"PORTUGAL GIGANTE": NATIONALISM, MOTHERLAND AND COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS IN PORTUGUESE SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

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Resumo: em Portugal, durante o Estado Novo (1933-1974), os livros escolares contribuíram para manter viva a idéia de império de “aquém e além-mar,” ao mesmo tempo que este mesmo império se desintegrava. Este artigo analisa o discurso e iconografia de manuais de escola primária (principalmente Livros de Leitura e de História), através da discussão do conceito de pátria e nação de “aquém e além-mar.”

Palavras-chave: Nacionalismo, Educação, Livros Escolares, Portugal

After a one-to two-mile walk to school, my classmates and I began each school day standing in prayer and singing the national anthem while respectfully facing the front of the classroom and arresting our eyes on a crucifix framed by pictures of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. Catholic teachings and values were central in our public school education, with a weekly class dedicated to “Morality and Religion,” in addition to texts that addressed moral issues, or even a whole section of the third grade reading textbook dedicated to Christian education. The most feared topics in our school education were those pertaining the President of the Republic, the Government and the symbolism of the flag, because mistakes were often met with severe punishment (the ruler, the long bamboo pointer, or some other form of public humiliation). Another dreaded moment was the Geography lesson where we had to memorize long lists of useless data on topics as far-reaching as the railways in Goa, Damão and Diu, former
Portuguese colonial territories that had reverted to India ten years before I had even started elementary school. Central to our school learning were facts of colonial interest, which we memorized precisely: Angola was fourteen times larger than Portugal, Mozambique nine times and Brazil twenty-three times (despite the fact that Brazil had been an independent nation since 1822!).

The highlight of our school year was the trip to Conimbriga (a Roman archaeological site), Fátima (a Catholic shrine) and Mosteiro da Batalha (a fourteenth- to fifteenth-century monastery celebrating a glorious battle against neighboring Castile, and the resting place of the World War I unknown soldier). On the odd year, the school trip took us to Guimarães (considered the cradle of the Portuguese nation, for it is usually connected to independence and traditionally viewed as the birth place of the first king) and Braga (another city with several Catholic shrines).

These are some memories I share with my classmates and that unite us despite our different paths in adult life. Whenever we have the occasion to meet, we reminisce and laugh about the careless games and mischief on the long trail we walked to and from school. More often, however, we discuss the impact of the school curriculum on our lives: Why did we have to memorize lists of past Portuguese kings, the course of tropical rivers, and faraway railroads that none of us ever expected to see or use?

INTRODUCTION

A common, national past is an essential component of national solidarity and consciousness. History is invoked to legitimize existing political order(s) and it can serve an integrative function by building a sense of destiny among citizens, while defining collective, national values. Although preeminent since the nineteenth century, the endeavor to inculcate patriotic, national values to citizens through public education was nowhere more pervasive than during the Portuguese Estado Novo (also known as the New State, and which dates from 1933 to 1974). During this period, state
ideology was produced and reproduced through school curricula laden with texts of past greatness, and national and religious heroes. Furthermore, an array of other means included textbooks’ discourse and iconography, organization of space in the classroom, school activities ranging from morning prayers and singing the national anthem, to school trips to specific locales identified with the origin of the Portuguese nation or of historical or religious significance.

In this article, I examine the nationalistic discourse and iconography present in Portuguese elementary school textbooks from the Estado Novo period. This analysis is taken in the context of broader political and cultural issues of the creation of Portuguese national consciousness, when pride in a past became a tool used by political officials to mobilize a largely illiterate and, supposedly, submissive population in support of the dictatorship and its policies. Textbooks and other aspects of classroom culture were only some of the means used by the complex propaganda machine during the Estado Novo, devised to justify the country’s superior historical and spiritual right to Empire and, after 1960, to justify the wars waged in Portugal’s African colonies. My research is anthropological in scope, but also self-reflective as it relies on personal experiences, the experiences of my classmates, school textbooks and exercise notebooks, as well as memories of elementary school classrooms and trips as sources of research. However, the goal is clearly not to present a memoir, but instead to ask how textbooks, teaching methods, curricular concerns, and classroom culture in general framed the understanding that the Portuguese have of their past and their place in the world. Individuals schooled under the policies of the New State are today’s political class, as well as the majority of the work force. How did the dictatorship’s historic and religious ideology produce, cement, and perpetuate social relations that span beyond the end of the colonial state? Did it create long-lasting allegiances to the dictator and the nation-state? How did a school education based on the colonial ideology of the History of “Portugal Gigante” (i.e., “a Giant Portugal,” the title of a history manual; PAMPLONA, [1947?] shape a
political and social order? In what ways did the postcolonial context perpetuate a neocolonial vision of former colonies, such as the articulation of a broad Luso identity beyond the sea (“aquém e além-mar”, from here and overseas) that now encompasses Portugal, the former colonies and Brazil?

It is indisputably accepted by anthropological and historical research that state power generates and suppresses national historical narratives to establish the legitimacy to its claims in the present and in the future. Preoccupation with the spread and popular understanding of narratives of past as a form of national unity emerged across Europe in the nineteenth century. Like other nation-states, Portugal used narratives of greatness and heroism to inculcate “patriotic” values and create a national identity (ANDERSON, 1991; BOYD, 1997; HARP, 1998; HOBSBAWM, 1992; CHILDRESS, 2001). Although contested pasts could emerge (as, for example, in the case of Spain [BOYD, 1997; DÁVILA BALSERÁ, 2005]), such as those that would challenge the dominant narratives or intensify ideological and social cleavages, the centralized state educational system often assured popular allegiance to specific political and social orders. Scholars have shown how dictatorships use public education as a tool to inculcate elite values that parallel those of the dictatorial apparatus, with the ideology of a general culture often based on a single language and culture (DÁVILA BALSERÁ, 2005), in which the regulation and manipulation of school curricula and textbooks play a key role. The development of a public education in order to increase productivity of the labor force (BOYD, 1997, p. xiv), also creates a shared national identity and encourages participation in the dissemination of propaganda. Portugal was no exception: its leaders employed mechanisms similar to those of other Western nation-states and modeled the state apparatus on other twentieth-century European dictatorships (primarily the ones in Italy and Germany in the 1930s and 40s) to consolidate the political and social power of Estado Novo (CALDEIRA, 1995; TORGAL, 1998).
Estado Novo is the designation given to the period between 1933 and 1974. The term was created to mark the new phase initiated after the 1926 coup d’état and convey the idea that the Portuguese had entered a new political phase, moving away from the uncertain times of the First Republic. After sixteen years of instability, which saw seven parliaments, eight presidents and forty-six governments (BAIOA, FERNANDES, MENÉSES, 2003; MAGONE, 1999; MARQUES, 1992; ROSAS, 1996), the military coup overthrew the First Republic and for the following 48 years, the country was ruled by a fascist regime. From 1933 to 1968, António de Oliveira Salazar was President of the Ministers’ Council (the equivalent of Prime Minister) and the regime’s strong man. Independent political parties and labor unions were outlawed, the press was ruthlessly censored and the economy controlled by a few state-favored oligarchs. Salazar fiercely repressed all forms of opposition. The secret police, inspired by the Gestapo, sent suspected dissidents to the infamous Tarrafal prison in Cape Verde. Salazar refused to yield to the UN pressure that Portugal negotiate independence for its colonies, and after 1960, the country was enmeshed in wars for independence in most of its African colonial territories, with young men drafted to fight and die, if necessary, defending these last remnants of European empire overseas.

Salazar retired from political life in 1968, and was replaced by Marcelo Caetano, a life-long supporter and colleague, as Prime Minister. M. Caetano initiated a period of “liberalization,” but the colonial wars of independence continued. Increasing popular discontent, visible for example in the 1969 student movement, ultimately led to a military coup on April 25, 1974, thus ending the dictatorship. One year later the revolutionary government signed with the liberation movements the independence of all the African colonies. It was the end of the longest European dictatorship and of the last European colonial empire.
During the Estado Novo, schools were an apparatus of indoctrination (MÓNICA, 1978; ALTHUSSER, 1971) and education served mostly as a means of ideological inculcation, with little to do with the formation of human capital, particularly until the 1960s. The regime’s education policies, shaped by a colonial narrative based on the greatness of the past and a divine right to empire, were carried by young students into their adult life and influenced how the Portuguese still see themselves today and wish others to see them (ERRANTE, 1998). Therefore, the legacy of empire continues to possess the country and its citizens, affecting contemporary identity discourses and the way we re-invented ourselves as a postcolonial imagined community (ANDERSON, 1991). Today’s identity and collective memory continues to be built based on a past of historic greatness indoctrinated upon us through decades of patriotic schooling, still displayed on a discourse of “Portugal is not a small country.”

MYTHS, DISCOURSE AND ICONOGRAPHY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

Despite the institution of mandatory education in 1911, for most of the twentieth century, the level of illiteracy in Portugal was very high. Primary school education and other means of popular education (e.g., restoration projects for national monuments, construction of statues, and a series of centennial commemorations involving parades that highlighted key historic events and figures, as well as representations of colonies and colonial cultures) were skillfully manipulated to create a support base for the dictatorship (ACCIAIUOLI, 1998; CALDEIRA, 1995; CORKILL, ALMEIDA, 2007; SAPEGÁ, 2002). As the official and therefore privileged tools of instruction, textbooks provide a reliable way of capturing the ideas and images that political and cultural elites wished to impress upon the nations’ youth. An analysis of their content can give us an interesting window through which to view the worldviews of citizens as they were shaped in the years of early education. This becomes particularly important in the case of Portugal, where the majority
of the population did not continue past the elementary school level and many were functionally illiterate.

According to national censuses (Estatísticas Demográficas; SILVA, 1970), in 1890 in a population of over 5 million people, only 609,000 men and 328,000 women knew how to read and write, while 58,000 men and 52,000 women could only read. This means that about 4 million (c. 77%) people were illiterate. The figures did not change much throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, regardless of the existence of public education, and in 1940 more than 50% of the population was illiterate. There was also a disproportionate gap between literacy rates in the rural and urban areas: in 1960, urban and rural illiteracy rates were 17.2% and 40.6% respectively (ERRANTE, 1998). Levels of literacy increased slowly in the 1950s and 1960s, but in 1970 the level of illiteracy was still 26%, one of the highest figures for Europe. However, it is difficult to gauge exactly how many citizens were functionally illiterate—for example, in the mid-1980s, I still came in contact with people of my generation who had attended elementary school, but had forgotten how to read or write. Until the 1970s, approximately 70% of the children who went to primary school lacked access to secondary schooling (ERRANTE, 1998, p. 283), with most having completed fourth grade and, in some cases, sixth grade. Of the remaining 30%, very few had the opportunity to attend university, and those who did often belonged to elites and urban populations. This situation changed only with the 1974 revolution and the resulting democratization of education.

My own family is a typical example of the state of education in the country during the twentieth century. Of my grand parents (all of whom were born between 1903 and 1915), two never learned how to read or write, and one learned minimal reading and writing skills as an adult during mandatory military service. My maternal grandmother was the only grandparent to have attended school, but only finished third grade. Among those relatives who belong to my parents’ generation (their siblings, like them, were born in the late 1930s and 1940s), all went to
school and completed the fourth grade before starting apprenticeships—the women as seamstresses and the men as masons. As adults, some continued their formal education obtaining technical degrees and middle school diplomas. My generation (my siblings and cousins, all born in the 1960s and early 1970s) was the first with access to university, although some only finished high school. Following the democratic revolution, lower classes and lower middle classes gained access to high school and the university. Middle school education became compulsory and free up to the ninth grade; high school and university tuition were not completely free, but their low fees were purely symbolic. However, among rural populations, people continued to finish elementary school only, while the majority left school after completing ninth grade. Among my 25 elementary school classmates from a rural area in central Portugal, only two of us obtained university degrees, two went to university, but dropped out before finishing their degrees, while three other completed higher degrees in elementary education and accounting. Many of the remaining did not complete ninth grade. They married very young and only their children finally gained access to higher education.

Under the justification of providing the Portuguese with knowledge, but especially to form the moral character of future citizens, the manipulation and strict regulation of education were means to create a normalized collective memory supporting the dictatorship’s political power (CALDEIRA, 1995, p. 122). Centralization of the education system, strict curricular goals, official textbooks, exams and teacher control gave the dictatorship additional power over worldviews, topics taught, and the perspectives presented to future generations. Informal activities (e.g., Mocidade Portuguesa [Portuguese Youth] and Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina [Feminine Portuguese Youth]) were an expression of nationalistic and patriotic spirit. Mocidade Portuguesa (both masculine and feminine) defended physical development, character formation, devotion to the motherland, discipline and, in the case of women, the need to create a patriotic “new woman” (i.e., educator, prolific mother and obedient wife; PIMENTEL,
2002; 2007). The goals embraced by these organizations worked together with school curricula, classroom culture and textbooks to convey patriotic values, reverence, obedience and loyalty to the nation, the government and the Church.

The “formation of Portuguese citizens” and use of past narratives as models for present character and behavior structured not only the political discourse, but mainly the creation of strict rules for school education was to be organized according to the national interests. That is, the interests of social and political elites. Therefore, school manuals became vehicles of nationalistic and patriotic ideology, or according to the Cordeiro Ramos, minister of Education in 1932, “the state can and should set what is the national truth, that is, what is for national interest” (RAMOS apud CALDEIRA, 1995, p. 122). Since 1929, textbooks had required government approval in order to be used in school; in 1932, a law signed by the minister of education dictated what could be approved and included in school manuals, especially in history textbooks. In 1936, the government furthered its control over school manuals imposing the single textbook policy (that is, that a single book per discipline would be adopted in all of the nation’s schools; CALDEIRA, 1995; CLAUDINO, 2005; TORGAL, 1998). This increased control over the messages transmitted, influencing youth’s perceptions of the world in an attempt to shape their national consciousness. Although, the single book policy was never quite accomplished in practice, the number of state-approved books was reduced significantly, with clear decisions made to have accepted models comply with Christian conduct and morals, and represent the “superior” interests and values of the nation as reverent (CALDEIRA, 1995; CLAUDINO, 2005). Changes in policies were reflected in the discourse and iconography of textbooks, but it is difficult to assess textbook perceptions and changes, as they rarely display publication dates, and in some cases the authors were also anonymous.

School curricula integrated a variety of subjects: Geography, Natural Science, and Christian Religion and Morality, but the state concentrated its attention primarily in “Livros de Leitura” [Reading Manuals] and History of Portu-
gal textbooks. There was a call for textbooks to have abundant, patriotic, illustrations and after 1960 they had to include expressions of nationalistic political discourse, often sentences from Salazar’s speeches. The fourth-grade reading manual (PIMENTA, EVANGELISTA, [1965?]) is an example of such policy with short, ideologically charged vignettes in most of its pages. Some examples:

Do not envy those who are superior to you, because they have responsibilities and duties you do not know.

If you only understood the true cost of leading, you would rather obey for the rest of your life.

To govern is not to enslave: it is to lead. The greater the obedience, the gentler the governance.

Within the Family, the leader is the Father; at School the leader is the Teacher; in the State, the leader is the Government.

The opening paragraph in the fourth-grade Reading Manual by J. Gaspar (1968?) is also emblematic of Estado Novo’s direction for education:

It is essential that the spirit of our youth be formed by us according to the Portuguese historical vocation, following the examples of sacrifice, patriotism, abnegation, valor and dignity.... (SALAZAR apud GASPAR, [1968?], p. 1)

In addition to ideologically charged discourse, an iconography based on the same mythology marked school textbooks and defined how we, as adults, would recall our passage through the primary school classroom and how we made sense of its teachings. Perhaps the most emblematic book of this generation, both in terms of discourse and iconography, was the third-grade Livro de Leitura, possibly published in the 1940s, with its third edition (1958) still found in use in
classroom in the 1970s. Many of us remember its cover with illustrations of stoic children holding historic Portuguese flags, and with the Portuguese Youth flag occupying center stage. The dryness of the text and the nationalistic flavor of the iconography are vivid memories for many of us. It was the memory of this book that drove me to explore the issues examined in this article; likewise, in conversations with my Portuguese peers, the first ideas expressed when discussing elementary school had to do with the cover and iconography of this manual. The style was not unlike that of old-fashioned comic books, with vivid green and orange hues, and special illustrations that still mark the memories of this period of schooling (ALMEIDA, 1991, p. 251). This manual is perhaps the best example of Estado Novo’s pervasive ideology in school textbooks, marking many generations of Portuguese, especially considering it was in use for about thirty years. However, it is only one among many ideologically-charged manuals used during the dictatorship, that imprinted their marks upon both personal

Figure 1. Cover of Livro de Leitura da 3ª Classe 1958 (3rd Grade Reading Manual). The figure at the center wears the uniform of Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth) and holds the organization’s flag.
memories of childhood, and contributed to our interpretations of school teachings, and, primarily, to a re-invention of the country's post-colonial collective memory and identity.

At the core of the regime’s ideology was the greatness of the past, the “authentic” Portuguese values and traditions: bravery, the noble Catholic faith, respect for hierarchy, work, disregard for material wealth, and a civilizing mission, all leading toward a destiny of empire. The regime’s slogan “God, Motherland, and Family”, was spread through a strong propaganda program, materialized in posters, monuments, commemorations, and reproduced for future generations at school. School textbooks were systematically organized around this tripartite construction of national identity and it was expected that generations of Portuguese citizens in the metropole and colonies would identify with, and reproduce such values. School textbooks included texts and iconography that, although not organized into well-defined sections, can easily be integrated in topical areas closely matching the regime’s slogan. First and
foremost, they addressed the greatness of past events and the nation. Patriotism and heroic actions of historic personages blended with faith and religion to construct a view that the Portuguese destiny of greatness was given to the nation by divine intervention and will (CALDEIRA, 1995; ERRANTE, 1998). Equally important was the definition of national identity (tradition) portrayed as a vision of a romanticized rural world with the family at the center, depicting traditional activities, and values such as humility, honesty and respect.

The culture of pastoral romantic nationalism was represented in stories of the natural world, work (almost exclusively presented as rural work [ALMEIDA, 1991, p. 258-259]), the family and gendered-organized activities (the mother holding the child, bringing the pot to the table, the grandfather telling stories of yore and the father carrying the hoe on his shoulder). Different books published between 1930 and 1974 have similar structures, address the same topics, often using the same texts. An obvious example is “A Moleirinha” [The Old Miller], a poem by Guerra Junqueiro repeated endlessly in reading manuals of various grades, and that at once offers a romanticized view of old age and rural work, ending with a religious reference to Jesus. Furthermore, the rural world was the perfect setting to present the family with its expected gender roles defended by the regime: the father, taller than the mother, comes home after a day of hard, agricultural, work; the mother, shorter than the father, cooks, gives good advice to her children (but often deferring to the father), an example of motherhood, dedication and sacrifice; and the children, a taller boy holds a book, while a younger, shorter girl plays with toy pots and pans (ALMEIDA, 1991).

Narratives of national glory and iconic figures were symbols of “Portugalidade” (i.e., “Portugueseness” [see also CORKILL, ALMEIDA, 2007, p. 9]) and the expression that the country’s destiny was one of greatness: in the present and the in future, led by the firm, but caring hand of Salazar, as in the past it had been led by heroic figures who sacrificed themselves to save Portugal. This nationalistic ideology and mythology
was then paramount in school curricula to instill national pride at a very young age and form a national consciousness. Reading manuals abounded in narratives of patriotic events and national heroes (e.g., the medieval foundation of Portugal, the discoveries and the Restoration of independence in 1640, after the “long night of Spanish rule”), texts about monuments (mainly castles, churches and monasteries) often related to such events, and finally a series of texts and images explaining the symbols of the nation (e.g., the colors and symbolism of the flag and the national anthem) compelled to loyalty to the motherland, flag, ancestors and government. There is little variation in the representation of the past and of national symbols in elementary school textbooks, with few or no references to technology, the industrial revolution and urban life (ALMEIDA, 1991) and, in history manuals, with deliberate chronological gaps (for example, between 1580 and 1640, the above mentioned “long night of Spanish rule;” similarly the First Republic, 1910-
1926, was hardly ever mentioned). The regime’s discourse emphasized the Middle Ages and the foundation of the nation (that could be pushed back to pre-Roman times, with Viriato and the Lusitanians considered the ancestors of the Portuguese nation). Castles, churches and monasteries equally represented this time period, while at the same time introducing religion into the historic narrative. Religious fervor and national pride were indistinguishable in the Estado Novo concept of patriotism and nation that saw Portugal as a country of heroes and saints. Often the heroes were also saints. This is the case of Nuno Álvares Pereira, the Constable of the Kingdom who became a saint – Saint Constable – and occupied a central place in school manuals. As mentioned above, a crucifix was always affixed on the classroom front wall; Religion and Morality (that is, Catholic Religion) was a theme in the school curricula and in textbooks; and the cross regularly appeared in illustrations: on kings’ and heroes’ armors, caravel sails, at the top of a castle’s main tower, on flags and house interiors.

Figure 4. The new heroes. Cover of a 1960s History textbook (BRANCO, 1968?).
Heroism and sanctity, past and present were intrinsic to the concept of motherland and nation:

The Motherland is the sacred territory that D. Afonso Henriques began to carve for the Portuguese Nation and which many heroes defended with their blood or expanded by sacrificing their lives. The Motherland is the soil where these heroes lived and now rest, alongside saints, scholars, writers, and artists. It is our Nation, and includes those before us, those who live today, and those who will follow us (LIVRO de leitura da 3ª classe, 1958, p. 5; emphasis added).

Nation and motherland were defined primarily as the metropole, and the regime’s colonial discourse was one of superiority in relation to subjugated peoples. In the text about Motherland cited above (Livro de leitura da 3ª classe, 1958, p. 5-6), the territories outside the metropole are mentioned at the very end, in a short paragraph that simply lists the colonial territories, and in a text entitled “Portugal é Grande” (Portugal is Expansive; Livro de leitura da 3ª classe, 1958, p. 17-18) that points out the scope of Portuguese territory. The textbook never mentions the empire or the colonies beyond narratives of discoveries and explorers. Despite a colonial discourse and the destiny of empire, nation and motherland seemed restricted to the metropolitan territory and the glorious past of continental Portuguese heroes. However, the terms of representation were to change in the 1960s, when colonial wars of independence were on everyone’s mind and military service a part of daily life.

The early geographic greatness of Portugal represented in the map “Portugal não é um país pequeno” (Portugal is not a small country) that was created for the 1934 Colonial Exhibition emphasized the size and greatness of the country. Superimposing the colonial territories onto the map of Europe, this map expanded the vision of what constituted the Portuguese nation – which otherwise was perceived as a small country in relation to other European territories. Accordingly,
the nation’s greatness was materialized in the 1934 Colonial Exhibition, and in the 1940 Portuguese World Exhibition (this one devised to celebrate the double centenary of the foundation of Portugal in 1140 and the Restoration of independence in 1640). Both exhibitions relied upon the idea of a colonial empire dispersed throughout the world, from Minho to Timor (an expression used by the regime), which were also intended for popular education. The colonies were paraded as touches of primitivism and exoticism for metropolitan consumption while the imperial mystique of Portuguese superiority harnessed a discourse of empire (ALMEIDA, 2004; CORKILL, ALMEIDA, 2007; LÉONARD, 1997). In Salazar’s words “... there are decadent and primitive races, but we have assumed the commitment to civilize them” (SALAZAR apud LÉONARD, 1997, p. 215). According to official discourse, the colonized felt gratitude for their deliverance from barbarism!

The increasing reinforcement of African and Asian nationalist movements demanding independence, the United Nations pressure and the regime’s refusal to bring to an end the colonial empire resulted in conceptual and ideological changes for colonial territories, which were mirrored in school textbooks. In 1951 the Constitutional revision clarified that overseas territories were intrinsic components of the national territory and the terms “Overseas Portugal” and “Overseas Provinces” replaced the designations “colonies” and “colonial empire.” Therefore, it marked the inclusion of the colonial spaces in a unifying concept of nation and motherland (“pátria de aquém e além mar”, or “motherland from here and overseas”). The metropole and its oversea provinces formed a single, indivisible nation that spread across continents, and included citizenship for lighter- and darker-skinned individuals. From the 1960s on, textbooks would maintain that the motherland extended to those provinces overseas all of whose inhabitants, united under a common language and one flag, were proud of their Portuguese citizenship:
The Portuguese Nation is made up of territories spread throughout the world. However, all people speak the same language, feel respect and love for the same flag, and obey the same leaders: They are all Portuguese. Portugal, therefore, consists of various territories in which peoples of different races live, yet it is a single nation. (CARVALHO, 1972?, p. 87)

Manuals started including texts characterizing each colony, their geography and culture; children from all races were also added to the narratives and iconography of discoveries and explorers. By then, the nation was multi-racial and multi-continental. Autonomy for the colonial spaces was out of the question as the overseas territories were already independent due to the fact that Portugal, an indivisible nation, had been independent since 1140. Additionally, Salazar’s ideology began to make use of Gilberto Freire’s concept of Lusotropicalism, promoting the image

Figure 5. “Among many and opportune measures, to attain harmony between the two races, Afonso de Albuquerque implemented the marriage between Portuguese soldiers and Indian women.” (CARVALHO, 1970?, p. 29).
that the relationship between Portugal and its overseas territories and citizens was different from that of other European empires. Instead of imposing European values, Portugal transmitted Christian values of equality among different races and had mixed with indigenous populations, creating a true lusotropical, multi-cultural civilization (LEONARD, 1997, p. 217). Paradigmatic of the new discourse was the mention of miscegenation, under the aegis of Afonso de Albuquerque (military and viceroy of India in the early sixteenth century) who encouraged the marriage between Portuguese soldiers and Indian women as a warrant for Portuguese domination in the East. According to textbooks, peoples of different races and religions were united in their love and loyalty to the motherland, the flag, the ancestors, the leaders, and willing to die for them. Itself a textbook case of Benedict Anderson’s imagined communities (ANDERSON, 1991).

Most historic personages that gave legitimacy to Estado Novo’s political order were maintained from the mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth century intellectual elite’s discourse on national identity, morality and patriotism (TORGAL, 1998). The history of Portugal was presented as biographies of kings and heroes who defended the nation, explorers who discovered new lands and spread Portuguese values and Christian faith. The heroes in school textbooks were mainly men of action (kings, explorers, saints); they were individuals of extraordinary valor and faith, who defended and aggrandized the nation, in actions not dissimilar to those of Salazar, the contemporary savior of the nation. Arlindo Caldeira (1995) quantified the relative importance given to historic heroes according to their appearance in the series of popular books Great Portuguese published by the SPN/SNI (Secretaria Nacional de Propaganda/Secretaria Nacional de Informação [National Propaganda Secretariat/National Information Secretariat] in the 1940s. These were not school manuals, but books geared to publicize, among the population, the heroic figures of the regime: 18 of 23 individuals deserving a volume consecrated to their feats had lived prior to the seventeenth century; the series dedicated to female historic figures had only four volu-
mes; and in the third series, Pátria [Motherland], geared to children, 35 of the 45 titles addressed events and personages from the period before the sixteenth century. The same author (CALDEIRA, 1995) analyzes a single speech by Salazar in which historic personages abound, and attempts to give meaning to the order in which such heroes are mentioned. Similar to the heroes of the publications, most of those mentioned in the speech lived prior to the seventeenth century, were revered for their spirituality and for having “saved” the nation. Historic figures were presented not as real people, but instead symbols of values dear to Salazar and the political system: sanctity, bravery, abnegation and patriotism prevailed.

While most historic heroes were maintained throughout the long period of Estado Novo and their deeds narrated according to the established ideology, the case of Viriato presents an exception. Viriato’s ascension to a heroic status had resulted from his struggle against the expanding Roman Empire and its armies. He had been defined as the ancestor of the Portuguese nation and our claim to the denomination “Lusos” (i.e., the heirs of the Lusitanians). This national and ethnic identification parallels France’s identification with the Gauls and England’s with the Britons (DIETLER, 1994), while mapping Portuguese identity and nation back to a time when it did not exist (in this case, 2nd century B.C.). Viriato was described in textbooks as a “barbarian,” a lonely shepherd who lived simply, and loved freedom. The iconography represented him as a strong, savage, bearded man, wearing skins, holding a small shield and a short spear (in clear opposition to Roman weaponry – FABIÃO, GUERRA, 1997). As a rebel he led the Lusitanians through a series of victories against the powerful Roman army, he was defeated only by treason. But after the beginning of the wars of independence in the African colonies, in 1961, Viriato became an inconvenient ancestor and was relegated to a secondary plan, almost completely disappearing from school textbooks with the rare exceptions as it is the case history textbook, published in 1968-1970, which has suggestive title of Lições de História Pátria, or “Lessons of Patriotic History,”). Through his defense of independence and use of less orthodox means to fight Roman armies,
he could easily be identified with the rebel armies fighting for the freedom of their countries in the African colonies, while the Portuguese colonial state could be compared to the invading Romans.

D. Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal, and Egas Moniz, his tutor, became the origin heroes of the regime’s re-imagined history. Bravery, but mainly sacrifice and loyalty became markers of national identity. Individuals capable of extraordinary deeds and the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives for nation and motherland become the new icons. D. Aleixo Corte Real, an indigenous chief who died defending Timor from invading Japanese troops, never revealing the place where he had hid the Portuguese flag, and Aniceto do Rosário, a victim of the Indian independence movement, entered the new national pantheon. Together with post-1961 soldiers, they became the new heroes, the role models in a multi-racial nation, who found themselves defending with their lives, the territory, the flag, and the indivisible Motherland.

Now as in the past, not a single Portuguese refuses to shed his blood, often to give his own life, in order to defend overseas Portuguese
territories. Examples of such devotion are D. Aleixo Corte Real and Aniceto do Rosário, who died defending the part of Portugal that had been entrusted to them. Examples of similar patriotic devotion are found in the thousands of Portuguese who fight in Guiné, Angola and Mozambique, defending those territories and their populations, to maintain the unity of the Motherland. Those are today's Portuguese heroes (CARVALHO, 1972, p. 87).

TODAY AS YESTERDAY: REPRESENTING HISTORICAL GREATNESS

In a country where the ruling elites preferred inert to engaged citizens and education was neglected until the early 1970s, school textbooks participated in the construction of a national identity that embodied values espoused by the regime. The emphasis on re-imagining historical figures and events nurtured a blind allegiance to the political power of the Estado Novo and in particular to its dictator, Oliveira Salazar, and defended the realities and projections of colonial empire. While subordinated groups (e.g., lower classes and colonized peoples) had some power to resist the dominant ideology, all individuals who attended elementary school before 1974 were exposed to this heroic construction of identity. Those fortunate enough to attend high school were exposed to an additional five to seven years of patriotic ideology, which included participation in the Mocidade Portuguesa (the Portuguese Youth movement discussed earlier in this essay), not to mention the exposure to endless celebrations, commemorations, public holidays and other constructed forms of collective memory. The question remains: How much did this immersion in a patriotic and imperialist discourse influence our lives, our perceptions of the world and of ourselves? Thirty-three years after the “carnation” revolution that ended the dictatorship, the visions of nation on display would appear to carry on the colonizing worldview so evident under Salazar.

In 1998, when the last universal exhibition of the 20th century (Expo’98) was held in Lisbon, the regime had ended

some 24 years earlier and, in this post-colonial era, all former Portuguese African colonies had long been independent countries. The theme of the exhibition, however, pointed to the continuity of the colonial past when it emphasized the Oceans and “Discoveries”, with Portugal still proclaiming the glories of expansionism, its “discovery” of new continents, and the contact with different races and customs that led to its significance in the world. Almeida (2004) argues that the Expo’98 and the celebration of the Fifth Centennial of the Portuguese Discoveries (1997-2000) are part of a historic continuity, but suggests that they differ from Estado Novo centennial celebrations. In contrast, I argue that they are (re)inventions of the same nationalist discourse, based on the same past greatness, on narratives of exploration, contact, and the feats of navigators. With the so-called golden age of discoveries still at the center of the new narrative, the historic realities of colonialism and colonial history remain uncomfortable and incomplete references. Emphasized, instead, were positive images of the contact with other cultures, cooperation, and a common cultural and linguistic heritage. With Portugal placed at center stage in this narrative, the event rearticulated the past by demonstrating to the world how significant Portugal has been and remains, not as a colonial multi-continental territory with a large population, but in terms of its history, culture and language.

A second re-invention of the colonial discourse inculcated by Salazar’s educational system was the replacement of the extended colonial empire by the concept of Lusophony. That is, the colonial space and physical territories have been replaced by the use of a common language, which became itself the means to recover the colonial space. The Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) includes all the former Portuguese African, Asian and American colonies. The expression “My homeland is the Portuguese language” created by Fernando Pessoa – under the semi-heteronym Bernardo Soares in The Book of Disquiet – became the cornerstone of Lusophony, and became normalized in the ideological desire to recover the country’s past greatness. The expression appears often as a textbook
title (SILVESTRE, PADRÃO, 1979), as a leitmotif for exhibitions, and endlessly in the realm of cyberspace. In the Portuguese imaginary, Lusophony is not far from the 1934 map “Portugal is not a small country” that overlapped former colonial territories onto the map of Europe. Today, the greatness of the Portuguese presence in the world is proclaimed not through the direct control of colonized populations, but through the numbers of those united by the same language (although in former African colonies, such as Angola, Guiné-Bissau and Mozambique, a very large percentage of the populations does not speak Portuguese). Lusophony is the new Portuguese mythology that draws on the discourse of empire; the new ideological tool that invents a lusophonic space and a common history. Today’s concern with a unifying language is a contradiction in itself, for when Portugal was a colonial power it never had an educational policy for the colonies, and the policy of non-education was a means to control indigenous populations. Alfredo Margarido argues that the use, in a post-colonial context, of language as unity between Portugal represents continuity in colonial domination (MARGARIDO, 2000) and the recovery of the lost Empire.

And last but not least, I would like to address the figure of Salazar and its place in contemporary Portuguese imaginary. Early in 2007, a TV show set itself to identify, through popular vote (conducted by phone and via email), the most influential figures of Portugal. Salazar received 41% of the votes, the largest number of votes granted any figure. Álvaro Cunhal, the leader of the Communist party and the main figure of resistance against the dictatorship, came in second place with only 19% of the votes, while D. Afonso Henriques, the founder of the nation, secured fourth place with no more than 12% of the votes. Similarly, a few days ago I entered a small bookstore in Coimbra only to find displayed in the window five different books about Salazar (both works of historical fiction and scholarly books) alongside a wide range of titles pertinent to the Estado Novo period. Why the fascination for the dictator and one of the darkest periods of our history? Is this a matter of nostalgia or are the Portuguese people attempting to make sense of it? The
reality is that most of today’s Portuguese population experienced the regime directly, with almost all indoctrinated with the lessons of patriotism as discussed here. Contemporary political discourse continues to require a positive national identity, therefore drawing its inspiration from the same past of greatness that shaped Salazarist ideology, while economic difficulties and our secondary place in Europe draws the nation’s inhabitants to romanticize a period from very recent and personal memory, which had often been represented as an era of stability and greatness.

The history of “A Giant Portugal” is still a part of daily life. The dictatorship and its nationalistic and imperialist discourses have long been replaced by a democratic system and a country disposed toward a united Europe. The terms of representation have changed. Yet the heritage of Estado Novo’s imagined past still surrounds us, with continuity in commemorations and public holidays, for example. Salazar’s concept of “pátria” (motherland) lives on in the nostalgia for grandiose past, and personal memories that embellish the passage through elementary school. A few years ago, facsimiles of several elementary school reading books from the period of the dictatorship were re-published as mementos of nostalgia. The infamous third-grade reading manual sold out within a few months.

Notes

1 During the 1930s and 1940s the age and degree for compulsory school education had been reduced (Stoer, Dale, 1987, p. 407) and it was common for children to start apprenticeships, working on factories or in agriculture.
2 During Estado Novo, most school were gender segregated, thus all my 25 classmates were women.
3 Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth) was a paramilitary organization mandatory for young men from 7 to 25 and young women from 7 to 14 years old.
4 In cases that books do not have a publication date, I use as possible year of publication the date the book entered the library at the University of Coimbra, and which is stamped on the books’ last page. This date is possibly close to the publication, since they are legal deposits and should have been logged within a few months of their publication.
The term “Portugalidade” means more than just Portuguese identity; it is the essence of Portuguese identity, of being Portuguese. Thus, my use of “Portugueseness.”

Condestável do Reino (Constable of the Kingdom) was the military title of the army’s second in command, after the king.

This textbook may have been published for the first time in 1967. However, I was not able to conform the similarity between the original text and this 1972 text.

On April 25, 1974, soldiers who had participated in the coup started inserting red carnations on the barrel of their rifles. The carnation became then symbol of the revolution.

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Acknowledgements

The research for this article is part of a broader project that has received financial support from the Archaeological Institute of America’s Archaeology of Portugal Fund and from the Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal). Special thanks to the Department of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary, who has been my institutional host during 2007-2008, and to colleagues and students for their helpful advice. This article is dedicated to my classmates who, with me, endured elementary school culture, punishments and joys, and continue to help me contributing to my research with memories and information.

Abstract: “Estado Novo” (New State, 1933-1974) Portuguese textbooks contributed to maintain alive the idea of an overseas empire, at the time of its collapse. This article examines the discourse and iconography in textbooks great narrative of national history, through the use of concepts such as motherland and nation “de aquém e além mar” (“from here and overseas”).

Key words: Nationalism, Education, School Textbooks, Portugal


