'Vivências Partilhadas': Finding Common Ground in the Short Stories of Three Goan Women Writers[1]

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Abstract

Reference books such as Aleixo Costa's *Literatura Goesa: Apontamentos Bibliográficos* [Goan Literature: Bibliographical Notes] (1967) and Vimala Devi and Manuel de Seabra's *Literatura Indo-Portuguesa* [Indo-Portuguese Literature] (1971) show that there were relatively few women publishing poetry and fiction in Goa, a Portuguese colony from 1510 until its union with India in 1961. This article focuses on three Goan women writers who were successful in publishing their short stories in newspapers, and later in collections: *Monção* [Monsoon] (1963) by Vimala Devi, *Tales of Goa* (1991) by Berta de Menezes Braganza and *Vivências Partilhadas* [Shared Experiences] (2006) by Maria Elsa da Rocha. Each of the women writes with a different agenda, but all of them portray colonial Goa with a critical eye and sensitivity to the lives of women, and the most wretched members of society.

Keywords: Goan literature, short stories, women's writing, castes, inequality

Like its delicious, multi-layered, traditional dessert *bebinca*, Goan society in the middle of the twentieth century was rigidly structured in strata or segments.[2] Just as there is no overlap between each coconut-sponge layer of the cake, there could be no intimacy between members of different classes and castes. People were classified, and identified themselves, as members of particular communities defined by religion (Catholic, Hindu, Muslim, other), by caste (*sudra, Chardó, Brahmin*, in ascending order of status), by whether or not they had Portuguese forebears, not to mention by their gender.[3] All of these categories

determined their access to education, certain professions, a good marriage and the acquisition of wealth.

This was a society of *vivência* [living alongside], rather than *convivência* [sharing experiences], and this formal and heavily ritualised interaction was divisive and oppressive, especially for those who transgressed. The stories analysed in this article show how rigid social structures punish and crush the most vulnerable; the writers instead contrive encounters that cross boundaries of all types in order to encourage tolerance and respect. As Cielo G. Festino points out, '*Vivências Partilhadas*', the title of one of the short-story collections I discuss below and use in my own title, 'might be translated as "Shared Experiences", "Shared Times" or "Shared Lives". The connotations of the title, therefore, already imply that as Bhabha […] points out it is in the in-between spaces of a culture that social differences are negotiated' (2017: 63). The three women writers all present a stratified society in need of change, and they point out ways in which this can be achieved.

The centuries-long presence of the Portuguese in Goa created a society significantly different to that of the surrounding territory. According to historian Fatima da Silva Gracias, 'Portuguese rule made a difference on the status of women in Goa', granting them certain rights 'before their counterparts elsewhere in India' (eg. rights to property, the abolition of cultural practices such as *sati* and polygamy and, later, divorce) (1996: 143). Christian women were the first to benefit from these changes, but 'by the end of the nineteenth century, Hindu women were permitted to opt out of their Hindu law and seek justice under Portuguese law' (Gracias 1996: 143). Nonetheless, patriarchal attitudes persisted, especially in rural areas, and Gracias concludes her study with the damning conclusion that '[w]omen are still held back by the forces of poverty, history, customs and traditions' (1996: 149). The three women writers featured in this article all focus on the injustices faced by women, many in a

rural setting, in mid-twentieth century Goa, before and after Portuguese colonial rule ended (December 1961) and absorption into India as a state in its own right.

There is in fact very little Goan literature in Portuguese, in comparison to Goan literature produced in English,[4] or literature in Portuguese from the African former colonies and its brief heyday was between the late nineteenth century and the end of Portuguese rule in 1961.[5] This is largely due to the fact that Portuguese was the language of the wealthy, educated, Catholic elite, and literature written during the colonial period tended to be written by and for that small but powerful sector of society. Although the producers were limited in number (especially in a society that prized linguistic purity), there was potentially a greater audience than might be expected. After 1961, though, Portuguese, the language of the elites and the colonisers, became widely neglected in favour of Marathi, English and Konkani.

Literary histories of Goa list numerous male poets writing in Portuguese, and some milestone novels - Francisco Luis Gomes's *Os Brahmanes* (1866) [*The Brahmans* (1971)], Francisco João da Costa's *Jacob e Dulce* (serialised in *O Ultramar* 1894-95 and published in book form in 1896) [*Jacob and Dulce* (2004)], Orlando da Costa's *O Signo da Ira* (1962) [*The Sign of Wrath* (2017)] - but very few women writers (Vicente 2017:1).[6] Those women who had the means, and enlightened parents, were able to gain an education and permitted to work in the fields of medicine and education, but marriage and family was the duty of most.[7] The journal *Mascotte*, published in the 1930s, aimed to educate and entertain women and children, and to promote good Catholic values, but it did print letters, articles and fiction submitted by its readers. The easiest way for women to get into print, then, was by publishing short stories in newspapers and magazines like *Mascotte*.[8]

> Edith Melo Furtado describes the pre-Liberation Goan woman writer as
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> [Conforming] to a highly conservative tradition. She is the imitator or the assimilator of Portuguese culture and the cultural sphere in which she was nurtured binds her

> imagination; her literary output gives it validation. Despite the recurring themes in this writing being religion, family and related issues, it was neither entirely hidebound nor limited however. The creativity of Indo–Portuguese women seems to have been coterminous with a pronouncedly pragmatic and didactic literature that encapsulates their preferred themes. (Furtado 2018: np)

The three women writers discussed in this article focus particularly on the experiences of the marginalised members of society, creating a counterhegemonic discourse and giving voice to those usually silenced in official historical accounts. Despite differences in style and focus, they all capture the complexity of Goan society in the late colonial period and illustrate the specific problems experienced by those at the bottom of the social hierarchy. All three came from similar backgrounds, and were brought up in wealthy dominant caste families, as can be deduced from their names: Berta Menezes Bragança (1911-1993), Maria Elsa da Rocha (1924-2006) and Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida (born 1932), who writes under the pseudonym Vimala Devi.[9] They all began their writing careers publishing short stories in newspapers and later collected them in volumes; in Rocha's case decades later.

Their stories are set either explicitly during the colonial period, or in an 'indefinite', almost mythological time 'continuous anywhere between a few decades ago and the medieval centuries', described by poet and critic A.K. Ramanujan as 'Indian Village Time' (in Gopal 2009: 47). The locations range from the wider world (Lisbon, Rio, Bombay), when describing the emigrant experience, and Goa's main towns of Pangim, Margão and Mapusa, to what is by far the most frequent setting: villages or communities dependent on the land or the sea, where everybody from *bhatkar* [semi-feudal rural landlords] to humble *manducar* [peasant worker] or fisherman knows their place, and knows each other, where *consideração*

[personal reputation; literally ‘consideration’] is paramount, and everyone fears gossip and losing face.

In these short texts, the frequent appearance of strangers, travelling salesmen, students, migrant workers and emigrants on visits home emphasises the narrow horizons of the poorest and most restricted (female) characters, because the former have seen life beyond the row of coconut palms at the edge of the village and therefore gained an aura of exoticism, romance and experience.[10] The *manilheiro* or travelling bangle salesman who goes from wedding to wedding[11] and the peripatetic teacher, doctor and priest (all respected male professions) have the freedom to cross borders unaccompanied. Impoverished Indian migrants desperate for work move into Goa, but Goans migrate further. The limitations of strictly respected tradition, and the lack of change or progress - what Paul Castro refers to as ‘infrastructural backwardness’ (2009: 50) - are themes which drive many of the stories, yet nostalgia for a simpler, rural, more rigidly-structured era is also present. Direct criticism of the colonial system is easily identified in Bragança and Rocha, but is not so explicit in Devi, maybe because she published her work in Portugal.

Although there are similarities, each woman was writing with a different agenda and for a slightly different audience. Berta Menezes Bragança was a teacher, a journalist and a freedom fighter: a committed supporter of the resistance movement against the Portuguese, and a founding member of the Goan Congress Committee, which supported union with India. She assisted her father, the writer Luís de Menezes Bragança and her uncle, Tristão Bragança de Cunha, in their campaigns for Goan independence, and was forced to flee to India in 1950.[12] Berta Menezes Bragança co-founded and edited the newspaper *Free Goa*, and travelled to India, Cairo, the USSR and beyond, giving ‘marathon speeches’ to raise international support for her country’s independence struggle (Cruz 1974: 119-23). She refused to write in Portuguese as a political statement.

She published only one book of fiction, *Tales from Goa* (1990) collecting together fifteen short stories that were published in English in the 1930s, in the Indian newspapers *Blitz* and *Bombay Chronicle*.[13] The stories are passionately told, highlighting poverty, injustice and cruelty caused by both the colonial system and the caste system, especially as exemplified by the *bhatkars*. The texts can be read as case studies of the lives of the poorest in society, who face 'misfortune in an unbroken continuity' (1990: 86): peasant farmers, illegitimate children, seduced and abandoned non-dominant caste women shunned by society and driven mad. In the face of continuous, increasing abuse, farmers are 'rendered pessimists and fatalists by long generations of exploitation, waiting in suspense, ever suspicious of the worst' (1990: 87). Further targets are family and society pressures on young men to marry the right person, to become a priest or a doctor; further obstacles to happiness are the forces of nature, disease and the evils of alcohol. In most of Bragança's stories, an event in the present (spotting a stranger or someone whose appearance is unusual, finding a letter on a train, witnessing a suicide) is the trigger for the narrator to rewind and explain the cause behind these visible effects usually by telling the life story of the main character. Another plot mechanism takes the form of retrospective justice: the protagonist is haunted by a crime they committed years earlier, revisited by the narrator, and thus punished psychologically.

The thread running through these stories is the individual's happiness and wellbeing thwarted by nature, religion or law, and principally by the colonial legacy, leading, very often, to death. The corruption that Portuguese rule fostered is explicitly described in 'His Neutrality', a story about attempted vote-fixing in municipal elections, and also in 'Victim of Terror', which takes place against the background of the 'rice manifest' scandal, when the police conducted mass arrests on the pretext of investigating rice sale fraud. Yet another, 'Anacleto's Fortune', deals with the moral decline that may accompany improved financial circumstances.. The latter story takes an ironic tone from the beginning, describing 'that

eminent symbol of prosperity', in other words, Anacleto's 'protruding paunch' (1990: 155). It becomes more sarcastic, narrating the effects of economic depression on the 'proudest of the 'noblest' *batkars* [sic]' (1990: 159):

> The old precept that to earn one's living was unbecoming, was replaced by a new one: so long as it was done at a desk in a Government office it was not so […]. Suddenly [every] mind was bent on some miserly official post. Nor was there anything else to aspire [to] for long centuries of colonial bondage... pardon, Portuguese civilization, had made the whole country into one big government office, an insipid, empty, bureaucratic world. (159)[14]

Bragança's stories may be melodramatic and moralistic, but they also capture the desperation of the times, and the author's determination to do something provocative and productive. As Manohar Rai Sar Dessai wrote in his effusive preface to *Tales from Goa*:

> These short stories are slices of life, fresh and raw, bedewed with tears and at times dripping with blood. […] Berta does not paint the golden sunshine of Goa's sandy beaches, nor the magnificence of its churches, nor the jasmin-like dreamy quality of its temples. Her Goa is not the paradise painted in dazzling colours. It is a place where selfishness has transformed man into an animal, and obscurantism clouded his clear vision. She depicts stark truth against the background of ignorance and poverty – the waves of words seething against the hard, naked rocks of reality. (np)

The second writer to be discussed is Maria Elsa da Rocha, who was a primary school teacher all her working life. She was posted to villages all over Goa and as far as Diu (another former Portuguese colony in the North West of India, on the Arabian Sea), and finally retired as headmistress of a school in the capital, Pangim.[15] She published short stories

in the Margão daily newspaper *A Vida* ['Life'] in the mid-1960s and read some of them on the Portuguese 'Renascença' ['Renaissance'] programme broadcast by All India Radio, but the author could only be persuaded to bring them out of the drawer and publish fourteen of them decades later. Her radio shows are remembered fondly by one reviewer of the collection *Vivências Partilhadas* ['Shared Experiences'], published many years later: '[In] Those days, families gobbled their dinner before she came on the air, so that the clank of crockery and cutlery would not mar Profa. Rocha's powerful narration' (Gomes 2008: wp). The stories in *Vivências Partilhadas* (2006) can be read as dramatic scripts, replete with exclamations in Konkani, pauses (ellipses in the text) for suspense and shifts in perspective that would have required the broadcaster (Rocha herself) putting on a different voice. This could be seen as a stylistic defect in her prose and may have provoked the rather unflattering criticism of Rocha in the standard reference work on Goan literature, *A Literatura Indo-Portuguesa*, edited by Manuel de Seabra and his wife Vimala Devi:

> A sua técnica assenta num processo de repetição de associações e emoções criadas vocabularmente com o objectivo de produzir ambientes psicológicos fortemente intensos. E raras vezes se preocupa em contar uma história. Quando o faz [...], as suas soluções recorrem ao anecdótico ou ao trágico lamecha. (1971: 229)
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> [Her technique relies on a process of repeating associations and emotions created through her use of vocabulary, in order to produce a highly intense psychological atmosphere. Rarely does she concern herself with telling a story. And when she does, she ends up with anecdotes or mawkish tragedy].[16]

The focus on atmosphere and repetition may have been seen by Seabra and Devi as defects, but they enhance the oral quality of the texts, many of which, as mentioned above, were performed as radio broadcasts. Rocha was writing at a time of transition, when Goan

identity was struggling to assert itself, leaving the writer 'straddling two periods of the history of Goa, grappling with two cultures, one acquired from her Portuguese upbringing and one brought in by the new Indian culture to which every Goan was exposed' (Furtado 2018: np). This may be the reason for her choice of settings and frequent use of Konkani expressions and syntax as a 'postcolonial manoeuvre' to assert the 'Goanness of the nativised variety of Portuguese used in distinctly Goan contexts' (Furtado 2018: np).

As for her storytelling skills, Rocha herself explains in the Introduction that 'era um hábito familiar partilhar memórias dos mais idosos' ['it was a family custom for the older relatives to share their memories'] (2006: 7).[17] Long before the advent of television and computers, she and her cousins, 'miúdos de palmo e meio' ['two-foot nothing tots'], on visits to her grandparents' house, listened 'bebendo as palavras do narrador, para o meu caso, o meu tio materno, literalmente mesmerizados' ['drinking in the narrator's words, in my case those of my mother's brother, literally mesmerized'], to tales of 'os tempos de antanho' ['long, long ago'] (Rocha 2006: 7). The implication is that she hopes her own stories, finally published in book form, will have the same effect.

The stories she tells, then, are inspired by her family legends, but also by the people she met and anecdotes she heard when she taught and lived in small villages, on her various postings around the territory. They are usually moral tales where the arrogant or foolish are punished, but where the poorest members of society suffer terrible indignities, especially women.[18] As in Bragança's stories, the reader is introduced to characters from all castes, religions and backgrounds such as Raiu, the Hindu jeweller and, Dom Teotónio, the haughty *bhatkar* (in 'Dom Teotónio'), Dr. Josico, who travels the islands on horseback, treating rich and poor alike (in 'Mary de Vitogém' [Mary from Vitogém]), Pulquéria, the market-seller, fraught with worry over her sick son working in Bombay (in 'Nem Só de Pão' [Not by Bread Alone]), and, interestingly, a number of economic migrants *to* rather than *from* Goa: Rucmá,

who gives birth alone in her hut rather than owe anything to her neighbours (in 'Rucmá, a Mulherzinha de Salém' ['Rucmá, the Little Woman from Salém']), Viraj, the eloquent teacher who is betrayed by her dominant caste lover, Sudar, a Marathi teacher more interested in looking at porn magazines than reading letters from his wife back in Bandá (in 'Raio de Castas!' ['Damn Castes!']), and so on. The last two characters show the growing presence in Goa of immigrants from the surrounding Indian states, and the teaching of Marathi rather than Portuguese, or Konkani, in schools. There are moments of terror, of tragedy and hilarity, the humour often created through physical description of the characters and their reactions to events.

The injustices faced are, in the more moralistic stories, of the characters' own creation: disrespect of another's religion, neglect, or lesser offences such as superstition or cowardice. Nonetheless, other characters, particularly women, suffer through no fault of their own but rather the cruel reality of caste division and the ineluctability of abuse by bosses or the sad, hard life of the emigrant workers: 'gente marcada para sofrer' ['people destined to suffer'] (2006: 87) in 'Nem Só de Pão'.

The title, *Vivências Partilhadas* can be taken as an allusion to the oral or written sharing of lived experiences, but also to the different castes, classes and religions living alongside one another. The Portuguese are absent from these stories, apart from a comment in one story about the absurdity of Goan children learning Portuguese history and being obliged to recite statements such as 'Eu amo Portugal porque meus pais são portugueses' (2006: 73) ['I love Portugal because my parents are Portuguese' (2017: 278)] in 'Anassuya, a Salva da Floresta' ['Anassuya, Saved from the Forest']. In the same story, the teacher thinks to himself 'Nada está certo, nada, nesta Goa dominada' ['Nothing's right here. Nothing in this oppressed Goa' (2017: 278)] (2006: 74). The other explicit reference to the Portuguese, in 'Shivá, Brincando…' ['Shiva, at Play'], is the fear of soldiers, searching the countryside for

freedom fighters in the years leading up to the integration of Goa with India.[19] Such allusions clearly identify the Portuguese as aggressive invaders, imposing their culture on the indigenous people, and yet the loving, lingering descriptions of life in Catholic households, imbued with Portuguese customs, language and aspirations, counter this hostile reaction to a certain extent. Nonetheless, it is made very clear that these days are long gone.

The first story in the collection, 'Dom Teotónio', describes a clash of cultures caused by the impatience and arrogance of the eponymous *bhatkar*, his spiteful and intentional pollution of a Hindu household (by sending animal bones to be hidden there) and, in consequence and in revenge, the disruption of his wedding reception. As well as these Goan characters, the plot involves Calpá, Teotónio's foreman, from Daman (the third and last of Portugal's former colonies in India), dignitaries from other parts of India like the King of Sundém, 'com pantufas bordadas a oiro puro, dando uma nota de riqueza e colorido oriental no meio de rigores de preto e branco, de casacas, fraques e jaquetões' (2006: 18) ['wearing slippers embroidered with pure gold, adding a touch of wealth and oriental colour in the midst of the rigorously black and white tailcoats, frock coats and blazers'], and glamorous European ladies, suspicious of the local men. The lavish decorations and excess of food and guests are narrated with gusto and superlatives 'uma rapsódia cacofónica de patos, galinhas e perus' ['a cacaphonic rhapsody of ducks, chickens and turkeys'], 'um regimento de sorveteiras' ['a regiment of ice-cream makers'], 'dois pianos de cauda' ['two grand pianos'] (2006: 18). The reception is interrupted by a large group of local men, Teotónio's 'súbditos' [subjects], in costume, playing drums in honour of the occasion, as tradition dictated. Their celebration becomes invasion as they enter the house and smash the crockery, in defiance of the *bhatkar's* deliberate sacrilege. Despite his 'ancestralidade fidalga' ['noble ancestry'] he is reduced to a 'pinguim estarrecido' ['terrified penguin'] who sits down, defeated, in a chair known by the family as the 'Cadeira de Inquisição' ['Inquisition Chair'] (2006: 23).[20]

The ceremonial party is disrupted, the household invaded, the host and patriarch humiliated, the trappings of wealth and culture destroyed, the reference to the Inquisition a cruel and literal 'turning of the tables' and the pride, dignity, teamwork and strength of the local people show the *bhatkar* that he cannot take liberties with them. This behaviour must surely be an allusion to the rejection of the Portuguese way of life and a lesson about 'vivências partilhadas', about communities living alongside one another in mutual respect.

The final writer to be discussed here is the best known.[21] Born and brought up in Goa, Vimala Devi emigrated to Portugal in 1960, lived in London for some years, and settled in Barcelona. She worked as a translator and broadcaster while she also painted and published poetry and prose. The fifteen texts in her masterpiece *Monção* [Monsoon] were published just two years after the loss of Goa, which had been so painful for Salazar.[22] They are at once foreign to a Portuguese readership, yet contain elements familiar to them: she 'adapt[s] the baggage of [her] cultural heritage and adopt[s] the norms of [the] host communit[y]', as Clive Willis puts it (2000: 61).[23] However, they avoid political references and focus on deeper problems in Goan society relating to tradition, class, caste and religion. Indeed Paul Melo e Castro has described the stories as 'The Last *Snapshots* of Colonial Goa' (emphasis mine) because they portray a variety of characters from all backgrounds, address a wide range of issues and each focus on one family's dilemma, although that is often unresolved (2009).

The crisis moment of decision is forced upon the protagonists, whose happiness is threatened by the forces we have already seen at work in stories by Bragança and Rocha: society pressure, natural forces, cruel fate, some of which are unknown to the characters. The implication is that despite the efforts of characters like the enlightened doctor in 'Os filhos de Job' ['Job's Children' (2016, 165)], despite hope, and the potential that rests in emigrants returning, Goan society has reached a stalemate. Even the poorest children have stopped crying because 'Era inútil' ['it was useless'] (Venus e os seus Braços [Venus and her Arms]

1963: 153). At a symbolic level, weddings are arranged in these stories, indeed they can be long and protracted negotiations that seem more like cattle trading, but no babies are actually born. Towards the end of the story 'O Genro-Comensal' [The Son-in-Law-Partner], Devi seems to be saying that there will be no future if things carry on like this: 'nas casas antigas, de pedra maciça, escurecida pelo tempo, como conventos, as velhas famílias não abdicam das suas prerrogativas, e a vida corre inalterável...' [in the old houses, of solid stone, darkened with time, like convents, the old families refuse to give up their entitlements, and life goes on unalterably…] (1963: 49). The same respect for tradition is shown in 'Dhruva': 'As leis tinham-se cumprido, e tudo decorrera como sempre' (1963: 55) ['the laws had been obeyed and everything had taken place according to tradition' (2016: 178)]; and 'Os Filhos de Job' 'Era assim, sempre fora assim, desde tempos remotos' (1963: 100) ['But that was the way it was, and had been since time immemorial' (2016: 166)].

In 'O Futuro e o Passado' ['The Future and the Past'], a moment of epiphany makes Carlos Siqueira, a Goan emigrant in Rio de Janeiro realise that his motto for 45 years, 'Não podia pôr-se com sentimentalismos... Só o futuro interessava' (1963: 92) ['He had no time for sentimentality. The past was over' (2017: 292)], no longer holds any meaning. He feels alienated from his adopted country, and distant from his homeland: 'De que lhe servia ser rico [...] ser uma pessoa importante, numa terra que não era a sua, onde não havia ninguém com quem tivesse brincado em criança. [...] pela primeira vez, sentiu-se velho' (1963: 94) ['What use was his wealth, what point importance in a land that wasn't his own, with no one there he'd played with as a child? […] For the first time in his life he felt old' (2017: 293)].

The stifling atmosphere of doom and tension in many of Devi's stories recreates monsoon time, when families are forced to stay at home together. During this claustrophobic time, arguments can break out, or long-held grudges flare up into something much more serious. Monsoon can also symbolise cleansing and renewal, of course. Change seems to be

happening offstage, arriving from outside Goa, brought by returning migrants who bring new fashions and customs: 'Eram elegantes. Tinham outras maneiras, usavam muita brilhantina no cabelo' ('Os Filhos de Job', 1963: 103) ['They were stylish. They had a different way about them, wore lots of Brilliantine in their hair'] (2016: 168)]. The older members of society don't trust change, resist 'progress', are suspicious of the young men who have worked in Bombay: 'por mais brilhantina que pusessem no cabelo, não deixavam de ser seus manducares ou filhos de seus manducares' ('Tyâtr', 2003: 82) ['However much Brilliantine they put in their hair, for him they were still his mundkars, or the sons of his mundkars' ('Tyâtr', 2016: 154)] or of 'droguistas enriquecidos que se pavoneiam pela cidade e vão para banhos em Colvá nos seus *chevrolets* reluzentes, novinhos em folha' ['druggists who've made their fortunes and strut round the city and go to the beach in Colvá in their shiny, brand new Chevrolets'] ('O Genro-Comensal', 1963: 49). The younger members of society see emigration as a way out of misery and a stultifying, suffering existence. The educated emigrants, like the young doctor Chandracanta, whose family sends him to Lisbon to study medicine for six years, leaving his new fourteen year old wife behind, returns disheartened to find 'transformadas as suas recordações em conceitos desactualizados, perantes os quais se sentia tão alheio' ('O Regresso', 2003: 137) ['his memories transformed before his eyes into out-of-date concepts with which he felt no connection' ('Returning', 2016: 187)]. Yet Devi does not hide the fact that the emigrant experience is tough and not necessarily rewarding. Financial gain does not circumvent personal loss.

She even includes Portuguese characters in her portrayal of Goan society. In 'Padmini', Captain João Fidalgo meets and falls in love with a Hindu maiden who can, however, never be his due to the barriers of race and religion. There are references to *paclé* [Portuguese men] and it is made very clear that good Goan girls should not dance with such men. Lastly, Devi describes Luisa, a medical student in Lisbon who takes a Goan lover.

Despite their physical intimacy the cultural distance between them is made very clear in the story ‘Fidelidade’ [Fidelity].

All three of these women writers highlight injustice and poverty in their very particular, multicultural and multi-layered society and all of them hint at the reasons behind such problems, with zeal and passion. They capture the sense of depression and frustration of those who are trapped by taboos, as if stuck in a house while the monsoon rages endlessly outside. They show the double bind of emigration: the price of success is the pain of exile. They bring characters from different backgrounds into contact, creating ‘a common ground where divergence and contradiction are not to be avoided but explored’ (Festino 2017: 65). Their portraits of places and people depict multiple facets of Goan identity and undoubtedly beg for respect for the most deprived in society, in the way that across the border Gandhi supported the untouchables. With very different voices, each of these writers recreates a Goa that has since faded into the past, showing a land pulled between two powerful cultural forces: ‘uma Índia que não o é, um Portugal que nunca o foi – porque nunca o poderia ter sido’ [an India it is not, a Portugal it never was] (Portas 2001: 12).

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[2] In the words of Chitrita Banerji, 'Undoubtedly the king of all Goanese desserts is bebinca, a legendary, multi-layered cake, an absolute must at formal banquets and meals. It is the perfect example of two widely disparate culinary imaginations at their creative best,' (2008: 42).

[3] The castes, as known in Goa, resemble, but do not correspond exactly to castes in the rest of India. On class rivalries in the nineteenth century particularly, see Pinto (2007: 45-48).

[4] See the 1983 special issue of the *Journal of South Asian Literature* entitled 'Goan Literature: A Modern Reader', re-published in 2010 as *Pivoting on the Point of Return: Modern Goan Literature*. The editor, Peter

Nazareth, explains in the introduction that the volume was put together from submissions elicited through adverts in the international press and therefore contains several texts from diasporic writers.

[5] Literature was also subject to censorship under the Estado Novo regime.

[6] In an article from 2000 on 'Literatura Feminina Luso-Indiana', Ana Maria Martinho lists the political thinker Propércia Correia Afonso de Figueiredo (1881-1944), travel writer Ezilda Ribeiro de Sousa, poet Clara de Menezes, short story writer Maria Elsa da Rocha, poet Judit Beatriz de Sousa, and poet and short story writer Vimala Devi. Goan women writers who publish in English include poet Eunice de Souza, memoirists Maria Aurora Couto and Imelda Dias, and novelists Margaret Mascarenhas and Sonia Faleiro.

[7] From her archival research Vicente identifies several categories in which women did publish: science (medicine, natural history, geography), travel writing (eg. Ezilda Ribeiro de Sousa), writing for children, domestic science and cookery, Catholicism, history and politics (eg. Propércia Correia Afonso de Figueiredo and Maria das Stuarts Gomes).

[8] Vicente notes that 'women started writing and publishing globally in a significant way when printed reproductive words became a much more easy, cheaper, democratic and multiple process' (2017: 2). See also Pinto (2007) and, on women's and girls' magazines of the 1950s, Edith Melo Furtado (2018).

[9] In Hindi, *Vimala* means 'pure, stainless'. It is one of the names of the goddess Lakshmi. *Devi* means 'goddess'.

[10] Cielo Festino highlights the number of male migrants leaving their wives behind in Devi's collection *Monção* [Monsoon] (2019: np).

[11] Bangles are not just an ornament for brides, but are seen to bring good luck and health to the couple. See Rocha's short story 'O Manilheiro' [The Bangle Seller] (2005: 59-67).

[12] On 30 June 1946, she and her uncle, addressed 'a huge rally' in Margão, appealing to 'the youth of the land' to continue their civil disobedience campaign towards the ultimate goal of 'complete freedom from all foreign yoke, of free Goa in free India!' (Kakodkar,1986: 175).

[13] The volume includes a number of poems, including one, 'A Clarion Call', which is a rousing cry for independence from Portugal, 'the vampire exploiter', who must be expelled (Bragança 1990: 190-93). Not mentioned as an author in the pioneering *A Literatura Indo-Portuguesa* (Devi and Seabra, 1971), her story 'Anacleto's Fortune' was included in 'Goan Literature: A Modern Reader', a special issue of the *Journal of South Asian Literature* (Nazareth 1983: 246-50) and its 2010 reprint, *Pivoting on the Point of Return: Modern Goan Literature* (Nazareth 2010: 339-45). Bragança also published a biography of her father, and *Landmarks in my Time*, a selection of her political writings (1992).

[14] Due to the economic depression, many landowners were forced to work in the Portuguese bureaucracy. This was actually a privilege since only people from the Catholic elite had access to these jobs.

[15] Indeed, Rocha dedicates her collection to the 'Professor de Instrução Primária do então Estado da Índia Portuguesa [...] que [...] deu o seu valioso contributo em prol da Língua Portuguesa, contributo, em minha opinião, totalmente ignorado pelo Governo Português. O Professor Primário goês falava, escrevia e lia o português muito melhor do que alguns dos portugueses nascidos e criados em Portugal' ['Primary School Teacher in what was then the State of Portuguese India, who made their valuable contribution to the Portuguese language, a contribution that was, in my opinion, completely ignored by the Portuguese Government. The Goan Primary School Teacher spoke, wrote and read much better Portuguese than some of the Portuguese born and raised in Portugal'] (2006: 7).

[16] In Chapter XII of vol. I of *A Literatura Indo-Portuguesa*, which describes 'O Conto-Teatro' [Short Stories and Drama] (1971: 217-36), Devi and Seabra devote three pages to Devi's work and international reception (225-27), and two paragraphs to Rocha's earliest stories, published timidly in her local newspaper (228-9). In the accompanying Anthology (vol. II), three stories and poems from all three of Devi's published collections are included (395-420) and only one story by Rocha, 'Shivá, Brincando…' ['Shiva, at Play'] (317-22).

[17] All translations from Portuguese into English are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

[18] Paul Melo e Castro has described her work as focusing on the lives of Goan women '[p]erhaps more than that of any Portuguese-language short story writer of Goa' (2016: 41).

[19] Lambert Mascarenhas' short story 'The Journey' tells the story of Damodar, who flees Goa after becoming involved with the freedom fighters and spreading the word of Indian socialist Ram Manohar Lohia. His actions risk imprisonment, a punishment begun by the Portuguese military in 1954, the year that story is set (1994).

[20] The story is very similar to one by Bragança in *Tales from Goa*, entitled 'Debts were paid', where the action also centres on a wedding celebration that is interrupted.

[21] Devi's works appear in anthologies of Goan literature in English translation such as *Ferry Crossing: Short Stories from Goa* (Shetty 1998), and *Lengthening Shadows*; indeed, the title of the latter is taken from the epigraph of one of her books of poems (itself a reference to and translation of a line by the Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa [Castro 2016: 54]). She is also the subject of three critical articles in the collection of essays *Woven Palms* (Castro 2019).

[22] The second edition of *Monção* (2003) presents the stories in a slightly different order, including three new ones. Now resident in Barcelona, Devi has also published nine books of poetry, the short stories collected in *A Cidade e os Dias* (2008), translations from Portuguese and English into Catalan, and with her husband she edited *A Literatura Indo-Portuguesa* (1973) and a Portuguese-Catalan dictionary.
[23] *Monção* has been translated into Catalan and Esperanto, and various stories have been translated into English.