocolonialism. Christophe [...] took himself for a black king but who was equal to any other sovereign. | M.A. – Another aspect of the tragedy with contemporary resonance: this problem of assimilation, of royal mimicry. | [...] | M.A – There is certainly an element of *négritude* 'avant la lettre' [...] | A.C – I put it there... It's a bit senghorien; *négritude* yes, but there is the presidential palace, the protocol of the Elysée, etc." Interview of Aimé Césaire by Mário Pinto de Andrade, undated, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 10197.002.001, 1-8, pp.6-8

⁹⁹ Grossberg, ed., 'On Postmodernism', p.53

¹⁰⁰ P.A., 'Culture économique et Tiers-Monde', *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 5-7.

Third World:

La négritude [...] n'est pas le sanctuaire de quelque nostalgie, mais un univers où tout l'homme est promis à une croissance originale et plénière. La culture économique pourra y retrouver non seulement l'esprit qui doit vivifier toute valeur africaine, mais aussi la substance de son contenu qui est la chair même des peuples, débordante de vie quotidienne, d'innovation et d'aventure collective.¹⁰¹

Here, Diop is concerned to redeem negritude as a collective and everyday quality, rather than as an elite and literary one. Diop tried to apply negritude to ideas of culture that were moving away from an emphasis on literature and towards broader ideas of everyday culture. We might interpret Diop's use of the word to signify "une croissance originale" as a way of connecting negritude to the possibility of new and as yet unimaginable selves that economic equality might enable. The next year, he called for revolution to "changer la qualité de l'homme."¹⁰² Like Cabral in Havana, Diop sought to shrug off commitments to tradition or identity in favour of forging new modes of sociality, uncoupled from hermetic conceptions of nationality. For Diop, negritude expressed this. In spite of its idealist tenor, the editorial is one of Diop's most militant. He hopes his support of Third Worldism can help "préparer la *Revolution Africaine* [original emphasis]."¹⁰³ Diop couches his faith in the Third World project as the means of achieving the unity and the new humanism that in earlier years had been articulated through the concept of negritude and that African nationalism was increasingly leaving behind.

¹⁰¹ Translated in the English edition of *Présence Africaine* as: "Negritude is not the sanctuary of nostalgia but a universe where the whole man is promised an original and absolute growth. Economics can find there not only the spirit which must enliven every African value but also the substance which is the very flesh of the peoples, overflowing with life, innovation and collective adventure." P.A., 'Economic Culture and the Third World', *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 18, 46 (1963), 5-8, p.7. P.A., 'Culture économique et Tiers Monde', *Présence Africaine*, 46 (1963), 5-7, pp.6-7

¹⁰² "To change the quality of man." PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, 'Révolution et autorité africaines', *Présence Africaine*, 49 (1964), 5-7, p.7.

¹⁰³ Translated in the English edition of *Présence Africaine* as: "prepare the *African Revolution* [original emphasis]." P.A., 'Economic Culture and the Third World', p.7; 'Culture économique et Tiers Monde', p.7

Diop's revival and redefinition of negritude accompanies a change in his subject of focus from the figure of the 'homme de culture' to a more collective subject represented by the 'people' and, now deeply influenced by Fanon, "les damnés de la terre."¹⁰⁴ He also re-emphasizes the insufficiency of national independence: "nous avons déjà constaté à nos dépens que l'indépendance politique ne suffisait pas. Que l'indépendance économique serait longue à conquérir, et l'indépendance culturelle délicate à dégager."¹⁰⁵ The earlier iterations of négritude as an expression of dispersed community, then, resurfaced into a revived more-than-national perspective that called into question the capacity of nations to solve the question of black empowerment at the domestic level. Notably, negritude re-emerges again as an engaged corrective to a dominant body of thought at a moment when Diop is looking for a way of expressing a culturally attentive, class and a more-than-national sensibility.

In the years that followed, *Présence Africaine* published several critiques of "le mimétisme royal,"¹⁰⁶ as Andrade put it. A particularly forceful critique was written by Keith Daniels, who denounced celebratory discourses of black kingship. Daniels' piece, written in English, was a response to James Baldwin's book *The Fire Next Time*. It is an excoriating piece of invective, written in a second person address to Baldwin himself. A particular source of outrage for Daniels is Baldwin's celebration that "African kings and heroes have come into the world."¹⁰⁷ Daniels' response is blunt:

Who wants kings anyway? And as for the heroes, what are they heroes of?
Are you thinking, by chance of the 'honorable' Dr. Banda of Malawi? Or Sir

¹⁰⁴ Translated in the English edition of *Présence Africaine* as: "the "Damned of the Earth." P.A., 'African Revolution and Authority', *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 21, 49 (1964), 5-7, p.7. 'PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, 'Révolution et autorité africaines', p.7.

¹⁰⁵ Translated in the English edition of *Présence Africaine* as: "We have already seen to our cost that political independence is not enough, that economic independence may be a long time in coming about and that cultural independence may be difficult to extricate." African Revolution and Authority', p.6. PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, 'Révolution et autorité africaines', p.6.

¹⁰⁶ "Royal mimicry."

¹⁰⁷ Keith Daniels, 'Letter to James Baldwin', *Présence Africaine*, 62 (1967), 3-12, p.5.

Seretse Kama? Or that foul bag of half-calculated folly, Tshombe? – to name only the ‘obvious’ heroes of Africa [...] Heroes like Jomo Kenyatta and Kenneth Kaunda are not good enough as models. They are probably waiting to be elevated into the white parliamentary portals of heaven anyway [...] Some heroes I am unable to speak of without wanting to puke [...] and do they have to be *black*? Had you thought of including brown and yellow and biscuit-coloured heroes? Because if you opened up the pigmented portals of power and progress wide enough, you might see that colour, in itself, can never serve as a passport to get to the kind of liberation and justice we want and are going to get.¹⁰⁸

Daniels’ letter emphasizes the need for an anti-capitalist anti-racism (“It is because you are running so hard from socialism, James, that you give us nothing but fresh air and death to cling to. We’ve got those already.”¹⁰⁹) but also calls on Baldwin to drop his American exceptionalism and to reconceptualize race not as a position to be inhabited but as a structuring ontology to be fought and dismantled: “For the black man *colour* is vital [...] [but] he needs to make his colour almost irrelevant.”¹¹⁰

Whether Daniels’ reading is a fair interpretation of Baldwin’s writing – and indeed, Baldwin did not take up *Présence Africaine*’s invitation to respond – the former’s ideas are in step with a particular thread of thinking about negritude current in the journal in those years. Daniels’ text does not directly refer to negritude, but is marked by the dialectic between racial consciousness and broader solidarities that characterize the history of negritude. At the same time, Daniels’ text represents a broader shift away from blackness as the centre point of thinking about racial solidarity earlier represented by negritude. Daniels writes, “what you have to ask yourself is: Am I, an American negro, with *them*, the exploited but nevertheless ‘superior’ white American people, or am I, an exploited American Negro, with *us*, the exploited and ‘inferior’ *mestizos* of the world?”¹¹¹ He is inviting Baldwin to underemphasize the specificity of the American situation to locate himself in the context of

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp.5-8.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.11-2.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.6.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.8.

the world, particularly in the context of neo-colonialism. Like Diop, who emphasized the structures of global inequality a few years before, Daniels calls on Baldwin to position his racial solidarities more widely amongst a wider, dispersed, global community.

Cuba 1966-8: Socialist Revolution and Tricontinentalism

Keith Daniels' aspiration to dismantle racial categories had been anticipated on the pages of *Présence Africaine* in a long essay by the Haitian poet René Depestre, who, this time, explicitly connected this aspiration to negritude. In his essay, published in *Présence Africaine* in 1965, Depestre argued that the Cuban Revolution was the concrete embodiment of negritude. In 1965, Depestre, who was working for the revolutionary government in Havana, wrote:

Le Congrès de Rome marquait, sans nul doute, une nouvelle victoire de la négritude sur le plan de la culture. A Cuba, au même moment, la négritude trouvait, non seulement dans le domaine culturel, mais dans celui autrement décisif de la praxis révolutionnaire un double débouché sur la mer libre de l'histoire et de la culture universelles. En effet, pour la première fois dans le monde, des millions de noirs et de mulâtres avaient la possibilité concrète [...] de participer corps et âme au colossal effort de *libération socialiste* de leur pays et de leur nation [original emphasis].¹¹²

Here Depestre applies to negritude the understanding of culture associated with Fanon, Andrade and Cabral that I discussed in Chapter Three. That is, Depestre takes political resistance itself, rather than, for example, literary writing, as cultural practice. Negritude is no longer textual for Depestre; no longer to be found fundamentally in poetry, as Césaire

¹¹² "The Rome Congress marked, without a doubt, a new victory for negritude in cultural terms. In Cuba, at the same time, negritude found, not only in the cultural domain, but in the differently decisive field of revolutionary praxis, a double outlet on the free sea of universal history and culture. Indeed, for the first time in the world, millions of blacks and mulattoes had the concrete possibility [...] of participating body and soul in the colossal effort of *socialist liberation* of their country and their nation.' René Depestre, 'Lettre de Cuba...', *Présence Africaine*, 56 (1965), 105-42, p.123.

suggested even in 1966.¹¹³ Rather, negritude is represented by the participation of black and mestizo people in the socialist project of the Cuban Revolution. More broadly, Depestre's understanding of culture, like his friend Mário Pinto de Andrade's in the 1960s and 1970s, had moved from an emphasis on the literary to a focus on collective and everyday practices off the page. For Depestre, negritude is "debout"¹¹⁴ (as Césaire's poetic voice puts it in the *Cahier*) in an actually existing socialist state project. Depestre's piece responded to a highly critical article by Carlos More about the racism of the Cuban Revolution.¹¹⁵ More's article is prefaced with the editorial disclaimer that "toutes nos sympathies vont à la Révolution Cubaine, que nous considérons comme un événement exemplaire [...] pour le Tiers-Monde tout entier [...] Mais c'est une doctrine à Présence Africaine de ne refuser la parole à aucune voix du monde nègre, quelle qu'elle soit."¹¹⁶ Depestre's article is prefaced with a more supportive note that lends editorial approval to his text: "nous ouvrons notre tribune à notre ami René DEPESTRE, grand écrivain haïtien."¹¹⁷ Depestre's faith in the Cuban project was inseparable from his sense of Fidel Castro's commitment to humanism and to moving past racial typologies:

Nous allions être des hommes à part entier, et non des "hommes noirs" sur qui des "hommes blancs" projettent mystiquement tout ce qui en eux inspire de troubles sentiments de peur et de culpabilité. Les noirs seront libérés de leur noirceur et les blancs de leur blancheur pour construire ensemble un monde démystifié d'êtres véritablement humains.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ "This essential language of Poetry." Aimé Césaire, 'Liminaire', *Présence Africaine*, 57 (1966), [unpaginated]

¹¹⁴ "Standing upright." French reference: Césaire, 'Cahier' in Eshleman and Smith, eds., p.47.

¹¹⁵ Carlos More, 'Le Peuple noir a-t-il sa place dans la révolution cubaine?', *Présence Africaine*, 52 (1964), 177-230 ("Do black people have a place in the Cuban Revolution?").

¹¹⁶ "The Cuban Revolution has all of our sympathies. We consider the revolution an exemplary development [...] for the whole of the Third World [...] But at *Présence Africaine* our doctrine is to never to deny a platform to voices from the black world, whatever they may say." More, p.177.

¹¹⁷ "We open the floor to our friend René Depestre, the great Haitian writer." 'Lettre de Cuba...', p.105

¹¹⁸ "We were going to be fully-fledged men, not 'black men' on whom 'white men' mysteriously project everything that inspires in them feelings of fear and guilt. Black people will be freed from their blackness and whites from their whiteness to build together a demystified world of truly human beings." 'Lettre de Cuba', p.122.

Deeply embedded in the conjuncture of the Cuban Revolution, Depestre understands negritude less as an act of racial affirmation and more as a social practice that works towards the dismantling of race as an ontology by dismantling the material inequalities that uphold it. That is, he understands race not as an essential identitarian state of being, but as a structure of containment and enclosure that negritude thinking named, and that negritude practice works towards breaking out of. This strand of negritude thinking was not entirely new. In 1964, Alfredo Margarido talked of “a desapareição absoluta de quaisquer formas de distinção entre os homens, incluindo as que se baseiam nas cores, isto é [...] a chegada a um estágio onde o homem não possua cor, seja apenas um homem, ou mais amplamente o homem.”¹¹⁹

Yet, as with Mário Pinto de Andrade’s understanding of tricontinentalism with which I began this chapter, what is remarkable about Depestre’s discussion of the Cuban Revolution is that he characterizes it in terms of negritude at all. That he does is a testimony to the enduring freight of the concept and to the double sense it always carried of an affirmation of community and the vanishing boundaries of that community in the face of humanity as a whole. It is this double movement in the concept itself that helps us make sense of the way that Depestre mobilizes negritude to signify the *dépassement* of identitarian categories. Depestre celebrates the Cuban Revolution in 1965 as a victory for negritude in an evangelist mode: negritude would not be globally “debout” until racial categories were materially dissolved not just in Cuba but all over the world.

Mário Pinto de Andrade’s conception of tricontinentalism as the *dépassement* of negritude is slightly distinct from Depestre’s. Writing in the aftermath of the Cultural Congress of Havana in 1968, Andrade sought not so much to move past race as to emphasize a broader

¹¹⁹ “The absolute disappearance of any form of distinction between men, including those based on colour, that is [...] the arrival at a stage where man has no colour, but is only a man, or more profoundly man.” Alfredo Margarido, *Negritude e Humanismo*, p.47.

Third World solidarity over black solidarity alone, as well as to emphasize the need for global and revolutionary solutions to the on-going problems of inequality and colonialism. Tricontinentalism signaled an internationalist project of class politics that called for economic equality on an international, indeed internationalist, scale. Tricontinental politics took race seriously as one vector along which material class inequalities were marshalled, but disavowed the nation as the boundary of political ambition, emphasizing rather the limits of seeking to solve global inequalities only at the level of domestic politics. In this sense, we can see similarities between the ontology represented by tricontinental socialism and by negritude, which had been expressed at the nexus of race, class and humanism, with an emphasis on the importance of black expression. In a sense, then, for Andrade, although he had arrived at Tricontinentalism through negritude, it also rendered negritude superfluous.

Conclusion: Algiers 1969

The account I have given of the ways that negritude's articulations were contested and reconceptualized beyond the work of its best-known architects could be seen as an attempt to reconstruct the literary and political climate that make legible Mario Pinto de Andrade's characterization of tricontinentalism as an evolution of negritude. At the same time, it brings into view a broader interest in negritude that changes the dominant narrative about the term. As Christopher Miller has argued, negritude was born as an engaged corrective to a colour-blind Marxism; I have argued that as it developed, negritude continued to be articulated to racially informed expressions of class politics that retained a more-than-national perspective. The indeterminacy of negritude's political significance was for many years a strength that allowed the concept to be taken up and reinterpreted in different contexts. *Présence Africaine's* willingness to publish opposing opinions within a broad commitment to anti-colonialism meant that the journal's political and cultural commitments evolved in an ecosystem of positions that are sometimes conceptualized as theoretically separate.

For all its moments of contestation and political articulation, however, as the 1960s came to an end many voices were becoming less and less interested in negritude even as a way of expressing their disagreement. At the 1969 Pan-African Festival of Algiers, mandated by the OAU though organized by the Algerian government with the intention of extending the boundaries of pan-African imaginations to include the Maghreb, many delegates denounced Senghorian negritude,¹²⁰ whilst the delegations from Portugal's African colonies did not even mention negritude.¹²¹ By this point, as Honorat Aguessy later pointed out, "le rejet de la négritude"¹²² had itself come to function almost "comme base politique."¹²³ *Présence Africaine* published the Festival's full manifesto and resolutions (in English and French), as well as reviews of the films and theatre put on during its course. Perhaps as a mark of the limits of their commitment to dissent, however, *Présence Africaine* did not publish the most vitriolically anti-negritude material. The intervention by the delegation from Sékou Touré's Guinea, that rejected negritude as "une idéologie auxiliaire de l'idéologie impérialiste"¹²⁴ was printed in another review, *Souffles*. In the editorial he wrote introducing the festival, Alioune Diop distanced himself from the views of Senghor's detractors and presented their wish for an alliance between the Arab and black parts of Africa as an abstraction:

The Algerian leaders did not only content themselves with fighting the thought of a leader whose political doctrine they do not share (as is their right) but they were equally against the use of the word itself [négritude] and the expression "Negro culture." They did not like the distinction made between Negro and Arab cultures and requested that one should speak only of *African culture*. It is certainly true that Africans should wish to see the springing up of a true culture proper to the continent as a whole but, for the moment however, such an African culture is an inclination as it does not correspond to reality.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ See Jules-Rosette, pp.70-3 and also Bernth Lindfors, 'Anti-negritude in Algiers', *Africa Today*, 17.1 (1970), 5.

¹²¹ [No named author], 'Intervention commune des mouvements de libération des colonies portugaises', *Souffles* 16-7, [Not individually paginated]

¹²² "The rejection of negritude." Honorat Aguessy, 'La phase de la négritude', *Présence Africaine*, 80 (1971), 33-47, p.47.

¹²³ "As a political basis." Aguessy, p.47.

¹²⁴ "An auxiliary ideology of imperialist ideology." Délégation de la Guinée, 'La Culture Africaine', *Souffles*, 16-7 (1969-70), 14-23. [Not individually paginated]

http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/deanhum/langlit/french/souffles/S1617/14g_16.HTM [accessed 3 August 2018]

¹²⁵ P.A., 'An African Cultural Summer', *Présence Africaine*, 72 (1969), 6-8 (Printed in English).

For Diop, so heavily involved in the work of connecting an international black diaspora, the grand-scale theorizing of negritude and the world seemed concrete enough; it was the connection between black and Arab cultures that seemed unreal. But, certainly from the perspective of the present, the contestations of negritude I have discussed could themselves often seem idealist in the occlusions engendered by their grandiose scale. A central occlusion, that I discuss next, was gender.

CHAPTER 6: WOMEN, WORK AND ANTI-COLONIAL WRITING

a luta continua

*let's say it out loud
about the other day
how we were talking
about that Comrade X
who went home
And gave his wife
a blue eye,
and we'd all clapped
an hour before
for the liberation
speech he gave
with such conviction.
Roshila Nair, 1992¹*

*It is always worth asking, 'Where are the
women?' Answering the question reveals the
dependence of most political and economic
systems not just on women, but on certain kinds
of relations between women and men.
Cynthia Enloe, 1989²*

Writing in the 1990s, Florence Stratton argued that what passed in those years for a canon of African writing should properly be called “the all-male canon,”³ such was the extent to which women writers had been excluded. Stratton’s argument calls on us to be precise about the gendering behind apparently gender-neutral categories such as “African” – or, I would add here, “anti-colonial.” The people both journals acknowledged as authors were mainly men. As Inocência Mata has emphasized, the *Casa* may well be increasingly celebrated as

¹ Roshila Nair, 'aluta continua (Poem)', *Feminist Studies*, 29.3 (2003), 617.

² Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, beaches & bases: making feminist sense of international politics* (London: Pandora, 1989), p.133.

³ Florence Stratton, *Contemporary African literature and the politics of gender* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.5.

a liberatory space in the history of the struggle against the Portuguese colonial and fascist projects, but it replicated colonialism's patriarchal biases.⁴ The same point must be made about *Présence Africaine*, which is often celebrated as an incubator of anti-colonial consciousness.

Anti-colonial nationalism, as critics such as Elleke Boehmer have shown, were typically highly gendered and involved aspirations to protect, civilize, censure, marshal and modernize women.⁵ Though women crowded the literary imaginations of many of the male writers published, both journals, at least in the period I am focussing on, published little work ascribed to women. Like many nationalist organizations, these literary institutions were patriarchal spaces, underpinned by norms of sociality that marginalized women. Few women, apart from Christiane Yandé Diop,⁶ occupied editorial or decision-making positions. As such, we need to read them both as institutions of power which encoded exclusionary practices as well as sites of (limited) liberatory expression. At *Présence Africaine*, discussions about political independence and black and human emancipation were typically undertaken in gender-neutral terms. As Anne McClintock has argued, however, race, gender and class are articulated categories that emerge "in and through relation to each other."⁷ Colonial projects themselves operated partly through the policing and management of gender. This theoretical omission of gender as a central dimension of racialized and classed freedom, as well as the practiced marginalization of women in much anti-colonial praxis, represents a major blind spot which has been the subject of much

⁴ Mata, *A Casa dos Estudantes do Império*, p.33.

⁵ Elleke Boehmer, *Mothers of Africa: Representations of nation and gender in postcolonial African literature* (Doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1991), esp. Chapter One, "'A world of fathers': The Gendered State of Nationalism", pp.21-72.

⁶ Ruth Bush asserts that from 1956 onwards Christiane Yandé Diop ran the publishing work at *Présence Africaine*. Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French*, p.243. Yandé Diop's name appears at the back of many editions of the journal as *Directrice Gérante* (Managing Director).

⁷ McClintock, p.5.

scholarly work with respect to African writing and anti-colonial histories more broadly.⁸

Neither *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*, however, totally excluded women: women authors were occasionally published before 1968, and women were also involved in the editing, administration and processing of other people's work. In this context, journals such as *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* represent a highly suggestive archive, because their form affords glimpses of womens' work. When we engage with these journals today, women are not invisible, but partially-visible. Two questions emerge here: what lived gender inequalities – what divisions of labour – underpinned the journals and shaped their form? Secondly, what did the women who were published say? I argue in this chapter that women were heavily involved in the lateral and associative work I have argued both journals undertook, notably as translators. Then, I argue that in much women's writing in both journals we can see an effort to rewrite single-scale and gender-neutral anti-colonial paradigms. Read together, these texts bring the private, the domestic and the labour of social reproduction to bear on the question of what the 'anti-colonial' comprised.

This partial-visibility requires us to deal with the problems of historiography and method that attend the question of bringing forward the women in the anti-colonial archives. Broadly, the archives of anti-colonial womens' work and networks in the literary-artistic sphere are characterized by tantalising but unrealisable promise. Fragments gesture to

⁸ Stratton, Boehmer and McLintock are important examples here. Urdang discusses women's roles in the PAIGC in Stephanie Urdang, 'Fighting Two Colonialisms: The Women's Struggle in Guinea-Bissau', *African Studies Review*, 18.3 (1975), 29-34. Hiddleston discusses Fanon's description of the active role women played in the Algerian struggle in Jane Hiddleston, '(Post)colonialism' in Renée C Hoogland, ed., *Gender: sources, perspectives, and methodologies* (Farmington Hills, Mich. ; New York ; Waterville, Maine ; Meriden, Conn ; Mason, Ohio ; Chicago: MacMillan, 2016), pp.277-89, p.283. Rothwell discusses Carmen Pereira's role at the PAIGC in Phillip Rothwell, 'Carmen Pereira in the Feminine Singular: Revolution, Motherhood and Sacrifice in Guinea-Bissau', *Journal of Romance Studies*, forthcoming; see also Ajamu Nangwaya, 'Pan-Africanism, feminism and finding missing pan-Africanist women', *Pambazuka News*, Thursday May 26 2016, <https://www.pambazuka.org/pan-africanism/pan-africanism-feminism-and-finding-missing-pan-africanist-women> [accessed 25 June 2018]

international networks of engaged literary women who never fully come into view. Annette MBaye dedicates one of her poems to Henriette Bathily.⁹ In the *Casa* archive, there is a file of poems by an anonymous writer, “T.G,” probably Teresa Gama, who dedicates poems to Alda Lara.¹⁰ Alda Espírito Santo dedicates texts to the Angolan militant Deolinda Rodrigues¹¹ and to the African-American activist Angela Davis.¹² In later interviews, Alda Espírito Santo talked about plays she had written that had been lost,¹³ and about women’s meetings she established alongside the CEA in the early 1950s in Lisbon with Noémia de Sousa, Maria Vilhena and Rute Neto, among others.¹⁴ Records of these meetings, if records ever existed, appear to have been lost too.¹⁵ Archived letters from Noémia de Sousa refer to meetings with Espírito Santo in the years after they left Lisbon,¹⁶ and to a meeting with Christiane Diop in Paris.¹⁷ What did this writer and editor discuss? These histories have not been recorded.

In *Présence Africaine*, an early notice advertizes Sarah Maldoror’s theatre troupe *Les Griots* and directs any interested parties to write to Maldoror herself.¹⁸ For all its interest in black culture, however, *Présence Africaine* never reviewed the performances of *Les Griots*, Paris’

⁹ Henriette Bathily was the director of the cultural department at the French Cultural Centre and a cultural activist. Bush, ‘Mesdames, il faut lire!’, p.217.

¹⁰ ‘File Marked T. G. 1961-63’, undated, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Associação Casa dos Estudantes do Império, File: 11120.007.000.

¹¹ Rodrigues was an MPLA militant whose letters and diaries have been subsequently published, though her writing never appeared in *Mensagem*. Espírito Santo stated that Amílcar Cabral introduced her to Deolinda Rodrigues on a trip to Angola between 1956 and 1958, when Rodrigues was living in a house with Agostinho Neto’s mother. ‘Entrevista com Alda Espírito Santo’ in Laban, ed., *S. Tomé e Príncipe*, p.77.

¹² ‘Aos Combatentes’ in Alda Espírito Santo, *É nosso o solo sagrado da terra - Poesia de protesto e luta* (Lisbon: Ulmeiro, 1978), pp.109-117.

¹³ Laban, ed., *S. Tomé e Príncipe*, p.102

¹⁴ Laban, ed., *S. Tomé e Príncipe*, p.77

¹⁵ Noémia de Sousa also talks about lost papers from the discussions at the Centro dos Estudos Africanos in Michel Laban, ed., *Moçambique: Encontro com Escritores* (Porto: Fundação Eng. António de Almeida, 1998), Vol. I, pp.237–346, pp.330-1.

¹⁶ Letter from Noémia de Sousa to Mário Pinto de Andrade, 27 July 1959, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 04305.002.008

¹⁷ Letter from Noémia de Sousa to Mário Pinto de Andrade, 5 January 1965, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Pasta 04308.007.017

¹⁸ [no named author], ‘Appel aux écrivains noirs et malgaches’, *Présence Africaine*, 17 (1957), 164, p.164.

first black theatre company. Maldoror's 1972 film *Sambizanga*, set in Luanda though filmed in Congo-Brazzaville with MPLA and *Présence Africaine* funding,¹⁹ and based on Mário Pinto de Andrade's translation into French of Luandino Viera's *A Verdadeira Vida de Domingos Xavier*, tells the story of a woman navigating the male-dominated worlds both of the PIDE prisons and of the nationalist struggle: an extremely rare perspective.²⁰ Maldoror later recalled how, in a fit of pique, soldiers from the Algerian FLN confiscated reels of film she had shot in 1971 in the liberated parts of Guinea-Bissau. The footage had been the raw material for a film she was making, *Des Fusils pour Banta*, about the role of PAIGC women in the armed struggle. The film was never made, and the reels have been lost or destroyed.²¹ This vignette illustrates both the deliberate erasures that attend the archiving of women's, and especially black women's, work, and the complicity of supposedly liberatory forces in the processes of silencing and destruction. Roshila Nair's poem, in the epigraph to this chapter, also takes up this question, suggesting that anti-colonial discourse actively provides cover for gendered violence.

To bring into view the histories of women involved in anti-colonial movements, then, requires grappling with the numerous gaps and silences in the surviving records, which call into question the limits and politics of a solely empiricist scholarship in the context of considerable and systematic archival inequalities and in the context of on-going canonization of the great men of the anti-colonial fights. Saidiya Hartmann has argued for the need to describe "as fully as possible the conditions that determine the appearance" of

¹⁹ Documents in the *Présence Africaine* archive demonstrate that *Présence Africaine* was financially involved in the production of Isabelle Films' film version of *La Vraie vie de Domingos Xavier* (they do not refer to the title 'Sambizanga.') IMEC: 490 PAE/46.

²⁰ Maldoror's 1972 film *Sambizanga* was based on José Luandino Vieira, *La vraie vie de Domingos Xavier: Suivi de Le complet de Mateus*, trans. Mario de Andrade and Chantal Tiberghien (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1971). Viera's text was published in Portuguese as José Luandino Viera, *A vida verdadeira de Domingos Xavier* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 1974).

²¹ Footage of Sarah Maldoror in Anne-Laure Folly et al., dir., *Sarah Maldoror ou la nostalgie de l'utopie* (Paris: Organisation internationale de la francophonie [distrib.], [DL 2012]).

women in the empirical archive, and the conditions that “dictate [...] [their] silence.”²² Hartmann’s call to attend to the processes by which records survive in the archive as well as to the objects themselves is extremely salient. Nevertheless, as I argued in Chapter Four, writing and editing are practices, whose import should be read connectively with other practices. As such, rather than address the significance of the gendered inequalities at *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* in terms of silence, I propose first to think in terms of divisions of labour; to ask Cynthia Enloe’s question: “where are the women?”²³

With this in mind, it is important to underline that, for example, alongside letters from reams of male would-be contributors pitching manuscripts and articles in the *Présence Africaine* archives, there exist letters from women offering themselves as translators. One woman writes to propose she quit her current job and translate English texts for *Présence Africaine* for 4 hours a day for 60.000CFA a month.²⁴ Another, writing from Washington, proposes a translation of ‘Eduardo Mondlane,’ a biography published that year by PanAf Books.²⁵ Some of the male contributors’ correspondence also evoke women translators. A letter from Virgílio de Lemos is marked “Pour Traduire: Cella Manolin.”²⁶ A letter from Mário Pinto de Andrade, in Algiers, specifies that his name should appear in front of Chantal Tiberghien’s on the cover of *La Vraie Vie de Domingos Xavier*.²⁷ If, as I have argued, translation and multilingualism were a fundamental part of these journals’ lateral and associative critical charge, it is important to emphasize that although the vast majority of the published authors were men, the process of exchange that translation effected was made possible by their translators, of which many were women. When Maryse Condé’s first

²² Saidiya Hartman, ‘Venus in Two Acts’, *Small Axe*, 12.2 (2008), 1-14, p.1. Hartmann’s essay addresses the figure of Venus in the archive of Atlantic slavery and strategies for addressing the violence of that archive.

²³ Enloe, *Bananas, beaches & bases*, p.133.

²⁴ Letter, signed Mme N’Diaye, 2 March 1971, IMEC: 490 PAE/46

²⁵ Letter from Washington 30 March 1972, IMEC: 490 PAE/46.

²⁶ Letter from Virgílio de Lemos 14 May 1964, IMEC: 490 PAE/46.

²⁷ Letter from Mario de Andrade, Algiers, 18 January 1971, IMEC: 490 PAE/46.

‘Review of Reviews’ articles appear in *Présence Africaine* in 1970,²⁸ telling her readers in authoritative tones what books and journals were worth reading from across the continent, we can read them not only as some of the first examples of women consistently being marked as ‘author’ in the journal, but also as a type of conceptual translation and of lateral and associative thinking which Condé was the latest in a lineage of women to undertake, though one of the first to be named and acknowledged.²⁹

On the Portuguese-language side of things, no records remain of how texts published in *Mensagem* were sourced and translated in the existing archives of the *Casa*. It is, however, important to emphasize the work of Noémia de Sousa. Despite later attempts to rehabilitate Sousa,³⁰ disappointment often accompanies accounts of her work. Sometimes this is because her work is deemed of little literary value. Alternatively, the disappointment is connected to her withdrawal from literary and political work in her later life as a single mother in France.³¹ Letters to Mário Pinto de Andrade call into question, however, just how quiet Sousa was. In 1965, Sousa writes about her translations of African lusophone poetry into French and discussions with Christiane Diop at *Présence Africaine*.³² In 1974, she wrote in urgent terms to Andrade to alert him to *Seara Nova*’s interest in publishing books about the MPLA,

²⁸ Condé’s first piece appeared in 1968 in the ‘Palabres’ section. (Maryse Condé et al., ‘Palabres’, *Présence Africaine*, 68 (1968), 197-209) but her ‘Review of Reviews’ articles first appeared in 1970: Maryse Condé, ‘Review of reviews’, *Présence Africaine*, 76 (1970), 232-4.

²⁹ Condé is a good example of a figure whose name appears minimally in the review itself, as the author of a handful of articles. In interviews, she describes a much more involved role: “I reached Paris in 1970 and started to work at *Présence Africaine*. Mr. Kala-Lobé and I were in charge of the *Présence Africaine* journal as well as colloquia. We would select articles and edit the journal’s issues. It wasn’t a bad job and it allowed me to meet a great number of people. [...] I called into question Negritude’s ‘negro.’” Françoise Pfaff, *Conversations with Maryse Condé* (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p.18.

³⁰ Such as by Hilary Owen in *Mother Africa, Father Marx: women's writing of Mozambique, 1948-2002* (Lewisburg [Pa.]: Bucknell University Press, 2007).

³¹ This attitude is palpable especially amongst those who wanted her to be more politically engaged; an attitude exemplified by Margaret Dickinson, a white English activist and filmmaker who in 1971 made the cult documentary about FRELIMO, *Behind the Lines*. In her 1972 poetry anthology *When Bullets Begin to Flower*, Dickinson wrote that Sousa “was very politically active during the 1950s when she was also producing her best work. She now lives quietly in Paris.” Margaret Dickinson, ed., *When bullets begin to flower: poems of resistance from Angola, Mozambique, and Guiné* (Nairobi: East African Pub. House, 1972), p.132.

³² Letter from Noémia de Sousa to Mário Pinto de Andrade, 5 January 1965, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Pasta 04308.007.017.

PAIGC and FRELIMO. She herself was involved in translating Amílcar Cabral's texts for the French radical publisher François Maspero.³³ Whilst the editor of the women's page at the Mozambican newspaper *O Brado Africano* between late 1949 and April 1951,³⁴ Sousa played a proactive and explicit role in constructing and fostering a critical readership of women for the page. Successive editorials appeal actively for women to engage, to write in, and to send their reactions to the articles she published.³⁵ Under her editorship, she expanded the women's page beyond received ideas of 'women's interest' topics to take on social and political questions at an international scale.³⁶ That is, she troubled gendered divisions of intellectual and social labour, conjugating pieces about cooking and hairdressing with questions of social change and international politics. In a later interview, she said that "eu resolvi de transformar essa página feminina numa página para toda a gente."³⁷

Partly due to Sousa's efforts, *O Brado Africano* published many more women than *Mensagem* or *Présence Africaine* were publishing at the time. Sousa's earlier work at *O Brado Africano* throws into relief the later omission of gender as a theoretical concern, and marginalization of women as authors, at *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine*. It is important we understand Sousa in plural terms, as a poet, journalist, organizer, editor and translator, not least as the first translator into Portuguese of Aimé Césaire's *Discours Sur le Colonialisme*.

³³ Letter from Noémia de Sousa to Mário Pinto de Andrade, 25 May 1974, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Pasta 04311.006.010.

³⁴ Owen, *Mother Africa, Father Marx*, pp.225-6.

³⁵ See for example, 'Postal', Página para a mulher, *O Brado Africano* (24 December 1949), p.4; 'Postal', Página para a mulher, *O Brado Africano* (11 February 1950), p.3; 'Resposta a Diana', Página para a mulher, *O Brado Africano* (11 March 1950), pp.3-4; 'Carta aberta para Diana', Página para a mulher, *O Brado Africano* (25 March 1950), p.3.

³⁶ For example, next to articles about cooking in most editions appeared a 'Sabia que?' column ("Did you know?") listing news and facts about women around the world, often in a political and literary vein. The page also ran opinion pieces about literary topics and happenings in Mozambique and further afield.

³⁷ "I resolved to transform the women's page into a page for everybody." Laban, ed., *Moçambique*, p.283.

Furthermore, as I discussed in Chapter Two, Sousa had been a central part of activities of the CEA, memorialized in interviews given by Mário Pinto de Andrade. Recalling their engagements at the *Clube Marítimo*, Andrade recalls the important literacy work and consciousness-raising theatre they staged with the workers there – a sphere of action clearly important to his progressive politics.³⁸ He talks about Sousa too, about going to dances with her and about how many men desired her: “ela era um pouco a nossa diva [...] era cortejada por nós todos.”³⁹ He neglects to mention that in fact it was she who translated the Keïta Fodéba play that was put on at the *Clube Marítimo*, and that, as such, her work had enabled this particular moment of translinguistic and transnational exchange so important to the pan-Africanist optic Andrade espoused.⁴⁰

In 1984, Sousa argued that telling the story of anti-colonial struggles through the individuated stories of their perceived leaders worked to occlude women who also worked alongside them: “penso que existe [...] um preconceito que consiste em atribuir papel preponderante em todas as actividades aos homens que nas lutas de libertação ou depois da independência das colónias portuguesas assumiram lugares de chefia [...] dir-se-ia que esses homens nasceram predestinados, que uma estrela na testa os marcou desde o berço.”⁴¹ Sousa’s critique is directed not at the gendered dynamics of the group at the time, but at the retrospective erasure of women involved, in the representation of contingency as teleology, and in the representation of collective work through the synecdoche of individuals.

³⁸ Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, pp.81-2.

³⁹ “She was like our diva [...] we were all courting her.” Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p.83.

⁴⁰ The manuscript is held at the Fundação Mário Soares and ascribes the translation to Noémia de Sousa. Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Pasta 04354.005.008. The Fundação also holds other translations by Noémia de Sousa in the same handwriting, including a poem called ‘Se morre Mac Gee’, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, Pasta 04355.009.007.

⁴¹ “I think there is [...] a prejudice that consists in assigning a preeminent role in all the activities to men who, in the liberation struggles or after the independence of the Portuguese colonies, have assumed leadership positions. To read these academics, you would think these men were born destined for greatness, that a star shining out of their foreheads marked them from the very cradle.” Article by Noémia de Sousa in *África Jornal*, 8 February 1984, about the re-edition of Tenreiro and Andrade’s 1953 poetry anthology, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 04356.009.010.

This synecdoche extends to ignoring the administrative work that women effected in publishing literary texts. Clearly, women were also involved in the administration and processing of men's work. An archived letter from a contributor to the editors at *Présence Africaine* apologising for the delay in sending in his manuscript illuminates, briefly, this hinterland. His wife has been up all night, he promises, transcribing his manuscript in – he specifies – her beautiful handwriting. It is her unnamed and presumably unpaid labour, then, that will ensure his own literary work was published.⁴² It is important to insist on the presence of these women in light of what Rush Bush identifies as the general misconception that “[francophone] African women were ‘silent’ or did not publish before the 1970s.”⁴³ Women had more limited access to publishing platforms and less socially licensed encouragement to write. Rewriting collaborative processes of textual production into fictions of hermetic authorial individuality also plays a role in occluding women in textual histories of anti-colonialism. As such, we should emphasize the partiality of the role of the single author in published literary work, especially when considering work in translation.⁴⁴

More fundamentally, though, we need to reckon with the fact that the practice of writing is

⁴² Letter, undated, IMEC: CAC 1, 1965-1971.

⁴³ Ruth Bush, ‘Mesdames, il faut lire!’, p.214.

⁴⁴ There were many other women involved in translating texts of the black Atlantic. Other women translators included Constance Farrington, who translated Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre* for *Présence Africaine* (*The damned* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1963)). Olga Lima translated texts by Mário Pinto de Andrade (See Olga Lima, ‘Tradução do livro de Mário de Andrade’, 25 May 1970, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 04311.003.025). Dulce Almada, from the PAIGC information services, translated into French Amílcar Cabral's ‘Le rôle de la culture dans la lutte pour l'indépendance’ (‘PAIGC – “Sur le rôle de la Culture dans la lutte pour l'indépendance”’, June 1972, Fundação Mário Soares, Collection: Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, File: 04344.004.006). Sophie Mayoux and Chantal Tiberghien translated the majority of texts in François Maspero's edition of Cabral's *Unité et Lutte* (Paris: Maspero, 1975) and *La pratique révolutionnaire* (Paris: Maspero, 1975). As part of the *Présence Africaine* ‘Écrits’ book series, which was intended to introduce to a French-language audience texts from around the world, Irene Assiba d'Almeida and Olga Mahougbe Simpson translated Achebe's *The Arrow of God*; Françoise Balogun translated Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana*; Violante do Canto translated Castro Soromenho's *Camaxilo*; Anne Paquier-Galliard translated the Black Panthers' *Picking up the gun*; Marie-Aïda Bah-Diop translated Nkrumah's *Class Struggle in Africa*. In the IMEC archive there is a reference to a Solange Schall, ‘Traductrice... Anglais Vers Français’ listed at a Paris address (IMEC: CAC30).

itself often gendered as well as raced and much of the work women did in anti-colonial contexts was not literary in nature.⁴⁵ Some names survive in the archives, such as Maria da Luz Boal, the director of the PAIGC flight school in Conakry; Carmen Pereira, another PAIGC militante who, for three days in 1984, served as acting president of Guinea-Bissau; and Jeanne Martin Cissé, a member of the RDA and later the Secretary General of the *Pan African Women's Organisation*. More detailed records of some of these women survive, sometimes refracted through the surveillance architectures of the governments that tracked them. Such sources are highly problematic, as to reconstruct any story through their gaze means in some senses accepting their optic.⁴⁶ On 12 August 1968, for example, the PIDE recorded how Maria Pomba Guerra, an anti-fascist, communist and pharmacist from Elvas, regularly received books and magazines from France and Dakar, and was seen at a wedding in Bissau with mostly “native” guests.⁴⁷ The PIDE record, too, how in July 1965, Radio Brazzaville discussed the case of Julietta Gandra, a doctor from near Aveiro and Amnesty International's 1964 prisoner of the year. The *Estado Novo* had imprisoned her. The record notes that she offered her services to the MPLA in Paris in 1967.⁴⁸ PIDE files contain

⁴⁵ Scholarship on the non-literary histories of women in anti-colonial struggles includes: Elizabeth Schmidt, “‘Emancipate Your Husbands!’ Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-1958” in Jean Marie Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi, eds., *Women in African colonial histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp.282-304; Cheryl Johnson, ‘Grass Roots Organizing: Women in Anti-colonial Activity in Southwestern Nigeria’, *African Studies Review*, 25.2/3 (1982), 137-57; Cheryl Johnson-Odim, ‘For their freedoms’: The anti-imperialist and international feminist activity of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria’, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 32 (2009), 51–59; Susan Geiger, ‘Women and African Nationalism’, *Journal of Women's History*, 2.1 (1990), 227-44; Urdang (1975); Iris Berger and E. Frances White, *Women in sub-Saharan Africa: restoring women to history* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Zaline Makini Roy-Campbell, ‘Pan-African Women Organising for the Future: The Formation of the Pan African Women's Liberation Organisation and Beyond’, *African Journal of Political Science / Revue Africaine de Science Politique*, 1.1 (1996), 45-57. Gloria Anzaldúa reflects on the difficulty of writing for women of colour in ‘Speaking In tongues: A letter to Third World Women Writers’ in Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This bridge called my back: writings by radical women of color* (New York: Suny Press, 2015), pp.163-72.

⁴⁶ Paulo Lara discusses the problems of using PIDE records in Paulo Lara, ‘O “Bando de Neto” visto pela PIDE/DGS & Carlos Pacheco. A propósito de uma inquisição ao nacionalismo angolano’, *Novo Jornal* 442 (29 July 2016), 14-7. Ann Stoler makes the opposite case – that working with the logics of official colonial archives can help us understand what she calls the affective registers of colonial mentality in Ann Stoler, *Along the archival grain: epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense* (Princeton, New Jersey; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁴⁷ File on Maria Sofia Carrajola Pomba Amaralda Guerra, Arquivo PIDE, Torre do Tombo, PT/TT AC PIDE/DGS Sdel G P I 2 NT 5601

⁴⁸ Files on Julietta Gandra, Arquivo PIDE, Torre do Tombo, PT/TT AC PIDE/DGS SC E/GT 4 NT 1432 and PT/TT AC PIDE/DGS SC SR 1405/53 NT2725.

photographs of the agronomist Maria Vilhena Cabral in Conakry with her husband Amílcar, and speculation that she had been living in Marrakesh, Dakar and Algeria. There is a letter from what appears to be a citizen informant on 23 July 1963 describing how her marriage had ruffled feathers in her hometown: “o casamento desta senhora, ao que parece, causou grande estranhêsa em Chaves, não só por pertencer a uma família de grande distinção como por ter dado a preferência a um indivíduo de raça negra.”⁴⁹

These fragments illustrate the difficulty of using records produced by the colonial state. They tell us more about the regime than about the women themselves. We can deduce that the officers writing the records were alarmed by Maria Pomba Guerra’s receipt of books and magazines, for example. They gesture to the class- and race-consciousness of 1950s society in Chaves, a small town to the west of Bragança in the north of Portugal. Read together, they testify to a significant, though somewhat inconsistent, security architecture capable of monitoring radio stations in Congo Brazzaville, and with some means of covering Paris, Morocco, Algeria and Senegal. The records also remind us of the collaboration between the French and Portuguese security services in monitoring perceived dissidents from both empires’ colonies.⁵⁰ They also offer tantalising circumstantial details about the women themselves. We know that Maria Vilhena Cabral was probably in Conakry, Dakar and Algiers, and Julietta Gandra in Paris. We know Maria Pomba Guerra was probably receiving French magazines in Bissau, and her mobility and multilingualism might gesture to certain life choices and political commitments. But we know very little else. We do not know how the women felt about being in those places, why they went, or how they responded to what they read. And yet, because these documents represent some of the very few extant records of these women’s work, they retain an importance even as they call attention to their own

⁴⁹ “This woman’s marriage, it would seem, caused quite an uproar in Chaves, not only because she belonged to a distinguished family but also because she had chosen a black man.” File on Maria Vilhena Cabral, Arquivo PIDE, Torre do Tombo, PT/TT AC PIDE/DGS Del P P I 27366 N3875.

⁵⁰ Mário Pinto Andrade talks about this in Laban, ed., *Entrevista*, p. 11.

insufficiency.

Opportunities to hear these women's voices, consider their work or read their writing are even more elusive, which is why the literary and artistic works that do survive assume real value even if the women who produced them represent a very particular, and decidedly middle-class, demographic of anti-colonial women. Pages of PIDE documents record the movements of Alda Espírito Santo during the years she lived in Lisbon, noting the times she left and returned home, the activities it was possible to see her executing through the window of her flat, such as housework, and descriptions of guests who visited her.⁵¹ A file on Manuela Margarida records overheard conversations she had at the *Institut Catholique*⁵² in Paris, and that her husband, Alfredo, was a communist.⁵³ These records are both banal and horrifying, because they make visible the surveillance both women endured as well as the normative conceptions of gendered behaviour that determine what the surveillants recorded. They demonstrate the enmeshment of women's daily lives in politics at the international and state level. In contrast to the cases of most of the other women mentioned above, however, Espírito Santo and Margarido's literary texts provide fragments of their own voices with which to work and construct a counterpoint to the PIDE perspective.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the overbearing paucity of texts can unhelpfully freight what writing does exist with representative pressure. The work of a single woman can be called upon to represent a more generalized experience. That is, in the general absence of an archive of anti-colonial women's work, women poets and writers of fiction have often been – to pick up a thread from Chapter Four – translated into other regimes of discourse, rather than read

⁵¹ File on Alda Espírito Santo, Arquivo PIDE, Torre do Tombo, PIDE/DGS SC Bol 143084 NT8072.

⁵² "Catholic Institute."

⁵³ File on Manuela Margarido, Arquivo PIDE, Torre do Tombo, PT/TT AC PIDE/DGS SC CI(2) 81 NT 6959.

⁵⁴ Phillip Rothwell gives a fine-grained reading of a PAIGC woman's diary in 'Carmen Pereira in the Feminine Singular', forthcoming.

as forms of thought. In particular, and also because of their authors' explicit political commitments, criticism of women's work, and especially of Alda Espírito Santo and Manuela Margarido, has often emphasized the 'real' social dimensions of their content.

Espírito Santo's poems "sketch scenes from the daily lives of common folk: washerwomen, fishermen, fishwives, plantation laborers."⁵⁵ Hers is a "poetry of the everyday life of São Tomé,"⁵⁶ which demonstrates "a closeness to everyday events of island life and she seems to pledge a common cause with the people,"⁵⁷ and with working women,⁵⁸ not least through her use of creole.⁵⁹ For Carmen Secco, Espírito Santo's work "recupera fragmentos da história passada e costumes locais: as brincadeiras e cantigas das crianças, o trabalho das mulheres, as lembranças das anciãs."⁶⁰ Though Espírito Santo's poems often display a collective vision,⁶¹ and Margarido's is more intimate,⁶² there is a certain critical consensus on their texts' primarily documentary and affirmative, rather than critical, charge. Both *engagées* contribute to building a sense of São Tomense nationality.⁶³ Indeed, criticism tends to oscillate between attempts to read these texts as repositories of historical

⁵⁵ Gerald Moser, 'Neglected or Forgotten Authors of Lusophone Africa', *World Literature Today*, 73.1 (1999), 19-22, p.22.

⁵⁶ Caroline Shaw, 'Sao Tomé and Príncipe' in Patrick Chabal et al., *The postcolonial literature of Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Co, 1996), pp.234-47, p.239.

⁵⁷ Russell G. Hamilton, *Voices from an empire: a history of Afro-Portuguese literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), p.370.

⁵⁸ Amarino Oliveira de Queiroz, 'Cantares de São Tomé e Príncipe: a militante poesia de Maria Manuela Margarido e Alda Espírito Santo', *Contexto*, 25 (2014), 7-19, p.14, citing Laura Cavalcante Padilha, 'Africanas vozes em chama' in Rita Chaves and Tania Macêdo, org, *Marcas da diferença: as literaturas africanas de língua portuguesa* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2006).

⁵⁹ Claudéci da Silva Ribeiro, 'A criouliização na poesia de Alda Espírito Santo', *Cadernos Imbondeiro*, 3.2 (2014), 1-8.

⁶⁰ "Pieces together fragments of history and local customs: the laughing and singing of children, womens' work, the memories of the old women." Carmen Lucia Tindó Ribeiro Secco, 'Dona Alda e Conceição Lima: uma geografia de paixões, afetos e memórias', *Revista Semioses*, 4 (2008), [unpaginated].

⁶¹ Queiroz, p.13 and Laura Cavalcante Padilha, 'Dois olhares e uma guerra', *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 68 (2004), 117-28, p.125.

⁶² Inocência Mata, 'Manuela Margarido: uma poetisa lírica entre o cânone e a margem', *SCRIPTA*, Belo Horizonte, 8.15 (2004), 240-52, p.242.

⁶³ See also Alda Neves, 'Marcas de nacionalismo na poesia de Alda Espírito Santo' in Luís Reis Torgal, Fernando Tavares Pimenta and Julião Soares Sousa, coord., *Comunidades Imaginadas: Nação e nacionalismos em África* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade da Coimbra, 2008), pp.219-26 and Queiroz, (2014).

information and celebration or suspicion about the political project that informs them. Caroline Shaw describes Espírito Santo's later work as "useful for demagogues"⁶⁴ and Margarido as a poet who "suffuses her descriptions of the island's landscape, plantations and the daily life of its people with an "ansia de liberdade [...]. Even the parrots are political."⁶⁵ Shaw sees both as partisans, even propagandists, which leaves little room to see critique or questioning in their work.

This critical consensus about the political and social nature of these writers' texts is in many ways correct. They represent, as Laura Padilha argues in relation to Espírito Santo, the poetry of solidarity.⁶⁶ Reading these women's texts predominantly to plug the gaps in the archival records of women's lives, however, is limited in its usefulness. Treating them as positivist sources underplays them as literary texts and underemphasizes the internal dissonances, sophistication and ambivalences of the poems themselves. For example, reading Alda Espírito Santo's work in the vein of one critic, who argues that "tanto Alda Espírito Santo quanto Maria Manuela Margarido acabariam se tornando, através da expressão poética e da militância política e social, porta-vozes desse ainda mais silenciado contingente humano,"⁶⁷ leaves us unable to make sense of the distances in Espírito Santo's work between the poetic voice and her often reticent characters.

Indeed, Espírito Santo's poems repeatedly foreground the silence of their characters. I have discussed 'Lá no Água Grande,' in other chapters. In 'Para lá da Praia,'⁶⁸ the poetic voice

⁶⁴ Shaw, 'Sao Tomé and Príncipe' in Chabal, *The postcolonial literature of Lusophone Africa*, p.238.

⁶⁵ "Thirst for freedom." Ibid, p.239. This is a reference to a line in Margarido's 'Na Beira do Mar.'

⁶⁶ Padilha, 'Dois olhares', p.124.

⁶⁷ "Both Alda Espírito Santo and Maria Manuela Margarido became, through their poetic expression and political and social militancy, spokeswomen for this particularly muffled contingent of humanity." Queiroz, p.14.

⁶⁸ "Beyond the beach." Alda Espírito Santo, 'Para Lá da Praia,' *Mensagem*, 2.8 (1959), 21, p.21.

calls on a child to express itself: “Canta, criança minha | teu sonho gritante.”⁶⁹ In ‘Avó Mariana,’⁷⁰ the poetic voice again entreats her interlocutor – this time an old woman – to tell her story: “Avó Mariana, pitando seu jessu | na soleira do teu beco escuro, | conta Avó Velhinha | teu fado inglório.”⁷¹ Neither character speaks: the child stays silent and Avó Mariana has forgotten her past. In both cases, the poet is unable to access their stories, foregrounding the extent to which the poet cannot act as spokeswoman.⁷² Clearly, these are poetic interventions on the question of the silencing of African women, but it cannot be said that they approach the question by attempting to write an empirical record of women’s speech. Espírito Santo’s strategy is precisely not to put words in women’s mouth, but rather to harness silence as a trope in order to attest to the existence of those women whose voices we can no longer hear.

In one of the first editions of *Mensagem*, Espírito Santo was explicit about her commitment to overcoming gendered inequalities in an essay entitled ‘Luares da África’⁷³ in which she addressed the situation of African women. In the essay, she insists that the lot of African women must improve from the “sorte das negras do presente. Eu quero vê-las [...] mulheres, com direitos, e não as quero escravas dos homens, da sociedade inteira e de velhos preconceitos.”⁷⁴ She argues that the status of black women has implications for the world as a whole: “a multidão inumerável das mulheres da nossa África [...] São elas a esperança do

⁶⁹ “Sing, my child | your crying dream | on the distant sand | of the tawny beach.” Ibid.

⁷⁰ “Grandma Mariana.” Alda Espírito Santo, ‘Avó Mariana’, *Poetas de S. Tomé e Príncipe* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes do Império, 1963) reprinted in Aida Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias de poesia da Casa dos Estudantes do Império 1951-1963. Angola, S. Tomé e Príncipe. Vol 1*, 2nd edn (Lisbon: UCCLA, 2014), pp.335-6.

⁷¹ “Grandma Mariana, puffing on her pipe | On the threshold of your dark alley | Tell us, little old woman, Of your modest fate.” Ibid., p.336.

⁷² Erica Atunes discusses silence in ‘Uma voz de imbondeiro no silêncio da gravana: a representação da mulher na poesia de Alda Espírito Santo e Conceição Lima’, *Revista Crioula*, 4 (2008), [unpaginated].

⁷³ “African moonlights.” Alda Espírito Santo, ‘Luares da Africa’, *Mensagem*, 1.7 (1949), 12-4.

⁷⁴ “The present lot of black women. I want to see them [...] as women, with rights, and not slaves of men, of society as a whole and of old prejudices.’ Santo, ‘Luares’, p.12.

nosso mundo.”⁷⁵ Espírito Santo foregrounds what she does not know and cannot access: “sigo passo a passo a história da mulher de pele bronzeada – que é a minha história, dos avós dos meus avós e da geração future e interrogante, que eu ainda não sei, nem talvez venha a saber.”⁷⁶ She is explicit, then, about how she cannot fully access the lives and thoughts of the women who have come before her. In her poetry, however, she does not attempt to plug this gap by imagining her subjects’ testimony for them. Instead, she foregrounds their silence, raising questions about her poetic voices’ own disarticulation from the women they describe. In this way her texts are both empirical *records* and philosophical and poetic *meditations* on the place of African women in the world.

Silent women also punctuate Noémia de Sousa’s poems. Her poem ‘Apelo’⁷⁷ figures a woman’s disappearance in terms of her voice: “quem terá estrangulado a voz cansada | de minha irmã do mato?”⁷⁸ ‘Se Me Quiseres Conhecer’⁷⁹ also ends in silence, as the poetic voice describes itself: “não sou mais que um búzio de carne | onde a revolta d’África congelou | seu grito inchado de esperança.”⁸⁰ This image is disturbing because of the dual dehumanizations that Sousa’s poetic voice effects upon herself: body becomes meat; voice, silence. We do not hear the cry of hope. Sousa, like Espírito Santo, treats the question of silence and silencing by foregrounding its existence, rather than by filling the void. In other

⁷⁵ “The innumerable multitude of women of our Africa [...] They are the hope of our world.” Santo, ‘Luares’, p.14.

⁷⁶ “Step by step I follow the history of the bronze-skinned woman – it is my history, of the grandparents of my grandparents and of the future questioning generations, that I still don’t know, and perhaps won’t ever know.” Santo, ‘Luares’, p.12.

⁷⁷ “Appeal.” Noémia de Sousa, ‘Apelo’, *Poetas de Moçambique* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes do Império, 1962), reprinted in Aida Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias de poesia da Casa dos Estudantes do Império 1951-1963. Moçambique, Vol 2*, 2nd edn (Lisbon: UCCLA, 2014), pp.233-5.

⁷⁸ “Who has strangled the tired voice | Of my sister from the bush?” Sousa, p.233.

⁷⁹ “If you want to know me.” This poem was published in *Mensagem*, 14.3 (1962), 47, p.47; then in *Poetas de Moçambique* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes do Império, 1962) and then in *Présence Africaine’s Nouvelle Somme de Poésie du Monde Noir* (1966).

⁸⁰ “I am nothing more than a shell of meat | Where the African revolt froze | Its bloated cry of hope.” Sousa, ‘Se me quiseres conhecer’, p.47.

poems, such as ‘Samba,’⁸¹ in which Sousa seeks to capture the rhythms of African dances and to reclaim the act of speaking through repetition and verbal accretion, she still does not speak for others. Russell Hamilton misses this point when he disparages Sousa’s poetry in strikingly sexist terms as “verbose,”⁸² with a “high-pitched emotional tone”⁸³ and involving “verbal thrashing about.”⁸⁴ It is highly uncomfortable that a woman poet of colour engaging with the question of how colonial societies silenced and erased black women’s voices should be dismissed – by an African-American critic, no less – as “verbose.”

Manuela Margarido’s ‘Memória da Ilha do Príncipe,’⁸⁵ also centres on a silent woman, the speaker’s mother. Again, her text does not attempt to record or speak for this silent woman, whom we learn has died. The text quickly leaves behind the documentary register the poem’s opening lines appear to establish: “mãe, tu pegavas charroco | nas águas das ribeiras | a caminho da praia.”⁸⁶ This precise tone quickly shifts to a dreamlike narrative that looks not to the past but to the present and the future. The aesthetic is surreal. Things turn into one another, changing colour and taking on strange proportions, resemblances and aspects: the mother’s hair “eram lemba-lembas;”⁸⁷ her “rosto escuro”⁸⁸ becomes “liliácea;”⁸⁹ her “mão cor-de-laranja | oscila no céu de zinco.”⁹⁰ This image, painterly and otherworldly, belongs to the realm of dream rather than documentary. The dark, lilac face itself turns into the

⁸¹ “Samba.” Ibid.

⁸² Hamilton, p.199.

⁸³ Ibid., p.199.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.201. Others choose to simply overlook her work, such as Patrick Chabal’s survey, who emphasizes instead the “giant” Craveirinha. Chabal, *The postcolonial literature of Lusophone Africa*, p.40.

⁸⁵ “Memory of Príncipe Island.” Manuela Margarido, ‘Memória da Ilha do Príncipe’, *Mensagem*, 15.1 (1963), 24.

⁸⁶ “Mother, you caught toadfish | In the waters of the streams | On the way to the beach.” Ibid., p.24.

⁸⁷ “Were creepers.” Ibid., p.24.

⁸⁸ “Dark face.” Ibid., p.24.

⁸⁹ “Lilac.” Ibid., p.24.

⁹⁰ “Orange hand | oscillates in the zinc sky.” Ibid., p.24.

“flores de ébano”⁹¹ into which the speaker and her mother throw themselves at the end of the poem.

The poem is built around a tension between the power of the speaking voice and her silent mother. The mother, though silent, remains an active presence, “irrompendo entre o cacau,”⁹² descending over her daughter, and perfuming her memories. The poetic voice writes her mother’s body through and into the landscape: “os veios da madeira guardam | a marca dos teus pés.”⁹³ The poetic voice claims “nossa” Africa, recasting the land as a resistive dreamscape in which the present and past blur. If the landscape is bound up with her mother’s body, marked by her very feet, this “Nossa Africa”⁹⁴ is a gendered appeal.

In a parenthetical aside, the poetic voice reimagines Pico, a figure of Greek myth endowed with prophecy, alongside the palms, mangoes, and Kapok trees of São Tomé: “(No sonho do Pico as mangas percorrem a órbita lenta | das orações dos ocás e todas as feiticeiras desertam | a caminho do mal, entre a doçura das palmas).”⁹⁵ At this and other points, the text holds up different modes of powerful speech – testimony, vocative elegy, storytelling, prayer, spell and prophecy – whose tenors the poem intones at different points. Speech is powerful here. At the end of the poem, the speaker claims powers of prophecy and magic for her and her mother: “E ambas nos lançamos | nas grandes flores de ébano | que crescem na água cálida | das vozes clarividentes | enchendo a nossa África | com sua mágica profecia.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ “Big ebony flowers.” Ibid., p.24.

⁹² “Bursting through the cocoa bushes.” Ibid., p.24.

⁹³ “The wooden veins | hold the mark of your feet.” Ibid., p.24.

⁹⁴ “Our Africa.” Ibid., p.24.

⁹⁵ “(In Pico’s dream the mangoes travel across the slow | orbit of the prayers of the kapok trees and all the witches abandon | the road of evil, between the sweetness of the palms.)” Ibid., p.24.

⁹⁶ “And we both launch ourselves | In the great ebony flowers | that grow in the warm water | of clairvoyant voices | filling our Africa | with its magical prophecy.” Ibid., p.24.

Margarido's surrealist aesthetics do not offer a rationalist account of the silencing of African women. Rather, her text emphasizes its speaker's dreams, subjectivity and ability to summon different registers to figure the mother not in tragic terms – as a poor and silent woman collecting fish – but to reimagine her cast in a scene of sensuous self-sovereignty at one with the landscape and in a world away from “male-sponsored emancipation.”⁹⁷ Margarido's surrealism centres the present power of her speaking subject to reimagine the ‘historical record.’ bell hooks⁹⁸ has complained that “theoretical feminist writing by women of colour is often ignored and attention given rather to works of fiction or confessional autobiographical writing.”⁹⁹ But fictional and poetic work are also, as I have argued, important forms of thought. We need to recognize anti-colonial women's literary writing as literary, not only as document.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize the marginality of these women's literary texts to *Mensagem*. Although some of her poems were printed in the journal's anthologies, only three poems and one essay by Espírito Santo were ever published in the journal itself. Noémia de Sousa published two poems and Manuela Margarido one poem in the journal proper. The journal did publish the work of other women too – notably Alda Lara and the illustrations of Noémia Delgado – but they represented only a small part of the journal's content. At *Présence Africaine*, women were implicitly excluded from the dominant lexicon the journal relied on to figure African writers: the “homme de culture”¹⁰⁰ was a clearly gendered, as well as individualized and elitist, concept. Diop referred to the 1956 *Premier*

⁹⁷ Gopal, ‘Speaking with Difficulty’, p.99.

⁹⁸ hooks writes her name in lower-case script.

⁹⁹ bell hooks, ‘Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women’, *Feminist Review*, 23 (1986), 125-38, p.126.

¹⁰⁰ See for example, PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE, ‘Liminaire: L'Homme a besoin des hommes’, *Présence Africaine*, 5 (1955), 3-7.

Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs as “ce premier Congrès mondial des Hommes de Culture noirs”¹⁰¹ and indeed, it was a mainly a meeting of men [see Appendix One, Fig. 6].

As part of the printed conference proceedings that year, *Présence Africaine* published a message from an unidentified “GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES.”¹⁰²

MESSAGE DES FEMMES NOIRES

Dans une manifestation aussi importante pour le Monde Noir que ce Congrès, nous ne pouvons pas demeurer de simples observatrices, car nous pensons que la Femme Noire a eu et aura un rôle important et lourd à jouer aux côtés de l’homme dans l’édification de son pays.

Une légende tenace veut que la Femme Noire soit confinée au rôle d’esclave de son mari et de ses enfants. Or il suffit de connaître un peu notre société pour juger de la fausseté de cette assertion.

En effet la Femme Noire assume au sein de sa famille une direction morale que l’on aurait tort de négliger au moment où le Monde Noir procède à la réévaluation de sa culture.

Ce ne sont pas ceux qui sont réunis ici qui nous démentiraient si nous affirmons la part éminente que la Femme Noire a prise à leur éducation. Peut-on citer un homme de culture Noire qui n’ait pas exalté dans ses écrits la Femme Noire, la Mère.

Ce rôle indiscutable ne fera que s’accroître dans la mesure où l’étreinte du colonialisme se desserrant, la Femme Noire connaîtra un épanouissement plus total.

Pour ne citer que deux exemples : les Femmes africaines manifestant publiquement leur solidarité avec les emprisonnés de Dimbokoro, avaient conscience non seulement de lutter contre les injustices locales mais aussi et surtout de contribuer activement à la reconnaissance de valeurs trop longtemps bafouées. Et que dire de celles qui passaient des nuits entières devant la porte des écoles pour assurer à leur enfant une place pour l’année scolaire.

Nous reviendrons dans « *Présence Africaine* » sur ces questions.

Pour terminer nous livrons simplement à votre méditation cette pensée ouolof :

« N’Gnou nè gaïndè môm al wandé nièye it tiala, n’dakh boumou balbalé bal balbalé ba balbali gnou nè nièye it tiala... »

« On dit que c’est le lion le roi de la forêt, mais l’éléphant aussi en est un, parce que quand il veut vraiment secouer toute sa masse, on se rend compte que l’on ne peut pas s’en passer de lui. »

UN GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES ¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ “This first world conference of black Men of Culture.” Alioune Diop, ‘Discours d’ouverture’, p.9.

¹⁰² “GROUP OF BLACK WOMEN”

¹⁰³ “MESSAGE FROM BLACK WOMEN. In the context of an event as important to the Black World as this Congress, we can not remain mere observers, because we believe that the Black Woman has had and will have an important and heavy role to play alongside men in the building of her country. A tenacious myth holds that

There are many fascinating things about this message, which appears among other messages, mostly signed by well-known men. There are messages from Picasso, W.E.B. Du Bois, George Padmore, Claude Levi-Strauss, Basil Davidson and Jean Rouch. In that context, the GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES' refusal to sign their names and decision to appear as a collective rejects the individualistic logic of the "homme de culture." Indeed, the content of the letter undoes this fiction by bringing into view the labour of other people required to produce such an intellectual. The women assume a posture of confidence and superiority: they are the educators of the educated who now forget them. Their argument is not just that women will further emancipate themselves in the future postcolony, but rather that it is a delusion to think women are not already involved in producing *Présence Africaine's* intellectual ambitions.

The GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES appeal to their social roles as mothers, but in writing in to *Présence Africaine* they also write themselves into the role of critics and participants in a lettered debate about what African independence should signify. While the collective's figuring of women's roles and of motherhood are expressed in somewhat romanticized, even essentialized, terms, they also use these roles to draw attention to a broader, already-existing,

the Black Woman is confined to role of slave of her husband and children. You don't need to know much about our society to see the falsity of this statement. In fact, the Black Woman plays the role of moral guide at the centre of her family which we would be wrong to neglect at the moment when the Black World undertakes the revaluation of its culture. Surely those gathered here would not deny the major role black women have played in their education. Can we think of one 'homme de culture' who has not exalted the black woman, his mother, in his writings? This undeniable role will only increase: as the grasp of colonialism loosens, black women will be able to thrive more fully. To cite only two examples: the African women who publicly demonstrated their solidarity with the imprisoned in Dimbokoro, thought of themselves not only as fighting local injustices but also and above all as actively contributing to the recognition of values that had long been violated. And what can we begin to say of those women who have spent entire nights in front of the school doors to ensure their child a school place for the year. We will return in 'Présence Africaine' on these questions. To finish, a Wolof reflection for your consideration: "N'Gnou nè gaïndè môm al wandé nieye it tiala, n'dakh boumou balbalé ball balbalé ba balbali gnou nè nieye it tiala ..."

"They say that the lion is the king of the forest, but the elephant is too, because when it really wants to shake its whole mass, they realize that they cannot do without it." A GROUP OF BLACK WOMEN." 'Message d'un groupe de femmes noires', *Présence Africaine*, 8-9-10 (1956), 398-9.

political role. In their letter, motherhood positions them as authorities at the centre of social reproduction. As organized collectives, women are also an important force in the anti-colonial struggle. This is clear in their reference to the Dimbokoro protests. These protests, organized by the RDA, and during which Ivorian civilians were killed by French bullets, resulted in the immediate prohibition by the French state of all RDA meetings in West Africa. The Wolof proverb indicates the women may have been Senegalese,¹⁰⁴ but the letter inhabits a decidedly transnational and multilingual posture.

The GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES' mobilization of the family as a site of power connected to anti-colonial politics predates by over a decade the popularization of the phrase 'the personal is political,' which gained prominence in the United States in the late 1960s. That slogan, and the feminist work it alludes to, connects the domestic sphere to state politics. It figures interpersonal relations, the family, the institution of marriage, and the work of everyday social reproduction as sites of contested and often unequal power. The GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES make this argument in transnational terms: their 'personal' is anti-colonial, and international. They call on *Présence Africaine* to refuse the ontological separation between the public 'political' and 'private' domestic that makes a gender-neutral anti-colonialism possible.

Cynthia Enloe's ground-breaking work of feminist international relations scholarship *Bananas, Beaches & Bases*, makes the case that "the international is personal."¹⁰⁵ Enloe argues that international politics are not separate from but often produced in and from the domestic and affective and apparently private. Enloe's observation, made in 1989, that

¹⁰⁴ Wolof is also spoken in Gambia and Mauritania, but given *Présence Africaine*'s more prominent reputation in Senegal, this seems most likely.

¹⁰⁵ Enloe, *Bananas, beaches & bases*. Enloe makes this argument throughout the book, but Chapter Nine is particularly useful. See, for example, p.196.

“women active in nationalist movements [...] [have begun to analyse how] ‘home’ and the ‘international system’ are integrally tied to one another”¹⁰⁶ was true many decades before. Here, in particular, the GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES make a multi-scalar intervention. They appeal not just to the world – as in the case of many of the expressions of negritude I discussed in Chapter Five – but to the connections between the domestic and the world, and the ways that international anti-colonialism is produced through the home.

The GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES’ understanding of the home as connected to the anti-colonial helps bring into view the anti-colonial significance of the two most substantial pieces published by women in *Présence Africaine* before 1970.¹⁰⁷ Rebecca Njau’s 1964 short story *Muma*¹⁰⁸ is set in Kenya and told from the perspective of a girl-child learning about systems of justice in the country.¹⁰⁹ Njau presents the official site of justice, the court, as a patriarchal, gerontocratic institution, a place of political stagnation from which women are kept away. The child protagonist, asking questions about the court, is told “little one, girls are not supposed to be told such things.”¹¹⁰ The picture of the court’s corruption Njau paints is tied up with its inaccessibility to the girl-protagonist. By contrast, the river, where the girl goes on Saturdays to do the laundry, is a connective site where people of different genders and provenance meet and talk: “we used to enjoy going down and meeting all the boys and girls from across the river.”¹¹¹ Njau presents the river as a site of political dissent: there the girl talks and learns about arrangements in other countries (Uganda) “where they really have a sort of *Uhuru* – freedom.”¹¹² She witnesses declarations of political militancy

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.56.

¹⁰⁷ See also: ‘What’s home got to do with it?’ in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity* (Durham, N.C. ; London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp.85-105.

¹⁰⁸ Rebecca Njau, ‘Muma’, *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 22, 50 (1964), 225-30.

¹⁰⁹ This is analogous to Ad’jibid’ji in Ousmane Sembène’s *Les bouts de bois de dieu: banty mam yall* (Paris: Livre Contemporain, 1960).

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.226.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.228.

¹¹² Ibid., p.228.

and ambitions for “revolution” against the “White Man’s government.”¹¹³ Njau’s story lays the corruption and gendered barriers of Kenyan society at the door of the colonial administration, and foregrounds the subversive political possibilities of sites where gender is less policed: it is at the river, not the court, where anti-colonial conversations are possible. Where the colonial court is inaccessible to the narrator, and impermeable to democratic accountability, Njau’s domestic settings – the house where informants can enter as well as the washing site out of town – are porous to political and legislative power, not hermetically sealed but part of the wider society. For Njau, then, “the significant geographies”¹¹⁴ (a term coined by Francesca Orsini, to which I return in the next chapter) of anti-colonial politics are not those official and gender-marshalled institutions of the law but the spaces of the reproduction of everyday life where women and girls are present.

The title of Flora Nwapa’s *My Spoons are Finished*, published in *Présence Africaine* in 1967,¹¹⁵ is a reference to one of the character’s – the eighteen-year-old Rose – refusal to use what another character, Ona, considers the “correct”¹¹⁶ cutlery during lunch at a restaurant. This focus on the fripperies of westernized etiquette creates an uneasy, darkly comic tone in a story set during the early years of the Biafran secession: “it was the worst crisis in our great country. The country was breaking.”¹¹⁷ Though we are never told in certain terms, the context of outside political upheaval appears to be the reason that we encounter the speaking voice, Ona, drinking and waiting around in a hotel with a man, Phil. The story turns on the tension between the broader context that comes into view through the references to displacement and survival, and the levity – even the banality – of the plot. The characters

¹¹³ Ibid., p.230.

¹¹⁴ Francesca Orsini, ‘The Multilingual Local in World Literature’, *Comparative Literature*, 67.4 (2015), 345-74, p.346.

¹¹⁵ Flora Nwapa, ‘My Spoons are Finished’, *Présence Africaine*, 63 (1967), 227-35.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.229.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.227.

are “in a sort of relaxed mood,”¹¹⁸ intermittently laughing, telling the waiter to be sure to bake enough dinner rolls. “The trouble was two weeks old, and you couldn’t be tense all that period,” the narrator says, inscrutably. Nwapa’s story engages with the clichés of routine and custom that can serve as handrails in a crisis. It is also an uncanny almost-comedy-of-manners that we might expect to be set in a domestic environment, but because of the crisis, is set in a hotel. The story addresses how the situation of civil upheaval is pushing private scenes out into public spaces – the road, the hotel lobby – but also the uncertainty that the instability engenders. The nature of all the characters’ relationships with one another always remains indistinct and undefined and Nwapa withholds a lot about the backstories to the vignettes on the page. There are several cryptic conversations: a telephone conversation of which we only hear one side;¹¹⁹ a newspaper cutting we do not see; Ona’s brother’s enigmatic reference to “the solution to it all”¹²⁰ for the country.

Nwapa addresses how the political events of the country affect women and shape their lives, but also how women as a group are sharply divided by class and age. Ona is fascinated by Rose but fails correctly to understand her situation or to help her: at the end of the story Ona drives off, refusing to tell Rose where she is going or to give her any money. Like in Alda Espírito Santo’s ‘No Mesmo Lado da Canoa,’¹²¹ which addresses the obstacles of class and experience which separate women from other women,¹²² Nwapa offers no meaningful basis for solidarity between the women. At the same time, the upheavals also offer some possibilities for a change in accepted gendered norms between women and men. In this

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.227.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.227.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.234.

¹²¹ “On the same side of the canoe.” Alda Espírito Santo, ‘No Mesmo Lado da Canoa’, *Poetas de S.Tomé e Príncipe* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes do Império, 1963), reprinted in Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias. Angola*, pp.337-9.

¹²² See also Maryse Condé talking about classed feminist experience in Guadeloupe in ‘Pan-Africanism, Feminism and Culture’ in Sidney J. Lemelle and Robin D.G. Kelley, eds., *Imagining home: class, culture and nationalism in the African diaspora* (London: Verso 1994), pp.55-65, p.64.

context, the unexplained and unexpected, such as the appearance of Rose, or the question of why Ona is in the guest house with Phil at all, are accepted as read. More fundamentally, the political instability offers some promise, some excitement, that the “correct thing”¹²³ could be ignored.

We might compare Nwapa’s suggestion that political upheaval could create possibilities for women to the Angolan militant Deolinda Rodrigues’ hope that, in the context of the revolutionary struggle, “Ninguém pode obrigar-me a casar.”¹²⁴ We might also think about Noémia de Sousa’s poem ‘Moças das Docas,’¹²⁵ in which, for the sex workers the poem addresses, stability is crushing. Sousa writes of “certeza terrível do dia da amanhã.”¹²⁶ Nwapa’s story takes this further, suggesting that civil crisis generates possibilities for new behaviours outside the bounds of ‘normal’ policed behaviour. Both Nwapa and Njau, then, emphasize the need for a multi-scalar conception of the connections between everyday domestic experience and state and nationalist politics. These stories should be read not just as stories of women’s experience but as comments on international politics, ways of reimagining what the category of the anti-colonial contained. As Elleke Boehmer writes, drawing on Susan Andrade, “although they *appear* to deal more than do men in the domestic, the private, the ‘small,’ women writers are [...] even if implicitly or covertly, engaging the political [original emphasis].”¹²⁷

¹²³ Nwapa, p.229.

¹²⁴ “No one can force me to get married.” Deolinda Rodrigues, *Diário de um exílio sem regresso* (Luanda: Nzila, 2003), p.52 (4 April 1964). See also 17 and 18 September 1964, pp.65-6.

¹²⁵ “Dock Girls.” This poem appeared in *Poetas de Moçambique* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes, 1960) and in Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias. Moçambique*, pp.96-8.

¹²⁶ “The terrible certainty of tomorrow.”

¹²⁷ See Elleke Boehmer, *Stories of women: gender and narrative in the postcolonial nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.35. See also Susan S Andrade, *The nation writ small* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011).

This effort to extend and scale dominant anti-colonial paradigms was not entirely consistent. Some women writers take up and redeploy the often highly masculinized gendering of mainstream negritudinist and anti-colonial discourses. Some of the earliest women poets to appear in *Présence Africaine* also mobilized highly gendered modes of imagining solidarity. The poetic voice of Georgina Johnston's 'To Africa,' for example, declares: "O what a privilege to be [...] A son of Africa,"¹²⁸ whilst other women's texts, such as Faustina Ermini's 'Lumumba,' write themselves into a tradition of venerating militant men. Her text celebrates "a noble son of Africa."¹²⁹ Hilary Owen has shown how in some of her work Noémia de Sousa explicitly attempts to "write female-gendered perspectives into the emerging discourses of anti-colonial resistance."¹³⁰ In poems such as 'Poema de João,'¹³¹ 'Samba,'¹³² and 'Poema da Infância Distante,'¹³³ however, she mobilizes 'fraternity' in celebratory tones. Sometimes her strategy is to feminize the concept, as Padilha observes.¹³⁴ We see this in 'Apelo.'¹³⁵ But such a strategy is erratically applied. Shiera Malik states that Tanzanian women activists before independence often referred to Julius Nyerere as their "son" rather than the "father" he became after independence. She argues "these relational positions are not necessarily viewed as ties that bind in a constricting sense; they can also be enabling."¹³⁶ In Sousa's early 'Irmãozinho Negro tem um papagaio de papel,'¹³⁷ for

¹²⁸ Georgina Johnston, 'To Africa', *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 6/7, 34-5, [undated], 115, p.115.

¹²⁹ Faustina Ermini, 'Lumumba', *Présence Africaine*, English Series, 8, 36, [undated], 79-80. Also, Faustina Ermini, 'Lumumba', *Présence Africaine*, 36 (1961), 88. There is a discrepancy between the two editions' rendering of this writer's surname.

¹³⁰ Owen, *Mother Africa, Father Marx*, p.76.

¹³¹ "João's poem." Noémia de Sousa, 'Poema de João', *Poetas de Moçambique* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes, 1960), in Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias. Moçambique*, pp.98-102.

¹³² "Samba." This poem appeared in a *Mensagem* pullout: *Poesia em Moçambique: Separata de Mensagem* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes do Império, 1951) and then again in *Mensagem*, 2.1 (1959), 14-5.

¹³³ "Poem of a distant childhood." Noémia de Sousa, 'Poema da Infância Distante', *Poetas de Moçambique* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes do Império, 1962) in Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias. Moçambique*, pp.227-30.

¹³⁴ Padilha, 'Dois olhares', p.125.

¹³⁵ "Appeal." Sousa, 'Apelo', *Antologias. Moçambique*, pp.233-5.

¹³⁶ Shiera S. el-Malik, 'Intellectual Work 'In-the-World': Women's Writing and Anti-Colonial Thought in Africa', *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 24 (2013), 1-20, p.7.

¹³⁷ "Little Black Brother has a paper kite." Noémia de Sousa, 'Irmãozinho Negro tem um papagaio de papel', *Poetas de Moçambique* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes, 1960), in Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias. Moçambique*, pp.102-3.

example, Sousa's speaking voice is wiser and more powerful than the small boy-child who naively dreams. Sousa figures 'fraternity' not in terms of a mode of sociality that excludes women, but as an affectionate relationship between a big sister and her little brother. Where the "homme de culture" was an individualized and hierarchical category, that no women sought to adopt, relational categories were at least plastic enough for women writers to adopt and adapt.

In this chapter, I have argued that *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* offer a highly suggestive archive from which to bring forward women in (literary) anti-colonial histories, because of the ways they render women partially visible and draw attention to the suturing that goes into the production of literary work. As such it is important to attend to the gendered divisions of literary labour that underpinned the journals. Women were involved in the lateral and associative work the journals undertook as translators and in other crucial para-literary roles. Existing black and anti-colonial women's literary writing takes on a particular – though non-representative – significance in the context of this division of labour, as well as in the context of the serious lacunae that attend the archiving of women's, and particularly black women's, histories. These texts are not records, but forms of thought themselves about historiography and resistance. In the work of writers such as Flora Nwapa, Rebecca Njau and the GROUPE DE FEMMES NOIRES, we see a call for a multi-scalar anti-colonial sensibility that writes gendered experience and the domestic space into anti-colonial politics. Over the final two chapters, I apply this call for a multi-scalar anti-colonialism to the question of comparison itself.

CHAPTER 7: CONNECTIVE ANTI-COLONIAL SPACE

*¿Ya conocéis mi sangre navegable,
mi geografía llena de oscuros montes,
de hondos y amargos valles
que no están en los mapas?*
Nicolas Guillén, 'El Apellido'¹

Monde compartimenté, manichéiste, immobile, monde de statues
Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la Terre*²

I have argued that *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* were underpinned by modes of comparative thinking which drew connections between situations across the European empires. As part of this process – particularly during the molten years of 1958 to 1964 – authors in both journals interrogated ontologies of space. In Luandino Vieira (writing as José Graça)'s 'Canção para Luanda,' the question "Luanda onde está?"³ floats on the air. In Ousmane Sembène's 'La Noire de,' Diouana, trapped in her white employers' Antibes flat, asks herself "où était la France?"⁴ In Marcelino dos Santos' poem, translated for *Présence Africaine* by René Depestre in 1958, the very title poses the question "Où Suis-Je?"⁵ These telegraphic examples point to an interrogation of location as well as of processes of space and place-making at different scales. Diouana is 'in' Antibes, topographically speaking, but nevertheless cannot access the experience she means by 'France.' Dos Santos-Depestre's

¹ "Do you already know my navigable blood | my geography full of dark mountains | of deep and bitter valleys | that are not on the maps?" Nicolas Guillén, 'El Apellido', *La Paloma de Veulo Popular* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1959), pp.115-9, pp.115-6. The poem was in circulation before its 1959 publication in Argentina and was mentioned in the 'Messages' sent by those who could not attend the 1956 Black Artists and Writers Congress in Paris. Petar Guberina, 'Messages', *Présence Africaine*, 14-5 (1957), 307-42, p.308.

² "A world divided into compartments, a motionless, manichaeistic world, a world of statues." Fanon, *Les damnés*, p.82.

³ "Song for Luanda." José Graça, 'Canção para Luanda', *Mensagem*, 1.3 (1958), 27-9.

⁴ "Where was France?" Ousmane Sembène, 'La Noire de...', *Présence Africaine*, 36 (1961), 90-102.

⁵ "Where am I?" Kalungano, 'Où Suis-Je', trans. René Depestre, *Présence Africaine*, 20 (1958), 62-3.

speaking voice extends across several space-times at once. In Vieira's poem the city's inhabitants resist a topographical response to the refrain the poem throws up. The answer – at the end of the poem: “Luanda está aqui”⁶ – does not situate the place on the map. Rather, it is ‘here,’ amidst the daily life of the people the poet has brought forward. Vieira's poem speaks to an understanding of space as *produced*: analogous to Doreen Massey's conception of relational space made up by a “complexity of networks, links, exchanges, connections, from the intimate level of our daily lives [...] to the global level.”⁷ As such, these authors move past the ossified and abstract conception of space as an “unchanging box within which material events occur,”⁸ that, as Neil Smith has argued, have become “virtually instinctive” in “Western societies.”⁹ In his 1958 poem, the Angolan poet Costa Andrade gestures to the contingency and agency that thinking in terms of the production rather than the inevitability of space opens up: “Constrói-se o mundo? | Os homens nascem todos | arquitectos.”¹⁰

Massey's work repeatedly insisted both that social space is always under construction, and that the ways in which we conceptualize space change across space and time. More than anything, conceptions of space are political: “the way in which space is conceptualized, in intellectual work, in social life, and in political practice, *matters*.”¹¹ Francesca Orsini has called for literary critics to reconsider the geographical categories that underpin their work, especially in discussions of World Literature. She argues: “precisely because geography is so crucial to world literature it is imperative that we think carefully about the geographical categories that we use.”¹² In an attempt to nuance critical oppositions between local and

⁶ “Luanda is here.” Graça, ‘Canção’, p.29.

⁷ Doreen Massey, ‘Concepts of space and power in theory and in political practice’, *Documents d'anàlisi geogràfica*, 55 (2009), 15-26, pp.16-17.

⁸ Neil Smith, *Uneven development: nature, capital, and the production of space*, 3rd edition (London: Verso, 2010), p.2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.92-3.

¹⁰ “Is the world constructed? | Men are all born | architects.” F. Costa Andrade, ‘Construção da vida’, *Mensagem*, 1.5 (1958), 8, p.8.

¹¹ Massey, ‘Concepts of space’, p.16.

¹² Orsini, ‘The Multilingual Local’, p.345.

global, she proposes the term “significant geographies” as a lexicon for asking the question of “which particular geographies—real and imaginary—were significant”¹³ for particular authors in particular times, places and languages. In the previous chapter, I brought forward the multi-scalar anti-colonial understanding inscribed in the work of writers such as Flora Nwapa, Rebecca Njau and others. In this chapter and the next, drawing more broadly on thinking about space, place and scale in both journals, I consider how we can bring multi-scalar sensibilities to bear on anti-colonial comparison. First, I discuss four significant geographies drawn from the pages of *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*: shifting and repopulated space; the ‘world;’ imagined places of escape; and mobile geographies of labour. Underpinning my discussion is the question of how these geographies can inform comparative postcolonial work.

SHIFTING AND REPOPULATED SPACE

As many scholars have emphasized, amongst the different techniques (extractive capitalism, racist propaganda, mechanized weapons – the list goes on) developed by colonial societies for dominating spaces beyond their national territories, colonial geography and its tool of choice – cartography – played an important role. Anne McClintock, who emphasizes the gendering of colonial cartography’s conception of empty, “virgin”¹⁴ space, argues that “map-making became the servant of colonial plunder, for the knowledge constituted by the map both preceded and legitimized the conquest of territory. The map is a technology of knowledge that professes to capture the truth about a place in pure, scientific form.”¹⁵ Geographers such as J.B. Harley have theorized maps as abstract modes of representing

¹³ Ibid., p.346.

¹⁴ McClintock, pp.30-1.

¹⁵ McClintock, p.27.

places, and cartography as a practice that, in the modern period, was informed and transformed by mathematical knowledge and techniques of representation.¹⁶ In particular, Harley argues that as an apparently “impersonal type of knowledge [maps] tend to ‘desocialize’ the territory they represent.”¹⁷ This not only “foster[s] the notion of socially empty space” but in so doing, “lessens the burden of conscience about people in the landscape.”¹⁸ Harley also argues that the representation of space in abstract, depopulated terms went hand in hand with capitalist modes of understanding space as a commodity. As he puts it, “thus, with the progress of scientific mapping, space became all too easily a socially empty commodity, a geometrical landscape of cold, non-human facts.”¹⁹

In an article entitled ‘Géographie, colonisation et culture,’²⁰ published in *Présence Africaine* in July 1957, Assane Seck sketched the ways in which the discipline of geography in France had evolved alongside the colonial project as a way of understanding the topography of Africa as a resource: “la géographie coloniale,” Seck argued, “présentait moins la réalité objective que la vérité d’une société ou celle du colonisateur.”²¹ A Sudanese geographer, Bakary Kamian, echoed Seck’s point two years later at the 1959 *Deuxième Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs*²² in Rome. He argued that “la géographie de l’Afrique présentée par les Occidentaux”²³ paradoxically represented Africa as a commodity rich in resources

¹⁶ J.B. Harley, *The new nature of maps: essays in the history of cartography*, ed. Paul Laxton (Baltimore, Md.; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p.88.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.81.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.81.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.99.

²⁰ “Geography, colonisation and culture.” Assane Seck, ‘Géographie, colonisation et culture’, *Présence Africaine*, 14-5 (1957), 46-57. Seck was at that point a teacher at the Lycée Maurice Delafosse in Dakar.

²¹ “Colonial geography [...] presented less objective reality than the truth of one society or that of the colonizer.” Ibid., p.46.

²² “Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists.”

²³ “The geography of Africa presented by Westerners.” Bakary Kamian, ‘La géographie de l’Afrique présentée par les Occidentaux’, *Présence Africaine*, 27-8 (1959), 100-7.

for colonial extraction and also poor and lacking “possibilité d'évolution interne”²⁴ at the same time.

By contrast, modes of understanding places based not in abstract representation but rather in lived experience appear in many authors' work. Alda Espírito Santos' poetic voice in 'Descendo o meu bairro'²⁵ declares “eu vou trazer para o palco da vida [...] | a fluência quente da minha terra.”²⁶ In Noémia de Sousa's 'Carta,' the speaking voice laments the disappearance of her brother “que conhecia todos os trilhos abertos na mata.”²⁷ In Césaire's earlier *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal* (republished by *Présence Africaine* in 1956), the poetic voice imagines “mon originale géographie aussi; la carte du monde faite à mon usage, non pas teinte aux arbitraires couleurs des savants, mais à la géométrie de mon sang répandu.”²⁸ In the move from 'savant' to 'sang,' the speaking voice imagines a repopled mode of understanding place, based in human history and visceral experience rather than in abstract knowledge, that sees rather than eclipses slave histories. The poetic voice brings forward “ceux qui n'ont inventé ni la poudre ni la boussole,”²⁹ – a line that connects colonial technologies of navigation with violence – and seeks to find modes of representing and

²⁴ “Possibility of internal development.” Kamian, ‘La géographie’, p.101. For a canonical treatment of the colonial histories of geography as a discipline, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). Said discusses histories of geography at several times in *Orientalism*. The discussion on pp.210-6 of Lord Cromer and the geographical society are illustrative. Said argues that “geography was essentially the material underpinning for knowledge about the Orient. All the latent and unchanging characteristics of the Orient stood upon, and were rooted in, its geography [...] Yet geographical appetite could also take on the moral neutrality of an epistemological impulse to find out, to settle upon, uncover - as when in Heart of Darkness Marlow confesses to having a passion for maps.” p.216.

²⁵ “I come from from this place.” Alda Espírito Santo, ‘Descendo o meu Bairro’, *Présence Africaine*, 57 (1966), 492-3.

²⁶ “Life is a stage. I bring to it [...] | the hot fluency of my land.” Santo, ‘Descendo’, p.492.

²⁷ “Who knew all the open tracks in the forest.” Noémia de Sousa, ‘Carta’, *Poetas de Moçambique* (Lisbon: Casa Dos Estudantes do Império, 1962) in Freudenthal et al org., *Antologias. Moçambique*, pp.230-1, p.231.

²⁸ “And my special geography too; the world map made for my own use, not tinted with the arbitrary colors of scholars, but with the geometry of my spilled blood.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Notebook of a Return to the Native Land’, pp.35-85, p.77. French reference: Césaire, ‘Cahier’ in Eshleman and Smith, eds., p.76.

²⁹ “Those who invented neither powder nor compass.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Notebook’, p.67. French reference: ‘Cahier’, p.66.

understanding the world that allows the poetic voice to be “debout à la boussole | debout à la carte.”³⁰

In two later poems, ‘Va-t-en chien des nuits’³¹ and ‘Des Crocs,’³² published alongside each other in *Présence Africaine* in 1955, horror attends any reference to maps. ‘Des Crocs’ reference to “carte de sang carte du sang,”³³ which echoes the *Cahier*, again associates histories of suffering with imperial cartographic ways of understanding space. In ‘Va-t-en chien-des-nuits,’ space and place are drastically in flux. The poetic voice is searching “dans le paysage qui se défait toujours à reprendre,”³⁴ but images of confusion and derailment ensue: “trop de pistes brouillent leurs caravanes,”³⁵ “trop de menteurs portulans s'enlisent | aux lignes de faîte toujours divergentes.”³⁶ Portolan charts were used by European maritime explorers between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The evolution of these charts accompanied the ‘discoveries’ of territories previously unknown to Europeans. Portolan charts often emphasize distance from European centres and record discovered territories in terms of their resources. They are a technology of spatial representation bound up with understanding space in commodified terms, and particularly colonial territories as potential sites of extraction.³⁷

³⁰ “Standing at the compass | standing at the map.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Notebook’, p.81. French reference: ‘Cahier’, p.66.

³¹ “Beat it night dog.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Beat it Night Dog’, pp.283, p.283. French reference: Aimé Césaire, ‘Va-t-en chien des nuits’, *Présence Africaine*, n.s. 1-2 (1955), 116. All subsequent quotations from this poem in French are from p.116.

³² “Fangs.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Fangs’, pp.291, p.291. French reference: Aimé Césaire, ‘Des Crocs’, *Présence Africaine*, n.s. 1-2 (1955), 117. All subsequent quotations from this poem in French are from p.117.

³³ “Map of blood map of the blood.” Eshleman and Smith, p.291.

³⁴ “In the landscape which deteriorates always to be reworked.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Beat it Night Dog’, p.283.

³⁵ “Too many tracks confuse their caravans.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Beat it Night Dog’, p.283.

³⁶ “Too many deceitful portulans are sucked down | into the always diverging crest lines.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Beat it Night Dog’, p.283.

³⁷ For a substantial discussion of the history of Portolan charts, see: Tony Campbell, ‘Portolan Charts from the Late Thirteenth Century to 1500’ in J.B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography*, Vol. 1 (London; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp.371-463.

In Césaire's poem these "menteurs portulans" are deceitful ways of understanding place, as well as uselessly ossified in the context of a poem in which space is constantly changing. At the beginning of the poem, we hear that "la mer s'est retirée intacte du sang des grands poulpes | échoués aux sables."³⁸ These lines are tinged with the horror of death: beached animals and the echo of slaves killed at sea. Beyond the obvious violence the image contains, there is the more unnerving, strange question of how the sea, a liquid, can remain 'intact' from blood. The norms of the natural world, of science, work weirdly in this poem, here and later, when the lyric voice suggests a buried world might rise up from silence: "de ce fougueux silence de la bouche de ce sable | surgira-t-il rien sinon les pointes cariées de la futaie."³⁹ The nightmarish quality registered in both poems' titles, and that pervades their texts, is closely connected to a sense of disorientation, to uncertainties about the landscapes in which the poetic subjects find themselves. Césaire's poem calls into question not only the outlines, but the very substance of the landscapes of his poetic scene. On the one hand, we can read a certain resistance in the ways that Césaire's scene evades the imperial epistemology represented by the portolan map. At the same time, there is anxiety in the inability to read the landscape at all, an anxiety about whether it might not ever be possible properly to know, represent or navigate such a shifting psychogeography, suffused with a history that evades the speaker: "je cherche | un souvenir."⁴⁰

³⁸ "The sea ebbed untouched from the blood of giant octopuses stranded on the sands." Eshleman and Smith, 'Beat it Night Dog', p.283.

³⁹ Eshleman and Smith trans.: "From this impetuous silence from the mouth of this sand | will nothing surge forth other than the [...] forest's blighted tops" Eshleman and Smith, 'Beat it Night Dog', p.283. In the version Eshleman and Smith translate, the version of the poem that was included in Césaire's 1960 collection *Ferraments*, the adjective "sechée" is inserted into the line to qualify "futaie." As such the line becomes "the dried forest's blighted tops."

⁴⁰ Eshleman and Smith trans.: "I search | for the memory." Eshleman and Smith, 'Beat it Night Dog', p.283.

This anxiety returns in ‘Salut à la Guinée,’⁴¹ a poem whose title appears to name a specific place and poses as a triumphant celebration of Guinean independence. The coherence of that Guinea, however, is constantly threatening to fall apart in Césaire’s poem, which begins with naming different parts of the Guinean landscape – “Dalaba Pita Labé Mali Timbo | puissantes falaises.”⁴² The naming of these “puissantes falaises” serves to engender a sense of specificity and of solid endurance, but in as much as the names alone mean nothing to an outsider, they also function to disorient the uninitiated. Stacked alongside each other, the names blur together as the poetic voice takes us from one part of the country to another, the connections between those places left unarticulated, in a jarring dissonance between the optimism and singularity of the title. Indeed, the nightmarish tropes of some of Césaire’s earlier poems recur: at the end of the poem, echoes emerge of the dog and sand imagery of ‘Des Crocs’ and ‘Va-t-en chien des nuits’ in the references to the uncertainly shifting sands “ce sable | ce roulis | de liberté fragile”⁴³ and to the muffled breathing of an animal. As Césaire’s Guinea metamorphoses into an animal - “ton muffle attentif”⁴⁴ and “ta langue de ton soufflé de ton rut”⁴⁵ – he reintroduces the back note of disquiet into a poem whose title appears to signal to the achievement of a coherent place. Psychology overtakes topography. We are left unsure as to who, what, or where “Guinée” is. The place the poem approaches cannot entirely be grasped by an anthropocentric gaze. Images from the natural world, cliffs and dogs, erupt into the poem as ciphers for a human inability fully to understand the world.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, in Césaire’s poems, what Harley calls a “a geometrical landscape of

⁴¹ “Hail to Guinea.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Hail to Guinea’ in Eshleman and Smith, eds., pp.271, p.271. French reference: Aimé Césaire, ‘Salut à la Guinée’, *Présence Africaine*, 26 (1959), 89. All subsequent quotations from this poem in French are from p.89.

⁴² “Dalaba Pita Labé Mali Timbo | mighty cliffs.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Hail to Guinea’, p.271.

⁴³ “This sand | this rolling | of fragile liberty.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Hail to Guinea’, p.271.

⁴⁴ “Your muzzle attentive.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Hail to Guinea’, p.271.

⁴⁵ “With your tongue with your breath with your rutting.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Hail to Guinea’, p.271.

⁴⁶ As Deloughrey also argues, from an ecocritical perspective, in Elizabeth Deloughrey, ‘Postcolonialism’ in Greg Garrard, *The Oxford handbook of ecocriticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.320-40.

cold, non-human facts”⁴⁷ is replaced by something more akin to a “géometrie de mon sang répandu.”⁴⁸ Césaire’s poems render spatial histories and spatial presents by repeopling and resocializing the landscapes he creates and in so doing by heightening “the burden of conscience”⁴⁹ of the people in them. Disorientation, here, is not defeatist but a mode of being-in-space that resists the panoptic transparency of colonial spatial representation.

Césaire’s tone shifts in ‘Pour saluer le Tiers Monde,’⁵⁰ perhaps the most optimistic of his poems to appear in *Présence Africaine*, which is interested less in expressing ways in which names on a map fail to capture a real sense of place, than in reimagining a connective African topography. From a distance – because the poet is far away, speaking “de mon île lointaine,”⁵¹ the poet sees the different countries knotted together: “d’ici, je vois noués, | Bénoué, Logone et Tchad; | liés, Sénégal et Niger [...] Je vois l’Afrique multiple et une.”⁵² The poetic voice alludes too to the Ghana-Mali–Guinée union.⁵³ In this poem, the countries are connected and communication is clear: the poet can speak across the sea and those across it can hear and speak back to him. Here, the sense of space in flux recurs as rivers turn into buildings, and moving narratives play out in front of the poet’s eyes: “d’ici je vois Kivu vers Tanganika descendre | par l’escalier d’argent de la Ruzizi.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, where in the other poems I have discussed, this flux accompanies a sometimes-distressed sense of disorientation, in this poem there is a rare certainty about the right route forward. It is a certainty that comes from the earth itself: “Terre enseignant nos routes, | c’est ici, qu’une

⁴⁷ Harley, *The new nature of maps*, p.99.

⁴⁸ Eshleman and Smith trans.: “Geometry of my spilled blood.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Notebook’, p.77.

⁴⁹ Harley, *The new nature of maps*, p.81.

⁵⁰ Aimé Césaire, ‘Pour saluer le Tiers Monde’, *Présence Africaine*, 26 (1959), 90-1.

⁵¹ “From my remote island.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘A Salute to the Third World / For Léopold Sedar Senghor’ in Eshleman and Smith, eds., pp.351-3, p.351. French reference: Césaire, ‘Pour saluer’, p.90.

⁵² “From here, I see Benue, | Logone and Chad knotted; | Senegal and Niger, bound [...] I see Africa multiple and one” Eshleman and Smith, ‘A Salute to the Third World’, pp.351-3. French reference: Césaire, ‘Pour saluer’, p.90-1.

⁵³ The union, Kwame Nkrumah’s idea, never materialized. See Nugent, p.79.

⁵⁴ “From here I see the Kivu descend Ruzizi’s silver stairway toward Tanganyika.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘A Salute to the Third World’, p.351. French reference: Césaire, ‘Pour saluer’, p.90.

vérité s'avise.”⁵⁵ The poetic voice rubs the soil between its fingers, and the poem ends with a defiant note of connection:

notre Afrique [...]
c'est une main tuméfiée,
une-blessée-main-ouverte,
Tendue,
 brunes, jaunes, blanches,
à toutes mains, à toutes les mains blessées
du monde⁵⁶

Though the imaginative horizon of the poem remains mainly in Africa, Césaire retains this optimism for a poem that imagines Africa as a site not of nationalist division but of a Third World political solidarity.

THE 'WORLD'

It is significant that 'le monde' emerges in highly ambivalent tones in Césaire's text at a moment of connection but associated with wounded subjects.⁵⁷ This ambivalence about global connectivity is palpable too in Kalungano's 'Onde Estou,' in which the poetic voice's declaration that "Je vis | Courbé sur la terre"⁵⁸ is both an image of expansiveness and contortion. In Tenreiro's 'Negro de Tudo Mundo,' his appeal to Rio, Lisbon, Harlem, Paris, Cape Verde is coloured by the tragedy of "homens | perdidos [...] | espalhados por todo o mundo."⁵⁹ The globality of these poets' lyric voices emerges in histories of the slave trade –

⁵⁵ "Earth showing us our paths, | It is here, that a truth is perceived" Eshleman and Smith, 'A Salute to the Third World', p.353. French reference: Césaire, 'Pour saluer', p.91.

⁵⁶ "Our Africa [...] it is a swollen hand, | a wounded-open-hand, | extended to | all hands, brown, yellow, | white, to all the wounded hands | in the world." Eshleman and Smith, 'A Salute to the Third World', p.353. French reference: Césaire, 'Pour saluer', p.91.

⁵⁷ See also Orlando Costa [sic], 'Poema' (Ao Mário Pinto de Andrade), *Mensagem*, 2.3 (1959), 31, p.31.

⁵⁸ "I live | curved over the earth." Kalungano, p.62. Kalungano was the *nom de plume* and *nom de guerre* of the Mozambican writer and militant Marcelino Dos Santos.

⁵⁹ "Men | lost [...] | scattered over the world." Francisco José Tenreiro, 'Nègre du Monde Entier', *Présence Africaine*, 65 (1968), 73-6.

histories of dispersed black labour that produced the modern world, as the poetic voice declares in the *Cahier*: “et je me dis Bordeaux et Nantes et Liverpool et New-York et San-Francisco | Pas un bout de ce monde qui ne porte mon empreinte digitale.”⁶⁰ This collective, global knowledge imbues the individual speaking subject as in Jacques Roumain’s lines in ‘Bois d’ébène’⁶¹ (1948): “Nègre colporteur de révolte | tu connais les chemins du monde | depuis que tu fus vendu en Guinée.”⁶² The ‘monde/mundo’ as it appears in these texts is in some ways quite vague. Rather than a clearly defined concept, ‘monde/mundo’ functions as a holding statement for talking about broader pressures and affiliations beyond the national or topographically proximate. In all these cases, worldliness is not an aspiration but a bitter reality. It is not a category *beyond* the local but a place where the speaking subjects find themselves. It is a place they already know because of histories of slaving and colonialism.

Alda de Espírito Santo’s poem, ‘Em Torno da Minha Baía,’⁶³ published by *Présence Africaine* in 1966, reflects on this coextension between particular place and globality. The poetic voice, looking around at the crumbling tropical quay on which she is giving a class, imagines the children she is teaching taking off “num voo magistral em torno do mundo,”⁶⁴ singing in a chorus of voices from around the world. Espírito Santo foregrounds the situatedness of her humanistic vision, imagining her dilapidated bay and her group of pupils as the site of the general as well as the particular. More fundamentally, Espírito Santo, along with all these poets, expresses movement through space, and modes of being in plural space-times concurrently, which colonial cartography – the *mappemonde* – cannot articulate.

⁶⁰ “And I say to myself Bordeaux and Nantes and Liverpool and New York and San Francisco | Not an inch of this world devoid of my fingerprint.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Notebook’, pp.46-7.

⁶¹ “Ebony Wood.”

⁶² “Negro peddler of revolt | you know all the world’s roads | since you were sold in Guinea.” Jacques Roumain, ‘Ebony Wood’ in *Ebony Wood*, trans. Sidney Shapiro (New York: Interworld Press, 1972), pp.10-22, p.11-3.

⁶³ “Around my Bay.” Alda Espírito Santo, ‘Em torno da minha Baía’, *Présence Africaine*, 57 (1966), 498.

⁶⁴ “Magisterial flight around the globe.” Santo, ‘Em torno’, p.498.

For Katherine McKittrick, whose book *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* seeks to analyze black women's geographies in the North American and Caribbean black diaspora, the salient characteristics of "cartographic, positivist, imperialist"⁶⁵ geographies her own work seeks to unsettle are that they present themselves as stable, unpeopled and singular, in the sense of allowing the world to be seen from only one vantage point. McKittrick underlines the element of stability in imperialist worldviews, because, she argues, imagining space as fixed closes down the possibilities for understanding the world as site of change or, more broadly, for imagining change at all. In the imperialist cartographic tradition McKittrick discusses, fixity helps to shore up the status quo the map inscribes. McKittrick's argument helps us understand what might be at stake – beyond engaging with mobile histories of black displacement – in these poets' roving spatial imaginations.

Nevertheless, not all the poets I discuss here delight in instability or mobility. In René Depestre's poetry, there is something much more melancholic about the broader world his poetic voices can never quite access. In his 'Port de Mer,'⁶⁶ for example, the poetic voice surveys a port and imagines the slave ships arriving: "Vers où affluent | Tous les cargos | Aux cales bondées."⁶⁷ For the speaking voice this thought is tragic and the port becomes not so much a site of connection as a confluence of pain: "où les larmes | De tous les pays viennent | Se jeter dans mes yeux!"⁶⁸ Where Césaire's speaking subjects are mobile and roving, hard to pin down, Depestre's poems rather register a sense of being stuck in place, or isolated despite the lyric voices' roving imaginations. In 'Mon Cinéma d'enfant noir,' the world map – so deceitful in Césaire – appears as a toy: "La mappemonde était une vaste

⁶⁵ Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle* (Minneapolis, Minn.; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p.xiii.

⁶⁶ "Sea Port." René Depestre, 'Port de Mer', *Présence Africaine*, 11 (1956), 108, p.108.

⁶⁷ "Towards which flow | All the cargo ships | with packed holds." Ibid, p.108.

⁶⁸ "Where the tears | of all the countries come | To throw themselves in my eyes!" Ibid, p.108.

marelle | Où à cloche-pied je poussais le palet | Qu'était pour moi la Croix-du-Sud.”⁶⁹ In Depestre’s poem, the Croix-du-Sud, a constellation of stars used by sailors for navigation, is a child’s puck. The child’s ability imaginatively to rove across the world contrasts with the constraints of his daily life, and in this sense provides an escape. Nevertheless, the roving is just a game, which does not really transport but only distracts the child. The melancholia in Depestre’s writing in these years derives at least in part from the frustrated longing for connection and mobility that his poems in *Présence Africaine* stage.

In ‘Le Mur de Son,’ the speaking voice is preoccupied with an obstruction between the world and himself: “dans mon cœur il y a quelque part | Un mur du son | Qui se dresse, géant, nuit et jour | Entre le monde et moi.”⁷⁰ Depestre’s poetic voice is incapable of achieving the broader perspective it craves, of reaching “le monde.” In the course of the poem the voice suggests that the wall is the memory of Africa itself. “Est-ce toi Afrique qui saigne | Dans mes profondeurs?”⁷¹ Africa, here, is a human history not just to be found within the topographical bounds of Africa the continent, but also a traumatic presence that obstructs the voice from connecting to the rest of the world.

In Francisco Jose Tenreiro’s ‘Amor de Africa,’⁷² also from 1963, the speaker casts Africa not as an external place but as interior to the subject: “Aqui estou eu agora vestido de África por dentro.”⁷³ Tenreiro figures Africa as a garment worn on the inside. Africa is an identity, then, hidden, untouchable and personal but also removable and chosen, in the sense that clothes are chosen and can be taken off. Tenreiro was a trained geographer who, in 1961,

⁶⁹ “The world map was a vast hopscotch | where, hopping, I pushed the puck | which was my Cross of the South.” René Depestre, ‘Mon Cinéma d’enfant noir’, *Présence Africaine*, 5 (1956), 90-4, p.92.

⁷⁰ “Somewhere in my heart there is | A wall of sound | Which stands, giant, night and day, | between the world and me.” René Depestre, ‘Le Mur de Son’, *Présence Africaine*, 48 (1963), p.164.

⁷¹ “Is it you, Africa which bleeds | In my depths?” Ibid., p.164.

⁷² “Love of Africa.” Francisco José Tenreiro, ‘Amor de África’, *Mensagem*, 15.2 (1963), 52-3.

⁷³ “Here am I now clothed with Africa inside.” Tenreiro, ‘Amor’, p.52.

had published a geographical study of Sao Tomé e Príncipe.⁷⁴ In his 1963 poem, the poetic voice is listening in anger to the “repetidas ideias”⁷⁵ of an old man who presumes to know everything about Africa, which in his account is curiously depopulated: “que das pirâmides diz e esquece os negros faraós.”⁷⁶ Because, in Tenreiro’s poem, Africa is a place inside the speaker, however, the man can never really know it: “Oh! Minha Africa ter-te no peito o que vale | Perante a clareza absoluta e homérica de afirmações tão sábias!”⁷⁷ Withdrawing from the outside world into the expansive realm of the interior self is a resistive and chosen mode of being, suspicious of the transparent exchange of geographical knowledge.

The world occupies a particular place in African anti-colonial thought, which was often committed to world transformation as well as to the production of national space. Nevertheless, the ‘world’ assumes different postures, scales and meanings for anti-colonial writers. It is a plastic and sometimes nebulous category whose particular freight emerges in conjunction with the other scales and places that any given writer deploys. I come in my conclusion to the question of how this might inform theorizing about ‘the world’ in discussions of World Literature today. My point here is that the world in these poems appears not as an idealized space of infinite encounter beyond the everyday, but as a temporal and spatial dimension of everyday life from which some might wish – though only wish – to flee.

⁷⁴ Francisco José Tenreiro, *A Ilha de São Tomé* (Lisboa: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1961).

⁷⁵ “Repeated ideas.” Ibid., p.52.

⁷⁶ “Who talks of the pyramids and forgets the black pharaohs.” Ibid., p.52.

⁷⁷ “Oh! My Africa what is it worth having you in my chest | In front of the absolute and Homeric clarity of such wise statements!” Ibid., p.53.

PLACES OF ESCAPE

Several poems that appeared in *Mensagem* dealing with themes of escape appeal to us to imagine constraint and immobility as one way of being-in-the-world in the context of colonial repression. These poems – which share a thematic focus on everyday life – create a frictive sense of pushing out the boundaries of the places where the poetic subjects find themselves. The poems do not imagine breaking outwards into the world, but rather develop modes of escape into the imagination or into language.

In Rui Knopfli's 'Terra de Manuel Bandeira',⁷⁸ the speaking voice longs to go to Pasárgarda, a utopian, dreamed-of place, but is held back by the place he is in already, comprised of "esta vida, este sítio, | E estes homens e estes objectos,"⁷⁹ from which he ultimately does not want to flee. The poem becomes the journey – and return – from a utopia to which he will not travel.

In Alda do Espírito Santos' 1963 'Angolares',⁸⁰ the poetic voice evokes the fishermen who, with "rostos duros"⁸¹ and no land of their own, take to the sea amidst the sharks and other dangers to assuage their hunger. The poem figures their journey as a way of escaping the bounds of the exploitative relationships they encounter on dry land. In this sense the waves, the sea and the beachscape becomes a human space that – if only imaginatively – transcends and resists the colonial relationship. In a similar vein, in his 1963 'Praia',⁸² Illídio Rocha figures the black Macua fishermen on the beach as "cosmonautas"⁸³ because they can escape

⁷⁸ "The Land of Manuel Bandeira." Rui Knopfli, 'Terra de Manuel Bandeira', *Mensagem*, 1.5 (1958), 27, p.27.

⁷⁹ "And this life, this place, | And these men and these objects?" Ibid, p.27.

⁸⁰ Alda do Espírito Santo, 'Angolares', *Mensagem*, 15.2 (1963), 19-20.

⁸¹ "Hard faces." Ibid., p.19.

⁸² Illídio Rocha, 'Praia', *Mensagem*, 15.2 (1963), 29.

⁸³ "Cosmonauts." Ibid., p.29.

the world on their boats and through their poetry: “o negro macua, que ignora a existência dos foguetões [...] dum punhado de versos | construir uma nave | e for abrir universos.”⁸⁴

The themes of voice and place-making come together in one of the last poems that *Mensagem* published, José Craveirinha’s 1964 ‘Sonho.’⁸⁵ In it, the poetic voice declares that he will build “uma casa | Sem ódio [...] Uma casa minha | construída sem o sabor acre da pólvora nos lábios gretados.”⁸⁶ The house is surrounded by song, by the “gritos das crianças | a cantar áfricas.”⁸⁷ The poem becomes a way of linguistically singing the dream-house into being. These are expansive places, but their “significant geographies”⁸⁸ are not the ‘big world.’ They are fragments and dreams in which space is inseparable from the people who produce it and whose subjects are not acquisitive but experiential in their relationship to the places in which they find themselves. In this posture, we can find a mode of understanding lived, human space that moves past the colonial spatial logics of appropriation and depopulation.

“*Nós avançamos para a nossa luta,*” Amílcar Cabral told a PAIGC training seminar in 1969, “*seguros da realidade da nossa terra (com os pés fincados na terra)* [original emphasis].”⁸⁹ But, Cabral argued, this geography was in flux: “temos que [...] transformar até a realidade geográfica [...] quando fizermos barragens, pontes, etc., mudaremos a paisagem geográfica da nossa terra, vamos fazer uma geografia humana nova.”⁹⁰ In these

⁸⁴ “The black Macua, who does not know about rockets [...] from a handful of verses | can build a ship | and open universes.” Ibid., p.29.

⁸⁵ José Craveirinha, ‘Sonho’, *Mensagem*, 16.1 (1964), 25, p.25.

⁸⁶ “A house | without hate [...] | A house that is mine | Built without the bitter taste of gunpowder on cracked lips.” Craveirinha, ‘Sonho’, p.25.

⁸⁷ “Children shouting / and singing africanas.” Ibid., p.25.

⁸⁸ Orsini, ‘The Multilingual Local’, p.346.

⁸⁹ “*We go forward to our struggle certain of the reality of our land (with our feet planted on the ground)* [original emphasis].” Amílcar Cabral, ‘Os Princípios do Partido e a Prática Política’ in *Obras Escolhidas de Amílcar Cabral: Unidade e Luta I*, Mário de Andrade, coord. (Lisbon: Seara Nova, 1976), pp.117-188, p.130.

⁹⁰ “We need to [...] transform even our geographical reality [...] when we build dams, bridges, etc., we will change the geographical landscape of our land, we will make a new human geography.” Cabral, ‘Os Princípios

lines, Cabral's understanding of what the liberation struggle involved is deeply geographical: emancipation involved a rebuilding of the human geography – of social space – produced during colonialism. In this context, the poetic, dreamed-of places I have discussed are not just mystification: from a context of political repression, they register an imaginative resistance against the constraints of the present that was part of, not separate from, the material fight for freedom and land. They represent, as Deepika Bahri puts it, an effort of “yearning for a world in which things might be other than they are in ways we must forever struggle to imagine.”⁹¹

MOBILE GEOGRAPHIES OF LABOUR

In the previous chapter, I suggested that women's writing in both journals turned its attention to, among other things, the scale of the political. In my discussions here of different writers' “significant geographies,”⁹² it is clear that different writers engage space at many different scales. In particular, it is important to emphasize that the spatial imaginations of many writers in both journals do not only deal with the ‘big’ world. Even the explicit appeals to the global in some writers' texts do not always stand for the *whole* world, but rather for a mode of being in the world grounded in the dispersed production of the individual subject. Among others, Césaire, Roumain and Kalungano, as I have suggested, connect their speakers' worldliness to the historic dispersal of black slaves over the earth. And yet, for

do Partido e a Prática Política’ in *Unidade e Luta I*, p.143. Cabral is arguing for the material production of a liberated space in advance of European Marxist arguments about the production of space. Henri Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace* [“The Production of space”], for example, was published in 1974.

⁹¹ Bahri, p.119.

⁹² Orsini, ‘The Multilingual Local’, p.346.

Kalungano, for example, the lyric voice is referring not just to the past, but to the current dispersed reality of black labourers around the world: “Je vis | dans les ports | Je vis courbé sur la terre [...] | bien vivant | dans la voix de Robeson et Hughes | Césaire et Guillén.”⁹³ Moreover, these lines do not just appeal to the whole world in general but sketch specific routes of connection through more-than-national space. We also see this attention to inter- and trans-national routes of black labour present in the work of José Craveirinha and Ousmane Sembène.

José Craveirinha’s ‘Cântico a um deus de alcatrão,’⁹⁴ published in *Mensagem* in 1959, is hooked around the image of a machine drilling the ground, from which appears “ouro | [...] barco cheio de máquina no porão | [...] notícia de Emmett Till boneco de carvão | [...] Cadillaque de patrão.”⁹⁵ Through this terse compression of causal links, Craveirinha’s verse connects African labour in one place with wealth and inequality elsewhere: the boat of machines, we imagine, is headed abroad. The references to Emmet Till and to the Cadillac car, as figures for two sides of 1950s America, expand the poem’s imaginative horizons to suggest the international connection between mineral extraction in Africa and acquisitive wealth and white supremacy in the USA. Again, Craveirinha’s text brings into view the connections between things-in-different-places that a static, geometric cartography cannot see.

In his 1962 poem, ‘3.a Ode ao Inverno,’⁹⁶ Craveirinha again counterpoises coeval realities at different points on a supply chain by interrogating an idealized image of the tropics as a

⁹³ “I live | in the ports | I live curved over the earth [...] | alive and well in the voices of Robeson and Hughes | Césaire and Guillén.” Kalungano, pp.62-3.

⁹⁴ “Hymn to a tar god.” José Craveirinha, ‘Cântico a um deus de alcatrão’, *Mensagem*, 2.3 (1959), 15, p.15.

⁹⁵ “Gold | [...] a boat with a hullfull of machines | [...] news of Emmet Till, the coal doll | [...] the boss’ Cadillac.” Ibid., p.15.

⁹⁶ “Third Ode to Winter.” José Craveirinha, ‘3.a Ode ao Inverno’, *Mensagem*, 14.4 (1962), 21, p.21.

place of leisure. In Craveirinha's poem, the "cansaços áfricos contra as duras paredes de vidro"⁹⁷ disrupt the tranquillity of the tropical beach scene represented by blue skies, rows of palm trees, tourists and iced drinks. The poem's lens widens, moving the beach from the foreground, where it is the only thing in focus, to become part of a panorama taking in the wider segregated context in which a tourist's iced Coca-Cola coexists with the exhaustion of the African workers. Craveirinha brings into view the workers whose labour produces the space of leisure for the tourists. The image of the glass wall (figured earlier in the text as a shop window), both impermeable and transparent, reinforces this play between the visible and the unseen (rather than the invisible), and emphasizes the discrepancy between the immobility of those pressed up against it and the leisured tourist displacements evoked by the poem's title.

Ousmane Sembène's short story '*La Noire de...*',⁹⁸ published in *Présence Africaine* in 1961, also contrasts black labour with beachgoers' leisure in Antibes. It tells the dystopian ante-story to the suicide of a Senegalese woman, Diouana, who has come to work in France. Sembène's story emphasizes how Diouana performs the labour that allows the white French family (and particularly the white woman) to live a life of luxurious idleness as Diouana takes on ever more work in the household: "elle était, à la fois, cuisinière, bonne d'enfant, blanchisseuse et repasseuse."⁹⁹ Diouana is kept constantly at work, and her horizons stretch only to the perimeters of her employers' Antibes flat: "de la France [...] la Belle France [...] elle n'avait qu'une vague idée [...] Elle se demandait où était la France."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ "Weary Africans pressed against the hard glass walls." Ibid., p.21.

⁹⁸ "Black Girl."

⁹⁹ "She was cook, nanny, washerwoman and ironer all at the same time." Sembène, '*La Noire de...*', p.98.

¹⁰⁰ "Of France [...] *la belle France* [...] she had only a vague idea [...] she asked herself where France was." Ibid., p.97-8.

Sembène's rendering of France as a place of atomization rather than connection – a country where “chacun vivait sa vie isolé, enfermé chez lui”¹⁰¹ — is another vector of the story's critical charge. France is a place of enclosure for Diouana. In Senegal, she had imagined France as a beautiful and prosperous place that would offer her freedom and mobility: “elle rêvait à la [sic] liberté, à aller où elle le désirait, sans avoir à travailler comme une bête de somme.”¹⁰² Sembène casts Diouana's idealized notion of France as a cruel fantasy that serves only as a preface for fatal entrapment. She is physically isolated, and also cannot meaningfully communicate either with her employer (“elles ne parlaient pas la même langue”¹⁰³) – because she does not speak much French – or her mother, who sends her letters in France to which Diouana cannot reply, as she cannot write. We also assume that Diouana's mother is unlikely to have been able to write the letters herself, and so the communication with her daughter is doubly mediated: by a scribe in Senegal and by her daughter's tormentors in France.

As Diouana cannot speak French or write down her own story, and what is more, died before telling it, the narration's reliability is always uncertain,¹⁰⁴ a tension that self-consciously undermines the apparent precision and omniscience of the opening lines' representation of time and space: “c'était le matin du 23 Juin de l'an de grâce mille neuf cent cinquante huit. Sur la croisette, ni le destin de la République Française, ni l'avenir de l'Algérie, pas plus que des territoires sous la coupe des colonialistes, ne préoccupaient ceux qui, tôt, envahissaient la plage d'Antibes.”¹⁰⁵ The story ends with an impersonal note in a newspaper:

¹⁰¹ “Everyone lives an isolated life, closed up at home.” Ibid., p.97.

¹⁰² “Freedom, of going wherever she wanted, without having to work like an animal.” Ibid., p.93.

¹⁰³ “They did not speak the same language.” Ibid., p.93.

¹⁰⁴ For commentary on how Sembène negotiated this uncertainty in his film of the story, see David Murphy, ‘An African Brecht’, *New Left Review*, 16 (2002), 115-29, p.120.

¹⁰⁵ “It was the morning of the 23rd of June, in the Year of Our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-eight. On the promenade, neither the destiny of the French Republic, nor the future of Algeria, nor even the territories under colonial control, troubled Antibes' early-morning beachgoers.” Sembène, ‘La Noire de...’, p.90.

“à Antibes, une Noire nostalgique se tranche la gorge.”¹⁰⁶ In its misapprehension of Diouana’s exploitation and unhappiness as nostalgia and because of the deceptiveness of this anaesthetized and racist language, this final sentence excoriates white French normalization of and indifference to black suffering, which Sembène presents as the underbelly of modern French life. More fundamentally, the story brings into view the geographies of labour that connect France and Senegal and the fatal enclosures that this apparent mobility engenders. Both Sembène and Craveirinha break open the surface of a particular place to reveal how it is produced by mobile, displaced and racialized exploitation.

Sembène and Craveirinha’s texts bring connections between Africa and Europe into view by treating them together. This insight might help us also bring into view what is politically at stake in treating African and European writing together rather than as separate ‘areas’ of literature. As Nicholas Brown puts it, “what is required is to ‘reconstellate’” African and European writing “in such a way as to make them both comprehensible within a single framework within which neither will look the same.”¹⁰⁷ But Sembène and Craveirinha show that in such a reconstellation, it is not a question of asserting abstract or arbitrary connections, but rather of embedding what Harry Harootunian calls “our strategies of comparison” in “specific temporal and spatial forms, in which social space is lived and experienced.”¹⁰⁸ In such an endeavour, it is important to take seriously the local production of connective, relational, transnational, international and ‘world’ space. This perspective contrasts with an attempt to claim particular ideas for particular, hermetically imagined places.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ “In Antibes, a nostalgic black woman slits her own throat.” Ibid., p.101.

¹⁰⁷ Nick Brown quoted in WReC, *Combined and uneven development*, p.19.

¹⁰⁸ Harry Harootunian, ‘Some Thoughts on Comparability and the Space-Time Problem’, *boundary 2*, 32.2 (2005), 23-52, p.52.

¹⁰⁹ Chris Goto-Jones, ‘Comparative Political Thought: Beyond the Non-Western’ in Duncan Bell, ed., *Ethics and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.219-36, p.225.

In this chapter, I have argued that, repeatedly in *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem*, we see writers in French and in Portuguese working to articulate anew the connections between parts of the world at different scales. These writers engage with the complex epistemic reality of what space is and how it is produced, filtered as it is through language, history and many other factors. As such, they take up the work of deconstructing and imagining alternatives to a cartesian conception of geometric space that relies on the baseline idea that space is defined by how far away we all are from one another.¹¹⁰

Césaire's roving counter-cartographies, Depestre's frustrated and isolated subjects, Tenreiro's geographical interiorities, Vieira and Espírito Santo's imagined places of escape, Craveirinha's compressed metaphors of extraction and Sembène's treatment of Diouana's fatal route through a geography of labour all make distinct and particular interventions. Read together, however, we can understand these spatial ontologies as modes of thought that sought to move beyond the divisive and abstracted modes of understanding the world represented by colonial cartography. This was part of the broader "lateral and associative"¹¹¹ work that, I have argued, *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* took up in as much as it represented an effort to rethink colonial conceptions of the connections between people and parts of the world.

Notably, these writers' "significant geographies"¹¹² do not figure language or nation as dominant boundaries and disavow any static analytic binary of local/national in opposition to the world. Rather, these writers register their specific instantiations of the idea that people exist, politically and socially, in space which is not abstractly imposed on them by pre-

¹¹⁰ Rethinking this 'common-sense' idea of space has informed a vast quantity of work in geography. For a brief introduction to the ideas of absolute, relative and relational space see David Harvey, 'Space as a Keyword' in Noel Castree and Derek Gregory, eds., *David Harvey A Critical Reader* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp.270-93.

¹¹¹ Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial*, p.18.

¹¹² Orsini, 'The Multilingual Local', p.346.

existing laws but rather continually negotiated through a host of different factors including language, economics, culture and ecology. In Chapter Five, I discussed the grand-scale political imaginaries of negritude, humanism, pan-Africanism and the third world. Drawing on the appeal for a multi-scalar anti-colonial sensibility discussed in Chapter Six, I set out in this chapter many more “significant geographies” registered by African writers that are more-than-local, more-than-national, but short of universal. In my concluding section, I consider how these anti-colonial modes of thinking about the world might speak to the present of francophone and lusophone postcolonial studies.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: LANGUAGE-WORLDS, COMPARISON AND PAN-AFRICANISM.

I began this thesis with Bouchra Khalili and Filípa César. Their work engages with the multilingual and spatial overlaps between the struggles against French and Portuguese colonialisms, and the place of creative work as part of the anti-colonial struggle. I have taken up these concerns through a focus on the literary journal as an important and under-considered form in the conjuncture of African decolonization. Focussing on *Mensagem*, *Présence Africaine*, and the connections between them, the thesis has sought to think with the journals' "lateral and associative"¹ form as well as with the polyphony and cracks that comprise them: they are "unstable compounds,"² which reveal polysemic intellectual histories. Working back and forth between similarity and difference and dominant and minor voices brings into view a period of intense concatenation, underpinned by journal culture, between African and anti-colonial writers in different languages and from different places.

We should understand these journals, and the literary texts they contain, as forms of thought in their own right. They are also a rich source of thinking about the relationship between the literary and the political which can inform critical thinking today. In them, the literary and the political were put into question and calibrated in ways that help us see the contingency and connections between these plastic concepts more broadly. Especially in my last two chapters, I demonstrated how and why we might situate literary texts in conversation with, rather than under the authority of, 'theoretical' texts. In my last chapter, I argued that the scalar and spatial thinking of writers in both journals offer ways to consider in more sophisticated terms the categories and vocabularies we use in comparative postcolonial

¹ Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial*, p.18.

² Green, 'Introduction', p.4.

studies. Construing an encounter with the texts of African anti-colonialism through both a comparative *and* a transnational optic can be deeply productive: it can help us see anew such well-worn concepts as ‘negritude’ and ‘anti-colonialism.’ Part of the freight of Khalili and César’s interventions is what I earlier called their reconjugation of anti-colonial thought and practice with the present. Connecting *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* with contemporary academic debates, such as those about literary form, African modernism, and the place of literature in postcolonial studies, shows that the thinking, writing and praxis of the decolonizing years can continue to speak to us today.

In this concluding section, I reflect on the implications of the arguments made, for ‘lusophone’ and ‘francophone’ postcolonial studies, two fields of scholarship that share a relationship of genealogy and counterpoint to the dominant field of (mainly anglophone) postcolonial studies.³ In the sense that francophone and lusophone postcolonial studies represent an appeal (albeit a limited one) to multilingualism, they have served an important role as a bulwark against theoretical over-extrapolation of English-language theory. When luso- and francophone postcolonial studies emerged, in slight syncopation to one another, what went by the name of postcolonial studies was mainly focussed on the (partially literary) histories of the British empire. Little work was dealing with, for example, what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls Portugal’s “subaltern colonialism,”⁴ the role of language in the French *mission civilisatrice* or the particular imperial legacies in French and Portuguese letters,

³ Paulo de Medeiros, dir., *Postcolonial theory and Lusophone literatures* (Utrecht: Portuguese Studies Center, Opleiding Portugese Taal en Cultuur, Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen, Universiteit Utrecht, 2007), esp. ‘Turning Points: An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory and Lusophone Literatures’, pp.1-9; Boaventura de Sousa Santos, ‘Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Interidentity’, *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 39.2 (2002), 9-43; Celia Britton and Michael Syrotinski, ‘Introduction’, *Paragraph* 24.3 (2001), 1-11; Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, eds., *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A critical Introduction* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003, 2014); Luís Madureira, ‘Is the Difference in Portuguese Colonialism the Difference in Lusophone Postcolonialism?’, *Ellipsis: Journal of the American Portuguese Studies Association*, 6 (2008), 136–41.

⁴ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, ‘Entre Prospero e Caliban: Colonialismo, pós-colonialismo e inter-identidade’ in *Entre ser e estar: Raízes, percursos e discursos da identidade*, Maria Irene Ramalho and António Sousa Ribeiro orgs. (Porto: Afrontamento, 2001), pp.23-85, p.26.

society and ex-colonies today. Francophone and lusophone postcolonial studies also represent an interpellation to French and Portuguese studies to take colonial histories more seriously and have paved the way for comparative transnational work within the ambits of those fields of study.⁵

Both francophone and lusophone are inherently problematic terms, that slip easily into the descriptions of the neo-colonial groupings of *Francophonie* and *Lusofonia*. The word ‘anglophone,’ we might note, does not elide so easily, aurally or otherwise, into ‘Commonwealth.’ Sometimes – though more often for francophone than for lusophone – the term is used not as a language-descriptor proper, but rather to describe places outside the former colonising country. Outrageously, the terms are sometimes used in racialized terms to describe peoples of colour and their work inside France and Portugal. In that sense, it is important to be wary of the ways the terms francophone and lusophone can facilitate retrenchment, racism and exclusion in terms of what is allowed to count as truly French or Portuguese. Nevertheless, my argument here is not simply that we should be wary of the terms. We should, for many reasons, but that point has been made repeatedly to the extent that it has become almost conventional for postcolonial critics to problematize the words even as they use them. In using them, scholars tend to proceed with caution,⁶ or to situate them as a strategic but temporary corrective. Mireille Rosello writes “francophone studies is a performative statement that may or may not be useful ten years from now.”⁷ Ana Paula

⁵ See David Murphy, ‘How French Studies Became Transnational; Or Postcolonialism as Comparatism’ in Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas, eds., *A Companion to Comparative Literature* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp.408-20, p.409. Murphy’s argument that the word ‘francophone’ is itself transnational applies also to ‘lusophone.’

⁶ Phillip Rothwell and Ana Maria Martinho, ‘Introduction. [I] Four Decades of Independence: The Multiple Cultures of Portuguese-speaking Africa’, *Journal of Lusophone Studies*, 1.1 (2016), 1-6, p.2; Forsdick and Murphy, ‘Situating Francophone Postcolonial Thought’, p.24.

⁷ Mireille Rosello, ‘Unhoming Francophone Studies: A House in the Middle of the Current’, *Yale French Studies* 103 (2003), French and Francophone: The Challenge of Expanding Horizons, pp.123-32, p.124.

Ferreira, talks of a “lusophone postcoloniality” “without exceptionalism.”⁸ David Murphy figures ‘francophone’ as centrifugal not centripetal: it should not be seen as a “sub-specialisation [...] Rather, it is a challenge to any exclusive definition of the postcolonial and is an acknowledgement of the necessity of opening the field to comparative ‘transcolonial’ approaches.”⁹

But, to repurpose Sembène, Vieira, Depestre and Santos’ question from the last chapter, where are ‘francophone’ and ‘lusophone?’ The journal histories I have brought forward testify to dislocated relationships between national/imperial space and national/imperial language that disrupt state-backed notions of their coextension. This is not only because not everyone speaks French in Senegal or Portuguese in Angola, but also because there are many French and Kimbundu speakers in Lisbon, just as there are many Portuguese and Peuhl speakers in Paris. Illustrative cases abound from the histories I have been discussing: are we talking about the ‘francophone’ or the ‘lusophone’ when we consider the headquartering of resistance against Portuguese colonialism in the 1960s and 1970s in Rabat, Conakry and Algiers? The ‘anglophone’ and ‘lusophone’ writers on the pages and editorial board of *Présence Africaine*? Ousmane Sembène’s creation of the Marseilles branch of the PAIGC?¹⁰ Mário Pinto de Andrade introducing Frantz Fanon to François Maspero?¹¹ Noémia de Sousa translating Amílcar Cabral for Maspero in Paris, or Keïta Fodeba in Lisbon? Alda Espírito Santo meeting Sarah Maldoror in Paris?¹² Clearly the categories of francophone and lusophone cannot stably be held apart, and we need to move between and beyond them.

⁸ Ana Paula Ferreira, ‘Specificity without Exceptionalism: Towards a Critical Lusophone Postcoloniality’ in Medeiros, ed., *Postcolonial theory and Lusophone literatures*, pp.21-40.

⁹ David Murphy, ‘Beyond Anglophone Imperialism?’, *New Formations*, 59 (2006), ‘After Iraq: Reframing Postcolonial Studies’, 132-43, p.139; Forsdick and Murphy, ‘Situating Francophone Postcolonial Thought’, p.4.

¹⁰ Gadjigo, p.129.

¹¹ Watson, ‘An Interview’, [unpaginated].

¹² Laban, ed., *S. Tomé e Príncipe*, p.79.

Holding onto these cracks in what Nicholas Harrison calls the “idealized alignment” between “a language, ‘a’ literature, [...] a ‘national’ identity”¹³ – and, I would add, a place – brings into view a whole world of connection, comparison, and multilingual practice that hermetically drawn conceptions of ‘the francophone’ and ‘lusophone’ risk occluding. Unpicking “globalized, Anglophone uniformity”¹⁴ also involves unpicking an understanding of the anglophone, francophone or lusophone worlds as homogenous or distinct blocs. If we are looking for ‘francophone’ or ‘lusophone’ space then perhaps it is more accurate to say – because individuals often speak more than one language, and because of translation, and because of political choice or obligation – those spaces are variegated, mottled and overlapping in and beyond the topographical territories of France, Portugal and their former empires. Françoise Lionnet emphasizes the spatial dimension implicit in her idea of the “transcolonial.”¹⁵ That dimension, then, exists at multiple scales.

The point is not just to homogenize histories of colonialism and anti-colonialism into the “fictive unity” that, as Paulo de Medeiros has argued, often works to eclipse thinking and writing in less dominant languages, such as Portuguese. Indeed, there is no point suggesting that, for example, Portuguese writers played a dominant a role in non-mainly Portuguese publications such as *Présence Africaine*. There were, and still are, hierarchies of power in terms of which languages receive attention as universal, connected not least with commercial logics of translation. Medeiros may be overstating his case when he writes that “writing in Portuguese, then, is, in a sense, a practice of invisibility”¹⁶ but his basic point

¹³ Harrison, ‘Life on the Second Floor’, p.341.

¹⁴ Forsdick and Murphy, eds., *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, p.14.

¹⁵ Françoise Lionnet, ‘Transnationalism, Postcolonialism or Transcolonialism? Reflections on Los Angeles, Geography, and the Uses of Theory’, *Emergences: Journal for the Study of Media & Composite Cultures*, 10:1 (2000), 25-35, p.31.

¹⁶ Paulo de Medeiros, ‘Beyond the looking glass of empire: the colonization of Portuguese literature’ in Michael Thomas Carroll, ed., *No Small World: visions and revisions of world literature* (Urbana, IL, National Council of Teachers of English, 1996), pp.43-57, p.54.

stands. As well as being wary of fictive unities, however, it is necessary to be aware of colonial fictions of separation. The connective and multilingual nature of *anti*-colonialism speaks to the connective and multi-lingual nature of colonialism itself. Fernando Coronil's argument that challenging Orientalism "requires that Occidentalism be unsettled"¹⁷ informs my suggestion here. Part of what Coronil means by "Occidentalism," are representational practices that "separate the world's components into bounded units" and "disaggregate their relational histories."¹⁸ This, Coronil suggests, was a colonial manoeuvre. Along with the many writers I discussed in the last chapter, *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* are themselves in form and content critiques of what Coronil later called "Occidentalism."

Colonialism itself was connective. This reality is particularly stark in the Portuguese case because of Portugal's obviously bifurcated status as an imperial country and as peripheral in the European system. The very poverty of the Portuguese economy meant that the financing of the Portuguese imperial project was often not Portuguese – rather, it happened "por delegação,"¹⁹ as Boaventura de Sousa Santos puts it, often to British and French private companies. The conclusion that we should draw from this is not that Portuguese colonialism was a particularly weak version of a stronger British and French state colonialism. Rather, the Portuguese case explodes myths of hermetically national imperial projects. Colonial projects were always an alliance between states and private finance from many different countries. Walter Rodney illustrates this multinational capitalism in Africa through the example of the British United Africa Company, which was itself owned by the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate Unilever, and in turn owned companies in Portugal and France's colonies.²⁰

¹⁷ Fernando Coronil, 'Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories', *Cultural Anthropology*, 11.1 (1966), 51-87, p.57.

¹⁸ Coronil, 'Beyond Occidentalism', p.57.

¹⁹ "By delegation."

²⁰ Rodney, pp.155-7.

That is, state-backed projections of ‘national’ colonial projects falsely nationalized what was often a multinational project.

We can see this fiction of separation at work in a letter Salazar wrote in 1961 to the German defence minister Franz Josef Strauss. Strauss had written to express his concerns about the developing situation in Angola, where the armed struggle broke out that year. Portugal was “um aliado de alto valor”²¹ Strauss wrote, and in a spirit of “auténtica solidariedade”²² he wondered if the Portuguese government, given the French failures in Algeria, might want to consider what he called a “solution along the lines of the British model?” In his reply, Salazar rejected Strauss’ suggestion that a comparative optic was appropriate. It was a mistake to think, Salazar wrote, that “não há diferença entre os territórios de Angola e Mozambique e os restantes territórios coloniais de África.”²³ Rather, in the Portuguese African colonies “a vida, a instalação dos colonos, as relações entre as raças, tudo é diferente do que se verifica nos outros territórios.”²⁴ Furthermore, Salazar continued, the uprisings in Angola did not have much support amongst the black or white populations in the country. In fact, most desired to continue to be part of the single sovereignty of the Portuguese nation. This, after all, Salazar noted, had been the situation for many centuries.

Salazar, then, wanted to assert the incommensurability between one European colonial project in Africa and another. And yet the very fact of the letter, of the system of inter-NATO “solidarity” itself belies this separation. The heavy arsenal, including Napalm bombs, that the Portuguese dropped on Angola that year were supplied by NATO. In the

²¹ “A highly valued ally.” Letter from Strauss to Salazar, 27 June 1961, Arquivo Salazar, Torre do Tombo, PT/TT/AOS/C/3/0001/00013.

²² “Authentic solidarity.” Letter, 27 June 1961.

²³ “There are no differences between the territories of Angola and Mozambique and the other colonial territories of Africa.” Letter from Salazar to Strauss, 13 July 1961. Arquivo Salazar, Torre do Tombo, PT/TT/AOS/C/3/0001/00013.

²⁴ “Life, the mode of colonial settlement, race relations, everything is different from in the other territories.” Letter, 13 July 1961.

British parliament, a few days before Strauss' letter, the British Labour Party member, anti-colonialist and contributor to *Présence Africaine* Fenner Brockway stood up to denounce the British export of arms to Portugal. Harold Macmillan stood his ground in response. As a NATO ally, Macmillan insisted, Portugal was entitled to "certain large deliveries of equipment."²⁵ Macmillan's words demonstrate the enmeshment of European colonial projects and remind us of the need to take seriously the articulations and disarticulations of state expansionist projects with multinational private finance. We certainly cannot account for ongoing legacies and presents of colonialism without stressing this alliance. The "lateral and associative"²⁶ literary work undertaken by journals such as *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* were informed by this very understanding: as Cheikh Anta Diop observed in 1955, "les puissances colonisatrices se sont liguées contre nous."²⁷

The reality that colonial histories were overlapping rather than distinct complicates the central concern against which lusophone and francophone postcolonial studies have developed: that anglophone theory does not quite apply to French or Portuguese empires. In the context of this interlaced, comparative and translated colonialism, what is the place of language-specific postcolonial studies? There is clearly a risk that spatially and linguistically separating histories of colonialism and anti-colonialism into 'anglophone,' 'lusophone,' 'francophone' occludes the broader logics of European colonialism, especially in Africa, of which Portuguese, French and British colonialism were only parts. Moreover, a purely French-language or purely Portuguese-language postcolonial studies could not capture French or Portuguese colonial histories either. Nor – and this is important – can a purely English-language postcolonial studies capture the whole of British colonialism.

²⁵ Brockway, Fenner et al, 'Portugal (Supply of Arms) [Parliamentary Transcript]', *Hansard*, 4 July 1961, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1961/jul/04/portugal-supply-of-arms> [accessed 25 June 2018].

²⁶ Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial*, p.18.

²⁷ "The colonial powers are in league against us." Cheikh Anta Diop, 'Alerte sous les Tropiques', *Présence Africaine*, 5 (1955), 8-33, p.3.

But it is not just a case of putting anglophone, lusophone and francophone into a comparative relationship; it is, to reorientate Nicholas Brown's point regarding Africa-Europe, about reconstellating them so that none looks the same.²⁸ One of the logics of the imperial nation-state practice was to homogenize and monolingualize 'national' and 'imperial' spaces, but this was always an ongoing and failed process. To overlook writers' attempts to think past these homogenizing attempts would be to overlook a major part of their anti-colonial practices of reading and writing. Multilingualism itself was a target of imperialism. The lateral and associative work I have described, as well as the "insurgent geographies of connection"²⁹ and translation forged by writers and editors in anti-colonial contexts were cracks in the imperial edifice that played a part in bringing it down. As Brent Hayes Edwards suggestively puts it, discussing translation between French and English in the interwar period in journals such as *La Revue du Monde Noir*: "if translations are in the most basic sense the practice of linguistic connection – if, in other words, translation is one of the ways the 'turbine' of the cultures of black internationalism is lubricated – then it is no coincidence that this situation caused such disproportionate consternation among French and British colonial authorities."³⁰ The PIDE's consternation about *Mensagem's* adoptions and adaptations of negritude³¹ bears this out. Francophone and lusophone postcolonial studies, in refusing to see monolingual English experience as a neutral or centre ground, are well placed to further consider these questions.

The centre of discursive gravity in postcolonial studies has, in fact, shifted to work in 'World Literature,' often couched in terms of a move away from nationalistic historiography, aiming

²⁸ Nick Brown quoted in WReC, p.19.

²⁹ Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p.62.

³⁰ Edwards, *The practice of diaspora*, p.9.

³¹ Secret Report, Arquivo PIDE, PIDE/DGS/SC/SR3529/62/NT2252, p.13.

as Franco Moretti wrote in 2000, “to be a thorn in the side, a permanent intellectual challenge to national literatures.”³² Boehmer asks, “what does it mean in political terms when Anglophone postcolonial writing becomes one of the predominant new areas of interest for world literature?”³³ One cynical answer is to read part of the attachment to World Literature in the anglophone academy as a supremacist reformulating of the paradigm in response to the critique of a monolingual postcolonial studies.

Nevertheless, clearly the category of ‘world’ can be put to different work, can mean different things, can be spoken in different tones and exist in different combinations, as I suggested in Chapter Seven. To generalize, anti-capitalist globalisms are not the same as what Deckard, Graham and Niblett call “the triumphalist discourse of globalization.”³⁴ And for all that Craig Calhoun warns against the type of liberal cosmopolitan world-visions produced out of plane windows,³⁵ it is also untenable, as indeed, anti-colonial histories remind us, only to associate world-visions with privilege.³⁶ But, as Francesca Orsini has argued, the World Literature discourse hides many geographical simplifications.³⁷ Notwithstanding this, the de-prioritising of the nation as the important unit of analysis in some versions of World Literature work can be suggestive. The Warwick Research

³² Moretti, p.68.

³³ Elleke Boehmer, ‘The World and the Postcolonial’, *European Review*, 22.2 (2014), 299-308, p.304.

³⁴ James Graham, Michael Niblett and Sharae Deckard ‘Postcolonial studies and world literature’, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 48.5 (2012), 465-71, p.466. See also “Cosmopolitanism would seem to mimic capital in seizing for itself the privilege [...] of “knowing no boundaries.” Pheng Cheah, Bruce Robbins, Social Text Collective, ed., *Cosmopolitics: thinking and feeling beyond the nation* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p.248.

³⁵ Craig Calhoun, ‘The class consciousness of frequent travellers: toward a critique of actually existing cosmopolitanism’, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 101.4 (2002), 869-97. As a political theory, cosmopolitanism has often been accused of being the theory of the élite and powerful. Cosmopolitanism assumes a “specious mastery of the whole” [Timothy Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1997), p.27], is “branded for the first world.” [Elleke Boehmer, ‘Global and textual webs in an age of transnational capitalism; or, what isn’t new about Empire’, *Postcolonial Studies*, 7.1 (2004), 11-26, p.12.]

³⁶ Mahmood Mamdani’s work, which is concerned to resist the idea that Africa is local whilst the rest of the world is international or global, reminds us of the normative assumptions that can underpin diagnostics of where or who is ‘more-than-local.’ See Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and subject: contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.60.

³⁷ Orsini, ‘The Multilingual Local’, pp.345-7.

Collective's case for treating as connected and coeval³⁸ the experiences on both sides of the "international division of labour"³⁹ dissolves national borders as the structuring divisions of a comparison in world space. Instead, they call for a structure of comparative methodology tracing the inequalities and unevenness established by a world capitalist system. This is one example of attempting to embed the work of comparison in the "specific temporal and spatial forms, in which social space is lived and experienced,"⁴⁰ something I have discussed and sought to stage in this work. WReC's intervention privileges the novel-form, arguing its "peculiar plasticity and hybridity [...] enables it to incorporate multiple literary levels, genres and modes as well as other non-literary and archaic cultural forms."⁴¹ Clearly these dimensions apply too to the journal form, which stages its own modes of disorientation, telescoping, and accordionising.⁴²

The writers in *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* remind us, though, that there are many scales and geographies of lived experience under capitalism. Space is multi-scalar and affiliation can be plural. That is, for many of the writers I have discussed, there was no stark choice to be made between local and global; nation or world; language-community or broader communities. The coexistence, rather than choice, between different scales and dimensions of affiliation recurs in the anti-colonial writing I have discussed. Notably, we might think of Fanon's idea that "c'est au coeur de la conscience nationale que s'élève et se vivifie la conscience internationale"⁴³ or Cabral's statement that "falamos muito de África, mas [...] devemos lembrar-nos de que antes de sermos africanos, somos homens, seres

³⁸ Harootunian also argues that the expansion of capitalism led to "a kind of synchronous classification" that ordered coexisting cultures "diachronically." Harootunian, p.50. See also McClintock, p.359.

³⁹ WReC, *Combined and Uneven Development*, p.10.

⁴⁰ Harootunian, p.52. See also McClintock, p.359.

⁴¹ WReC, *Combined and Uneven Development*, p.16.

⁴² WReC, *Combined and Uneven Development*, p.17.

⁴³ "It is in the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness arises and is invigorated," Frantz Fanon, 'Fondement réciproque de la culture nationale et des luttes de libération', *Présence Africaine*, 24-5 (1959), 82-9, p.89.

humanos, pertencendo ao Mundo inteiro.”⁴⁴ Alda Espírito Santo’s vision of a rooted humanism, Alioune Diop’s tension between nationalism and the world or Mário Pinto de Andrade’s idea of a push and pull between the particular and the general in the African anti-colonial struggle are further examples.⁴⁵ Neil Lazarus gestures to this when he writes “there is no necessary contradiction between the ideas of the ‘universal’ and the ‘local’ or the ‘national,’ but that, on the contrary, there are *only* local universalisms [original emphasis].”⁴⁶ Among other things, postcolonial work in French and Portuguese can bring forward particular traditions of world-thinking in different languages, and further interrogate how the world can be produced at different scales, and how the meaning of its invocation changes in context and combination. Literary texts, put into conversation with theorizations of ‘the world,’ can be part of rethinking what that world consists of, whose it is and at what scale.

But there are many languages beyond French, Portuguese and English and the more difficult task is for language-specific fields to see literary work in different languages as part of a shared endeavour, to maintain an open posture in relation to other languages, rather than become interested in policing their own borders. Notably, as I discussed in Chapter One, Alioune Diop saw the pan-African project as a revolutionary project because of the spatial

⁴⁴ “We talk a lot about Africa but [...] we should remember that before being Africans we are men, human beings, belonging to the whole world.” Cabral, ‘Os Princípios do Partido e a Prática Política’ in *Unidade e Luta I*, p.160. See also his idea of forging a “Homem novo, plenamente consciente dos seus direitos e deveres nacionais, continentais e internacionais.” “A new Man, fully conscious of his national, continental and international rights and obligations.” Cabral, ‘A Arma da Teoria’ in *Unidade e Luta I*, p.199.

⁴⁵ Existing scholarship in political theory dances around this ambivalence, searching for the right formulation to describe the kinds of affiliative commitments and the juxtaposition of communitarian and cosmopolitan strands African and other Third World anti-colonialisms involved. Cemil Aydin considers the coexistence of nationalism with pan-nationalisms a “puzzle.” (Cemil Aydin, ‘Pan-Nationalism of Pan-Islamic, Pan-Asian, and Pan-African Thought’ in John Breuilly, ed., *The Oxford handbook of the history of nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.672-93, p.673) Vijay Prashad describes an “internationalist nationalism” (Prashad, p.12); Glick Schiller suggests pan-Africanisms represent “subaltern and every day forms of cosmopolitanism” in N. G. Schiller, ‘Old baggage and missing luggage: a commentary on Beck and Sznaider’s ‘Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda’’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61 (2010), 413-420, [unpaginated online] doi:[10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01297.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01297.x); Rahul Rao talks about a “space between cosmopolitanism and nationalism.” (Rao, p.8.)

⁴⁶ Neil Lazarus, ‘Cosmopolitanism and the Specificity of the Local in World Literature’, *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 46.1 (2011), 119–37, p.134.

and linguistic revolution it represented to him. Like Mário Pinto de Andrade – who denounced, in French, on the pages of *Présence Africaine*, the idea of a world made up of Portuguese speakers – Alioune Diop imagined a multilingual pan-Africanism, which expressly sought to move past language barriers.

Césaire's poem, 'Addis-Abeba 1963' is dedicated to Diop. The dedication reflects the poem's engagement with Diop's multilingual project, and was published in *Présence Africaine* in 1963.⁴⁷ The title gestures to the establishment of the Organisation for African Unity, that, for all its limitations, Diop later called "LA GRANDE DATE AFRICAINE [original emphasis]."⁴⁸ In Césaire's poem, Addis-Abéba is neither a utopic achievement nor a precise moment in space-time. Rather, it is the stage for questions and whirling experiences, freighted with history, characters, mythology and imagination, neither encapsulated nor answered by its title. Building on the calling-into-question of abstract ways of knowing place that his earlier poems in the journal advance, the text of 'Addis-Abéba 1963' resists the summarial quality of its title. The poem appears to be set in Addis but that place is not hermetic: the scale amplifies and contracts from injera eaters on city streets to distant Kraals, and the poem moves backwards and forwards in time from the Queen of Sheba to the South African singer Miriam Makeba.

⁴⁷ Aimé Césaire, 'Addis-Abeba 1963', *Présence Africaine*, 47 (1963), 173-5. When published in Césaire's collection *Noria* (1976) the poem's title was changed to 'Ethiopie' ("Ethiopia"). The titles of both versions are followed by a subtitular address to Alioune Diop ("à Alioune Diop").

⁴⁸ "THE GREAT AFRICAN DATE." P.A., 'Il y a Un An, Addis-Abéba', *Présence Africaine*, 50 (1963), 3-4, p.3. The Organisation for African Unity, established in Adis Abeba in 1963 as a "response to the aspirations of our peoples for brother-hood and solidarity, in a larger unity transcending ethnic and national differences" (OAU, *Charter*, Adis Abeba, 25 May 1963, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7759-file-oau_charter_1963.pdf [accessed 15 August 2018]) also quickly cemented national boundaries, passing a resolution in 1964 to "respect the frontiers" that were already in place in Africa. (OAU, 'Resolutions adopted by the first ordinary session of the assembly of heads of state and government', Cairo, 17-21 July 1964, https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/9514-1964_ahg_res_1-24_i_e.pdf [accessed 15 August 2018])

The poem is built around an interrogation of space and language. From the beginning of the poem, language itself is strange and does not always make sense, at least from where the poetic voice is standing. The opening lines refer to a “conte byzantine”⁴⁹ written into the landscape itself – again Césaire gives agency to the natural world – in an “alphabet fantastique de l’eucalyptus.”⁵⁰ Often, the poetic voice seems to delight in the incomprehensibility: “Éthiopie | belle comme ton écriture étrange | qui avance dans le mystère telle un arbre | d’épiphytes chargé.”⁵¹ In this phrase, Ethiopia is beautiful, and, in the epiphytes it carries, a symbol of interdependence. At the same time, Ethiopia is an enigma, whose landscape is inscribed by fantastical writing, perhaps a reference to Amharic script, but a “pêle-mêle”⁵² place, unordered, full of different and unfamiliar things. For much of the poem, horrific images and haunting fragments create a sense of unease.

The surreal, free verse lyric is paced by the faint refrain comprised of a series of questions addressed by the poetic voice to the Queen of Sheba about the “l’oiseau Simmorg-Anka.” This bird remains opaque, a hybrid of the Simmorg and the Anka birds of Persian and Arab mythology. The poetic voice asks:

Reine de Saba Reine de Saba
 qu'en dit l'oiseau Simmorg-Anka?
 [...]
 Reine de Saba Reine de Saba
 Serai-je l'oiseau Simmorg-Anka?
 [...]
 Reine du Matin Reine de Saba
 Où vit l'oiseau Simmorg-Anka
 [...]

⁴⁹ “Byzantine tale.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Ethiopia... For Alioune Diop’ in Eshleman and Smith, eds., pp.363-7, p.363. French reference: Césaire, ‘Addis-Abeba 1963’, p.173.

⁵⁰ “The bizarre alphabet of the eucalyptus.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Ethiopia’, p.363. French reference: Césaire, ‘Addis-Abeba 1963’, p.173.

⁵¹ “Ethiopia | beautiful like your strange writing | advancing into the mystery like a tree | loaded with epiphytes.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Ethiopia’, p.363. French reference: Césaire, ‘Addis-Abeba 1963’, p.173.

⁵² “Jumble.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Ethiopia’, p.365. French reference: Césaire, ‘Addis-Abeba 1963’, p.174.

Reine du Midi Reine de Saba
Ci-gît l'oiseau Simmorg-Anka⁵³

These questions conjure the spectre of inaccessible knowledge and epistemologies bound up with the bird. At the same time, the almost-repeated and yet slightly changing questions create a sense of doubt not only about the answers but about whether the questions – deferential, ritualistic, and in some ways incomprehensible – are themselves the right ones.

After roving through a city, the poetic voice eventually finds the bird at its centre. When the bird is found, the tone of the poem changes. The explicitly haunting images of the first half ebb and, for a moment, there is an efflorescence of connection, notably between question and answer (where is the bird – the bird is here). Then, Africa begins to speak, both a euphoric moment and a moment when this sense of connection, of approximation and convergence, threatens to tip over into meaninglessness:

*“... L 'Afrique parlait en une langue sacrée
où le même mot signifiait
couteau des pluies sang de taureau
nerf et tendon du dieu caché”⁵⁴ [original emphasis]*

In the context of a poem largely structured as a quest for special language and knowledge, there is hope and power in the idea of speaking a sacred language. Nevertheless, in these lines, concern tempers the euphoria. Possibilities for expression seem to be threatened, not

⁵³ “Queen of Sheba Queen of Sheba | What says the Simmorg-Anka bird? | [...] | Queen of Sheba Queen of Sheba | Am I to be Simmorg-Anka bird? | [...] | Queen of the Morning Queen of Sheba | Where does the Simmorg-Anka bird live | [...] | Queen of the Noon Queen of Sheba | Here lies the Simmorg-Anka bird” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Ethiopia’, pp.363-5. French reference: Césaire, ‘Addis-Abeba 1963’, pp.173-4.

⁵⁴ “...Africa was speaking a sacred language | in which the same word signified | knife of the rains blood of the bull | nerve and tendon of the hidden god.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Ethiopia’, p.367. French reference: Césaire, ‘Addis-Abeba 1963’, p.175.

amplified, in the way the conjunctions and articulations of the writing recede in the third line, by the idea that one word signifies all these strange and distinct words, with their echoes of empty incantation. The poem ends abruptly with a final line that, whilst flashing up half-suggested associations of interdependence (lichen) and celebration or peace (release of birds), ultimately eludes us: “*lichen profond lâcher d’oiseaux*” [italics in original].⁵⁵ The reduction of plurality and incomprehensibility to radical singularity and then silence is strange and disturbing.

The pan-Africanism of Césaire’s poem revels in fragment, difficulty and polyphony. In as much as the poetic form holds this polyphony loosely together whilst resisting smoothness and transparency, Césaire offers one vision of what a pan-African reading might be. The poem moves between languages and stories, connecting them loosely in a broader whole, but warns of putting them into a singular order. The uncertain path Césaire’s lyric voice walks, surrounded by unfamiliar languages, experiences and knowledge he has not yet attained, proves more appealing than the silence and compressed expression at the end. Césaire’s poem gestures to a connective and comparative mode of moving backwards and forwards between similarity and difference without subsuming difference into singularity. It gestures, then, to lateral and associative method and purpose that the histories of journals such as *Mensagem* and *Présence Africaine* illuminate more broadly. At the same time, Césaire’s poem brings us back to the question of the political and the literary. His text does not conform to the stabilized codes of ‘the political,’ offers no easy prescription or policy within that framework, and yet its critique is illegible without them. It is, after all, ‘Addis-Abéba 1963.’ Like the poem, *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* formally undertake the recursive work of interrogating the connections between culture and politics. Like the poem,

⁵⁵ “Profound lichen release of birds.” Eshleman and Smith, ‘Ethiopia’, p.367. French reference: Césaire, ‘Addis-Abeba 1963’, p.175.

they offer us myriad possibilities for formulating emancipatory readings of colonialism, anti-colonialism and their afterlives. *Présence Africaine* and *Mensagem* attest to the power of aesthetic work to re-organise our understanding of the world. Re-conjugated for our own conjuncture, these journals can continue to disrupt our understandings of the powerful divisions which still configure social reality.

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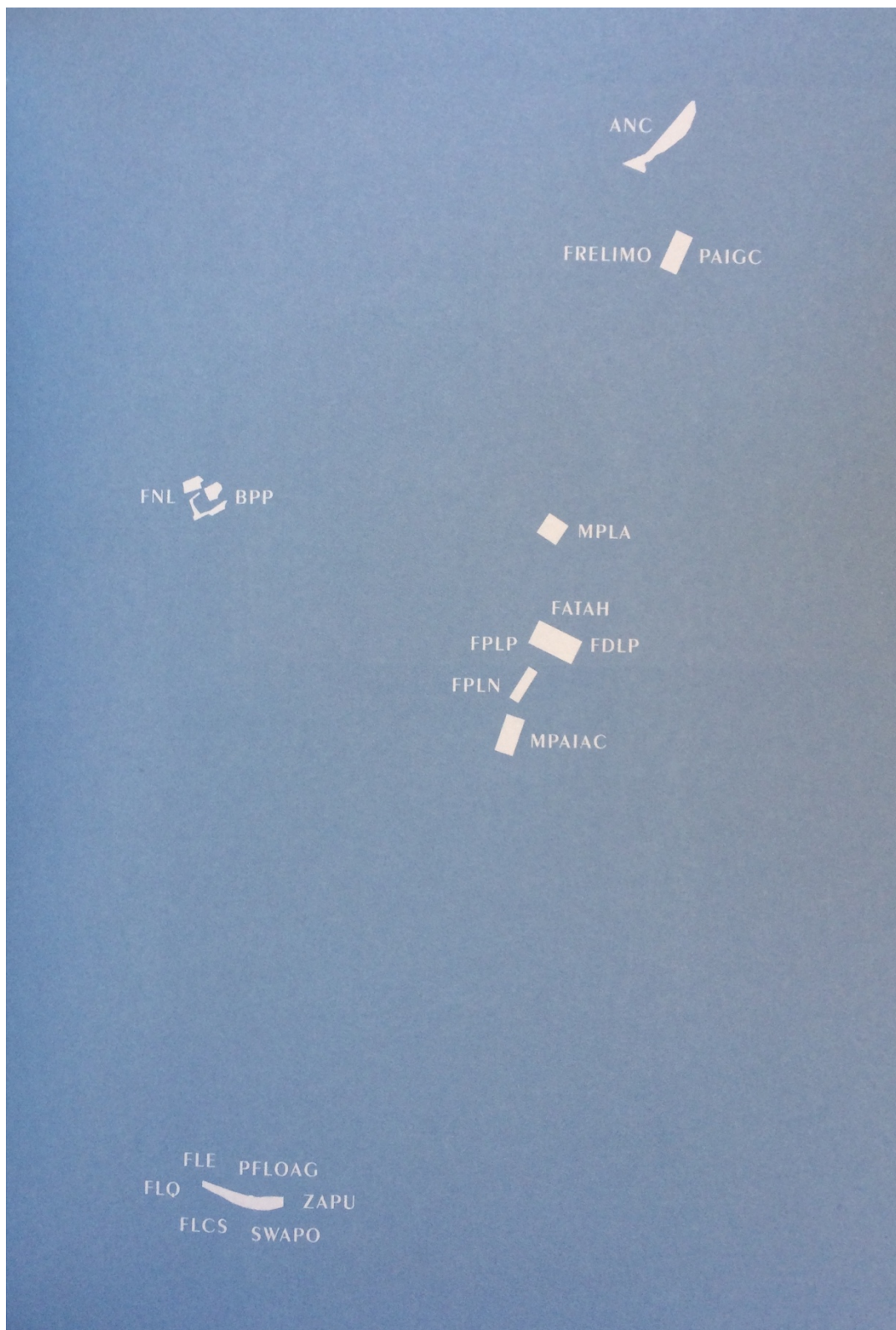
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Appendix One

FIG. 1: THE ARCHIPELAGO



'The Archipelago', Silk Screen print, from the catalogue: Bouchra Khalili (Paris: SAM Arts Projects, 2015), p.53.

FIG. 1.1



The Archipelago is an imagined transposition of these liberation movements' buildings' topographical locations. Bouchra Khalili (Paris: SAM Arts Projects, 2015), p.51.

FIG. 2: PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE STOCKIST PAGE

DÉPOSITAIRES DES ÉDITIONS " PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE "	
PARIS	
Librairie L'Escalier, 12, rue Monsieur-le-Prince, <i>Paris</i> (VI^e). Les Presses Universitaires, 49, boulevard St-Michel, <i>Paris</i> (Ve). Librairie La Hune, 170, boulevard Saint-Germain, <i>Paris</i> (Ve). Librairie « La Joie de Lire », 40, rue Saint-Séverin, <i>Paris</i> (Ve). Librairie Glauser, 105, boulevard Jourdan, <i>Paris</i> (XIV^e). Librairie Montsouris, 30 bis, boulevard Jourdan, <i>Paris</i> (XIV^e). Librairie Monchrestien, 160, rue Saint-Jacques, <i>Paris</i> (Ve).	Librairie Technique, 26, rue Soufflot, <i>Paris</i> (Ve). Librairie Clarté, 168, boulevard Saint-Germain, <i>Paris</i> (VI^e). Librairie « 73 », 73, boulevard St-Michel, <i>Paris</i> (Ve). Librairie Picquart, 59, boulevard Saint-Michel, <i>Paris</i> (Ve). Librairie de l'Etoile, rue Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, <i>Paris</i> (Ve). Librairie de la C.I.V. (C^{ie} Interafricaine de Voyages), 14, avenue Matignon, <i>Paris</i> (VIII^e).
PROVINCE	
Librairie Du Taur, 13, rue du Taur, <i>Toulouse</i>. Librairie Mollat, 15, rue Vital-Carles, <i>Bordeaux</i>. Librairie Laffite, 156, La Canebière, <i>Marseille</i>. Librairie de l'Université, 12-A, rue Nazareth, <i>Aix-en-Provence</i>. Librairie « Terre des Hommes », 4, avenue de Grammont, <i>Tours</i> (Indre-et-Loire). Librairie des Alpes, 1, rue Casimir-Périer, <i>Grenoble</i> (Isère). Librairie du 20^e siècle, 46, rue Ecuyère, <i>Caen</i> (Calvados). Librairie Bernanos, place Brant, <i>Strasbourg</i> (Bas-Rhin). Librairie Le Furet, place du Général de Gaulle, <i>Lille</i>. Librairie Pasteur, 61, cours Pasteur, <i>Bordeaux</i>. Librairie Provence, 31, cours Mirabeau, <i>Aix-en-Provence</i>.	Librairie La Proue, 15, rue Childebert, <i>Lyon</i>. Librairie Nouvelle, 11, rue du Plat, <i>Lyon</i>. Librairie Arthaud, 23, Grande-Rue, <i>Grenoble</i>. Librairie Jean Sébire, 8, place St-Pierre, <i>Caen</i>. Librairie du Musée, 3, bd. Léon Malfreyt, <i>Clermont-Ferrand</i>. Librairie « Les Beaux Livres », 22, rue Foch, <i>Montpellier</i>. Librairie Valat, 9, place Chabanon, <i>Montpellier</i>. Librairie Foch, 11, rue Foch, <i>Montpellier</i>. Librairie Van Moe, 20, rue Thiers, <i>Rouen</i>. Librairie Poiré-Choquet, 7, rue de Noyon, <i>Amiens</i>.
AFRIQUE	
Librairie « PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE », 8 Bis, rue Thiong, <i>Dakar</i>. Librairie Clairafrique, place Protet, <i>Dakar</i>. Librairie « La Maison du Livre », avenue Roume, <i>Dakar</i>. Librairie Populaire du Mali, B.P. 28, <i>Bamako</i> (Rép. du Mali).	University bookshop, <i>Ibadan</i> (Nigéria). Librairie « Au Messager », B.P. 823, <i>Bangui</i> (R.C.A.). Librairie de la Savane, B.P. 149, <i>Bobo Dioulasso</i> (Haute-Volta).

DEPOSITAIRES DES EDITIONS "PRESENCE AFRICAINE"

AFRIQUE (suite)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Librairie générale Mme E. Pociello, B.P. 1 757 et 587, <i>Abidjan</i> (Côte-d'Ivoire).</p> <p>Société congolaise Hachette, B.P. B.P. 919, <i>Brazzaville</i> (Congo).</p> <p>Librairie Régionale, B. P. 69, <i>Dschang</i> (Cameroun).</p> <p>Librairie de l'Institut Politique Congolais - B.P. 2307. <i>Léopoldville 1</i> (Congo).</p> <p>Librairie Hachette du Gabon, B.P. 121, <i>Libreville</i> (Gabon).</p> | <p>Librairie-Papeterie Ferré, B.P. 181, <i>Bamako</i> (Rép. du Mali).</p> <p>Librairie Papeterie Moderne, B.P. 495, <i>Yaoundé</i> (Cameroun).</p> <p>Librairie C. Attié, B.P. 64, <i>Ouagadougou</i> (Haute-Volta).</p> <p>University bookshop, P.O. Box 1, <i>Legon-Accra</i> (Ghana).</p> <p>Librairie E. Mauclet, B.P. 337, <i>Niamey</i> (Niger).</p> |
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AFRIQUE DU NORD

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| <p>Editions Nationales Algériennes, 88 rue Didouche Mourad, <i>Alger</i> (Algérie).</p> <p>Société des Etablissements E. Saliba, 17, avenue de France, <i>Tunis</i> (Tunisie).</p> | <p>Librairie de Provence, 44, avenue Général - d'Amade, <i>Casablanca</i> (Maroc).</p> |
|--|--|

MADAGASCAR

- | | |
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| <p>Librairie et Art Malgache « Ny Nosy », 4, rue Galliéni, <i>Tanana-rive</i>.</p> | <p>Librairie de Madagascar, 38, avenue de l'Indépendance, <i>Tanana-rive</i>.</p> |
|--|---|

ANTILLES

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Librairie de la Renaissance, 9 Bis, rue Barbès, <i>Pointe-à-Pitre</i> (Guadeloupe).</p> <p>Librairie Aux 4 Vents, 47 ter, rue Schoelcher, <i>Pointe-à-Pitre</i> (Guadeloupe).</p> <p>Librairie Universitaire Antillaise, 2, rue de la République, <i>Pointe-à-Pitre</i> (Guadeloupe).</p> <p>Librairie Jasor (Universo), 25, rue Barbès, <i>Pointe-à-Pitre</i> (Guadeloupe).</p> | <p>Librairie Albert Jean Charles, 86-88, rue Victor Sévère, <i>Fort-de-France</i> (Martinique).</p> <p>Librairie Papeterie Moderne IMAN, B.P. 490, angle rue Perrinen et République, <i>Fort-de-France</i>.</p> <p>Librairie Select, rue des Miracles, <i>Port-au-Prince</i> (Haïti).</p> <p>Librairie « A la Caravelle », 36, rue Roux, <i>Port-au-Prince</i> (Haïti).</p> <p>Aux livres pour tous, 62, rue Bonnesfloy, <i>Port-au-Prince</i> (Haïti).</p> |
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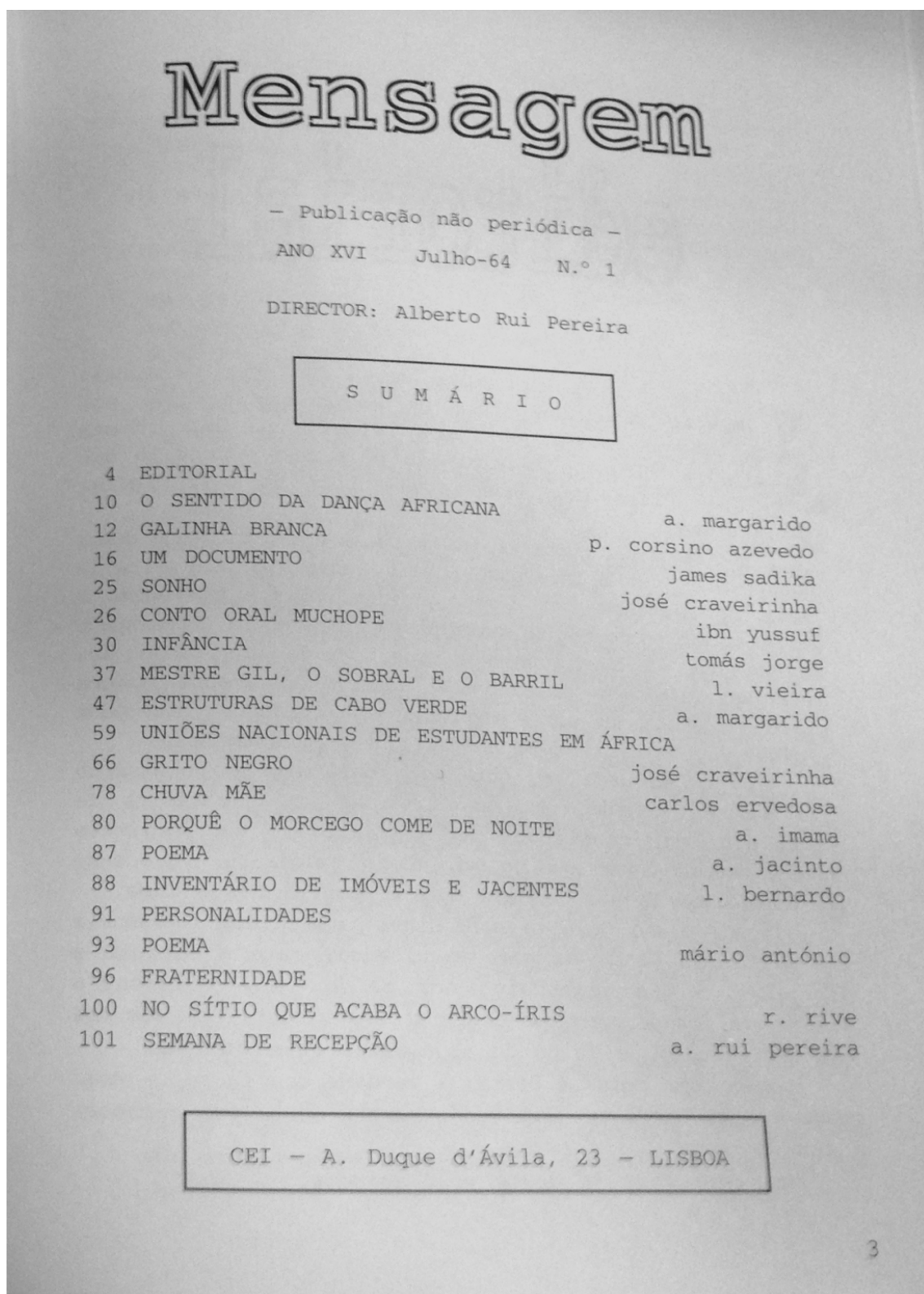
ETRANGER

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Les Amis de « Présence Africaine », 40, rue du Champ de Mars, <i>Bruxelles</i> (Belgique).</p> <p>Librairie Pierre Rieben, 19, Escaliers du Marché, <i>Lausanne</i> (Suisse).</p> | <p>Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 43 Great Russel Street, <i>London</i> W.C.I. (Angleterre).</p> <p>Libreria Internazionale Terzo Mondo, Via Ventiquattro Maggio 47, <i>Rome</i> (Italie).</p> <p>Libreria Paesi Nuovi, 31 Via Aurora, <i>Rome</i> (Italie).</p> |
|--|---|

Directrice-Gérante : C. Mame Yandé DIOP

From: *Présence Africaine*, 60 (1966)

FIG. 3: LAST EDITION OF *MENSAGEM*



July 1964

FIG. 4: SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

Alioune Diop (above) and Richard Wright (below) with translation headsets at the 1956 Premier Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs in Paris.

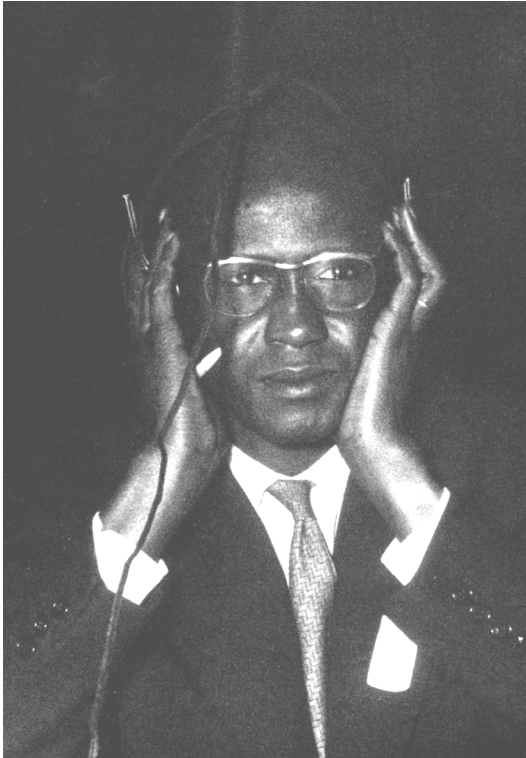


FIG. 5: FIRST EDITION OF THE NEW SERIES OF *PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE*

NOUVELLE SERIE BIMESTRIELLE		N° 1-2
		AVRIL-JUILLET 1955.
Présence Africaine		
Revue Culturelle du Monde Noir		
Sommaire		
<i>Liminaire</i>		5
<i>Foreword</i>		8
S. ABESSOLO	<i>Emprise de la religion sur le Noir</i>	11
A. ADANDE	<i>Fonctions et significations des masques en Afrique Noire</i>	24
H.U. BEIER	<i>The position of Yoruba women</i>	39
SYLLA ASSANE	<i>Une République Africaine au XIX^e siècle</i>	47
A.L. DUMAINE	<i>La signification réelle du second plan d'équipement et de modernisation des T. O. M</i>	66
B. DAVIDSON	<i>Le Congo Belge au carrefour de son destin</i>	94
 Poèmes inédits		
NICOLAS GUILLEN	<i>Mau-Mau (traduction française)</i>	109
—	<i>Mau-Mau (traduction anglaise)</i>	111
—	<i>Réponse à Depestre, poète haïtien (Eléments d'un art poétique)</i>	113
AIMÉ CÉSAIRE	<i>Va-t-en chien des nuits</i>	116
—	<i>Des crocs</i>	117
—	<i>Statue de Lafcadio Hearn</i>	118
—	<i>Faveur des sèves</i>	119
—	<i>Pour un gréviste assassiné</i>	120

CYPRIEN MEDEDJI	<i>A Anoma</i>	122
NYUNAÏ	<i>Les liens du passé</i>	123
—	<i>L'essor</i>	124
EZA BOTO	<i>Tanga (from « Cruel Town »)</i>	126

CHRONIQUES

A. B	<i>Afrique Noire, littérature rose</i>	133
BUANGA FELE	<i>Massacres à Sao Tomé</i>	146
G. ROUGET	<i>La Musique</i>	153

NOTES

Cinéma, par IJDEDEM C. — Les Livres, par BUANGA FELE et NYUNAÏ. —
 Revue des Revues, par S. KUO, K. PAULIN JOACHIM, NYUNAÏ.
 Proposition sur le folklore.



**FIG. 6: THE 1956 PREMIER CONGRES DES ÉCRIVAINS ET ARTISTES NOIRS IN
PARIS**



The only woman, Clara Perez, the wife of Jean Price-Mars, sits front and centre.

Appendix Two

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1856		<i>A Aurora</i> founded (Luanda, Angola).		
1881		<i>Revista Africana</i> (Mozambique).		
1884-5				
1900	First Pan-African conference.			

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1927		<i>La voix des nègres</i> founded (Paris). <i>La Race Nègre</i> founded (Paris, France).		
1931		<i>La Revue du Monde Noir</i> founded (Paris).		
1932		<i>Légitime Défense</i> founded (Paris).		
1934		<i>L'Étudiant Noir</i> founded (Paris).		
1936		<i>Claridade</i> founded (São Vicente, Cape Verde).		
1939	Publication of <i>Cahier d'un retour au pays natal</i> by Aimé Césaire.			

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1941	Atlantic Charter, stipulating self-determination, only applies to Europe.	<i>Itinerário</i> founded (Lourenço Marques, Mozambique).		
1942	Publication of <i>Ilha de Nome Santo</i> by Francisco José Tenreiro.	<i>Tropiques</i> founded (Fort-de-France, Martinique).		
1943		<i>Focus</i> founded (Kingston, Jamaica).		
1944	Brazzaville Conference.	<i>Certeza</i> founded (Cape Verde).	Foundation of the <i>Casas dos Estudantes do Império</i> in Lisbon and Coimbra.	
1945	Surkano declares independent Indonesian republic.	<i>Cultura I</i> founded (Luanda).		
1946		<i>Meridiano</i> founded (Coimbra, Portugal).		

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1947	Indian independence.	<i>Présence Africaine</i> founded (Paris).		<i>Présence Africaine</i> founded (Paris).
1948	<i>Vamos Descobrir Angola</i> movement in Luanda.	<i>Mensagem</i> founded (Lisbon, Portugal).	<i>Mensagem</i> founded (Lisbon, Portugal).	
1949	French clamp down on nationalists and trade unionists in Africa.			
1950		<i>Momento</i> founded (Coimbra, Portugal).		
1951		<i>Mensagem</i> founded (Luanda). <i>Drum</i> (Johannesburg, South Africa).	<i>Poesia em Moçambique</i> supplement published in <i>Mensagem</i> . <i>Centro de Estudos Africanos</i> founded.	

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1952		<i>Msalho</i> founded (Lourenço Marques).	First administrative commission established at <i>Mensagem</i> . Journal suspended.	
1953	Maunau begins in Kenya. Batepá massacre in São Tomé.	<i>Bingo</i> founded (Dakar, Senegal).	<i>Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa</i> , ed. Mário Pinto de Andrade and Francisco Tenreiro published.	(N.14) DES ÉTUDIANTS D'AFRIQUE PORTUGUAISE, 'Situation des étudiants noirs dans le monde.'
1954	Defeat of French at Dien-Bien-Phu (Indochina). Algerian war of independence begins.			
1955	Bandung Conference.			(n.s. N.1) New series and editorial board. Buanga Fele [Pseudonym Mário Pinto de Andrade], 'Massacres à São Tomé,' (n.s. N.3)

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1959	Pidgiguiti Massacre in Guinea-Bissau.		Mário Pinto de Andrade, ed., <i>Antologia da Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa</i> (Paris: P.J.Oswald)	<i>Deuxième Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs</i> (Rome). (N.27-8), V. da Cruz, 'Des responsabilités de l'intellectuel noir.'
1960	UN resolution on the rights of colonized peoples. Mass independences of French and British African colonies. 'Mensagem ao Povo português' disseminated in Portugal.	<i>Transition</i> founded (Kampala, Uganda).	<i>Poetas de Moçambique</i> supplement published.	
1961	Sierra Leone and Tanganyika independence.		Administrative commission re-established.	

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
	Patrice Lumumba assassinated. Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade.			
	Publication of Frantz Fanon's <i>Les Damnés de la Terre</i> . Armed struggle begins in Angola.			
1962	Algerian independence. Mandela imprisoned. FRELIMO founded.		Raids at the Lisbon <i>Casa. Poetas Angolanos</i> supplement published. <i>Poetas de Moçambique</i> supplement published.	(N.41) Mário Andrade, 'Littérature et nationalisme en Angola.' Agostinho Neto, 'Aspiration.' Mario Antonio Fernandes de Oliveira, 'L'Amour et L'Avenir.' (N.42) Mario Andrade, 'Le nationalisme angolais.'

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
				Marcelino Dos Santos, 'Déclaration de principe de la Conférence des Organisations nationalistes des colonies portugaises (C.O.N.C.P.) adressée au Comité spécial de l'O.N.U. pour les territoires administrés par le Portugal.' [No named author], 'Agostinho Neto et la police de sécurité portugaise.' Castro Soromenho, 'Jinga, reine de Ngola et de Matamba.'
1963	Kenyan independence. Foundation of the OAU. Beginning of the armed struggle in Guinea-Bissau.	<i>Abbia</i> founded (Cameroon). <i>Awja</i> founded (Senegal).	<i>Poetas de S. Tomé e Príncipe</i> Casa funding cut.	(N.48) Eduardo Mondlane, 'La lutte pour l'Indépendance au Mozambique.'

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1964	Beginning of the Mozambican War of Independence. OAU resolution to respect existing state borders in Africa.		Last edition of <i>Mensagem</i> .	
1965	Mobutu assumes power. Che Guevara arrives in Dar-Es-Salaam.		Lisbon <i>Casa</i> closed.	(N.55) Alfredo Margarido 'Processus de domination fondant un empire: Cas des Lunda.'
1966	1966 Coup in Ghana overthrows Nkrumah. Tricontinental Conference. <i>Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres</i> in Dakar.	<i>Souffles</i> launched (Rabat, Morocco).		(N.57) <i>Nouvelle Somme de Poesie du Monde Noir</i> Terencio Anahory, 'Meia Noite.' Mario De Andrade, 'Conção de Sabalu.' Mario Antonio, 'Poema', 'Luanda 53.' Antonio Cardoso, 'Um dia.' José Craveirinha, 'Poema "Africa,"' 'Poema

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
				Manifesto', 'Poema do futuro Cidadão', 'Poema "Ao meu Pai', 'Mamana saquina.' Viriato Cruz, 'So Santo.' Mario Fonseca, 'Quando a vida nascer.' Antonio Jacinto, 'Monangamba.' Virgilio De Lemos, 'A tortura da Estátua', 'Augustia', 'Teus blocos de gelo, Europa!', 'Terceiro poema do guerreiro shangane que ha em mim', 'Segundo poema do guerreiro shangane que ha em mim.' Manuela Margarido, 'Socope', 'Vos que ocupaís a nossa terra.'

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
				Gabriel Mariano, ‘Galo velho’, ‘João cabafume’, ‘Cantiga da Minha Ilha.’ Rui Nogar, ‘Enigma N.2’, ‘Certidão urbana psíquico’, ‘Poesia guerreiro involuntário.’ Alda do Espírito Santo, ‘ No mesmo lado da canoa’, ‘Descendo o meu bairro’, ‘Avo Mariana’, ‘Onde estão os homens caçados neste vento de locoura’, ‘Angolares’, ‘Em torno da minha Baía’, ‘Là no Água grande.’ Marcelino Dos Santos, ‘Xangana, filho pobre aqui nascemos.’ Onesimo Da Silveira, ‘Lema’, ‘Hora grande 3.’ ‘Hora grande 1’

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1967	Biafran war begins.			Noémia de Sousa, 'Poema da infância distante', 'Se me quiseres conhecer', 'Sangue Negro', 'Nas matas.' M. Gowenha Valente, 'Macaíça', 'O mineiro sobrevivente.' Luandino Vieira, 'Buganvilla', 'Girassóis', 'Natal.'
1968	Cultural Congress in Havana.		Mario de Andrade, <i>La poesie africaine d'expression portugaise</i> (Paris, P.J. Oswald).	(N.65) Mario de Andrade et al., 'Palabres. Réflexions autour du Congrès Culturel de la Havana). Mario de Andrade, 'La poésie africaine d'expression

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
				portugaise: évolution et tendances actuelles.’ Oswaldo Alcantara, ‘Ressac.’ Fernando Costa Andrade, ‘Quatrième poème d’un chant d’accusation.’ José Craveirinha, ‘Le cri nègre.’ Antonio Jacinto, ‘Poème d’amour.’ Agostinho Neto, ‘Levéé des couleurs.’ Rui de Noronha, ‘Surge et ambula.’ Tomas Medeiros, ‘Socopé por Nicholas Guillén.’ Onesimo Da Silveira, ‘Un poème différent.’ Francisco José Tenreiro, ‘Nègre du monde entier.’

Date	Wider political and cultural contexts	Journal histories	Notable events at <i>Mensagem</i>	Notable events and Portuguese-language material in <i>Présence Africaine</i>
1969	Pan-African Festival of Algiers			(N.67) Mario Andrade, 'In Memoriam. (Évocation de Castro Soromenho)'
1973	Amílcar Cabral assassinated			(N.68) Onesimo Da Silva, 'Prise de conscience dans la littérature du Cap-Vert.'
1974	Carnation revolution in Portugal. Guinea Bissauan independence.			(N.86) Mario Andrade, 'Amílcar Cabral, profil d'un révolutionnaire africain.'
1975	Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Cape Verde independence			