

Preface

This book started as a mistake, like so many things in both life and fiction. In my first decision to convert my dissertation into a publishable manuscript I misjudged the adaptations needed, and then its submission did not go well also for other reasons which at that moment were barely clear to me. So that plan was sent to a hidden folder in my computer, and it remained unseen for a few years, while I was busy writing papers and designing research projects that might bring me a stable job position.

The idea was suddenly revived during a dinner with a good friend and advisor, who recalled once again that a monograph was missing in my list of academic achievements. This time some trick of the mind made the whole project mature under a different drive, which gave it the flavour of a fresh start. The practical trigger was still that empty space in my *cv*, but my goal was now bigger than filling it. Now I wanted to write a book. As the papers on “how to convert a thesis into a monograph” often put it, I was determined to find my own voice.

And then a new proposal emerged which was based on my recent results within my favourite topic of research. I sent it to another publishing house and got a very positive response from the editors. And here it is, that new item in my *cv*. I cannot confirm it reflects my own voice, though; even if I were sure of what that means exactly, I would probably be unable to fully say it in these foreign words and clauses. But this background goal was a nice motivation anyway.

This enthusiasm has been put to the test every single day of hard work in these latter months, which would be close to intolerable without the permanent support from both my husband, Luís, and our daughter, Adriana—their sharp minds, independent spirits and sweet hearts are my constant fount of inspiration and wonder.

I can never express enough gratitude to each of the numerous Cabo Verdean friends and consultants who have so kindly helped me along the way, in so many ways, as well as to my dearest colleagues and family members—and you know who you are!—for layers of reasons dispersed over many years and places.

A great amount of thankfulness goes to the persons at De Gruyter who have dealt with this project at different stages, all and always with impeccable professionalism and generosity, and to the anonymous reviewer whose insightful remarks and suggestions played a key role in this final version.

Now it would be too pretentious to expect that all the beautiful things I believe about my work are as appealing to others as they are to me. But I dare wish that these six chapters contribute a little to explain how we, humans, use words to express temporal meaning.

Fernanda Pratas

