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engajamento, crioulização e semovência literárias em Amílcar Cabral e Bruno de Menezes

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Abstract: This article investigates literary engagement, creolization, and self-movement in the poetics of Amílcar Cabral and Bruno de Menezes, whose trajectories are inscribed in the decolonization struggles in Cape Verde and Brazil. It begins with a comparative analysis, based on references related to the context of the study, to understand how the works of these authors express resistance to the cultural hegemony imposed by the coloniality of power. The methodology is grounded in a critical and interpretative reading of their literary productions, linked to the historical context in which colonized subjectivities were formed. It is observed that, despite being separated by distinct spatial and temporal contexts, both poets construct a poetics of confrontation with colonial structures, redefining the language of the colonizer by means of cultural and popular elements, territorial resonances, and environments touched by the decolonial struggle, whether in the urban periphery of the Amazon in Pará or in the torrid island landscapes of Cape Verde. It is concluded that Cabral and Menezes' engaged literature operates as aesthetic and political praxis, promoting the symbolic reterritorialization of subalternized identities and the emergence of a diverse poetics, affirmed in the continuous creation and reinvention of the historical experience of exiled peoples.
Keywords: colonialism; subalternity; creolization; literary self-movement; engagement.

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Resumo: Este artigo investiga o engajamento, a crioulização e a semovência literárias nas poéticas de Amílcar Cabral e Bruno de Menezes, cujas trajetórias se inscrevem nas lutas de descolonização em Cabo Verde e no Brasil. Parte-se de uma análise comparativa, com base em referenciais relacionados ao contexto do estudo, para compreender como as obras desses autores expressam resistência à hegemonia cultural imposta pela colonialidade do poder. A metodologia fundamenta-se na leitura crítica e interpretativa das produções literárias e associada ao contexto histórico de formação das subjetividades colonizadas. Observa-se que, mesmo separados por contextos espaciais e temporais distintos, os dois poetas constroem uma poética de enfrentamento às estruturas coloniais, ressignificando a língua do colonizador a partir de elementos culturais e populares, de ressonâncias territoriais e de meios tocados pela luta decolonial, seja na periferia urbana da Amazônia paraense, ou nas tórridas paragens insulares caboverdianas. Conclui-se que a literatura engajada de Cabral e Menezes opera como práxis estética e política, promovendo a reterritorialização simbólica das identidades subalternizadas e o devir de uma poética diversa, afirmada na criação e reinvenção contínua da experiência histórica dos povos desterrados.
Palavras-chave: colonialismo; subalternidade; crioulização; semovência literária; engajamento.

1 Introduction

Colonialism is a process of internationalizing economic exploitation, in which dominant nations establish both control and appropriation of means of production, as well as the hegemony of institutions and cultural heritage in dominated nations. The purpose is to render the colony economically and politically dependent on the metropolis, ensuring it provides raw materials at low cost, thereby generating high profit for the dominant power and the subalternization of colonized peoples.

Brazil and Cape Verde, the focus countries of this study, underwent this process as nations dominated by Portugal's metropolitan power. The former achieved political independence in 1822, while Cape Verde did so only in 1975. Despite a century-and-a-half gap between their independence movements, the decolonization of both nations reveals many convergences, whether in the strategies that made independence possible or in the post-independence colonial continuity that produced what is known as coloniality. This means that, despite formal political independence, a cultural hegemony persisted in the newly formed nations, marked by the influence and maintenance of the colonizers' status quo and their dominant-class values and ideals. Such hegemony manifested in the imposition of artistic, cultural, and social canons by means of native elites who, in deference to the metropolis, maintained coalition alliances and thereby renounced the possibility of constructing a sense of nationhood and autochthonous identities.

This political and social process produced a corresponding artistic and cultural dependency, marked by the establishment of "colonialities of power." This concept entails the domination of public opinion, shaping the belief that foreign and colonial values are the superior ones to be followed by local societies, as they are regarded as unquestionable, true, and correct. Undoubtedly, such reasoning arises from the alienation experienced by our native societies, by which the epistemological legacy of Eurocentrism is considered the only possible path to understand the autochthonous world, preventing us from interpreting it from its own epistemes.

This mechanism, which gives rise to the modern/colonial world-system, legitimizes the continuity of the colonizing process—no longer in the strict sense of colonization, in which self-sufficient economies are destroyed with the imposition of markets and commodities, the separation of modes of production, the expropriation of native lands, and the enslavement of labor force (Bottomore, 1988). Now, in the post-colonial period, what sustains dependency is the coloniality of power, which generates colonialities of knowledge:

> Colonial exploitation is legitimized by an imaginary that establishes immeasurable differences between the colonizer and the colonized. Notions of "race" and "culture" operate here as a taxonomic device that produces opposing identities. The colonized thus appears as the "other of reason," which justifies the exercise of disciplinary power by the colonizer (Castro-Gómez, 2005, p. 83).

In the Brazilian case, this exploitation has been present since the emergence of national literature, as the only existing records were those produced by European explorers and travelers who, in their own languages, documented what the Indigenous peoples were, along with their territories and riches to be exploited. It is no coincidence that these early accounts are classified as possessory voyages, in which the colonizer justified his "legitimate" right over a land supposedly devoid of peoples—reinforcing the Roman law of *jus possidendi*, by the "seizure and possession of the land they believed they had found or discovered, which was legitimized by their own accounts" (Guerini; Torres; Fernandes, 2021, p. 12).

What we call Brazilian literature—possibly inaugurated in the 16th century with the Portuguese invasion of Amerindian territories, according to the classical view of the origins of literature in Brazil—was, in itself, an initial act of alienation. From that moment on, both race and culture—in this case, the culture of Indigenous peoples—were subjected to exploitation in the name of a supposedly "superior" and ethnocentric culture. We will never have another version of what the encounter between Europeans and Indigenous peoples of the Americas truly was; at least not in written form and not from the native's own voice. What remains are texts produced solely by the colonizer: disciplinary writings that imposed the Judeo-Christian and militarized rationality of Europeans, later imposed on a nativist elite.

The Cape Verdean case could, at first glance, appear different, since by the time the Portuguese arrived on the shores of the archipelago, there was no native population. However, this does not mean that, over time and with the gradual advancement of the colonization process, a migrant population did not undergo a process of "nativization" and the consequent construction of local identity or identities. Glissant's (2005) concept of creolization illustrates this dynamic: despite the suffering and pain caused by violent enslavement, the peoples brought to Cape Verde, initially in transit to the American colonies and even to Europe, eventually settled on the islands and developed a distinctive culture, born from the multiplicity of languages and practices originating from their continental homelands.

Based on Deleuze and Guattari, along with their concepts of single root and rhizome root, the Antillean thinker Édouard Glissant proposes that cultures shaped by forced migration, particularly those of Africans affected by the transatlantic slave trade, are composite in nature. In the holds of the slave ships, the African languages of the displaced peoples disappeared, since "those who spoke the same language were never placed together on the slave ship, nor on the plantations" (Glissant, 2005, p. 19). Yet, despite all this suffering and misfortune, the displaced peoples conducted a process of reterritorialization, reconstructing "through traces and remnants language and artistic manifestations that we might say were valid for all" (Glissant, 2005, p. 19).

In a line of thought closely related to that of Édouard Glissant (1997), we also find the work of the Antillean thinker Franz Fanon (2020), a key author to understand the intertwining of poetics and politics within the colonial and postcolonial contexts. Born in 1925 in Fort-de-France, Martinique, and passing away prematurely in 1961, Fanon developed a body of work that

stands as a lucid form of resistance against the subordination of the colonized; or, in one of his striking formulations, against the imposition of "wearing the livery forced upon him by the white man" (Fanon, 2020, p. 48). His reflections are equally important for interpreting the poetics of Amílcar Cabral and Bruno de Menezes, not only because of the singularities of their aesthetics but also because each illuminates the other when read against the backdrop of colonial conditions experienced in their respective nations of origin.

Unlike "Introduction to a Poetics of Diversity" (Glissant, 2005), in which the notion of relation occupies a central place, "Black Skin, White Masks" (Fanon, 2020) draws upon Lacanian psychoanalysis in an open criticism of "The Psychology of Colonization" (Mannoni, 2024). By moving away from Freudian frameworks, Fanon focuses on the perverse effects of the colonial and slaveholding past on the formation of the subjectivities of affected peoples. In this sense, he not only examines the identification dynamics that alienate the colonized but also confronts them directly, seeking to uproot their most harmful consequences. Thus, in commenting on the verses of Aimé Césaire (1978), Fanon makes resound the searing pain inscribed in Black skin.

> […] He [Césaire] reminds me that my Blackness is but a weak moment. Truly, I tell you, my shoulders have slipped from the framework of the world, my feet no longer feel the caress of the earth. Without a Black past and without a Black future, it became impossible for me to exist in my Black being. Without having become white, I was no longer properly Black, I was a condemned man (Fanon, 2020, p. 151).

Nevertheless, his broad intellectual background, combined with a keen sensitivity to the contours of both white and Black worlds, make it possible for him to recognize that such processes do not occur in a vacuum. Rather, they emerge from the realm of culture and language—from the field of the Other, as designated by Lacan (Quinet, 2012). Fanon notes that their effects reach subjects across multiple spheres, being aware of the "*for-others* dimension of the man of color, bearing in mind that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (Fanon, 2020, p. 31, emphasis added). Perceptive and alert to the injunction of the colonizing Other, he also understands the dispossession experienced by Caribbean, African, and Latin American peoples, expropriated by the expansive processes of modern Western capitalist machinery, rooted above all in Europe and North America.

It is important, however, to recall the historical moment in which his work was published, as it did not emerge in isolation. In fact, it forms part of the broader body of postcolonial studies that arose in the 1950s, within which the category of otherness, understood as a relational notion between antagonistic pairs (Abbagnano, 2007), gained prominence in Western scholarship (Spielmann, 2000). Consequently, Fanon's thought—anchored in the perception of otherness as a formative aspect of human relations, given that we are speaking beings—"to speak means to take on the morphology of another language, but above all to assume a culture, to bear the weight of a civilization" (Fanon, 2020, p. 31) is by no means limited to identity politics, nor are the verses of Amílcar Cabral or Bruno de Menezes.

On the contrary, Fanon's prose is relational, grounded in an understanding of otherness as constitutive of the human condition. This aspect is particularly evident in his engagement with Lacan's study of the mirror stage, in which he notes in a footnote that "the true Other of the white man is and remains the Black man. And vice versa" (Fanon, 2020, p. 174-175). Since his thought is profoundly anchored in alterity, it is not by chance that he concludes in terms we might also find echoed in the verses of Amílcar Cabral: "[…] I refuse this amputation with all my being. I feel within me a soul as vast as the world, a soul as truly deep as the deepest of rivers; my chest possesses an infinite power of expansion" (Fanon, 2020, p. 153). Indeed, the two poetics compared here—emerging from Cape Verde and Brazil, and thus from the histories of enslavement and colonization—both experience and rebel against the apparent alienation imposed by the colonizer and his cultural atavisms.

Conversely, there was the creation of creolized languages and cultures; that is, when heterogeneous elements brought into contact generate unpredictability proportional to the distance that originally separated them. From the very outset, in the turbulence of violent intercultural encounters, they became aware they were producing new culture and new art, in a perpetual process of reinvention. This is characteristic of poetic creation and of an inclusive perspective of the world. It represents the great act of insubordination of the displaced peoples which, in turn, gave rise, in a sense, to the poetics of the authors examined here in terms of comparison and self-movement.

The poetics of Cabral and Menezes reveal a detachment from a fixed territory, highlighting a movement across languages, cultures, and temporalities. The self-movement of literary objects—the action of that which "moves" on its own, distancing itself from a given place—is thus entwined with ideological dimensions, permeated by beliefs, traditions, principles, and myths (Fernandes, 2024). It encompasses both an aesthetic and a political perspective that stretches boundaries and brings new meanings to decolonial literature, carrying with it a counter-coloniality, insofar as resistance is due to affinities among works originating from colonial processes that challenge colonialities of knowledge.

In this context, it becomes possible to reflect on how literary creation functions as an act of resistance and reterritorialization. Not reterritorialization in a spatial or physical sense, but given the same social and historical conditions of literary production, an aesthetic and ethical proximity emerges, as aspects of language, narrative structure, and protagonism converge. The authors bring into the scope of their works "experiences" of their cultures and intercultural encounters. This proximity does not arise from direct contact between authors or texts, but from the existence of "historical and social conditions of text production, in similar contexts, which give rise to similar narratives, even if there is no immediate contact or exchange between the compared social groups" (Fernandes, 2024, p. 21).

2 Engagement: two poets, the same commitment

Artistic and literary engagement refers to an author's social participation in defense of a sociocultural, ethical, political, or religious cause—either by means of their works, in thematic and language choices, or by direct involvement in social, political, and artistic movements, with acts of denunciation and proposals for change. Hence, so-called engaged literature is not limited to the 18th century, when a new ethic of freedom of expression was consolidated. As early as the 16th century, authors such as Montaigne and Rabelais included veiled critiques against intolerance and torture.

It is important to note, however, that the bourgeoisie itself, a social class on the rise during this period, also produced forms of literary and cultural activism in defense of its values, many of which remain hegemonic today. In any case, we recognize here the engagement present in the poetics of the aforementioned authors, without losing sight of attention to the construction of language; otherwise, such works would be reduced to mere pamphlets, devoid of the creative force that grants them their liberatory power.

According to Perrone-Moisés, referring to Sartre, "unveiling and appeal are indirect actions, different from direct actions of a pamphlet, a libel, or a command" (2023, p. 371) in a work by an engaged author. If the creative purpose of the literary work is lost, the writer would be producing "militant literature, merely repeating slogans of a party" (Perrone-Moisés, 2023, p. 371). In our view, it is precisely "unveiling" and "appeal" that Cabral and Menezes carry out, as their poetics retain their artistic integrity even when serving as a means to denounce (the appeal), since the ultimate aim of poetic texts should be to liberate (the unveiling). This aligns with Marx's view in his "Theses on Feuerbach," in which he says that "the poet is degraded when poetry becomes a means for him" (Marx-Engels, 1986, p. 32). We believe that both authors ennoble rather than degrade telic poetry.

Thus, with a shared commitment of to the lives of subordinated peoples, Amílcar Cabral and Bruno de Menezes—separated by nearly half a century and by several thousand kilometers along the Atlantic margins, in Africa and the Amazon—produced and inscribed a poetics that is both similar and, at the same time, marked by nuances unique to each territory.

Amílcar Cabral was born in 1924, in Bafatá, Guinea-Bissau. At the age of eight, he moved to Cape Verde, where he spent his childhood and adolescence. In 1945, he left for Lisbon, Portugal, to study agronomy at the Instituto Superior de Agronomia. Beyond his technical training, he became involved with political groups of African students, initiating his revolutionary ideals for the independence of African colonies and the end of Portuguese colonialism. In 1952, he returned to Guinea-Bissau to work as an agricultural technician and, confronted with the harsh colonial reality, founded the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) in 1959 alongside fellow activists. His militancy unfolded both in the political arena and on the battlefield, decisively contributing to the independence of both countries, although he did not live to witness

it, as he was assassinated in 1973. Alongside his political work, Cabral also stood out as a thinker and writer, producing reflections of a philosophical and literary nature.

Bruno de Menezes, in turn, was born Bento Menezes Costa in 1893, in Belém do Pará, in the Amazon region. Over the course of his life, he adopted the pseudonym by which he became known for. At the age of 11, he began working as a printer's apprentice, eventually becoming a master typographer, and by 20, he was teaching literacy at the Federation of Workers' Union of Pará. This experience, combined with his background as a laborer, set the tone of his militancy against social injustice, reflected in his work as a poet, novelist, and essayist. He dedicated himself to popular culture and Amazonian folklore, addressing themes related to subaltern classes. Menezes participated in several literary associations, including the *Academia do Peixe Frito*, always committed to fostering a poetics centered on the lives of urban peripheries and the defense of rural and urban workers, especially via cooperativism. He also produced ethnographic studies on popular festivals in Belém. He passed away in Manaus in 1963, victim of a heart attack.

Let us begin with what brings them together within this poetics of militancy: the understanding that poetic creation is grounded in reality and in the lived experience of humanity in its everyday life. Cabral thus announces his Poetry:

My poetry is me

… No, Poetry:
Do not hide yourself away in the grottoes of my being,
espouse life.
Break the invisible bars of my prison,
open gates of my being through and through
— and leave…
In the struggle (life is struggle)
men outside call you,
and you, Poetry, you are a Man too.
Love the Poems of the whole World,
— love Men
Deliver the poems for all races,
for all things.
Whelm yourself with me...
Leave, Poetry:
Take my arms to bind the World,
give me your arms to bind Life.
My Poetry is me.
(Cabral, 1946).

In his poetics, Cabral urges the anchoring of literary themes in the poet's surrounding world, in direct insurgence against classical models of a self-absorbed and self-referential art—"Do not hide yourself away in the grottoes of my being, espouse life"—because to write poetry is to be and make Life from struggle and liberation, as an inviolable condition of human existence: "In the struggle (life is struggle) / men outside call you, / and you, Poetry, you are a Man too." This vision is essential to literary modernity, born from the questioning of the canon and the rupture with

tradition, since modernity is "the transitory, the fleeting, the contingent, one half of art, whose other half is eternal and immutable" (Baudelaire, 1991, p. 109).

In Bruno de Menezes there is also an early concern with establishing his poetics as both transitory and immutable. Although his initial work stemmed from a more Eurocentric aesthetic, as his earliest poems borne a Symbolist tone, he never denied that poetry must embody originality and innovation. As early as 1920, he published the poem "*New Art*," foreshadowing what would later emerge in his most notorious book, "*Batuque*" (1931). In it, he anticipated key ideas of the 1922 Brazilian Modernist movement, proclaiming that "original art" must carry the restlessness of the Muse and the yearning for novelty, concluding: "Glorious the Art whose ideals renew! / — The reason why I refine myself / In the extravagance of a new image!".

This "new image" in Menezes is revealed in his aforementioned book "*Batuque*," which inaugurates the creation of Afro-Amazonian poetics, woven from verbal-percussive sonorities, olfactory-visual synesthesia, the play of bodies and seduction, and the words of the mythical-religious sacred. Menezes reaches the most visceral sense of modernity by means of creolization in his work, subverting the language and literature of the colonizer. If there was any benefit in this relationship, it was that we retained the language (the "eternal") while subverting it (the "fleeting"). In this regard, Perrone-Moisés corroborates this perspective, noting that "the formerly colonized now use European languages to communicate their claims to audiences far broader than those of their original, numerous, and minority languages" (2023, p. 379).

The appeal of engaged literature emerges insofar as, by incorporating immediate themes of human struggle and daily life, both Menezes and Cabral share, in some measure, what the latter discusses in his essay "Notes on Cape Verdean poetry," published in 1952 in *Cabo Verde – Boletim de Propaganda e Informação*. When comparing poets from before and after the *Revista Claridade* movement, Cabral points out that many earlier poets—most of them educated at the Seminary of São Nicolau, in Portugal—produced verses marked by classical influence, with strict adherence to meter and rhyme, typical "of a life in which, able to enjoy positions of prominence, they ignore or forget the realities surrounding them" (Cabral, 1952, p. 6).

The stance of the new Cape Verdean poetry that emerged from the *Claridoso* movement is different, in which "it is the clarity that emerges, giving form to real things, pointing to the sea, the bare rocks, the people struggling in crises, the fight of the 'anonymous' Cape Verdean; in short, the land and the People of Cape Verde" (Cabral, 1952, p. 7). Undoubtedly, it is precisely this landscape and these anonymous people that Bruno de Menezes also portrays—only in another context, the Amazonian one. Let us look at the poem:

Toiá Verequete

Ambrosina's voice in a "state of saint" turned masculine.
Her body took on the shape of a man.
She asked for a pure Bahia cigar then lit it blowing the smoke.

Her eyes gleamed.
Then the "*terreiro*" in a spinning dance joined the sung rhythm of the "*ponto*."
It was the "obligation" of Mother Ambrosina speaking Kimbundu in the Mina tongue.
"Toiá Verequête!"
"Toiá Verequête!"
(Menezes, 1931)

The first two stanzas, along with the refrain, indicate that the poem depicts the beginning of an Umbanda ritual, a Brazilian religion of African descent, hybridized with Indigenous practices and popular Catholicism. According to Fares, the poem presents "the arrival of the saint—the incorporation; the taking of the *ponto* and the beginning of the dance; the request for the Saint Benedict's blessing, the praise of the spiritual guides, and the closing of the works" (2012, p. 135). Beyond portraying a scene from the everyday life of "ordinary" people, the poem also brings forth the spirituality of socially marginalized groups in Brazil—rituals often pejoratively referred to as *macumba*, a term historically used to demonize Black religious practices that diverged from Judeo-Christian norms. Yet, in this poem, as in all others from "*Batuque*," Menezes aligns with principles identified by Cabral and reaffirms the meaning of Blackness, anticipating it as part of the broader movement of Afro-descendant writers' resistance that would only emerge publicly in 1935.

By presenting a woman who embodies the role of a man—and, even more so, that of a mythical-religious entity, Toiá Verequete—we may affirm that Menezes directly aligns himself with "all human groups that the gaze of the Western 'white' world has gathered under the name of Black individuals" (Munanga, 2009, p. 20). In this same line of thought, it is not excessive to say that Menezes anticipates the very concept of Blackness when, using the figure of Ambrosina, he summons and intuits solidarity among all those who inherit this condition (colonized people) so they may "engage in the struggle to rehabilitate values of their destroyed civilizations and their denied cultures" (Munanga, 2009, p. 10). We can ratify this perspective by reading another poem from "*Batuque*," which gives it its title:

Batuque

— "*Nêga*, what's with you?
— Maribondo Sinhá!
— "*Nêga*, what's with you?
— Maribondo Sinhá!"
The drumbeat rolls in maddening rhythm
— from *jongo* to *samba*, in the swaying wave.
Swaying hips, stamping feet, circling turns,
Cabindas chanting *lundus* from their *cubatas*.
Patichouli, *cipó-catinga*, *priprioca*,
vanilla, *pau-rosa*, *orisa*, jasmine.
Curled hair parted,
creoles, mulattas, people of *pixaim*…
— "*Nêga*, what's with you?
— Maribondo Sinhá!
— "*Nêga*, what's with you?

— Maribondo Sinhá!"
Sweat and scent mingle intoxicating
in the musk of sleek and glistening bodies.
Bellies rise bold in the thrust of the *umbigada*,
hands clap the pulse of the chant.
— "I was in my garden
the hornet bit me!…"
Oh Princess Izabel! Patrocínio! Nabuco!
Viscount of Rio Branco!
Euzébio de Queiroz!
And the drum still beats and the song still sings
recalling in the warm night the tragedy of the race!
Mãe Preta gave white blood to many a "young master"…
— "Maribondo on my body!
— Maribondo Sinhá!"
Lace garments washed by moonlight in the yard,
a strong scent of *mandinga* resins
comes from the forest and enters writhing bodies.
— "*Nêga*, what's with you?
— Maribondo Sinhá!
— Maribondo won't let
— *Nêga* work!…"
And it rolls and reels and swings and falls and breathes and sambas,
the wave that sinks in sensual rhythm.
The drumbeat strikes back echoing *banzeiros*,
flesh quivers in the carnal dance!…
— "Maribondo on my body!
— Maribondo Sinhá!"
— From above, from below!
— From everywhere!
(Menezes, 1931).

According to Fares, this poem is

> a synesthesia. The images interpenetrate across sensorial planes, fusing into visual (plastic or scenic), sound (from the rhythm and musical cadence), and olfactory sensations (the scent of herbs and of the body), producing rare expressive effects. The intensity with which scenes, settings, and sounds unfold, at times accelerated, at times slowed, is revealed by metaphors, alliterations, gradations, and punctuation (Fares, 2012, p. 129).

In his treatment of language, it becomes clear that, more than addressing a theme close to the peripheral populations of Belém do Pará—that is, the *lundu* dance in the suburbs of the city—Menezes' renewed art is concerned with including the Other as well, through that which most strongly marks identity: one's words and expressions. Thus, he brings a new poetics to creolized literature. This recalls Cabral's assertion that a people's cultural resistance ensures that the colonizing culture cannot fully prevail, for "as long as there exists a part of that people capable of sustaining a cultural life, foreign domination can never be assured of its perpetuation" (1995, p. 2).

Within the broad scope of cultural expression, Menezes went beyond literary production when he turned to the ethnography of popular manifestations of Pará culture, publishing two essays

that explore a folk festival—the *boi bumbá*—and a religious devotion—the cult of *São Benedito da Praia*. In the first, in the book "*Boi Bumbá – Auto Popular*" (1958), he introduces the chants, costumes, performance spaces, and transformations of this festivity so characteristic of northern Brazil. In the second, "*São Benedito da Praia*" (1959), he portrays the profane devotion to Saint Benedict by the vendors of the legendary *Ver-o-Peso* market in Belém do Pará, highlighting the atmosphere, the organization of the celebration, the raising of the mast, and the miracles of the Black saint. As we can observe, in addition to the literary artist lies the thinker-researcher, aligned with what Cabral advocates regarding the need for oppressed people to reclaim the development of their productive forces by means of liberation and historical protagonism:

> The national liberation of a people is the reconquest of that people's historical personality, their return to history via the destruction of imperialist domination to which they were subjected to […], it is this freedom, and only this, that ensures the normalization of a people's historical process (Cabral, 1980, p. 33-34).

I understand "productive forces" as agents that make life materialize, including the reclaiming of popular knowledge, such as folklore and manifestations of popular culture—precisely what Menezes achieves in his studies and essays ("would he be the Gramscian organic intellectual?")—thus converging with Cabral's vision of national liberation. Here, I use "nation" in its adjectival, not substantive sense, as a quality that confers collectivity and solidarity among members of the same social group, reinserting the history of subalterns into the history of humanity—an authentic "history against the grain," to recall Walter Benjamin. Based on these certainties and reflections, how can we not be astonished by so many affinities between these authors, even though they lived in different times and on geographically distant continents? Could it be self-movement? That is what we shall see next.

3 Self-movements: two poetics, the same praxis

In an earlier study—"Negritude and creolization in Bruno de Menezes" (2010)—Fernandes (2010) insisted that correspondences can exist between apparently distant and incommunicable productions as long as the historical and social conditions of their creation are linked to tensions among actors who assert a system of domination rooted in incommensurable differences. Thus, to understand this historical and social context of artistic and cultural production, it is crucial to recognize that

> there are correspondences among intellectuals conditioned by the same realities, despite the absence of immediate relationships or direct influence. This is what I call self-movement, for it is as if such intellectual and artistic production, as an animated entity, moved by itself, distancing from its origin and engaging, via dialogue and comparativism, with other similar productions (Fernandes, 2010, p. 224).

In our understanding, this is the case of Amílcar Cabral, in Cape Verde, and Bruno de Menezes, in the Brazilian Amazon. Employing the concept of literary and/or cultural self-movement is essential to grasp the dimension of the colonial process that, with impositions of coloniality, structured societies that remain dependent on standards and worldviews of the Old World. Yet, like a chiaroscuro, what once appeared as normality for the dominator became the subaltern's strength, for it is precisely from that condition of subalternity that the norm, both literary and cultural, is subverted. Self-movement, in this sense, becomes the colonizer's haunting presence, as it replicates across once-dominated spaces the very forces of resistance and the struggle for national liberation.

And it is a ghost precisely because it haunts the hidden corners of everyday practices of doing and knowing within societies, even when the dominated are not fully conscious of their shared forms of resistance. When the oppressor perceives these resemblances, they are inevitably unsettled by the looming possibility of an encounter among their subalternized subjects; for what is similar, under conditions of violence and in modes of resistance, may well become the seed of a great revolution. What makes the dominated similar is that the mechanisms of repression are so analogous that their practices of resistance converge—and these practices are marked by the relationship between culture and revolutionary movement. As Cabral reminds us, the revolution

> must establish with precision the objectives to be achieved so that the people it represents and leads may regain the right to have their own history and to freely dispose of their productive forces, aiming toward the further development of a richer, deeper, national, scientific, and universal culture (Cabral, 1974, p. 3).

Both Cabral and Menezes draw from the repertoire of poetics rooted in popular classes, echoing territorial resonances and environments marked by the decolonial struggle—whether in the urban peripheries of the Amazonian Pará or in the scorching island landscapes of Cape Verde, heirs to the "vast" African continent, like "ten caravels in search of the Infinite" ("*Poemas Naus sem rumo*"). Within these representations of landscapes, so distant yet so near, lies the essence of the reconquest by colonized peoples: the act of recognizing their own history. This, in turn, gives rise to a richer and more critical culture, which is present in the poetics of both authors.

The Infinite—born from the creative becoming of inclusive poetics of praxis and aesthetics once excluded by the coloniality of power—and Diversity—stemming from the coexistence of distinct and heterogeneous cultural groups—seem to be the two avatars guiding the transformation of post-colonized peoples into realities that recognize their composite cultural peculiarities. One could even speak of Poetics of Diversity, as Glissant suggests, since this poetics emerges from the cultural and literary interpenetration of distinct groups brought into contact, first in slave ships and later in nations forged by the Berlin Conference.

Contrary to these enclosures of forged countries without true nations—those constructed by imperialist ambition—Diversity embodies what Cabral proclaimed, in the words of Barros-Varela, "the mutual, healthy, and fruitful coexistence of various forms of political and social organization existing within state borders" (2017, p. 73). Moreover, according to the author, Cabral calls for a

"multinational state" as a means to overcome the possible fragility, failure, or collapse of emerging national states in Africa.

For whether in Cape Verde or in the Amazon, our nations may indeed stand in solitude, yet the quest for the Infinite is far more than wandering aimlessly, it is the possibility of building a new society, a new poetics, one not measured by Eurocentrism, but by the Diversity of Becoming.

— Where are you going, ships Hunger,
of Morna,
of Dream,
and of Misfortune? …
— Where are you going? …
Aimless and without a goal,
Alone,
scattered,
adrift,
we go on,
dreaming,
suffering,
in search of the Infinite! …
(Cabral, 1983).

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