

The Writings of the National Anthem in Independent Mozambique: Fictions of the Subject-People

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This article examines how the writing of the national anthem – taken as an object of a history of post-independence Mozambique – reveals processes of identification concerning the imagining of a subject-people. This involves an analysis of three calls to submit proposals for an anthem and the responses to such calls, at the eve of independence, in the context of the civil war and the Fourth Congress in the early 1980s, and after the advent of multiparty democracy. While each of these calls was related to a different fiction of the people, all of them shared a common contradiction: the postulate of an active, sovereign people coexisted with the presumption of its passivity, conceived as the inability to produce the anthem which would represent the people's very self. Thus, rather than confirming the principle of popular sovereignty, the writings of the national anthem led to its problematisation and constitutes an intriguing historiographical object.

O sangue dos nomes
É o sangue dos homens
Suga-o também se és capaz
Tu que não os amas¹
José Craveirinha

The putting-in-writing of a nation, as we know, bears the signs of an imagined community: it suggests the unity of society where there is diversity and speaks of such unity as a necessary historical becoming that denies both indeterminacy and agency. However, the diversity of historical experience over the last two centuries shows us that the conditions and the consequences of 'putting-into-writing' have been various and distinctive. In the nation-states that emerged from the processes of colonisation, the need to distinguish themselves from the colonial political order, and the legitimisation of imposed frontiers and languages, has frequently been the cause of both the intensity and the constant ambiguities of this 'work of words'. The situation of armed struggles in processes of decolonisation adds an urgency that makes it hard to manage difference and confidence on a terrain dominated by the obsessive presence of 'the enemy'. Through concepts and discourse the 'work of words' consists of

1 The blood of names is the blood of men; suck it up if you can, you, who do not love them.

weaving together the common thinking of the new community that has been put together by the political function and ethical duty of the struggle. Thus, the national anthem, and especially its words, is a detonator of an emotional economy, underpinning the building of this common thought.

How and why can a national anthem be an appropriate object of research on the relationship between nationalism and historiography? It is clear that a first link between these two concepts is located in a historiography that tries to contribute to the legitimisation of the right to independence from the coloniser. As Frederick Cooper points out, the concern to associate the emergence of the modern nation with primary resistance and with pre-colonial political systems is fundamental.² The experience of post-colonial states has seen the emergence of a different articulation between the two terms; not one of coincidence, but one based on a critique connected to the effort to abandon binary and teleological conceptual frameworks.

It is in this sense that the national anthem, as object of a History of post-colonial Mozambique, allows us to emphasise the non-linear conflicts, tensions and transformations that constitute a part of the re-creation of the nation. And here three lines of research present themselves. The first has to do with an historical sociology of the intellectual and political elites who were involved in the anthem's creation. These would include, for example, the parliamentary commissions that were set up for the purpose. We are therefore attempting to understand its interconnections with the political class of the Mozambican state. We can also find, at the same time, some continuity in the relations within the elites and a process of evolution that took place as a function of changes within the regime. This was particularly clear in the circumstances of the change to political pluralism.

A second avenue of research has to do with the press as a privileged space for the description, diffusion and circulation of information concerning the creation of the national anthem. The press was especially important in Mozambique after independence. Both the issue of the role of intellectuals and this line of research on the press are excellent examples of Anderson's model of a national imaginary based on a community of readers and on an intelligentsia involved in the production of a representative national culture.³

The third line of investigation allows us to focus on the study of the effects produced by the ideological weight of an anthem that, while symbolising *par excellence* collective identity, is also a vehicle for a collective subject, which is customarily designated by the term 'the people'. Here, the anthem becomes a form of revelation of these effects. It can show, for example, the way in which the change from a socialist one-party system to liberal pluralism impacts the way the nation and the citizenry are represented. In Mozambique, the phrasing of the various calls to submit proposals for an anthem show how, in relation to the first call, we are dealing with a collective process of composition that would constitute, in its very performativity, the nation and the 'people'. For the third anthem, the call for proposals was competitive and this 'individualised' it, above all through the award of a monetary prize for the victor. In this case, the call was directed at a community that was constituted by individuals.

2 F. Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History', *American Historical Review*, 99(5), 1994, 1520.

3 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, new ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 149.

Mamadou Diouf says that nations organise their forms of identification through ‘matrices of identity’.⁴ This is what we find beneath the ‘terms of reference’ of these calls, which for this reason appear under different guises, defining here a time of revolution and single party, there a period of multi-party democracy. In the first instance, the discourse is not juridical in character, and the terms of reference are not even called as such. There are only ‘themes’ which are presented to the people through the mass media, somewhat like editorial topics (for the nation is a large school),⁵ in a direct communication between power and reader. In the third case, there is a complete bureaucratic structuring, divided between parliamentary commissions and professional groups such as journalists and writers, who must decide on a framework within which proposals must be located and evaluated.

It seems that a single question cuts across all three of these lines of research: what ‘people’ is constituted through this act of singing? Bruno Peixe Dias and José Neves point to the dual dimensionality of the people, simultaneously both active and passive – in Foucault’s terms, that which is both responsible for an action and that which submits itself to an action – arguing that little attention has been paid to this insight.⁶ More specifically, Dias and Neves explain how the active aspect of the people created a forgetfulness with respect to the theme of passivity.⁷ For Etienne Balibar, this passivity is directly linked to the dynamics of a state that tries to defer, that is say to neutralise, the political competence of the citizen outside the ‘self-constitution of the people’.⁸

The case of the various ‘writings’ of the Mozambican national anthem is an interesting example of a people that is simultaneously both active and passive. It illustrates, especially in the circumstances in which the first of the anthems was composed, the twin desires for an emancipatory politics and national autonomy, both of these evoked by the above-mentioned authors.⁹ Finally, this case – and again, above all, the first writing of the anthem – leads us to reflect on what I called in an earlier text ‘the space of impossibility’ or utopia.¹⁰ In conformity with a Marxist-Leninist canon, the idea of a collective Mozambican subject was expressed in the desire to constitute itself through the affirmation of a victory within a context of class struggle. But the word ‘people’ short-circuits this process of identity building, because the word itself includes the entire population. But the national project, needed for the very affirmation of the Mozambican state, is confronted by yet two more problems: on the one hand, the internationalism of the struggle of the working class, and on the other, the very nationalism that is driven by feelings of belonging to a collective. The explanations that accompanied the call for proposals for the composition of the first anthem, as well as its lyrics, both show this tension at work. This sense of belonging to a collective revolves around the production of a set of symbols of identity that delimit the space and refer to a homogenous internality. In this way, the ‘nation’ in independent Mozambique constitutes itself in an impossible mixture of stereotypical celebrations

4 M. Diouf, ‘Introduction. Entre l’Afrique et l’Inde: sur les Questions Coloniales et Nationales. Écritures de l’Histoire et Recherches Historiques’ in Diouf, ed., *L’Historiographie Indienne en Débat. Colonialisme, Nationalisme et Sociétés Postcoloniales* (Paris: Karthala; Amsterdam: Sefhis, 1999), 32.

5 M.-B. Basto, *A Guerra das Escritas. Literatura, Nação e Teoria Pós-Colonial em Moçambique* (Lisboa: Vendaval, 2006), 170.

6 B. Peixe Dias and J. Neves, eds., *A Política dos Muitos: Povo, Classes e Multidão* (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2010).

7 *Ibid.*, 13.

8 E. Balibar, *Les Frontières de la Démocratie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1992), 129, author’s translation.

9 Balibar, *Les Frontières*, 129.

10 Basto, *A Guerra das Escritas*, 135.

of the national character, intended to create sentimental bonding – anthem, flag, coat of arms, monuments to ‘national’ heroes – and its operation within a social dynamic that is driven by the desire to construct a society free from the exploitation of man by man.¹¹

Finally, because it carries two distinct meanings, the word ‘people’ is also the site of another conflict, between the community and the poor, between the masses and the plebs. This tension justifies the paternalism of the revolutionary elites. In the end, the ‘sovereignty’ of the people rests on a base of inequality amongst those who always have something still to learn, those who always need the great explanation, and those who ‘teach,’ ‘orient,’ and ‘guide.’¹² Also here, the case of the national anthem(s) seems to be exemplary.

The Cause of the People, or, Because of the People: the First Anthem, 1975

The *national anthem* will be everybody’s voice!
Call for proposals, *Notícias*, 4 March 1975.

The model of the nation-state that was implicit in the programme of the Mozambican struggle for national liberation led by Frelimo was based on the necessity for access to and mastery of the written word. The very construction of national subjects as scientifically modern subjects, themselves located within a dynamic of economic and social progress, would emerge from this. The literacy campaigns, which were immediately undertaken after the transition and which succeeded in bringing illiteracy rates down from the colonial level of about 90 percent, are a good example. But even before this, it is worth noting the intense activity around information gathering during the armed struggle, especially if one takes into account the kind of difficulties inherent in wartime conditions.

The ‘text’ of a national anthem is not literature, nor journalism, nor legislation; it is not part of the body of national literature, even if it is composed by a poet. Oddly enough, it is a text with a high level of poetic density, without consequently entering the nation’s literary canon. We can nonetheless locate this symbolic object within the musical patrimony of a country, and in this sense, even though it is the music that seems to decide the ‘discipline,’ the text produces the narrative. Singing brings the two aspects together.

In a brief passage, Anderson invokes the special form of community that is suggested by a national anthem, focussing on the singing of the anthem, because through the singing one can identify simultaneity as the experience of self-constitution of the national community.¹³ Anderson therefore suggests the terms ‘unisonance’ and ‘unisonality’ – a physical-choral-singing with a single voice that is the ‘physical realisation of the imagined community.’¹⁴ But for the purposes of this article, I am interested in another argument by Anderson, namely his idea that there are neither false nor true communities, but rather only different ‘styles’ in which communities are ‘imagined.’¹⁵

11 Basto, *A Guerra das Escritas*, 63.

12 J. Rancière, *Le Maître Ignorant: Cinq Leçons sur l'Émancipation Intellectuelle* (Paris: Éditions «10/18», 1987 (repr.2004).

13 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, new ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 149.

14 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 149.

15 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

Although rarely cited, this notion of 'style' nevertheless seems relevant to an analysis of the national anthem. The anthem attempts to create a 'style', a signature that will identify a set of imagined presuppositions, principles, and values; a model of a society and a citizen, a kind of biography of a people. We might even speak of 'style effect' as a kind of Gramscian ideologeme, a fundamental unit of ideology. But what is even more interesting, I think, is less the idea of a 'signature' than the idea of an 'author': who is the author of the anthem? Is it an individual citizen, or is it the people? What are the implications, from the perspective of building a national community, of a call to the people to write the national anthem?

A few months before the date chosen for independence, June 25, 1975, an appeal was published in the newspaper *Notícias* for proposals for the first national anthem of the young Mozambican nation. The invitation stated that '[t]he whole people must collaborate in the creation of the *national anthem*, because the whole people collaborated in the victory of our revolution.'¹⁶ The call was published under the heading 'National Anthem/Anthem of the People/From the Rovuma to the Maputo'. This headline established that the two terms that characterised the anthem – nation and people – were synonymous, and added the geographical limits of the national community that the people constituted. The Rovuma River in the north and the Maputo River in the south rewrite, in a way, the imperialist cartography 'from the Minho to Timor', now making visible what had been deleted and affirming that unity was the foundation of the Mozambican nation.

The call for proposals began by stating that 'music' was integral to the identity of the Mozambican people and sketched out a national history based on the people's singing: resistance to the invaders in the long darkness of colonialism; the launching of the struggle, victory and the heroes of the armed struggle; treason against the Mozambican revolution and the tactics of the enemy – a progressive journey to a liberation that was to become real on independence day. On this day, the Mozambican people would need its song, its anthem. Such an anthem needed to be 'easy and popular so that the whole Mozambican people understands the history of the revolution itself. An anthem that is energetic, dynamic and strong, like our struggle. An anthem that expresses the stage of the organisation of the people within Frelimo.' An explanation of how to proceed followed: everybody who wanted to take part had to use the 'Frelimo structures to deliver the anthems that each group has created to the provincial headquarters'. Through the dynamising groups (*grupos dinamizadores*), all Mozambicans should reflect on the long process of the liberation struggle. The anthem should represent the various themes of the new citizenship that would be constitutive of this Mozambican subject-people.

The principle that anybody could write an anthem inevitably required the setting up of a system of selection from the proposals that were sent in. This was why Frelimo issued the call, an appeal to creative capacity, and promised that the 'most beautiful composition would be chosen as the *national anthem*'.¹⁷ Each individual proposal would thus be synonymous with all of the other proposals. Writing was 'collective'. But which subject-people was at stake?

16 *Notícias*, 25 Feb. 1975, 1.

17 *Notícias*, 25 Feb. 1975, 1.

We, the People

Over the following eight days, *Notícias* published the same call for proposals on its front page, always in the same location but presenting six different themes, accompanied by detailed explanations. In this way a set of basic topics was assembled that were to be addressed in the compositions that would be submitted. It was like a mini-encyclopaedia, a new grammar to be employed by the new citizen. The first theme explained was 'Organisation and Unity',¹⁸ followed by 'Armed Struggle',¹⁹ 'Social Victories of the Revolution',²⁰ 'Liberation',²¹ 'Production',²² and 'The Struggle Continues'.²³ The weekly magazine *Tempo* also devoted three pages of its March 9 issue to the call for the people to collaborate in the authoring of the anthem, reprinting the themes and the explanations.²⁴ In exactly the same terms as *Notícias*, *Tempo* also encouraged its readers thus:

[...] let us give vent to our creative imagination by participating in the composition of the national anthem. The anthem should reproduce the dynamics itself of ten years of armed struggle, the Organisation and National Unity from the Rovuma to the Maputo, in the glorious effort of the Struggle for National Liberation waged by Frelimo, organised vanguard of the People.²⁵

These journalistic publications need to be read in the broad context of the orientation of the press at that time. *Tempo* was a weekly magazine that had been publishing songs for the people, the Frelimo anthem, songs from the period of the armed struggle, including precise annotations such as 'chorus', or 'repeat'. The special issue to mark independence included an anthology of poetry and songs, the title of which took the form of a chiasmus, *Poesia-Povo/Povo-Poesia*, and in which were published poems from a new canon, produced by unrecognised writers.²⁶ The cover of the issue featured the Mozambican flag. The call for proposals also appeared in the afternoon daily *A Tribuna* on March 27. Moreover, it should be remembered that from Independence Day onwards, *Notícias* replaced the word *Moçambique* at the top of the page of national news by the word *Nation* ('*Nação*').

The anthem, therefore, had to sing of 'the virtues of *production* in the service of independent Mozambique',²⁷ to show why it was that '*the struggle continues* [...]',²⁸ to exalt the 'powerful spirit of the Mozambican People, committed to the struggle for a future that is prosperous and free',²⁹ to honour the '*armed struggle*, the victories that were won in each battle, and the courage of our heroes',³⁰ and to tell of the birth of the new man who had to be 'dynamic, cheerful and popular like national liberation itself!'³¹

18 *Notícias*, 26 Feb. 1975, 1.

19 *Notícias*, 27 Feb. 1975, 1.

20 *Notícias*, 28 Feb. 1975, 1.

21 *Notícias*, 1 Mar. 1975, 1.

22 *Notícias*, 2 Mar. 1975, 1.

23 *Notícias*, 3 Mar. 1975, 1.

24 *Tempo*, 232, 9 Mar. 1975, 6-9.

25 *Tempo*, 232, 9 Mar. 1975, 6.

26 *Tempo*, special issue, 25 Mar. 1975.

27 *Notícias*, 2 Mar. 1975, 1.

28 *Notícias*, 3 Mar. 1975, 1.

29 *Notícias*, 3 Mar. 1975, 1.

30 *Notícias*, 27 Feb. 1975, 1.

31 *Notícias*, 1 Mar. 1975, 1.

This was how the anthem needed to be and this was what it had to celebrate – an anthem ‘made by the people, simple in form, but dynamic and expressive.’³² This people would at the same time be the ideal author-people and the ideal subject-people, a people that by writing itself should constitute itself through the writing, as long as it represented with ‘authentic realism’ the ‘sensibility of the people’ – which is to say its own sensibility. A sensibility, therefore, that had also to be that which it must, ideally, feel.

The penultimate call in the series published in *Notícias* did not deal with any particular thematic, but rather with the question of defining what a national anthem does. The subject-people was clearly implicated in this definition,³³ which can be divided into three points. First, the anthem is sung in unison. Anderson could not have found a better example: ‘In hoisting the flag on that day, therefore, we shall surely feel an irrepressible desire to raise our voice to express everything that we are feeling. The voice of us all will be the *national anthem*.’³⁴ Second, this anthem is an inter-national act of song, it is the ‘grandiloquent image’ of a ‘People which does not struggle alone, and only for itself, because it receives the support of the whole of progressive humanity in a fight that is the fight of all. With our victory, our *People* must make a decisive contribution to the final liberation of all peoples who are still oppressed.’³⁵ Third, what is it that the anthem must ‘sing’? The text of the call responds: ‘[t]he building of a society in which man, armed with a new mentality, finally sees all his aspirations satisfied.’³⁶ We could say then, that this national anthem ‘sings’ *nation-as-society*.³⁷

The final call for proposals published in *Notícias* is a kind of synthesis. It explains again how to take part, summarises the themes and repeats again the supposed territorial unity of the Mozambican subject-people. Once again it sets the challenge of the ‘creative capacity of the People’,³⁸ encouraging participation by submitting a proposal. Society thus renders itself horizontal. And yet, the type of participation described from the beginning and repeated here seems to contradict the egalitarian force of creativity. It assumes a hierarchical structure and centralisation in the capital. Organised participants have to contact the dynamising groups, which in turn must contact Frelimo structures which subsequently send compositions to headquarters in the then Lourenço Marques (today’s Maputo). This whole process must be coordinated by the dynamising groups, which would channel all the anthem proposals to the various provincial headquarters of the Mozambican Liberation Front.³⁹ The make-up of the jury that will evaluate the proposals is also laid out. It will be composed of ‘elements’ from the Political Commissariat of Frelimo and from the Ministry of Education and Culture.⁴⁰

In this way, both the framing of the themes and the way in which proposals are to be submitted have the effect of building a new verticality. In the postulation of this ‘people’ we see both an assumption of equality of intelligence⁴¹ and its opposite, an opposition that strengthens the capillarity or permeability of power in

32 *Notícias*, 4 Mar. 1975, 1.

33 *Notícias*, 4 Mar. 1975, 1.

34 *Notícias*, 4 Mar. 1975, 1.

35 *Notícias*, 4 Mar. 1975, 1.

36 *Notícias*, 4 Mar. 1975, 1.

37 Basto, *A Guerra das Escritas*, 63.

38 *Notícias*, 5 Mar. 1975, 1.

39 *Tempo*, 232, 9 Mar. 1975, 6.

40 *Notícias*, 5 Mar. 1975, 1.

41 Rancière, *Le Maître Ignorant*.

governmentality – in Foucault’s sense – and the identification of the people with the disorganised and childish lower classes.

Due to the small number of proposals that were submitted and their poor quality (many were not even complete), Mozambique approached Independence Day without a national anthem. In the end the anthem was created on the eve of Independence – not by the people, nor in the people’s cause, but in the people’s name by maestro Justino Chemane, as he later recounted, in a single night, in a moment of inspiration after he had been contacted by Frelimo.⁴² It seems likely that Fernando Ganhão, at that time the rector of Eduardo Mondlane University, had a hand in the composition of the lyrics, which is what he told me in a later interview.⁴³ Indeed, Chemane himself stated that the words were added later, although he did not say how or by whom.⁴⁴ The maestro, who had founded his own choir in the colonial era, in 1940, confirmed that Frelimo approached him because the received proposals were not considered good enough.⁴⁵

The anthem was consequently published on June 24, on the very eve of independence, in the form of maestro Justino Chemane’s composition,⁴⁶ alongside a long news report headlined *Samora Arrived! Samora Arrived!*, announcing the arrival of the Frelimo leader in Lourenço Marques after his ‘Triumphal Journey’, which in the course of a month had redrawn a new cartography for Mozambique, and which itself became a new dictionary and a new grammar for the nation. It is worth analysing the introductory text to the anthem. It was produced by the Ministry of Information, and reads:

The national anthem that is divulged here has historical significance. It is the life of a people who sing its suffering, its strength, its confidence and its certainty about the future. The national anthem embodies the heroic struggle that the Mozambican People went through to defeat Portuguese colonialism. Only the unity of the People from the Rovuma to the Maputo enabled the destruction of the weight of imperialism, capitalism and the exploitation of man by man. But the struggle continues. It is the application of Frelimo’s correct line that unites and organises the people and will make the building of a new society and a New Man possible [...] ⁴⁷

Three points should be noted here. First, the societal character already mentioned above: the centrality of the political project for the building of a new society is clearly present at the end of the text and it seems to prevail over the emotion of national belonging; in other terms, that emotion is diluted in the immediate task of building a new society made up of new men. Next, the biographical character of the

42 *Notícias*, 21 Jun 1999, 5

43 Basto, Interview with Fernando Ganhão, Maputo, 2001.

44 Basto, Interview with Fernando Ganhão, Maputo, 2001.

45 *Notícias*, 21 Jun. 1999.

46 The words are similar to those of the Unity Anthem: ‘Long live Frelimo, which is the vanguard// [...] The *povo* united by Frelimo/ From the Rovuma to the Maputo/Against the oppressor and exploitation/The *povo* fights with gun in hand// [...] We have already defeated colonialism/We will beat imperialism/Our motherland will be the graveyard/Of capitalism and exploitation// We’re united across the whole world/Who are fighting the bourgeois/For power that serves the *Povo*/Workers and peasants.’ (Viva a Frelimo, que é a vanguarda//(...)O Povo unido pela Frelimo/Desde o Rovuma ao Maputo/Contra o opressor e a exploração/o Povo luta d’armas na mão//(...) Nós já vencemos o colonialismo/Nós venceremos o imperialismo/A nossa Pátria será o túmulo/ P’ra o capitalismo e a exploração// ‘stamos unidos ao mundo inteiro/Que está lutando contra os burgueses/pelo poder que sirva o Povo/os operários e camponeses’).

47 *Notícias*, 24 Jun. 1975, 1.

anthem: it has historical significance; it is an element in the writing of the history of this people; and, at the same time, it ‘translates’ the struggle that constitutes the biographical trajectory of this subject-people – it writes the biography of the new Mozambican people. Finally, the exclusive character of the social project: what unites is the application of the correct line, and consequently, if there is a ‘line’ it must also be what divides.

The words of the anthem were as follows:

<i>Viva, Viva a Frelimo</i>	Long live, long live Frelimo
<i>Guia do Povo Moçambicano</i>	Guide of the Mozambican people
<i>Povo heróico qu’arma em punho</i>	Heroic people which with arms in hand
<i>o colonialismo derrubou</i>	Overthrew colonialism

<i>Todo o Povo unido</i>	All the people united
<i>desde Rovuma até ao Maputo</i>	From the Rovuma to the Maputo
<i>Luta contra o imperialismo</i>	The struggle against imperialism
<i>Continua e sempre vencerá</i>	Continues and will always win

<i>Coro:</i>	<i>Chorus:</i>
<i>Viva, Viva Moçambique</i>	Long live, long live Frelimo
<i>Viva a Bandeira símbolo nacional</i>	Long live the flag, national symbol
<i>Viva Moçambique</i>	Long live Mozambique
<i>Que por ti o Povo lutará</i>	It is for you that the people will struggle

<i>Unido ao mundo inteiro</i>	United with the entire world
<i>Lutando contra a burguesia</i>	Struggling against the bourgeoisie
<i>Nossa Pátria será túmulo</i>	Our country will be the graveyard
<i>Do capitalismo e exploração</i>	Of capitalism and exploitation

<i>O Povo Moçambicano</i>	The Mozambican people
<i>D’operários e de camponeses</i>	Of workers and peasants
<i>Engajado no Trabalho</i>	Committed to labour
<i>A riqueza sempre brotará</i>	Will always produce wealth

We can see here how an anthem, as Diouf points out, is a device that attempts to organise and control collective processes of identification. The economic difficulties and violence that followed independence created many complex social problems and profound crises of identity: ‘the post-colonial nation-state is increasingly incapable of reducing or containing its identifications, or of imposing its representations as exclusive to the nation.’⁴⁸ Samora perceived this, and five years later, in 1982, this understanding led him to commission a new ‘writing’ of the national anthem: in his words, the anthem had to become a kind of ‘flag that would encompass *all* Mozambicans’. In the Central Committee report to the Fourth Congress, Samora stated that ‘we must struggle against the simplistic tendency to reject diversity as a way of achieving unity. To do this is to make the error of considering diversity as a negative factor in building

48 Diouf, ‘Introduction. Entre l’Afrique et l’Inde’, 32.

national unity [...]’⁴⁹ But this new writing should take place at the same time as another new writing, that of the new party anthem. I think it is important to understand the dynamics of this new partitioning of the people.

A False Start for a New Anthem, or, the Case of the Artists Locked up in a Villa in Matola, 1982-1983

Anthems function as a kind of ideological barometer: you need an anthem when you need to invent a people. And the anthem needs to be changed when it loses its capacity to unite, when it becomes hard to sing it in unison. Thus, the saga of the anthems carried on. The story of how the new anthem was composed in the 1980s was mostly revealed in a ‘note’ or *apontamento* that Albino Magaia published in 1999 in *Notícias*;⁵⁰ the story was reduced to the moment when a group of writers and musicians were summoned to the task by Samora. Nevertheless, more happened in those years. In 1982, the Party’s National Conference, which took place in March, signalled a necessity to ‘match the symbols of the Party and the State’ to the ‘Marxist-Leninist ideology and to the socialist character of our revolution.’⁵¹ As far as the Party anthem was concerned, the conference believed that ‘its content is now seriously outdated, taking into account the advances made in the revolutionary process, and the qualitative leap that the creation and consolidation of the Party represents.’⁵² Consequently, the conference decided that ‘a new Party anthem must be composed, that correctly reflects the Marxist-Leninist nature of the Frelimo Party.’⁵³ Moreover, the conference added that ‘a new national anthem must be composed that in both form and content better represents the socialist character of our State and the great victories won by our people in the years since national independence.’⁵⁴ After this, the Central Committee secretariat of the Frelimo Party, named as the ‘author’ of the newspaper article, puts forward the idea of launching another competition, arguing that

it is our tradition that the anthems that represent us should be both the expression and the result of popular creativity. So it was with Anthem of the Front [i.e. Frelimo], and so it was with the national anthem that we adopted in 1975. So the new Party anthem and the new national anthem must also be the outcome of the participation of the largest possible number of Mozambicans.⁵⁵

It did not seem to be a problem that the composer of the first national anthem did not correspond, historically, to the people described here. Impervious to this fact, the Central Committee secretariat invited and encouraged ‘all Mozambicans from the Rovuma to the Maputo’, especially musicians and poets, to participate in the composition of the Party anthem and the national anthem. As for the entries, they were to be ‘channelled through the local Party structures’ or ‘sent directly to the headquarters

49 Frelimo Party, *Out of Underdevelopment to Socialism: Report of the Central Committee, IV Congress* (Maputo: Frelimo Party, 1983), 74.

50 A. Magaia, *Apontamento* ‘Era uma vez Samora Machel e dois hinos,’ *Notícias*, 20 Mar. 1999, 3.

51 *Notícias*, 25 Aug. 1982, 8.

52 *Notícias*, 25 Aug. 1982, 8.

53 *Notícias*, 25 Aug. 1982, 8.

54 *Notícias*, 25 Aug. 1982, 8.

55 *Notícias*, 25 Aug. 1982, 8.

of the Central Committee of the Frelimo Party, in Maputo' no later than January 31, 1983. We have here a call for proposals that is the same as that followed for the 1975 anthem, but Frelimo also introduced a new element; this time there would be a prize, details of which '[t]he Party will divulge at an appropriate time [...] to the composers of the best proposals'.⁵⁶

But the contest was not even carried through. At the end of 1982, Samora Machel confined in a villa a group of poets and musicians – Raul Calane da Silva, Albino Magaia, Mia Couto, Gulamo Khan and Rui Nogar were the poets and Justino Chemane, Salomão Manhiça e José Vedor the musicians – with everything they needed, including a swimming pool, and charged them with the job of composing the new Frelimo and national anthems. In the note mentioned above, published in the newspaper many years later, Albino Magaia recalled the days spent working hard from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon. The group composed five anthems, which were both 'beautiful and inspired'.⁵⁷ In an interview published in *Notícias* in March 2002,⁵⁸ Magaia returned to this experience and recalled that in order to find inspiration and make 'a comparative study', they had at their disposal 'cassette tapes [...] provided by the Presidency of the Republic' with the anthems of Germany, the United States, South Africa, France, England, the former German Democratic Republic, Brazil, and Angola.⁵⁹ This period of seclusion was a golden time: lots of food and above all lots of alcohol was consumed during a time of rationing and even prohibition.

Samora wanted to change the anthems. The previous national anthem did not seem able to continue to motivate a 'people' that was wounded and lacerated by years of war and by economic hardship. The desired unisonant voice of a people that had been set in motion had fallen out of tune, without finding the encyclopaedic tone of the days of hope. The link between the population and the State had come undone. The organisation of the Fourth Congress of Frelimo had to deal with this situation, by adjusting the political orientation of the State and the Party. To the Nkomati Accord and the opening up of the market to capitalism corresponds the negotiation between Maputo and Lisbon for the return of the bones of Ngungunhane; so began a rehabilitation of this historic personality, making him into a unifying symbol of the people, a memory of common resistance and common suffering. Apart from all the material difficulties that people were living through, there was also an emotional bond that was getting lost in all the words with which politics was made. Here, a new anthem would have the function of creating anew 'collectively' the words that expressed a shared commonality.

But none of the versions composed by the group of musicians and poets ended up being approved. In an interview at the end of the 1990s, Mia Couto told me a story that has now been published in his text *The Seven Dirty Shoes*, according to which it had been problems with diction that had prevented one version of the anthem from being approved. The group was working with a church choir from the Swiss Mission, which maestro Chemane, the composer of the first national anthem, also belonged to. The members of the choir were Shangaan speakers, people who sometimes find it

56 *Notícias*, 25 Aug. 1982, 8.

57 A. Magaia, Apontamento 'Era uma vez Samora Machel e dois hinos', *Notícias*, 20 Mar. 1999, 3.

58 "Foi Samora Machel quem mandou escrever um novo hino", *Notícias*, 26 March 2002, 2.

59 Albino Magaia does not cite the same countries in his two accounts of the month passed in Matola. So here I have put together all countries he mentioned.

hard to pronounce the trilled 'r' sound in Portuguese. The very first words of the new anthem, *Pátria de heróis* (Motherland of heroes) came out sounding like *Pátria de arroz* (Motherland of rice). Albino Magaia tells a different version. For Magaia, the real reason was the 'loneliness' of Samora's decisions, which nobody questioned. Samora did not like any of the five versions, even though Graça Machel did find one of them pleasing. And so the poets and musicians were sent home. Several weeks later, at the beginning of 1983, one afternoon just before the Fourth Congress was due to start, Gulamo Khan, a journalist and Samora's press attaché, telephoned Mia Couto and asked him to come over, because a new Party anthem had to be quickly composed. When Mia Couto arrived, he found an elderly Portuguese musician seated at the piano composing the Frelimo anthem. 'We've got thirty minutes to write the words,' Gulamo told him.⁶⁰ So the new Party anthem was born, changing the old version that dated back to 1962. At that time, Frelimo was still a front, not a Party, and had not even begun the armed struggle. The urgency of the moment was a reflection of the importance of taking into account in the new composition more recent history, including the change from front to Marxist-Leninist party, and introducing stronger terminology such as 'socialism' and 'bourgeoisie', while keeping references to the struggle. So phrases such as *Frelimo vencerá, Frelimo triunfará/ na luta pela liberdade* (Frelimo will win, Frelimo will triumph/in the struggle for liberty) become *Nós somos os soldados do povo, caminhamos diante de nós, na luta contra a burguesia, o socialismo triunfará* (We are the soldiers of the people marching onwards, in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, socialism will triumph). The closure that the change from front to party involved, as well as the affirmation of Frelimo's Marxist character appeared to clash with the openness to the capitalist structures of international finance and the pragmatic decisions taken by the Congress. They appeared to clash, but this was how Samora understood the relationship between party, state and people.

As for the new national anthem, that had to wait another twenty years. It was the new constitution of 1990, the end of the fighting in 1992, and the opening to pluralism and the first elections in 1994, which brought about the change to a new anthem. The resolution 4/92 was voted in 1992, requiring the establishment of a competition for the revision of the anthem, the convocation of a jury that would judge the entries, and determining that entries were allowed to keep the old tune, or to come up with both new words and a new melody.⁶¹

The Road to *Beloved Motherland*

Now we enter into the third stage of the history of the Mozambican national anthem, a third appeal to the people. This third history is a prolonged one, running from 1992 until April 24, 2002, when a CD of the new national anthem was recorded in Nelspruit in South Africa by a 40-member choir accompanied by maestro Faustino Chirute, five deputies from the Assembly of the Republic, and the music teacher Tiago Langa. The new anthem had been unanimously approved by the Fourth Assembly of the Republic on March 22, and became the official anthem on May 3 2002.

In 1994, all available political energy was devoted to the implementation of the Rome Peace Accord and preparations for the elections. Consequently, the debate

60 Basto, Interview with Mia Couto, Maputo, 2000.

61 *Notícias*, 22 Mar. 2002, 4.

around the composition of a new national anthem only moved forward in 1995, when Renamo began to exert pressure on the question. The subject was discussed in Parliament in 1996, and an *ad hoc* commission that included members from both parties was set up. To begin with, its job was to develop the terms of reference for the public competition.

In accordance with the liberal spirit of the times, marked by the idea that civil society should be the driving force behind all reforms, the ad hoc commission organised meetings with writers, poets, representatives from the media and other sectors. The tenor of these consultations was set by Deputy Almeida Tambara, a member of Renamo and the chairperson of the commission, for whom the new anthem needed to be 'a symbol of the nation that reflected the political, cultural and social reality of Mozambicans, without embodying an ideology, regardless of what that might be.'⁶² With regard to the terms of reference, writers and journalists including José Craveirinha, Hilário Matusse and Orlando Mendes, appealed for these to be formulated broadly around such preferred themes as 'the heroism of the people', 'national unity and independence', 'national reconciliation' or 'the secular nature of the state.'⁶³ There was also some discussion as to whether the old melody of the anthem should be kept or not. To begin with, the commission took the position that only the words needed to be changed, which would provide some continuity with the earlier anthem. Frelimo liked this approach, but during the debate in the Assembly of the Republic Renamo adopted the opposite position.

The terms of reference that were eventually adopted defined as criteria 'national unity', 'independence and national sovereignty', 'the heroism of the people', 'labour', 'equality among Mozambicans', 'peace' and 'internationalism'. There was also a compromise between the different positions of Frelimo and Renamo: 'the revision of the anthem may be accomplished in either of two ways, namely by altering the words, without this implying any modifications to the melody, or, purely and simply by modifying both aspects.'⁶⁴

Despite all this work, the actual process of revising the anthem only began on June 10, 1998, with the launching of the public competition which was to last until January 10, 1999. However, despite all the publicity, by the end of July the commission had not received a single entry, and it was decided that additional informative activities should be organised. In August, the members of the commission toured the provinces with the objective of informing the population about the competition and the terms of reference. To make this effort more effective, it was also decided to print information leaflets to be distributed with the help and support of the local offices of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport.

In December 1998, the Assembly decided on the membership of the jury, divided between Frelimo and Renamo. The group was made up of Faustino Chirute, Julieta Langa, Alexandrino José, António Emílio Leite (Mia Couto), a musician, two history teachers and a writer, all nominated by Frelimo; and Amaro Valerio Mwituu, Elias Jacinto Matuele (the chairperson) and Eduardo Carimo, all musicians, nominated by Renamo. Of the 35 entries submitted, the jury chose only three, which were later rejected by the Assembly. In its final report, the jury noted that the best entry only

62 *Notícias*, 20 Aug.1996, 4.

63 *Notícias*, 28 Aug.1996, 4.

64 *Notícias*, 30 Jun. 1998, 4.

received 34.7 points out of a possible 50, and none of the rest received more than 25 points: 'the quantity and quality of the entries received did not appropriately reflect the cultural riches or the historical values of the Mozambican motherland.'⁶⁵ Confronted with this outcome, the jury recommended the greater involvement of creators, poets and musicians – and not just the population – in the process of composing an anthem. For the commission, it was necessary to launch a second phase in order to collect entries.

At this point it was suggested that the terms of reference should be changed, as they were considered too restrictive regarding the relationship between the words and the melody. The idea was to abandon the option that Frelimo favoured, namely keeping the melody of the former anthem. Renamo seized the opportunity offered by prolonging the process to submit a petition to replace the old anthem, which it thought was 'more like a party anthem', with the African anthem, (*Hosi Katequisa Africa* or God Bless Africa), since, according to the opposition, citizens no longer identified with the anthem when they sang about fighting capitalism and the bourgeoisie.⁶⁶ This proposal was rejected *en bloc* by the Frelimo deputies, and, in the debate that followed in the Assembly, old ghosts raised their heads: some spoke of the 'armed bandits of Renamo', others of 'Marxists and Communists'.

However, something happened that was to change the course of events. In March 1999 the journalist and writer Albino Magaia, who had been a member of the group of composers in the villa in Matola in the early 1980s published his *Apontamento*, cited above, in *Notícias*.⁶⁷ In the piece, he described the five compositions that were the outcome of the collective work of the writers and musicians who had been brought together there. He invited the legislators to call the military band to come and play these pieces in the park behind Parliament. Magaia was then contacted by members of the commission who wanted to know where they could find the old proposals. At the time, Magaia replied, the group had handed over all their work to the State. Various attempts were made to find where they had ended up, until finally they were found in a safe located at the Ministry of Culture.

A new competition was announced in May 1999. The jury received 21 entries, and to this tally they added four of the five proposals that had been composed in the 1980s. According to the jury's chairperson, the 21 new entries were worse than the ones received during the first competition. In fact the three best entries were precisely the ones that had been composed in Matola at the end of 1982. Meanwhile, the process was interrupted again, because in order to be presented to Parliament the proposals needed to be recorded, and there were no funds to pay for either the recording studio or for the musicians.

The mandate of the first ad hoc commission chaired by Almeida Tambara expired on June 30th. The presidential and legislative elections of December 1999 delayed the renewal of the process even more. A new commission was set up later, in December 2000, this time chaired by the musician and Frelimo member Roberto Chitsondzo. This commission was charged with finalising the process of choosing the winning entries and supervising the recording of the three that were chosen, as well as being given the job of drafting a law to establish the national anthem as a national symbol,

65 *Notícias*, 16 Jan. 1999, 3.

66 *Notícias*, 23 Mar. 1999, 1.

67 *Notícias*, 20 Mar. 1999, 3.

defining its significance, fixing the ways in which it could be played, thinking about how it was to be taught and popularised, developing rules for its use and the penalties for abusing it. This law had twenty-two articles in total. During the drafting, a new round of consultations took place, which required visits to the provinces throughout 2001 in order to listen to ‘the feelings and opinions of civil society’.⁶⁸ During one of these meetings, at the Middle Institute of Public Administration in Matola, about 50 civil society representatives demanded to participate directly in the choosing of the winning entry: ‘[w]e want to feel that we are present during the choosing of the anthem because it’s only in that way that it will really belong to all of us.’⁶⁹ The request was turned down, but it raised another question about the limits of the demand for participation in decision-making and the elitism of the state in the business of governance. In another meeting with civil society groups, some students asked that the entries come from the people and not from the political parties, so that the anthem be free of ideological influences.⁷⁰

During these two competitions, the concept of collective composition did not define the mechanics of how the anthem would be written. The prize of 250 million *meticais* was intended to reward individual creativity. In the earlier cases, and especially the first one, the concept was that anybody could send in an entry that would represent the voice of everybody: any one entry would be equivalent to all the entries. Underlying this was the principle of an anonymity that would be constitutive of a collective body in motion, expressing itself through a voice made up of all voices, like the concept implicit in the title of the 1975 book *Eu, o Povo (I, the People)* by Mutimati Barnabé João and Grabato Dias. We know, however, that the 1975 call for proposals was internally contradictory, containing at the same time both a desire for and the impossibility of anonymity as well as a possibility that any *one* (I) might be equivalent to *anyone* (the people). We can say that in the first anthem there was a utopia that transformed it into a poem of the nation, collectively and anonymously composed, from which there emerged the figure of a popular people: the anthem joined politics and aesthetics, art and life, as the vanguardists claimed.

Almost seven years went by before the definitive version of the current anthem was approved on March 22, 2002. The new anthem is called *Pátria Amada*⁷¹ (Beloved Motherland) and the final version includes some changes from the original text composed in the 1980s. The anthem corresponds to the second composition that was submitted to Samora Machel, with the reference number BM 3003 F.⁷² The original first line of the second verse *Pátria bela dos que ousaram vencer* (‘Beautiful motherland of those who dare to win’) becomes *Pátria bela dos que ousaram lutar* (‘Beautiful motherland of those who dare to struggle’). In the fourth verse, the line *O sol de Junho brilhará na tua história* (‘The sun of June will shine on your history’) is changed to *O sol de Junho para sempre brilhará* (‘The sun of June will shine forever’). The second line, *Povo unido na defesa da nação* (‘People united in defence of the nation’) becomes *O povo unido do Rovuma ao Maputo* (‘The People united from the Rovuma to the Maputo’). In the third verse, *Cresce o sonho à sombra da bandeira* (‘The dream will

68 *Notícias*, 9 Jul. 2001, 5.

69 *Notícias*, 3 Dec. 2001, 5.

70 *Notícias* 20 Aug. 1996, 4.

71 ‘Patria amada’ is also the first verse of the Brazilian anthem, which is repeated throughout (Ó Pátria amada, idolatrada, Salve! Salve!...)

72 Mia Couto, e-mail interview, Maputo, 2000.

grow in the shadow of the flag') is altered to *Cresce o sonho ondulando na bandeira* ('The dream will grow waving in the flag'); and in the third and last line (there are no changes in the chorus) of the second verse, the phrase *Pelos rios, pelos montes, pelo mar* ('By the rivers, mountains and sea') becomes *Pelos montes, pelos rios, pelo mar* ('By the mountains, river and sea').

Compared to the first anthem, this version takes on a closed territorial aspect in which are listed – almost like a catalogue – the emotive symbols that will make nationalist ideology function: the national territory, the people, the flag. We see here that the subject-people continues to be constituted by the collective memory of the struggle for national liberation. The reference to the 'sun of June', to independence day in 1975, clearly expresses the idea that the struggle for national independence can be reduced to the history of Frelimo. The replacement of the phrase 'will shine on your history' by 'will shine forever' also seems to reinforce the idea that this history not only refers to the past, but also constitutes the horizon of the future. The anthem thus confirms the 'teleological problematic' that Aquino de Bragança and Jacques Depelchin describe in their analysis of the historical ideology of Frelimo.⁷³ The change of the phrase 'People united in defence of the nation' to 'The people united from the Rovuma to the Maputo' can also be interpreted as a reduction of the range of experiences associated with the new anthem. While the referent 'nation' potentially offers a certain latitude regarding its possible semantic content, the phrase *do Rovuma ao Maputo* repeats the slogan that the Triumphal Journey of Samora Machel caused to echo throughout the country during the run-up to independence. What is in play here is the affirmation of the unity of peoples who find themselves inside a territory, the frontiers of which were artificially demarcated by colonialism. In the early 1980s, the people might be found 'from the Rovuma to the Maputo', but the struggle was internationalist, and so the closure within a territorial identity could be counterbalanced by a reference to the universal. But it is precisely the reference to anti-imperialism and to the fight against the bourgeoisie as defining characteristics of the subject-people that creates a problem now, and which explains why it is that the old anthem cannot be retained.

We might say that in May 2002, when the law regulating the meaning and laying down standards for performance of the anthem was passed, a page was turned over in the symbolic representation of the people. A 'people' had been found that fitted into history. But this is not exactly what we find when we take into account the interpretation that the party in power attributed to this event. On the day that the law was passed, Frelimo published in *Notícias* the complete speech that was made to mark the occasion, a speech in which the emphasis was on continuity rather than on a break with the past:

[...] before this new anthem that we are adopting today, there was another anthem that was not less beautiful nor less truthful. Beautiful and truthful in how it interpreted the foundation of the new State as the culmination of the heroic achievement of national liberation, brought to fruition by Frelimo, from the Rovuma to the Maputo.⁷⁴

73 A. Bragança and J. Depelchin, 'From the Idealization of Frelimo to the Understanding of the Recent History of Mozambique,' *African Journal of Political Economy*, 1, 1986, 162-180.

74 *Notícias*, 22 Mar. 2002, 4.

This affirmation was followed by an argument aimed directly at the opposition, which was trying to take credit for the creation of the new anthem.

Contrary to the claims of those who, while having destroyed everything, want to give the impression that they were the ones who brought change, it was the Frelimo Party led by President Samora Machel that discussed changing the flag in 1984 [...] So it is clear that the changes did not begin today and are not the fruits of destruction, but rather of the creativity of those Mozambicans who identify with the national interest. To change the anthem cannot mean to deny the past nor to reject history and the beautiful ideas and the progress that are inscribed in this symbol.⁷⁵

The viewpoint of continuity was also defended by Albino Magaia. While lamenting the fact that the names of the authors were not mentioned at the time of the vote in the Assembly of the Republic, Magaia emphasised, in a long article on the origins of the anthem that was now being adopted, that it was Samora who had the original idea to change it. He describes this in a curious way: 'Concerns that sometimes seemed to be new, absolutely brand new, were already in Samora's mind [*já vinham na cabeça do Samora*], and because they were in Samora's mind, they weren't only things from his own mind' (*não eram só coisas da cabeça dele*).⁷⁶ Albino Magaia leaves us then with yet another question, that of the possibility of a perfect identification between people and state in the figure of the leader, a perfect accord between the body of the king and body of the people, the body of the state. But what this demonstrates above all is that imagining the people, as a homogeneous mass within a supra-ethnic carved-out territory happened twice, once with colonialism and once with the struggle for liberation. So we are back to the people and its fictions.

The past erupts in the present and shows us how a radical break can only be imposed from above. One of the problems that Samora had to face, and that made him decide to suggest changing the anthem, was exactly the kind of rupture with the past that Frelimo employed as the defining line of the new man and the new society. But the change also suggested another idea of the future: on the one hand to proclaim, in the Party anthem, the socialism that had been adopted at the Third Congress; on the other hand, to invent in the national anthem a timeless and glorious people, as a pledge in a long-term narrative. The rehabilitation of Ngungunhane as a founding hero from 1983 onwards has to be understood in this way. Nevertheless, the idea of continuity between the first anthem and the current one arises from a sense of a medium-term historical perspective that begins with the armed struggle. The rediscovery of Samora Machel, who comes onto the stage not as an outdated historical figure but rather as a visionary, prophetic and creative leader, serves to confirm this. But what remains unaccounted for, in such a reading, is the fact that Samora did not choose any of the versions of the anthem that were composed in the 1980s at his request.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *Notícias* 26 Mar. 2002, p. 2.

Conclusion

In each of the three calls for proposals for the composition of the national anthem we find not only the convocation of the people from which the anthem had to emanate, but different fictions of a subject-people: in the first case a people from below, 'revolutionary', popular, 'frelimist' (*frelimista*); in the second, a 'national people' (that did not manage to concretise); in the third, a 'parliamentary' people of national individuals. There is a call for the participation of everybody in the elaboration of these anthems: this act of participation would be the expression of the necessary identity between the anthem and the people and in turn the people and the nation. Whether it is the socialist people where the individual is merged in the collective or the people of civil society associated with liberal ideology, the force behind the creation of this imagined nation is always the figure of an active people. Nevertheless, in each one of the cases, its convocation did not engender the anthem that power dreamed, because the people did not correspond to the fiction that was needed at that moment. It is not only that the quality and the quantity of entries fell below the level of expectation; at least in the second case, Samora waited only a short while after the call for proposals was made to the collective before asking 'professionals' to replace it. A gap, therefore, exists between the postulated active subject-people and the presumption or confirmation of its passivity, its inability to produce an anthem that needed to be assimilated to its very self. This disqualification of the people is noted by Idahosa, according to whom nationalism 'see[s] people as rational only insofar as their interests like their culture are identifiable with and useful to the nation state.'⁷⁷ We find here a tension that is typical of the practice of sovereignty mentioned by Balibar, in which the people – while it is the only force capable of installing power – finds itself supplanted by the power of the state and its elites.⁷⁸ Thus, the anthem as the object of a historiography of the nation, does not lead us to a confirmation of the principle of popular sovereignty, as the authors of histories during the time of the anti-colonial struggles tried to show, but rather to its problematisation.

The question that remains to be addressed concerns the relationship between power and the intellectual elites who were, in the end, given the job of producing the words and music of an adequate anthem. In a rich and welcome comparative study on the anthems of various Portuguese-speaking African countries, Cusack asks this question.⁷⁹ He emphasises the important role that the political and cultural elites play in the creation of anthems, noting the 'very closeness of the writers and composers to the new leaders'.⁸⁰ The Mozambican case does not seem to confirm, or at least only partially, this hypothesis. In the search for a proposal for the anthem before the date of independence there was no recourse to established poets. In 1982, during the writers' and musicians' stay in the villa in Matola, things changed, but in the opposite way to what happened in Angola. There, writers such as Manuel Rui (author of the anthem), Luandino Vieira and Pepetela were ministers or had other jobs in the government or the party; in Mozambique none of the personalities had high-level political roles. Of the people who were in Matola, Mia Couto was a newspaper and news agency editor-

77 P. L. E. Idahosa, *The Populist Dimension to African Political Thought* (Trenton, Asmara: Africa World Press, 2004), 30-31.

78 E. Balibar, 'Prolégomènes à la souveraineté : la Frontière, l'État, le Peuple,' *Les Temps Modernes*, 610, Sept.-Oct. 2000, 47-75.

79 I. Cusack, 'From Revolution to Reflection: the National Anthems of the New Lusophone Worlds,' *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 45(2), 2008, 45-67.

80 Cusack, 'From Revolution to Reflection,' 62.

in-chief, but at a time when he was not yet acknowledged as a great writer; Albino Magaia was editor-in-chief of *Tempo* and Gulamo Khan later became Samora's press attaché. The recognised poets who were part of the state structures (Marcelino dos Santos, Jorge Rebelo, Sérgio Vieira) were not among those invited to help compose the anthem in the villa in Matola. It is worth noting that Mozambique's greatest poet, José Craveirinha, never held any political or state position and was also not invited to Matola. We can suggest that the relationship between power and creators did not follow the same path in Angola and Mozambique. In Angola, a writers' association was established immediately after independence, in 1976, but in Mozambique an association was only constituted precisely in 1982. In the third attempt to compose an anthem, we find a commission made up of parliamentary deputies, and a jury composed of historians, musicians and a writer, all nominated by the two main political parties. The contribution of the composers of the current anthem, which was devised in the villa in Matola, was not recognised, and their names are not mentioned in the official documents gazetted in the *Boletim da República*. It was only in May 2013 that one of them, the composer Salomão Manhiça, was recognised as the author of the Mozambican national anthem.

Let us turn again to Anderson's idea that there are no more or less truthful ways of imagining communities, but that rather they raise issues of style. In this respect, in spite of the public voicing of a need to adjust to fundamental changes, the references used in the different versions of the anthem have remained remarkably constant. It is possible to read here, but in the opposite sense, the criticism published in a chronicle in *Notícias*, according to which the new anthem would not be a 'national' anthem, but rather a 'parliamentary' anthem,⁸¹ thinking, unlike the author, that this 'parliamentarity' of the anthem might have eroded such continuity. The opposite being the case, one could conclude that the new anthem is above all a reflection of the dominance of Frelimo leading a kind of party-state and the underlying idea of the liberation movement as its foundation and legitimation. The desire for continuity is also palpable in the readers' letters to the editor published in *Notícias*,⁸² a newspaper that is close to power. Several of them affirm the necessity of keeping the old anthem because, in order to function as a symbol that generates emotional linkages of nationhood, the anthem needs an ancestry, and therefore must not change according to the flavour of historical factuality. However, with respect to the current dominance of Frelimo their assessment also introduces a surprising twist in the rhetoric of continuity: they argue that the Frelimo represented in the text does not correspond to the Frelimo Party that is currently in power, but rather to the 'Front', the Frelimo that fought colonialism in the name of all Mozambicans – an ahistorical, mythical Frelimo, a kind of ethnic origin for a homogenous people. The readers who wrote these letters show, in the end, a dynamism of the civil society and put forward a conflictual and unresolvable proposal, namely that if Frelimo is to function as a mythical point of reference, it must renounce its role as a partisan force in the political arena of contemporary Mozambique. Thus, opening a window to the workings of the Nation and its underlying contradictions – as seen through the fictions of the subject-people – the Mozambican national anthem provides an intriguing historiographical object.

81 A. Dondo, chronicle 'Falar por Falar' / 'Sobre o hino nacional', *Notícias*, 28 Nov 2001, 4.

82 Naimito Marina (*Notícias*, 8 March 2002, 5), Fahed Sacoor, Altino Mario Estefane (*Notícias* 6 August 2002, 2) (*Notícias*, 7 August 2002, 3), Moisés Mutimba (*Notícias*, 14 July 1997, 5).