

# The First Foreign Edition of the Poems of Agostinho Neto

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## **Abstract:**

This article deals with the first edition of Agostinho Neto's poems, published in Milan in 1963 and edited by Joyce Lussu, a translator and, above all, an activist, with extensive political work in the context of anti-fascist and anti-colonialist movements. Among the issues to be analysed here is the title of the volume, the corpus (the edition includes about half of the poems which would be included in the definitive version of *Sagrada Esperança*, 1974) and – based on a comparison with previous and later editions of some of the compositions – problems of textual and genetic criticism. From the analysis that was carried out, it is possible to conclude that the 1963 edition corresponds to a mature project, since a series of poems are presented already in their definitive version. Marginally, given that this is a subject already developed by Italian scholars, some aspects of the translation are also discussed here, namely the layout of the long verses, some mistakes (due to a wrong grammatical interpretation or a misprint in the Portuguese version) and a few cases of what we might call an interpretive translation.

## **Keywords:**

Agostinho Neto. Genetic criticism. Textual criticism.

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## FOREWORD

It is well known that the first edition in book form of Agostinho Neto's poems did not see the light either in Angola or in Portugal, but in a country that, at first sight, may seem unlikely: Italy. Bearing the title *Con occhi asciutti* [With dry eyes], the book was published in Milan by Il Saggiatore (of Alberto Mondadori), in February 1963, edited and translated by Joyce Lussu, and with a preliminary, unsigned, note by the writer and critic Giacomo Debenedetti.

This volume has, understandably, been the object of some attention, especially in recent years, by Italian researchers, such as Simone Celani (2003), Mariagrazia Russo (2003) and Claudia Capancioni (2012). But recognition on the part of Angolan and, above all, Portuguese authors and critics of a work which went far beyond translation, and which clearly deserves to be considered an object of study, is still lacking. In fact, Joyce Lussu (1912-1998) – whose real name was Gioconda Beatrice Salvadori Paleotti – did much more than simply translate (and edit) Agostinho Neto: having mastered the Portuguese language (among several others). Since her stay in Lisbon, between 1941 and 1942<sup>1</sup>, as part of her activities at the service of the Italian resistance, she would also come to translate and edit, after Neto's volume, *Cantico a un dio di catrame* [Canticle to a god made of tar], by José Craveirinha (1966), and, in the same year, *Portogallo, mio rimorso* [Portugal, my regret], by Alexandre O'Neill (1966). A year later, in the second part of *Tradurre Poesia* [Translating Poetry], she was to include some poems by these three authors, together with pieces by the Mozambican poets Marcelino dos Santos, Virgílio de Lemos and Rui Nogar (two from each of them) and four works by Kaoberdiano Dambará (pseudonym of the Cape Verdean author Felisberto Vieira Lopes).

In addition to this, which in itself was immense – especially if we put things in perspective and attend to the historical context –, Joyce Lussu was actively involved, in Italy and in various other places, in anti-fascist and anti-colonialist struggles, something which she had already done while a member, within the Italian Resistance, of the “Giustizia e Libertà” [Justice and Freedom] movement. Lussu, who had lived in Africa for a few years in the early 1930s and who was to return to that continent several times since the 1960s, was also one of the founders, with the photographer and journalist Augusta Conchiglia, of ARMAL (Associazione per i Rapporti con i Movimenti Africani di Liberazione)<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, she became involved in a series of political and cultural activities in defense of freedom.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Russo (2020, p. 62): “E nell'intermezzo tra il 1941 e il 1942, la residenza a Lisbona dei coniugi Lussu sotto il falso nome di Laskowski, polacchi di razza ariana, l'iscrizione ai corsi di filologia della Faculdade de Letras di Lisbona [...] dove impara il portoghese, una delle lingue delle lotte anticolonialiste degli anni a venire e strumento decisivo per il lavoro di traduzione e divulgazione delle culture africane in lotta e della letteratura portoghese anti-salazarista.” [And in the interlude between 1941 and 1942, the residence of the Lussu couple in Lisbon, under the false name of Laskowski, Poles of Aryan race, the enrolment in philology courses at the Faculty of Arts of Lisbon [...] where she learned Portuguese, one of the languages of the anti-colonial struggles of the coming years and a decisive instrument for the work of translation and diffusion of African resistance cultures and of Portuguese anti-Salazarist literature.]

<sup>2</sup> Association for Relations with African Liberation Movements.



Source: Research files.

**Figure 1** – Cover of the 1963 edition

I will not insist on this point insofar as it is well-known, though devalued and forgotten, at least in Portugal<sup>3</sup>. I will also not delve into other aspects which have already been reasonably well explored, such as Lussu's relations with Neto or her specific idea of translation, which Simone Celani called “instinctive”, with errors (2003, p. 55), but which earned the approval of Claudia Capancioni (2012, p. 257):

[The article] celebrates her original translating methodology as unorthodox but significant. More importantly, it establishes Lussu as a translator of success, who claims the beauty of future possibilities built on linguistic bridges reaching unknown horizons; who succeeds in passing on difference in its multiplicity and polyphony through poetry by focusing on the collaborative dialogism between poet and translator. She introduced political and historical discourses addressing multilingual and multicultural concepts of identity which cannot be limited by politics, as well as the urgent need for people to be actively citizens of a postcolonial, global world. This is Lussu's enduring contribution into the twenty-first century and most significantly to Translation Studies.

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<sup>3</sup> Note, for example, that the only book by Joyce Lussu to be found in the National Library of Portugal is the edition and translation of José Craveirinha's volume of poems, *Cantico a un dio di catrame*.

More recently, Vincenzo Russo (2020) expressed a similar judgement:

L'eredità che il lavoro di traduttrice-mediatrice di poeti africani di lingua portoghese, condotto negli anni '60 da Joyce Lussu, ancora oggi ci interroga criticamente non solo in termini di restituzione traduttiva (linguistica, estetica, filologica) ma soprattutto da una prospettiva politica o usando l'espressione della stessa Lussu, eticopolitico-poetica. In altre parole, se come è stato notato, le sue traduzioni italiane della poesia africana presentano una stratificata complessità, esse vanno tuttavia inserite in un contesto in cui tradurre poesia eccede l'esercizio teorico testuale (sulle complicazioni grammaticali e sintattiche di una lingua) per trasformarsi in 'sforzo per comprenderla, quasi riviverla'<sup>4</sup> (p. 73).

## THE EDITION

I will instead focus my analysis on the fact that the 1963 edition was a bilingual one or, as the Italians say, with "*testo a fronte*" (parallel text), an aspect which may seem irrelevant at first sight but which, in my opinion, deserves reflection and opens the way for other issues to be addressed.

In the absence of an explanation from the editor and translator, we can only speculate as to the reason for this option. It is possible that this was primarily a question of rigor: with the two versions side by side, an Italian reader fairly trained in reading Portuguese would be able to check the work of the translator and, perhaps, make different choices. Not only did Joyce Lussu do the same in other volumes, but, even today, this is a common practice.

Another possible explanation is of a more commercial and symbolic nature: as the volume contains only 28 poems, it would be quite short if it only offered the Italian version, appearing to be more of a leaflet than a real book.

A third hypothesis, which seems to me to be more substantive, has to do with the fact that a bilingual edition can serve two audiences simultaneously: an Italian and a Portuguese-speaking one. Let us not forget the opening sentence of the note dictated by Neto to serve as preamble to the volume: "Crediamo che il singole lettore di questi versi, ora editi in italiano per merito di Joyce Lussu, comprenderà l'angoscia di chi non ha avuto ancora la fortuna di vedere la propria opera – non importa quanto valida – scritta nella propria lingua e letta dal proprio popolo"<sup>5</sup> (NETO, 1963, p. 21). Banned from publication in both Angola and Portugal, the poetry of Agostinho Neto thus got the chance of in fact becoming known. However, there is no data attesting to the circulation, whether legal or clandestine, of *Con occhi asciutti* among Portuguese-speaking readers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The legacy of the work of translation-mediation of Portuguese-speaking African poets, carried out in the 1960s by Joyce Lussu, still poses critical questions today, not only in terms of translational restitution (linguistic, aesthetic, philological), but above all from a political – or, in Lussu's own words, *ethical-political-poetic* – point of view. In other words, if, as noted, her Italian translations of African poetry present a stratified complexity, they must nevertheless be placed in a context in which translating poetry goes beyond the textual theoretical exercise (on the grammatical and syntactic complexities of a language) to become an "effort to understand it, almost to relive it".

<sup>5</sup> We believe that any reader of these verses, now published in Italian thanks to Joyce Lussu, will understand the anguish of someone who has not yet had the good fortune of seeing his work – regardless of its value – written in his own language and read by his own people.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted, however, that, in a congress held in 2019 at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Porto, Professor Arnaldo Saraiva revealed that his first contact with Neto's poetry had been taken place through the Italian edition.



Source: Carte Sensibili (2012).

Figure 2 – Joyce Lussu and Agostinho Neto in Luanda, 1976

## The Title

The second aspect of Lussu's edition that seems to me to be relevant is the title. Several commentators have already noted that this is a verse<sup>7</sup> which, with slight variations, appears in three of the poems of the anthology. However, there is a small peculiarity which has not yet been observed. Let us look at the various occurrences of the verse in the Italian edition:

1. Poem "Il pianto dell'Africa" < "O choro de África" [The tears of Africa]<sup>8</sup> (p. 26-29)  
v. 40. *e occhi asciutti.* < *e os olhos secos*
2. Poem "Creare" < "Criar" [Create] (p. 34-37)  
vv. 5, 11, 18. *creare con occhi asciutti* < *criar com os olhos secos*<sup>9</sup>  
v. 25. *creare pace con occhi asciutti* < *criar paz com os olhos secos*<sup>10</sup>  
v. 31. *creare amore con occhi asciutti.* < *criar amor com os olhos secos.*<sup>11</sup>
3. Poem "Presa di coscienza" < "Conscientização" [Awakening consciousness] (p. 78-79)  
v. 17. *con gli occhi asciutti.* < *com os olhos secos.*

<sup>7</sup> This is not the only instance of this kind. The Serbo-Croat edition of 1978 also uses a verse as title, in this case taken from the poem "Adeus à hora da largada" [Farewell at the hour of parting]: *Tragajući za životom / Em busca da vida: Pesme / Poems* (Belgrade: Nova knjiga).

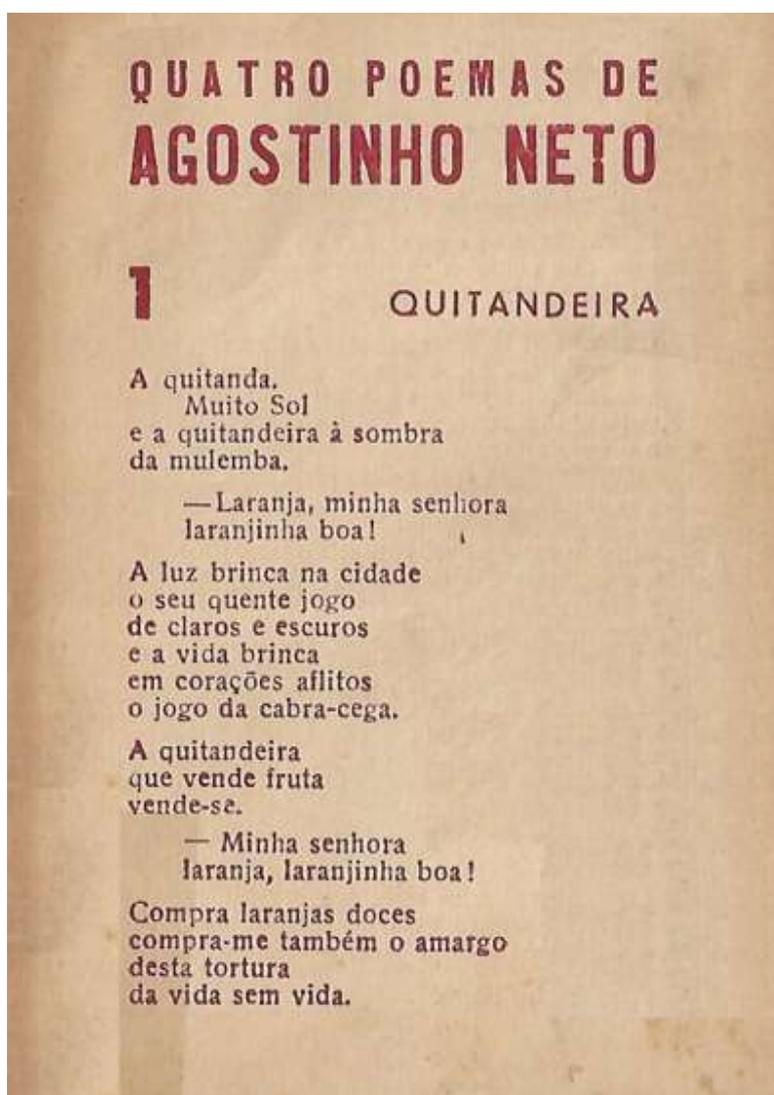
<sup>8</sup> Translations into English of Agostinho Neto's poems were taken from the English edition of *Sagrada Esperança* (AGOSTINHO NETO, 1986), except when they differ from Joyce Lussu's translations or previous editions in Portuguese.

<sup>9</sup> create with dry eyes

<sup>10</sup> create peace with dry eyes

<sup>11</sup> to create love with dry eyes.

In the latter case, we may be faced with a misprint, since when Joyce Lussu republished the poem, four years later, in *Tradurre poesia*, she corrected the verse to “*con occhi asciutti?*” (LUSSU, 1967, p. 117). This means that the translator preferred to remove the determiner which Neto included in all variants of the verse. Why? Although a proper answer could only be given by the translator, it may be possible to advance some hypotheses. First of all, and in particular as regards the last example (the verse which will be used unchanged in the title), the reason may have had to do with metrics: the Portuguese verse is a pentasyllable and, without the determiner, the number of syllables in Italian is maintained. This is so because Lussu used the term *asciutti*, and that implied adding a syllable to the verse. With this choice, the translator reinterpreted – or at least fixed an interpretation – the original verse: *asciutti* (past participle of *asciugare*, which comes from the Latin *exsugere*, “to suck out completely, to draw out moisture”) refers to eyes that were wiped, and therefore ceased to be wet or moist, thus serving as an identifying trait of a new phase of the resistance and struggle, which will no longer be carried out with tears, either because there is no longer anything to justify them, or because the reaction must now be different. On the other hand, the suppression of the determiner seems to somehow universalize *olhos*, expanding its metonymic value. In any case, these are only hypotheses; there may be other reasons that only an Italian, or a person who has an excellent command of the language (which is not my case), is able to perceive.



Source: Research files.

Figure 3 – First page of the 1957 booklet

## The Corpus

A third aspect of the Italian edition which I think should be considered has to do with the *corpus*. Lussu published 28 poems, which constitutes about half of the total number of pieces (51) of the definitive edition of *Sagrada Esperança* [Sacred Hope], published in 1974, but is much more than what, until then, had been brought out in autonomous editions: in 1957, the booklet *Quatro poemas de Agostinho Neto* [Four Poems by Agostinho Neto] and, four years later, the brochure *Poemas* (1961), which included 16 compositions, printed by Casa dos Estudantes do Império (CEI – House of Students of the Empire). It happens, however, that not all 20 poems already published in autonomous editions were to be included in the Italian anthology, and there is also a significant change in their ordering, as can easily be seen by this table of correspondences:

**Table 1 – Ordering changes**

<i>Con occhi asciutti</i>		<i>Poemas</i> (CEI)		Order in <i>Sagrada Esperança</i>
N.º	Title	N.º	Title	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Il camino delle stelle	16 <sup>th</sup>	O caminho das estrelas	26 <sup>th</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Il pianto dell’Africa	11 <sup>th</sup>	O choro de África	44 <sup>th</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Fuoco e ritmo	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Fogo e ritmo	34 <sup>th</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup>	Creare	12 <sup>th</sup>	Criar	33 <sup>th</sup>
5 <sup>th</sup>	Sentiero della landa	6 <sup>th</sup>	Caminho do mato	4 <sup>th</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup>	Aspirazione	13 <sup>th</sup>	Aspiração	18 <sup>th</sup>
7 <sup>th</sup>	Fiducia	9 <sup>th</sup>	Confiança	17 <sup>th</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	Civiltà occidentale			12 <sup>th</sup>
9 <sup>th</sup>	«Contratados»			16 <sup>th</sup>
10 <sup>th</sup>	Partenza per «contrato»			2 <sup>nd</sup>
11 <sup>th</sup>	Treno africano	7 <sup>th</sup>	Comboio africano	6 <sup>th</sup>
12 <sup>th</sup>	Sabato nel musseche			3 <sup>rd</sup> (Sábado <b>nos musseques</b> <sup>12</sup> )
13 <sup>th</sup>	Noite	8 <sup>th</sup>	Noite	11 <sup>th</sup>
14 <sup>th</sup>	Presa di coscienza			22 <sup>nd</sup>
15 <sup>th</sup>	Terre offese	10 <sup>th</sup>	As terras sentidas	31 <sup>st</sup>
16 <sup>th</sup>	Non chiedermi sorrisi			19 <sup>th</sup>
17 <sup>th</sup>	Oltre la poesia	1 <sup>st</sup>	Poesia africana	10 <sup>th</sup> (Para além da Poesia)
18 <sup>th</sup>	Mezzanotte nella bottega	5 <sup>th</sup>	Meia-noite na quitanda	9 <sup>th</sup>
19 <sup>th</sup>	Kinascigi	4 <sup>th</sup>	Kinaxixi	21 <sup>st</sup>
20 <sup>th</sup>	Un anniversario			23 <sup>rd</sup>
21 <sup>st</sup>	L’alzabandiera			45 <sup>th</sup>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Amico Mussunda	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mussunda amigo	25 <sup>th</sup>
23 <sup>rd</sup>	In carcere			43 <sup>rd</sup> ( <b>Aqui</b> no cárcere)
24 <sup>th</sup>	Notti in carcere			42 <sup>nd</sup> (Noites <b>de</b> cárcere)
25 <sup>th</sup>	Così gridavo, spossato			41 <sup>st</sup>
26 <sup>th</sup>	Pausa			24.º
27 <sup>th</sup>	Addio nell’ora della partenza			1 <sup>st</sup>
28 <sup>th</sup>	Abbiamo da tornare			49 <sup>th</sup>

**Source:** Produced by the author

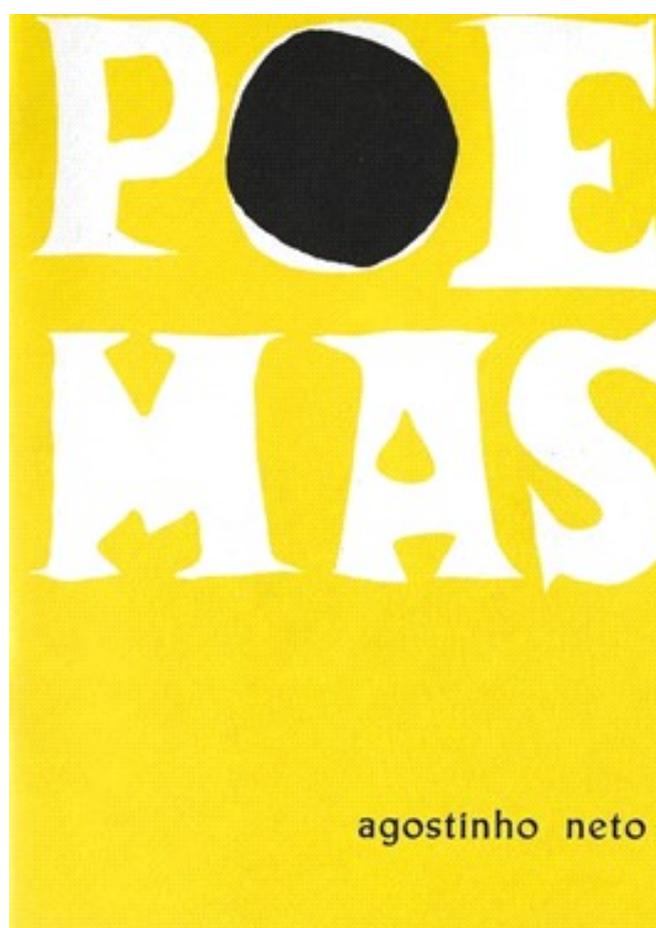
As for the *corpus*, 14 of the 16 poems from the CEI edition were used by Lussu, and only two were left out: “Certeza” [Certainty] and “Sim em qualquer poema” [Yes in every poem]. In relation to the 1957

<sup>12</sup> Differences between the original text and Lussu’s translation marked in bold.

booklet, two of the four texts were included: the third one, [“Adeus à hora da largada” – Farewell at the hour of parting] (which appears without title), and the fourth, “Um aniversário” [A birthday]. Those which were excluded were “Quitandeira” [Marketwoman] and “Um bouquet de rosas para ti” [A bouquet of roses for you]. This means that the 1963 edition contains ten poems which had never been published in a book.

As regards the order, it is more difficult to draw any conclusion, as there are very significant differences in relation to both the anthology of the CEI and the complete and definitive edition of *Sagrada Esperança*. The author of the introductory note to the Italian anthology explains that the poems fell almost naturally into order:

È bastato metterle insieme, e le poesia sparse di Agostinho Neto si sono spontaneamente ordinate in un piccolo canzoniere, di cui è facile rintracciare il filo, dal preludio lirico e più pregante che si alza sulle ‘aritmie dell’irreale’ per convertirle nel senso che avrà la vita angolana quando sarà davvero vita, al susseguirsi delle pagine staccate di un ideale e crudo diario che registra le alternative di quell’attesa, sottoposta al dilemma del ‘vivere sottomessi o perseguitati’, fino alla chiusura di nuovo tutta lirica, dove è presagito e danzato, ‘marimbe e braccia tamburi e braccia canzoni e braccia’, il canto inaugurale dell’Africa.<sup>13</sup> (NETO, 1963, p. 13).



Source: Research files.

**Image 4** – Cover of the 1961 edition of Casa dos Estudantes do Império

<sup>13</sup> “It was enough to put them together, and Agostinho Neto’s scattered poems arranged themselves spontaneously into a small songbook, whose guiding thread is easy to trace, from the lyrical and more expressive prelude which rises above the “*aritmias do irreal*” [arrhythmias of the unreal] so as to convert them into the meaning which Angolan life will have when it really is life, to the succession of pages taken from an ideal and raw diary that records the alternatives to this waiting, subject as they are to the dilemma of “*viver submisso ou perseguido*” [living submissive or persecuted], until the closing, which is once again purely lyrical, in which is foreseen and danced, with “*marimbas e braços tambores e braços vozes e braços*” [marimbas and arms drums and arms voices and arms], the inaugural chant of Africa.”

It is not easy to agree with this explanation entirely, although the ordering of the poems in the Italian anthology seems to make sense, with the passage from the abstract to the concrete, from the lament to a certainty that closes with “*Abbiamo da tornare*” [We shall return]. The problem is that we are strongly influenced by the reading of *Sagrada Esperança*, which presents a somewhat different logic.

## The Text

A fourth point of Joyce Lussu’s work which should be noted here concerns the text itself, both Portuguese and Italian. It is not the translation that is at stake here, since I will not deal with it as it is outside my range of competence, but rather questions of textual criticism and, in a way, of genetic criticism.

In this context, I should start by referring to the misprints, although they are not many or very significant, as in general they do not pose real difficulties to a Portuguese-speaking reader: it is the case of “*estelas*” instead of “*estrelas*”, in l. 2 of “*O caminho das estrelas*”, translated into Italian under the title “*Il camino delle stelle*” [The pathway to the stars].

There are also cases in which the Portuguese version corrects the previous edition of the CEI. See l. 24 of “*Il pianto dell’Africa*” [The tears of Africa]:

*em histórias de dramas negros almas brancas preguiças*<sup>14</sup>,

in which “*histórias*” [stories] corrects the mistaken “*histerias*” [hysterias] of the 1961 edition.

Elsewhere, the misprints in the Italian edition are in the form of a missing word: this is the case of l. 7 of “*Il pianto dell’Africa*”:

*nos sarcasmos no trabalho de África*<sup>15</sup>,

instead of

*nos sarcasmos no trabalho **choro** de África*<sup>16</sup> (CEI booklet version),

the latter being also the lesson of the Italian text. Curiously, the definitive edition of *Sagrada Esperança* (NETO, 2018) presents yet another variant:

*nos sarcasmos no trabalho **na vida** choro de África*<sup>17</sup>.

Several other examples seem to point to the 1963 edition as a mature project, a series of poems appearing there already in their final version. See the case of “*Noite*” [Night], in its 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza, l. 9-11, which reads as follows in the CEI edition:

— *Bairros escuros*  
*mundos de miséria*<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> in stories of black dramas white souls sloth

<sup>15</sup> in sarcasm in labour of Africa

<sup>16</sup> in sarcasm in labour tears of Africa

<sup>17</sup> in sarcasm in labour in life tears of Africa

<sup>18</sup> — Dark neighbourhoods/ worlds of misery

In the Italian edition, the passage already presents the final form that will be adopted in *Sagrada Esperança*:

*São bairros de escravos  
mundos de miséria  
bairros escuros*<sup>19</sup>.

Likewise, but through the suppression of a verse, we have the case of the conclusion of the poem “Terre offese” [Lands felt]. In the CEI edition we read:

*e somos as partículas imperecíveis  
e inatacáveis  
das terras sentidas de África*.<sup>20</sup>

In the Italian edition and in *Sagrada Esperança* we have:

*e somos as partículas imperecíveis  
das terras sentidas de África*.<sup>21</sup>

Something similar, as regards the maturity of the poems published by Lussu, can be surmised from cross-checking the Italian edition with the 1957 booklet. Take the poem “Un anniversario”, which in the older version ends with the line “*como tributo à nossa escravidão*.”<sup>22</sup>, followed by the date of its writing, “Setembro de 1951”<sup>23</sup>. In the 1963 volume, a couplet is added, which will remain in *Sagrada Esperança*:

*Um dia inútil como tantos outros até um dia  
Mas duma inutilidade necessária*.<sup>24</sup>

In the definitive edition, though not in that of Joyce Lussu, the date is included.

In the other poem taken from the booklet, “Addio nell’ora della partenza”, the changes are more numerous. I will give only two examples: one of expansion, another of reordering. In the 1957 version, the poem ends with the following couplet:

*Somos nós  
a esperança em busca de vida*.<sup>25</sup>

In the version of the Italian anthology and, afterwards, of *Sagrada Esperança*, an addition takes place:

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<sup>19</sup> They are neighbourhoods of slaves/ worlds of misery/ dark neighbourhoods

<sup>20</sup> and are imperishable/ and unassailable particles/ of lands of Africa felt.

<sup>21</sup> and are imperishable particles/ of lands of Africa felt.

<sup>22</sup> as a tribute to our slavery

<sup>23</sup> September 1951

<sup>24</sup> A useless day like so many others until one day/ But of a necessary uselessness.

<sup>25</sup> It is we who are/ hope in search of life.

*nós mesmos*

*Amanhã*

*entoaremos binos à liberdade*

*quando comemorarmos*

*a data da abolição desta escravatura*

*Nós vamos em busca de luz*

*os teus filhos Mãe*

*(todas as mães negras*

*cujos filhos partiram)*

*Vão em busca de vida.<sup>26</sup>*

The other case concerns l. 6-7, which in the 1957 version looked like this:

*Mas em mim*

*a vida matou essa mística esperança.<sup>27</sup>*

In Lussu's edition, a change takes place through reordering:

*Mas a vida*

*matou em mim essa mística esperança<sup>28</sup>,*

thus highlighting the subject, “*a vida*” [life], while taking advantage of the phonetic effect of “*matou em mim*” [killed in me].

## The Italian Version

The fifth point of this brief analysis concerns the Italian text, but I will not – for the reasons mentioned above – criticize the translation. A first observation, which has already been made by other researchers, has to do with the fact that Joyce Lussu very often “arranges” the verses in a different way, usually by dividing long verses. A good example is the poem “Il pianto dell’Africa”, in which there are seven occurrences of this type:

v. 2. *nos seus olhos traidores pela servidão dos homens<sup>29</sup>*

transl. *nei suoi occhi traditori*

*per la servitù degli uomini*

v. 3. *no desejo alimentado entre ambições de lufadas românticas<sup>30</sup>*

transl. *nel desiderio alimentato*

*tra le ambizioni di folate romantiche*

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<sup>26</sup> we ourselves// Tomorrow/ we shall sing anthems to freedom/ when we commemorate/ the day of the abolition of this slavery/  
/ We are going in search of light/ your children Mother/ (all black mothers/ whose children have left)/ go in search of life

<sup>27</sup> But in me/ life killed that mystic hope

<sup>28</sup> But life/ killed in me that mystic hope

<sup>29</sup> in eyes treacherous from men's servitude

<sup>30</sup> in desire sustained amid ambitions and romantic outbursts

- v. 6. *nas fogueiras choro de África*<sup>31</sup>  
 transl. *nei fuochi accesi*  
*tra gli sterpi pianto dell’Africa*<sup>32</sup>
- v. 9. *meu irmão Nguxi e amigo Mussunda*<sup>33</sup>  
 transl. *immortale fratello mio*  
*Ngugi e amico Mussunda*<sup>34</sup>
- v. 12. *e da vida jorrante das fontes e de toda a parte e de todas as almas*<sup>35</sup>  
 transl. *e della vita che sgorga*  
*dalle sorgenti e da ogni parte e da tutte le anime*
- v. 21. *mesmo na beleza do trabalho construtivo dos homens*<sup>36</sup>  
 transl. *anche nella bellezza*  
*del lavoro costruttivo degli uomini*
- v. 28. *onde a verdade violentada se estiola ao círculo de ferro*<sup>37</sup>  
 transl. *dove la verità violentata appassisce*  
*nel cerchio di ferro*

A second observation has to do with clear mistakes, which may result from a grammatical misinterpretation or a misprint in the Portuguese version. For the first type, we have l. 8 of “Il pianto dell’Africa”, which in the Portuguese version is as follows:

*Sempre o choro mesmo na vossa alegria imortal*<sup>38</sup>,

which Lussu translated as

*Sempre lo stesso pianto nella nostra allegria*<sup>39</sup>,

taking “*mesmo*” for a demonstrative determiner [the same] instead of an adverb [even]. For the second type of mistakes, we may use as an example the initial verse of “Notte”, which in the Portuguese version appears as:

*Eu vivo nos*<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> in bonfires tears of Africa

<sup>32</sup> in bonfires burning/ among the stumps tears of Africa

<sup>33</sup> my brother Nguxi and friend Mussunda

<sup>34</sup> my immortal brother/ Ngugi and friend Mussunda

<sup>35</sup> and of life gushing from springs and from everywhere and from all souls

<sup>36</sup> even in the beauty of men’s constructive labour

<sup>37</sup> where outraged truth withers in the iron circle

<sup>38</sup> Always tears even in your immortal joy

<sup>39</sup> Always the same tears in our joy

<sup>40</sup> I live in the

The last word, which is misplaced since it belongs to the next line, was interpreted by the translator as “*nós*” [we], leading to the following version:

*Io vivo noi stessi*<sup>41</sup>.

A third observation concerns what might be called an interpretive translation, which occurs when the translation changes the original text in order to suggest a reading which, while not to be ruled out, was also not explicit in the source text. See the 1<sup>st</sup> stanza of *Fiducia* [Confidence]:

**Chart 2** – Interpretative translation in *Fiducia*

<i>O oceano separou-me de mim</i>	<i>L’oceano mi separò da me stesso</i>
<i>enquanto me fui esquecendo nos séculos</i>	<i>perché mi venni dimenticando nei secoli</i>
<i>e eis-me presente</i>	<i>l’oceano è presente in me</i>
<i>reunindo em mim o espaço</i>	<i>riunisce in me lo spazio</i>
<i>condensando o tempo</i> <sup>42</sup>	<i>condensa il tempo</i> <sup>43</sup>

**Source:** Produced by the author.

In the original version, the lyrical subject, asserting himself as a representative of black identity, evokes the figure of the scattered black man, torn from Africa and stripped of his roots, and proposes to retrieve this loss, by overcoming constraints of space and time. In the translation proposed, the grammatical subject changes from “*eu*” [I] to “*oceano*” [ocean], making this – the Atlantic of the old slave ships – a means for uniting all black people, whatever the space in which they find themselves today. In addition, the process of deculturation (“*enquanto*” [while]) is now represented as the cause (“*perché*” [why]) of the subject’s alienation. Note that both solutions are legitimate, thus revealing the true nature of the translation process: rewriting and recoding of the original.

## CONCLUSION

The examples could be multiplied and the analysis taken further, but I believe that the elements presented here are sufficient to show that *Con occhi asciutti* was an extremely important edition for Agostinho Neto, for the Angolan cause and that of the other (then) Portuguese colonies in Africa, and also for the literature that was produced in those spaces. The oversights in the edition, of both Portuguese and Italian versions, are normal in any genuine work in which their authors truly project themselves, and in no way jeopardize the final result. We must all, therefore, Italians, Angolans and Portuguese, be grateful to Joyce Lussu.

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<sup>41</sup> I live ourselves

<sup>42</sup> The ocean separated me from myself/ while I forgot myself over the centuries/ and here I am/ reuniting space in myself/ condensing time

<sup>43</sup> The ocean separated me from myself/ because I was forgetting myself over the centuries/ the ocean is present in me/ reunites space in me/ condenses time

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