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Gwyneth Tefft February 25, 2021

Identity and *as Retornadas*: Confronting National Discourse Through Literary Works that Address Portugal's Colonial Past

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Abstract

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This Honors Thesis explores challenges to modern-day Portuguese identity, where I approach Portugal's troubling colonial history through both scholarly and fictional literary sources. The primary focus of this thesis is a literary investigation of fictional works written by a particular group of people: *retornadas.* The *retornados* are the Portuguese settlers who lived in the African colonies and 'returned' to Portugal after the fall of the colonial empire in 1974. From a critical analysis of *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais* (2009), by Isabela Figueiredo, *O Retorno* (2011), by Dulce Maria Cardoso and *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* (2011), by Aida Gomes, this thesis will demonstrate that *retornados* offer a unique and valuable lens through which to examine Portugal's past. A focus on the collective memories of these people, in contrast to an objective historical account, allows for a profound exploration of particular emotions and experiences the *retornados* faced during the colonial era and onward, contributing to an overall understanding of Portuguese national identity. Specifically, female *retornadas* perspectives provide a decisive approach to gendered experiences in the colonies that is attentive to the hardships women faced. These women authors tackle some of the most important themes in recent literary investigation and discourse in Portugal, such as race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy, which are crucial in a comprehensive understanding of identity. *Retornados* simultaneously represent a dark history with colonialism and a rich diversity of thought and culture. Their reputation within society has fluctuated, and while some deem them racist colonial oppressors, others point to them as being victims of prejudices in Portugal. Engaging in these contrasting points of view will provide insight into the most difficult issues of Portugal's past, thus enabling a deeper understanding of the complexities that comprise society today. In this way, literature written by *retornadas* forces Portugal to directly confront its problematic history by exposing memories of a past that has been intentionally repressed and forgotten.

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Introduction

Portugal is a country comprised of diverse cultures and traditions. This vibrancy is visible across all parts of Portuguese life, including food, music, fashion and art. African culture, in particular, is deeply intertwined with Portuguese society. When walking through the rolling streets of Lisbon, Portugal's capital city, one can find restaurants serving cuisine from Angola and Mozambique, offering an assortment of rich flavors such as *Piri-Piri* and classical dishes like *Funge*.[1] An African presence is also seen in popular music, as radio stations blast *kizomba* and *kuduro*, music genres from Angola that emerged in the 1980s. Not only are these types of music well known in Portugal, but they have become global sensations, listened to by people all over the world. Moreover, music from Cape Verde has also gained significant attention globally. Cesária Évora is a Cape Verdean music icon who popularized the genre of *morna,* a style that mixes creole-Portuguese lyrics with slow, rhythmic acoustics. Évora's music is widely listened to across Portugal, earning her the title of the "queen of *morna*."

The saliency of Africa within Portuguese everyday life is undeniable. As a past colonial empire, it is clear that such influences are attributed to Portugal's enduring colonial presence in the continent of Africa. However, less understood by Portuguese society is the significance of their colonial past. For a country that prides itself on its multicultural landscape, how does a history that is deeply intertwined with racism rooted in a conquest for global empire building affect this perception? What does a past of human right abuses and slavery mean for Portuguese identity, especially given the recent nature of such events? How does Portugal's profoundly patriarchal colonial background affect the country's approach to contemporary issues of gender

[1] *Piri-Piri* is a popular chili sauce that originated from Mozambique and is used as a key ingredient in many African dishes. *Funge* is a traditional Angolan porridge dish made from cassava flour. It is typically served as a side accompanying breakfast, lunch and dinner meals.

equality? Addressing these questions about present-day Portugal requires a comprehensive investigation into Portugal's history. For many the past is still an open wound, and a confrontation of racism, slavery and colonialism is difficult and painful.[2] However, directly facing these topics is necessary for a society that still has yet to come to terms with its own Portuguese identity. The only way to truly heal and move forward is through a deep-dive into the past.

The primary focus of such an analysis must consider the significant era of colonialism within Portuguese history. Portugal had the longest enduring colonial empire of any European country, beginning with its forceful seizure of Ceuta, Morocco in 1415, and coming to an end with the formal handover of Macau to the People's Republic of China in 1999 (Jerónimo, "Portuguese Colonialism" 2). Due to its longevity, colonialism has substantial implications for Portuguese society and culture, which have reverberations that continue to shape modern Portugal.

While a historical study of Portuguese colonialism can take various forms and perspectives, in this thesis, I choose to examine Portugal's past through the lens of a particular group of people: the *retornados.*[3] These individuals can be best understood through the unique and valuable experiences of *retornada* women in particular, whose perspectives warrant an important discussion of Portuguese identity. *Retornada* voices are crucial in challenging a national discourse that has historically been written and propagated by men.

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[2] The past has haunting effects on both the Portuguese who lived through the major events of colonialism, the colonial wars and the fall of the colonial empire, as well as future generations of Portuguese citizens, who must deal with the repercussions of such a national legacy.

[3] Portuguese is a gendered language, meaning that nouns, adjectives, pronouns and articles are inflected based on two genders: feminine and masculine. Typically, the masculine gender is used when referring to a group comprised of both men and women (i.e. *os alunos* = the boy and girl students). In this thesis, I use the term *retornado/a* to refer to both the men and women in this group. When I use the term *retornada(s)*, I am specifically discussing a singular woman or group of women.

The *retornados* were the Portuguese settlers who lived in the African colonies of Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe. As defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the term settler refers to someone who settles in a new region or colony. I choose to use this word when describing the *retornados* due to the long-term nature of their experiences in Africa. During the mid-1900s, the Portuguese government sought to promote an expansion into their African territories and as a result of extensive propaganda, a significant number of Portuguese citizens migrated to Africa (Lubkemann, "Race" 79). Consequently, these migrants settled down and established new lives for themselves and their families. When the Portuguese colonial empire came to end in 1974, these individuals left their homes and came to Portugal, a country that was largely unfamiliar to them. While many of these Portuguese settlers fled colonial Africa in fear for their lives due to intensifying violence and the onset of civil wars, others left because of racist sentiments and an extreme rejection of living under the rule of Black people. Regardless of their reason, most of these individuals left Africa hastily and reluctant to leave behind their homelands.

Considering that this group included a diverse mix of races, ethnicities and national backgrounds, an ambiguity exists around who exactly the *retornados* are. In order to understand who these people are, it is crucial to first acknowledge the significance of the label *retornado,* which many from this group do not identify with. By definition, the word *retornado*, which means "returnee", has the connotation of returning to a place from which one has been before. However, only about 60% of *retornados* had been born in Portugal, leaving 40% who would not consider themselves to be "returning" to a familiar country (Lubkemann, "Race" 79). Additionally, people who were placed within this category may not identify with the name *retornado* because it acquired a derogatory connotation, which resulted in many attempting to

distance themselves from this label. Yet the name prevailed, and even to this day, these Portuguese settlers who left Africa are widely identified as *retornados.* In this thesis, I refer to these people as *retornados* not because I believe it to be an accurate representation of these individuals, but because it has been the predominating label across time.

It is the stories of the *retornados* that I will explore in this thesis to gain a deeper understanding of Portuguese history. Their experiences will offer compelling insight into Portuguese colonialism, which I will examine in order to demonstrate how and why this era has affected modern Portuguese identity, memories and culture.

I. Methodology

In this thesis, I will be analyzing a variety of literature written by and about the *retornados* in order to gain a deeper understanding about key themes that are deeply entrenched in Portuguese culture. This literary investigation will be divided into three chapters:

i. In my first chapter, I will examine various scholarly articles that deal with key topics such as Portuguese colonialism, race, the colonial wars and decolonization. Many of these works are written by scholars renowned in their fields, including Patrick Chabal, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Stephen Lubkemann and Norrie Macqueen. It is important to note that this field of research has been dominated by male scholars, and while I do rely on a number of these men's work in my historical analysis, I also attempt to provide more female perspectives throughout my thesis. The works of female scholars such as Ana Paula Ferreira, Isabel Gould, Mariana Candido and Elsa Peralta, are equally, if not more important to a discussion of Portugal's past. This chapter will demonstrate that these women scholars are crucial to an understanding of Portugal's problematic history and to a conception of national identity. Female historians offer unique and nuanced perspectives that their male counterparts do not, their works focusing on a range of

themes from women in the colonies to race and identity issues. An analysis of these secondary sources is important to my thesis because it helps set a historical background that will allow me to discuss issues pertinent to a broader discussion of the *retornados.* Additionally, these articles provide insight into how scholars have previously approached themes of Portuguese colonialism. Such topics have already received a significant amount of interest within the academic community from scholars both within Portugal and in other nations. In this chapter, I will summarize key findings within the literature, which are helpful in providing a backdrop for my following two chapters.

ii. Chapter two of my thesis discusses lingering repercussions of Portugal's colonial past, focusing on themes and attitudes that have characterized Portuguese identity since the fall of the empire. Specifically, this chapter introduces the group of individuals who are at the heart of my thesis: the *retornados*. I draw from prior research on the *retornados*, answering questions about who these individuals are, what hardships they faced 'returning' to Portugal and challenges to their identity. Through an analysis of the *retornados*, I will demonstrate that Portugal's dark colonial history is still very much alive in present day, posing significant questions to a national identity. It is also in this chapter, where I initiate a conversation about the three *retornada* authors whose works I address in my third chapter. It is important to recognize how the authors Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso and Aida Gomes fit into the broader context of Portuguese history as *retornadas* in order to appreciate the significance of their literary works. As *retornadas*, all three of these female authors share valuable perspectives on Portuguese women growing up in the African colonies and their transition to a new life in Portugal. These women were all born in the 1960s and spent their childhoods growing up in Portuguese African territories. Not only are Figueiredo, Cardoso, and Gomes all from the same generation, but they

also published these particular works around the same time, which allows for a clear comparison of their writing. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to provide important background information on *retornados* within the context of contemporary Portugal, which allows for a deeper discussion on the literary works written by the three *retornada* authors that I approach in my final chapter.

iii. Chapter three of my thesis places women at the forefront of a discussion on Portuguese identity, seeking to destabilize narratives that have previously been monopolized by men. Central to this chapter is a literary analysis of multiple Portuguese fictional works written by *retornada* women. For many years after the fall of the Salazar regime, the voices of *retornados* were absent from national discourse. However, in the early twenty-first century, there was a sudden explosion of novels, fictional memoirs and biographies written by *retornados.* This literature depicted their lives in Africa, their experiences of decolonization and the hardships they faced upon arriving in Portugal. Dominating this new genre of fictional literature were women, who had experienced life in a highly patriarchal, racist, colonial Portugal and sought to shed light on such troubling issues. They incorporated these painful memories of the past into their writing, forcing Portugal to directly confront its dark history. This chapter will focus on these literary works, emphasizing how themes of race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy, contribute to a crisis of identity.

Specifically, I investigate the Portuguese works of *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais* (2009), by Isabela Figueiredo, *O Retorno* (2011), by Dulce Maria Cardoso, and *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* (2011), by Aida Gomes. Although these novels are written in Portuguese, in my analysis I seek to present them to an English-speaking audience. By privileging these female authors' voices, I confront a male-dominated national narrative about Portuguese history through

an emphasis on gender and race. The perspective of Aida Gomes is especially significant in my analysis because she stands out as the singular Afro-Portuguese author whose fictional work I've chosen to examine. As someone who experienced both racism and gender discrimination in a highly patriarchal colonial Portuguese society, Gomes offers a crucial understanding of some of the deepest issues that permeate colonial and post-colonial Portugal, which she incorporates into her writing. Therefore, this chapter not only highlights the voices of female authors, but it also places a spotlight on Aida Gomes, who has been doubly-marginalized as an Afro-Portuguese woman. While the three literary works I've chosen to evaluate are fictional, these narratives nonetheless provide insight into a pivotal era in Portuguese history that is relevant in a broader discussion of national identity.

II. Language

Central to this thesis is the topic of race. As a white author discussing difficult themes of racism and slavery within a colonial landscape, I must be deliberate and thoughtful in the manner in which I address such issues. Therefore, I recognize how my own privilege affects the language I am able to use when addressing populations who have been systemically oppressed throughout history.

Within this thesis, I extensively highlight evidence of racism and oppression in colonial and post-colonial Portugal. In doing so, I often cite passages or terms that are offensive and difficult to read. Specifically, my third chapter features excerpts from fictional literary sources that display extremely racist sentiments and derogatory names. In translating these citations from Portuguese to English for my audience, I have been highly attentive to the greater implications of my wording, particularly when referring to Afro-Portuguese and biracial people. For example, the Portuguese word "*preto"* is a derogatory racialized term that has often been translated into

the n-word in English. However, I use the term "darky" in my translation of "*preto*", which is language that I feel most comfortable using. I acknowledge that "darky" is an imperfect translation of this offensive slur, but it is one that scholars such as Anna M. Klobucka and Phillip Rothwell, have previously utilized when approaching this word in literature.

While the word choice within my own writing is meant to be as neutral as possible, my decision to leave certain phrases in their offensive state in my direct translations of quotes is quite intentional. In the case of the word "*mulatto/a*", which is a term that has derogatory connotations, I made the decision to maintain its original form in my English translations, modeling how scholars such as Júlia Garraio and Patrícia Martinho Ferreira have dealt with this matter. Because the three literary works I've chosen to analyze are rich with textual evidence of racism, my translations attempt to capture these sentiments and experiences as accurately as possible. In this way, the textual evidence I use is extremely lucrative because it is crucial in accentuating and denouncing deep-seated racism within Portuguese society. While many of the excerpts I cite are deeply troubling and often evoke a visceral response, I believe it is important to feature such language in my thesis because it directly challenges the national discourse by exposing extremely racist and problematic sentiments.

III. Theoretical Framework: Nexus Between History and Fiction

Due to the literary nature of this thesis, it is important to consider the value of such an analysis over other forms of social expression. Specifically, why have I chosen to examine literature, both fictional and scholarly, to ground my discussion instead of cinema or oral histories, for example. An answer lies in the depth and breadth of literary work, which allows for an exhaustive discussion of each topic and theme. Academic works on Portuguese colonialism and the *retornadas* are extensive, with each author contributing to the existing field of research

by building arguments that either reject or accept prior studies. Within this community of scholars, various hypotheses arise that are constantly being contested by new research. Literature written with such collaboration produces a discourse that is ever-changing and multivocal, which fosters a scope of works with more depth than other forms of social expression.

Additionally, the study of fictionalized history is equally, if not more important in my thesis. Because fiction work may often be viewed as subjective and therefore, less truthful, many would deem it irrelevant in a historical analysis about Portugal. However, I argue that an examination of fictional works such as first-person fictional narratives, are just as meaningful as non-fictional works in my historical investigation. These fictional stories provide invaluable insight into the memories of the past, which reflects both a nostalgia for an African childhood and a critique of colonialism. Non-fictional literary works, which are much more objective, lack an understanding of these conflicting emotions, remembrances and experiences.

Why should a professional historian bother to read novels and how should one read novels in history? These are important questions posed by historian Dominick LaCapra, who discusses how novels pertain to an understanding of history. Novels, unlike historiography, can invent characters and events and give rise to configurations that are not available in the writing of history. While an elementary distinction between history and novel may point to one of these having the appearance of myth, it "is on other levels of interpretation, composition, and style that the relationship between the novel and historiography become more engaging and controversial" (LaCapra 129). In this way, LaCapra cautions against a reliance on a documentary model of knowledge, which threatens to identify all interpretations of the past as anachronistic. Therefore, a different way of reading novels is useful because it "may alert us not only to the contestatory

voices and counter-discourses of the past but to the ways in which historiography itself may become a more critical voice in the 'human sciences"' (LaCapra 130).

Linda Hutcheon also discusses this debate on fictional works in *A Theory of Adaptation,* where she considers the concept of fidelity and how close an adaptation is to the original source. A significant emphasis has consistently been placed on original works as being the absolute truth, making secondary adaptations appear inferior for their lack of fidelity to the source. In literature, this phenomenon is witnessed with fiction and non-fiction, where non-fiction assumes the position of truth while fiction is deemed as unfaithful to the source. However, Hutcheon claims that "to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative" (Hutcheon XIII). While non-fictional work may provide one truth, many more truths exist that are important to an overall understanding. History rarely has one distinct account that encapsulates the entire story. Instead, the past is best understood from a number of perspectives that demonstrate a multitude of truths. These many truths are thus more enduring across time because they do not seek to denounce a particular story, but rather, provide a variety of versions for any given experience (A. Ferreira 166). The three fictional narratives that I have chosen to analyze each offer their own truth, which both reaffirm and challenge one another.

My choice to include fictional works in this thesis is both deliberate and necessary for my overall argument. Narratives written by *retornadas* are crucial in understanding themes and issues that are at the center of the colonial experience and Portuguese society. These stories combine fictional elements with real sentiments and memories of the author's time in Africa and their 'return' to Portugal. This projection of real experiences into a fictional narrative adds to the many truths that exist for each story, providing a diversity of perspectives in which to

examine history. This thesis seeks to evaluate each of these truths in order to understand a history that is complex and variable.

Chapter 1
A Clash between Past and Present: Portugal's Troubling Colonial History and Implications for the Modern National Discourse

Fig. 1. *Padrão dos Descobrimentos.* Dinis, Rita. "Deputado Do PS Defende Demolição Do Padrão Dos Descobrimentos." *Observador*, 2021, observador.pt/2021/02/19/deputado-do-ps-defende-demolicao-do-padrao-dos-descobrimentos/.

I. Introduction

The *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* is a striking monument that towers over the riverbanks of the Tagus river in Lisbon (see fig. 1). This massive slab of limestone reaches 52 meters in height and is emblematic of Portugal's so-called glorious past, memorializing famous Portuguese explorers who contributed to the "Age of Discovery" during the fifteenth century. Completed in 1960, this monument was erected to commemorate the 500 years since the death of Henry the Navigator, an important figure in Portugal's exploration of Western Africa and

trade routes in the Atlantic Ocean. Since then, the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* has become a famous attraction in Lisbon, with thousands of tourists visiting the site each year. Despite its obvious beauty and grandeur, many of these visitors may never truly understand the historical significance of the voyages and supposed discoveries that this monument commemorates.[4] While sites of national pride such as the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* celebrate a triumphant Portuguese history, these tributes often conceal a past that is much more complex and cruel than one might think. Invariably, a connection exists between Portuguese exploration, and hundreds of years of colonialism, slavery and violence.

Directly across the street from the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* is another stunning historical site called the *Mosteiro dos Jerónimos.* Located in front of the *Praça Império* (Imperial Plaza), this monastery was built in 1502 to commemorate Vasco da Gama's voyage to India and was classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983. While *Mosteiro dos Jerónimos* is recognized for its extravagant architecture representative of the "Age of Discovery," what is not widely acknowledged is that this monastery was built by slaves who were violently seized by the Portuguese from their communities in West Central Africa and its interior, and exported from coastal regions in the colonies of Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Guine-Bissau (Candido, "An African" 5; Neto 110). These individuals were kidnapped and separated from their families, forced to endure the dangerous and agonizing journey across the Atlantic Ocean to Portugal. Thus, the construction of *Mosteiro dos Jerónimos*, along with many of Portugal's great accomplishments, relied on the exploitation of enslaved labor. Due to its strategic location along the Tagus River and Atlantic Ocean, Lisbon was an epicenter of slave trade for centuries. The

[4] Through a Eurocentric gaze and from much of what is promoted by the Portuguese national discourse, these so-called discoveries imply the uncovering of territories that had not previously been inhabited. Thus, it is important to note that the term 'discovery' ignores the variety of indigenous populations already living there.

exchange of slaves who were captured and transported by Portuguese merchants from West Central Africa, was a central part of Portuguese life (Henriques). Although a glorious national history is promoted across Portugal, which is evident in distinguished monuments and historical sites, it important to recognize another, darker side of Portuguese past. My thesis directly confronts this problematic past by exposing some of the most difficult themes that characterize Portuguese history.

It is imperative to discuss key topics of race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy when considering Portuguese history, which are crucial because of how deeply intertwined they are with Portugal's past, present and future. This chapter will delve into Portugal's rich historical background, primarily concerned with Portuguese colonialism, its origins, its various forms assumed across time and finally, its collapse and future repercussions. Fundamental questions that are addressed include: what is Portuguese colonialism and what are its core tenets, how did Portuguese colonialism evolve over time, who benefited and who suffered under the Portuguese colonial system and what led to the fall of the Portuguese colonial empire. By discussing these questions, I seek to challenge an official discourse of Portuguese history that glorifies the past. For many Portuguese, what they are taught about colonialism in school textbooks does not accurately portray what occurred. Although a confrontation with the truth is painful, Portuguese society desperately needs to come to terms with its problematic history. This chapter will shed light on the many truths of Portugal's colonial past, while disputing the official Portuguese national history. However, in order to challenge Portugal's official historical discourse, it is first necessary to understand what exactly that discourse is.

II. Overview of Early Portuguese Colonialism

The Age of Assault. The Portuguese colonial empire was the longest enduring colonial power of any European country, at its peak extending from regions in South America, Africa and Asia. Portuguese colonialism dates back to 1415, with the occupation of Ceuta, Morocco, and finally comes to an end over 500 years later, with the formal handover of the island of Macau to the People's Republic of China in 1999 (Jerónimo 1). Due to its longevity and expansiveness, it is difficult to dissect the colonial empire in its entirety, especially given the various forms it assumed across continents. Therefore, in this chapter, I focus primarily on Portugal's colonies in Africa, which I believe offer valuable insight into my topic. By concentrating on the African empire from its beginnings, all the way through its violent end, I am able to explore important structural developments over time, which allows for a deep examination into how and why this empire fell.

The early stages of Portuguese colonialism were characterized by an era of exploration and expansion. From this period, national historical discourse highlights prominent explorers such as Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan, who led voyages that established trade routes in Asia and the Atlantic Ocean, facilitating access to new markets and cultures. These explorers are frequently featured as a source of national pride. However, what many Portuguese fail to consider is the disastrous impact that such voyages would have on foreign lands and peoples. While Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan and other distinguished explorers, viewed through a Eurocentric lens, have been deemed national heroes by Portugal, what is far less acknowledged is the extreme violence, exploitation and subjugation that accompanied their voyages. It is this problematic side of Portuguese exploration that I will discuss in further detail in this section.

Early Portuguese exploration of Africa began in the northern regions of the continent. Motivated by a desire to strengthen Portuguese independence over his rival, Castile, which was the powerful kingdom that comprised modern Spain, King João I of Portugal promoted the military conquest and settlement of Morocco in the early 1400s (Jerónimo 2). Historians such as Mariana Candido, have emphasized that this expansion was also justified by religious reasoning, as the Portuguese were motivated by anti-Muslim sentiments to attack and conquer peoples deemed as enemies of Christ. The King authorized Portuguese forces to seize material goods from Muslim-dominated territories in modern-day Morocco and Senegambia, and promoted the occupation of their lands. Thus, Portuguese expansion along the coast of Africa can largely be understood in the context of violent religious conflicts, in which the Crown legitimized the enslavement of indigenous Muslim populations through Christianity (Candido, "An African" 56). While a spreading Ottoman presence eventually forced the Portuguese to retreat from Northern Africa, the future exploration of the rest of the continent had become a top priority for Portugal. These so-called explorations in Atlantic Africa continued under King João II in the late fifteenth century. Reconnaissance expeditions into the African interior were carried out largely for religious, geopolitical and economic purposes, which resulted in the establishment of relatively safe areas for the advancement of Portuguese interest. Ultimately, a crucial component of these early contacts was the enslavement of indigenous peoples by the Portuguese, which they rationalized through characterizing these African populations as pagan, corrupt and inferior. Such racist sentiments, along with Portugal's religious missions, allowed the nation to exploit and enslave any non-Christian population they deemed as savages (Candido, "An African" 56; Jerónimo 3).

At the heart of the Portuguese empire was the expropriation of land, which was central in the incorporation of new territory, the implementation of the colonial state and the subjugation of local populations. In order to successfully occupy and exploit their colonies, the Portuguese created formal modalities of control. For example, in central Africa settlers were granted *donataria* by the Portuguese crown, which gave them political, administrative, criminal, military and commercial jurisdiction. It is important to note that this power was granted without consent of the African people, which unfortunately becomes a trend for Portuguese imperialism in the centuries to come. As the Portuguese sought to expand their presence within Africa, initial contacts of exploration resulted in violent clashes with local populations, in what became known as *guerras de conquistas.* While the Portuguese colonial authority's objective was to expand its occupation into new regions, they also utilized these wars as a means of capturing free Africans to sell them as slaves (Candido, "Conquest" 225).

In 1497, the journey of Vasco da Gama to India opened the door to Portuguese exploitation in South Eastern Africa, in what is now the country of Mozambique. When the Portuguese became aware of the abundance of gold and silver in this region, they were eager to establish contact with the native Tongan people who had been living there for centuries in order to take advantage of these resources (Jerónimo 7). Such exploitation by the Portuguese would continue for centuries to come, having severe negative impacts on the peoples and lands these explorers 'discovered.'

Trade was central to early interactions with populations, as the Portuguese offered new commodities such as gunpowder, firearms and cannons in exchange for silver, gold, ivory, cotton, wax and a variety of other resources Africa had to offer (Candido, "Conquest" 227). In many cases, rulers of small African communities welcomed the Portuguese, who provided

protection against stronger rival neighbors. To compensate for their scarce physical presence during the early centuries of colonialism, the Portuguese established a variation of feudal systems called *prazos*, in which settlements were primarily ruled by local Africans, Indo-Portuguese and Afro-Portuguese. These *prazo* systems, which remained in place until the late nineteenth century, allowed for the continuation of some Crown influence despite an initially minimal Portuguese presence in Africa. However, the decision to open up their homes to the Portuguese would prove to be fatal for local populations, as *prazos* became essential institutions in slave trade, ultimately functioning as commercial middlemen in the capture and enslavement of Africans. While early forms of Portuguese settlements in Africa were often disconnected and varied in structure, they all had a comparable economic mission, which was the focus on an extraction of resources. Consequently, trade was a crucial element of the colonial economies, most importantly including the trade of people (Jerónimo 7; Candido, "An African" 226).

Slavery. Throughout Portuguese colonialism, slavery was at the base of all economic activity, which is a matter that is not widely discussed in the national historical discourse. In terms of Portugal's empire-building ambitions, the continent of Africa was valuable not only due to its abundance of raw materials, but also because they could exploit the indigenous populations living there. While these native inhabitants of Africa had established cultures and communities prior to the arrival of Europeans, this was of no concern to imperial Portugal, which sought to dominate and extract as much as possible from these 'new lands.' Consequently, the Portuguese transformed Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau into their primary sources of slave labor. In the Portuguese colonial islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, the plantation economy became heavily dependent on slave labor from the mainland. The principle crops that these slaves cultivated were sugar cane, prevailing until the nineteenth century, and coffee, which grew in

importance during nineteenth century. In West Central Africa, the colonies of Angola and Benguela became the main locations for this business, linking African ports to the Portuguese colony of Brazil. São Tomé and Príncipe and Cape Verde served as essential transit points for the transatlantic slave trade, where thousands of African slaves were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean every year (Ishemo 162). Luanda was one of the most important ports for slave trade, and around 1,500,000 African captives were transported from this region between the sixteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries (Oliveira 448).

For most of the trans-Atlantic slave trade era, coastal regions, such as Benguela, imported captives from inland territories, such as Bihe, Bailundu and Wambu. However, traders also enslaved many people from along the coast, subjecting these populations to raids and kidnappings. As slave trade quickly proliferated the continent, enslavement and violence moved not only eastward, but also southward and northward, resulting in the displacement of millions of people and the collapse of earlier states (Candido, "An African" 197). Soon, an economic coexistence emerged between Portugal's colonies in Africa and Brazil, where sugar cane brandy from Brazil was used to purchase enslaved people. This interdependence between the two continents created a relationship where Portugal was dependent on both Africa and Brazil for political and economic power (Arenas 354). Although Portuguese colonizers and slave trade merchants alike, benefited from such a reliance, Portugal's dependence on this exchange would prove to be unsustainable (Neto 123).

Christianity. While early Portuguese domination in Africa was mainly characterized by slavery and violence, the Portuguese also used religion as another means of effective control. It is imperative to understand these mechanisms of oppression because they truly defy the official national discourse that Portugal promotes. Moreover, these repressive themes are witnessed

throughout Portugal's colonial history, thus setting the stage for a deeper discussion of the experiences of the *retornados* as Portuguese settlers.

The spread of Christianity in Africa was viewed as an important religious and political mission. Through religion, the Portuguese believed that they could both colonize and civilize the indigenous Africans, who they believed to be savages of an inferior race. This attitude of 'the white man's burden' is evident in the heavy missionary presence throughout Portugal's colonies, which continued to have substantial influence over these territories for many years to follow. A large religious victory for Portugal occurred in the Kingdom of Kongo, located in present-day Angola, where the African king declared Christianity the official religion of the state after the Portuguese developed a strong alliance with him. Additionally, the king's son was sent to Portugal to be educated and became the first bishop of the Kingdom of Kongo (Jerónimo 6). The imposition of Christianity involved both a religious and cultural component, where the Portuguese settlers promoted western values and practices through their religious ideals. The influence of Christianity as a means of control only continued to expand in the Portuguese colonies, especially growing in importance during the later years of empire.

Shift towards African Colonies. Despite Portugal's success in carrying out its imperial mission of empire building and exploitation, the country's most critical overseas possession, Brazil, would soon escape from its grip, gaining independence in 1822. This pivotal event provoked a drastic shift in the Portuguese approach to its colonies, particularly in Africa, as the nation sought to counteract the significant economic and political loss of Brazil. To further exacerbate matters, during this time there was a growing perception of Portuguese inferiority amongst European nations as a result of the country's economic backwardness. After the end of the slave trade, the Portuguese desperately attempted to foster development of commercial

agriculture within its colonies in order to sustain its economy, which led to in state-sponsored projects that promoted the cultivation of coffee, tobacco and sugar (R. Ferreira 235). In comparison to the prevailing colonial empires of Britain and France, Portugal was perceived as lesser due to its reliance on mercantilism and its extremely low industrial development, all of which hindered Portugal's ability to exploit its empire (Chabal 190). In terms of its effective occupation of land mass, especially after the loss of Brazil, the Portuguese territory was far less expansive than other colonial powers, such as Britain and France. The Portuguese empire was relatively small in comparison to other colonial nations because of its inferior economic and political position within Europe, which hindered the country's ability to compete against other colonizers for African territory (Alexandre 12).

Boaventura de Sousa Santos provides an interesting interpretation of the Portuguese predicament, describing Portugal as both a "semicolonizer and semicolonized" nation, meaning Portugal was considered a second-tier-colony in its inability to effectively colonize and thus, was treated like a colony by other European powers. In this sense, Portugal was unable to adequately govern its colonies and simultaneously maintain a legitimate colonial reputation amongst other imperial countries. A major explanation for this asymmetry is that while "the British Empire was based on a dynamic balance between colonialism and capitalism, the Portuguese empire was based on an equally dynamic imbalance between an excess and deficit of colonialism" (B. Santos, "Between" 9). It is this backdrop of political and economic uncertainty that Portugal found itself in 1822, setting the stage for a drastic overhaul of their attitude towards their colonial empire after the devastating loss of Brazil. This pinnacle moment signaled a turn to Africa in hopes of healing the economic and political damage that had been done to the Portuguese reputation and national morale. Thus, the Portuguese would concentrate all of their efforts on the

extraction of its African territories, predominantly through commercial agricultural production, in order to compete in the global market (R. Ferreira 230). Portugal's goal of reconstructing its colonial empire resulted in the mentality of creating "new Brazils in Africa", a strategic theme that would galvanize its fixation on Africa.

Another pivotal development that forced Portugal to reevaluate its colonial position was the end of slave trade in 1836. Mounting international pressure that called into question the morality of slavery practices, eventually resulted in Portugal, and other European colonial powers, to outlaw the transatlantic slave trade. This decree was made official when the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty Against the Slave Trade was signed in 1842 (Jerónimo 10). It was not until nearly forty years later, in 1875, however, that the Portuguese passed a decree declaring the freedom of all slaves across the colonies. This formal abolition stance taken by Portugal did not result in the immediate end of slavery in its colonies.[5] Instead, the centuries-old institution of slavery was forced to transform and reshape itself under the guise of a different name. Official Portuguese discourse may acknowledge slavery as a part of the country's colonial history, but what is missing from this narrative is the continuation of these abuses all the way into the later years of the empire. The termination of the transatlantic slave trade did not mark the end of racism and discrimination. These deeply-rooted issues would leave an open wound across Portuguese society, which still have yet to be healed. For a colonial economy that had depended so heavily on slave labor for generations, the Portuguese colonies were compelled to adapted

[5] In Portugal's colonies, African people continued to be captured, enslaved, and exported from West Central Africa even after the 1836 slave trade ban. In Benguela, for example, there was an increase in the number of enslaved people after this ban. For more information, please see:
Mariana P. Candido, "The Expansion of Slavery in Benguela During the Nineteenth Century." *International Review of Social History*, vol. 65, no. S28, 2020, pp. 67–92.

through the creation of subtler coercive practices and policies, which were used to continue the exploitation and suppression of indigenous African populations for decades to come (Neto 119).[6]

III. Late Colonialism

Forced Labor Continues. During the later years of the Portuguese colonial empire, the country took a revitalized and more elaborate approach to its African possessions. While the ultimate goal of exploitation and control remained the same, the colonial administration constructed new measures to carry out its economic and political mission. Slave labor continued under the cloak of forced labor schemes, which were essential to the plantation economy that existed. For example, in 1875 the Portuguese state abolished the *liberto* status, a category of indentured labor imposed on Africans, and replaced it with a new classification called *serviçal*, which established a contract labor system. However, this legal device only allowed the abusive practice of slavery to continue. Central to this *serviçal* decree was a provision against 'vagrancy', which included every peasant not involved in the sphere of capitalist relations of production. This allowed the exploitation of all peasants, even children starting at age seven (Ishemo 163). Across all Portuguese territories, peasants were required to contribute to the agricultural economy. In Central and Northern Mozambique, Africans were forced to grow cotton and rice. In Angola, the primary products were cotton and tobacco. And in Guinea-Bissau, the cash crop was peanuts. These labor institutions, which rarely could be defined as voluntary employment, certainly fell short in assuring basic labor standards and rights (Neto 109; R Ferreira 230).

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[6] A discussion of women has been absent from my examination of early Portuguese colonialism so far. Mariana Candido and Eugénia Rodrigues' research focuses on women's rights within the Portuguese colonies before the twentieth century. They argue that within the colonies, skin color, status and gender limited the roles that women could occupy. While certain women were granted rights such as owning property, it was only "women of means" who had achieved a high social and economic position in society that truly had access to these privileges. Generally, women's role within colonial society was often limited to their relationship with men – as wives, daughters and mothers. For more on this topic, please see:
Mariana Pinho Candido and Eugénia Rodrigues, "African Women's Access and Rights to Property in the Portuguese Empire." *African Economic History*, vol. 43, 2015, pp. 1-18.

Another mechanism the Portuguese utilized to acquire labor was through taxation. The taxation on African peasantry far outstripped the level of wages they received, promoting an exploitative system in which indigenous people were forced to work long, grueling hours in order to survive. Under this tax scheme, Africans were extremely vulnerable, experiencing long-term insecurity and frequent outbreaks of famine. When there was not enough labor available, Africans were shipped between the colonies to make a profit. Between 1903 and 1970, around 80,000 people were forcibly transported to São Tomé, which was a labor practice that unfortunately continued despite international condemnation during the later period of the empire (Ishemo 164). It is evident that Portuguese settlers were primarily focused on production, and not the well-being of the native populations. These abusive labor practices persevered for decades, continually adapting over time to pacify international scrutiny, yet maintaining their original oppressive and racist nature.

Salazar Regime: Portuguesation of Africa. Even when international beliefs and moral attitudes began to shift away from colonialism, Portugal continued its exploitative practices. Although the country's immoral methods of exploitation and slavery persisted, the Portuguese national discourse painted its colonial empire in a positive light. International state and non-state actors, as well as local anti-colonial authors alike, labeled Portuguese colonialism as unethical and cruel. These criticisms, however, were largely ignored by the nation and would continue to be overlooked until recently. The period of history during the Salazar regime is important because it demonstrates that exploitative and immoral practices in Portugal's colonies occurred even during more modern times.

Up until the twentieth century, Portuguese colonial administrative rule had mainly assumed a structure of indirect rule, meaning Lisbon had less management in Africa and local power

frameworks prevailed. However, in 1933 this dynamic began to change, as Portugal's nearly fifty-year dictator, António Salazar, began his reign. During his dictatorship, he pressed for a centralization of power and focused on a reinvigorated approach to the African colonies. Salazar viewed Portugal's colonial possessions as an opportunity to achieve greatness and bolster nationalism. In this pluri-continental approach, the colonies could be utilized not only to promote their economy, but they could also become an integral part of the Portuguese nation.

At a time when other European powers were beginning the process of decolonization, Portugal pushed for a tighter grip on its colonies. Within the decades following Salazar's rise to power, the African colonies would transform from territories widely uninhabited by the Portuguese, to a place that would draw in thousands of mainland residents. In Mozambique and Angola, the European presence quadrupled between 1940 and 1960, rising to approximately 97,000 and 170,000 individuals, respectively. In 1973, the numbers rose to around 190,000 and about 324,000, respectively (Jerónimo 17). This massive migration can largely be attributed to Salazar's effective propaganda strategies, which encouraged citizens to move to the colonies and work as part of their patriotic duty. Propaganda posters sought to portray the colonies as integral to the country and reinforced national pride, which can be seen from images such as *Portugal Não é um País Pequeno* (Portugal is not a Small Country) (see fig. 2). Such visuals were displayed across Portugal and contributed to a sentiment that the Portuguese African territories were more like states or provinces.

Salazarian propaganda was important in promoting key tenets of the regime. For example, in his *Lição de Salazar* (Salazar's Lesson), Salazar sought to teach young children, both in mainland Portugal and the colonies, about the nation's principles. Particularly, the values of *Deus, Pátria e Família* (God, Country and Family) were at the core of Salazar's dogma (see

fig. 3). This propaganda image displays the model Portuguese family: the husband returning home from his daily work, the wife doing her maternal duties as the caretaker of the home, their son wearing his Portuguese youth uniform, and their daughter playing with dolls. Central in this image is the holy cross, and outside the window a Portuguese flag is visible, representing religion and country respectively. This concept of the perfect Portuguese family was crucial in Salazar's national education efforts, bolstering traditional gender roles and resulting in the continuing oppression of women.

Fig. 2. *Portugal Não é Um País Pequeno.* Ellen Sebring "Col VN Angola." Visualizing Portugal: the New State (1933-1974), 2014, visualizingportugal.squarespace.com/col-vn-angola.

Fig 3. *A Lição de Salazar.* Ellen Sebring. Visualizing Portugal: the New State (1933-1974), Visualizing Portugal: the New State (1933-1974), 2013, visualizingportugal.com/ed-vn3-8-lessons-salazar/2013/4/2/a-lio-de-salazar.

'Luso-Tropicalism.' During Salazar's Estado Novo regime, a type of thinking that glorified the Portuguese colonial experience became an important component of national discourse. This discourse was particularly visible in the theory of 'luso-tropicalism', a concept that was developed by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre. Portuguese colonialism was frequently viewed as a different, gentler model of colonialism than its European counterparts. Freyre's writing in *The Masters and the Slaves, The Mansions and the Shanties, and Order and Progress*, builds off of this narrative, painting Portugal as the 'good colonizer.' 'Luso-

tropicalism' is a term that portrays the Portuguese colonial experience as a positive transforming project. Freyre claims that the world owes Portugal for the creation of the first creolized identities and the conditions for a cross-culturalization, which have since become an intrinsic part of post-colonial identity (T. Silva 30). In this way, 'luso-tropicalists' viewed the Portuguese as beneficial and necessary to the native populations in their colonies. Portugal prided itself on being a pluri-continental and multi-racial society, where the Portuguese fit perfectly with the lands and people they encountered and were able to engage in an exchange of cultures (Pinto and Jerónimo 13). Such ideology conveniently frames the Portuguese as the anti-racist colonizer, who instead of exploiting and subjugating local populations, seeks to learn from and assist them. However, as Patrícia Ferreira explains, one of the great ironies of the 'luso-tropic' rhetoric is that Salazar's Portugal was relatively closed, isolated and more or less, racially homogeneous, which contrasts drastically with the multi-cultural predisposition the Portuguese proclaimed (P. Ferreira 97).

Fundamental to this convergence of cultures was the pervasiveness of miscegenation between Portuguese settlers and indigenous populations, which is an element of Portuguese colonialism that differed from other colonial empires. Many imperial powers were critical of sexual relationships between settlers and their native subjects. Influenced by the growing popularity of eugenic theories in the twentieth century, they were concerned about the dilution of the superior white race. However, in Portuguese colonies, sex between Portuguese men and African women was widely encouraged. The idea that Portuguese men should have a sexual preference for exotic Native American and African women was central to Freyre's concept of 'luso-tropicalism', which he believed to be imperative in the spread of Portuguese culture and a diversification of national identity. According to Freyre, it was the Portuguese instinct to "delight

in the pleasures yielded by these exoticisms without being depraved by their excesses; to benefit from their values without dissolving himself into them; to assimilate their virtues without renouncing, for the love of them, his original, European, and Christian ones" (Madureira 161). The Estado Novo used Freyre's 'luso-tropic' ideals to legitimize the Portuguese presence in their colonies. Especially in later years of the Portuguese colonial regime, when other European nations had already begun the process of decolonization, Salazar claimed that Portugal was different from other colonizers. He stated that the Portuguese had a unique connection with those they colonized, citing the mixing of different races as evidence of harmonious race relations (Castelo 277). While Portugal accepted sexual relations between the two populations, it is important to note that this acceptance was quite gendered, as such a relationship between a Portuguese woman and an African man was widely condemned. Nonetheless, because of what many viewed as a free exchange between Africans and settlers, Portuguese colonialism was deemed a lighter, more accepting colonial structure by 'luso-tropicalists' (Scully).

Freyre's concept of 'luso-tropicalism', which portrayed the Portuguese as the benevolent and gentle colonizer, is deeply problematic for multiple reasons. His depiction of sex between Portuguese men and African women makes the incorrect assumption that such a relationship was consensual. This type of behavior traces back to centuries of slavery in which a tradition of slave masters raping their 'property' persisted. Pamela Scully adds an interesting perspective to a discussion on the oversexualization of the indigenous woman across history, claiming that the Atlantic World "was built, and continues to be built, both literally and metaphorically, on the labor, bodies, and sexuality of indigenous women," (Scully). While male historians and authors alike have consistently portrayed these women as consensual icons, always bending to the will of the male colonizer, Scully warns against this representation of female sexuality. She offers an

important viewpoint from a female perspective that emphasizes details of abuse and sexism that many male-dominated perceptions may overlook. Female scholars who study colonialism provide a uniquely nuanced understanding of history that is inspired and informed from their own experiences as women and the implications that arise from abuses across time.

While 'luso-tropicalism' portrayed the intermixing of different races in a positive light, miscegenation was largely an act of violence against the colonized female subject. Because each sexual encounter was perceived as an act of spreading cultures, it can be said that the Portuguese conquered the world, not with the sword and cross, but with sex. Thus, sexual conquest was decisive in the Portuguese colonial enterprise, becoming an effective weapon of disempowerment (T. Silva 33). Unfortunately, it is this type of abuse and sexual exploitation that characterized Portuguese colonialism, allowing for deeply-rooted racism to flourish (Scully).

Salazar Regime: Racialized Exploitation. One of the most pivotal changes the Salazar regime made to Portugal's colonies was through the Colonial Act of 1930. This act would allow for racist and exploitative schemes to continue up until the 1970s, directly challenging the 'good colonizer' perception that Portugal sought to display. With a primary goal of centralizing power within the colonies and promoting a production-based economy, the Colonial Act of 1930 required African people to produce new materials. Portugal wanted its African colonies to contribute to an equilibrium of Portuguese balance of payments, which led to the introduction of enforced cash crop, such as cotton and rice (Cross 558). As previously addressed, such a production-based economy required a significant labor force, which settlers turned to Africans for. In order to capitalize on indigenous labor, the Portuguese created new tactics of manipulation and disempowerment to control local populations in their colonies. It all began

with constructing a legal framework from which to subdue Africans living in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Principe.

Under Salazar's Estado Novo government, two very different realities existed for each race. The Colonial Act of 1930 crystalized these differences in legal writing, creating the two major categories of *indígenas* (indigenous peoples) and *não-indígenas* (non-indigenous peoples). Though they had no status of citizenship, *indígenas* represented a majority of the population in the colonies. Some Africans were able to overcome this *indígena* label and become 'assimilated', meaning they had reached an acceptable level of civilization to become Portuguese citizens. These Africans were named *assimilados* and given certain exemptions from taxes as well as rights to purchase property. A final classification identified under the Colonial Act were the *mulatos*, who were mixed-raced people that resulted from miscegenation (Cross 564). While in many cases, the Portuguese classified these biracial children of white Portuguese men and African women as Portuguese and baptized them, they still faced considerable challenges in a highly racist colonial society (Oliveira 449). These categories are imperative in understanding how Portuguese colonial society functioned because they governed Portuguese politics and determined rights that each person was entitled to depending on the color of their skin. Such labels permeated every-day colonial life, influencing both the public and private spheres.

These labels are particularly important in my discussion of race in my second chapter, in which I engage in a deeper analysis of how native populations and the Portuguese interacted. It is clear that race was a determining factor across colonial life, intertwining with all sectors of society. For example, race deeply affected the quality of education children received, as two entirely different primary education systems existed for white settlers and African children. The first system institutionalized under the Estado Novo consisted of sophisticated government

schools for whites, Asians, *mulatos* and *assimilados*. For *indígenas,* the Portuguese introduced a separate school system, which relied on Roman Catholic mission schools to 'civilize' African children. These schools adapted a more rudimentary education system, which placed a heavy emphasis on faith as a civilizing tool. The aim for educating African children was to promote a "Portuguesation" of indigenous peoples so that they would accept Portuguese rule with little resistance. The Salazar government emphasized order, obedience, conformity and resignation to one's lot in life as crucial educational elements across Portugal and the colonies (Errante 10). Missionary schools were controlled by bishops and apostolic vicars, who gave teachings instructed in Portuguese, and who were required by law to be of Portuguese nationality. The curriculum taught included basic subjects of arithmetic and science, but also highlighted instructions in manual work, religion and for girls, sewing, embroidery and cooking. This instruction acted to manipulate and develop the unskilled work force, preserving all skilled and semiskilled labor for Europeans. It is evident from the fact that more than 98% of the African population was illiterate, that the colonial education system for Africans was intended to create a lower class of agricultural workers and craftsmen who could be easily be capitalized on by the colonial economy (Cross 565).

The later years of Portuguese colonialism were defined by coercive schemes reinforced through education and propaganda, creating a system which discriminated against and abused local populations. Although the Salazar regime boasted of a harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship with its African colonies, this could not be further from the truth. Influenced by the overwhelming national rhetoric and propaganda, many Portuguese believed that the country's relationship with Africa was a necessary good. This departure from reality emphasizes the significance of Linda Hutcheon's discussion of many truths that I address in my thesis

introduction. A story is comprised of multiple narratives and to comprehend the truth in its entirety, all perspectives must be heard. While an awareness of various Portuguese historical discourses is important, it is valuable to question each of these narratives. During the Salazar regime, national discourse ignored a multitude of truths about colonialism. While human rights abuses were not as overt as during the early period of Portuguese colonialism, a deep engrained racism still dominated the colonies. Though more subtle, the colonies maintained a system in which whites used their power to continue the subjugation and exploitation of local African communities. However, the global landscape was beginning to shift as other nations turned to moralism, and before long, the international community would notice Portugal's transgressions.

IV. The Beginning of the End: The Liberation Movement and Colonial War

International Scrutiny. As the international discourse regarding imperialism began to shift, Portugal's problematic control over its colonies would soon be recognized and condemned. After the 1950s, Portuguese colonial practices began receiving significant international scrutiny, which resulted in an Estado Novo governmental response that would lead the country into further isolationism. In a world that had become increasingly concerned with the immorality of imperialism, Portugal felt a growing pressure to adapt, resulting in a new standard of colonialism that would force them to 'civilize' in a progressive and modern way. In order to distance themselves from any negative connotations, the country officially changed the name of their colonies to *províncias ultramarinas*, or overseas provinces in 1951. This slight modification in name was done in hopes of removing the problematic implications that accompanied the term "colony", giving the appearance of an equal relationship between mainland Portugal and its territories. However, this new title would not change the nature of what these *províncias ultramarinas* were and had been for hundreds of years, nor would it eliminate the abuses under

which they operated. Formal accusations of clear exploitation and widespread venality against Portuguese colonial administrators were aired for the first time in the League on Slavery and Forced Labour in 1925. While Portugal did make efforts to counteract slavery, the country did not ratify the 1930 Convention on Forced Labour no. 29. It was only in 1956 when Salazar would finally decide to ratify this convention after intensifying international pressure (Jerónimo and Monteiro 147).

A number of reports in the 1940s began to expose a myriad of injustices under the Portuguese colonial administration. A report of the *Curador Geral* of Angola stressed that labor abuses were rampant, particularly citing forced migration practices and information provided by the *Curador* of São Tomé, which highlighted the use of violence against *serviçiais.* An article published by the American Federation of Labour described the conditions in which Africans were forced to work: Africans were "forced to come in from their jungle and semi-jungle habitats and work for nothing and under very miserable conditions and with but a rag for clothes and just enough food to sustain them" (Jerónimo and Monteiro 150). These reports uncovered some of the worst aspects of the Portuguese colonial administration, depicting how the state permitted commercial monopolies on production in its colonies, in which companies forced Africans to grow crops and exclusively sell it to them. These structures that were propped up by the Salazar regime, facilitated a cycle of indebtedness that led to the perpetual impoverishment of peasants (Neto 108). Such astonishing realities began to trigger outrage from international actors who had come to realize the moral pitfalls that imperialism presented. In 1951, the United Nations (UN) sent a survey to the administrators of each province, inquiring for more information about their labor practices. Salazar refused to comply, warning his administrators that the UN did not have the country's best interests in mind, and that a response could have dire

consequences (Jerónimo and Monteiro 152). Salazar's decision to not engage with the UN invoked more international pressure from NGO's, union movements and missionary societies, plunging the country further into isolation.

Liberation Movements. Despite Portugal's tight grip on its overseas possessions, ideas of liberation were already festering in the African territories, which eventually erupted into a fierce conflict that would transform the entire political landscape for Portugal, and the world. In 1959, violent suppression of African workers during a dock strike in Bissau culminated in the massacre of about fifty protesters by the Portuguese colonial state. This event led the nationalist movement, *Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC), to conclude that an armed struggle against Portuguese rule was necessary. Thus began the first, and longest enduring of the three Portuguese colonial wars. The battle in Guinea-Bissau was distinguished by difficult tropical terrain, which promoted a guerrilla combat in which the PAIGC fighters greatly outnumbered the Portuguese soldiers (Macqueen 222). While this war dragged on, violence also broke out in Angola and Mozambique, Portugal's prized possessions. The *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) formed in 1957, and by 1961, they had initiated an armed struggle against the Portuguese ("Angola"). In Mozambique, the struggle for Independence began in 1964, when violence erupted between the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) and Portuguese troops, resulting in a bloody armed conflict that would devastate the region.

These liberation struggles were not unique to Portugal, but instead were part of a greater global context set in the Cold War. During this time, the world witnessed a clash between two competing ideologies: America's western principles of democracy and the Soviet Union's ideals of communism. This conflict dominated all corners of the world, including the continent of

Africa, where liberation movements against Portuguese rule developed. Seizing an opportunity to strengthen their global position, the Soviet Union provided assistance to insurgent groups in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea. Angola became a crucial proxy battleground when the Soviet Union began supplying military aid and several thousands of Cuban soldiers to MPLA. The United States, which depended on its military alliance with the Portuguese government, backed Portuguese military forces ("Angola"). While these bloody conflicts dragged on, the neighboring country of South Africa began to experience serious backlash against their apartheid regime. As two African countries with a ruling white elite, the Portuguese government and the White Boer Republic of South Africa relied on each other both politically and financially to maintain rule over the African people.[7] However, when the Portuguese empire finally fell, this event signaled that European rule in Africa was coming to an end.

V. The Fall of the Portuguese Empire

The Carnation Revolution and Colonial Wars. Despite Portugal's firm grasp on its African colonies, the Portuguese colonial empire finally fell, officially coming to an end on April 25th, 1974. On this date, a group of Portuguese military officials within *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (MFA), overthrew the Estado Novo regime in Lisbon. After years of fighting endless battles in the colonies, this group of low-ranked military officers had finally realized the need for change, resulting in the organization of MFA and the subsequent coup d'etat. The Carnation Revolution acquired its name because soldiers placed carnations in the muzzles of their guns to demonstrate that almost no shots were fired. April 25th marked the pivotal fall of the nearly fifty-

[7] For more information on the South African Apartheid regime, please see:
Jamie Miller, "Things Fall Apart: South Africa and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire, 1973–74*." Cold War History*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2012, pp. 183–204.
Roger Southall, "South Africa." The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy, by Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell, *Edinburgh University Press,* 2012, pp. 373–384.
Arvind Kumar Yadav, "Nelson Mandela and the Process of Reconciliation in South Africa."

year dictatorship, the immediate collapse of the Portuguese colonial regime, the end of the colonial wars and the turn to a democratic system of government in Portugal. Due to the relatively few numbers of deaths that occurred during the right-winged coup, this event was later deemed the 'bloodless' revolution. However, when the greater context of the colonial wars is considered, it becomes clear that this revolution resulted in substantial brutality and loss of life. The number of Portuguese soldiers who died in service in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique is 8,300. Around 30,000 soldiers were injured, 4,500 were mutilated and more than 100,000 soldiers suffered from PTSD (Campos 152). When taking into account the guerrillas and civilians who were killed by Portuguese forces, that number exceeds 100,000 (Varela 54). Additionally, the Portuguese military used napalm, a highly toxic weapon that is banned by the United Nations, on civilians in Africa. These atrocities, in addition to the devastation seen across all fronts, resulted in a conflict that became highly unpopular amongst Portuguese citizens and the international community. This growing unpopularity regarding the colonial wars within the Portuguese populace was also driven by a staggering Portuguese economy. Salazar's isolationist agenda had separated the country from the rest of Europe, resulting in a decline in trade and deterioration of the economy. Inflation rose from 4% in 1964 to 20% in 1974, and the country's population declined from 9.7 million in 1960, to 8.5 million in 1970 (Story 417). The colonial wars exacerbated all of these problems, which drained Portugal's money and depleted its population. These difficult circumstances in which Portugal found itself in the 1970's allowed for the Carnation Revolution to triumph, and Portugal's shift away from colonialism.

Transition to Democracy. During the early stages of the democratic transition, Portugal faced significant political uncertainty. After years of devastating conflict and the eventual loss of its colonies, Portugal desperately needed a leader who would facilitate the recovery of the nation. Initially, the

country's future seemed bleak. Portugal experienced a hectic democratic transition period that witnessed several leaders over a short amount of time, representing a variety of interests, from military officers such as Francisco da Costa Gomes to Mário Soares, a member of the socialist party. The MFA leadership promoted the independence of the African colonies, but also had the goal of forming a special relationship with their former possessions. Guinea was the first nation to declare independence from Portugal and the most receptive of the former African colonies to form amicable relations with Portugal. Socialists were more concerned with Portugal's connection with Europe and pushed for the country's full membership into European institutions as a national objective. Despite the variety of political goals, during the beginning years, power primarily oscillated between two parties: the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista*) and the Social Democratic Party (*Partido Social Democrática*) (Macqueen 190). While Portugal had finally made the transition from dictatorship to democracy, this political shift proved to be tumultuous, posing new and difficult issues for modern Portugal. Particularly, Portugal's extensive colonial history represented troubling ideals that would present significant challenges to the country's newly declared democracy.

Conclusions. Given how deeply intertwined Portugal's extensive colonial past is with racism, subjugation and the enslavement of indigenous peoples, it is inevitable that such a history still torments the Portuguese to this day. While in this chapter, I attempted to summarize the centuries of abuse under Portuguese rule in its African colonies, such an overview barely touches the surface of the atrocities and injustices experienced by the local African people. What is missing from this history are the individual stories of the millions of Africans whose lands were invaded and exploited by the Portuguese; the experiences of the men, women and children who were violently kidnapped from their homes and enslaved, subjected by the Portuguese to grueling work in plantations and mines until the day they died; the endless assault of African women by Portuguese colonizers, who treated them as nothing more than

sexual commodities. These countless daily colonial interactions between the unjust colonizer and the indigenous peoples, are what comprise of Portuguese history. Such a troubling colonial past is what Portugal still desperately needs to face.

The end of the Portuguese empire did not signify closure on the reoccurring themes and attitudes connected to colonialism. As Portugal's new government sought to transform the country's political institutions into a democratic system accessible to all Portuguese citizens, at the same time the country was undergoing another momentous change. Although less overt, this transformation would occur at a societal level, having impacts on Portuguese people to this day. As a country that had recently experienced a drastic shift away from the ethical perils of colonialism, the fall of Portugal's empire represented a major fracture in Portuguese identity. Colonialism was an institution that had flourished for centuries under Portuguese rule, and when a moral light was shed on its injustices, many experienced conflicting sentiments. Consequently, Portuguese society was forced to wrestle with a cognitive dissonance about their own problematic history. Some were deeply troubled by colonialism, demonizing those who had participated in its practices. Others still longed for the colonial past, believing the colonies to be an essential part of Portugal. Opinion polls taken in 1978 showed that 20% of respondents believed Portugal could not survive economically without the former colonies (Pinto and Jerónimo 18). This divide created a rupture in Portuguese identity. In order to better understand the themes that have dominated Portuguese attitudes since the fall of the colonial empire, this thesis analyzes the experience of the *retornados*, a group of people who provide a unique perspective on the link between colonialism and contemporary Portuguese identity.

Chapter 2: The *Retornados*

I. Introduction

The past is inextricably intertwined with the present. It is inevitable that many contemporary countries have problematic histories which continue to impact their legacies and haunt their citizens. For example, troubling institutions of the past, such as slave trade, colonialism and civil wars, all still carry a heavy weight on societies today. No matter how long ago these events occurred, the memories and feelings associated with such times are still very much alive in present-day Portugal. While some countries choose to directly confront the difficult themes that comprise their history, providing opportunities for reconciliation, acknowledgement and forgiveness, others choose to bury their past. Unfortunately, the latter represents the case of Portugal, a country that has ignored its deeply problematic colonial history. Instead, the country advances a national rhetoric that romanticizes colonialism, priding itself on the incredible 'discoveries' of early Portuguese explorers, the 'gentle colonizer' characterization of Portuguese expansion and the harmonious multi-racial settlements that were claimed to exist in Africa. As addressed in the previous chapter, such a portrayal is simply not accurate. It is within this chapter, that I will discuss how Portugal's problematic past connects to the present, focusing on the implications of the country's glorified national discourse.

To further a discussion about Portugal's complex and troubling past, I now turn to a faction of Portuguese society that had the closest ties to colonialism: the *retornados*. While a historical background is necessary for an understanding of Portugal's past, the *retornados* are central to my thesis because they provide narratives that challenge the official Portuguese discourse. These narratives, written by *retornada authors,* will be presented in my next chapter, where I will demonstrate that difficult themes such as Portugal's colonial legacy, race, gender and sense of belonging are important for a comprehension of national identity. As I will discuss, *retornado* experiences provide insight that is

imperative to Portugal's past, present and future. Therefore, this chapter includes a broad summary of the *retornados* to allow for a smooth transition into my third chapter, which gives a more in-depth analysis of stories written by *retornadas* about their own experiences.

The *retornados* are a diverse group of people that represent a variety of ethnicities, ages, backgrounds and beliefs. While *retornado* is a label that has been given to a broad range of people, this section clarifies who exactly this group is. Are they migrants or refugees? Are they Africans or Portuguese? As I will discuss in this chapter, the answer is often not entirely clear. Further, this section will examine the hardships the *retornados* faced upon their 'return' to Portugal after the fall of the colonial empire. With minimal support from their relatives living in Portugal, *retornados* struggled with finding access to sustainable jobs, housing and adapting to a culture and lifestyle drastically different from what they had known in Africa. This group of people was stigmatized and rejected by a Portuguese society critical of their role in colonialism, which was an institution deemed immoral by an increasingly democratizing society. I will examine these core issues of the *retornados* alongside the topic of Portuguese colonialism in order to provide context into concurrent themes of colonial legacy that are present in Portuguese society today. Given the difficulty in defining who exactly the *retornados* are, this chapter illustrates that a true understanding of Portuguese past requires a multiplicity of narratives and perspectives.

II. The 'Return'

In the most basic sense, the *retornados* were the group of Portuguese that had settled in the African colonies and who abandoned their homes when violence broke out during the colonial wars. During the years of 1974 to 1979, some 800,000 *retornados* left for Portugal in what became known as the 'decolonization migration.' The overwhelming majority came from the countries of Angola and Mozambique, representing 61% and 33% respectively. (Lubkemann, "Race" 78). During the peak of this

migration, approximately 7,000 people arrived at the Lisbon airport everyday (Peralta 14). They arrived during the climax of Portugal's political uncertainty, to a country with an acute housing shortage that was already at a historical high. Overall, the influx of *retornados* accounted for a 10% increase in Portugal's population, which would further heighten the volatility of the economy and political landscape (Lewis and Williams 182).

While these numbers provide important background information about the *retornados*, they do not offer a comprehensive depiction of their true identity. In reality, many of the people who were clumped into the group of *retornados* did not identify with this label. The name *retornado*, or returnee, does not accurately represent many of these people because a significant minority, about 40%, had been born in Africa and had never set foot in Portugal (Lubkemann, "Race" 79). This concept of 'returning' to a country from which one had never been was contradictory and mistakenly grouped everyone into one sweeping category. Furthermore, the *retornados* were an extremely diverse group, representing a variety of ethnicities, nationalities and experiences. To label all of them under a singular classification makes the error of overgeneralization, erasing important individual identities and replacing them with a broad group characterization. Doing so can provide an unreliable representation of the Portuguese people who left the colonies during the decolonization process. According to Elsa Peralta, the *retornados* embody an array of identities:

> Deslocados, repatriados, desterrados, refugiados da descolonização ou retornados são, em todos os casos, nomes que determinam uma categoria social única e abrangente que, contudo, acolhe no seu seio uma população atravessada por muitas divisões e heterogeneidades. São, com efeito, socialmente muito diversificados estes portugueses que vieram das colónias, evidenciando-se também diferenças nos seus perfis conforme as colónias de fixação. (Peralta 321)[8]

[8] Displaced, repatriated, exiled, refugees from decolonization or returnees are, in all cases, names that determine a unique and comprehensive social category that, welcomes in its midst a population crossed by many divisions and heterogeneities. In fact, these Portuguese who came from the colonies are very diverse socially, and also show differences in their profiles according to their settlement colonies.

Although the *retornados* are often treated as one homogenous group, it is important to note that this is not necessarily the case. Interestingly though, many did not consider Afro-Portuguese people *retornados*. For example, Portugal did not classify Black people who migrated from Cape Verde during this time as *retornados,* which further adds to the inconsistency of this label. Such discrepancies in *retornado* identity and claims to Portuguese citizenship continue to present ongoing challenges to Portuguese national identity to this day. Nonetheless, *retornados* did represent all types of people, from white, to Black, to mixed-race. Throughout history, this group has consistently been referred to as *retornados*, and in this thesis, I also use the term *retornados* to address them. However, I do not use this label without first considering the problems associated with it and the inaccuracies it may present in my research. It is clear that this group cannot be easily summarized under one category, which is important to a broader understanding identity in Portugal.

The *retornados* came from an array of backgrounds and settled in various places across Portugal (see fig. 4). Their 'return' to Portugal resulted in significant implications for Portuguese society, including the recomposition of social hierarchies, a larger liberalization of customs, and an adoption of new languages values and behaviors (Pinto and Faria 6). These changes were not initially welcomed by many Portuguese, as many *retornados* faced hardships with repatriation and integration. A majority of them fled to major cities such as Lisbon, Porto or Faro, where vacant tourist hotels were used to accommodate them. Family ties were important in a successful integration process because they provided vital assistance to returning settlers, which is evident from the 31% of *retornados* who returned to districts where they had been born. While many came back to their families in the north or interior of the country, a significant amount had no family support system to return to (Lewis and Williams 182). Those who had no family connections tended to settle in urban areas because of access to better job opportunities.

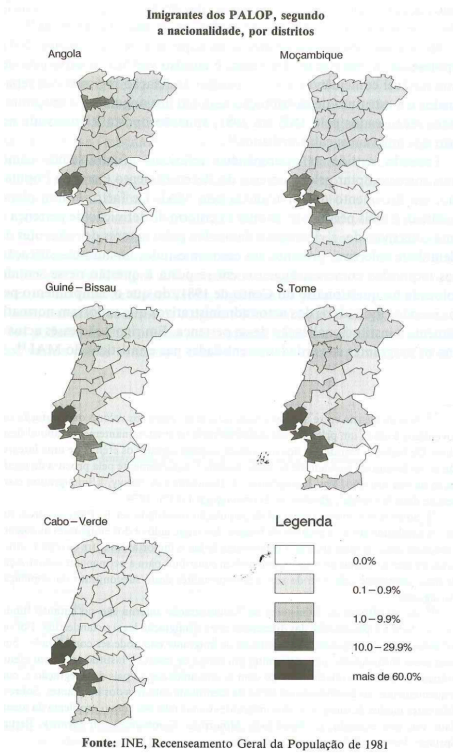


Fig. 4. "Imigrantes dos PALOP, segundo a nacionalidade, por distritos/ Immigrants of PALOP (African Countries of Portuguese Official Language), according to nationality, by district." Saint-Maurice, Ana, and Rui P. Pires. "Descolonização e Migrações: Os imigrantes de PALOP em Portugal." Revista Internacional De Estudos Africanos, no. 10, 11, 1989, pp. 203-226.

However, there was a considerable group of *retornados* who did have family ties, but were rejected by their families and received little to no support from them. Their difficult reintegration was the result of multiple factors, but primarily emerged from a deeply rooted stigma in Portuguese culture. The families who had left their homes to migrate to Africa were perceived as placing themselves above family and culture in order to pursue prosperity in a new land. Such a decision was looked down upon in a society that emphasized traditional familial relationships. Another belief was that *retornados* had chosen a life of ease in Africa, where Africans did all of the work for them, instead of staying in Portugal to work with their families. These perceptions placed serious strains on familial ties and further

added to the challenges of reintegration. Fernando Lages Ribeiro, a trained mechanic repatriated from Angola, explains the rejection *retornados* faced:

> I reached out to family for a place to stay. But the family believed that everyone who came [back] from Africa brought pockets full of money [with them] and that upon arrival, all was pleasant and made easy. However, once they figure out the reality, that our money was miserable pennies, clinking together as if worth much more, they shoo you away, children turning against their parents, parents against children, brother against brother, a family pandemonium, that's the end that comes to all. (Lourenço and Keese)

Particularly in a post-colonial Portugal that was transitioning to democracy, society view the *retornados* as immoral for their role in colonialism, deeming them "minions of colonial oppression" (Lubkemann, "The Moral" 191). This moral stigma resulted in the *retornados* being condemned by both their families and Portuguese society as a whole. Additionally, families of mixed race were often rejected, as racism was still a dominating aspect of daily Portuguese life. These stereotypes were ascribed to all *retornados*, but were particularly felt by those whose families refused to accept them back into their homes. The negative connotations associated with being a *retornado* contributed to a feeling of being an internal stranger in one's own home (Lubkemann, "Race" 76). Unfortunately, these stereotypes permeated Portuguese everyday life, having implications for *retornados* across all spheres of society (Fonseca 655).

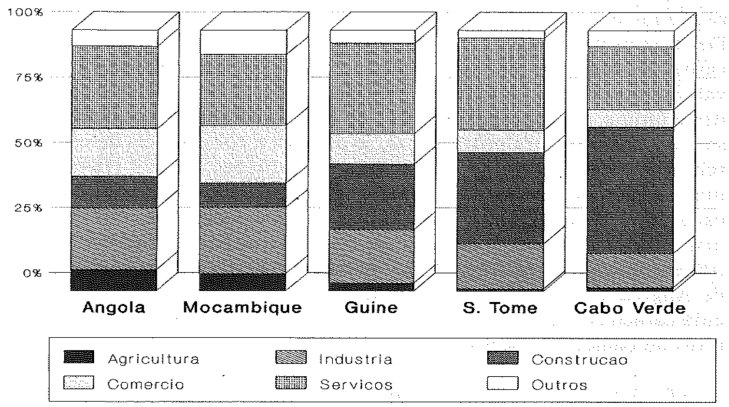
Interestingly, some of these *retornados* had been part of a group of condemned criminals called the *degredados,* which may have also contributed to a negative stigma associated with the larger group of returnees. Anabela Cunha's research concentrates on the experiences of these individuals, whose existence further complicates an understanding of the *retornados.* The system of sending Portuguese who had committed crimes to the colonies in order to serve out their sentences began in the fifteenth century, and would result in the shipment of thousands of convicts to Portugal's African colonies. Such crimes included anything from witchcraft, sodomy, blasphemy and Judaism, to murder, theft and abduction. During the Salazar dictatorship in particular, enemies of the state were exiled to various

prisons throughout the colonies. Therefore, Portuguese colonial settlements in Africa were comprised of a significant number of *degredados*, many whom would choose to remain in Africa after serving their sentences (Cunha 88). This grim historical background behind Portuguese colonial settlements would add another layer of stigmatization for *retornados* migrating to Portugal after 1974.

Upon arrival in Portugal, the *retornados* faced many challenges, one of the most difficult being the financial situation in which they found themselves. A rushed departure from Africa forced them to leave their belongings and homes behind. They came to Portugal with essentially nothing and had to find sustainable jobs in order to survive. Prior work experience was crucial in the types of jobs they could acquire, and colonial affiliation was often a predictor of this experience (see fig. 5). Despite certain variation, it is evident from this table that *retornados* generally occupied low-skilled, low-status positions. More than 95% worked in construction, manufacturing or manual public services while in Africa (Lewis and Williams 181). With few people having prior professional experience, when they arrived to Portugal, many were forced to survive off of low-wage jobs that could barely sustain their families. Moreover, the *retornados* did not represent a highly educated group, with 12% declaring themselves illiterate and only 4% claiming to have received professional training of any kind while in Africa (M. Silva 217). In a country that was already facing economic and political turmoil, an absorption of this many workers into the job market posed challenges to the Portuguese labor force and economy. In years following 1974, the Portuguese labor market deteriorated drastically, which may have been a part of an overall European trend, or the result of a significant increase in unemployment caused by the *retornados* (Guedes 18). Many Portuguese blamed the *retornados*, who they believed to be stealing their jobs and weakening the economy. Whatever the explanation, the slump in Portugal's economy resulted in significant suffering and difficulties particularly felt by the *retornados*, who faced acute adversity from their arrival (Carrington 330).

FIGURA 13

Imigrantes dos PALOP, segundo a nacionalidade, por sector de actividade



Fonte: INE, Recenseamento Geral da População de 1981

Fig. 5. "Imigrantes dos PALOP, segundo a nacionalidade por sector de atividade/Immigrants of PALOP (African Countries of Portuguese Official Language), accordinng to nationality by sector of activity." Saint-Maurice, Ana, and Rui P. Pires. "Descolonização e Migrações: Os imigrantes de PALOP em Portugal." Revista Internacional De Estudos Africanos, no. 10, 11, 1989, pp. 203-226.

Not only did the *retornados* endure hardships in the job market, but they also struggled to obtain affordable housing in a country that simply did not have adequate infrastructure to receive them (Guedes 18). When they first arrived, the Portuguese government placed families with no place to stay in vacant hotels, which was far from a luxurious experience. Entire families were packed into one small room, where they often stayed for months or years on end. They complained of being served dismal food, being unable to exert their rights and being exploited by greedy owners (Lourenço and Keese). Other *retornados* were forced to settle in government-sponsored encampments (*bairros sociais*) on the outskirts of Lisbon, Cascais and Leiria. These neighborhoods, which more resembled shantytowns, were extremely impoverished places that were ethnically mixed. The *bairros* further allowed for the ostracization of the *retornados* from Portuguese society. There, they were stigmatized and deemed as

ethnic others, a stereotype that was reinforced by the press. A leftist press conflated these neighborhoods with gypsy settlements, claiming they were dangerous and brimming with crime. Moreover, the *retornados* were vilified, as stories aired that featured them unlawfully seizing housing and stealing jobs (Lubkemann, "The Moral" 198). Because many of these negative stereotypes towards the *retornados*, Portuguese society was not eager to accept them, continuing the exclusion of *retornados* from everyday Portuguese life and preventing them from truly feeling comfortable as Portuguese citizens.

III. Post-Colonial Portugal: Themes and Attitudes

Reconciling the Past. Portugal's colonial past has posed significant challenges to national identity and overall collective memory. An analysis of such themes requires an understanding between history and memory, two entirely different concepts. Levy and Sznaider clarify the important distinction between the two: "History is a particularized idea of temporal sequences articulating some form of (national) development. Memory, on the other hand, represents a coexistence of simultaneous phenomena and a multitude of pasts," (Levy and Sznaider 12). While history portrays one particular story, memories represent multiple versions of this story. Communities often transmit different memories of the same past, which is a phenomenon that has occurred in post-colonial Portugal. This variation is largely the result of whether past abuses are a concrete part of shared experiences or whether a group lacks proximity to such experiences. Thus, the collective memory of a nation may not be one cohesive memory, but different remembrances from various collections of individuals (Connerton 13). In Portugal, this is true for groups present within Portuguese society, which represent diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, generations and experiences. In this way, the singular mainstream discourse of Portuguese history that has dominated the country's consciousness and rhetoric, is incomplete. What is needed is a comprehensive examination of various historical perspectives that deal with colonial legacy. In this section, I confront the national discourse of Portugal's colonial past through an analysis of the

multidimensional challenges to Portuguese identity after decolonization. These themes are decisive in novels that I will analyze in my third chapter, which are written by *retornada* authors themselves.

Challenges to Portugal's National Identity. Since the 1974 Carnation Revolution, Portugal has undergone significant social change. For example, transitioning from a dictatorship to democracy represents a drastic political shift that affects national thought and expression. Portugal also went from a country of out-migration to a country of incoming migrants over just a few years. On a larger scale, Portugal is a nation that has endured periods of criticism and rejection by the international community, to times of acceptance. Despite these many changes, Portugal has always been a peripheral country within Europe. Boaventura de Sousa Santos claims that the existence of Portugal as a non-central country creates a dilemma in which the nation is unable to overcome its problematic past: "Not being in the center meant lagging behind, and lagging behind, in turn, meant having a problematic past – and the past became an inescapable part of the present," (B. Santos, "Tales" 404). 'Lusofonia' has become an expressive post-colonial term used to compensate for this predicament. It refers to the eight existing Lusophone countries, which are thought to make up for Portugal's irreversible peripheral location in the context of Europe. 'Lusofonia' has become a term that reclaims centrality through Portugal's ties to Brazil and Angola, countries where this relationship has not historically been guaranteed (Arenas 159).

Consequently, Portugal's consciousness of its peripheral position has prevented the country from truly reconciling its past in a meaningful way. For example, in a discussion of national identity, there has been an emphasis placed on what the Portuguese have given to others and not what they have received from others. These attitudes arise from Portugal's colonial history, where ideas of 'luso-tropicalism' and miscegenation dominated Portuguese thought for decades (Almeida 182). Unfortunately, these concepts still infiltrate national discourse and Portugal's education system today. In 2012, a United Nations report argued that textbooks and national curricula do not offer an accurate portrayal of Portugal's colonial past

or provide any recognition of the positive contributions of Africans and Afro-descendants to the formation of Portuguese society (Arenas 357). Undoubtedly, a country that has yet to heal from its own wounds of the past cannot accurately teach the history of such traumas. Portugal's colonial past is a topic that is still deeply uncomfortable for many, especially those who experienced this history firsthand.

Due to the unease associated with Portugal's colonial past, over time Portugal has witnessed a silencing of those involved in maintaining the empire. This phenomenon is particularly visible with veterans of the colonial wars, where a collective amnesia exists surrounding their experiences and roles in the conflict. Veterans feel a great deal of deep-rooted guilt and shame regarding their participation in a war to uphold the colonial regime. These feeling are intensified by a society that actively has chosen not to engage with these difficult memories. For example, the colonial war is virtually absent from Portugal's history curriculum in state schools and only a small number of textbooks include a few lines about the conflict (Campos 41). As a result, an important part of Portugal's past remains unresolved, which makes the possibility of the nation moving on quite difficult. Only recently have the memories of veterans been put on display for the nation, as forms of recognition through the press, television programs and various organizations have allowed them to share their voices (Campos 156). Although it took some time for these initiatives to be taken, they are nonetheless a gradual step in the right direction for a nation that needs to confront its true national identity. However, there are still serious issues that the country must approach to be able to truly come to terms with its past. The memories of the *retornados* provide important insight into this problematic history.

Challenges to *Retornado* Identity. The *retornados* serve as an interesting example of an identity crisis. One of the largest predicaments for this group has been the question of nationality. Are they Portuguese or African? How does race affect this delineation? Do they adapt well to Portugal or do they long for their past lives in Africa? The answers to such dilemmas are difficult and extremely complex.

Race is a topic that is fundamental in the discussion of the *retornados.* The color of one's skin is an element that further confounds the issue of identity. *Retornados* that are white and claim Angolanness, for instance, challenge the politics associated with mainstream post-colonial discourses on power and belonging. For a country that had just washed its hands of its African colonial subjects, white *retornados* who claim African identity present a precarious status in Portuguese society (Øien 186). On the other hand, Black or mixed-race *retornados* find it difficult to claim Portugueseness for multiple reasons. Primarily, they feel rejection from a society whose values have been still deeply entangled in its problematic colonial past. In Portugal, Afro-Portuguese have been treated more as immigrants than as true Portuguese citizens, which adds to the marginalization they've experienced (Peralta 326). Ultimately, *retornados* of all races have had their identities questioned by a society that feels threatened and ashamed of the past that they represented. In this way, many *retornados* are prevented from fully laying claim to their own identities because of Portugal's desire to erase its painful history.

While Portugal attempted to forget its troubling past, many *retornados* feel a deep nostalgia for their lost lives in Africa. For example, many parents actively try to preserve the good memories of Africa for their children:

> um cuidado – intencional ou não – por parte dos pais em preservar as "boas memórias", passando-as aos seus filhos, no desiderato de ter essas memórias como aquelas que pautam as histórias do passado africano, procurando-se escamotear muitas vezes alguns dos aspectos inegavelmente negativos da passagem dos portugueses por África, assim como os contornos da saída de África, nomeadamente os últimos episódios dessa vivência. (Machado 82)[9]

This longing to preserve good memories in Africa acts in direct conflict with the national desire to forget the colonial past. Furthermore, the *retornados'* nostalgia for the past raises difficult issues for their sense of belonging. If Africa is still considered "home" for many *retornados*, then that home is located in a

[9] The parents took care – whether intentionally or unintentionally – to preserve the "good memories", passing them on to their children, with the desire of having these memories be the ones that guide their stories of an African past, trying to hide many of the undeniably negative aspects from the time of the Portuguese in Africa, as well as the contours of leaving Africa, namely the final episodes of that experience.

past that is no longer available for return (Øien 192). This predicament makes the process of ever truly moving on from the past quite arduous, as memories of their African lives may prevent them from feeling acceptance and belonging in their new homes in Portugal. For Irène dos Santos, there seems to be a generational difference between *retornados* born in the colonies in the decades of 1930-40, versus their children born in the colonies who repatriated to Portugal as adolescents. The older generation who was rooted in Africa for generations, feels intense ties to Africa. They view themselves as protagonists in a collective history of colonization and thus, have a strong sense of loyalty to their homeland in Africa. Their children who grew up in the colonies experience a similar attachment to Africa, but their forced migration to mainland Portugal at a young age makes them more resilient to adapting to a new environment (I. Santos 4). Nevertheless, all *retornados* were faced with a serious challenge to their sense of belonging when they left Africa, resulting in an acute identity crisis.

The experience of Carmen, a white Angolan *retornada,* provides a perfect example of this lack of belonging. Carmen came to Portugal in 1975, at the peak of migration for *retornados.* In the beginning, she struggled to create a home for herself and develop a sense of belonging in Portugal. For Carmen, and many others, her Angolan identity was very important. However, a multitude of differences between Angola and Portugal made it challenging to adapt. In Angola, the lifestyle differed from Portugal in that it was much more comfortable and free. Women experienced greater autonomy and equality within society, where they were allowed to study and play sports with the boys. The dress code was more casual for women, who could wear mini-skirts and bikinis (Machado 92). Carmen struggled with leaving this kind of life behind. Another challenge she faced was leaving behind her social network in Angola and making new friends in a completely new setting, which proved to be a tough task. Moreover, she felt that she was a reminder of what Portugal could no longer be and knew that she represented a past that the Portuguese wanted to distance themselves from. However, Carmen's past was

not something she wanted to give up herself, and for many years she planned to return to Angola. She clung to her Angolan identity tightly, but the longer she remained in Portugal, the more she felt it slipping away. She automatically could be labeled as Portuguese and deemed one of "us" in Portugal because of her white skin, but her whiteness also marked her as non-Angolan, which was deeply conflicting for her identity. For Carmen, leaving Angola was a personal trauma that changed her entire vision of the world and her own self-perception.

Unfortunately, these hardships are similar to the experiences of many *retornados,* who wrestled with their own identity and felt that they did not entirely belong to Portugal (Øien 194). Carmen's struggles are not unique, and as my second chapter will demonstrate, these issues of belonging are important to the identity of other *retornados* as well, which Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso, and Aida Gomes illustrate in their writing.

The Silence. Although their initial integration was quite difficult, despite all odds, the *retornados* were able to survive and even flourish within Portuguese society. They adjusted quickly after their 'return', as many succeeded academically and placed well in the job market. By 1981, *retornados* represented over 14% of all professionals in banking, financial service and insurance industries. They also occupied just under 11% of all civil service positions in the country (Lubkemann, "The Moral" 204). In the political sphere, they also prevailed. In 1976, the *retornados* created their only political party called *o Centro Social Independente* (CSI), and in 1975, they established their own media organ, *o Jornal O Retornado* (Peralta 323).

Despite these early accomplishments and visibility across Portugal, within a few years, the *retornados* would completely disappear from the public perception. The name *retornado* went from being a ubiquitous term that had a prominent space in Portuguese daily life, to not being used or discussed anywhere. During the decades beginning in the early 80s and leading all the way up to the late

90s, the *retornados* seemed to completely vanish. They were particularly silent in the field of literature written in the 70s, 80s and early 90s. Although Portugal began to revisit its African colonial experience, the voices and perspectives of the *retornados* were absent from the discourse until much later. Writers during this time period focused on the theme of the colonial wars and redemption. The authors of these novels were not *retornados* themselves, but they often had a connection with colonial Africa. For example, the famous author, António Lobo Antunes, served as an amputation doctor to the Portuguese troops in the Angolan colonial war. In his novels, Antunes writes extensively on the topic of the colonial wars and the fall of the empire. Many of these authors during the 70s and 80s denounced the violence of the colonial wars and engaged in a form of catharsis of memory, which would serve as an important first step in the healing of the Portuguese identity (Gould, "Decanting" 183). Yet, this remembrance was incomplete without the perspectives of the *retornados.* While these authors were able to provide an interesting analysis about certain elements of Portuguese colonialism, there were still a variety of difficult topics that were left untouched. Due to their unique experiences in Africa, the *retornados* are able to truly address many of these issues that dealt with identity, such as race, gender, colonial legacy and sense of belonging.[10]

Only in the past twenty years have the *retornados* surfaced as prominent voices in Portuguese colonial discourse. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, Portugal experienced an explosion of fictional literature written by *retornados*, which placed a far greater emphasis on colonial memory. This 'new novel', as described by Isabel Ferreira Gould, creates links between colonial legacy, identity, family line and race (Gould, "Decanting" 191). Many of these novels engage in a form of "marketing of nostalgia",

[10] While the *retornados* provide decisive insight into Portuguese national identity, it is important to note that reconciliation of the past is possible not only in the Global North. For Africans who live in formerly colonized Portuguese nations, confrontation with this past of abuse under the Portuguese is necessary to better understand national identity in countries such as Mozambique and Angola. In many ways, this process of reconciliation has already begun. For an example, please see Ruy Guerra's film re-enactment *Mueda, Memory and Massacre*. Instituto Nacional De Cinema Production Company, 1982.

where they express a longing for an African past. They display a happy, harmonious experience in Africa that was tragically taken away from them after the revolution (I. Azevedo 241). Other perspectives are more critical of the Portuguese imperial legacy and seek to uncover some extremely painful truths about the realities of Portuguese colonialism. The novels that I will be analyzing in my third chapter by Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso, and Aida Gomes, fall into this second category, as they apply a more critical lens in their portrayal of colonialism. While the two types of narratives that emerged were different in many ways, they were both crucial to a collective national memory of the past. After decades of silence from the *retornados,* this new body of literature appeared unexpectedly, acting as a shock to a society that was still in the process of healing from the past. Many Portuguese citizens, particularly those from younger generations, gained their knowledge about Portugal's colonial empire strictly from the national colonial discourse. Many of the new novels written by *retornados* completely challenge this narrative of the past, reopening old wounds and forcing the nation to come to terms with its problematic history.

Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso and Aida Gomes. During the regime, Salazar sought to promote a very particular version of Portugal, one which emphasized the values of Catholicism and loyalty to country. These ideals projected strict adherence to gender roles, creating an environment in which sexism pervaded all aspects of life. The place of woman was reserved to the domestic sphere, where she was expected to graciously perform her feminine chores and uphold the social and moral values of the family (Kendrick 46). For Salazar, there existed a natural order, and women were conveniently situated towards the bottom of the hierarchy. Because of what he deemed as 'differences that result from women's nature and the welfare of the family', Salazar believed that women were not entitled to equality. Moreover, for Portuguese women living in the colonies, it was expected that they act as men's helpmates in the progressive taming of the colonies, where their

maternal presence would be crucial in civilizing and educating the native populations (A. Ferreira 53). It is this setting in which Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso, and Aida Gomes grew up. As women, this patriarchal atmosphere contributed to the way in which they perceived the world around them, ultimately resulting in such themes being displayed in their writing.

Isabela Figueiredo was born in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique (modern-day Maputo), in 1963 to two Portuguese settlers. She spent her formative years growing up in Africa, where she was exposed to colonial life early on. At the age of 13 her parents sent her to Portugal for her own safety after Mozambique gained its independence in 1974. In Portugal, she spent the next several years living with relatives and continuing her education. Figueiredo excelled in her studies, and later went on to study Languages and Modern Literature at the *Universidade Nova de Lisboa* in Lisbon. She then specialized in Women's Studies at the *Universidade Aberta*, where she gained important knowledge that would prepare her for her career as a writer (Gould "A Daughter's" 133).

As an acclaimed author, Figueiredo has produced many successful works, one of her most distinguished being *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais*. This piece of literature traces her time as a young white girl growing up in Mozambique, as well as the challenges she faced upon her 'return' to a country that she had never seen before. Although the work itself is described as a fictional memoir, undoubtedly the stories and feelings expressed in the narrative arise from her own experiences and memories. As Figueiredo grew up, she began to wrestle with her complicated past and ties to colonialism, which manifested itself in her difficult relationship with her father. Her memoir challenges the overwhelming national narrative that her father and many others held. Figueiredo claims:

> I feel that I do what needs to be done…We are always sweeping colonialism under the rug. What we like to say most when we are accused of our overseas past, is that our colonialism was gentle, and that it was nothing like that of the British. (D. Silva)

Caderno de Memórias Coloniais offers a shocking depiction of the reality of Portuguese colonialism through the eyes of a young girl who witnessed its abuses and violence first-hand. Though controversial due to its staunch criticism of Portugal's past, Figueiredo's memoir has received astoundingly positive reviews. Moreover, it has triggered an outpouring of reactions from the diverse community of Portuguese *retornados* and their descendants, which act as a testament to the memoir's relevance within modern Portuguese discourse (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 8).

Dulce Maria Cardoso's novel, *O Retorno,* also directly addresses the prevailing national discourse. Her experiences and childhood memories growing up in Angola have a significant influence on her writing and the stories she seeks to tell. While Cardoso was born in Trás-os-Montes, a small town in Northern Portugal, in 1964, she and her family emigrated to Luanda when she was an infant. As a white Portuguese settler's daughter raised in an African colony, many of her childhood memories laid the framework for her future career as an author, as she claims: "I did not do any research to write *O Retorno*. I had it all inside me," (Cardoso, "Dulce"). When Cardoso was 10 years old, her family fled Angola and returned to Portugal, a country that she had no recollection of. Initial reintegration into Portuguese society proved to be difficult for her and her family, as they lived in a hotel for some time before they were able to afford housing. This experience provided inspiration for the plot of *O Retorno*, which is a story that shares many similarities with her own life as a *retornada.* Through her writing, Cardoso engages with her own past as a child in Angola, as well as through her difficult journey integrating into Portugal after the fall of the empire. Cardoso's portrayal of the various themes that characterize Portuguese colonialism stands to contrast a glorified Portuguese colonial discourse.

Another novel that starkly contrasts with the national discourse is Aida Gomes's *Os Pretos de Pousaflores*. Not only is Aida Gomes a woman, but her Afro-Portuguese identity provides her with a unique and valuable perspective through which to view Portuguese colonialism. She was born in Huambo, Angola, to a white Portuguese father and Black mother. In 1985 she came to Portugal as a child, and later moved to the Netherlands where she completed a Master's degree in Historical and Political Processes in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a *retornada* of African descent, her race is integral in how she experiences and interprets the world. In *Os Pretos de Pousaflores*, Gomes attempts to shed light on the grave injustices of Portuguese colonialism by giving a voice to those most abused: Black people. While *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais* and *O Retorno* are works that focus on the struggles of the white returnee, Gomes's novel gives priority to the Black *retornada.* Particularly, *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* explores the adversity and violence that Black women face. In an interview, Gomes describes how she observed a "narrative that was dominated by stories of the white, middle-class *retornado* who had lost everything and discovered a new understanding of Portugal," (Gomes, "Mar"). *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* completely shifts this narrative to highlight the experiences of Black *retornadas.* Because *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* is a narrative written by an Afro-Portuguese woman about Afro-Portuguese women, this novel is important in amplifying the voices of those who have been systemically marginalized in a deeply racist society, thus, filling in gaps of understanding in post-colonial literature. In the following chapter, I will further address the importance of Aida Gomes as an Afro-Portuguese voice in the greater context of the Portuguese national discourse and identity.

It is clear that *retornadas* provide valuable perspectives that challenge the unreliable national discourse, their memories and experiences adding a very authentic element to their

writing. The narratives written by these three women are particularly important because they help fill in a scholarly and historical gap that has previously been dominated by men. In my next chapter, I will delve deeper into these novels written by Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso and Aida Gomes, which will allow for a discussion of the difficult themes pertinent to Portugal's national identity.

IV. Conclusions

While the Portuguese colonial regime came to an end nearly fifty years ago, colonialism still lives on in the hearts and minds of the Portuguese. A centuries-long institution of abuse and devastation does not simply disappear overnight. The atrocities that the Portuguese committed continue to have lasting effects on the generations to come, which is evident from the explosion of literature in the early 2000s written by *retornados* that reexamine the colonial past. Although the Portuguese national discourse has repeatedly ignored the problematic themes that comprise the country's history, it is both important and necessary to reconsider this narrative.

The particular perspectives of *retornados* provide a valuable lens in which the country can directly confront and reconcile its own colonial experience. Though painful, the truths about Portugal's colonial history are essential for the Portuguese to hear. Only through a retrospective investigation into the past can the nation truly understand and reconcile its own national identity. In this next chapter, I will highlight stories of *retornados*, written by *retornada* women themselves, whose experiences provide a uniquely human element to the greater context of this Portuguese historical overview. What is often lost in historiographical investigations is the individual, which can leave the past with a sensation of one-dimensionality. What my first two chapters may lack in regards to comprehensive examples of the human experience within a colonial and post-colonial society, my final chapter will make up for through a rich analysis of narratives written by and about *retornados*. I incorporate fictional literature

written by Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso and Aida Gomes into this thesis in order to place the experiences of those who have lived through such history at the forefront of discussion.

Ch 3: *Retornadas* in the Literature: Challenges to National Identity

I. Introduction

The *Museu do Aljube Resistência e Liberdade* is a museum in Lisbon dedicated to the memory of the fight against the Salazar dictatorship. This museum was erected in 2015 in the former prison for political enemies of the state during the Estado Novo. It is important because it seeks to confront Portugal's collective amnesia of its dictatorial past. I had the opportunity of visiting the *Museu do Aljube Resistência e Liberdade* during my time in Lisbon, which I found to be an emotional and meaningful experience for my understanding of Portuguese identity. The museum's mission is to give a voice to the victims of the regime, intending to promote truth over silence. In this way, it attempts to encourage the constructing of a responsible citizenship through the process informing people about the past and acknowledging a deeply painful history. This process consequently helps to restore a collective memory to the citizens, in their plurality. It is this same mission that I hope to accomplish in my thesis. While projects similar to the *Museu do Aljube* have been approached by Portugal, which emphasize the experiences of the Portuguese under the Salazar regime, a major gap still exists in regards to colonial remembrances. After all, the "future is created in the present with the memory of the past" ("Resistência e Liberdade"). In this chapter, I now approach Portugal's troubling colonial past through the collective memories of *retornada* women, whose experiences and writing seek to break this collective amnesia.

While Chapters 1 and 2 provide an in-depth historical analysis of Portuguese colonialism through past research in the academic field, this chapter takes an entirely different approach to the various themes and attitudes previously discussed. Chapter 3 consists of a comprehensive investigation into fictional literary works about Portuguese colonialism, which allows me to connect a deeply troubling and painful Portuguese past to the prevailing national discourse.

Specifically, I focus on three fictional literary works written by *retornadas,* whose valuable perspectives act to challenge prior national discourse that paint the Portuguese as 'good colonizers.' Before a discussion of these three important pieces of literature is possible, it is first necessary to explain how and why these works were produced.

Portugal has witnessed various types of literary narratives regarding its colonial history, all of which have their own significance and place within the national discourse. After the 1974 Carnation Revolution, various novels began to appear that featured Portuguese colonialism. Many of these works surfaced in the late 1970s and continued through the 80s and 90s. Authors of these texts including, Manuel Alegre, António Lobo Antunes, Carlos Vale Ferraz, José Martins Garcia, Lídia Jorge, João de Melo, Álamo Oliveira and Wanda Ramos, placed heavy emphasis on the 1961-1974 colonial wars, seeking to denounce the violence of the wars and invest in a catharsis of memory (Gould, "Decanting" 183).

While the voices of the *retornados* were silent for an extended period of Portugal's post-colonial history, beginning in the twenty-first century, the world began to witness an emergence of *retornado* narratives. Amongst these *retornados* perspectives, two starkly different strands of literature appeared. One portrayed an idyllic version of colonialism, attempting to illustrate happier times in Africa. These novels are marked by their sepia covers depicting images of African landscapes, which create a sense of familiarity and sentimental appeal for the reader. They target an audience that was born in Africa, inviting them to revisit the emotions associated with daily colonial life. Consequently, the term "marketing nostalgia" represents these types of literary works, which aim to attract an audience that longs for the 'good old days' in Africa and the better times associated with colonialism. However, such accounts fail to accurately depict the numerous issues associated with Portugal's history, instead creating a narrative that paints the

white colonizer as a force of good who was needed to help civilize the indigenous peoples (Ribeiro).

The second type of these *retornado* narratives represents a stark departure from the idyllic novels. Rather than emphasize nostalgia for colonial times, these novels highlighted memories of the long-term presence of the Portuguese in Africa, the violence of daily colonial life and the shocking abuses of local African populations. Authors such as Maria Isabel Barreno, Teolinda Gersão, Francisco Camacho, Eduardo Bettencourt Pinto and Miguel Sousa Tavares, focused on issues of colonial legacy and belonging, especially relating to Portuguese settlers who 'returned' to Portugal during the decolonization process. Isabel Ferreira Gould describes these novels as narratives of decantation, which is in reference to their process of filtering and settling memories of the past in order to redress identity (Gould, "Decanting" 183). Because these new novels were written by *retornados* themselves, they could directly confront the national discourse through their own lived stories and experiences (Ribeiro). Interestingly, this new corpus of literature was dominated by *retornadas*, which contrasts with a prior discourse overshadowed by male authors. The sudden explosion of decanting literature written by *retornados,* seemed to stem from a place of suppressed emotion that finally demanded the spotlight to challenge and correct the prevailing historical narrative. In this way, literature written by these *retornado* authors acts as a catharsis of memory that was intended to confront the problematic prevailing colonial discourse (V. Azevedo 50).

It is this second type of colonial narrative, of literature written by *retornados*, that I will focus on in this chapter. By concentrating on works that challenge Portugal's national discourse, I am better able to analyze the complexities and themes that comprise of contemporary Portuguese identity. The concept of identity encompasses one's memories, experiences,

relationships, and values, which culminate in one's sense of self. For many scholars, identity is composed of one's individuality (e.g., Gaertner and Sedikides; Hoyle, Kernis, Leary, and Baldwin; Swann and Bosson) and group membership (e.g., Brewer; Gaertner and Dovidio; Tajfel and Turner). Others, such as Judith Butler, claim identity is a performative act constructed through constant repetition (Butler 520). I build off of this past scholarship and explore the four main elements of race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy to analyze Portuguese identity. These components are essential in my research, because they play a major role in daily interactions and attitudes of modern Portuguese society. The works *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais* (2009), by Isabela Figueiredo, *O Retorno* (2011), by Dulce Maria Cardoso, and *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* (2011), by Aida Gomes, extensively discuss these four themes. Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes are women who grew up in the Portuguese African colonies, which makes their experiences essential in their storytelling and confrontation of the national discourse. As Patrícia Martinho Ferreira explains, these novels "can be read as counternarratives to the political discourse that prefers to celebrate a cosmopolitan, inclusive, contemporary Portugal that supposedly is neither racist nor xenophobic, instead of questioning the contradictions and complexities of post-revolutionary and post-imperial Portugal," (P. Ferreira 159). Not only does Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes's writing challenge past narratives about Portuguese colonialism, but the fact that these three authors are women who grew up in a highly patriarchal society adds another important factor in their writing. In order to recognize the significance these three women's perspectives, it is important to understand the setting in which these authors grew up.

Within Salazar's Portugal, men had considerably more rights before the law than women. While, women were relegated to the domestic sphere, men dominated all other aspects of

society. Due to their subordinate role in society, women were excluded from many of the basic privileges and activities that men were granted. Within Portuguese society, a heavy emphasis was placed on women as being mothers. The mother played an important role in transmitting the values that make the nation grow, such as religion, love, honesty, obedience and dedication to one's work (Kendrick 46). As caretakers of the home, women were often prevented from taking part in the public sphere, which resulted in the continuing cycle of oppression. For example, in 1970, 68% of housewives in the 20-54 age group were officially registered as such, and as the sole custodians of the home and children, this made the possibility of having a profession outside of the household quite difficult. In a speech given by Salazar in 1933, he discusses the state's view on working women: "We defend the argument that the work of the married woman, and generally even that of the single women, within her family and without responsibility for it, must not be encouraged; there has never been a good homemaker that did not have an enormous amount of work to do" (A. Ferreira 15). However, this expectation of men as the 'breadwinners' of the family was entirely unrealistic in a country that faced issues of poverty and a failing economy. Undoubtedly, many women needed to work difficult jobs in order to survive. Nonetheless, most women's lives were controlled by their husbands, who allowed them little opportunity to make their own choices. Women were forbidden to leave the country without permission from their husbands and unless they were the head of the household, they did not have the right to vote. Moreover, women's access to civil service positions were also limited.

The gender roles and sexism that was enforced by Salazar not only held its grip on mainland Portugal, but these unsettling ideals also made their way to the colonies, causing even more oppression and discrimination. It is the deeply patriarchal colonial world that Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes were raised in, making their perspectives as women authors even more

compelling. As *retornadas* who lived through such troubling times, they incorporate valuable details about the realities they faced living in the colonies of Angola and Mozambique into their own narratives. I now turn to these stories to further my discussion on Portuguese national identity.

Caderno de Memórias Coloniais is unique because it is the only fictional memoir that I analyze. In this autofictional work, Figueiredo offers an extremely critical portrayal of the Portuguese African colonies through her own experiences growing up in Lourenço Marques. The narrative is written from a reflective first-first person perspective, in which she describes various memorable events in her own childhood as young Isabela. The narrative is particularly attentive to the relationship between Isabela and her father, which proves to be a point of contention throughout the autobiography. This father-daughter relationship offers rich material for my analysis of identity, and is a topic I will explore further in this chapter. *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais* is an important work because it demonstrates the violence of everyday colonial life through the sheer power of graphic and striking language (Ribeiro).

While Figueiredo's writing positions herself at the center of the narrative, in *O Retorno*, Cardoso's literary voice is expressed through the lens of a young boy. This novel is a story about Rui, a fifteen-year-old Portuguese boy who is forced to leave behind his life in Luanda and move to Portugal in 1975. Rui, along with his mother and sister, arrive in Lisbon with nothing, and resort to living in a hotel for months while they await the arrival of his father. This poignant story is about a maturing young teenager who struggles with his own identity, while also dealing with the detrimental loss of his home in Angola. Cardoso's work provides an authentic depiction of the true sentiments and themes that illustrate what exactly it means to be a *retornado*, which allows for a larger debate about Portugal's colonial past.

Instead of concentrating on a singular point of view, Gomes's writing shifts between various characters. *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* follows the life of Silvério and his three biracial children, Justino, Belmira and Ercília, each of whom have different African mothers. When war breaks out in Angola, their family flees to Pousaflores, Portugal, the small town where Silvério grew up. Through this complex and gripping story, Gomes tells a sad tale about racial injustice, mistreatment and sexual violence against women, and failure to find belonging in a new home. While her writing jumps back and forth between various perspectives, she primarily emphasizes the experiences of Afro-Portuguese women and the struggles they face in a post-colonial environment. Specifically, the story lines of Belmira and Ercília are significant in underscoring just how difficult it was to be a woman of color during this time period, especially as a *retornada* adjusting to life in Portugal. *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* offers a troubling depiction of colonial and post-colonial life in Portugal, which directly opposes the 'good colonizer' narrative.

I've chosen to analyze these three literary works, not only because they seek to confront the prevailing national discourse, but also because I believe *retornadas*' perspectives on Portuguese colonialism are profoundly valuable. The perpetual discrimination, abuse, violence and intolerance that women have faced throughout history is pervasive and indisputable. However, Salazar's Portugal offers a prime example of patriarchy in its clearest form, as women suffered from a deeply sexist and inequitable society. Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes are women who lived through such times, and as they grew up, they became acutely aware of the injustices faced not only by Portuguese women, but African women as well. Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes applied this critical lens to their own lives, in which they grappled with how their role in colonial Africa connected to the idyllic childhood memories they had there.

This chapter will focus on the abuses that these women witnessed and the challenges associated with being a *retornado.* An investigation into the themes of race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy that present themselves in these three literary works will allow for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary national identity and what it means to be Portuguese. In Portugal, identity is complex and multilayered. According to Santos, the Portuguese settler experienced a double identity as being both a colonizer and colonized, as a dominating force, but also receiving constant criticism from other nations (B. Santos, "Between" 144). How does this duality affect one's concept of self within the greater context of colonialism? Moreover, an identity crisis for the *retornados* presents itself in several ways. Are they refugees, returnees or *desalojados*?[11] Are they African, Portuguese or both? Specifically, Afro-Portuguese *retornados* are "doubly marginalized in being foreign/immigrant/unwanted guest[s] and wom[e]n, and resist colonial fantasies of whiteness and patriarchy from within the metropolitan centre" (Mendes 734). Such conceptions of identity provoke a discussion about perplexing and difficult themes such as race, gender, belonging and colonial legacy. Through an investigation into these topics, I hope to directly challenge the historical discourse that has long dominated Portuguese society, disputing the idea that Portugal was the 'good colonizer.'

II. Contesting 'Luso-Tropic' Thinking About Race

Racism. Race is a theme that is central to *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais*, *O Retorno* and *Os Pretos de Pousaflores.* As discussed in the previous chapter, Portuguese national discourse painted Portuguese colonialism as a gentle form of colonialism. The Portuguese were considered the 'good colonizer', in that they treated their subjects well and had an openness for

[11] Homeless

intermixing with the native populations. Indeed, the Portuguese were the only colonial power that did not condemn interracial relations with their subjects, which was an attitude popularized by 'luso-tropicalism' (T. Silvia 27). Despite the strong grip that this historical delusion had on Portuguese rhetoric and beliefs, it is clear that a deep-seated racism permeated colonial life. This racism was rooted in the country's long history with enslavement of native populations and more recent forms of servitude, which was visible in both overt and intricate structures. The three works by Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes, place a critical lens on race, completely defying the preexisting discourse that claims Portuguese colonizers were accepting of all people.

All three of these stories depict racist sentiments exhibited by the parental figures. In *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais*, Isabela's father works as a chief electrician in Mozambique, who hires and interacts with Africans on a daily basis. His racist beliefs are apparent by his perception of his workers:

> A white man was expensive because you couldn't beat him… A white man was good for being boss, for giving orders, supervising, making the lazy bums work, as they did nothing without being forced to… the darky bastard didn't like working. He earned just enough to eat and drink the next week, especially to drink. Then he stayed in his hut stretched out on a flea-ridden sleeping mat, fermenting cashew or cane liquor, while darky women worked for him, with children on their backs. (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 35)[12]

For young Isabela, such ways of thinking are justified as the 'natural order of things.' According to her father, Black people existed to served white people, and white people gave orders to Black people. While Isabela's father is portrayed throughout the novel as overtly racist, racism also existed in subtle, yet equally problematic forms as well. In *O Retorno*, Rui's father uses many offensive words to describe Africans. For example, he claims that Black people are *matumbo*, or ignorant, for not being able to pronounce Portuguese names. Learning these racists beliefs from

[12] All English-language translations from Figueiredo's memoir are taken from Notebook of Colonial Memories, translated by Anna M. Klobucka and Phillip Rothwell, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Press, 2015.

his father, Rui believes that all Black people are lazy, arrogant, stupid and ungrateful (Cardoso, "*O Retorno*" 21).[13] Unfortunately, in the case of both young Isabela and Rui, their parents' prejudices have an influence on them, affecting their own understandings of the world.

Growing up in a deeply prejudiced colonial environment with parents who reinforce these negative stereotypes, it is inevitable that Rui and Isabela begin to learn and reciprocate the racism they see. A childhood moment that exemplifies this indoctrination for Rui is when he and Lee, one of his white friends, are playing soccer with a Black boy. In the middle of the game, Lee calls the boy a "darky shit", an extremely offensive insult that results in the boy leaving the field and never playing with them again. Although Rui is not the one who used this language, he never questions Lee and does nothing to stand up for the boy. Ultimately, he is passive in a society that not only permits such racism, but encourages it (Cardoso, "*O Retorno*" 25). A similarly striking moment in *Caderno de Memórias Colonias* is when Isabela slaps her mixed-race classmate during fourth-grade recess. She describes the act as premeditated, completely understanding that she would have no repercussions because she was white and the girl was Black: "I told her, you got what you had coming, and I went off into the playground, totally aware of the infamy I committed, that act of power I didn't understand and didn't agree with," (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 61). This incident demonstrates just how easy it is for Isabela to emulate the racism that she sees around her, as this type of behavior would have no consequences in an inherently racist society. However, even though she is influenced by it, this does not mean she accepts the power that comes with the color of her skin.

[13] All translations of *O Retorno* are my own, made after careful consideration of shades of meaning. However, the process of capturing exactly what the author intended in an English adaptation is impossible in many cases, making my translations admittedly imperfect.

While in many cases these characters reciprocate the racism they witness around them, occasionally, they engage in certain acts of resistance against the predominant norms. As young Isabela grows up, she slowly begins to realize that her parents' perception of Africans is wrong. One incident that defies their racist beliefs is at the age of seven, when she goes to a movie theater with her parents. In the theater, Black people were not allowed to sit in the cushioned seats in the back, which left only the benches in the very front available for them. According to Isabela's parents, "A darky over in the front section never looked back with good intentions. He either gawked at white women, against the laws of nature, or looked for something to steal, or exuded hatred" (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 52). With this in mind, Isabela concocts a plan to get rid of her much-hated ring that her mother forced her to wear: she would drop the ring and let it roll into the 'darky section,' where it would be irretrievable. However, her idea does not go as expected, and she is stunned when a Black man finds her ring, and walks through each row asking if someone lost it. This event challenges Isabela's preconception of Black people, planting a doubt that would continue to grow as she aged. Throughout her life, she struggles to find a place in a reality that she cannot quite understand or accept. Consequently, she engages in acts that defy racialized norms and beliefs, such as the many times she sells mangos to Africans at a cheap price. While she knows that her parents would never condone such behavior, she does it anyway claiming "Selling mangoes at the gate, hidden from my mother, was the act of disobedience I most liked." (Figueiredo "*Notebook* 44). These seeds of defiance would continue to expand as she matured and began to see her parents' racism for what it was, ultimately resulting in a deep divide between her and her father.

While *O Retorno* and *Caderno de Memórias Colonias* both follow white characters who struggle with becoming products of the racist colonial environments in which they are raised, in

Os Pretos de Pousaflores Gomes traces the lives of those who are victims of this injustice. Particularly, her portrayal of the experiences of Justino, Belmira and Ercília when they move to Portugal shows the prevalence of racism in society. The title of the novel, which means 'the darkies of Pousaflores', is suggestive of the racial challenges these three mixed-race children face as essentially the only Black people living in the small town of Pousaflores. Throughout their lives, these siblings experience a multitude of abuses and discrimination simply due to the color of their skin. For example, on their first day of school in Pousaflores, the schoolchildren berate them with insults, yelling "Here they come! Here they come! The darkies of Guiné!" (Gomes, "*Os Pretos*" 110).[14] Not only are these comments racially degrading, but they also point to the ignorance of these children, who inaccurately believe that they came from Guine, an entirely different country from Angola. Unfortunately, Justino, Belmira and Ercília continue to endure racism throughout their lives, even, most surprisingly, from their own family.

Gomes's depiction of white parental figures as highly prejudiced products of the racist society in which they live is a literary choice that is quite intentional. Both Silvério and his sister, Marcolina, express racist sentiments, even though they are raising three mixed-race children. When Silvério and his children flee to Pousaflores, they move in with Marcolina out of necessity. While she is willing to take them in, she is extremely disapproving of the life that Silvério chose in Africa, and especially that he returned with three Black children: "I don't like darkies…let alone mulattos, and see my fate here, I have them at home… In the beginning I was even ashamed to go out on the streets," (Gomes, "*Os Pretos*" 142) This blatant racism speaks to a larger intolerance witnessed throughout Portugal, which Gomes and other Afro-Portuguese

[14] All translations of *Os Pretos de Pousaflores* are my own, made after careful consideration of shades of meaning. However, the process of capturing exactly what the author intended in an English adaptation is impossible in many cases, making my translations admittedly imperfect.

faced constantly. In this way, Gomes openly confronts the 'good colonizer' narrative that the Portuguese boasted of, drawing from her own experiences of abuse and discrimination. Sadly, because Marcolina's nieces and nephew are mixed-race, she is unable to detach her prejudicial views from her own family. Even the children's own father is guilty of such racist beliefs, as Silvério claims that "mulattos" are the unfortunate experience of colonialism, despite his children being the result of such actions. Ironically, little does he realize that his own sexual conquests with Black women in Africa represent the epitome of what is wrong with Portuguese colonialism.

Miscegenation. Miscegenation, or the sexual relations and reproduction between two people of different races, is the defining feature of Portuguese colonialism. National discourse claims that liberal sex between the Portuguese and Africans exemplified just how gentle and open to diversity the nation was. This narrative asserted that the Portuguese were accepting of all races and sought to spread their culture, as well as learn from their colonial subjects. While this 'luso-tropic' attitude dominated the country's understanding of its own history, Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes's literature directly opposes this discourse.

The fetishization of Black female bodies as sexual objects is overwhelming in *Caderno de Memórias Colonias* and *Os Pretos de Pousaflores*, which is a conversation that connects to the scholarship of Pamela Scully. As Scully discusses, white men and their fixation with Black women is not unique to Portuguese colonialism, but part of a larger history of white men in the context of the Atlantic World. Isabela provides examples of such fetishization in Portugal as she explains how colonial men would frequently venture deep into the native shantytowns to find Black women to have sex with. These men, including her father, would go off into the forests, only to return hours later to their wives and children. Consequently, Isabela is exposed to a

troubling notion of female sexuality from a young age. She soon learns that "Darky women had loose cunts…White women's weren't, they were tight, because white women were not easy bitches." (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 29). This absurd judgment paints Black women as overtly sexual animals, while the white male settler is absolved of this criticism. Such normalization of Black women as objects of sexual conquest is problematic because it depicts them as inhuman commodities with no propensity to feel emotions or capacity to make their own choices. Unfortunately, it is quite clear that African women were afforded little power in these situations, having no ability to refuse sexual requests of white men. More likely than not, these interracial interactions involved no discussions of consent, further adding to a picture of sexual violence toward African women in the colonies.

Another example of this harmful fetishization of Black women is in *Os Pretos de Pousaflores*. Mário, a wealthy white classmate of Belmira and Ercília, consistently boasts about his desire to "try mulattos." Eventually, he ends up taking the virginity of both girls at different times. Gomes's writing about these sexual encounters vaguely depicts experiences that were not consensual, suggesting that Belmira and Ercília were raped (Garraio 1574). Through these non-consensual sexual experiences, Gomes is deliberately drawing from an extensive history of sexual violence against indigenous women by white, colonial men. In addition to being witnessed by Gomes, this troubling past was experienced and perpetuated by her parents' generation (her mother being of African descent and her father as a white Portuguese) as well as her ancestors. As Gomes displays, the weight of such sexual encounters overwhelmingly falls on the women. For Ercília, the result of this encounter with Mário is a pregnancy, which at the age of fifteen, is a traumatic event for her. Unable to take responsibility for his actions, Mário pressures Ercília to get an abortion, threatening to kick the baby out of her belly. He claims that

the fetus is an aberration that does not result from dating, but from a mistake, and that she should abort it because "Darkies are angry and there are enough angry people coming into the world that provoke wars and terror attacks" (Gomes, "*Os Pretos*" 251). This horrifying experience demonstrates the over-sexualization of Black women, as well as the violence that emerges from this narrative. While white men had no boundaries or consequences for their sexual behavior, Black women bore the brunt of the suffering. This difficult reality was felt by Black women across all of the Portugal and its colonies.

While 'luso-tropicalism' painted Portugal as a superior European colonizer nation, celebrating the country's prolific interracial relations with local populations, it is clear that this narrative is deceiving. Instead, this philosophy permitted overt racism to flourish in the Portuguese colonies, adding to the continual violence against people of color. While treatment of all Africans was deeply problematic, the sexualization and commodification of Black women was particularly disturbing. In a patriarchal society where Black people were constantly abused, Black women faced multiple layers of discrimination. Both the color of their skin and their gender resulted in a daily struggle with racism and sexism. Although race was a determinative feature of Portuguese colonialism, gender was also decisive in how one was treated by society.

III. Gender Discrimination in a Deeply Inequitable Society

In addition to race, gender is also one of the most distinct factors that decide one's position in society. Especially in colonial Portugal, patriarchal values dominated every-day life, contributing to the overwhelming presence of strict gender roles and limitations on both men and women. In this way, gender makes up an important component of individuals' identity, influencing they view themselves and perceive the world they live in. For women in particular, their sex placed rigid restraints on their lives, confining them to be obedient caretakers of the

home. Such sexist preconceptions created a setting in which women often could not pursue the life they wanted, ultimately leaving them vulnerable to perpetual abuse within a male-dominated society. All three literary works, *Caderno de Memórias Colonias, O Retorno* and *Os Pretos de Pousaflores,* provide concrete examples of how these destructive gender roles controlled Portugal, acting as troubling historical evidence that challenges the prevailing national discourse.

Toxic Masculinity. In these fictional works, men are defined by their ability to take on the traditional role as head of the household, which creates an environment that is detrimental to both men and women. For example, Isabela's father, Rui's father and Silvério all represent that archetypical white male colonizer. They are both loyal in providing for their country and family, and must act as the strong head of the home. It is their duty to work and support their family, yet they are also allowed to enjoy their leisure activities that men do, such as drinking and having sex. In *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais,* Isabela says that her father liked "fucking" (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 31). As a child, she couldn't quite understand it, but she claims that she still knew. From the many times he disappeared into the forest searching for Black women, to the night she heard her parents having sex, she knew. In an interview with Figueiredo, she says "My father was colonialism. Therefore, my father was also injustice and violence" (D. Silva). Her father represents the typical Portuguese colonizer that upheld an oppressive system and conquered Africa through sex. For a white man, not only was this aggressive sexual behavior accepted, it was encouraged by a society dominated by men.

As a result of these traditional gender roles, white men were expected to possess certain masculine qualities that displayed strength and power. For example, in *O Retorno*, Rui struggles with becoming the new 'man of the family' when he, his mother and sister flee to Lisbon while his father remains in Angola. Even at fifteen, he feels a sense of responsibly to take care of his

mother and sister in the absence of his father, leading to his various attempts to make money so that he can support his struggling family. Moreover, his conception of masculinity is displayed multiple times throughout the novel, which is especially visible in how he believes men should behave. Rui claims "a man doesn't cry" (Cardoso, "*O Retorno*" 40), which is an idea that reinforces toxic masculinity and further leads to destructive behavior within Portuguese society. While Rui is understandably scared about leaving his beloved home in Angola and moving to Portugal, he says that he cannot be a coward. In his eyes, being a coward is worse than being an assassin. These notions of hyper-masculinity are ultimately very detrimental, as the continual repression of emotions prevents men from adequately dealing with how they feel, resulting in long-term mental issues and violence. In many cases, these enduring masculinity problems are discharged on women, who are frequently on the receiving end of such abuse.

Women: Obedience and Submission. Women who grew up during the Salazar regime faced acute discrimination and were expected to conform to a particularly degrading role in society. In *Os Pretos de Pousaflores,* a woman's marital expectations are clearly defined:

> A woman has to accept her husband... A woman who wants to leave her husband must have a very strong reason, whether it is infidelity, sterility, he's a bad man or witchcraft. But, if the woman has food on the table and clothes on her body, the children are going to school, and other children are working, then it is the woman's duty to stay with her husband. (Gomes, "*Os Pretos*"186)

Therefore, even when a wife is unhappy in her marriage, if her husband is performing his duty to provide for the family, then she is expected to stay in the relationship. Throughout the novel, women who assume these traditional gender roles are depicted. For instance, Macolina and Deodata (Ercília's mother) are two women that take on a majority of the housework in Pousaflores. They spend their days cooking, cleaning, gardening and taking care of the children. While many women conform to these degrading positions within society, Gomes portrays

Belmira and Ercília's struggle to fit into this gender role that prioritizes marriage, having children and being good housewives. Instead, both of them lose their virginity before marriage, which is a major taboo in an extremely Catholic country. Furthermore, Belmira becomes a prostitute, which initially may appear to be a path of resistance, but is ultimately marked by repeated abuse and violence. This lifestyle allows for her own sexual commodification to persist, adding to a picture of overwhelming abuse and mistreatment of women.

While women are constantly treated as sexual objects, they also face a double standard that prevents them from being sexual. Specifically, white women are expected to be chaste and non-sexual, but are also treated as sexual commodities in a highly patriarchal society. Even as a young girl, Isabela learns that "A white woman should not admit she liked fucking, even if she did. Not admitting was a guarantee of seriousness to her husband, and to the whole immaculate society" (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 33). This sexist standard contrasts significantly with acceptable male behavior, in which sexual conquest is promoted. A husband's loyalty to his wife is never scrutinized by a culture that accepts male hyper-sexuality, but a women's purity is constantly under judgment from the day she's born. Isabela witnesses this contradiction as a little girl in Mozambique, when her next-door childhood friend, little Luís, one day asks if she wants to "play at fucking." As a curious eight-year-old she says yes, even though both of them don't know what they are doing. After a few minutes of them laying on top of each other naked, Isabela's father sees them in the backyard, and in the heat of anger, he violently beats her. She claims that even "Seconds before the beating started, I was already absolutely certain that fucking was utterly forbidden…Worse than the pain from the beating was the humiliation of him having seen me fucking, him having caught me in the darkest of sins" (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 40). Despite

growing up around her own father's overtly sexual lifestyle, Isabela learns quickly that this type of behavior is unacceptable for women.

To further a discussion of gender in patriarchal Portugal, it is important to note how race affects an overall understanding of abuse. Within colonial Portuguese society, the levels of injustice are multidimensional and complex. For example, the intersection of race and gender create a hierarchy of discrimination that places the white colonizer male at the top and the Black woman at the bottom, where she is faced with the highest level of injustice and lack of rights. Such layers of abuse are congruent with the idea of intersectionality, which describes how forms of oppression interact with one another in multiple, intricate ways, ultimately affecting one's identity and position within society (Garry, 828). The white male settler dominates colonial Portugal, as his gender and race afford him the most freedom and position of power, while the white colonial female is strictly limited by her sex:

> As a colonial marker of whiteness under the rules and regulations of the white patriarchal gaze, white colonist womanhood was to be isolated from sexual pleasure – especially interracial sex – at all costs… Sexual pleasure was to be solely a phallocentric practice of white imperial masculinity. (D. Silva)

This exemplifies how various double standards exist. White men have the ability to be sexual while white women do not. On the other hand, Black women are treated as sexual objects and repeatedly portrayed as excessively sexual. Moreover, Black men are presented as a constant threat to white women's purity, which must be protected at all cost. All of these contradictions converged to create a deeply complicated and unjust colonial atmosphere that abuses the most vulnerable and props up toxic white men.

While the national discourse claims a harmonious culture in Portugal's colonies, it is apparent that this fantasy did not exist. Both interracial interactions, as well as gendered relations, were prejudiced and extremely problematic. Because gender and race are deeply

intertwined with one's identity, these themes continue to define how *retornados* view themselves after leaving the colonies. For many *retornados,* Africa was a place of comfort and happiness, which makes reconciliation of certain negative experiences with racism and sexism quite painful. How do *retornados* adapt to leaving their beloved homes in Africa and moving to an entirely new place? What struggles do they face and how does this affect their own self-perception? In this next section, I discuss the challenges of coming to Portugal that the characters in these three literary works face, and how their journey to fit in affects their sense of identity.

IV. The Clash Between Nationality and Sense of Belonging

Adjusting to Life in Portugal. Many *retornados* arrived to Portugal frightened, disillusioned and with nothing but the clothes on their backs. As they struggled to adjust and survive in an entirely new setting, they also mourned the loss of their past lives in Africa, their homes and nearly all of their possessions they left behind. For more than 40% of these *retornados*, this would be the first time they set foot in mainland Portugal (Lubkemann, "Race" 79). In addition to the apparent difficulties associated with adapting, they also arrived in a country that had become extremely critical of Portugal's colonial history, which resulted in the unwelcoming atmosphere they felt upon arrival. For the many *retornados* who had lived in the colonies their entire lives, such a drastic change presented numerous challenges to their identity. Namely, they had to address their own confounding and fragile sense of belonging. With such strong ties to their African roots, a move to Portugal signified the loss of a part of themselves, causing them to reassess their identity. While they may have had their Portuguese nationality, the *retornados* struggled to obtain a sense of belonging in an entirely new country where they felt unwanted.

This question of citizenship is significant not only because it poses acute challenges to *retornado* identity, but it also presents ongoing issues for present-day Portugal. Who can claim Portuguese citizenship and what are the implications of being Portuguese? Such questions continue to generate difficult debates within society, particularly regarding the ongoing arrival of immigrants from former Portuguese colonies. Today, the Portuguese state may not guarantee naturalization to immigrants who have ties to the former colonies, which confounds an understanding of modern Portuguese identity even further. Such problems of citizenship and claim to Portuguese identity are complex and ambiguous. However, *retornado* experiences of migrating to Portugal after 1974 offer important examples of these challenges, which help to solidify an understanding of modern Portuguese national identity.

For many *retornados,* their (re)integration experience was determined by whether or not they had accepting family in Portugal who could help get them on their feet. *O Retorno* examines this struggle for survival without the assistance of family. When Rui and his family arrive in Lisbon, they resort to living in a hotel as they wait for Rui's father to come. However, their hotel stay is not the luxurious experience that one would expect. Numerous other *retornado* families are also crammed into this hotel, each of them forced to live in one small hotel room for months. Not only are the food and services atrocious, but their family is completely ostracized from both society and other *retornados*: "*Retornados* who are not in hotels avoid *retornados* from hotels, they think that we are buggers," (Cardoso, "*O Retorno*" 116). Because Rui's family has no preexisting support network within Portugal, they are rejected by society and destined to live in a hotel until they can afford appropriate housing. This makes for a difficult transition into his new 'home,' as Rui can never quite feel a sense of belonging in such temporary accommodations.

Furthermore, Rui's status as a *retornado* proves to be a substantial barrier in his journey to fit in. As a teenager trying to make friends in school, he finds it difficult to gain acceptance because he is bullied for being from Africa. While Rui is able to become friends with other *retornados* that he meets in his hotel, making friends with locals is not easy. He especially struggles with his eagerness to date girls, claiming: "And the girls here don't want to be friends with *retornados* so that they won't be talked about, *retornados* have a bad reputation, they wear short skirts and smoke in cafes" (Cardoso, "*O Retorno*" 143). His inability to fit in results in severe emotional anxiety for Rui, which makes him want to distance himself from his *retornado* label. However, as much as Rui wishes to feel a sense of belonging in Portugal, his memories of his past in Africa never leave him, causing him to experience conflicting feelings about his own identity.

Even for *retornados* who had families to return to, their journey to find a sense of belonging is also arduous. Upon her arrival in Portugal, Isabela faces constant criticism, as she claims that "In Portugal, I got used to being a target of mockery or ridicule at an early age for being a *retornado* or for wearing red or lilac," (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 119). Because she dresses differently, she stands out from her other Portuguese classmates, making her an easy target for torment. As a result of this daily abuse, Isabela begins to question her Portuguese identity and whether she truly belongs. In *Os Pretos de Pousaflores,* Justino, Belmira and Ercília are consistently the targets of racism and abuse. While they have a family to return to in Portugal, their situation is certainly not ideal, and all four of them must cram into one small room and sleep on hay mattresses. As the only Black people in their small town of Pousaflores, their skin color clearly brands them as *retornados*, exposing them to all kinds of judgment. Being minorities in Portugal, both as *retornados* and from the color of their skin, these children adapt to

feeling like outsiders. Consequently, cultivating a feeling of belonging is a long and difficult path, which ultimately, becomes a hopeless goal for them. For many *retornados,* the lure of their African past proves to be a powerful part of their identity, preventing them from ever fully feeling at home in Portugal.

Longing for the Past. One of the obstacles holding *retornados* back from adapting to their new lives in Portugal is their strong attachment to Africa. For many, their African identities are profoundly meaningful and when this life is ripped away from them, they face an imminent challenge to their sense of self. Rui is deeply affected by his longing for his past in Africa, and throughout *O Retorno*, Cardoso explores the pain of this trauma. She analyzes his disenchantment from forced abandonment and loss of property, particularly through memories of his past, which offer insight into Rui's identity (I. Azevedo 245). These remembrances depict various events from his time in Africa. While most flashbacks portray happy scenes, others are much darker towards the final years of the empire. However, these memories truly represent his extreme nostalgia for the past. When Rui first arrives in Lisbon, he is overwhelmed by a place that he has only learned about during his time in Africa: "It was as if we were entering the torn map, or the photographs in the magazines, the stories our mother was always telling, the hymns we sang on Saturday morning in the schoolyard" (Cardoso, "*Notebook*" 57). For so long, mainland Portugal had only been a mere conception in Rui's head, and now he is forced to reconcile leaving his cherished life in Africa behind to come to Lisbon. His past in Angola, his friends there, his experiences and memories, would always be a part of him, proving to be extremely painful to leave behind.

Similarly, Justino, Belmira and Ercília feel an intense longing for their past. All three of them discuss how in Africa, their lives were much simpler, with few worries. For example,

Belmira views her displacement from Angola to Pousaflores as an expulsion from paradise (Garraio 1573). Throughout the novel, they all face their own challenges with gaining acceptance in Portugal. Ultimately, the nostalgia for their past is overpowering, and the discrimination they face in Portugal becomes overwhelming. Justino finally comes to the realization that he must choose between his two competing identities, as he explains to Belmira: "to live is to choose, either it's Angola or it's Portugal" (Gomes, "*Os Pretos*" 287). For Justino, the lure of Angola is inescapable, and eventually, he makes the decision to move back to Africa, a place where he feels he belongs. Belmira chooses a new path for herself and moves to Switzerland, where she hopes for a fresh start and to escape the troubles of her past. Not only does this drastic change for Belmira demonstrate her feelings of rootlessness, but it also mirrors Cardoso's own experience as a *retornada*, who eventually left Portugal and moved to the Netherlands in order to continue her studies.

While Isabela's memoir provides a brutally accurate depiction of colonial life in Africa, sparing no details of the racism and prejudice she witnesses, she nonetheless has strong ties to her former home. She loved growing up in Mozambique, as she clearly has multiple happy memories there. Although Isabela does remember the problematic issues from her childhood and often tries to reconcile this past, she claims that "the land where I was born remains in me like a stain that's impossible to erase" (Figueiredo "*Notebook*" 133). Such experiences in Africa are integral in shaping how she views the world and own sense of self. However, as Isabela matures, she must come to terms with how her early life as a colonizer's daughter fits into an emerging historical narrative in Portugal. The question of how her colonial memories correlate to Portugal's problematic colonial past is a matter that is extremely difficult to confront. By

investigating colonial legacy as a national discourse, can Isabela, and other *retornados*, better understand how their own lived memories intersect with Portuguese history?

V. Colonial Legacy as a Challenge to Portuguese Identity

In contrast to the prevailing national discourse that portrays Portuguese colonialism in a positive light, this period represents a dark time in Portuguese history. Over time, this era has come to have different meanings for certain groups of people. While some look back on colonialism with nostalgia and longing, others are still grappling with the problematic themes that dominated this history. For those who have had personal experiences with colonialism, such as the *retornados,* their memories of the past converge to form a part of their identity. However, coming to terms with how these remembrances, both good and bad, fit into the larger narrative of Portuguese colonialism, is a task that proves to be challenging. While the 'good colonizer' discourse prevailed for so long, a new, more critical story has begun to emerge, exposing difficult themes and reopening painful wounds of the past. What do these depictions mean for Portugal and the country's colonial legacy? What implications do they have for Portuguese identity today? How can those who lived through this time period reconcile their own memories of the past with these modern, rather uncomfortable illustrations of Portuguese history exposed by *retornados*? This notion of colonial legacy is addressed extensively by Figueiredo, Cardoso, and Gomes.

For Rui, the loss of his home in Africa not only marks the end of his blissful childhood, but it also coincides with the fall of the Portuguese empire. The country of Angola, the proud homeland to which he feels deeply tied, no longer belongs to him. Consequently, the collapse of the Portuguese empire also results in a loss of identity for Rui, whose claim to Angola is no longer accepted in a post-colonial society. Rui is not alone in these sentiments, as he explains

that *retornados* from all over struggle to come to terms with the loss of the empire, "a defeated and humiliated empire, an empire that nobody wanted to know" (Cardoso, "*O Retorno*" 86). This shameful colonial legacy that develops during the newly forming Portuguese democracy, paints Rui and his family as the immoral colonizer. Rui's past in Africa, and therefore, his own identity, would be suppressed by a country that does not wish to hear about his colonial experience. Portugal's unwillingness to address its own troubling history from early on, would prevent people like Rui and his family from ever being able to truly express themselves or adequately deal with their own emotions associated with the past.

In *Os Pretos de Pousaflores*, the residents of Pousaflores seem to share this similar rejection of their colonial history. For example, Marcolina claims "people here don't want anything to do with darkies. Losing the colonies was the greatest blessing the God gave us. They stay in their land, and our people stay in ours" (Gomes, "*Os Pretos*" 142). While this comment is clearly racist in nature, it accurately represents the mentality that is voiced by many Portuguese. This also proves that Portugal is not unanimous in its perception of its own colonial legacy. Some people attempt to distance themselves from the country's past because of shame for the atrocities of colonialism, while others express visible racist sentiments and no longer want to be associated with Africa. Nonetheless, these conflicting stances create an environment that seeks to conceal the country's disturbing past, in which those who have connections to Africa do not feel comfortable sharing their stories. As a result, many begin to lose ties to their former homeland. Deodata acts as an example of this sad deprivation from her roots, as she discusses forgetting Africa: "Now our grandchildren don't speak nurerere, they don't speak mutilele, they don't speak any of our languages, only Portuguese. Even I already forgot the nurerere. Who am I going to talk to?" (Gomes, "*Os Pretos*" 294). Not only does she lose her own African identity, but this

culture will not be transmitted to future generations. In a Portuguese society that wants to distance itself from its colonial history, people like Deodata are pushed aside, unable to assert their stories and express who they truly are.

While some are proud of their past in Africa, others express an overpowering guilty conscience about their memories. Isabela displays these difficult emotions through her memoir, and instead of choosing to conceal her pain, her writing acts as the cathartic process needed in order to reconcile her feelings. Her childhood memories deeply shape her conception of Portugal's colonial legacy, which are influenced by her father's actions and perspectives. As she matures, Isabela begins to realize that her father is not the idyllic parent that she once deemed him to be, but instead a living embodiment of the cruel white male colonizer. This comprehension generates considerable guilt for her, which continues to fester: "An exile like me is also a statue of guilt. And the guilt, the guilt, the guilt we let grow and twist up inside us like a colorless creeper binds us to silence, solitude, irresolvable exile" (Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 134). In Mozambique, she does not completely accept the racist and sexist ideals that govern her world, but she nonetheless feels actively involved in upholding the immoral Portuguese regime. Although it is clear that she views her role in Portugal's colonial history as shameful, this is not the case for her father, who she clashes with until the day he passes away.

As a privileged white male living in colonial Africa, he reaped the benefits of holding power. Thus, his experience differs drastically from Africans, and even white women during this time period. His privilege results in a sense of entitlement over Africa, which he claims as his own home. This feeling of ownership would stay with him long after the fall of the empire, as Isabela explains: "A white who lived under colonialism will be a white who lived under colonialism until their dying day. And all my truth is treason to them. These words, treason,"

(Figueiredo, "*Notebook*" 131). While Isabela hoped to spread her truth about Portuguese colonialism, this was not the same truth for her father. In his mind, Portugal's colonial past symbolized a glorious history, and its demise was not only tragic, but a grave injustice. Although critical narratives are beginning to emerge that challenge beliefs of people like Isabela's father, many Portuguese are still fixated on this glorious version of the colonial past (Marques 8).

It is evident that Portugal's colonial legacy is quite complex, assuming different meanings for various people. For this reason, it is imperative to explore colonial legacy in order to better understand Portuguese national identity as whole. Especially since the truth about Portugal's colonial past has been repressed for so long, an examination of the intricacies and contradictions that make up Portugal's national identity is crucial in drawing attention to the country's problematic history. Despite how painful it may be, only when this past is addressed, can Portugal truly be able to move on. This investigation into what it means to be Portuguese in a post-colonial society is not only important, but necessary in order for the country to learn from its mistakes and progress as a united people.

VI. Conclusions

Caderno de Memórias Colonias, O Retorno and *Os Pretos de Pousaflores*, are three incredibly moving and valuable pieces of literature in a post-colonial world. However, the reason I chose to analyze these works is not only because of how strong the stories are, or that they are well-written. Nor is it simply due to their depiction of colonial Portugal through the eyes of *retornados.* I chose to include these works in my thesis because of their authors and their own compelling personal experiences. Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes each bring a unique and equally significant perspective in the overall colonial narrative. While these three *retornada* women had their own unique experiences growing up in Africa and later 'returning' to Portugal,

they all provide their own meaningful versions of history that intertwine with one another, adding to one collective understanding of the past. Through each of their literary works, a different layer in this complex discussion of Portuguese colonialism is pulled back, revealing new and painful challenges to identity.

The memories of Figueiredo function as a journey back in time through the eyes of her childhood self. Her struggles with her father represent her difficult reconciliation with her own identity, as the daughter of a white colonizer. This point of view connects to the generation of white settlers who grew up during this time period, offering an important discussion of the various themes they face. Her memoir addresses a crushing guilt about her involvement in colonialism, which is a feeling that still silently lingers across modern Portugal. Similarly, Cardoso's novel deals with the idea of Portuguese identity though the lens of Rui. As a settler who lost his homeland, Rui represents the painful experience of a country that lost its prized colonial possessions in Africa. His struggle between both his Angolan and Portuguese identity depict the challenges to a national Portuguese identity in a post-colonial society. Moreover, Rui's preoccupation with his happy life in Africa demonstrates the nation's nostalgia for its previous power and glory as a colonizer. Lastly, Gomes exposes Black women's underrepresented voices in her novel, which offers crucial insight that demands a place within Portuguese national discourse. As a Black woman herself, Gomes incorporates her own experiences of oppression and discrimination within the characters of her novel. These stories display a Portugal that is far from the accepting, compassionate society that many believe it to be, as colonial prejudices still permeate across all areas of life.

Whether overt or hidden, Portuguese colonial history is still deeply engrained within modern society. These three authors who were oppressed and silenced in a colonial and post-

colonial society, share their own ordeals through their writing and the characters they've created. While each story is unique, they all discuss critical topics of race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy, which are themes that unconsciously penetrate Portuguese everyday life. Without authors such as Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes to shed light on these issues, Portugal will never truly be able to move on from its difficult history. For a country that has long suppressed its painful past, these new narratives that challenge the predominant national discourse are decisive in the nation's healing process, providing opportunities for forgiveness, redemption, acceptance and unity.

Conclusion

Um só povo, um so coraçâo, one love	One people, one heart, one love
Branco, ku preto, vermelho, ku amarelo Ka tem diferença nâo Ama na fé, ama bué, Amor grande no coraçâo	From white to black, from red to yellow Is there any difference, no Love in faith, love in good A great love in the heart

"One Love" by Sara Tavares

Renowned Portuguese singer and composer Sara Tavares, provides inspiration for Portugal's future in her song "One Love." These lyrics are a reminder for the Portuguese, and the world, to move forward together, united as one. No matter one's background, race, religion or sexuality, everyone is connected through love. The different languages Tavares uses in this song are a testament to her background and the inclusive multicultural message she hopes to spread. While she incorporates both Portuguese and Cape Verdean Creole into her music, in this song she also sings in English. Tavares was born in Lisbon to two Cape Verdean immigrants in 1978. As she grew up in Portugal, her Afro-Portuguese identity came to be very important to her and the music she produced, having an influence on the languages and rhythms she uses in each of her songs. By speaking in Creole and getting in touch with her Cape Verdean culture, Tavares claims that she has been able to fill in gaps from her and her parents' history that she can now express (Tavares).

While Tavares has embraced her identity, claiming her Afro-Portuguese ethnicity through music, other Portuguese may find their own identities more difficult to navigate. For a country

that still has yet to reconcile with its troubling colonial history, the issue of Portuguese identity is frequently confounded by memories of the past. Portugal is not alone in its inability to address its problematic history. While Portugal's imperial past is unique in certain regards, in other ways the country shares many similarities with other former colonial powers. European nations such as England and France all participated in the maintenance of a deeply problematic and abusive colonial regime that terrorized and displaced native populations for centuries. Inevitably, this troubling past still lives on in the present, which is witnessed in the daily interactions and attitudes that characterize each of these countries.

Themes of race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy still play a decisive role in the everyday lives of American citizens as well. The horrific killing of George Floyd, an African-American man, by a white police officer in May of 2020, offers clear evidence that deep-seated racism is still very much alive today. The United States, along with Portugal and many other European nations, still have a lot of work to do in order to fully come to terms with their own troubling history. The very existence of the Black Lives Matter Movement exemplifies the need to address this difficult past of racism and slavery. Such history is inextricably still tied to the present, which is evident across areas of American life such as policing, voting accessibility, incarceration, diversity across leadership positions, poverty demographics and healthcare outcomes. However, similar to Portugal, much of the American national discourse does not adequately address such difficult issues. For a country that was built on the backs of millions of enslaved peoples and a very recent history of racial segregation, it often seems that the United States does not do enough to confront this past. Do the words "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" really apply to all Americans if African-American men and women still live in constant fear for their lives? The United States boasts of racial harmony and diversity, yet

the pervasiveness of white supremacist groups across the country seem to contradict such a stance. In this way, the United States' struggle to confront its own history is comparable to Portugal's, as both countries have adopted a national rhetoric that does not allow for true reconciliation with the past.

Within a Portuguese national discourse that glorifies the past, there are those whose stories and voices have been repressed for decades. For new generations in Portugal, the national discourse is all they have ever known, and the harsh realities of colonialism remain far less understood. There are also those who lived through these times and are still haunted by them, further complicating the national identity. This thesis addresses such complexities and challenges to Portuguese identity, which is relevant in a multidimensional society that is still healing from its past.

Although my thesis does address Portugal's colonial history, my writing is not meant to be an objective historical account of history. Through an intensive overview of Portuguese colonialism within Africa, I seek to acknowledge and denounce the national discourse that depicts Portugal as the 'good colonizer.' My analysis is in no means exhaustive in terms of specific details and events within Portuguese colonial history, as the scope of my research does not warrant such a comprehensive discussion. Rather, my investigation emphasizes key themes and discourses that comprise this troubling past. Such an analysis provides crucial background information that allows for a rich discussion on the *retornados*, whose experiences are central to my thesis.

By challenging the Portuguese national discourse through fictional literary works written by *retornadas,* my thesis attempts to fill in the scholarly gap of overlooked women's narratives. Throughout this thesis I seek to privilege female voices, which I do not only to challenge a

history that has been dominated by men, but also because I believe women provide a valuable lens through which to analyze the abuses under a patriarchal colonial state. As a woman of Afro-Portuguese descent, Aida Gomes in particular offers critical insight into an investigation of racialized/gendered power structures under the Portuguese. Gomes's own voice, which she employs through the Afro-Portuguese characters in *Os Pretos de Pousaflores,* is crucial in confronting a past in which Africans have been brutalized, marginalized and enslaved by white people. Her writing acts to empower people of color and expose their stories, which directly confronts a discourse that claims the Portuguese as the 'good colonizer.' In this way, women, and specifically Afro-Portuguese women, are essential in my contestation of the Portuguese national discourse.

Within this thesis, I draw from an extensive corpus of literature, both scholarly and fictional. It is important to note the significance of literary works in an overall understanding of historical knowledge and how the past interacts with the present. Specifically, the novels I highlight provide critical insight into Portugal's colonial past and the various themes that make up Portuguese identity. While some might argue that fictional works do not provide an accurate account of history, I challenge this notion by demonstrating that these narratives add to the many truths of Portuguese past. Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes's work contributes to an emerging discourse that seeks to challenge prior idealized perspectives on colonialism. Moreover, these three authors' direct experiences with Portugal's problematic past have allowed them to incorporate their own versions of history into their narratives. The racism and sexism they have experienced is faithfully displayed in their writing. No less so than historical accounts, novels tell stories that enlarge and complement our understanding of the discriminatory mechanisms that are part and parcel of the vision of national identity that *retornada* authors refute.

In this thesis, I have attempted to answer important questions pertaining to Portuguese national identity, which has provoked difficult discussions about race, gender, sense of belonging and colonial legacy. While I hoped to provide clarity on these issues, some questions still remain unanswered. Primarily, what steps can the Portuguese take moving forward in order to heal from their colonial past? To begin this healing process, a direct confrontation with the past is necessary, and the narratives of Figueiredo, Cardoso and Gomes are certainly a good starting point. However, what specific actions can the Portuguese take to directly face their colonial history? Privileging the stories of *retornados* does challenge the national narrative, but when will this be enough for the official discourse to change? In what other ways can this discourse be challenged?

In future research, I would like to explore more narratives written by *retornada* women in hopes of providing answers to these difficult questions. Specifically, works written by Afro-Portuguese women present a valuable area of literature to investigate. I believe it is important to listen to the voices of those who have been marginalized throughout history. Without these perspectives, an understanding of history is incomplete. Portugal, and other countries living in the shadow of their colonial legacy, can greatly benefit from a comprehensive investigation into their painful pasts through the lens of those who have been most abused across time. Therefore, it is not only useful, but essential to place the perspectives of women, Africans and other marginalized groups at the forefront of a national discussion.

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