

FIDELITIES

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Abstract

The present study articulates the approach to Vimala Devi's intellectual biography between late 1950s until early 1970s with a look at her writings about Goa (1962-1971) as a cycle of cultural intervention on the coeval debate about Portuguese colonialism and Goan identity. A debate that was running both in Portugal and Goa, having narratives about Goa, Goan literature and print histories played a crucial role. Analysing such activity may not ignore the conditioning of writing and publishing under Salazar's dictatorship, the possibilities for differentiated positioning within the regime, and the limits to dissent. Nor may it ignore how Portuguese opposition related with the country's colonial past and present. Such perception is important to approach the relation of Vimala Devi and Manuel de Seabra (her husband and partner) with Lusotropicalism in the face of the couple's distancing from Salazarism and the dictator's own use of Freire. Relevant to this journey was her condition as a Migrant Goan woman writer and researcher, the position from which she looked at Goa, performed her work, and published. Among her first books, *Monsoon* stands for the multiple and even conflictual readings that its stories open to. Here, the stories are revisited to discuss the fixing of identities, relations between tradition and modernity, and the possibility of a Lusotropicalist stand. Thereafter, the study moves to the building up of the influential *Literatura Indo-Portuguesa* published by the couple in 1971, where Freire is a fundamental reference. The dossier found at the Portuguese funding agency reinforces Devi's crucial role throughout the research and maturation of the project. Not the least also, it allows to highlight Devi's marginality in face of the post-1961 Goan community in Portugal, and how she achieved the collective involvement of her homeland's postcolonial intellectual milieu in the outcome of the book.

Keywords

Case of Goa; Cultural resistance; Goan Literature; Indo-Portuguese Literature; Literature and politics of identity; Lusotropicalism; Portuguese Colonialism

About the Author

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INTRODUCTION

The first edition of *Monsoon*¹ dates from 1963, when Vimala Devi published in Lisbon this collection of stories, written in Portuguese language.² Little more than one year before, in December of 1961, the Indian military takeover of the territories of the Estado da Índia had ended Portuguese domain over the said territories, where Goa had been the political and cultural centre for almost 450 years. The symbolic weight of Goa was in fact much larger. For the Portuguese, Goa was associated with Portugal's past greatness. On the opposite side, leaders of the new Indian republic saw the Portuguese "pockets" in the subcontinent as an offence to Indian integrity, as well as a surviving symbol of Indian secular subjugation to European powers precisely initiated by the Portuguese.

Thus, *Monsoon* saw daylight during Goa's early postcolonial period, a time of nationalist commotion in Portugal as in India, where reactions in Goa to the political change and the processes it carried were far from unanimous. This study departs from "Fidelity," the only story in *Monsoon* to unfold in Lisbon, the metropole of the Portuguese Empire. Considering the context of its publication and that the stories were chronologically located in the last decades of the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, I sought to understand the place of "Fidelity" in the collection, and the place of the collection in coeval debates on Portuguese colonialism and Goan identity. These debates were significantly marked and constrained by the reality of Salazar's dictatorship and by the use of Gilberto Freyre's theorization of Lusotropicalism, while they were also marked by Indian arguments on the subject. These complex circumstances led me to look not only at *Monsoon*, but also at Devi's other publications on Goa, with particular attention to the "Literatura Indo-Portuguesa" (Indo-Portuguese Literature), having concluded that they correspond to a cycle of cultural-political involvement (1962-1971) built at the crossroads of personal history and the tensions and agendas that marked discussions. This perspective allows us to deepen our perception of the crucial role played by narratives about Goa, Goan literature, and print histories. I underline that although my quotes are from the 2019 English edition, I am following the 1963 edition in my discussion. It is only when closing this study that I attend to one new connected story published in the 2003 edition, which changes the possible readings of the book.

Goa has a centennial history of migration. By the end of the nineteenth century, migration movements had become a veritable flood particularly among Catholics. Such trend was favoured by the conditions under Portuguese governance, the European turn to Africa, and the rapid urban development of neighbouring British India. In the twentieth century, Catholic migration became massive and transversal to all classes, acquiring diasporic characteristics with a lasting impact in Goa. Indeed, it not only shook the traditional local social structure but also

led, by the end of Portuguese domain, to Catholics becoming a minority even in districts—such as Salcete, Bardez, and the Islands of Goa—where they had previously constituted the clear majority (see Matos 2013). This profound change and the later cultural-political conflicts around Goa's political status spurred an ongoing debate regarding Goan identity.

The prominence of migrant writers and of migration stories is not an incidental feature of Goan literature. Vimala Devi exemplifies this phenomenon, having lived in Lisbon (1958-1963), London (1963-1972), and Barcelona (since 1973). As Devi admitted, moving to Lisbon had a major effect on her life and views. Upon her arrival, the conflict between Portugal and India was at its peak. While India insisted on the Indianness of the territories comprehended by it and their political integration into the Indian federation, the Portuguese dictatorship—which had been in place since 1926—refused to acknowledge their colonial condition, arguing they were part of pluricontinental Portugal inhabited by Portuguese citizens.

Devi published *Monsoon* on the eve of leaving Lisbon. In a recent interview with Daniela Spina (2018), she stated that her strongest motivation was to denounce the problems and the injustices in Goan society. Moving to Lisbon had been liberating, allowing her to write freely without fearing ostracization. Devi's perception of Lisbon as an environment amenable to liberty, especially freedom of expression, appears paradoxical considering the vigilance and censorship that regulated public life in dictatorial Portugal, but is revealing of the complexity of individual experiences of political and social constraints.

Having called, in 2009, *Monsoon's* stories “the last snapshots of Colonial Goa,” Paul Melo e Castro has recently proposed that they should be understood as a short story cycle— a genre that distinguishes itself from unintegrated collections by playing with the “double paradoxical condition between narrative independence and partial thematic integration in the cycle as totality” (Castro “Em torno do fim” 18). In Castro's view, such choice had allowed “Devi's particular portrait of late-colonial Goa” (15).

Given the characteristics of the book, several stories unavoidably dwell on the local impact of migration. Additionally, two take place outside Goa: “The Future and the Past” and “Fidelity.” While the first focuses on a migrant who found his fortune in Brazil, “Fidelity” captures a student in Lisbon with plans to return to Goa. Unlike the immersion of the protagonist in “The Future and the Past” in Rio de Janeiro's effervescence, in “Fidelity,” 1950's Lisbon appears filtered by the window curtains of an anonymous hotel bedroom in a story that builds a narrative about Goan presence in the Portuguese metropole and Indo-Portuguese relations. The story is a good example of how *Monsoon* skirts colonial power relations by shifting

to a cultural reading of personal relations, where the stereotyping of characters manages to accommodate dissonances that open space to divergent interpretations. It is significant that the satire “The Supplement” is the only story that specifically convokes the colonial situation, suggesting that the laws consequent to the 1930 Colonial Act created a crisis of identity among the Lusodescendants, apparently disturbing their previous integration into the social and cultural building of Goan-ness.

PUBLISHING IN A DICTATORSHIP

In his 2009 essay, Castro commented on the absence of any reference, “however slight or cryptic, to Indian Freedom Fighters, the actions of the PIDE, the imprisonment of pro-Indian agitators in Tiracol, Tarrafal or Peniche, or to the *satyagrahas* shot by the Portuguese police” in *Monsoon* (Castro “Vimala Devi’s” 49). By contrast, Castro referred *Luuanda* and *Nós matamos o Cão Tinhoso* (*We Killed the Mangy Dog*), released in 1964, as African examples of an anticolonial position.

More recently, Castro has become determined to locate signs of resistance to the dominant colonial discourses of the time in *Monsoon*. Yet his earlier perplexity deserves attention, as it allows us to reflect on the possibilities and limitations of criticism in a dictatorship, as well as about our present interest in situating the political dimension of cultural intervention. The stories of the books and of the authors disclose the kind of constraints just suggested, as they were marked by an environment where censorship was imposed along with colonial repression, though articulation between both did not necessarily happen— at least to the degree we could expect. In this, discussion of the novel *O Signo da Ira* (*The Sign of Wrath*)³ authored by Orlando da Costa, also gains relevance.

Luuanda was published in Luanda after the manuscript earned a literary prize in Angola. Its author, hardly 30 years old, was at the time imprisoned in Cape Verde, where he had been transferred from Angolan jails, for ‘terrorist’ activities. Although born in Portugal he had lived in Angola since childhood, having taken a stand against the dictatorship since the late 1950’s and adopted the Angolan liberation cause with the start of the Colonial War. In fact, his own penname was significant of his choices in matter of identity: José Luandino [from Luanda] Vieira. Vieira’s political engagement gained notoriety not only in Angola, but also in Portugal, after the Portuguese Society of Writers (SPA), whose board included Orlando da Costa (Passos 55), awarded *Luuanda* in 1965 with the “Grande Prémio de Novela” (Big Prize for Novel). The regime soon exploited the situation to create a nationalist public commotion. Part of the SPA jury was arrested, the society was banned, and a

huge campaign followed in Portugal and Angola against the prizes and the ‘traitor.’ Curiously, as Francisco Topa reveals in *Luuanda há 50 anos*, contrary to many others, the book wasn’t banned. In fact, access to the novel by the metropolitan public ended being helped by an unauthorised Portuguese edition, published in 1965 by some agents of the secret political police (PIDE) who Vieira took to court. As Luandino, the Mozambican Luís Bernardo Honsowana was also arrested for his anticolonial militancy, shortly after publishing *Nós matamos o Cão Tinhoso* in Mozambique. Once again, this book was not banned, even if its circulation was strongly discouraged after the *Luuanda* events.

By this time, wars of liberation in the African colonies of the Portuguese Empire had broken out, starting in 1961 in Angola (February) and Guinee (July), and extending in 1964 to Mozambique. As referred, in December 1961, the *Estado da Índia* had fallen. Not coincidentally, in early 1961, the Goan writer Orlando da Costa—who had been living in Lisbon since 1947—published *The Sign of Wrath*. Costa’s curriculum included affiliation with the Communist Party, political arrests, prohibition from teaching in public schools, and prohibition of his previous books. While the Angolan and Mozambican stories were metaphoric, Costa’s neorealist romance touched on the outrageous militarization of the colonial rule in India by the end of Portuguese domain, a situation that was a favourite topic of the anticolonial Goan press in Bombay. The novel was finally banned in early 1962, at the height of Portuguese patriotic commotion. Still, a few months later, the book received the Ricardo Malheiro’s prize from the Portuguese Academy of Sciences. We may conclude that the evaluators were either unaware of the prohibition or, more probably, had been conscious of such ban, but still decided to grant the award, trusting that the dictatorship would find it difficult to affront this centenary institution (officially considered of public utility by the Portuguese State). Discomfort caused by the decision may also explain why the censorship file of *The Sign of Wrath*, although registered, disappeared from the SNI’s⁴ archives.

Returning to Castro’s observations about how *Monsoon* ignores the political ambience of its time, it seems almost impossible that even cryptic references to Portuguese political repression in India could pass censorship and did not lead to persecution (see Pinto; Melo). Although it is possible that Devi wished to avoid such risk, I suggest that her declared purposes of being an internal social critic and her political positioning in this period could not have accommodated the denunciation of the colonial situation.

MONSOON

Following Castro's appreciation of *Monsoon* as a short story cycle, I suggest the relevance of "Fidelity" within it. Its protagonist actually appears in different stories: twice in the first edition, and in the new story introduced in the 2003 edition. As with her "snapshots of colonial Goa," resorting to Castro's happy image, in what regards the construction of the metropole approached through the lenses of the Goan presence and Indo-Portuguese relations, Devi's choices in "Fidelity" turn what is silenced as interesting as what it reveals.

"FIDELITY"

While dressing, Luisa suggests to Chandracanta that they stay overnight in the hotel, saddened by the idea of returning to her hostel and sleeping alone. The young man is lost in thought, distractedly looking through the curtained window at the hurried movement of passers-by, indistinguishable behind their raised collars in the Lisbon winter. Her pestering draws his attention back to her. When Chandracanta turns around, his sad and distant expression disturbs her. Persisting, Luisa chitchats about his background, with teasing remarks that clearly echo Orientalist tropes (Castro *Urban* 411). She laughingly recalls a supposed anecdote he recounted on their first meeting at an Anatomy class— in Goa, anatomy was studied with dummies, as the students refused to dissect corpses. Chandra replies that there are things in the East she cannot understand. She continues to provoke him until she finally addresses his arranged marriage with the fourteen-year-old Dhruva. She deems the situation unacceptable and, searching for a reaction, speculates about their marital relation. Chandra answers with an enigmatic smile. When Luisa asks what a girl of such tender years could possibly know, Chandra responds that at least she knew how to continue. Luisa ignores or does not comprehend his sarcasm in the hurry to disclose her plans: Chandra could easily annul his ties, based on the principle of *non consumatus* (a legal solution clearly inspired by Catholic precepts). They could then marry, specialize in tropical medicine, and leave to make their fortune in Africa. At this point, Chandra stares at the curtains while his mind returns to Goa. He recalls his wedding with Dhruva, how she had become part of his family, and the consequences his abandonment would bring, as after being a wife she could only become a widow in status. When Luisa's persistence pulls him back to the bedroom, Chandra ends the scene with an answer that packs sexism into cultural incommunicability,

‘There are many things you cannot understand Luisa,’ he repeated. ‘Many things... You see, this is how we are in the East. The man might stray but the husband is always faithful...’ (Devi *Monsoon* 79)

Voicing his background as representative of a unified East, Chandracanta dismisses Luisa’s views as an incapacity to understand the Eastern mind. Upset by his lover’s plans and judgements, he presents his Eastern sensibility to demonstrate how fidelity and infidelity articulate and dictate the ephemeral nature of their relationship. Apparently, Chandracanta can return home with his values untouched by this relation.

Connectable stories

Chandracanta positions himself in Lisbon as representative of the East— an East marked by a traditionalist mind-set. It is significant that only the local or informed foreign reader may know through different signs, starting with family names, that Chandracanta is Hindu. Only two stories in *Monsoon* explicitly designate local communities created by religious ties. The first, “The Cure,” focuses on the impossible love between a Hindu man and a Catholic girl. The second, which is more germane to the present discussion, is “Padmini.”

The Portuguese Army Captain, João Fidalgo—laterally John Nobleman, a surname that suggests both social origin and moral standards—arrives in Goa and visits the household of a Hindu doctor. Before departing from Lisbon, Fidalgo is asked by the doctor’s son to carry a parcel with presents to his father and sister. The boy had been studying medicine in Lisbon and was put in contact with Fidalgo by one of his teachers, the captain’s uncle. Performing this favour allows Fidalgo to enter the intimacy of this family. While speaking with the father, he sees the daughter and falls in love. She remains silent, only offering a “millenary,” “sacred” smile. Sensing the man’s interest, the father explains the divine character of her name, “Padmini, woman Lotus,” “the fourth and final stage of the female soul ere it merges into Brahma” (Devi *Monsoon* 57). Fidalgo intuits the father’s intention to create a barrier around the girl through this apparently casual explanation. Bewitched by her aura of unattainability, thereafter he spends hours in front of the house without daring to approach. Aware of this romantic agony, Lieutenant Gama—a surname that evidently invokes Vasco da Gama—suggests a new visit to the father. Yet, as a European old hand in India, he alerts:

‘You’re still a greenhorn here in India. If you think that you can have your way with the lass, you can forget it, let me tell you! Hindu girls don’t marry our lot. The parents

arrange their marriages and only with men from the same caste. Courting like you did in Lisbon? Not a chance...

‘... I mean that we haven’t a hope with the local girls. Apart from the tarts, of course, tarts are the same everywhere, only good to pass the time.’ (58)

The idea that ‘good’ native girls do not mix with Europeans is also present in “Hope.” Here, the son of an impoverished Catholic Brahmin family acts as custodian of his sisters’ reputations. Roberto refuses to take them to a ball because they dance with Europeans (referred to by the pejorative local term ‘Paclé’) and are getting a bad reputation. The girls finally agree that Europeans that come from the Portuguese metropole lack moral conduct and are uncommitted to lifetime marriage, unlike Goan boys. Though they have pretensions to social prestige, the ones stationed in Goa are in fact of doubtful social background, stupid and poor, and so unsuitable for marriage. The girls rhetorically add that they would rather marry a Sudra, that is, a member of the lowest caste in native social rank.

While this family entertains itself by downgrading the Paclé, offering a caricature picture of their morality, “Padmini” opens another reading of Portuguese male behaviour in India, deconstructing the stereotypes voiced by the Goan Catholic elites. Here, the protagonists are educated Portuguese military officers appreciating native elites. In this narrative, Goan women capture Portuguese chivalry by maintaining distance and by feeding their cultural differences in face of the Portuguese, protected by native males. Different from the Paclé described in “Hope,” here the officers evince codes of conduct that could be acknowledged by natives, while the officers themselves are ready to accept local customs and choices without dismissing or trying to overturn them. As he confesses to Gama, Fidalgo bows before Padmini with tender and respectful feelings. Once again playing the expert on Indian and Portuguese mind-sets, Gama concludes,

‘Of course. It happens to us all... sooner or later we all realize these people have roots and customs we must accept... and respect!’ (59)

In both narratives, endogamy takes part in the indigenous mechanisms to incorporate diversity while stabilizing local social order in a strategy of adaptation between the pre-existent and the elements considered invasive menaces to such order. These stories suggest that coexistence requires the cultural negotiation of relations. By complying with native traditions and morals, thus creating social barriers to miscegenation, Catholics and Hindus halt Portuguese male impulses. Conversely, the Portuguese capacity to adapt stands out in “Padmini” when the officers acknowledge and respect Indian ‘millennial’ civilization. Not by accident does Devi choose Hindus to face Europeans in Goa and in Portugal, electing them

as representatives of India or the East in stories where cultural differences and the limits of relations are tested. Equally relevant is the narrative it constructs, against historical evidences offered by the genealogy of many “Lusodendant” and “native” families, that miscegenation only happens through sexual encounters with women deviant from the local social order.

The difference in the way Devi treats Catholics and Hindus is notorious. Catholics—who shared the religion, had adopted some of the habits, had more interaction but were in social competition—are the ones to feel threatened and invest in constructing a preconception about the Portuguese in Goa. Tradition amongst Hindus—expressed in body language, storytelling, and metaphorical communication—is presented as a natural shield against troubles. The focus is native refusal of miscegenation; the Indians, not the Portuguese, determine the terms of relationship, equating it on a cultural rather than a racial level. Although the Portuguese officers represent the colonial state’s capacity to impose itself by force, power relations are not even slightly insinuated. In Goa as in Lisbon, relations are determined by personal interactions where cultural gaps emerge.

CHANGING TIMES

Monsoon’s stories also unveil the structures and dynamics of families. Notwithstanding the discourse on Hindu traditionalism, their actual permeability to change emerges. It is worth comparing the Sirvoicar in “Padmini” and the Dessai in “Dhruva,” the story that presents Chandracanta’s background through the eyes of his wife. As well as being Brahmin, both families make the decision to send their sons to study medicine in Portugal. Yet there are significant differences—while the Sirvoicar son is in Lisbon, the Dessai are caught before the move. The Dessai are a business family with local prestige having a generational conflict about Chandracanta’s future: should he interrupt familial expectations to continue the business to study in Portugal? While the grandfather disagrees, the father and uncle believe it will add prestige to the family. Differently, the Sirvoicar father is a doctor, which may explain why the son’s presence in Lisbon is taken for granted. The father’s profession highlights that rupture with tradition has a family history as, at least in his generation, a decision had been taken to have a child studying Western medical curricula at Goa Medical School or elsewhere.

It is worth recalling that in Goa, as in other parts of the subcontinent, professionals in modern Western medicine competed with—and questioned—Ayurvedic and other native healthcare knowledges. Such competition has engendered Hindu reaction since the nineteenth century. Significantly, one of the

first and more lasting Hindu periodicals in Goa was precisely a bilingual (Marathi and Portuguese) magazine dedicated to Ayurvedic hygiene (“Pathea Both” 1888-1908). Its founder, Dada Vaidya, also edited since 1907 “A Luz do Oriente,” a cultural magazine in Portuguese language, whose agenda included the diffusion of Ayurvedic knowledge (Lobo *O Desassossego*, 234). Until that time, the study and practice of modern Western medicine was almost exclusively the domain of the Catholic elites, only later gaining adherence among Hindu elites— an option that affronted religious interdictions as briefly referred in “Fidelity.” In fact, in British India, whose rapid changes had a growing influence in Goa, the Hindu entrance in this and other fields of “Western” sciences articulated reformist movements and internal tensions (see Panikkar; Kamat). In early twentieth century Goa, a further step was taken when the first Hindu males travelled to Portugal and other Western countries to take university courses. The tensions and social, political, and cultural impact that such movement carried are yet to be studied. Regarding “Dhruva” and “Padmini,” other negotiations between tradition and change deserve attention. The female characters, Padmini and Dhruva, confirm such negotiations. Although both apparently live and behave under unchanging traditions, their conditions are substantially different. Dhruva was subjected to child marriage and educated into the new family’s habits to start performing her wifely duties. Padmini still lives in her family’s household and is old enough to nourish the Portuguese officer’s romanticism.

Notwithstanding Chandracanta’s refusal to discuss child marriage and women’s condition in India, this was an ongoing discussion within Hindu communities. Again, in Goa, debates between social reformists and traditionalists have been particularly vibrant since the early twentieth century. Yet, as in the case of education, the impact of discussions held at the community level eventually depended on the decisions taken by families and individuals. In *In Search of Tomorrow* (1987) the late pianist and writer Edila Gaitonde, married to the freedom fighter Pundalica (Pundalik) Gaitonde, offers a rare testimony of what followed her Hindu fiancé’s announcement of the wish to marry a Portuguese. Despite being unencumbered by child marriage, the proposal of breaking community, caste, and race barriers provoked passionate discussions and hesitations among the family until the blessing finally reached Portugal. Nevertheless, such consent had an immediate negative impact on the Gaitonde’s status among the Brahmin arch-traditionalists.

The discreet way by which these choices emerge in Devi’s accounts allows us to interrogate her awareness or will to make such differences perceptible. We may speculate about an intentional opening to a double reading depending on the audience, captured either by the image of immovable traditionalism or by the signs of change. In any case, the conservative perspective prevails in “Fidelity,” where *Monsoon’s* only actual Indo-Portuguese conflict occurs. As Castro (following

Boaventura Sousa Santos) has already discussed at *The Heart Of The Metropole*, “Fidelity” inverts the gendered terms on which colonial relations and debates on racial miscegenation were equated, namely in Portuguese colonialism (407-8).

However, differently from Castro, I am reticent in interpreting it as a rejection of Lusotropicalism, while agreeing that “Fidelity” steps out of the Salazarist order and its peculiar interpretation of Gilberto Freyre’s ideas. Rather, the story and how it may be set in dialog with others in the book seems to evidence Freyre’s influence on Devi, which Devi assumes in different texts. I emphasize that the contradictory readings that “Fidelity” opens, turns it into one of the stories in *Monsoon* more difficult to interpret. But from a Lusotropical observation stand, I argue that within the short story cycle of *Monsoon*, “Fidelity” helps confronting Goan society’s Lusotropical character with the metropolitan alienation from the tropics, an alienation that dictates the incapacity of its members to understand the “Indian” mind-set. In other words, “Fidelity,” along with the stories already approached and the local cultural palette observable in *Monsoon*, confirms Freyre’s Lusotropicalism, first formulated in Goa at the Instituto Vasco da Gama, where the idea of plasticity stands. Commenting on the harmonious contribution of local diversity to form Goan Lusotropical society, Freyre observed in this 1951 conference,

It is true that here we notice, since first contact, the presence of the East; and the East is too profound to be, for even a moment, forgotten or ignored in India, as much Latinized or Christianized she may present herself in Goa, Diu or Daman. Certainly, here it is always at our side the Hindu, the Mahomedan, the Parsi, who having religions different from the traditionally Portuguese, are, in the meantime, members, as the Catholics, of the same Lusotropical community of culture (...) [The Portuguese] Has Europeanized and Latinized, not only Christianized, tropical peoples. Himself, yet, instead of rigidly European and imperially Iberian, extra-Europeanized and tropicalized himself since the beginning of his maritime adventures, getting brownish under the tropical Sun or under action or reburn⁵ of tropical miscegenation. (Freyre 15-16)

In this and other writings, Freyre defended the plasticity and the circulatory character of cultural traveling and adaptation, starting with the Portuguese—a people in the frontier between the East and the West—having been a product of past dominations, migrations, and contacts in the Iberian Peninsula including Arab domination, for several centuries. This character explained Portuguese ease in the tropics, facilitating tropicalizing themselves and “Europeanizing” the others—a process that shortened East/West distances.

In Freyre’s perspective, the Portuguese approach was essentially different from that of the Northern Europeans. Through the former, since early on, the Orient travelled to other spaces, as in the case of Brazil where Freyre found abundant

traces of Indian beliefs, aesthetics, and customs, and of Portugal as his 'tropical sensibility' was able to notice. In Freyre's view, Lusotropicalism was a reality decipherable by sensitive trained tropical observers, capable of finding the traces of unity in diversity and of valuing diversity in unity, making them significant to the present, even where it had been obscured in collective memory. This was a world not exempt from historical trauma and injustices, but its positive aspects allowed a sense of harmony and human empathy that created hope for internal and international relations in a postcolonial world. Lusotropicalism became to Freyre a humanism inspired by the "world that the Portuguese created," resistant and an alternative to what he considered the racist, conflictual, and annihilating forces fuelled by the hegemonic Northern European imperialisms, from whose influence the Portuguese and their political powers had not been exempt.⁶

The idea that Indian prejudices stopped miscegenation in Goa safeguarded the Portuguese position and still permitted the envisaging of Goa's Lusotropicality. Inspired by the divisions between communities and by the caste system, but not by race, local reality in *Monsoon* does not conflict with Freyre's thesis about the Portuguese male's proclivity for racial miscegenation in the tropics. On the contrary, "Padmina" and "Hope" confirm it, while denoting Portuguese adaptability. Unscrutinised sexual encounters that could allow miscegenation could—or should—only happen in Lisbon through the inversion of the expectable gender terms of such encounters; in Goa women were controlled by native males and in *Monsoon*, women did not move in either direction— that is, there are no Goan women in Lisbon or Portuguese women in Goa. "Padmini" and "Hope" open a question: if miscegenation carried social disgrace for Goan women, what about Goan males' expectations in Europe regarding Portuguese women?

Toying with the concept of "fidelity," "Fidelity" seems to offer a clear answer, while it may also be read as a critique of the metropolitan divorce from its "overseas" realities; a divorce that had been institutionalized with Salazar's 1930 Colonial Act, which constitutionalised the subalternity of the territories and populations of the Empire, dividing them between assimilated and indigenous. Native cultural annihilation and assimilation to Portuguese values, represented as being those of a Western Roman Catholic nation, now became the expression of the Portuguese civilizing mission. Luisa's insistence of her values' unquestionability apparently discloses a mentality moulded by this hegemonizing ideology. The contrast between what happens in the metropole and in India highlights that metropolitan cultural inwardness was overcome in the tropics.

The problem is that Luisa complicates this narrative, as she is a poor candidate to represent the Portuguese (metropolitan) woman idealized by the *Estado Novo*: the gatekeeper of the most reactionary interpretation of Catholic family values,

who understood that women's primordial vocation and duties were marriage, motherhood, and the happiness of the *pater familias*, whose male 'weaknesses' should be silently suffered— a subaltern status that the dictatorship reinforced with limited private and civil rights. Luisa seems much more representative of the urban youth, who Devi most probably encountered, that by the end of the 1950's emerged at the margins of Portuguese society, in rupture with the regime— a youth that looked for freedom from the dominant conservatism that set Portugal apart from European modernity in its post-war rebuilding process. All in Luisa point in that direction: her apparent lack of family constraints, views on a career after marriage, and sexual freedom in clear break with Catholic morality. In fact, her solitude in Salazarist Lisbon seem to be the price of stepping out of the sexist/gendered order authored by the dictatorship.

Under such a perspective, Luisa looks less focused in confronting the East than in scrutinizing tradition in matters of ethical evaluation and individual choices. She even subtly insinuates her plan would liberate Chandracanta's adolescent wife, a theme that opens the non-linear relations and tensions between feminism and colonialism. What is less clear is Devi's own awareness of Luisa's disruptive profile and, consequently, the intentionality of presenting Luisa's displacement and divorce from Salazarist Lisbon, or whether, on the contrary, through Luisa, Devi aimed at representing the metropole as Western and modern. Both readings suppose different views of the metropole but share the tensions and unavoidable ruptures between the languages and values of modernity and of tradition, as well as the problems of communication that such confrontations carry.

Within *Monsoon*, "Fidelity" expands the overall feeling of open narratives that turn what is silenced relevant and allow diverse, even conflictual readings. This complexity extends to the understanding of Devi's declared aim of denouncing injustices in Goan society. The context of the publication suggests a will to intervene in the discussions, which intensified after 1961, about Goan identity and its reality after 450 years of Portuguese domain, as well as about Indo-Portuguese relations in the twilight of this reality.

Publishing in Lisbon in 1963 meant intervening in an ambience dominated by Salazarist narratives where the lack of freedom of expression called for imaginative solutions. It also meant doing so when the Goan Catholic refugees—who had been arriving from India since the end of 1961—started to organize and achieve public visibility as a community. Such activism was dominated by upper caste and Lusodendant leaders who found in Salazar an interested supporter and moulded the profile of dominant discourses. Aiming especially to reify the Portuguese character of *Estado da Índia* and offer an idealistic view of its reality, the intellectuals of this new community exploded onto the scene that between the 1950's

and the 1970's in Portugal as in India—and to a lesser degree also in Mozambique—elaborated in the print media about Portuguese colonialism, *Estado da Índia*, and Goan identity. Overall, the writers involved were responsible for the discursive moulding of different views. *Monsoon* integrates this general trend through creative writing, a genre underrepresented in that lot. If, as I defend, it is difficult to grasp in this cycle of stories a critique of Portuguese colonialism, although there are signs of distancing from its Salazarist configuration), writing about *injustices*, namely those that affected subaltern groups in Goa, as Devi intended to—like Orlando Costa had done two years before—disrupted the hegemonic discourse installed in Portugal by the pens of other Goan writers.

Monsoon had favourable reception among Portuguese critics at important newspapers of the time, who consecrated Vimala Devi as a writer (Devi and Seabra 225-227; Devi *Monsoon* 2003 and 2019). In Goa her skills were well appreciated, even by Leopoldo da Rocha who, in a review dated 23 October 1965, in the newspaper *A Vida* published in Margão, expressed that the stories missed the “true face of Goa.” The question of whether it was appreciated by the Goan community in Portugal does not have a direct answer but may be guessed by the story of the *A Literatura Indo-Portuguesa* (The Indo-Portuguese literature, hereafter LIP).

BEING VIMALA DEVI: A LUSOTROPICAL OR A GOAN STORY?

Born in 1932, Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida (de Seabra) was around 25 years old when, in 1958, she headed from Goa to Lisbon. With roots in a native landed Catholic family, she was the daughter of a lawyer and a housewife. According to her interview with Spina she moved to reunite with her family that, for different reasons, was residing in Portugal. Thereafter, she found a job as a translator and, in 1959, married. A file at PIDE's archives introduces slight changes to this narrative and details her path in Goa.

TERESA DE ALMEIDA AND MANUEL DE SEABRA

In April 1963, Teresa applied for a passport on the eve of travelling to England with her husband, a file that may be found at PIDE's archive (ANTT. PIDE/DGS, SC, processo 594/63). The application was accompanied by a letter of consent from her husband, who, by law, held the power to authorize or deny the wife's access to an individual passport that enabled travelling by herself. The process involved

a meeting with PIDE that the Civil Government (CG) required to issue such documents. PIDE found no problem in dispensing the passport.

PIDE's response to the CG included a report of her extensive statements at its headquarters. Although in the CG she filed the application as a housewife, at PIDE she presented herself as a writer, sharing that she had come to Portugal to enjoy a long holiday. Without referring to her family or her activity in Lisbon as a translator, she indicated that in the meantime she had married with Manuel de Seabra (Ernesto Manuel de Seabra Ferreira Bértolo), thus adopting permanent residence in Lisbon. She also mentioned that she had followed Portuguese and English studies in Goa, up to the lyceum level, after which she worked for six years for different departments of the Portuguese government, where she then took her leave of absence to travel to Portugal.

The details about her path just to obtain a passport reflect an anxiety to evidence political reliability—as licence to leave the country depended on such image—at a moment when the loyalty of Goans resident in Portugal had come under scrutiny. The narrative of her stay in Portugal reinforces this feeling. We learn that after returning with Manuel de Seabra from a two month stay in Brazil in 1961, she regularly collaborated with Portuguese newspapers, namely with the *Diário da Manhã* on short-stories, poetry, and folklore from Goa, and with the *Diário de Notícias* and *Diário Popular* on literary subjects. This was not politically neutral information, for only the *Diário Popular* had some anti status quo positioning. The *Diário da Manhã* was the mouthpiece of the *União Nacional*, the dictatorship's party, and the centenarian *Diário de Notícias*, another unofficial vehicle of the dictatorship, was a publication of the Empresa Nacional de Publicidade, property of the national public bank. Teresa referred that *Suria* (1962), her work of collected poems, was published by the Agência Geral do Ultramar (Overseas General Agency), the state organism dedicated to colonial propaganda, while her second book, *Monção*, was self-published; she detailed that both received good reviews, for which she was interviewed by the State's television (*RPT*) and radio (*Emissora Nacional*).

Furthermore, she indicated that Seabra was also a published writer. His last assignment had been the editorship of the Overseas Room recently created by the *Emissora Nacional*, and that he had recently won a three year contract with the Portuguese section of BBC radio. The BBC contract is well known in the couple's biographies, but not Seabra's task at BBC and the post at *Emissora Nacional*, which may have been decisive in winning the British contract. All the data offered by Teresa to PIDE helped compose the image of reliability, with emphasis on their engagement with media and institutions related to the dictatorship. This file found at PIDE's records introduces Teresa's marriage to the Portuguese writer, editor, and

polyglot translator Manuel de Seabra, as well as the couple's activity after their marriage. As highlighted by others, Devi frequently refers to Seabra's importance to her intellectual awareness, requiring us to pay attention to his path, as Braga (2019) has already called attention to, especially because of their lasting partnership. In 2018, Devi again spoke about his influence and incentive to become a writer (Spina), investing in a talent that already started to evidence in Goa through occasional collaborations with local newspapers. Such were the cases of the *O Heraldo* and the *Diário da Noite* (Jorge 24 February 1970). When preparing *Súria*, Seabra suggested she should adopt an Indian-sounding pseudonym using exoticism as a marketing tool. Consequently, Teresa took the penname by which she became known, the undefiled form (Vimala) of the Goddess (Devi) Durga, consort of Shiva.⁷ Teresa, in fact, was continuing a tradition among Goan Catholic writers to create pennames with Hindu resonances, but this is the first known case of a woman taking such a step. A year later Devi published *Monsoon* with *Dédalo*, a "publishing house"—sometimes also referred to by bibliophiles as a collection—probably created by Seabra to release the couple's work, as the only other *Dédalo*'s books (two) were authored by Seabra.

The same age as Teresa, Seabra was adventurous. Since his youth an Esperantist, a movement the dictatorship held in suspicion, he later started struggling to live on writing. He was, while still a student, incarcerated for a few days in April 1952 for distributing MUD's pamphlets (Movement for Democratic Unity), which took a pacifist position against the North Atlantic Pact and demanded the release of their leaders, arrested in 1949. Seabra's minor role and declared intention of abandoning the movement, a frequent stratagem among oppositionists without a police record, justified his short stay behind bars. That same year he founded an ephemeral magazine, *Neo Cadernos Literários*, where he dedicated a special issue to Catalan literature, whose culture fascinated him. In 1954 he had a temporary job as a writer in Barcelona and took a journey through Europe afterwards, surviving on petty jobs. Back in Portugal, he returned to Lisbon's intellectual milieu, commuting between the neo-realists, who were associated with the communist party, and the more heterodox surrealists who embraced cultural intervention—when not embracing political militancy—as a form of resistance against the dictatorship's dominant discourses. In 1958, he joined the architect, cinephile, and later movie director, António de Macedo, and the fine arts student Carlos Gama to establish a small publishing house, *Clube Bibliográfico Editex*, which went bankrupt in 1960 (cf. Macedo). It was this liberating ambience that Teresa joined when meeting Seabra, an ambience where alternative modes of dealing with the dictatorship's claustrophobic atmosphere were set in motion.

Seabra confessed later that meeting Teresa awakened his curiosity about the Portuguese presence in India. By that time she,

suffered the dictatorship with exaggeration. I think that in that moment I was her lifeline. Through her I started to know about the anticolonial fight. Her environment in Goa was very Portuguese and Vimala was perfectly integrated in that world. (Cerdà Interview)

Seemingly, the Goan situation had become for her a source of anxiety and desperation about its future.

BUILDING AN INTELLECTUAL MEMORY OF PORTUGUESE INDIA IN THE/A PORTUGUESE LUSOTROPICAL ENVIRONMENT

Soon after marrying, the couple began engaging intellectually with the colonial question and the Portuguese presence in the world through a focus on the Goan case. This intervention led them to engage with the media and organs associated with the state propaganda machinery. In their more recent statements, both agreed that the research that resulted in *A Literatura indo-portuguesa* (LIP), published by the *Junta de Investigações do Ultramar* (JIU), started in the early 1960s.

Given its scope and aims, it could sound surprising that the *Heraldo* did not pay any attention to the publication of the LIP in 1971, as this newspaper—published in Lisbon (May 1972–March 1974) by the Government Commissariat for the Affairs of *Estado da Índia* and directed and contributed to by Goans—strongly invested in the diffusion of Goan culture and related print activities. Yet this silence demonstrates Devi's outsider status within the community. Only in May 1973 did the book merit a congratulatory note for winning the 1972 *Abílio Lopes do Rego* prize from the Portuguese Academy of Sciences, the authors being praised for “rehabilitating an overseas literature with profound Lusitanian roots that had crossed the limited horizons of the land where it was born and flourished.” Instituted in 1950, the prize sought to “stimulate studies about the overseas administration.” According to its 1964 regulation, the scope could be “any theme of the science of colonization or any concrete problem that relates directly to the Portuguese overseas administration” or “any study of human sciences with direct and immediate interest to the Portuguese overseas administration.” (Ministério da Educação Nacional... Portaria 20925). Welcoming a book dedicated to a space over which Portuguese administration was now merely virtual (the dictatorship accused India of an imperialist takeover and created the fiction of still administrating *Estado da Índia* within the circumstances of an invaded territory), and highlighting it with a prize, was a reification of the field where the Portuguese state could still effectively intervene— one which fomented the assertion of distinctiveness and an intellectual management through the cultural domain.

LIP was published by the end of the period that, as already indicated, saw intense publishing activity by Goans in India and Portugal. Distinct from the metropolitan focus on the Portuguese Oriental Empire, of which the city of Goa was the metropolitan space of confluence, these works invested in unveiling local agency during the late period of Portuguese domain (nineteenth to twentieth centuries), a time when Goa's place in the Oriental Empire had become a mirage of past glories.

Three studies on Goan literature and publishing histories are particularly relevant. The first to be published was in Goa, the *Esboço da história da literatura indo-portuguesa* by Father Filinto Cristo Dias, the earliest essay to present a systematic look of such literature (Spina). Father Dias had first published the *Esboço* in the bulletin of the Archdiocese of Goa⁸ between 1957 and 1963, thus traversing periods of colonial Portuguese and postcolonial Indian governance of Goa (Spina 130). In 1963, he released the study in book-form at the Tipografia Rangel, the most important local typography and publishing house in Portuguese language.

In 1967, the year of the Opinion Poll in Goa about its future administrative status, the first volume of *Literatura Goesa: apontamentos bio-bibliográficos para a sua história* authored by Aleixo Manuel da Costa was published in Lisbon by the *Agência Geral do Ultramar* and sponsored by the *Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos* (CEHU, Centre for Overseas Historical Studies). It was the first work to coin the concept of Goan literature in a title. Significantly, this release happened when Costa retired from his duties as curator of the Goa Central library, formerly the Biblioteca Nacional de Nova Goa, where he had built his career. The volume was enigmatically preceded by an undated and unsigned talk—probably at the *Emissora Nacional*—by a female member of the team of *Filmoteca Ultramarina*, a microfilm archive created by the historian Father Silva Rego. The talk was dedicated to the theme *Illustrious Goans*, and the speaker recalled that the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* held a column dedicated to the Great Overseas Portuguese, where Indians stood out. The purpose of the talk was in fact to announce Costa's work, and detailed that it was a

Bio-biography of hundreds and hundreds of Goans, both Christians and Hindus. The original, typewritten, has 8 volumes like this, with 2125 pages. Reaches letter S. Flipping through these pages pass under our eyes some centuries of Luso-Indian culture, intimately laced and united; great Goan families, that are simultaneously great Portuguese families (...) Goa has performed in the Indic the role that Portugal performed in the Atlantic. That is the revelation, I referred, contained in this marvellous work... (apud Costa *Literatura Goesa* 10)

The talk didn't clarify how or when the work reached Portugal, but the Costa family blog enlightens some aspects of this history. Like the *Esboço*, this work had been

under preparation since the 1950s. After the fall of Nagar-Haveli, Portugal instituted a process at the International Court at the Hague regarding Portuguese rights over the territory and the right of passage between its Indian spaces. The Portuguese Mozambican historian Alexandre Lobato, a researcher of CEHU, headed a mission to Goa to collect documents in support of such claim (Araújo; Souza). Coming to know Aleixo Costa and his work, Lobato proposed to take a sample volume to Portugal to explore the possibility of its publication under CEHU's sponsorship. It is not certain when the rest of the volumes reached Portugal and where most of them are today.

I located the first three volumes (corresponding to the 1967 edition) at the Overseas Archive (*Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*). Publication of Costa's complete work, helped by another Portuguese historian, Artur Teodoro de Matos, would have to wait until 1997. This updated version took the form of a dictionary, and was published not in Goa or Lisbon, but in Macau. Throughout those 30 years, Costa continued to enrich the manuscript with new data. The reason the Costa family blog offers for this delay in publication—the 1974 revolution—is not convincing, as until that date seven years had passed since the edition of the first volume. Could it be the case that the head of the *Agência Geral do Ultramar* had finally realized the existence of abundant references to banned anticolonial publications in Costa's work? Or did eventual financial difficulties interrupt the project, as feared by Father Silva Rego in a letter to Kruss Abecasis on 17 December 1965, that was attached to the LIP's file mentioned below?⁹ In any case, the 1967 volume offered enough material for propaganda with *Lusotropicalist* timbre, as the talk reproduced in the book evidences. Costa himself seemed less enamoured by such a tone. In the frontispiece of the volume, he preferred to quote several Europeans who had pointed to a distinctive Goan intellect, culture, and knowledge—a kind of endorsement that had a long tradition in local publishing.

The last study is LIP. In her thesis (2020), Spina focused on the historiography of Goan literature, studying and contextualizing this work with considerable profundity. Spina particularly evidenced LIP's open dialog with Gilberto Freyre and proved that “the use of Lusotropicalism is recurrent and adjusted to different contexts, both as theory and as methodological approach.” (185). Yet she felt it was difficult to establish if such presence reflected the authors' adherence, responded to sponsorship requirements, or just reflected the air of the time. To Spina, Seabra's political background seemed incompatible with Lusotropicalism, a perplexity that I believe is tributary to Freyre's present image in Portuguese academia, marked by the dictatorship's propagandistic use of Freyre—not without Freyre's complicity—at some point.

Adding to my above analysis of *Monsoon*, Devi's 2018 interview with Spina is illuminating about what attracted the couple to Lusotropicalism. Devi underscored their investment in LIP in proving Freyre's proposal, and dissociated "Lusotropicalism from Salazar's colonial policy, specifying that her husband and colleague «was always a man of the Left»" (185). Spina concludes that, in any case, LIP is a sound example of how literary history is vulnerable to the representation of dominant political discourses. I would argue that Devi's insistence is significant and consistent with at least a part of the Portuguese Left's reception of Freyre and positioning towards the colonial question.

Portuguese democratic intellectuals revealed until late a dominantly nationalist attitude about Portuguese colonialism, even when criticizing Salazar's policies (Lopes 297-307). Even the Communist Party took a clear anticolonial stand only by the mid-fifties, but even so, conditioned the solution to the fall of the regime. On the other hand, Freyre had captured the attention of Portuguese republican and democratic circles since the 1930s when, long before creating the concept of Lusotropicalism, he had started elaborating about Brazilian multiracial society and the Portuguese role in such fabric. This interest may be explained by Freyre's path towards the building of a theoretical and methodological framework that could be set into dialog with ideas that had been gaining argumentative sophistication in Portugal since the late nineteenth century. Such ideas were repeated long enough to lastingly nourish Portuguese national imaginary and segments of native elites of its colonies, as the case of Goan Catholic elites illustrates, and may be summarized as the case of Portuguese exceptionalism in the face of other colonial powers.

The Portuguese constitutional tradition, from liberalism until to the First Republic where the legislators sought to make colonial domination compatible with universalist ideals of the Enlightenment, played a determining role in the argument. This was particularly so after the First World War, when the principle of self-rule gained breadth and was articulated in federalist projects of future independent or autonomous states of the Empire; strongly supported by colonial elites, this would progressively work to bring native populations to Western modern civilization and democracy. Evidence that contradicted such self-image could therefore be discarded as correctible deviations. The idea that the Portuguese were able to create unbreakable ties between peoples and spaces was sufficiently strong to bridge different political visions in the country. In their history of Goan literature and in other texts, Seabra and Devi clearly renewed that imaginary to Freyre's views, although keeping critical eyes regarding colonial practices.

Furthermore, clarifying Devi's above quoted comment about Salazar's relation to Lusotropicalism, gains from approaching the JIU (the funding agency of LIP) as an institution dedicated to multidisciplinary research about the colonies.

Cláudia Castelo and Alexandre Valentim have demonstrated that JIU became an important instrument of those within the regime that, overcoming rhetoric, were seduced by Freyre's Lusotropicalism and looked at his ideas as a reference and opportunity to redirect colonial policies. Generically, they laid their trust in promoting local development sustained by scientific studies, fomenting education and opportunities for native self-development and investing in multicultural and non-racist conviviality as solutions to correct the later *deviations* from Portuguese traditions, consequently guaranteeing the survival of a pluricontinental Portugal. If Sarmiento Rodrigues heading the Overseas Ministry (1950-1955) represented the entrance of such a current in Salazar's government, Adriano Moreira (1961-1962) was its last breath (cf. Silva; Castelo). Differently from them, Salazar continued to defend the spirit of the *Colonial Act* and consequent colonial policies, believing that reformism would accelerate the fall of the empire (Castelo *Investigação* 399). In fact, the most sensitive reports produced by scientists working under JIU's missions in the colonies were systematically ignored by the government. For many of these scientists, the contact with such realities came as a shock and alert, as had happened with the Lusotropicalist agronomist, ethnologist, and poet Ruy Cinatti in Timor, a close friend of Carlos Krus Abecasis who called him to JIU while heading the institution (Castelo "Ruy Cinatti").

A LITERATURA INDO-PORTUGUESA

If the discussion thus far helps clarify Devi/Seabra's and JIU's relation to the different sensibilities regarding Lusotropicalism, we are still left with the question of how this state institution came to finance the couple, and if there was any conditioning of the manuscript. Resolving this question was made possible through the discovery of the quite complete file about the building of LIP, found in the archives of the *Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical*, the heir of JIU.

Before approaching the file, I travel to *Uma história da literatura Goesa* (A history of Goan literature) that Devi published in the Goan newspaper *A Vida* on 17 December 1965, where she traced a genealogy of the project. In that narrative, Seabra became interested in Goan literature following the book project *Goa, Daman and Diu*, a literary anthology about those spaces that the publishing house *Livraria Bertrand* invited him to write in February 1961. She believed that the motive for this odd invitation was his marriage with a Goan, for although fascinated by Indian culture, Seabra knew nothing about Goa. The task wasn't easy, as she herself had travelled from Goa to Portugal with only few books, being thus unable to offer Seabra access to related bibliography. Yet, as a professional writer, Seabra accepted the challenge and delivered the anthology within scarcely two months. Thereafter

his interest grew to the point of having, by 1962, enough material to deliver ten radio talks and a conference at the Soares dos Reis Museum (Porto). Vimala confessed that Seabra's curiosity took her to her land's forgotten literature, as she started to assist him. After moving to England, Seabra's lack of free time led Vimala to head the research thereafter, with his occasional collaboration.

JIU's file revealed that it was Teresa de Almeida e Seabra who submitted, contracted, and conducted the building of LIP. Considering Devi's statement that Seabra was the soul of the project—having started the research alone—this finding came as a surprise with the reason being unclear for her, and not Seabra, to head such a process. Discussing the issue with Spina, this researcher advanced the hypothesis that Devi's Goan origin may have been considered a strong argument to persuade the funding agency, as she could be presented as a particularly authoritative voice. The hypothesis is convincing, particularly because different public organisms were then supporting Goan publishing, as exemplified above. In any case, this file justifies why Devi headed the publication, and evidences the decisive role played by her, even if the outcome reflected the couple's intellectual partnership. The project proposal was submitted in the form of a letter dated 27 December 1962 that, although signed by Teresa, referred to that partnership. The letter illuminates the aims and how far their previous research had reached. It does not mention Seabra's assignment with Livraria Bertrand but underscores a series of talks about "Goa in Portuguese literature"¹⁰ delivered at *Emissora Nacional*, probably in the context of Seabra's post at that radio. But, while in 1965 Devi attributes the talks to Seabra, here the project is referred to as a joint work and presented as being the first literary history of Portuguese India.

To underline the importance of their previous achievements and credits as researchers, Devi affirmed that before such talks there was not even a "guide or catalogue for a critical study of Indo-Portuguese literature, or, more properly, of Portuguese literature of Indian expression."¹¹ That is, she was still not aware of Father Filinto Cristo Dias' work, or other previous historiographic and critical approaches to that literature. Consequently, according to her, they "had to discover everything," initiating their research "from stage zero."¹²

In a moment of national trauma, the proposal's strongest argument was the project's urgency:

in the present circumstances in Goa, there is the risk of five centuries of the contribution of Goa to Portuguese literature, a most valuable contribution since the first years of Portuguese presence in the Konkan being lost, in forgetfulness¹³

This argument is noteworthy, as it moves the focus from metropolitan Portuguese action to the early results of such action, through a focus that expressed a culturally decentred conception of Portuguese literature and that allowed defending a centennial Goan agency in its building up. According to the project, such contribution had yet to be engraved in Portuguese cultural memory given the vast inattention it had received. This argument reinforced the idea, expressed in the letter, that Indo-Portuguese literature was Portuguese literature of Indian expression.

FROM LONDON, BETWEEN LISBON AND GOA

In the meantime, the couple moved to London, from where, on 15 July 1963, Teresa sent a second letter.¹⁴ Now she appeared as the sole author and researcher, and presented a more detailed plan with a timetable to support the budget, including regular research travels to Portugal. The project comprised a chapter dedicated to Konkani and its alphabet as elements of diffusion of Western culture, and another chapter regarding Goan contribution to Portuguese culture and literature. It also planned a dictionary of Goan authors in the Portuguese language and an anthology. The initial idea of writing two separate histories, one dedicated to literature and another to publishing (books and periodicals) had disappeared. It proposed to deliver the final version in 28 months' time, an unrealistic schedule that would be continually reevaluated in the coming years.

Only four days later, on 19 July, Krus Abecasis recommended the proposal to the new Overseas Minister, António Augusto Peixoto Correia, mentioning that he had already received clearance from Ruy Cinatti and Commandant Avelino Teixeira da Mota, a specialist in the history of Portuguese *expansion*.¹⁵ He also underlined the Goan origin of the author, referring that she had been studying the subject for some time and would be helped by her husband. The recommendation had a clear Lusotropicalist tune:

Through it will be documented the Portuguese cultural presence in India, translated in the literary creation of peculiar nature, synthesis of contributions of very different origins that the Lusitanian genius harmonized in a spirit of perfect unity, similar to what happened in other domains of Art and in contrast with the form by which the other European cultures affirmed their presence amongst foreign civilizations.¹⁶

As indicated, the couple took much longer to deliver the project than the initial plan. Difficulties in gathering information and afterwards in managing a growing archive justified such delay, as the regular reports show. Over the years, the plan

was reworked, accompanying the research and the editorial dynamics in Portugal and in Goa. In 1965, the couple not only came to know Father Filinto Cristo Dias' work, but also became aware of Manuel Aleixo Costa's book project. Such findings seem to have been decisive in restructuring the project, as the history of publishing and the dictionary of authors risked repeating those works. As on other occasions, this late knowledge evidences Teresa's outsider status within the Goan circles that moved around other Portuguese institutions. In fact, the dossier confirms that, notwithstanding successive appeals, the Goan community in Portugal mostly chose to ignore the project. One of the few exception seems to have been a book by the poet Paulino Dias, *No País de Súrria*, sent to the couple by an anonymous donator (Devi "Uma história." 1). Her research only found a positive turn when Teresa was able to connect with postcolonial Goa, win the local intellectual milieu's goodwill, and gain access to "public secrets" such as the local knowledge about Dias' and Costa's works. In her report dated 15 September 1965, Teresa refers to this development, sharing with evident delight the number of letters she had received acknowledging her work's "great importance to this land."¹⁷

Persisting along this path, on 17 December 1965, Devi published *Uma história da literatura Goesa* (A history of Goan literature) at the *A Vida* edited in Margão (Goa). This Portuguese language newspaper (with English and Konkani sections) was an important player in the campaign for the preservation of Goan specificity and was against its integration into the State of Maharashtra (Assunção). The struggle had its first high moment in the first postcolonial elections (1963), and culminated with the 1967 Opinion Poll that favoured the maintenance of Goa as a Union territory (see Joshi). The movement united Catholic and Hindu elites, who feared such integration would in a single stroke mark the death knell of Goan autonomy, identity, and way of life. Assunção displays how Konkani and Portuguese languages and their literature, as markers of Goan identity within India's diversity, became crucial in the campaign, namely in Portuguese language newspapers. Significantly, Father Filinto Cristo Dias and Manuel Aleixo da Costa contributed abundantly on the theme to *A Vida*. The couple's research focus was thus interesting enough to mobilize local collaboration. Their evident alienation from the milieu that persisted in refusing to acknowledge the Goan postcolonial condition was probably particularly welcomed.

Vimala's aim in the referred article was precisely to present the project and appeal to collaboration. The author, understandably, avoided any reference to JIU as the founding agency of the research. Rather, she emphasized that her work, like a snowball, had grown from the ambition of drawing a literary history to turn into a history of Goan culture. She expressed the aim that the future publication,

may contribute to a better awareness of the cultural personality of Goa, providing a basis, from which Goans, on the reflected image of their values, may create a new Renaissance. (Devi "Uma história." 3)

Reconnecting with Goa in postcolonial times allowed access to the new ambience, marked by the tensions and dilemmas that accompanied its integration into the Indian Federation. Although Teresa's reports maintained the language by which it was supposed to officially address the local status (*Estado da Índia*), these same reports, as well as the subsequent book, reflect the impact of this turn on the research. She not only discovered new and not so new authors, including former freedom fighters, but was also able to build a more objective understanding of Goan postcolonial reality. On the other hand, such evolution certainly helped her promote her own work in Goa, contributing to the local acknowledgement of a Goan literature in Portuguese language that was gaining a new breath outside Goa.

In her November/December 1965 report, she indicates having opened a new path in her research, that of Goan postcolonial literature, or rather, as she writes, "the literary manifestations in Goa after the invasion, notably the number of Hindus that continue to write in Portuguese."¹⁸ It could be suggested that contrary to the original aims presented to JIU, in this new phase, the couple started to think less on how the avowal of Goan colonial literature served Portuguese politics. Rather, they became more interested in thinking critically how the domain of Portuguese in Goan multilingual literary reality could help the building up of Goan postcolonial identity, while never abandoning, rather deepening, their engagement with a Lusotropical reading of such culture.

There is no evidence in the file that JIU circumscribed the research and outcome of the project, although self-censorship must have played a role in choices of inclusion and exclusion of authors and works, and in the way resistant voices ended up entering the study. Ruy Cinatti, whose criticism of Portuguese colonial policies grew along the years, was in charge of the process for most of the time. This fact must have been decisive in securing this liberty and the continuous financing of the project.

In 1970, Devi and Seabra sent the final version of LIP, which over the years they restructured and rewrote several times. The work was published in 1971, on the 150th anniversary of the reintroduction of printing in Goa. The list of thanks indicates the significant number of intellectuals in Goa who offered their help (amongst them my own father), while there were only two Goans based in Portugal. Further contributions came from Angola, Mozambique, Germany, USA, and Canada. The list discloses a notable collective investment in the outcome of the work.

One of the most interesting features of LIP lies precisely in the dialogue established between Goan colonial and postcolonial literature in Portuguese, along with its critical evaluations of past colonial policies and of endemic problems in Goan social structure that helped the elite profile of the players and their difficult relation with Western languages of modernity. If several aspects of this critique were already present in *Monsoon*, LIP shows a more profound understanding of Lusotropicalism and of Goan and Portuguese agencies in the building of the Lusotropical society that Devi and Seabra aimed to describe. Yet, such criticism did not stop the authors from considering the 1961 political rupture as a lost opportunity for modernization, believing that by that time, the colonial state had finally created the conditions to spur meaningful change— an unambiguous political appreciation of the late Portuguese policies in Goa (Devi & Seabra 339).

Unlike other coeval publications with Portuguese public funding, namely the *Heraldo* that, as we have seen, dismissed the work's importance to a short note, LIP took the irreversibility of Goan postcolonial condition for granted. In the end of the study, the couple searched for positive signs that Catholic and Hindu intellectuals and politicians from different political backgrounds had reflected on the vanishing history of Portuguese language in Goa, and were interested in maintaining it within the local multilingual literary culture. They therefore appealed to Portuguese and Brazilian publishers to support such a venture, as the reduced public in Goa turned any local attempts to refresh the literary life of the language economically unsustainable. The examples of Orlando da Costa and Devi served to emphasize the need to incorporate, in the evaluation of such literature, the contributions of its diaspora.

EPILOGUE: VIMALA DEVI, A GOAN STORY

Apart from LIP, since the end of the 1960's, in addition to painting exhibitions and collaborating with the BBC Portuguese section, Devi published works of poetry with experimentalist character, unrelated to Goan themes. In February 1970, Evágrio Jorge, under the penname *Um Bibliografo* (A Bibliographer) published three articles in the Goan daily *O Herald* dedicated to Vimala Devi, which she attached to one of her reports. Jorge was a former freedom fighter who belonged to the group that, under the leadership of T. B. Cunha, had consistently defended Goa's integration in the Indian nation-state. That position did not stop him, as in the case of other freedom fighters, from being an anti-merger militant and defender of the Portuguese language's 'Goan-ness.' In line with what Devi and Seabra expressed in LIP, Jorge demystified the idea that it was due to lack of learning prospects that Portuguese was in decay in postcolonial times. Rather, he

accused local opportunism in the decision of neglecting the considerable offer of Portuguese education still available in Goa and Bombay, and challenged the younger generations to use those means.

In his review, Jorge chose to ignore the nationalist anticolonial ambience, which, aided by the freezing of diplomatic relations between India and Portugal, in those years favoured the rejection of Portuguese language, particularly by Goan youth—who urged integration into the new political and cultural order—a situation that favoured a generational gap difficult to overcome. Jorge’s advice to Goan writers was to invest in publishing in the Portuguese language with major Portuguese and Brazilian magazines and publishing houses. In his view, along with their original works, they should, through translation, promote Indian literature (both classic and modern) to the Portuguese language reading public; a kind of positive attitude that Jorge found in Vimala Devi,

a countrywoman put in other conjunction of latitudes and longitudes – geographic and others – entertained in a positive, creative, work both in the benefit of Goa as of Portugal.
(Jorge 24 February 2)

Forecasting postcolonial relations, he aimed to withdraw Portuguese from nationalist discussions, enabling it to become a language animated by cultural creation and intellectual exchange between independent peoples. Involving peoples, communities, and individuals so vividly marked by conflictual views about their common past and present, with little space for fractured identities, such positioning carried democratic openness for divergence. When appreciating Devi’s only political poem in *Suria*, a cry on the fall of *Portuguese India*, Jorge affirmed,

I do not agree with it but respect the opinion of others. And welcome with pleasure the poet’s desire to be the voice of two worlds, as us here, even the more extreme nationalists as the present, only have love for Portugal and the Portuguese people, to its literature and to its culture. A healthy love of mutual respect for our independences and our personalities. (Jorge 26 February 4)

Moving to Devi’s later works, namely *Holograms*, Jorge admitted his difficulties in understanding and adhering to the new cultural languages that were emerging in Europe. Yet, what interested him was how the Goan character revealed itself in Devi’s literary path,

What all this proves once again is that the Goan is dexterous in assimilating other cultures and can show free from the ‘atavist concepts’ among the people with whom they live, be they the Kannadigas of Mysore or the Maharashtrians of Bombay, the Portuguese from Lisbon or the Londoners...

Hats off [English in the original] to this gentle Goan lady who in the demanding environments of Europe maintains the heights of her rich millenary tradition and never stops remembering about native land and its people. (Jorge 27 February)

By looking at Goan-ness through its diasporic reality, Jorge defended the need to appreciate Goan literature and culture from the perspective of what seemed to him the distinctive characteristic of Goans as travellers: the capacity to adapt, assimilate and contribute to different cultures while keeping up with their origins— an ethos expressing a cultural positioning nourished in the fragmentary experiences of the world. Such positioning distinguished the Goan diaspora as one marked not by disjunction and loss, but by integration and creative renewal.

Thinking about Vimala Devi's writings and path, these questions seem to be more complicated; after departing, is it possible to return home without a certain feeling of disjunction and loss of freedom? Is it possible to stay away from home without a certain feeling of disjunction and loss of roots? Where is home, and where does "Fidelity" stand?

Teresa de Almeida never returned to Goa. Likewise, only for a very brief period after delivering LIP, did the couple return to live in Portugal. In the second Portuguese edition of the book (2003), she takes Chandracanta to his household in the short story "Returning", only to find he was unable to fit in any longer— he was neither the representative of the East or of the West, and just needed to leave to "return to the twentieth century, to today." (Devi *Monsoon* 129).

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Notes

1. I shall adopt in this article the English translation of the title, of the short stories, and of their quotes, offered by Castro in 2019.
2. [Official letter from the President of Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos to the Presidente of Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 17 December 1965] Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciências. Bibliotecas e Arquivos. JIU/IICT. Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida e Seabra. Proc. 512. This file will hereafter be referred as JIU/IICT, Proc. 512
3. Recently translated by D. A. Smith under the title *The Sign of Wrath* (2019).
4. Serviço Nacional de Informações (National Service of Information) that was namely responsible for censorship.
5. Burn again and again. Difficult translation. “Requeime” in Portuguese, meaning in the context the effect in “white” skin of continuous exposure to racial miscegenation.
6. About Freyre and Lusotropicalism, see (amongst others): Castelo, Cahen, Pinto, Melo (2014), Mestrinelli.
7. In Puri (Orissa), the Vimala Temple, one of the most important of Tantrism and of Shakism, Vimala is considered the tantric consort of Shiva. <https://www.tripinvites.com/places/puri/vimala-temple/>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vimala_Temple.
8. *Boletim Eclesiástico da Arquidiocese de Goa*
9. [Official letter from the President of Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos to the Presidente of Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 17 December 1965] Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciências. Bibliotecas e Arquivos. JIU/IICT. Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida e Seabra. Proc. 512. This file will hereafter be referred as JIU/IICT, Proc. 512
10. [Letter to the Director of the *Junta de Investigações do Ultramar*, Carlos Krus Abecasis, signed by Vimala Devi, Lisbon, 27 December 1962] JIU/IICT, Proc. 512, fl. 1.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid. Nine years after, in LIP’s introduction, the couple stated that they only knew Dias’ work too late to benefit from it in their own research. In her thesis Spina disputes such statement by disclosing the abundant citation of Cristo Dias in LIP to prove otherwise. As LIP’s file proves, Devi accessed the book in 1965, six years before the publication of their own work and in a crucial phase of their own research, which confirms they had abundant time to benefit from and reflect about Dias’ work. Thus, their statement in LIP seems to mainly aim at reinforcing their own merits as researchers.
13. Ibid, fl. 1-2.
14. [Letter to the President of the *Junta das Missões Geográficas e de Investigações do Ultramar*, signed by Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida de Seabra, London, 15 July 1963] JIU/IICT, Proc. 512, 5 fls.
15. Ibid. The draft of the official letter to the Minister is handwritten by Krus Abecasis on top of Teresa’s own letter.
16. Ibid, fl. 1.

17. [Letter to the President of the Executive Commission of the Junta de Investigações do Ultramar signed by Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida de Seabra, London, 15 September 1965],] JIU/IICT, Proc. 512, fl.1. By this time the file was being managed by Ruy Cinnatti.
18. [A Literatura Indo-Portuguesa: Report on the work done in the period between 15 of November and 15 of December of 1965, signed by Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida de Seabra] JIU/IICT, Proc. 512.

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