Inequality in the Portuguese-Speaking World
Global and Historical Perspectives
Edited by Francisco Bethencourt
Global social inequality has declined over the past 100 years and the gap between different parts of the world, measured by average lifespan, has narrowed. The internal gap between wealthy and poor in the western world has likewise reduced, from the 1930s to the 1970s, although not in a linear way. The 1980s represented a turning point in developed countries, as the top 0.1% of income earners accumulated extraordinary riches. This new trend did not subside with the financial crisis of 2008, but expanded to less developed areas of the world; indeed, long-term significant reduction of poverty is now considered vulnerable. Inequality of income and its associated impacts has triggered a passionate debate between those who maintain that an unequal accumulation of richness is crucial for economic and social progress and those who believe that it does not encourage investment and that it prevents increased demand, thus negatively affecting the economy.

This contributed volume sets out to study social inequality in Portuguese-speaking countries, thus providing diversification of experience across different continents. The purpose is to identify major economic, historical and cultural developments in terms of education, health, life-cycle, gender, ethnic, and religious relations. The current realities of migration are also addressed, since they raise the issue of ethnic integration. This is the first published work to address inequality in a cross-continent yet same language perspective, and presents a striking advance in the global study of inequality.

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Cover illustration: São Paulo, Brazil, 2005. The Paraisópolis favela (Paradise City shantytown) borders the affluent district of Morumbi in São Paulo, Brazil (Photo: Tuca Vieira).
The Portuguese-Speaking World
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10

Inequalities, in Other Words: Literary Portrayals of the Cities of Luanda and Maputo

MARGARIDA CALAFATE RIBEIRO

Foreword

Every city contains its history. Luanda and Maputo are no different. Luanda, with its Atlantic coastline, reveals Western influence in its Luso-Brazilian architecture. Maputo, facing the Indian Ocean, boasts other influences in its mix of Africa, Portugal, India, and South Africa. These cities sediment the temporal, the spatial and the political. Past experiences overlay and underpin the urban experience. The archaic occurs with the modern; progress with backwardness. Political moments crash into one another. Geography becomes fluid. Skewed temporalities contribute to multiple layers. The precolonial era, coastal settlement, modern colonialism, then independence and postcolonialism, all stake claims to historical attention. This mix impacts on, and is influenced by, many subjectivities, both collective and individual. The result of a European arrival either for commerce or to colonize, the mix had a political impact on the ordering of space, and in the power relations seen in each city.

The cities contain divergent signs that never cancelled each other out. The erasing flow of history seems suspended there. In Luanda, the Fort of San Miguel, the churches of the Alta, as well as the streets in the Baixa connected to commerce, all provide a historical link to Portuguese colonialism, the slave trade and commerce with Brazil. On the other hand, any reflection on Luanda’s musseques (slums) or the shantytowns of Maputo indexes local cultures and the disadvantaged populations, once the organizational backbone of resistance to the Portuguese, harbouring a commitment to the struggle for independence. We see this social-political landscape reflected in the literary work of José Luandino Vieira, António Cardoso, Costa Andrade, Rui Noronha, José Craveirinha and Noémia de Sousa among so many others. In contrast, a contemporary view of South Luanda highlights an elite whose pockets have been lined by oil, diamonds and clientelism.
The research project, “From S. Paulo de Luanda to Luanda, from Lourenço Marques to Maputo: colonial capitals in postcolonial times”, was developed by a team of architects and literary studies researchers from different continents working at the University of Coimbra’s Centre for Social Studies, and was coordinated by me (cultural studies) and Walter Rossa (architecture and urbanism). The project’s approach was remarkably comparative — between spaces and narratives — and interdisciplinary, drawing on literary criticism, history, cultural studies, architecture and urban studies. It took an interdisciplinary look at the colonial project and how literature reflected urban planning, capturing discursively the city architecture that fashioned it. We analysed the continuities and ruptures, either in reality or in the construction of the cities’ imaginaries, having in mind the concept of “the city as a text”, (Lévi-Strauss) or as a palimpsest of texts, constructed of imagined, triumphant, and defeated spaces. The analysis focused on the city/capital as a colonial space; as a place of resistance; and as a force forging the new nation; as the centre of the post-colonial state. Engaging with the city as a text requires a methodology able to draw on both literary studies and architecture. We collected and analysed representations of spaces and social life in the Angolan and Mozambican capitals in literary and historical writing, photographs, images and maps. As colonial spaces, a double perspective on these cities was identified. On the one hand, we examined how the colonial Portuguese state and settlers had secured, organised, built and used both capitals, and to what extent they had reproduced a metropolitan political and cultural imaginary through architectonic and literary narratives. On the other hand, we looked at the way colonized people had interpreted European intervention and lifestyle, and had started rehearsing political independence through their literature: writing about the “unseen” city, “beyond the tarmac”. We analysed colonial literature and texts by colonized writers and, from the point of view of architecture and urbanism, the same assumptions were followed to investigate differentiated presentation. This is the investigative route we pursued to produce the research that led to the following reflections.

The cities of Luanda and Lourenço Marques/Maputo and the literature

In this chapter, I will draw on the literary images and descriptions of the cities of Luanda and Maputo to demonstrate a design that used political and social inequality to determine their urbanism. A struggle for terrain and citizenship — in the conquest of spaces by the colonizers and the reconquest of lost spaces by the colonized — draws the lines of that inequality as they existed in the time of colonialism.

The authors of the emerging national literatures of Portuguese-speaking Africa, particularly in Angola and Mozambique, generally grew up in the colonial capitals. The literatures they produced foretelling liberation were thus essentially a phenomenon of urbanism. They were concerned with city life, and with fostering an urban culture focused on newspapers, clubs and social activities. The polis was the stage they chose to expose inequality. They portrayed inequality
first hand by drawing on their observations of the planning and functioning of the cities of their youth.

Given the historical and geographical context in which these authors wrote, the concept of literary formation rather than foundational literature seems a more appropriate tool on which to draw in order to read their work, born of a self-interrogating colonial heritage fused with African roots. Expounded by Antonio Candido in relation to Brazilian literature, with a variant offered by Mário António referencing Angolan literature, simply put: “formation is something which is formed.” Why do I prefer the concept of formation over the more classical vision of foundational literatures closely associated with the emergence of nationhood in nineteenth-century Latin America? It comes down to colonial and postcolonial connotations. Foundation, a term applied in relation to cities and cultures in previously colonized spaces, was a colonial act that disciplined literature and cities into binary hierarchies: there was colonial literature and the Other’s literature, the colonial city and the Other’s space. The use of the term foundational, as Antonio Candido points out, perpetuates a narrative that implies that, prior to the arrival of Europeans, there was nothing there. It creates the impression of a ground zero on which history started at a foundational moment. Published in 1989, “Vilas e Cidades”: Bourgs et Villes en Afrique Lusophone, edited by Michel Cahen, was the first study of urban space in Portuguese-speaking Africa. At the time, the issue of the foundation of cities as such, and its interpretation, was not the object of much analysis. There was a greater emphasis on description. Recently, Cidades e Império: dinâmicas coloniais e reconfigurações pós-coloniais, edited by Nuno Domingos and Elsa Peralta, shows how research of an essentially ethnocentric hue has been conducted in colonized spaces since the arrival of Europeans. Certainly, there were no cities in the Western sense of the word. As Walter Rossa affirms, the city was “uma criação da civilização ocidental, e pelo menos no Ocidente, a civilização continua a ser impensável sem elas e sem as redes que elas formam”, as far as Southern Saharan Africa was concerned. In these parts of Africa, there was a different ordering of spaces where people lived together in communities, as can be seen on early maps and in early descriptions of colonization, an ordering that underwent tremendous change as Europeans began their processes of conquest. Rossa asserts that, “inevitavelmente as cidades foram um dos principais instrumentos usados pelos europeus no estabelecimento dos seus sistemas coloniais, começando logo com os primeiros, o português e o espanhol, no início da primeira modernidade.” Consequently, studies produced about African cities are overwhelmingly part of a grand European narrative defining these locations. By analysing the voices of African literatures about Luanda and Maputo, I aim to show the other side of a seemingly common history, one with very different memories.

The colonial era

The imposition of cities in the European sense on colonized spaces introduced the dynamic of a struggle for territory which gained weight and took various forms. One domain in which the struggle became obvious was literature that described
urban life. From within the variegated contours of the cities, local elites and cultures emerged, which in the case of Luanda became apparent from 1576, passing through various historical stages; though in Lourenço Marques, the urban settlement only began to show some size and importance in the last quarter of the 1900s. Initially, portrayal of the city was steeped in the political affirmation of colonial power, as early descriptions highlighted strategic places and architectural marvels so that readers could grasp what they looked like, judge their importance and understand their nature as a capital. Like every Portuguese colonial capital, and the metropolis itself, Luanda and Maputo were founded on the coast, with the result that the maritime districts played a fundamental role in city life and were correspondingly prevalent in literature. They rivalled Lisbon with monuments on their skylines and buildings that affirmed power — their port, forts, squares, churches and administrative offices, filled with elites and colonial bureaucrats who exercised that power either locally or through their connections with Lisbon.

António Oliveira Cadornega, in his História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, published in 1680, describes the strategic impressiveness of a city that functions as a center of commercial and military power, and with which he identifies as both a resident and citizen of São Paulo de Assunção de Luanda and as a native of Vila Viçosa, Portugal. His História includes poems, among which are unattributed verses that allow Cardonega to broach from an urban perspective the city’s insularity, its streets, its colors, its speech and its people, linked to slaves and every type of legal and not-so-legal trade.

That trade gave Luanda an architecture echoed in Salvador da Baía, since both cities operated in similar ways for the centuries of the slave trade. Both were also colonial capitals on the South Atlantic, exporting raw materials and agricultural

![Picture 10.1](https://example.com/Eroberung_der_Statt_Loando_de_Sant_Paolo_in_Angola_in_Africa_Gelegen.png)  

products. They were centers of cultural, financial and social circulation, bound up with trade, as shown in Luís Félix da Cruz’s poem, “Descrição da Cidade de Loanda e Reyno de Angola”:8

*Nesta turbulenta terra
almazem de pena e dor,
confuza mais de temor.
Inferno em vida.*

*Terra de gente oprimida,
Monturo de Portugal,
por onde purga seu mal,
e sua escoria*

*Onde se tem por vãa gloria,
a mentira e falsidade,
o roubo, a malinidade,
o interesse*

*Donde a justiça perece
por falta de quem a entenda,
donde para haver emenda,
usahaan Deos*
do que uzava com os Judeos,
quando era Deos de vingança,
que com todas as três lança
de sua ira

In this turbulent land
warehouse of pain and sorrow,
confusion more than fear.
Living hell.

Land of the oppressed,
Portugal’s dungheap,
Where it purges its sin
And its slag

Where glory means
lies and falsehood,
Theft, malice,
Profit

Where justice dies
Of loneliness
Where to make amends,
They turn to god
The same god the Jews prayed to

When he was the God of vengeance,
With his three spears
Of anger

In the modern colonial era, an era in which Maputo came to imperial prominence and which changed the feel of Luanda, the colonial city was characterized by cement and tarmac, a place where whites were concentrated and power structures solidified. Further out, on the peripheries, there was the “other” city, constituted by an amalgam of mixed races: blacks and poor whites who lived in Luanda’s musseques and Maputo’s caniços. As a result of this social apartheid, the colonial city became a spatial expression of the inequality instated by the colonial order, but also a locus of opportunities. It gave access to work, education and culture. It provided living conditions of sorts. In effect, this urbanism of inequality transformed the city’s peripheries, where people from throughout the colonial territory lived, into the cultural backdrop for a new political awareness and the cradle of nationalist movements and a literature of nationhood.

The cities of Luanda and Maputo are interrelated through the long Portuguese colonial presence that, in unequal combination with other influences, progressively defined the cities as a textual polyphony. However, their very diverse geographies, with Luanda on the South Atlantic and Maputo facing the Indian
Ocean, their different temporalities, and their distinct historical pasts, separate them, as is reflected in the literature representing and presenting the cities. While a large part of Angolan literary imagery centred on the city of Luanda, textually represented ever since its creation, and from the 1950s abundantly portrayed, the same cannot be said of Maputo, which never occupied a similarly central place in Mozambican literature. From the perspective of the imagery of centrality and power, Portuguese colonial and Mozambican literature celebrated the Ilha de Moçambique far more than Lourenço Marques (as Maputo used to be known). In fact, Maputo is a relatively recent administrative and political capital. Its colonial writers had very little time to describe their city-as-capital. The Other’s city, on the capital’s periphery in districts like Mafalala, and neighbourhoods like Chamanculo and Xipamanine, became the fundamental references of colonial subalterntity abundantly portrayed in Mozambican literature. As Nuno Simão Gonçalves points out:

*As medidas segregacionistas para com as comunidades africanas, em particular, e não europeias, em geral, seguiam não só a narrativa colonial da missão civilizadora como também incorporavam o discurso higienista desenvolvido ao longo do século XIX nos países do Norte.*

Segregationist measures towards African communities in particular and non-Europeans in general were informed not only by colonial ‘civilizing mission’ narratives, but also by the hygienist discourse that developed throughout the nineteenth century in Northern countries.

José Craveirinha and Noémia de Sousa were early poetic giants to emerge from, and celebrate, these peripheral districts. Later, Calane da Silva, Luís Carlos Patraquim and Nelson Saúte contributed to the establishment of Mafalala as a byword for poetry, the struggle against colonialism and a free nation.

The history of Luanda and Maputo, recorded in the various forms of literature arising from their midst, is the history of a struggle for territory, whether from a perspective of conquest and appropriation in Portuguese colonial literature, or with a view to the recovery of that territory in Angolan and Mozambican literature from the 1940s and 1950s onwards. Poetry marks the territory, emphasising it, and conjuring images of people who parade under our gaze as if they were in a photo album. Narratives describe the cities as places in motion through their denizens, with their customs, their work, their houses, their talk, their cosmogonies and their stories.
Any analysis of the city implies various forms of recording, appropriation and description. The two cities under analysis share a common feature: they were designed and very often described by those who did not live in them, but merely imagined them as aspects of a formal city, particularly a colonial city. Yet they were effectively formed by those who gave them life and resided in them. This group often came from outside the urban boundaries, as was the case of those from mainland Portugal (e.g. the metropolitanos) in the colonial era, portrayed in Portuguese colonial literature, or the case of migrants from the hinterland, attracted by the development inherent to a capital, in a general movement from the countryside to the town both before and after independence. The majority of the latter were the men and women who lived in the musseques of Luanda and the caníços of Maputo. They embody and shape Angolan and Mozambican literatures. In their numerous literary expressions of belonging to, and conquest of, the territory there is an interplay of the concepts of foundation and formation. Through that interplay, the city unveils its ethnic, social and political multiplicity, delineating the various layers of inequality generated within its terrain in the very place that, in principle, should welcome and foster the equality of those who live in it.

The literature of the 1940s and 1950s can be put into at least two categories: colonial literature and local literature. Local literature, produced by those who lived in the cities, gave birth to the national literatures of Mozambique and Angola. Local literature affirmed feelings generated around urban models, flourishing among a mixed-race elite in the early twentieth century, gaining momentum especially through newspapers and the first cultural and sports associations. It was marked by an experience of the colonial-oriented and segregated city. In a different form, but with the same content, in the post-independence era, city models were
also discussed by focusing either on the alienation of a city occupied by those who had never lived there before; or by talking of a city bursting at its seams that did not welcome those in search of a better life or fleeing lengthy civil wars.

In 1943, Júlio de Castro Lopo wrote at the beginning of his book *Alguns Aspetos dos Musseques*:

*Os europeus que vivem na cidade-baixa e na cidade-alta - nos lugares enfim civilizados de Luanda - estão longe de fazer ideia exata do que sejam os musseques, os lendários arredores da capital de Angola. (...) Todos estes musseques (além dos não citados) constituem subúrbios da capital de Angola: a sul, leste e nordeste da cidade, ou seja: desde o bairro da Maianga (parte alta) até Sambizanga.¹³*

The Europeans who live in the downtown and uptown parts of the city — in short, the civilized places of Luanda — know very little about the musseques, the notorious outskirts of the Angolan capital (...) In truth these musseques (as well as those I haven’t mentioned) make up the the city's suburbs, to the south, east and northeast, from the uptown Maianga neighbourhood to Sambizanga.

It is not difficult to find an equivalent observation about the city of Lourenço Marques/ Maputo. Literary texts, more than any other genre, present us with the subtle differences inherent in the histories of both cities highlighted by Castro Lopo. He outlines various ideas. First, and most obviously, there is a line dividing

![Picture 10.5](Plan of Luanda (1965). Grey indicates the cidade de asfalto. Dark grey the musseques.)
the city, and, beyond that line, a varied and heterogeneous city emerges that is
totally unknown to the colonial population. Second, the reverse is not the case,
because blacks and mixed-race people work in the heart of the colonial city,
coming to know the habits, culture and language of those who live there. Third,
the line divides the populations not only according to their economic condition,
but also by race. And, finally, the geography of the musseques announces other
forms of struggle for the territory that will take place. The musseques encircle the
white, colonial city. From the 1940s onwards, they will be the place for the
enunciation of the struggle, and for Angolan and Mozambican literatures.

Clear lines thus divide the colonial city, essentially white, from the rest, whose
cartographic portrayal ranges from pure non-representation — emptiness — to
lines marking the beginning of the indigenous neighbourhoods, in the colonial
formulation. In the middle are transition neighbourhoods, normally with
indigenous names or linked to the profession of their residents — Alto Maé or
Chamanculo in Maputo, and Bairro Operário in Luanda — usually inhabited by
poorer whites and low-ranked administration employees and traders.

Colonial literature replicates that erasure or ignorance of anything beyond the
white city. According to Francisco Noa, from the 1930s onwards, due to the policy
of the Estado Novo, colonial literature began to take on a decidedly ideological
tone.\textsuperscript{15} By the late 1950s and early 1960s, it had become aesthetically more
sophisticated and cosmopolitan, coinciding with the city’s replication of districts
similar to those found in Lisbon, like Alvalade and Benfica. It even copied their
names, as well as major social infrastructures such as schools and leisure facilities.
At different stages, colonial literature reaffirmed the conquest and urban
acculturation of the territory, with plots that took place in the white city, with white
characters, cloaking in invisibility the largest part of the city’s space and population.

**Picture 10.6** Photo of the musseque and the Bairro do Prenda, Luanda (1965).\textsuperscript{14}
Hipólito Raposo, António Pires, Maria Archer, Henrique Galvão, Maria da Graça Azambuja among many wrote about Angola in this way. Brito Camacho, Julião Quintinha, Guilhermina Azeredo, Manuel Rodrigues Júnior, Eduardo Paixão did the same about Mozambique. The titles produced included works that revealed the ambiguity of the colonial situation by showing the borderline spaces in which many people moved. These narratives of colonialism contained a version of history that numerous individuals, mainly white, would later invoke to justify a relationship of “belonging” to that colonized land. Distancing themselves politically from their context, a series of voices stood on both sides of the fence, recalling the old city through the metaphor of a childhood in which white, black and mixed-raced children played together peacefully, against the modernization ushered in by progress, but also segregation as mixed-raced elites were pushed to the city’s peripheries. Examples of this can be found in the poetic voices of the magazine Cultura, in the autobiography Era o Tempo das Acárias, by Carlos Ervedosa, and in the poems of Mário António, Cochat Osório, Tomás Vieira da Cruz and António Jacinto. Jacinto’s “O Grande Desafio” talks of children of all races playing in the street until adult restrictions meant that games had to be played in different ways.

Naquele tempo
a gente punha despreocupadamente os livros no chão
ali mesmo naquele largo - areal batido de caminhos passados
os mesmos trilhos de escravidões
onde hoje passa a avenida luminosamente grande

e com uma bola de meia
bem forrada de rede
bem dura de borracha roubada às borracheiras do Neves
em alegre folguedo, entremeando caçambulas
... a gente fazia um desafio...

(...)  
Mas talvez um dia
quando as buganvilhas alegrement florirem
quando as bimbis entoarem hinos de madrugada nos capinzais
quando a sombra das mulemeiras for mais boa
quando todos os que isoladamente padecemos
nos encontrarmos iguais como antigamente
talvez a gente ponha
as dores, as humilhações, os medos
desesperadamente no chão
no largo - areal batido de caminhos passados
os mesmos trilhos de escravidões

onde passa a avenida que ao sol ardente alcatroámos
e unidos nas ânsias, nas aventuras, nas esperanças
vamos então fazer um grande desafio...

16
In those days
We tossed our books to the ground
Right there at the dusty crossroads — beaten from old journeys
The same slave tracks
Where now the gleaming avenue runs
And with a ball of rags
Wrapped up in mesh
Gummed up in rubber we nicked from the rubber men in town
We tore around, laughing, playing catch,
... We took on the world

(...)

But maybe one day
When the bougainvilleas are flowering happily
When the birds are whistling dawn hymns in the long grass
When the shade of the sacred fig is deeper
When all who suffer alone
Find ourselves as we were before
Maybe we can fling
Our pain, our shame, our fear
Desperately to the ground
Right there at the dusty crossroads — beaten from old journeys
The same slave tracks

Where the avenue runs that we tarred under the burning sun
And united in longing, in adventure, in hope
Take on the world again ...

António Jacinto, Vriat do Cruz and Agostinho Neto wrote poetry denouncing the colonial situation, portraying the musseque, with its workers, their poverty, their hunger, and their uneducated children. Yet this was also a place of alternative wisdoms, other orders, other ideas, other languages and cultures, as shown in the short stories of Luanda, by José Luandino Vieira. Later, prose by Boaventura Cardoso, Jofre Rocha, and António Cardoso, among others, presented the musseque as a political space by converting it into a metaphor for the shackled and struggling nation and so, literally speaking, this was the place of the enunciation of pre-Independence Angolan literature, indelibly shaping practically all its novels and many poems.

In Mozambique, Rui Noronha or Orlando Mendes configured the divided city by contrasting the cement city with the reed city. As in Angola, the borderline sites were spaces privileged by literature in order to illustrate the porosity of those divisions, a situation that persists to this day, as portrayed by Helder Faife in his 2010 novel, Contos de Fuga:

Dobrei a esquina que fronteira os bairros. Não cai, habitado ao súbito contraste do chão que carateriza o litoral urbano. Ali, o casal pavimento e asfalto divorcia-se bruscamente e deixa a amante, a areia, orientar os caminhos. 18
I turned the corner along the border of the neighbourhoods. I didn't slip, used to the way the city floor suddenly changes underfoot at the seafront. There, the marriage of pavement and tarmac abruptly breaks down and the lover, the sand, shapes the paths.

As today, neither in Luanda nor in Lourenço Marques/Maputo were the colonial city or its peripheries homogenous. Within these two stark divisions, marking the inequality that characterized colonialism and was reflected in the design of the city, a series of other inequalities scarred the landscape, divided by professional, ethnic and economic conditions that defined the social status of each neighbourhood and its inhabitants. Colonial society was itself stratified, like the
Picture 10.8  Photo of the canico and the Bairro COOP, Lourenço Marques (1965).19

suburbs, with a range of divisions based on religion, ethnicity and origin, as well as cultural differences. There were assimilados, mestizos, blacks, Muslims, Christians, political leaders, poets and musicians. In fact, in the city of Lourenço Marques an Indian, Chinese or white, low-income worker who was resident of Maxaquene or Alto Maê, with their dirt tracks, poor lighting and humble houses, was as unlikely to cross paths with someone from Polana as with an inhabitant of Mafalala or Xipamanine. However, these frontier spaces were fundamental to the struggle for independence which developed as their denizens crossed between one place and the other. This was not merely a physical transit, to go to a club or to visit prostitutes, but also a cultural and political transit, and involved an awareness of subalternity, inequality and injustice. While these frontier spaces were of crucial importance, the reed neighbourhoods of Xipamanine and Mafalala were most significant as culturally affirmed metaphors for the shackled and struggling nation, expressed through the voices of their great poets. The workplaces, the deportations to São Tomé in the dead of night in the silent city, the port, the canico and its appalling conditions, its hungry and uneducated children, the cosmopolitan movement of its bars, clubs and sports associations were spaces of affirmation and conviviality gathering various social layers around the cinema, jazz, cabarets and prostitution. The places enjoined poets to denounce injustice and proclaim the struggle. Noémia de Sousa and José Craveirinha were the first to set the tone in their poems. Noémia de Sousa was particularly attentive to the double subalternity experienced by women, in verses such as “Cais” and “Moças das Docas”. José Craveirinha’s extensive work included poems dealing with urban divisions, poems like “Nossa Cidade”, “Afinal a Bala do Homem Maut”, and “Mamanô”.

As in Angola, inequality was not just defined by evoking poverty, exploitation and inadequate conditions, but also by the affirmation of cultural differences
unknown to the white city, or else considered “savage”. José Craveirinha epitomizes that difference in his poem, “Quero ser tambor”, through images of drums and the black city’s dances, the noise of which the colonial city would rather not hear. Rui Knopfli is an example of a poet who came from Polana, one of the most elegant zones of Lourenço Marques. Even so, he became involved in the active denunciation of the colonial situation in Mozambique, capturing the anaesthetic climate of the cement city in his poem, “Winds of Change”:

\[
\text{Ninguém se apercebe de nada. (…)}
\text{como é boa e mansa a Polana}
\text{nas suas ruas, túneis de frescura}
\text{atapetados de veludo vermelho}
\text{Tudo joga tão certo, tudo está tão bem}
\text{como num filme tecnicolorido}
\text{Passam. Passam}
\text{e tornam a passar}
\text{Ninguém se apercebe de nada.}^{21}
\]

No one notices a thing. (…)  
How pleasant Polana is, how peaceful,  
The streets are breezy passageways  
With red velvet carpets.  
Here, life is technicolour, and like a film  
everything will turn out alright.  
They stroll. They stroll  
Up and down.  
No one notices a thing.

Rui Knopfli, like several other poets from the colonial city, crossed the city’s divisions and became one of the most visual poets of Lourenço Marques. Colonial Mozambique’s capital remained forever in his memory when he went into exile after independence. While he lived in colonial Mozambique, he saw and gave voice to the “invisible people”, the “transparent people” — those labourers who worked in the white city and lived in the caniço — as we can read in his poem “Ao Cair da Noite”, which recounts crossing the spaces in the “Cantinela de Subúrbio”:

\[
\text{Do Jardim Vasco da Gama chega o percutir}
\text{seco das bolas de ténis, para lá da sombra}
\text{(…) Do caniço, o soluço entrecortado da cantiga:}
\text{“Eu vou morrer na cantina}
\text{com um copo de vinho na mão.}
\text{A cantina será cemitério}
\text{e o barril o meu caixão.}
\text{(…)}
\text{Principia, lento, o agonizar dos dias.”}^{22}
\]
From Vasco da Gama Garden comes the dull thud
of tennis balls from the shadows
(...). From the canico, sobbing snippets of song:
"I will die in the kitchen
with a drink in my hand.
The canteen shall be my cemetery
and the barrel my coffin.

(...). So begins, slowly, the misery of days

The sense of struggle heralding a confrontation to come that was embodied in
the texts of that time expressed the tension of different groups living in close
proximity, a situation characteristic of colonial society, and of the colonial city in
particular. It was not a linear opposition between whites and blacks or mixed-race
people, but between freedom and submission, social justice and inequality. These
were the very same values that would underpin the struggle for independence,
activating mechanisms of belonging and identity which, in a post-Second-World-
War context, were reflected in being Portuguese, Angolan or Mozambican, while
never neglecting class and racial differences. In Noémia de Sousa’s poem
"Godido", which echoes a character from João Dias’s 1952 collection of short
stories, Godido e Outros Contos, we hear of a black child wandering
uncomfortably in the city’s centre, which does not belong to him and where he
feels like a foreigner, searching for his own place in the world. The poem describes
the violence of assimilation, a process based on sacrifice and the annulment of
difference. At the same time, through formal education, racialized subjects became
aware of the possibilities inherent in critical thought. The very education they
received as part of their assimilation in the colonial city lead many blacks to rethink
their own position and situation, as de Sousa’s poem implicitly contends:

Dos longes do meu sertão natal,
eu desci à cidade da civilização.
Embriaguei-me de pasmo entre os astros
suspenso dos postes das ruas
e atração das montras nuas

tomou-me a respiração
Todo esse brilho de névoa, ténue e superficial
que envolve a capital,

me cegou e fez de mim coisa sua.

(...)
Mas a cidade, a cidade, a cidade, a cidade!

esmagou-me com os pneus do seu luxo,
sem caridade,

meus pés cortados nos trilhos duros do sertão,
encarcerou-me numa neblina quase palpável de ódio e desprezo,

e ignorando a luz verde do meu olhar,
a maravilhosa oferta
(essa estrela, esse tesouro) de cada minha mão aberta,
exigiu-me impiedosamente a abdicação
da minha qualidade intangível de ser humano!

(...) 
Ah, mas eu não me deixei adormecer!
Levantei-me e gritei contra a noite sem lua,
sem batuque, sem nada que me falasse da minha África,
da sua beleza majestosa e natural,
sem uma única gota da sua magia!
A luz verde incendiou-se no meu olhar
e foi fogueira vermelha na noite fria
dos revoltados.²³

From the backlands where I was born
I went down to the city of civilisation.
I lost myself in wonder between the stars
That hung from street posts
And the tug of the bare shop windows
took my breath away.
All that delicate shimmering mist that
wraps the surface of the capital
Blinded me and made me its own.

(...) 
But the city, the city, the city, the city!
It crushed me cruelly with the tyres of its luxury,
My feet hardened by the backland tracks,
It prisoned me in a haze of hatred and disgust that I could almost touch
And ignoring the green light in my eyes,
The marvellous gifts
(This star, this treasure) from each of my open hands,
It demanded mercilessly that I abdicate
My intangible humanity!

(...) 
Oh, but I did not let myself sleep!
I got up and screamed at the moonless night,
Without the music of the drums, without anything that spoke of my Africa,
Of its majesty and natural beauty,
Without a single drop of its magic!
The green light caught fire in my eye
and became the red bonfire in the cold night
of rebellion

From this overview, two crucial aspects of understanding the city and its literature are revealed. The first is the observation of the contrasts of the dual city during colonial times, where the dichotomy between the formal urban area (inhabited by a predominantly European colonizer minority) known as the
"cement city", and the suburb (where the predominantly African colonized population lived), either in the musseque, in Angola, or in the caniço, in Mozambique. The second is the discovery of urban continuities and discontinuities after independence in 1975.

**After independence**

By the time the Colonial or Liberation Wars began, Portuguese literature written from an experience of the Colonial Wars provided mainland Portuguese with impressions of the cities of Luanda and Lourenço Marques in an approach that perpetuated colonial literature, to the extent that it looked merely at the "cement city" and the social and power relations inherent in it. In contrast, in the literatures of the Angolan and Mozambican armed struggles, the liberated site is not the city, but rather the bush — the sacred space of freedom fighters, as depicted in several Portuguese novels about the Colonial Wars. In African novels and poems from that time, the capitals are places that symbolize colonial power, and therefore the real and symbolic spaces of a territory that must be won back. Thus the capital city is converted into a symbol of the need for conquest of the entire territory, and for independence. As such, it also the space from which, and on top of which, the new nation will be constructed, as signalled in Agostinho Neto’s poem “Havemos de voltar”.

After independence, in 1975, various trends took root in the urban fabric, modifying the landscape, effectively constituting a different city with a different use of space, different symbols of power and different concepts of functionality. These changes were reflected in many novels and poems born of the new nation. A first stage imposed change on the city’s toponyms, embodying a strong image of the end of colonialism by the re-appropriation of the city’s territory, excluding some and including others in the public space. A number of colonial symbols disappeared, especially through the pulling down of emblematic statues, as Mia Couto captures in a text about the toppling of the equestrian statue of Mouzinho da Silveira – “A derradeira morte da estátua de Mouzinho”. Simultaneously, socialist-style statues
began to appear, designating where power and sovereignty resided in the new capitals through the erasure of the symbols of the old order and the erection of a new order. Companies and services were nationalized, significantly transforming their presentation in the context of the city. Formal trade and the canteens decayed and, in their stead, “people’s shops” and duty-free shops appeared, with a parallel growth in informal trade in huge open-air markets. There was an influx of suburban residents coming into the cement city, filling the massive gaps left by the departure of settlers, a process portrayed in novels such as *Crónica da Rua 513.2*, by João Paulo Borges Coelho, and *A Canção de Zefanias Sforza*, by Luís Carlos Patraquim. Carlos Cardoso succinctly describes it in his poem “Primeiro Aniversário”:

*Hoje*

*aromas chamanculos*

*politizam os fogões*

*da polana.*

*Today*

*Suburban scents*

*petition stoves*

*in polana.*
Later, the Angolan Civil War's encroachment on significant parts of the country, and the subsequent arrival of displaced people from rural areas with an urgent need for accommodation in a city where their presence had never been countenanced, offers the historical context for the plot of Manuel Rui's epic tale, *Rio Seco*.

Regarding Luanda, as Silvia Leiria Viegas underlines, although "inequalities derived from the period of Portuguese colonial rule (1576–1975)", they "persisted throughout the civil war (1975–2002) that followed independence. In 2010, official projections suggested that Luanda had a population of 4,772 million within an area of approximately 350 square kilometres, with nearly 80 per cent of its inhabitants residing in self-produced peri-urban areas known locally as *musseques*."\(^{28}\)

The flow into the city of people from the hinterland who, replacing the colonial pairing of civilized-uncivilized, saw in the city a space for progress and civilization, is a dynamic portrayed in the Mozambican Suleiman Cassamo's *Palestra para um Morto*. The arrival of foreign aid workers from the most diverse parts of the former socialist block and their participation in the education and life of the city is portrayed in novels by a generation born after independence, including Ondjaki, and by the photographic works of Kiluanji Kia Henda, and other young African artists, as shown on the recent exhibition *Things Fall Apart — Red Africa*, where the socialist inheritance is beginning to be questioned. As stated in the exhibition booklet, "the civil war that began in 1975 following Angola’s independence from Portugal saw the involvement of the Soviet Union, Cuba and the United States, amongst others, who supported rival political factions in an attempt to gain influence over the newly independent country."\(^{29}\) At the time of the socialist revolution, their presence was celebrated by the introduction of words into daily life that indicated what these countries were contributing to the Angolan and Mozambican urban space. For example, "Hungary," which appears in *Ô Cronista* by Areosa Pena, refers to the buses Hungary donated to Mozambique as part of an aid and development package provided by the former Eastern bloc. In a similar vein, but involving post-revolutionary Portuguese assistance, the "Ramalho Eanes" in *Quem me Dera ser Onda* by Manuel Rui, refers to the wine the former colonial power sent during an era of great economic and social upheaval, when there was a political rapprochement with Angola and Mozambique under Ramalho Eanes's presidency. In fact, the shortage of many basic items brought about changes in the urban population's habits and even in their vocabulary, with words like "bichar" designating the long queues at the rationing shops, or the sarcastic "peixe-fritismo" which in Mozambique originally referred to the fish Agostinho Neto, the Angolan president, sent in ideological solidarity at a time the Mozambican population had next to nothing in their shops. Fried fish was one of the few foods available. The term was transformed in daily and literary language into a metaphor expressing a commitment to an independent revolutionary Mozambique, resisting the onslaughts of global capitalism.

Post-independence fiction reflects the dawn of a new day, and is full of the great hopes of a new nation, constantly undermined by the spectre of war and the difficulties of subsistence. In Lilía Momplé's *Neighbours*, the hostile actions of Apartheid-era South Africa are depicted with the appalling impact they had on
urban Mozambique. Similarly, Nelson Saúte’s poem, “Ruth First,” pays homage to the famous South African anti-Apartheid activist killed by a parcel bomb addressed to her at the Universidade Mondlane in Maputo, where she worked in exile. Carlos Cardoso’s “Cidade 1985” expresses the heroic survival of Maputo’s citizens, portraying the violence of daily life, its power cuts and its water shortages, in a way replicated in short stories and poems, such as “Anos 80”, by Nelson Saúte. In Quem me dera ser onda, Manuel Rui captures the difficulty people had in adjusting to their new residential space through the combination of a series of absurd daily routines, and simultaneously anticipates the tragic end of the farce. The rural culture of the people propelled by the independence process into old colonial parts of the cities, and the presence of the war and its consequences, also affected the city with immediately visible impacts, like the disabled war veterans representing a stain on the city’s fabric who are evoked by Luís Carlos Patraquim in the poem “Formulação da Avenida”:

Sentam-se, sob as acácia, no asfalto roto,  
os mutilados com cigarros de embalar. 
Nenhum som os recorta 
E todos os sentidos foram amputados.30

Under the acacias, on the pot-holed tarmac,  
The maimed ones sit with roll-up cigarettes. 
No sound disturbs them  
or their amputated senses.

Ana Paula Tavares, in “November without water” depicts people displaced by the war, such as the street urchins in Luanda:

Olha-me p’ra estas crianças de vidro  
cheias de água até às lágrimas  
enchendo a cidade de estilhaços  
procurando a vida  
nos caixotes do lixo.31

Just look at these glass children  
so full of water that their eyes spill tears  
filling up the splintered city  
searching for life  
in rubbish bins.

Today, with the peace, a growth in wealth and the embrace of neo-liberalism, these countries and cities have undergone numerous transformations, which their literature is actively recording, thus continuing their path of political engagement. In cities with a temporarily resident foreign population and an enriched local bourgeoisie, the changes are evident. While there has been a recovery of these cities, mainly in their former colonial zones, there has also been a radical
transformation of their spaces, documented by contemporary poets with an intense nostalgia for the Luanda that is disappearing, and an indignation against the conditions under which the transformation has taken place. An example of this occurs in Ana Paula Tavares’s poem, “As portas de Luanda”, where machines devour the city, or in simultaneously outraged and nostalgic poems by Carlos Ferreira, who takes us through the streets of Luanda, through its names, its poets, and the people who fought for freedom, only to find nothing.\textsuperscript{32}

Another crucial element in these modern cities is the metamorphosis of their outskirts, some into luxury neighbourhoods, others into new shantytowns, the destination of the population expelled from former shantytowns that are now in the middle of the city, occupying terrain coveted for new neighbourhoods based on an urban model of major social segregation. These new neighbourhoods are materialising in gated communities, isolated in all senses from the rest of the city, so well illustrated by Pepetela in \textit{O Desejo de Kianda} and in some poems by João Melo, Aires de Almeida Santos and José Luís Mendonça. As Silvia Leiria Viegas points out,

In the current century, after the end of civil war (2002), most of the socio-spatial restrictions, which had emerged during the colonial, socialist and early neoliberal periods, grew worse. In addition, the conflict between the urbanised centre and the self-produced peri-urban areas became critical, and a new wave of self-produced housing occurred. In response, the government adopted the strategy of seeking to control urban society, particularly in Luanda, by eradicating the \textit{musseques}. So, the government created new instruments of socio-spatial production and/or transformation — for example, new laws, programmes and urban plans.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Picture 10.11} Photo of the old Bairro Operário, 2015.\textsuperscript{33}
Like the dividing line between the colonial city and the shantytown drawn by Luandino Vieira in the earlier imaginary of these literatures, demarcating the European space from the African space, the new dividing line of the current cities is still based on the same stamp of power and inequality, albeit expressed in an alternative form. And perhaps, in another hangover from the colonial past, the most effective place from which to denounce this inequality remains literature, depicting the interplay between the archaic and the modern, between poverty and the extravagance of the *nouveau riche*, between exploitation and the easy display of wealth portrayed by Pepetela in *Os Predadores*, Luandino Vieira in *O Livro dos Guerrilheiros* and Ondjaki in *Os Transparentes*, as well as in Carlos Ferreira’s poetry. In contemporary fiction, there are still many invisible cities which form and reform the historic and textually polyphonic cities under permanent mutation.

The cities’ most culturally decolonising and politically revolutionary moment is probably in the literary projects of the Angolans Pepetela and Luandino Vieira, when they go back to the historic texts of António Oliveira Cadornega. As we have seen, the *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas* contains one of the first descriptions of Luanda, as well as poems about the city. In *A Gloriosa Familia*, set during the seventeenth-century Dutch occupation of Luanda, Pepetela reproduces Cadornega’s text, rewriting it in order to identify a city and a territory, as well as a people fighting for these. Luandino Vieira does something similar when he purposefully paraphrases Cardona in his *O Livro dos Rios* in order to identify a territory and a people suffering but valiantly struggling, from that early moment, to be Angolans, thus assuming a common written literary heritage with the then-colonizer, but one that will become wholly Angolan. The process of taking on this inheritance implies selection, re-arrangement, a writing of difference. Through

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intertextuality, the new writing re-interrogates the original text with which it dialogues, bringing it up to date in a different context and through a different hue of Portuguese. Moreover, *A Gloriosa Família*’s narrator is a slave, bringing into focus the Other side of history through the voice of those who experienced it. Ironically, this slave, who is the property of Baltazar van Dum, the novel’s protagonist, is mute and illiterate. As such, he does not have at his disposal the instruments required to tell his story. Yet precisely through this ontological silence, the subaltern’s history emerges. In other words, the Other does have a story to tell, and s/he is quite capable of telling it. It is just that the conditions of production and expression they have long endured have led them to an apparent silence. Through his novel, Pepetela writes about Luanda drawing on a different spatial and human geography, pronounced in the language of an Other, a person hitherto excluded from History’s grand narrative. Through an “unfaithful copy”, the multiple legacies that define Angola and, more specifically, Luanda come into play, and the inherent hierarchy between copy and original, between origin and influence, fade away. The action of rewriting constitutes a political movement to conquer the territory and its history by narrating versions of history previously told by other voices and in other places, making the history of the city from its beginning textually more polyphonic. This is a movement against the inequality of power in the narration of history, a movement of Angolanness, or Mozambicanness. These are forms of re-founding and re-formation of citizenship, and therefore of struggle against inequality. They also reflect cities as spaces wide open to life and full of the possibilities of citizenship-in-difference.

**Acknowledgements**

This chapter results from work developed in “Memoirs — Children of Empires and European Postmemories”, financed by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (nº 648624), and partly from the project “De S. Paulo de Luanda a Luanda, de Lourenço Marques a Maputo: capitais coloniais em tempos pós-coloniais” (PTDC/CLE-LLI/122229/2010 - FCOMP-01- 0124-FEDER- 019830), financed by Fundos FEDER, Programa Operacional Factores de Competitividade and Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia; both carried out at the Social Studies Centre, University of Coimbra. The author wishes to thank Walter Rossa for his reading and suggestions, and Nuno Simão Gonçalves for his choice of the photographs that complement the text. An earlier version of some parts of this text was published in the *Journal of Lusophone Studies* 1.1 (Spring 2016): 88–106.

**Notes**


2. The classic definition of formation as “the history of Brazilians in their desire to have a literature” fits the idea of literature that is formed. See Antonio Candido, *Formação*

3 See Cahen, ed., “Vilas et Cidades”.


7 Rossa, “Stone raft”, p. 78.


10 All translations of texts in Portuguese are by Alexandra Reza (University of Oxford).


15 See Francisco Noa, Império, Mito e Miopia — Moçambique como uma Invenção Literária (Lisbon: Caminho, 2003).


20 In “Ronda dos Leques ou Terapêutica da Ocupação Laurentina a partir do Litoral”, the poet Grabato Dias offers a description of the socioeconomic status of the residents of the city of Lourenço Marques based on car brands and the women associated with places in the city. See João Pedro Grabato Dias, Uma Meditação 21 Laurentinas e Dois Fabulírios Falhados (Lourenço Marques: Dias, 1971), pp. 48–49.


25 See Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, Uma História de Regressos, Império, Guerra Colonial e Pós-Colonialismo. (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2004). See also Noa, Império, Mito e Miopia.

26 Private collection. Cedida pelo fotógrafo à autora.


29 See booklet for the exhibition, Things Fall Apart - Red Africa, EGEAC, from 7/12/2016 to 12/03/2017, Galeria da Avenida da Índia, Lisbon.


31 Ana Paula Tavares, O lago da lua (Lisbon: Caminho, 1999), p. 36.


33 Unknown photographer.


35 Unknown photographer.