

The 'problem' of miscegenation in the Portuguese colonies: From Lusotropicalism to Anticolonialism

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It was not until the 1950s, when most European empires were dissolving in Africa, that settler colonialism was encouraged by the Portuguese fascistic dictatorship (1933-1974). Ironically, it increased exponentially during the wars for independence of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau (1961-1975). This paper is part of my research on how women writers and intellectuals responded to the so-called weakness of Portuguese colonialism at different points in time by engaging with the issue of miscegenation. Here I focus on critiques of Lusotropicalism, the myth that there was no racism in the overseas “provinces” where racial and cultural mixtures were the norm. Created by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, it was used from the 1950’s on by Salazar’s government to justify the Portuguese presence in Africa and Asia. Working with literary and cultural discourses and other qualitative sources, I call attention to critiques of Lusotropicalism emerging in very different geo-cultural and political spaces of contestation and/or active struggle against Portuguese colonialism in Africa. Texts by Mário Pinto de Andrade (1928-1990), founder of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, and by Portuguese writer, exiled in Brazil since 1955, Maria Archer (1898-1982), are briefly discussed.

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Girls and Soldiers

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