

*Sights  
from the  
South*

Portuguese  
literature 5

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Campo Grande, 83 - 1º

P- 1700-088 Lisboa

Phone: + 351 21 7982143/45

Fax: + 351 21 7982141

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# *summary*

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## José Rodrigues Miguéis

He was born in Lisbon in 1901. He took a degree in Law, practised as a lawyer, worked as a teacher, and distinguished himself as a journalist and political ideologue, intervening actively in politics in Portugal and Spain at the time of the Civil War. In 1935 he went into exile in the USA. He returned to Portugal ten years later, but did not settle there. He later lived in Belgium and Brazil. His works combine markedly Portuguese elements with the foreign ambiances he mastered so well. He died in the USA in 1980.

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Av. Duque de Loulé, 31  
P-1069-153 Lisboa  
geral@spautores.pt

## *A man smiles at death with half a face*

*Um homem sorri à morte  
com meia cara*



His whole life was a fulfilment of Lisbon's tragic destiny: departing and remaining, proving that the state of exile arises before departure and that exile is the place of writing. He affirmed Lisbon as the genus of his writing and as a literary genre. He did not narrate travelled or imagined distances, nor did he allow himself to be overcome by sheer distance. He acknowledged no poetry in transport and never opted to write travel literature. He might have loved so many other places, as happened with Brussels or New York. He travelled on a quest to find himself. He used distance like a circle around the place of departure. (...)

Lisbon, a sad and joyful city, the city of José Rodrigues Miguéis.

Henrique Dinis da Gama, 2003



The delightful stories of Lisbon in the 1920s, with unforgettable portraits of the city (...) are, after so many years, a guarantee of a unique experience of a re-encounter with deepest Portugal or of an encounter with a still very real America and, in any case, an immersion in language full of vigour, elegance, humour and life wisdom.

Onésimo Teotónio Almeida

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I

I awoke at three A.M., in a cold sweat, twisting and turning with cramps. I took a sedative and waited. The pain got worse, and my wife, alarmed, telephoned the doctor. "Don't worry," he responded in a sleepy, tired voice. "There's nothing seriously wrong with your husband. Give him some strong coffee and another sedative."

This same practitioner, whom I was seeing in the absence of my own physician, Dr. Milton Kissin, then on military service in India, had recently said to me as I stood before the X-ray screen: "You are suffering merely from spasms of the colon. Look, here you have the image of a typical spastic colon. It's a bit of nerves and, let's face it, a touch of hypochondria."

I had long ago become used to physical pain. For many years I had suffered from gastrointestinal indisposition - the so-called centrointestine mucomembraneosis (colitis) then so much in vogue - and I suffered frequent attacks of catarrh in the sinuses which tied me to my bed for days at a time, unable to work, to move my head, or even tolerate sunlight. In Brussels once I got up from a sickbed to take an examination, and shut up by myself in an amphitheater at the medical school and waiting to be called, with my head in my arms, I heard echoing in the roam my own voice answering questions. I realized that I was delirious and fell silent. Dr. Péchère, a teacher of Social and Scholastic Hygiene, became wary of my demeanor during the examination and offered to see me in his office in a few days. His office was in a splendid modern building close by the Étangs de Ixelles. After a lengthy examination, which included various tests for "stamina," he declared, shaking his venerable head, "To be candid, I cannot see, given your condition, how

it is that you are still among the living, let alone working!"

That was in 1930 or '31. It seemed like a death sentence. I laughed. And to this day, after all these struggles, attacks, and ambushes, I still laugh. There exists in man an incommensurable power of resistance.

The years went by. I remained active and happy, as well as no stranger to polemics or even merely a good fight, never retreating before a moral risk - a bundle of nerves vibrating within a carcass of skin and bones; but being divided among preoccupations over ideas and literature and over earning a living and keeping physically active, I perhaps devoted too much attention to the multiple ills that besieged me, even though, since succumbing to that unflinching "second-childhood" disease measles, I had never had any serious illness. (Or so I thought, even though at the age of twelve or thirteen, I had gone through a period of atrocious stomach pains.)

Then was I really a hypochondriac? And did I have good reason to be one? To what extent had I been so affected by chronic sinusitis that it brought about in me an excessive sensitivity to illness and the jitters, I could not say. I even got to the point of laughing at myself, saying, "*Nulla dies sine dolore!*" (There is no such thing as a day without pain.) There are those who claim that certain respiratory diseases are common to nervous types. That is like asking what came first, the chicken or the egg. Man is a unitary being, and it is always by way of the body, and in the body, that he suffers. Are we not beginning to penetrate the mysterious realm of cellular physical-chemistry which might give us, among other things, the key to mental illness? Psychic activity offers tire its most subtle relationship between the two worlds of man and

## BY THE AUTHOR

Selected Works

### Fiction

*Páscoa Feliz* (Happy Easter), 1932  
(novella)

*Onde a noite se acaba* [Where night ends], 1946 (short stories and novellas)

*Léah e Outras histórias* [Léah and Other Stories], 1958 (short stories)

*Uma aventura inquietante*  
[A disquieting adventure], 1959 (novel)

*Um homem sorri à morte*  
(A man smiles at death with half a face),  
1959 (autobiographical narrative)

*A escola do paraíso* [School of paradise],  
1960 (novel)

*Gente de terceira classe* [Third class  
people], 1962 (short stories and novellas)

*Nikalai! Nikalai!*, 1971 (novel)

*O pão não cai do céu* [Bread does not fall  
from heaven], 1981 (novel)

## SELECTED TRANSLATIONS

### English

*Happy Easter*, translated by John Byrne.  
London: Carcanet, 1995

*A man smiles at death with half a face*,  
translated by George Monteiro. University  
Press of New England, 1990

### French

*Léah et une autre histoire*, translated by  
Marie-Claire Vromans. Brussels: Orfeu,  
1994

### Czech Republic

*Sestnáct hodin s tajným posláním* (short  
stories - anthology) translated by Pavla  
Lidmilova. Prague: Mladá Fronta, 2000

*Dobrodružství v Bruselu* translated by  
Ludek Kult. Prague: Odeon, 1978

things. It is not surprising, then, that man's body should reflect his conflicts and clashes.

Meanwhile, I would give the doctors minute descriptions of my symptoms, a thing that can perplex them, and which sometimes sets them against the patient, but which, in every case, puts them on the defensive. After all, the clinician is a man, and his power is limited. We ask so much of him, we ascribe to him so much responsibility, expecting from his still circumscribed science and art cures for all illnesses, including those that are not seldom imaginary. Sedatives and antispasmodics were prescribed. Dr. Milton Kissin my friend and helper, and a clinician of exceeding knowledge and honesty, would say to me, "To feel bad is not necessarily to be ill, and to feel good is not always equivalent to being healthy. Certain individuals have an uncommonly low threshold for pain, and at the slightest stimulus suffer excessively. If fear of illness does not generate illness, unfortunately neither does it prevent it or cure it."

In his opinion and that of other physicians, I was, in fine, what is called a "functional sick man" or, in more modern terms, a "psychosomatic." I would settle for that - with my sinusitis, gastrointestinal episodes, emaciation and diffuse pains - and go on living an active life with the hope for better days. I did not turn away from heavily spiced food or give up nights spent in discussion and conversation conducted amid cigarette smoke and a few fortifying drinks. On one occasion I did manage to get the doctors to extract my tonsils, long since infected, and my condition improved a bit. (When I was a boy, there was an affable Navy doctor working in a Lisbon clinic who over several months tried to rid my tonsils of the abundant colonies of crypt-dwellers that inhabited their numerous cavities, without obtaining any result

other than that of giving me pain and making me bleed. But he would not operate.)

At the time I was forty-two, but felt ten years younger and lived as if I were actually no more than thirty-two. It never crossed my mind that I might be entering into a general decline. I worked intensively, had friends, love, a daughter. And after a few years of conflicts and difficulties that resulted in a nervous attack (about which I shall not at this time speak; I'm saving that for a more propitious occasion), I had a routine, more or less, which I followed in my spare time and during Saturdays, Sundays, and evenings, to fill reams of paper with the unpublishable prose of a Portuguese writer *in partibus infidelium*. It was my way of continuing to live my life in Portugal, without actually being there. (Faced with the failure of my few efforts to be read in English, I convinced myself early on that it was preferable to remain Portuguese, even if that meant I would remain unpublished.) That winter of 1943-44, therefore, was very hard. My sinusitis, which had dried up, now once again became active, and bronchitis prostrated me. I lived in a state of excessive mental tension with all my defenses enfeebled. I weighed a mere 54 kilos-20 kilos less than, theoretically, I should weigh. That was when it all came to a crisis.

As time went on the pain got worse. I was sweating and moaning. At my wife's urging, Dr. X finally promised to come to see me. But, fatigued, he fell asleep in his tub (at the risk of drowning) and did not show up until around seven. It was wartime. Doctors were scarce, and each one of them did the work of ten. An old and pleasant surgeon, my landlord and neighbor, Dr. Coccuzza, had come up to see me and, displeased, said, "It doesn't seem like the appendicitis to me." On leaving he looked back, "Still,

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to be on the safe side, I'd open him up-his abdomen. Who knows?"

By the time Dr. X finally arrived I was exhausted. I can still remember his cold hands as they poked around over my tense and aching abdomen. Conclusion. It was not appendicitis. Then what was it? I insisted on being taken to Beth Israel Hospital, just a few steps away, where I had had my tonsils extracted. "Don't even think about it!" he said. "There isn't a room available, and they won't accept you without my saying so!"

"We'll see about that!" said I. I got out of bed, dressed, descended five flights of stairs (I always lived in old houses with no elevators, those brownstones that are giving way to progress), crossed the park at an angle and limped into the hospital, all the while with a knife tearing away at my insides. I was given a room and put to bed. They took my blood, urine, secretions, and temperature. They touched me and poked me, rapped me and tapped me all over. They debated over me in their profession's unintelligible argot. It was not appendicitis! I was suffering, but I was also amused. On seeing the rose-colored discharge that came from my nose when I blew it, Dr. X exclaimed triumphantly, "You see! That's what's making him suffer!"

They gave me analgesics, I presume. The pain abated a little and I, weak and perplexed, calmed down.

Toward late afternoon, while talking with a friend, I was hit by a fit of intermittent fevers. My teeth were knocking like castanets and I lost the ability to speak. When the attack was over, though I was conscious and lucid, I began to react less to the people and the happenings around me. I sank into a strange quiescence and beatitude. Even my pain seemed to be impersonal and off at a distance. I looked into a small mirror and saw a denuded and pallid face, a slender nose. Where had I seen the like? The distant memory of a loved one - my dead brother - gave me the chills. I thought: "I have the face of a dying man. What will they do? Why don't they do something?"

The doctors came by frequently. In the dead of night and in my torpor, I heard the muffled voice of the surgeon, Dr. Isaacs, harshly scolding my wife, who had resolved to

spend the night at my side, curled up in a small armchair. "What, madame, are you doing here? Do you want to spoil your husband rotten? Go home. Right now!" (She had helped me so many times during other illnesses- always solicitous and sympathetic, suffering because she saw me suffering, running the risk of babying me!)

Dr. Isaacs enjoyed a reputation for rudeness and was on the outs with many of that hospital's doctors, including my current attending physician. But it was everyone's opinion that he was highly competent. Perceiving that he was being discourteous, I fantasized that I raised myself from the pillow to hit him with a couple of hard truths - that that was no way to treat my vexed wife. But I did not move at all or utter a single word. It was as if everything was taking place behind a thick crystal plate. I was losing contact with reality and sinking into drowsiness and unconsciousness. And I knew it.

Early the next morning I awoke to a great hullabaloo. The doctors again congregated, talking their Molièresque language. In my torpor I understood only their conclusion. I would be operated on - "an emergency" - twenty-four hours late. I smiled at my wife and murmured, "At last." My smile was probably imbecilic. But inside I knew what I wanted. I wanted to escape that apathy, confront the test, confirm what was wrong with me, save myself, live.

With a thousand precautions they transferred me to the stretcher, all done aseptically. There was a certain comfort in all of that. In the corridor I glanced at the large electric clock hanging from the ceiling. It was ten on the dot. "How long will this take?" It was then (I found out later) that my wife, in distress, demanded that the doctor explain my condition. "It could be almost anything," he said, which was the same thing as saying, "get ready for the worst!" Was he thinking about cancer?

I was given a spinal anesthetic. On the operating table, with my eyes covered over, I could hear and feel everything, except pain. I remained attentive to the curt and muffled voices within the masks, to the tense and charged atmosphere in the operating room, to the painless incision, to the hands that were handling my viscera, to the pull of

the catgut, to the tinkling of the instruments. A dear friend, the Brazilian neurosurgeon Nilson de Rezende, assisted in the operation. He gave my right hand a squeeze and whispered into my ear, "Everything is going well. Take heart!" I was moved by that and it made me happy. In times of stress all signs of affection become greatly magnified.

There was as yet no such thing as penicillin. Before closing up the incision they powdered me with sulfa drugs.

While being wheeled back to my room I remembered the ceiling clock and uncovered my face. It read a quarter to eleven. The time had flown! I was consoled and felt light as a cloud, but extremely weak and inert.

In the final analysis, it turned out, I had a case of extensive peritonitis. My appendix, gangrenous and purulent, showed itself encysted in the caecum. It bore a scar from a prior infection, which must have healed spontaneously under the auspices of my "hypochondria" and my "spastic attacks." All this, they told me, had made it difficult to locate it by touch and to make a diagnosis. Had, my "hypochondria" blinded them to the signs of an organic malfunction? I don't know. What did it matter now? The "expression of anxiety" to which the secret report made reference at the time of my admittance and which had so perturbed Dr. X was fully justified. But I did not feel spite or acrimony toward the doctor. On the contrary, I considered myself free from the threat that had so long kept me from living peacefully. When shortly thereafter he appeared before me, pale with fatigue and sleeplessness, I told him, "Well, doctor, I expect that this will put an end to *our* nervous spasms!"

We both smiled, relieved.

The shock was profound, the crisis dragged on, and for a long time I was on the danger list.

The first few days they fed me intravenously. Things looked distant and nebulous. Smells made me nauseous. I had to beg a middle-aged nurse not to come near me mornings after she had sprayed herself with the inexpensive cologne she could afford to buy. I found its peculiar odor intolerable.

She must have been insulted, but I had no choice. The very paper handkerchiefs - facial tissues - sent waves of nausea through me. My abdomen, veritably a sack of stones, was in painful stasis. I developed gastritis and couldn't even swallow saliva without groaning in pain. I was hit with another inflammatory complication which is hardly worth mentioning. How long would the test last? I prepared myself to wait. I saw myself surrounded by dear friends, medical attention, solicitous nursing, and, despite the suffering, I felt pacified and happy - as if I were resting at the bottom of a well of warmth and gentleness. The long incision healed with astonishing rapidity.

The days went by slowly. The telephone brought into my insular hospital room the tumult of the life outside - we were at war and I was in that place! During the long nights the fierce February winds shook the steel window frames, the overcast sky showed all the congested reflections of the monstrous city, the hot breath of the radiators reached my bed, and in that strange quiet and penumbra of the corridor where a nurse, sitting at a small table, read and studied under light from a green lampshade, I could hear the breathing and moaning of other patients, who would sometimes cry out in the horror of worry or as the result of anesthesia, and I listened to muffled murmurs, and quick, light steps. Down there, by the window, I could see the immense illumination of a movie-house sign - "The Academy of Music" - whose lights ran interminably one after the other like a string of small goldfish chasing themselves. In all this there was something comforting that cannot be put into words.

Even though I knew that I was being attended to day and night, each morning I impatiently awaited my private-duty nurse, Miss Goldis. At eight, on the dot, she would throw open the shutters, smile, and with a voice that was a bird's warbling and which brought me a breath of active, healthy life, bid me "Good morning!" She would give me a sponge bath while I was in bed, rub me with alcohol, change my sheets every day (from her I learned how to make a bed with a patient in it), serve me breakfast, converse with me, and laugh with me to get my mind off my



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troubles. Afterward, snug in my remade bed and lulled by her cheerful, gentle voice, I would nap, hearing only vaguely the hospital's morning noises, the whirr of the floor-waxers in the corridors. She would then tiptoe out of the room or sit down quietly to read. She would stay with me until 4 P.M., talk to me about the ballet, which she was studying, about books, about her friends and her plans for the future.

Was all this attention merely a function of her professional technique or was it sincerely cordial? Whatever it was, I blessed her, marveled at her patience, good humor, efficiency, and hard work. (For some years afterward, whenever we ran into each other, we behaved like two old friends and confidants. I only hope that somewhere Miss Goldis is now doing what she always wanted to do - teaching art in some high school.)

Even during my hours of solitude and quiet, the idea of death never occurred to me, an idea that seemed to obsess me in so many of my stories and which (I thought) explained my maniacal fear of illness. Was I really a hypochondriac, as they had led me to believe? In that hospital room I did a lot of thinking.

What is a hypochondriac? Does an obsession with illness express a fear of death or an exaggerated attachment to life? Is hypochondria a defense mechanism for those who, fearing their demise, search out vivid ways to shield themselves from the threat? Or is it a defense, like that of children who, playing at war, crime, horrors, and deaths, expose themselves to risks that could destroy them? Or, contrariwise, is hypochondria the dramatization of the subjective gratification of an obscure desire for annihilation? Can it be the expression of the feeling of guilt, as the pure Freudians have it, a form of self-punishment or "castration"? Or, rather, is hypochondria a way of evading the responsibilities and exigencies of our everyday social lives? A loophole for the indolent and timid, for those who entrench themselves behind walls of symptoms so that they can tell the world: "Ah, see what I would be capable of doing if only had my health. Don't ask me for anything or expect anything of me. I am a sick man. Count me out"? Can it be that the

hypochondriac is a kind of unrecognized masochist who lives by fantasizing flagellations for which he sighs (of which he fakes fear and dare not ask for) so that later he can confront the culminating moment of danger and trespass the stoic's serenity and the saint's jubilation?

The fear of death is worse than death itself, and that is why so many combatants, out of control and hallucinated, leap from the trenches and shelters and run toward the enemy's lines, in search of death.

But what do we know - layman or expert - of the thousand obscure tendencies that ensnare us? The best authorities disagree. To seek out answers to these questions is like trying to explain what a dream is and the reasons for our dreaming; or what esthetic creation is, and to what end we create; or what love is, and why we do not merely submit to satisfying our biological impulse to preserve the species, but have thrown ourselves, over millennia, into so many ecstasies, deliriums, and tragedies of passion. We have made so many marvelous discoveries in these areas without, however, having come to an accepted universal conclusion, or, what is more, one that is always therapeutically productive. There is still so much we do not know about ourselves.

In the meantime, there I was, enjoined in combat with that "combination of forces that oppose themselves to life" - to paraphrase (in reverse) old Le Dantec. Was I too trusting? Insensible? Dormant?

I remember that, closing my eyes, I dreamt I was somewhere amidst rocks, naked and hot in the sun, bathing in the *bassin* of cool water cascading over me. This fantasy, which repeated itself numerous times, cooled me and invigorated me. I also went for long imaginary walks, planned trips and excursions that unfortunately to this day have not been taken. So many times during the month I spent there, I walked the mountains of Arrábida in the company of a dear Brazilian friend who had hoped to come to Portugal in his country's service; and we would end up in Setubal in a *casa de pasto*, an "eating-house" (please excuse my plebeian archaism) close by the quays. We would eat surmullets (broiled in butter), with parsley and lime. Dare I rec-

commend this therapy through fantasy to those beings confined to beds?

My recovery picked up speed. One night I got up by myself, having against my nurse's advice, and without any heed for my "adhesions." Dr. Isaacs, who used to look in frequently, gave me a friendly tap on the arm and said, "You're a good patient. I like you." His pleasure was evident. I must confess that, his rough exterior notwithstanding, I reciprocated sympathetically. I have always liked "aggressive" people who speak their minds (in contrast, perhaps, to my own ancient reserve and timidity), and above all when they are doctors, for I understand that frankness and severity itself can be exceptionally helpful in treatment. Most patients want to be coddled, to have their innumerable symptoms flattered, to be given bundles of prescriptions from the clinician's hands, even when no medicine is required. A woman friend, a university person besieged by obstacles, went to a physician to complain of several ailments that she did not have. He examined her, found her to be, for her seventy years and more, fit as a fiddle, and prescribed nothing. "Would you mind if I took a little oil of ricinus?" she asked him angrily, and never went back. The doctor laughed as he told me about her. "Perhaps eighty percent of the patients who enter this office have nothing wrong with them, unless it's fear, or the desire to have some illness," he said. "And all they want is the doctor's complicity, sympathy, and consoling words. But these people help me get a living! Most of them are disappointed when we fail to discover that at the least they have cancer. And those who momentarily feel relieved of their vexation waste little time in inventing another one. At this very moment your friend is probably in the hands of one of my less experienced or less scrupulous colleagues." Like the frightened fallen horse, mortals need doctors to pull on their reins, put the spurs to them, and get them to sniff out the shadows that are the source of their fright.

Dr. Isaacs, after all, had saved my life. I could not help feeling grateful. And I am certain that I was grateful not merely for his having opened up my abdomen.

When in March, after a month, I returned home and was carried up the stairs by my brothers-in-law, I saw in myself a new man, one who was liberated for all time from his "spastic colon" and some other little ailments. (Indeed, for a long time afterward I had no digestive problems as I had had up till then, and a great deal of my nervousness did disappear.) The first thing I did, the minute I was alone, was to remake my bed the way Miss Goldis taught me.

I went back to work. I spent a good two months taking care of a painful complication; for some time I had an intolerable skin itch (probably caused by the sulfa drugs), but I soon got back my color, appetite, vigor, and confidence. And even my weight went up some. I felt capable of making new efforts and taking on new tasks.

"Hypochondriac!" I would say, voluptuously pulling out my abdominal stitches, one by one. "I'll give you 'psychosomatic!' "

But my difficulties were far from over.

## II

My sinusitis continued to flare up at times, but nothing like before, and I didn't pay much attention to it. That condition was already systematic to my life and part of the picture. I smoked much too much, given my condition, but kept putting off the day (as I still do) when courageously or out of fear I would give up smoking. I felt congested, all blocked up, had persistent headaches, a rare thing for me, and my stuffed-up nose seemed to have stopped functioning. I now frequently used "nose drops", which helped me to breathe again. I had a constant need for pure, cold air and would go out winter nights, into the snow, to get relief.

In the fall of 1945, a year and a half after my bout with peritonitis, I began to suffer from strange perturbations. One night I awoke with a start. There was a hammering sensation in my head. I fell into an agitated sleep. I didn't have the mental and physical energy of times past. Maybe it was age. I was working very hard, and now I was happily, if imprudently, embarked on new and risky ventures. Little by little, a steel ring tightened around my head. Something had

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happened to my eyesight and I could no longer see at all well through my customary lenses. The ophthalmologist noticed that I had a slight strabismus and wrote me a stronger prescription. I was feeling slightly muddleheaded and was seized by an inexplicable distress that seemed to narrow my physical and mental horizons. The physician caring for me during Dr. Milton Kissin's absence knew my story, and he would laugh at the minute descriptions of symptoms and I furnished him. A case of nerves, always nerves! The imagination of a hypochondriac, of a literary person! The clearest case of a psychosomatic.

It seemed natural to me, given my temperament and my habit of self-analysis, that every small symptom would exaggerate itself. The man must be right. He was a good young clinician, and I had confidence in him. Headaches? Aspirin. Irritability? Anxiety? Phenobarbital. I became, temporarily, a pill-taker. Everybody I knew took pills. I took them too, though with moderation. I took a lot of vitamins, B complex. And I used to put drops into my nose to reduce congestion so that I could breathe. "You'll make it to ninety", he would tell me, optimistically and encouragingly.

Then I noticed that telephone voices were becoming intolerable, causing me sharp pain in my inner left ear. I started to use my right ear for listening, which was not habitual with me. The irritability increased. My vision became distorted and I had difficulty focusing. It was like looking through flawed glass or water. I lived in anticipation that something was going to happen to me. But what?

One rainy day in November, when it was already dark out, I returned home in distress. I had a headache and a slight fever. I called the doctor, who came the following morning. I had gone to see him two days earlier and had asked him to give me penicillin.

Now he found me in bed. He smiled and said, "Well, did it take merely a visit to the doctor to make you sick?" But he was intrigued and prescribed penicillin inhalations, through an atomizer. (...)

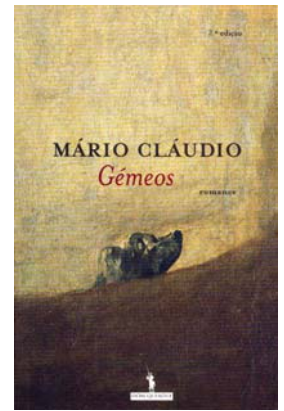
Translated by George Monteiro  
University Press of New England, 1990

Excerpt from *Um homem sorri à morte com meia cara*  
Lisbon: Estampa, 1989, 112 pp.



Luísa Ferreira

## Twins Gêmeos



### Mário Cláudio

A prolific writer, methodical and disciplined student of styles, and researcher into the Portuguese identity, Mário Cláudio re-examines Portuguese history and culture in a personal way, basing his fiction on facts while rejecting the label of "historical novelist".

A chronicler of contemporary life, he writes frequently about Oporto and Northern Portugal. He has worked in a wide range of literary genres (poetry, chronicles, theater, children's literature, and biography). He has received many prizes, including the *Pessoa Prize* in 2004. The jury cited his "mastery of language, devotion to history, attraction to biography, and exceptional narrative inventiveness". He has published regularly since 1969 more than 50 plays, collections of poetry, short stories, novels and romances.

His writing is shaped in the act of writing itself, as if the language was fertilising itself in the hidden mysteries of indecipherable contaminations.

Joaquim Matos, 1988



To sum up, a truly masterly style which, with its highly original flavour, is in the tradition of the most beautiful Portuguese prose, running from Vieira to Camilo, or Eça, or Aquilino or Vitorino Nemésio.

Urbano Tavares Rodrigues, 1991



(...) one of the few Portuguese novelists able to play with structures and induce language.

António Cabrita, 1993

What fascinates me in the writing of Mário Cláudio is the fact that we sense the untiring hand of the writer in his books. (...) This is when we see the hand painting the picture or, if we prefer, the very origin of literature. Because both things are present in this openly baroque world: a literature of origins constantly provides us with a view of the origin of origins, i.e., the origin of literature.

Eduardo Prado Coelho, 1997



A man whose style is finely worked and exact, whose speech frequently comes close to the rigour of his writing, Mário Cláudio has constructed a body of work which, like few others, cross-examines our country by permanently questioning its values and symbols. His work as a playwright has also contributed to underline this vocation, to which his voice as a prose fiction writer adds appreciable brilliance and energy.

José Jorge Letria, 1992

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There he was that summer, then, ensconced in the peninsular city, supported by a problematic grant to study the painter's last period. For some time his abiding love of those late years had been nourished by their rebirth under the auspices of several cutting-edge movements, making an extended stay a foregone conclusion. So there he was in a pension that took up the top floor of a building in the middle of town, trying to get used to the shadows that turned his siesta into a hallway he could scarcely see to walk down. Now and then a shuddering jolt from the sluggish elevator shook him out of his torpor: it was like the gasp of an utterly exhausted creature condemned to the most unrelenting bondage. In the lounge, having glanced at yesterday's paper, the receptionist mused in silence, aroused from his boredom those three times each day when the telephone rang so softly it was almost inaudible. He was a retired man with hair as shiny as a beetle's shell. A keen observer could have sworn that dusty fans moved the air in the adjacent rooms, occasionally stirring underwear hung out on hangers. Almost exactly across the street, the director of the Museum was waiting for him in the office over which he ruled, where the air-conditioning murmured with discreet satisfaction. He was a well-dressed gentleman who turned the pages of his huge reference books with hands one would swear had been softened by talcum. He offered him a cup of inferior coffee, stared at him gravely while he spoke, and without smiling asked how he could be of assistance. The man handed him the cards he had brought along, squares of yellowing cardboard on which he had written the famous titles: "Parade", "Seizure", "Insane Asylum". There opened up around him another realm, however, with a touch of make-believe: cheesy shops that had survived competition from the chain stores and still offered tourists the splendor of Manila lace shawls for-

merly de rigueur around the pianos of fancy bordellos, and folding fans with flamenco scenes, snatched up by pre-adolescent girls in search of their first grown-up accessories. The most popular bars were the last remaining survivors of an era that ended with the triumph of the kind of sandals the poorest of the poor used to wear, bars where Spanish civil war correspondents used to rub elbows, editing clipped sentences of copy before drinking themselves blind. These characters had cleared out to make room in the 1950s for actors and actresses who used their devious sexuality to cultivate the company of bullfighters. Middle class couples still sauntered in early in the afternoon, usually forming platoons in which the wives walked ahead monitored by their respective husbands, resplendent in their masculinity. It was not until later that outlandish transvestites sashayed up and down the street like mobile altarstones crowned with combs and mantillas.

We had arrived with three pack mules and two old wagons full of the rest of our stuff. It was 5:40 in the afternoon, and it had cooled off a little, though I still heard – or thought I still heard – fat flies buzzing around my head. Madame Leocadia got down off the seat and proceeded to give orders all around with the self-confidence of one who assumes that a hypothetical discipline is active in the midst of the most intractable chaos. I remember how one of the mules, finally liberated from its packs, brayed triumphantly and casually emptied its bladder for what seemed an eternity.

Against the advice of friends, I had decided to ride a mare and as a result was hurting more than I had anticipated. It had not seemed appropriate for a man to take possession of his new country house shut up in a carriage like a bourgeois going out to purchase cheese for Sunday dinner. Despite my age I wanted to feel like the landowner I had never been, to take in the boundless expanse of my prop-

## COPYRIGHT

Eulama

Dr. Pina Von Prellwitz

Via Guido de Ruggiero, 28

I-00142 ROMA

eulama@fastwebnet.it

## BY THE AUTHOR

Selected Works

### Fiction

*Amadeo*, 1984 (novel)

*Guilhermina*, 1986 (novel)

*A fuga para o Egípto*

[The flight into Egypt], 1987 (novella)

*A Quinta das virtudes*

[The farm of virtues], 1990, (novel)

*Tocata para dois clarins*

[Tocatta for two bugles], 1992 (novel)

*Peregrinação de Barnabé das Índias*

[The pilgrimage of Barnabas of the Indies], 1998 (novel)

*Ursamaior* [Ursa major], 2000 (novel)

*Orion*, 2002 (novel)

*Gêmeos* [Twins], 2004 (novel)

*Camilo Broca*, 2006 (novel)

### Poetry

*Dois equinócios* [Two equinoxes], 1996

*Os sonetos italianos de Tiago Veiga*

[The Italian sonnets of Tiago Veiga], 2005

## Theatre

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*A ilha do Oriente* [The isle of the Orient], 1989

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## SELECTED TRANSLATIONS

### French

*La Grande Ourse* translated by Pierre Légliise-Costa. Paris: Métailié, 2006

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### Italian

*Orion* translated by Vincenzo Barca. Roma: Pericle Tangerine: 2004

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*La tela del sogno* translated by Manuel Simões. Aquila: Japadre, 1990

*Amadeo* translated by Rita Desti. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1988

erty in a glance, kicking dirt clods and rocks with the arrogance of one who does whatever he wants to the earth beneath his feet. The long ride, however, had been a disaster for my hemorrhoids. The swaying of the mare, which seemed the epitome of elegance on the way in, had turned into a merciless aggravation of my suffering, and all I could think about was the sitz bath that would relieve the burning that was seeping into the seat of my wool trousers. Despite this I made an effort to give my companions the impression that I was entirely in control of the situation. Nothing detracts more completely from our dignity in the eyes of others than stains between the midriff and the knees, and nothing makes us more resistant in our own eyes to sympathy from our fellows.

I therefore asked someone to hold the bridle and stepped firmly to the ground with a self-assurance that surprised even me. There was the old man, then, going to meet his destiny. With my riding crop I struck the dust from my jacket, called for my high hat and prepared to take possession of the estate. In the light of that unusually warm February, the property had turned a crude yellow that I did not find particularly unpleasing. It was the yellow most people called “brown”, though the more discerning would prefer “muddy”. “Clay-colored” struck me as the most accurate description, unlikely to be mistaken for any other and impossible to disassociate from this place, where it was definitely the first thing one noticed about the landscape. I had become accustomed to this dominant hue, and when Simon the gardener came over to proffer a gesture of servile solicitude that always embarrasses me, I could think of nothing else to say but: “When they used to come this way on pilgrimage they left piles of lamb bones and melon rinds all over the place, and there were tangled stockings and filthy tissues left by those who had acted the most disgracefully”.

Then I took in the view of the City, putting off my grand entrance into the house for later, because that would be an event of singular solemnity for me and for me alone. In the meantime I wanted to look at the meager, sinewy river that separated me from the Capitol, a mass that would most certainly be obscured by dust, through which one might be granted an unimpeded glimpse of timid gold and a sky constantly crisscrossed by falcons decrying the cruelty of the humans who languished in the shadow of their wings. And on the left, in the palace of endless columns, the King would be sitting in his favorite easy chair, his feet warmed by slippers full of holes, smoking the best West Indian tobacco in a long pipe with a porcelain bowl.

On my way to the house I spotted Madame Leocadia bustling about by the well, tending to a wall clock, a trunk, and two mattresses. Slowly I approached the garden, which was just coming back to life, graced by a reflecting pool with a spouting fountain. They had thrown open the shutters, giving the house the air of a ship with its sails furled en route to the sea. Even then I had no illusions about the decisive step I had taken at that advanced stage of my life. What does the home to which we have become accustomed symbolize, my good men, but the casket that awaits us in the end? A sharp breeze pricked my neck. I entered the first-floor rooms, no longer with the boldness of an owner but with the apprehension of the eternal apprentice. And I swear that I had never heard a deeper silence than at that very moment.

Madame Leocadia had ordered lanterns lit in all the rooms, and the servants had begun closing the windows so the late afternoon breeze that blew from the denuded plateau would not put out their flames. The woman bustled about without seeming actually to acknowledge my presence, exaggerating the irritability (more affected than authentic) that she deemed a necessary adjunct of

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efficient command. She complained that a piece of furniture had been left outdoors, exposed to the elements. She demanded that a rug be beat and a fire lit. She ordered that the beds be made, lost as they were in the vastness of the guest quarters, like horses on a plain. She specified the sheets that were to be used but that no one was able to find.

Meanwhile I wandered through the various parts of the house, casting an enormous fool's silhouette on the walls, a hugely fat fool with a pumpkin for a head in which an enormous grin had been carved, one of those fools who make all the pilgrims laugh. I made up really ridiculous things about him: that he had a pair of bald witches's heads dangling from the castanets he was playing, that he was bullying some greedy fellow into carrying his own shriven body around with him, that he watched him eat and drink until he poked him with his finger, that it became necessary to save him from certain death by sticking a wooden spoon down his throat and making him throw up a stinking mess of rotgut and sausage.

Madame Leocadia disappeared briefly, then reappeared dragging a pine box, thinking in this way to instill a code of proper household management. The servants in her charge put on a distracted air in the face of the examples Madame was providing them, aware that St. Thomas's homily would be quite a bit heavier than the works in which his holiness was expressed. I tried to stay out of it, indifferent to the hubbub around me – in this way underscoring my identity as sole, undisputed owner of everything in sight. The estate had been bought with my money: more than sixty acres, a gabled house, a well and poplar trees and a garden in need of attention. It was my sole responsibility to decide the fate of all of this, which I had acquired at my own private expense.

In the dark of night I opened the second-floor rooms, coming across the most entertaining thing of all, Madame Leocadia's boudoir. She was still convinced that the care with which she applied her make-up had to somehow eventually enhance my future interest in her. There was a narrow little bench in front of a mirror in a golden frame grand enough to return the image of a princess in silk finery. There was an assortment of face powders, jars of kohl, and little boxes of rouge amidst countless pencils for tracing the thin line of her

eyebrows. What kind of monster did that creature expect to turn herself into? Had she forgotten that no ghosts disturb the sleep of the old? For years to come she would nevertheless sit there arranging a veil on her forehead beneath the gaze of the girl who looked after her like a governess, as unspeaking as I am unseeing and as fascinated as all young people are with the way the aging persist in wanting to be taken for youths.

Moving on to the bedroom I had chosen for myself, I found my nightshirt and cap rolled up in the sandstone jug next to the bed, alongside the basin for the impending sitz bath. If Madame Leocadia were there – if I thought well enough of her to let her watch me taking my treatment – she would entone: "If it burns, it cures – if it squeezes, it secures". I slowly undressed in the immense silence, only vaguely aware that the stress of a difficult day's journey was fading, imagining that the horses would be pawing the cinder of the courtyard with their hooves, their noses deep in the feedbags that were their reward, and that the sky would be filled with stars, announcing a beautiful tomorrow.

Soon Madame Leocadia would come, taking endless precautions, persisting in her belief in an innocence the world no longer recognized, the silver candle stick and lighted candle trembling in her hand as she searched for the warmth she thought was waiting for her. The vibrations of the flooring beneath her feet reached me where I lay, and I coughed to give her her bearings in the semi-darkness. I raised myself up a little, spat in the chamber pot at the right side of the bed, and dove back under the covers. When the light that penetrated my closed eyelids went out I realized that my companion had extinguished the candle that was lighting her way. And reassured by the knowledge that neither the yowling of cats in mid-winter heat nor the screeching of owls of evil omen would disturb my rest, I condescended to let Dona Leocadia try to warm my old man's feet with her own pitiful bony extremities.

It wasn't until early morning that I learned that Rosarito had slept under the same roof. There was the little girl by my bed, hugging one of her favorite dolls and staring at me with the blue eyes that were first thing anybody noticed in a face that her adoring teachers swore "looks like painted porcelain". Carefully forming the words with her lips so that the

hard of hearing geezer she still called “uncle” could understand her, she blurted what she’d come to say: “Get up! We’re going for a walk”. Her mother Leocadia, an unrepentant early riser, had already given her a bath and freshened her with a sprinkling of perfume, sending her off to rouse the sleepy-head that I was turning into with the passing years. The child stepped forward with the silk cap I was getting into the habit of wearing and struggled to arrange it on my head so I would be ready to go out.

Each day Rosarito grew a little more inside me. She dispelled some of the clouds that obscured my memory and illuminated my thoughts during our morning promenade. Some would have found her too lively, seeing in her the makings of a future vamp, an image unbecoming to a woman who wanted to command respect. Full of questions, she paid scant attention to the answers with which we tried to satisfy her endless curiosity. She was quick to imitate grownups. One minute she was saying how the velvet bodice she noticed on a notary’s daughter was so cute, the next minute she was busily fanning herself with gestures she assumed were the height of elegance.

How very many times had I been almost entertained by Dona Leocadia’s impatience with the little girl’s affectations. She was less concerned about the erosion of moral behavior that these affectations betokened than she was jealous of the devoted attention I couldn’t help giving her. Her mother yanked her arm, brusquely hushed her, undid the silk ribbons that graced her hair and began brushing her unruly locks so hard that it wasn’t difficult to discern the intent to hurt. The poor thing was snuffling. She shot me a look that was a cry for help and finally pulled free to run away, dragging one of her dolls after her. “That girl’s more stubborn than ever”, Dona Leocadia complained. I wasn’t listening, but she imagined what I would have said anyway and added: “And you’re to blame, Mr. Francisco, because you spoil her terribly and do nothing to discipline her”.

Last evening’s turmoil had nevertheless died down, and whoever wanted to could hear the burbling of the terrace fountain, which spurted water from a spout adorned with a little stone angel. Madame Leocadia had gone off somewhere in her enthusiasm for never allowing the servants a moment’s

rest. Rosarito came up to me again, glued as always to her beloved doll. “If you want to go for a walk with me”, I said, “get some other shoes: the trails are muddy, and your mother doesn’t want you to ruin those, because they’re new and they’re made of satin”. The girl went back the way she had come and returned with a pair of little calfskin boots. She took my hand, and we were on our way. She wouldn’t talk at first, hugging her doll tight and taking great care to step where she was supposed to, acting far too formal than usual. And after a couple hundred yards she came to an abrupt halt and looked straight at me so I could understand what she was saying, which was: “My daddy who died wasn’t an old man like you”.

I thought it best not to answer. Initiating what would become our regular practice, with my cane I began pointing out things that were demonstrably worthy of her interest: a glistening slug, a shrivelled mushroom, a piece of pure quartz. But I never once stopped thinking about the poignant words she had spoken. I went on walking with the daughter I had never had, through her living a childhood that was becoming alarmingly real to me, drinking a life that was just beginning from the same cup that I had drained to the dregs. Rosarito entertained herself imagining other things. She might start singing a song she had learned from one of the those young women who hung around the kitchen telling her things she couldn’t yet understand, motivated by a shrewd pleasure in stirring up trouble in the house. “The rag doll is sick,/what shall be give him?/Snail water/that makes you grow horns”. I’m sure that was what she was humming. Songs like that filled me with disgust and an overpowering urge to be by myself. Figuring that my old age might as easily be charmed by childhood as conceive an unbearable hatred of it, I heard myself blurting out, “Let’s keep moving, Miss Rosario. It’s cold, my knees ache, I’m tired, and damned if you still don’t understand what I’m trying to get across to you”.

There’s nothing like fear, seductive fear, to spur a child’s imagination. Tell her a good fairy tale about witches and she’ll forget about playing, immobilized by an apprehension that is by turns hot and freezing cold. Rosarito ran right into that big sorceress when I went to the studio, which had not been completely set up. At the center of an old painting, the horrible



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woman held forth, presiding over a witches' sabbath. Two fluttering bats held the ends of her shawl suspended in the air: she was baring her remaining teeth, and burning coals issued from pupils sunk in the dark circles around her eyes while she stuck a slender needle into the back of a naked newborn. The girl was subdued by what I told her later, which I dare not reveal to any adult.

From then on, whenever she found the door ajar, Rosarito would sneak into the studio. She brought a great variety of things from the woods: poplar leaves and pebbles from the river, the desiccated skin of a mole, a button from a soldier's uniform dating back to the war with France. At the beginning I pretended not to notice these things, not knowing whether to receive them as silent offerings that gave her a chance to observe me or as mysterious assets she was in the process of consolidating. I would ask her to sit down quietly in her smock and hand her an illustrated story book, and when she was busy making up tall tales for her audience – a couple of farmer's kids who had been trailing behind after her – I hurriedly drew a fat oil crayon over the flat stone slab, shadows here, light there, thickness and transparency, youth bursting forth, the nearness of death. Rosarito gradually realized why I was keeping her there and seemed to apply herself to the job that she had been assigned with patience and a certain pride.

But there is no way to keep an active, sunny little kid quiet for as long as you need. Soon she was poking into the corners of my studio, poking into piles of things that hadn't been touched for years, like wood frames which the humidity had been busily warping and old cardboard folders which mildew had reduced to crumbs. Soon other enchantments attracted her attention: sheets of paper that I dipped in turpentine to make them transparent, the soot I ordered cleaned from the top of the chimneys, the names of the colors I was working with at the time – "burnt umber", "warm gray", "olive green". Rosarito curled up with her stones in her lap, cleaning them with a wet cloth, and passing the time drawing on them whatever occurred to her, which I was happy to inspect.

What secrets of his art can an old man pass on to those he deems worthy to receive them? Let all those learn who come forward, however arrogantly they parade their untested wis-

dom, however sure they are that they have unearthed the ultimate technique! I wanted the little girl to botch her sketches, to ask me for help guiding the clumsy fingers that grasped the lead pencil. I wanted her to succumb to tears that would turn her drawing into a huge, embarrassing smudge. But she made a point of not taking me up on my offer. With her tongue between her teeth, she would draw a straight line with the intense focus that gives beginners a look of strength identical to that of a man about to fell an ox. "No, dear", I would think: "You'll never make it like this".

About midmorning I would be struck by an irresistible need to sleep. The brush moved more slowly across the broad surface, and the chisel grew too heavy for me to hold. So I stretched out on a sofa that the Duchess had given me one Ascension Thursday and was soon on my way to the other side. Rosarito was there, but she wasn't herself: she was a bratty kid sticking out her almost beastly lips and demanding that the old man, who continued napping, go with her into the future. The elderly gentleman tried to drag her by a harness attached to her back while the young thing threw an endless screaming fit. I woke up panic-stricken, convinced that this was a long-forgotten event, and with bleary eyes tried to make out where Rosarito had gotten to.

I thought I saw her standing in front of a sketch of a hellish owl that screeched as it carried her through the sky. Astride its winged shoulders was a hobgoblin with nothing in mind for her but evil. It looked to me as if her entire body had turned white. She was covered from head to toe with some kind of flour that caked the corners of her mouth, and she was holding the golden key to the Paradise that I would never enter. Opening wide the eyes of a dead woman who had suddenly come back to life, she starting talking in such a way that I could understand her by reading her lips. "Good morning, Mr. Francisco – kidneys holding up? Did you get rid of that cough? What about the bunions: still bothering you? And your asshole, Mr. Francisco, is it burning today like a monkey's asshole should? Didn't they flush you out, Mr. Francisco?" (...)

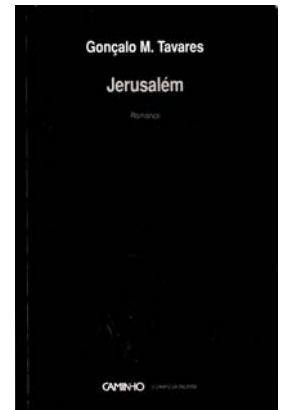
Translated by Ken Krabbenhoft, 2005

Excerpt from *Gêmeos*

Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 2004, 134 pp.



## Jerusalem Jerusalém



### Gonçalo M. Tavares

The Portuguese writer Gonçalo M. Tavares was born in August 1970. He published his first work in December 2001 and in less than three years went on to publish novels, poetry, plays and short fiction, for which he has already been awarded important prizes: *Prémio Ler/Millennium-Bcp* and *Saramago Prize* 2005 for his novel *Jerusalém*, *Prémio Branquinho da Fonseca*, awarded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and *Expresso* newspaper, for *Mr. Valery*, and the award for best new poet of the *Portuguese Association of Writers*, for *Investigações. Novalis*.

He numbers all of his books and organises them into series and lines: the *Misters* – lucid books, amusing yet profound at the same time – the novel series entitled *Black books*, set against the background of moral and human existence in the midst of war (*Jerusalém*, *A man: Klaus Klump*, *Joseph Walser's machine*); and the *Bloom Books*, unclassifiable books, where literary genres are undermined and questioned,

He is an absolutely exceptional case in Portuguese literature. This is not an everyday occurrence. It has happened with Gonçalo M. Tavares, and he can do no other than force a complete brake in literature written in the Portuguese language.

Eduardo Prado Coelho, 2005



I know that the word genius should only be used carefully and sparingly. But I will risk it anyway. As far as I am concerned, this novel is not only the best I've read in Portuguese in recent years. It is a work – and I am not afraid to use the expression – of genius.

José Mário Silva, 2003



His originality meets the best contemporary Portuguese fiction: the direct and dry sentences of Saramago's latest work, (...), the minutely detailed bringing to life of objects we see in Lobo Antunes. But he transcends these influences in an inspiration which is uniquely his.

Maria Alzira Seixo, 2005



Gonçalo M. Tavares. He has come to stay, in a place all of his own.

Eduardo Lourenço



Gonçalo M. Tavares has displayed surprising and measureless skill. This writer will certainly be spoken of by the Swedish committee in a few years' time.

in *Magazine Artes*, 2004



We know that the "Notebooks of Gonçalo M. Tavares" are only just beginning to be written, and that this may eventually be comparable to the Fernando Pessoa phenomenon.

Pedro Mexia, 2003



The French magazine *Lire* has chosen 50 writers for the new century. We can add one. My choice: Gonçalo M. Tavares

The great prose fiction writer of his generation.

Pedro Mexia, 2005



"Jerusalem is a great book, taking its place alongside the great works of Western literature." Gonçalo M. Tavares – "he's no right to be writing so well at only 35: you feel like punching him!"

José Saramago, 2005

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## Chapter IX

### The Mad

1

It's Gada speaking. He's fifteen.

I come in and out of here. They open me like a door and shut me. I've been operated on for eleven years. Seventeen times. They've made a door of me for eleven years. They've been opening me and shutting me. Opening me and shutting me. They've also made a door of my head.

It's Gada, he's fifteen, with a scar on his head.

I don't have a shadow, says Heinrich.

It's hot. The man under the shadow of the tree smokes a cigarette and gobs strongly so that nothing lands within the shadow. I'm having a competition with my gob, says Heinrich. Seeing whether my gob goes further than the tree's shadow.

Heinrich moves away from the tree and goes out into the sun to get his shadow back. You see, pointing. I'm not dead.

He looks at his feet and gobs towards his right foot.

I need water, lady, says Heinrich. But there's not a single lady around.

She's feverish and wants to break the glass. I don't feel my hand, says Mylia. If I break the glass with my hand, I'll feel my hand.

Witold says: if you don't feel your soul break the glass with your soul. He laughs.

The soul shouldn't break the glass. The hand is used to it.

I don't feel my hand, says Mylia.

Count your fingers.

Five fingers.

See, you've got your whole hand.

The hand is missing, says Mylia.

Two women grab her. Mylia opens and closes her right hand dozens of times.

I'm sweeping the hotel, says Marksara.

The hotel is dirty, it's got crumbs and men. It's got butts.

I'm sweeping the hotel. It's full of men, says Marksara. And butts.

They smoke a lot.

I won't stop sweeping, says Marksara.

They've shut me up in here so Mother won't see me die.

Johana says she understands.

A mother mustn't see her daughter die.

Johana cuts the fingers of a glove off so she can mend it after with woollen thread.

It's to save the fingers, she says, laughing.

She doesn't have scissors. She tears the fingers of the glove off, grabbing it and then pulling with her teeth.

My mother had strong teeth, Johana says.

They've shut me up in here so she won't see my teeth.

My mother shut me up in here.

Marko watches television all day long. From the moment he wakes up until he goes to bed. No one can get him away from it.

Something might happen, he says.

He has a hat.

He says that the hat makes his head nervy. But he doesn't want to take it off.

It invents nerves in the head, he says, about the hat.

The hat isn't heavy, he says, offering the hat. No one putting the hat on will fall over.

Nobody accepts the hat. He puts it back on his head.

It was my father who gave it to me when I was fifteen. It's small.

The man hangs his head and cries.

that is poetry books, researches and theatre.

Several of his plays have been performed.

His work has been translated and included in a number of poetry and short story anthologies (Holland, Belgium, Hungary, Brazil) and published in British and American periodicals.

### COPYRIGHT

Dr. Ray-Güde Mertin

Literary Agency

Friedrichstrasse 1

D-61348 Bad Homburg

Phone: 0049-6172-2 98 42

Fax: 0049-6172-2 97 71

info@mertin-litag.de

## BY THE AUTHOR

Selected Works

## Fiction

*O Senhor Valéry* [Mister Valery] 2002; 2004

*O Senhor Henri* [Mister Henri], 2003

*Um homem*: Klaus Klump

[A man: Klaus Klump], 2003

*O Senhor Juarroz* [Mister Juarroz], 2004

*O Senhor Brecht* [Mister Brecht]

2004; 2005

*A Máquina de Joseph Walser*

[Joseph Walser's machine], 2004

*O Senhor Krauss* [Mister Krauss], 2005

*O Senhor Calvino* [Mister Calvino], 2005

*Jerusalém*, 2005

*Água, cão, cavalo, cabeça*

[Water, dog, house, head], 2006

## Poetry

*Livro de dança* [Dance book], 2001

*Investigações. Novalis* [Investigations.

Novalis], 2002

## Theatre

*A colher de Samuel Beckett e outros*

*textos* [Samuel Beckett's spoon and other stories], 2002

*O Homem ou é tonto ou é mulher*

She's got number 53 on her jumper and is eating a sweet.

I'm Martha.

She's very thin.

Martha says: I'm very thin.

She points at the number 53 on her jumper.

When my mother let me play in the park.

Then my mother brought me here. I thought it was a game.

You can see the collar bones underneath, the bones of the thin legs.

My mother used to say my clothes didn't have a body.

He has various maps in his pocket. Maps of the world, of Europe, of Asia.

Stieglitz says: now we're here.

Whenever he stops he takes the maps out of his pocket and consults them. He then uses a marker pen to show where he is.

We are here.

He never says: I'm here. He always says: we are here. Everyday he repeats the same route. You can't see the borders of the countries now due to the lines of the marker pen.

When somebody comes from the outside, Stieglitz goes up to them and whispers:

If you could give me maps.

When somebody says they don't have any, Stieglitz becomes violent.

Then he shuts up. He looks at the person and smiles.

I swallowed a nail, I've got a nail in my throat.

Wisliz shows his throat. He points at a small ridge.

The nail's here, pointing.

The nail won't let me sing.

As a child I ate snails. I got hold of them and ate them. My father didn't like me eating them.

He said it was bad luck.

Rodsa is a woman who's afraid of suffocating to death.

I was a very wealthy woman, she says.

Rodsa is fifty.

When they tell her how old she is, she asks: what's that?

They've explained to her that her age is several times that week that passed since her brother's last visit.

Rodsa says: I don't know what fifty years is.

Rodsa is thin and smokes a lot.

The last time my brother visited me, Rodsa says, I put a short skirt on. So he could see my legs.

My brother brought me cigarettes.

Rodsa touches her sex three times for luck.

I'm still going to have three boys, she says.

Rodsa pats her sex three more times with her right hand.

Rodsa has no children.

Zero percent doesn't exist, says Uberbein, who was a mathematician.

Because of his visits to a prostitute, he's lost his hair.

By the summer I'll have no hair. That's what they've told me.

But zero percent doesn't exist, he repeats.

Uberbein puts his hand in his pocket and shows a handful of salt.

If zero percent existed this wouldn't be here.

He almost starts crying. He composes himself.

It was because of going to a prostitute that I've lost my hair.

I was a maths teacher, says Uberbein.

By the summer I'll have no hair.

She has short white hair.

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She could be everyone's mother.  
Laras is sixty-five.

They say I've got a problem in my head, but it's a lie, says Laras. My mother had short hair like me – and died from a heart problem.

They say I've got a problem in my head, but I won't die from the head. I have a heart problem, and not a head one.

I'll die when my heart stops.

My mother also had short hair.

Laras manages to stick out her chin.

See? I could be everyone's mother.

Janika is black and likes making food.

I like making food, says Janika.

She puts everything she finds in the pot. Stones, grass, cigarette butts, scraps of paper.

You can't waste, she says.

Janika is fifty.

I've been hungry, says Janika. You can't waste. Some men throw cigarettes and butts straight into the pot Janika carries.

I've been hungry. I like making food, says Janika.

Paola is in love.

I've met a boy, says Paola, and starts laughing and lifting her skirt.

Paola is forty and Rudi, the boy, is thirty-two.

I met him here, says Paola.

It was here, Paola points to the corridor leading to the rooms.

Paola says: he's crazy.

I'm going to plait my hair for my boy to think I'm pretty.

But he's crazy, he laughs a lot.

I shouldn't plait my hair for someone who only knows how to laugh. But I'm not pretty either, says Paolo.

Vana grabs Markso's genitals through his trousers.

He's got a big one, says Vana.

It's the biggest here. I've seen them all.

He was in the shower one day, Vana says, and I opened the door and I saw.

Markso's thing is the biggest.

Markso is leaning against a tree. He's smoking a cigarette. Each time Vana touches his genitals he seems to stop thinking for a moment, but carries on indifferently.

Markso only knows how to smoke, says Vana.

There's no hygiene here, says Mylia.

They don't wash me.

Mylia lifts her skirt constantly: she shows her genitals.

There's no hygiene, Mylia insists, they stuck a garden here.

It's shameful to lift your skirt to show, but I've always liked to show. I've always been clean, says Mylia. There's a lack of hygiene here.

They brought me here. It was my husband. Doctor Busbeck. He's important. He says I see souls.

Mylia points to the garden: a lack of hygiene. How can they have made a garden? asks Mylia.

They don't wash me here, it disgusts them to wash my thing, says Mylia.

Wisliz has a bandage on his head.

I was operated on the head, says Wisliz.

They took intelligence away.

They say I'm stupid, that I don't understand.

I'm tired, I can't concentrate.

I need to sleep a lot, says Wisliz.

Ernst. The others mock the way Ernst runs. My name's Ernst. Ernst Spengler.

I like it here.

[The man either he is a fool or he is a woman], 2002

## SELECTED TRANSLATIONS

### English

*Mister Henri* translated by Roopanjali Roy. New Deli: TransBooks, 2006

*Mister Valery* translated by Roopanjali Roy. New Deli: TransBooks, 2005

### French

*Monsieur Valery* translated by Dominique Nédellec. Geneve: La Joie de Lire, 2003

### Italian

*Gerusalemme* translated by Roberto Mulinacci. Milan: Ugo Guanda, 2006

*Il Signor Valéry* translated by Roberto Mulinacci. Milan: Ugo Guanda, 2005

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### Portuguese (Brazil)

*O Senhor Valéry*. Escritos, 2004

*O Senhor Henri*. Escritos, 2004

*O Senhor Brecht*. Casa da palavra, 2005

*A Perna Esquerda de Paris seguido de Roland Barthes e Robert Musil*. Coralina: Lumme, 2005

Chapter X

Kaas

1

Belly down the boy tries to sleep, unsuccessfully. He gets up decidedly, but stops, sits. He lets himself fall back on the bed again. Unused to his body after sleep, Kaas Busbeck, met again that thickness continually grabbing at him: a discomfort; getting up he looked at himself in the mirror.

His thin legs would never allow him to be a soldier. Unhappiness compromised him from the first moments of the day, when he awoke still tired from some harsh sleep. He lit a match. He looked: night still. The match in his hand, alight, proved that night was still in charge of the surroundings. He looked at his knees which were a slight advance on the extraordinary thinness of his legs. However, it would be impossible to chase anyone, or even run away. A general weakness, the doctors said. Just that: general weakness. As if his body forced him to stay where he was a little longer. Laziness or you're there already and, so, there's no need to multiply movements? Certain deficiencies are, sometimes, nature's way of granting our most secret requests, said his father, Theodor Busbeck.

Kaas picked up the clock and suddenly saw in that object an amazing hole in the middle of the compartment where time was concentrated. He pressed his right eye up against the clock as if in hope of seeing something, in addition to the hours of the day that object apparently indicated. With his eye up against the glass that protected the hands, Kaas imagined he was a maker of catastrophes, through the simple image that occurred to him at that moment: the strange, unexpected introduction of one of his long eyelashes into that other apparently separate and mechanical universe: the hands pointing out the hours, minutes, seconds. A tiny eyelash that was capable of confusing time and the normal functioning of days.

He removed his eye: the hands were intact, protected by some stupid glass. Kaas got up and opened the bedroom door. A light in the room, but no one. His father's door was still shut.

Nobody was like Kaas and that hard separateness had touched him early. It wasn't just his absurdly thin legs in relation to the rest of his body, and his particular way of walking which made it seem the distribution of his weight was unbalanced. His personal interests were a gap that could not be crossed in relation to boys and girls of own his age.

Smelling something, he went to the kitchen. Nothing special, just two dirty plates. Kaas' uncontrolled diction was perhaps the most mocked thing, even more than his legs. He could not walk, he could keep still, or even seated, with his legs out of sight, but it was difficult to keep quiet for long in the middle of a group: he'd be ridiculed. Being seated could express a certain acquiescence in the distribution of collective force, but prolonged silence could be seen as provocation; a kind of readiness for revolution, small certainly, circumscribed by a room and half a dozen companions, but revolution: the possibility of denying the meaning of history, however minimal and insignificant. For that reason Kaas had to speak, every now and again. And in speaking he expressed himself through that uncontrolled diction, where certain words finished involuntarily before it was time and others began later, in a turbulence that seemed to put the sentence into a fragile boat. His father, Theodor, would say to him: keep hold of the sentence as if it were an oar, keep hold of the sentence, don't let it rock. But Kaas couldn't.

2

For Kaas vigorous health was something he could only show in photographs. Certainly any distant relative, for example, a Busbeck living on the other side of the world that only got news of his father by post, wouldn't have the notion that he wasn't a normal boy. Theodor would choose the photos and refused to make any written reference to his son's deficiencies, sustaining, without ever expressing it, a certain lie which the image permitted. In a photograph, Kaas' skeletal and disproportionate legs were easily hidden, and the incapacity for normal diction was, as seems obvious, untransferable to a visual document only giving importance to the eyes of the receiver. For various reasons, but perhaps also for that one, Kaas acquired an unexpected second activ-

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ity, along with his studies which, one way or another, he was managing to do, without brilliance, with enormous effort, perhaps even with the excessive aid of his father's good name, but he was carrying on, without even failing a year. Besides normal school, he had the activity of photography, where year after year he seemed to specialise. This activity seemed to condense two moments of comfort in Kaas' existence: manual work, where his skilful fingers would earn the respect of any of his classmates, and the possibility of long silences or perhaps, more appropriately, the easy possibility of dispensing with discourse. The images, the capturing of images properly speaking, became a way of displaying something hiding himself, of being with others from the trunk up, if we can put it like that, in other words: the collective look could fall upon his body without mockery or compassion because, when he was taking a photograph, Kaas was a human who could compete with all the others, on the same level: he became someone you could argue with.

Anyway, the image that had marked him most at school came out of a minor conflict; short insults between him and a classmate that grew in intensity until the moment when neither could say another word without becoming a coward in the eyes of the other. There were the two of them in that unique moment when violent physical contact was inevitable and almost indispensable, when suddenly his opponent, as if he had suddenly remembered something he'd forgotten when trading insults, stopped, and stepping back in a movement that under other circumstances would certainly have been considered cowardly, stepping back, then said to Kaas: I can't fight with you.

It's certain that Kaas had as much force in his arms as his classmates. It was his legs that did not, in the least, have what was needed for a fight between boys. The slightest touch on the legs and he'd go down, definitively, in a sec-

ond the fight would be over. Kaas couldn't punch or be punched because he didn't have legs. I can't fight with you was the most offensive sentence Kaas had ever heard.

### 3

Something strange was present there in his insomnia. Another clock, the one in the kitchen, exuberantly showed the time: three-fifty. However, the strangeness did not come from him, from the fact of him being awake, as that had happened various times. What was beginning to trouble him was the imposing silence that had installed itself throughout the house. There was something quieter than normal.

He opened the curtain a little and looked out onto the street, completely deserted and without a single sound. Up to now, everything was as usual, the house was in one of the good central districts where, at this hour, the bustle still hadn't reached its peak. Nevertheless, the excessive silence didn't come from the street, but rather from the house itself, from the interior of the house.

He went out of the kitchen and went towards the bedroom of his father, Theodor Busbeck. He put his ear to the door: nothing, no noise. He dared to open the door slowly. The bedroom was empty. Theodor had gone out.

Kaas was still for some moments, as if gathering enough force to accept he was scared. But he didn't stay like that – like someone who has received stunning information – for long. He went to his room and got dressed. He was going to look for his father in the city.

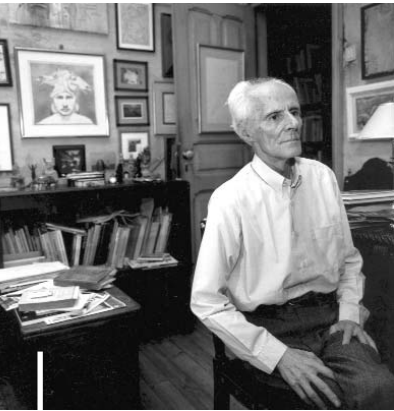
Kaas was angry. As a doctor and as a father, Theodor had no right to leave him alone in the middle of the night.

Cowardice, he murmured. (...)

Translated by Mick Greer, 2005

Excerpt from *Jerusalém*

Lisbon: Caminho, 2005, 256 pp.



Luísa Ferreira

## *Capital Punishment* *Pena capital*

MÁRIO CESARINY  
PENNA CAPITAL

ASSÍRIO & ALVIM

### Mário Cesariny

Born in Lisbon 1923. He studied arts. He is a poet and a painter. He has translated Rimbaud and Antonin Artaud. He first rose to fame as a writer with the first group of Lisbon surrealists. His poetry is spontaneous, subversive, fiery, and animated by a profound feeling of opposition to institutionalised values at the level of thought, social customs, culture and eroticism.

#### COPYRIGHT

Assírio & Alvim  
Rua Passos Manuel, 67b  
P-1150-258 LISBOA  
Phone: + 351 213583033  
Fax: + 351 3583039  
assírio@assírio.pt

Mário Cesariny de Vasconcelos has remained, his whole life long, an "amateur" of art and of life. A lover, not a professional. And so it seems like an accident that he stands out as one of Portugal's major poets of the second half of the 20th century, as well as a notable painter. When I say "amateur", I don't mean that his literary and artistic activities were a sideline. They were, in fact, his full-time "profession". But he didn't pursue them with the care or ambition typical of a professional.

Richard Zenith, 2005



(...) Surrealism, for this poet, was a lifestyle, one that constantly spat on conventions and pushed against the limits imposed by an autocratic political regime, by society at large, and by human reason itself. One of his most famous poems, "you are welcome to elsinore", is a scathing indictment of Portugal under Salazar, whose small-minded and isolationist philosophy of government ("Proudly alone" was one of the dictator's mottos for the nation) infected daily life itself, standing like an impassable wall "between us and words", making communication, poetry and love's free expression all but impossible.

For Cesariny, a homosexual, the open expression of love was especially problematic (he was occasionally arrested for "immoral" behavior), such that love became almost a synonym for freedom. A number of his poems document both the liberating hope ("poem that can serve as an afterword") and liberating effect ("de profundis amamus") of love.

Richard Zenith, 2005





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## Poems

from *Pena Capital (1957)*

Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2004

### *you are welcome to elsinore*

Between us and words there's molten metal  
between us and words there are spinning  
[propellers  
that can kill us    ravish us    wrench  
from our inner depths the most worthwhile  
[secret  
between us and words there are burning profiles  
spaces full of people with their backs turned  
tall poisonous flowers    closed doors  
and stairs and ticking clocks and seated children  
waiting for their time and their precipice

Along the walls in which we live  
there are words of life    words of death  
there are vast words that wait for us  
and other, fragile words that have stopped  
[waiting  
there are words lit up like boats  
and there are words that are men, words that  
[conceal  
their secret and their position

Between us and words, without a sound,  
the hands and walls of Elsinore

And there are words of night words that are  
[moans  
illegible words that rise to our lips  
diamond words unwritten words  
words that can't be written  
because here we don't have any violin strings  
we don't have all the world's blood or the air's  
[whole embrace

and the arms of lovers write high overhead  
far beyond the blue where they rust and die

maternal words just shadow just sobbing  
just spasms just love just solitude's dissolution

Between us and words those who are walled in,  
and between us and words our duty to speak



### *poem*

Light occurs when  
shadows are eliminated  
Shadows are what exist  
shadows have their own exhaustive life  
not on this or that side of light but in its very  
[heart  
intensely loving    insanely beloved  
and they spread over the ground their arms of  
[gray light  
that enter human eyes at the corners

On the other hand the shadow called light  
doesn't illuminate    objects    really  
objects live in the dark  
in a perpetual surrealist aurora  
which we cannot contact  
except the way lovers do  
with eyes closed  
and lamps in our fingers    lamps on our lips

## BY THE AUTHOR

Selected Works

### Poetry

*Manual de Prestidigitação*

[Manual of Prestidigitation], 1957;  
revised, 1981

*Pena Capital* [Capital Punishment], 1957;  
revised, 2004

*Nobilíssima Visão* [Most Noble Vision],  
1959; revised, 1991

*Planisfério e Outros Poemas* [Planisphere  
and Other Poems], 1961

*A Cidade Queimada* [The Burnt City],  
1965; revised, 1988

*O Virgem Negra* [The Black Virgin], 1989

### Anthologies, essays and other prose:

*Surrealismo/Abjeccionismo*  
[Surrealism Abjectionism], 1963;  
revised, 1992

*A Intervenção Surrealista* [The Surrealist  
Intervention], 1966; revised, 1997

*As Mãos na Água a Cabeça no Mar*  
[Hands in the Water, Head at Sea], 1972;  
revised, 1985

*Titânia e a Cidade Queimada*  
[Titânia and the Burnt City], 1977

*Antologia do Cadáver Esquisito*  
[Anthology of the Strange Corpse], 1989

## SELECTED TRANSLATIONS

### Spanish

*Antología poética* translated by Vicente Araguas. Madrid: Visor Libros, 2004

*De Profundis Amamus*, translated by Perfecto E. Cuadrado. Mérida, 2001

*Manual de Prestidigitación*, translated by X. Trigo. Barcelona, 1990

*Ortofrenia y otros poemas*, translated by Perfecto E. Cuadrado. Madrid, 1989

### French

*Labyrinthe du chant*. Anthologie, translated by Isabel Meyrelles. Bordeaux, 1994

### Italian

*Titânia*, translated by Livia Apa. Naples, 1997.

### *de profundis amamus*

de profundis amamus

Yesterday  
at eleven  
you smoked  
a cigarette  
I found you  
sitting there  
we stayed and missed  
all your streetcars  
mine  
by their very nature  
were missed

We walked  
five miles  
no one saw us go by  
except  
of course  
the doormen  
it's in the nature of things  
to be seen  
by doormen

Look  
as only you know how  
at the street    manners  
The Public  
the crease in your trousers  
is shivering  
and four thousand people are interested  
in this

It's all right    hug me  
with the perfectly blue circles  
of your eyes  
it will be this way for a long time  
many centuries will arrive before we do  
but don't worry  
don't worry  
too much  
we have only to do  
with the present  
perfect  
pirates with the  
wonder-struck    wondrous    unique  
eyes of an impassible cat  
our strange verb  
has no past or future



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*to a dead rat found in a park*

Here this creature ended its vast career  
as a dark and living rat beneath the starry expanse  
its diminutive size only humiliates  
those who want everything to be enormous  
and who can only think in human or arboreal terms  
for surely this rat used as well as it knew how (or didn't  
[know)  
the miracle of its tiny feet - so close to its snout! -  
which were after all just right, serving perfectly  
for clawing, scurrying, securing food or beating a retreat,  
[when necessary

So is everything as it should be, O "God of small  
[cemeteries"?  
But who knows who can know when a mistake has been  
[made  
in hell's central offices? Who can be sure  
that this creation so disdained by the world  
but with a world inside it  
wasn't initially conceived to be a prince or judge of  
[nations?  
The worries it aroused in housewives and physicians!  
Who are we to play at good and evil when they're beyond  
[us?

Some lad understood the uniqueness of its life  
and ran over it with the wheel by which, eye to eye,  
the victim and the executioner love each other

It had no friends? It deceived its parents?

It ran all about, a tiny body that had fun  
and now just lies there, gooshy, smelly.

What sort of conclusion does this poem,  
without exaggeration, merit?  
Romantic? Classical? Regionalist?

What end belongs to a brave and humble body  
killed at the height of its lyrical powers?



*being beauteous*

My English friend who entered the bedroom and drew the  
[curtains with a single swipe  
knew what he was drawing  
I say he said you'll say it was shocking  
it's that we were strangers    strangers and foreigners  
and so close to each other in that house  
but I see more widely    more darkly inside the body  
and I've discovered that light is something for the rich  
those who spend their lives gazing at the sun  
cultivating bees in their sex organs    lyres in their heads  
and no sooner does night touch the white strip of beach  
than they run and phone the police

And it's not so much the diamonds and conveniences and  
[housemaids

I mean the rich in spirit  
rich in experience  
rich in knowing how  
semen flows out one side and feces out the other  
and in the sweet in-betweens  
there's urine and libraries train stations the theater  
all that has been loved  
and stored in the corner of an eye imploring more light for  
[it to have been true

My English friend remembered only  
simple beginning gestures  
and he drew the curtains and created  
beyond the feeble kiss we can kiss  
the endless voyage of no return



*voice from a stone*

I don't adore the past  
I'm not three times a master  
I made no pact with the underworld  
that's not why I'm here  
sure I saw Osiris but at the time he was called Luiz  
sure I was with Isis but I told her my name was João  
no word is ever complete  
not even in German which has such big ones  
and so I'll never succeed in telling you what I know  
unless by an arrow from the wind's blue and black bow

I won't say as someone else did that I know I know  
[nothing

I know that I've always known a few things  
and that this counts for something  
and that I hurl whirlwinds and see the rainbow  
believing it to be the supreme agent  
of the world's heart  
vessel of freedom purged of menstruation  
living rose before our eyes  
The future city where "poetry will no longer give rhythm  
to action since it will march ahead of it"  
is still far far away  
Will there be an end to the preachers of death?  
An end to the reapers of love?  
An end to the torture of eyes?  
Then pass me that jackknife  
because there's a lot we need to start pruning  
pass it don't look at me as if I were a wizard  
entrusted with the miracle of truth  
"the swinging of an ax and the goal of not being  
[sacrificed won't build anything under the sun"  
nothing is written after all



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from *Manual de Prestidigitação (1957)*

Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2005

*a poem that can serve as an afterword*

streets where the danger is obvious  
green arms of occult practices  
corpses floating on the water  
sunflowers  
and a body  
a body for blocking the day's lamps  
a body for falling through a landscape of birds  
for going out early in the morning and coming back very late  
surrounded by dwarfs and lilac fields  
a body for covering your absence  
like a bedspread  
a place setting  
a perfume

this or its contrary, but somehow gaping  
and with many people there to see what it is  
this or a population of sixty thousand souls devouring  
[scarlet pillows on their way to the  
sea  
and arriving, at dusk,  
next to the submarines

this or a torso dislodged from a verse  
and whose death makes everyone proud  
o pallid city built  
like a fever between two floors!  
we'll home deliver  
dirt for filling up candelabras  
smoldering beds for erect lovers  
slates with forbidden words  
- a woman for the fellow who's losing interest in life  
[(Here, take her!),  
two grandchildren for the old woman at the end of the line  
[(That's all we have!) -

we'll pillage the museum give a diadem to the world and  
[then require it to be put back

in the same place,  
and for you and for me, favorably situated,  
some poison to pour into the giant's eyes

this or a face a solitary face like a boat in search of  
[a gentle breeze for the night  
if we're sand that's sifted  
in a slack wind among painted bushes  
if an intention is bound to reach its shore like  
[the ocean's currents shipwrecks and  
storms

if the man of hostels and boardinghouses lifts his damp  
[cratered forehead  
if the sun outside is shining more than ever  
if for a minute  
it's worth  
waiting

this or happiness in the simple form of a pulse  
shimmering amid the foliage of the loftiest lamps  
this or the said happiness the airplane of cards  
that comes in through the window that goes out  
[by the roof

so does the pyramid exist?  
so does the pyramid say things?  
is the pyramid each person's secret with the world?

yes my love the pyramid exists  
the pyramid says many many things  
the pyramid is the art of dancing in silence

and in any case

there are public squares where a lily can be sculpted  
subtle regions where blueness flows  
gestures belonging to no one boats underneath flowers  
a song by which to hear you arrive

*Words to Prince Epaminondas,  
a Lad with a Great Future*

Strip yourself of truths  
the great before the small  
your own before any others  
dig a pit and bury them  
at your side  
first those that they imposed on you when you were still  
[a docile child  
and had no stain except for that of a strange name  
then those that as you grew you painfully put on  
the truth of bread the truth of tears  
for you are neither flower nor mourning nor consolation  
[nor star  
then those you won with your semen  
where the morning raises high an empty mirror  
and a child cries between clouds and an abyss  
then those they're going to place above your portrait  
when you provide them with the great remembrance  
they all expect so anxiously expecting it of you  
Then nothing, just you and your silence  
and veins of coral tearing at our wrists  
And now, my lord, we can proceed across  
the naked plains  
your body with clouds upon its shoulders  
my hands full with a white beard  
There, there will be no delay no shelter no arrival  
just a square of fire above our heads  
a street of stone to the end of the lights  
and the silence of death as we pass

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from *A Cidade Queimada (1965)*

Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2000

The ship of mirrors  
doesn't sail, it gallops

Its sea is a forest  
serving as level plane

At dusk its flanks  
mirror the sun and moon

That's why time loves  
to lie down with it

Shipowners don't like  
its clear and bright route

(To someone in motion  
it looks stationary)

When it reaches the city  
no wharf gives it shelter

Its bilge brings nothing  
it departs with nothing

Voices and heavy air  
are all it transports

And a species of door  
in its mirrored mast

Its ten thousand captains  
all have the same face

The same dark belt  
the same rank and office

When one man revolts  
there are ten thousand mutineers

(The way objects are reflected  
in the eyes of a fly)

And when one of them ascends  
and his body climbs the masts  
and he scans the ocean depths

The whole ship gallops  
(like the stars in space)

From the world's beginning  
to the world's end

Translated by Richard Zenith, 2005



## Adília Lopes

Adília Lopes was born in Lisbon in 1960. She has always lived in the same house, surrounded by cats since 1982. She studied Physics at the University of Lisbon, but dropped the subject in 1982, graduating in Portuguese and French Literature (1988) from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon. She went on to specialise in Document and Archive studies, but has devoted herself exclusively to Poetry. In 1999 she received a literary creativity grant from the Portuguese Institute for Books and Libraries, which allowed her to work on her drama writing. A Lisbon theatre company later performed a play based on her texts.

### COPYRIGHT

Adília Lopes  
Rua José Estevão, 16 - 1º  
P-1150-202 LISBOA  
phone: 21 354 87 82

## Work

### *Obra*



Adília Lopes self-published her first book, in 1985, under the title *A Rather Dangerous Game*, a fitting epithet for her entire poetic career.

(...)What was truly "dangerous", however, in terms of forging a career, was the poetry itself. It had apparently little to do with the Portuguese poetic tradition, though it was firmly rooted in Portuguese culture and language, being full of word games, idioms, references to Portuguese proverbs, sayings, children's songs and historical events, as well as frequent citations or borrowings from other national (and international) writers. But was it worthwhile as poetry? Many readers and critics had their doubts, but Adília Lopes seems to be winning the game. She has a strong and loyal following, not only in Portugal but also in Brazil, and some important critics and academics have taken up her cause. Others, meanwhile, continue to throw up their hands in exasperation.

Richard Zenith, 2005

(...) Though the first poem of her first book evokes Esther Greenwood, the narrator of Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, and a later poem evokes a persona of Anne Sexton named Elizabeth, Adília Lopes doesn't write for therapeutic purposes, and her poetry, despite its candor, is not of the confessional variety. Her subject matter is much broader: the world, and her relationship with it. Put that way, the observation is trite: it could apply to the majority of poets. The difference is that Lopes writes about the world as she knows it (and this includes her childhood memories and extensive readings) in the crudest terms, without any attempt to aestheticize it or to endow her verses with a lofty aura.

Richard Zenith, 2005



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from *Obra*

Lisbon: Mariposa Azual, 2000

*Making my Peace with Memories*

In the mirror I see myself  
pieced together with glue  
more beautiful  
than before  
like the Zen plate  
whose fractures  
are highlighted  
with gold  
I'm the work of good  
and bad luck  
the work of affection  
and the lack of it  
Narcissus and anti-Narcissus  
living is believing



*Childhood Memories*

We loved raspberry compote  
and we were given a dish with more raspberry  
[compote  
than usual  
but  
our maid and our great-aunt  
for our own good  
because we were sick  
had laced the raspberry compote  
with spoonfuls of medicine  
that tasted bad  
the raspberry compote didn't taste the same  
and it had white streaks  
this happened to us once and that was enough  
we never again jumped up and down when  
[there was  
raspberry compote for dessert  
we never again jumped up and down for  
[anything  
we can't say  
how yucky the medicine from our childhood tasted!  
how yummy the raspberry compote from our  
[childhood was!  
when we found out about the mixture  
of raspberry compote with the medicine  
we fell silent  
later we heard about entropy  
we learned that it's not easy to separate  
raspberry compote from medicine once they're  
[mixed together  
that's how it is in books  
that's how it is in childhood  
and books are like childhood  
which is like Catrina's little doves  
  
one is yours  
another is mine  
yet another is someone else's

BY THE AUTHOR

Selected Works

Poetry

*Um jogo bastante perigoso* [A Rather dangerous game], Lisbon, 1985

*O poeta de Pondichéry* [The poet of Pondichery], Lisbon, 1986

*A pão e água de Colónia* [On bread and eau de cologne], Lisbon, 1987

*O Marquês de Chamilly* [The marquis of Chamilly], Lisbon, 1987

*O decote da dama de espadas* [The neckline of the Queen of spades], Lisbon, 1988

*Os 5 livros de versos salvaram o tio* [The five books of verse that saved my uncle], Lisbon, 1991

*Maria Cristina Martins*, Lisbon, 1992

*O peixe na água* [Fish in water], Lisbon, 1993

*A continuação do fim do mundo* [The continuation of the end of the world], Lisbon, 1995

*Clube da poetisa morta* [Dead poetess's club], Lisbon, 1997

*Sete rios entre campos* [Seven rivers among fields], Lisbon, 1999

*Florabela Espanca espanca*, Lisbon, 1999

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*Irmã barata, irmã batata*

[Sister cockroach, sister potato],

Braga-Coimbra, 2000

*Obra* [Work], Lisbon, 2000

*A mulher-a-dias* [The daily woman],

Lisbon, 2002

*César a César* [Caesar to Caesar], Lisbon,

2003

*Poemas novas* [New poems], Lisbon, 2004

## SELECTED TRANSLATIONS

### German

*Klub der toten Dichterin* translated by

Elfriede Engelmayer. Berlin: Tranvia, 2000

### Dutch

*De dichter van Pondichéry* translated by

August Willemsen. Rotterdam: Poetry

International, 1997

### French

*Maria Cristina Martins Et Le poète de*

*Pondichéry* translated by Henry Deluy.

CIDADE: Fourbis, 1993

### Spanish

*El Poeta de Pondichéry* translated by

Mario Morales Castro, 1998. Mexico,

1998

### Italian

*Il Poeta di Pondichéry* translated by Carlo

Vittorio Cattaneo. Roma: Empiria, 1988



I don't like books  
as much  
as Mallarmé seems  
to have liked them  
I'm not a book  
and when people say  
I really like your books  
I wish I could say  
like the poet Cesariny  
listen  
what I'd really like  
is for you to like me  
books aren't made  
of flesh and blood  
and when I feel  
like crying  
it doesn't help  
to open a book  
I need a hug  
but thank God  
the world isn't a book  
and chance doesn't exist  
still and all I really like  
books  
and believe in the Resurrection  
of books  
and believe that in Heaven  
there are libraries  
and reading and writing



### Candy

She dropped the photograph  
and when a stranger ran up from behind  
to give it to her  
she refused to touch it  
but you dropped it miss  
I couldn't have dropped it  
because it isn't mine  
she didn't want anyone  
and especially not a stranger  
to suspect there was any relation  
between her and the photograph  
it was as if she'd dropped  
a blood-soaked handkerchief  
because she was the one in the photograph  
and nothing belongs to us more than blood  
which is why when someone pricks their finger  
they stick it right in their mouth to suck the  
[blood  
the stranger understood  
it's a picture of you miss  
it may be a picture of someone who looks just  
[like me  
but it isn't me  
the stranger was a kind person  
he didn't insist  
and since he knew beggars  
don't have money for taking pictures  
he gave the photograph to a beggar  
who ate it up like candy



### *Curlpapers*

We'll never cry enough  
for having wanted to be beautiful  
at all costs  
I wanted to be beautiful  
and I thought ringlets would be enough  
to make me beautiful  
I asked to have my hair done in ringlets  
using a curling iron and curlpapers  
they pulled my hair this way and that  
I screamed  
they told me that to be beautiful  
you have to suffer  
then my hair got all burnt  
and wouldn't grow back  
I had to start going around with a wig  
you have to suffer to be beautiful  
but suffering doesn't necessarily make us beautiful  
suffering doesn't imply a reward  
as a logical consequence  
a toothache may stir pity in our mother  
who to soothe us but not knowing for what  
gives us a piece of candy  
but the candy makes our teeth hurt even more  
the consequence of suffering  
can be more suffering  
the cause following the effect  
the motive for suffering being one of the consequences  
of the suffering  
curlpapers being a consequence of the wig



### *Weather Report*

God didn't give me  
a boyfriend  
he gave me  
the white martyrdom  
of doing without one

I've known some potential  
boyfriends  
they were swine  
they were elephants  
and me pearls  
and crystal

You don't want me  
you never did  
(why, for God's sake?)

Life  
is free  
and the book  
isn't free

I cry  
it rains  
but that's  
Verlaine

Or:  
such a beautiful  
day  
and I'm not  
fornicating



*Thirty-year-old Woman*

You'll love  
my shiny  
nose  
my stretch marks  
my blackheads  
my writings  
my ailments  
my quirks  
and my cats that go  
with being a spinster  
or else you won't love me



Pleasures and displeasures  
lead to the poem  
as they might lead  
to the precipice  
the poem speaks of the precipice  
where there will be weeping  
and gnashing of teeth  
and there won't be Kleenex  
or Dr. Abilio Loff  
my dear dentist  
the poem speaks of the precipice  
averted in the nick of time  
a bad poem kills no one  
(a living donkey is worth more  
than a dead wise man)



1  
Penelope  
is a spider  
that spins  
a web  
the web is Penelope's  
Odyssey

2  
Penelope is  
always  
sitting down

3  
Ulysses  
is abstract  
Penelope is concrete  
the web is abstract  
and concrete

4  
Penelope gets married  
to Homer  
Ulysses  
never lands



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*Elisabeth Doesn't Work Here Anymore*

(with a few things from Anne Sexton)

I've already walked from breakfast to madness  
I've already gotten sick on studying morse code  
and drinking coffee with milk  
I can't do without Elisabeth  
why did you fire her madam?  
what harm was Elisabeth doing me?  
I only like Elisabeth  
to wash my hair  
I can't stand to have you touch my hair madam  
I only come here madam  
for Elisabeth to wash my hair  
only she knows the colors and scents and thickness  
I like in shampoos  
only she knows how I like the water almost cold  
running down the back of my head  
I can't do without Elisabeth  
don't try to tell me that time heals all wounds  
I was counting on her for the rest of my life  
Elisabeth was the princess of all the foxes  
I needed her hands in my hair  
ah if only there were knives for cutting your  
throat madam I'm not coming back  
to your antiseptic tunnel  
once I was beautiful now I'm myself  
I don't want to be a ranter and alone  
again in the tunnel what did you do to Elisabeth?

Elisabeth was the princess of all the foxes  
why did you take Elisabeth away from me?  
Elisabeth doesn't work here anymore  
is that all you have to say to me madam  
with a sentence like that in my head  
I don't want to go back to my life

Translated by Richard Zenith, 2005



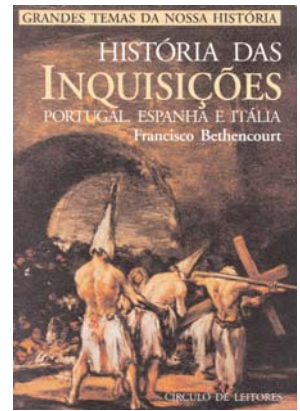
Luísa Ferreira

## Francisco Bethencourt

Born in Lisbon in 1955, he is an historian, essayist, and cultural manager. Currently Charles Boxer Professor at King's College, London, he was director of the National Library of Portugal, director of the Gulbenkian Cultural Centre in Paris, and taught at Universidade Nova de Lisboa. He founded the journal *Leituras*, and was director of the *Archives of Gulbenkian Cultural Centre*.

He began his career by studying magic, which in his view is crucial to understand how past people thought and behaved. Following a monograph on Portugal in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, he expanded his research to Southern Europe. Struck by the means used by the Catholic Church to marginalise and persecute competing systems of knowledge, believe and orientation, he decided to conduct his second major research project on the Inquisition, the biggest disciplinary institution in Early Modern Europe, whose impact lasted for centuries. It was at that stage that he developed a

## History of the Inquisitions *História das Inquisições*



(...) Until now, we have lacked a comprehensive, reliable, comparative study of the broad range of inquisitorial systems: we have even lacked an agreed-on methodology for writing such a study.

Francisco Bethencourt has solved both problems in a single volume. Bethencourt's *L'inquisition à l'époque moderne* promises to survey the tribunals in Spain, Portugal, and Italy from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and does so remarkably successfully in an attractive volume produced in the sturdy and clear *Fayard* format that has recently served Carlrichard Brühl's *Naissance de deux peuples* (Paris, 1994) so very well. (...)

Edward Peters, in *Journal of Modern History*. 69, 1997



(...) Bethencourt brings two great advantages to his study of the three great Mediterranean Inquisitions. The first is his superb knowledge of his own country's Holy Office, which has rarely been properly grasped, let alone situated satisfactorily in a comparative framework. In many ways, Portugal stands in the middle of this trio. Although younger, smaller, and less well studied than its Spanish counterpart, it was nonetheless older, better articulated, better recorded, and on balance less difficult to understand than its Roman counterpart. As a Portuguese studying in Italy, Bethencourt has positioned himself ideally for explaining how his nation's peculiar

institution helps illuminate the history of its more famous Spanish and Papal cousins. He could have simply have given us – perhaps he will also give us – a detailed synthesis of the Portuguese Inquisition; but by placing it within a comparative setting, he has done much more.

Bethencourt's second advantage is his skilful manipulation of thick descriptions, which enables him to create richly innovative portraits of the symbolic apparatus and institutional strategies employed by each inquisition. His style of bureaucratic portraiture owes more to Norbert Elias than to Max Weber. Organizing his book around four areas (ritual and etiquette; forms of organisation; modes of action; and, last but far from least, systems of representation), Bethencourt ventures into such virtually-unknown subjects as inquisitorial emblems (pp.87-96) or forms of protocol with the flair of an anthropologist. From the language of inquisitorial edicts to the remarkably diverse patterns of recruiting familiars of the subtle changes in European procedural modes under colonial conditions, very little of what he refers to as their "administrative culture" escapes him. Even when apologize to his readers for reviewing relatively well-studied terrain in his third section ("modes of action"), Bethencourt provides fresh Portuguese data to move scholarly debate beyond its previous level, a simple comparison between Spain and Italy. (...)

William Monter, in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 1996

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from *História das Inquisições*

Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1994

The prolongation of inquisitorial activity during a period of around three centuries (or even longer) is owed precisely to the capacity of tribunals to adapt to different political, social and cultural contexts. Above all, their flexibility: the *autos-da-fé* in Spain were completely taken up with the persecution of New Christians of Jewish origin during the first decades in which they functioned; when this source dried up, they turned to the old Christians from the countryside, the *alumbrados* in the towns and the Moriscos; at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup>, with the massive entry of Portuguese into Spain, once again they persecuted Judaism; during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the 18<sup>th</sup> century they prosecuted heretical propositions, blasphemy and the new spiritual or philosophical currents (Molinism, Masonry), without giving up their pursuit of New Christians. In Portugal, on the other hand, inquisitorial activity was almost exclusively concerned with Judaism throughout the entire period in which it operated. In a context in which the Jewish population, converted by violence was much more important, the Portuguese Inquisition avoided using up this “reserve”, managing to maintain a regular supply of this kind of “client” up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Only the Lisbon tribunal carried out more diversified activities, directed even in the 16<sup>th</sup> century against the Lutherans and Moriscos, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries against the deviant New Christians. The different models of inquisitorial action can be seen in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies. In the latter case, the tribunals of Lima, Mexico and Cartagena de Índias persecuted in particular

New Christians and descendants of converted Indians, accused of heretical propositions, blasphemy and “superstitions”, as well as New Christians of Portuguese origin in the period of unification of the Crowns. In Brazil, the New Christians and mestizos undergo the greatest number of trials, while New Christians of Portuguese origin represent 50% of the trials. In the Portuguese colonies in East Africa and Asia, the Goa tribunal mainly persecuted the local converted populations (Islamism until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, gentility in the majority of cases from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century), but also the Old Christians, some of them originating from other European countries (heretical propositions, blasphemy, Protestantism, Islamism), and the New Christians of Jewish origin (these last two categories were persecuted above all in the initial phase, disappearing from the lists of condemned throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century).

In the Italic Peninsula, the situation was also varied. In the main Northern States, with strong commercial ties to Central Europe, the Roman Inquisition persecuted Protestants, above all in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as well as witches, while in the Southern States inquisitorial activity was concentrated on the “minor” offences of heretical propositions, blasphemy and superstition.

Translated by Patrícia Odber de Baubeta, 2005



from *A Memória da Nação*

[co-edited with Diogo Ramada Curto]

Lisbon: Sá da Costa, 1991

The memory of the nation is almost omnipresent, placing the accents on people’s everyday lives, shaping their way of living and

comparative approach which has defined his work as historian since.

He next co-edited a new history of the Portuguese expansion. To overcome the traditional nationalistic framework of analysis, he invited foreign and Portuguese scholars with an experience of intellectual exchange, and included comparative chapters.

The comparison of different European empires and their impact at a local level in the long run called his attention to the issue of how social discrimination is produced. Systems of social classification, which spread in time and space, shaped the way people perceived others and themselves until nowadays. To understand how these taxonomies were established, how they resisted social change, how they were replaced but nevertheless influenced successive systems, has become a major motivation for his recent work. This is why he decided to focus his current research on the history of racism in the Atlantic world, comparing Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch and English experiences. National identity is another subject which concerns him. He did both historical research and field work concerning Portuguese communities in the United States (New England), France and England. He includes in his analysis historical trends to reinforce collective identity, major events which reshaped collective feelings, and social practices aiming to distinguish Portuguese communities of emigrants. The relationship between insiders and outsiders, active citizens and distant

emigrants, family and territory, are some of the issues at stake in this research placed in the long run.

## COPYRIGHT

Francisco Bethencourt

email: francisco.bethencourt@kcl.ac.uk

## BY THE AUTHOR

Selected works

*História da Expansão Portuguesa* [History of the Portuguese Expansion] (co-editor), 5 vols..Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1998-1999

*L'Inquisition à l'époque moderne. Espagne, Portugal et Italie, XV<sup>e</sup>-XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles.* (Inquisition in the Early Modern World) Paris : Fayard, 1995 (with Spanish, Portuguese and Brazilian editions)

*A memória da nação* [The Memory of the Nation] (co-editor). Lisbon: Sá da Costa, 1991

*O imaginário da magia. Feiticeiras, saladores e nigromantes no século XVI.* [The Imaginary of Magic] Lisbon: Universidade Aberta, 1987

(a revised edition was published in São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2004)

*Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800* (co-editor). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006

*Correspondence in the age of printing* (co-editor). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006

feeling, demarcating the present and the future as a way of representing an identity constructed over a period of eight centuries, though not continuously.<sup>1</sup> It is found in the monuments<sup>2</sup> which commemorate collective deeds and anonymous sacrifices (like the Battle of Aljubarrota, the feats of the Discoveries, the dead of the Peninsular War, the fallen of the Great War) or which celebrate kings and heroes, politicians, literary figures or scientists (like the statues of King Afonso Henriques, Nuno Álvares Pereira, Teófilo Braga, Egas Moniz). It is visible in town planning, namely through place names, but also through the very configuration of squares and streets, full to bursting with historical references.<sup>3</sup> It is inscribed in the landscape, both in the network of castles and fortresses that frame the frontier zones and coastal areas, and the ways that urban nuclei have been established and agricultural lands have been modelled. It is incorporated into the perception of the recent past and the distant past, playing an important role in the way the historical community conceives itself and positions itself vis-à-vis the others. It is revealed by the literary works that crystallise socially sensitive moments and express the ways in which awareness is attained.

Collective memory,<sup>4</sup> however, does not move forward in a cumulative, linear, spontaneous manner. Recent examples show us how symbolic struggles are waged around the naming of streets, squares and public works (28 of May Avenue / Avenue of the Armed Forces, Salazar Bridge / 25 of April Bridge, Areeiro Square, Sá Carneiro Square), historical facts and figures (let us not forget the controversies about Prince Henry the Navigator or the painted panels of Nuno Gonçalves), consecratory dates (remember the silencing of the 5<sup>th</sup> of October under the

Estado Novo or the recent introduction of new elements into the 10<sup>th</sup> of June ceremony). These symbolic struggles show us how the past is not a succession of raw facts fixed by History (often seen as the guardian of memory and the judge competent to select and appreciate the “important facts”); the past is perceived in different ways by men and women according to the time, social and cultural milieu or the economic and political situation in which they find themselves.

Translated by Patrícia Odber de Baubeta, 2005

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<sup>1</sup> In a wider sense, the presence of the past in everyday life has been the subject of a rich and stimulating study by David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985. See also more recently, the study and respective bibliographical indications of Paul Connerton, *How Societies remember*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> The idea that monuments express and shape the memory of the nation constitutes a research area that has been investigated in recent years, among others by Mona Ozouf, Maurice Agulhon and Antoine Prost, in the work edited by Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*. 1 *La République*, Paris, Gallimard, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Among the studies of statuary and urban place names mention should be made of the contributions by June Hergrove and Daniel Milo in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*. II. *La Nation*, vol. III, Paris, Gallimard, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> This notion, proposed by Maurice Halbwachs in *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris, PUF, 1925, e *La mémoire collective*, Paris, PUF, 1950, allows us to locate memory on the same level as lived history, memory apprehended socially as the result of group conflicts and related to spatial and temporal conditions.



from *História da Expansão Portuguesa vol. I*

Francisco Bethencourt and Kirti Chaudhuri (eds.)  
Lisbon: Circulo de Leitores, 1998

*The contact between peoples and civilisations*

The *Relazione del reame di Congo et delle circonvicine contrade*, published by Filippo Pigafetta in 1591 on the basis of written and oral testimony presented by Duarte Lopes, gives as the reasons for the “cooling” of the Christian religion in the kingdom of the Congo the scarcity of bishops, the promiscuity, the refusal to search for metals and the transfer of the most of the traffic to Angola. But, if we jump forward almost a century and analyse the *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas* [General History of the Angolan Wars], a text written in 1681 by António de Oliveira Cadornega, or even the *Descrizione de’ tre regni Congo, Matamba et Angola*, published by Father Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi da Montecuccolo in 1687 in Bologna, the perception of the local people is already radically different. The first case involves a royal official directly involved in the wars in Angola, who sets out to narrate the conquest of the territory by the Portuguese from Paulo Dias de Novais onward. The shift from the evangelization phase and their peaceful presence in the kingdom of the Congo to the phase of territorial conquest is not even questioned, since it is part of the reality to which the author belongs, referring with the greatest disdain to the local “pagans” and “barbarians”. In the case of Father Cavazzi, it is highly significant that he should dedicate a whole chapter, in Book One, to the “natural and moral” defects of the inhabitants, beginning with the following paragraph:

My pen will write strange things about the customs of these three kingdoms, and in my capacity as religious I will not cease to be vexed by this matter, both because the lack of civilisation makes them abominable, and because their difference from our customs makes them incredible. (Montecuccolo, 1965: I, 81).

In his account, based in part on his direct experience of missionary work in Angola from 1654 to 1667, we encounter the same unbridgeable divide, this time made perfectly explicit, from the customs of the local population. One might say that within the space of a century and a half the attempt to “understand” and “assimilate” the local realities to the European universe had disappeared, and the barrier between one civilisation and another, as far as ways of acting and thinking are concerned, now appeared to be huge and insurmountable.

(...)

*Configurations of the empire*

Our working hypothesis is that the maintenance of the Portuguese Empire during more than three centuries was due to the establishment and reproduction of a strong colonial bureaucracy that progressively divided into relatively autonomous interest groups (military, financial, legal, commercial), but with coherent objectives that contributed to the development of the administration. This bureaucracy was organised into a typology of posts that allowed it to function in a network, occupying a large institutional surface and assuming different paths that facilitated organisational and geographical mobility, bringing the different regions of the Empire closer to one another. Furthermore, our hypothesis is that the colonial bureaucracy knew how to weave, down the centuries, narrow relationships with the networks of

*Inquisition in the Early Modern World* (English revised edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006

*Les frontières religieuses. Rejets et passages, dissimulation et contrebande spirituelle* (co-editor). Paris :Presses de la Sorbonne, 2006

*L'empire portugais face aux autres empires* (co-editor). Paris : Maisonneuve et Larose, 2006

merchants who operated transversally throughout the whole Portuguese Empire, distributing privileges, leaseholds, concessions and contracts, that allowed them to assure a base of liquidity that was essential for feeding the State apparatus. These networks of merchants, although they are not in themselves the object of study in these chapters, also played a fundamental role in establishing connections between the different regions of the Empire, forming a kind of familiar and organisational sediment in horizontal relations that sometimes didn't even pass through the "metropolis".



*from Low Cost Empire. Interaction between the Portuguese and Local Societies in Asia*

in Ernst van Veen (ed.), *Rivalry and Conflict. European Traders and Asians Trading Networks, 16th and 17th Centuries*, Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2005

Portuguese interaction with local societies in Asia cannot be analysed as a general pattern from a Eurocentric point of view. It depended largely on local conditions, which imposed different political and social configurations. The Portuguese presence in Asia varied from key port enclaves – in the Persian Gulf, on the Western Coast of India, in the Gulf of Bengal, Southeast Asia and the Far East – to large extensions of territories, as in Ceylon between 1590s and 1630s. This meant permanent confrontation with completely different powers, political cultures and social contexts.

This article argues that from the very start, the structural deficit of capital and human resources in the *Estado da Índia* imposed the creation of local networks that combined "white" and "black" *casados* (married European and converted native people). This ethnic mixture, which was not exclusive to the Portuguese (the Dutch also mixed extensively with local people), became socially and politically important under Portuguese rule. The deficit of manpower, which was responsible for this, must necessarily be linked to the permanent shortage of capital. These two factors explain the constant policy of alliances and political

treaties with regional and local powers, as well as the structural dependence on local bankers and investors, which increased after the second wave of inquisitorial repression of the new Christians of Jewish origin in the 1630s.

I propose the following itinerary of analysis: first, I will criticise the "lusotropical" theory, which still frames the approaches of social interaction of the Portuguese overseas; secondly, I will examine integration policies that opposed inquisitorial repression of converted Hindus and Muslims; thirdly, I will make a detailed analysis of the conversion of natives and the creation of a mixed social "buffer", proposing new estimates of the population involved; the next point will consider how widespread racist prejudice was, before the final evaluation of the main argument in a comparative perspective.

(...)

VIII  
Comparison

In December 1510, immediately after the conquest of Goa, Afonso de Albuquerque claimed that several hundred Portuguese had married local women, involving a total of "450 souls".<sup>1</sup> In 1650, Johan Maetsuyker, the Dutch governor of Ceylon who was still fighting the last strongholds of Portuguese resistance, reported that there were sixty eight free-burghers married to local women, mostly of Portuguese descent. Another 200 free-burghers married Indo-Portuguese women after the conquest of Colombo and Jaffna in 1656-1658.<sup>2</sup> In Batavia and Far-East Dutch factories, the existence of extended mixed families could be observed throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and many of the offspring married senior VOC officials, including governors-general.<sup>3</sup> Cornelia van Nijenroode, the daughter of a geisha and a Dutch merchant in Japan, was the most amazing case of a wealthy woman who fought for her rights against her greedy second husband, a Dutch lawyer in 17<sup>th</sup> century Batavia.<sup>4</sup> In the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, well-known officers of the East India Company, like Major James Achilles Kirkpatrick, the British resident at the Court of Hyderabad, or General William Palmer, resident at

Poona, had Indian wives and families, and shared in most native rituals, cloths, food, and habits. It is estimated that by that time, one third of the British in India had Indian wives or concubines, fathering mixed-race children.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Portuguese were not the only Europeans in Asia to create mixed-race communities or establish a very intimate relationship with local societies. The difference between the European powers in Asia lay in the political status attributed to those communities.

As early as 1612, Pieter Both, the first governor-general of the East Indies, advocated mixed marriages with native women and converted Christians (Catholics) from different parts of Asia, namely Amboin. The Heeren XVII authorised the governor-general and his council to allow the settlement of so-called “time-expired” men in Asia, such as merchants, clerks, soldiers and sailors. They could trade in non-monopolised goods like rice, sago or livestock and were expected to supplement the Company’s local garrisons in time of war. These free-burghers first established themselves in the Moluccas, then in Batavia, Malacca and Sri Lanka, following the course of the Dutch expansion. They were supposed to remain subordinate to the Company’s rules and jurisdiction, could be authorised to marry baptised Asian women, and their children were to be educated as Christians. But the free-burghers married to Asian women were not allowed to return to Europe. In 1644, slaves, coloured people and coloured wives were forbidden to travel to Europe, a ban that was renewed in 1650 and in 1713. Even free-burghers married to European women could only travel back to Europe with personal items. In 1672, the authorities at Batavia forbade the employment of Asian office-clerks except if they had special permission – a ban that was renewed in 1715 and extended in 1718 to the descendants of Europeans. It was only in 1727 that the reverse process started: promoting Eurasians in VOC administered territories.

Although these rules indicate a segregation process until the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, their primary purpose was to control the group of time-expired men who wanted to go on living in Asia. They were considered potential

competitors of Company officials, in terms of trade, smuggling and piracy. This kind of legislation kept free-burghers at the margins of the system, and indeed they never became an important social group. The VOC never depended on them in Java, Sri Lanka or India, because Chinese, Gujarati, Bengali and other merchant groups were much more efficient in local, regional and inter-regional trade networks. Free-burghers mainly invested in inn-keeping, which gives some idea of the reduced scale of their commercial activities. The only exception to this situation was the Cape Town colony, which operated as a supply point for the VOC navy on its way to Asia. In this case, the free-burghers mixed extensively with the local population, used slaves from East Africa – namely Madagascar – and created a solid basis of agriculture and livestock production. In the other cases where there is information on extensive mixed marriages after conquest, the group of free-burghers did not develop as initially envisaged. Even in Sri Lanka, where there was strong encouragement of mixed marriages, the community did not last for a significant period of time.<sup>6</sup>

The English case is more complicated because the empire in Asia was established quite late: until 1757, there was only a set of factories and forts without effective control on significant territory. Clive’s policy of conquest completely changed the situation, stimulating emigration from the British Isles and further contacts with local societies. The emergence of mixed families, came quite late in comparison to the Portuguese and Dutch cases. It was considered as a private matter, tolerated and managed on an individual basis for a short period of time. Mixed families never became “communities”, because the English had the capital (mostly native capital, incidentally), the manpower and the military technology to extend their political dominion in India without depending on a buffer of mixed race people. The new trend towards mixed families was immediately confronted by the emergence of racist prejudices, which became very effective in political terms by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1793, the decision to exclude mixed-race people from government service defined a policy of dis-

crimination which set the course of social relations between colonisers and native people for the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The creation of mixed families was significantly reduced by the turn of the century, offering a good case study of the impact of the change in values (and policies) on human behaviour.

The comparison between the Portuguese and Dutch empires in Asia merits further examination, because they were less distant in time and less alien in social and intellectual context. The entrepreneurial structure of the VOC defined a political culture that placed the group of free-burghers under constant pressure to avoid losses for the company. This permanent tension left this social group no space for the development, instead placing it on the margins of the Dutch empire. The only free-burghers who had a solid position in the different communities were senior officials who retired and decided to continue living overseas, lent money and developed financial operations. I question the traditional vision of contrasts between the Dutch and Portuguese empires, which underlines the Portuguese ability to settle and create roots, as against the Dutch ability to trade and return home. These “essential” psychological features of both peoples simply did not exist. The Portuguese generally lived from trade, mostly when they were established outside the empire, such as in the coastal communities of the Gulf of Bengal, while the Dutch could establish themselves as prosperous landowners if they had the opportunity, as for example in Cape of Good Hope.

The key to understanding different social policies is to consider the different structural conditions of empire-building. From the very beginning, the Portuguese empire developed in spite of a structural deficit of available capital. Crown initiatives were supplemented by private merchants, mostly Italians or Germans, who benefited from the royal monopolies over inter-continental trade. But there was no private initiative to create companies which could rival the Dutch or the English in exploring overseas trade. When the crown launched such projects, they did not have enough public support or did not last long, as shown by the

company of Brazil, created in 1649. The Portuguese empire could only survive in Asia if it was supported by local communities of mixed-race people. This was not only because these people met demographic and military needs, but also because they mediated with local native communities, gathering political support, information and financial resources.

The tolerance shown to the *casados* on the outskirts of the *Estado da Índia*, namely in the Gulf of Bengal or Southeast Asia, is an example of this *realpolitik*. Those Portuguese coastal communities, created by runaway soldiers, sailors, gunmen, and clergymen, could always count on the king’s mercy and return to the empire, because they played an essential economic and political role in the *Estado da Índia*. This would have been unthinkable in the Dutch empire, where free-burghers who went out of line were pursued by the VOC’s judicial structure.

We therefore have to understand two radically different configurations: one that was profit-oriented and organised through a system of salaries and rewards for share holders; another that was politically-oriented and organised through a system of concession of privileges (to gain access to jobs, rents, lands, taxes). Naturally, the Portuguese system needed profits to function and the Dutch system remained tied to some unprofitable investments for bureaucratic reasons (as in the long-term situation in Sri Lanka). In both cases, it was normal for capital to be accumulated through archaic means such as piracy and extortion. Nevertheless, the possibilities to mobilise capital and manpower back in Europe were completely different.<sup>8</sup>

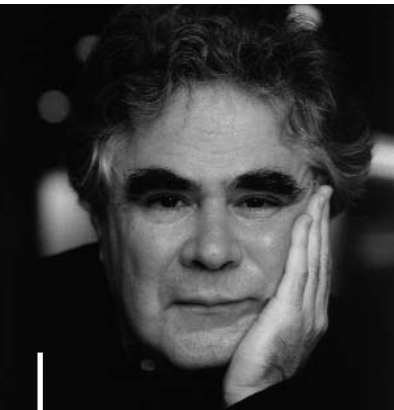
The Portuguese political system was also completely different from the Dutch one, as it depended on municipal councils that extended to areas not controlled by the Portuguese authorities. These municipal councils were formed by the mixed-race groups of *casados*, who provided the core social structure of the *Estado da Índia*. It is true that, from the beginning of the Portuguese presence in Asia, the king created the fiction that all the peoples under his dominion were to be considered as vassals.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, the effective policies developed from the 1540s on showed that only converted people would be able to reach the same formal status as the Portuguese “natives of the kingdom”. This could be dismissed as another political fiction, demystified by discrimination in everyday life, but there is sufficient evidence of a consistent policy to favour converted people, even if the major bankers and investors were always Hindus. Pombal’s policies in the 1760s reinforced the social status of converted natives under a notion that came close to citizenship. This notion, applied with all due caution to earlier periods, is the key to understanding the political world of the Portuguese empire in Asia.

The Dutch empire had more hierarchical structures of government, administration and justice, which were designed to protect and sustain monopolised trade to Europe – the main purpose of the company. As seen before, the Dutch had the necessary capital to invest in ships, manpower and equipment, and did not depend on mixed-race groups. Although considered useful, these groups were not allowed the political, economic and social space to develop on the same scale as the world of the *casados* did. It is these different configurations of capital structure and manpower that explain the different settlement policies and, in the long run, different trends of mixed-race realities.

Revised by Richard Trewinnard

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- <sup>1</sup> *Cartas, op. cit.*, p. 27.
  - <sup>2</sup> Charles R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1965, reprint, London, Penguin, 1990, p. 248.
  - <sup>3</sup> Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1983; Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese settlers, mestizo women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia*, Leiden, KITLV Press, 1986.
  - <sup>4</sup> Leonard Blussé, *Bitter Bonds. A Colonial Divorce Drama of the Seventeenth Century*, English Translation, Princeton, Markus Wiener, 2002.
  - <sup>5</sup> William Dalrymple, *White Mughals. Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India*, London, Harper Colins, 2002.
  - <sup>6</sup> The best global information on mixed Dutch communities in Asia is still to be found in Charles R. Boxer, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-272.
  - <sup>7</sup> Christopher Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 71. On the racial issue, see also Christopher Bayly, *Imperial Meridian. The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830*, London, Longman, 1989, pp. 147-155.
  - <sup>8</sup> I have compared Dutch and Portuguese men and navy power in Asia in “Competição entre impérios europeus”, in Francisco Bethencourt and Kirti Chaudhuri (eds.), *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 361-382, mainly p. 366-368, and again, with more detail, in “Political configurations and Local Powers”, in Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto (eds.), *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800*, to be published by Cambridge University Press.
  - <sup>9</sup> Délio de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenship. Goa under the Portuguese, 1510-1610*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 2002.



## José Gil

He was born in Mozambique in 1939. He graduated from the Faculty of Arts of the Sorbonne in 1968. He is a university professor, philosopher, essayist and writer of prose fiction. As major influences he cites Espinosa, Deleuze and Derrida.

He was considered one of the 25 great world thinkers by the French periodical *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in a special edition to commemorate its 40th anniversary (January 2005).

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Francisco Vale

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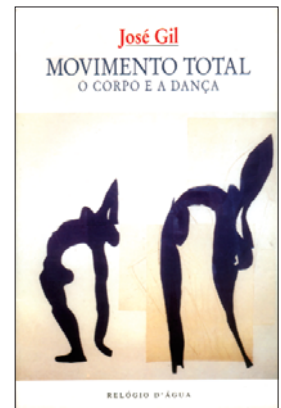
phone: +351 21 8474450

Fax: +351 21 8470775

relogiodagua@relogiodagua.pt

www.relogiodagua.pt

## *Total movement – body and dance* *Movimento total, o corpo e a dança*



Strongly influenced by phenomenology, this Portuguese philosopher places the body at the heart of his philosophical thought, not the objectified body, but the body seen as that field existing prior to any of its effects or expressions of it, starting with language itself.

(...)

In *Movimento total*, an essay on dance, Gil puts forward new concepts of the body (paradoxical body) and a critical re-reading of the unconscious (unconscious of position) and the conscious (body conscious) as a dark side of the intentionality of consciousness: to constitute a transcendental body, a pre-reflexive field, with a phenomenological genealogy, accompanied by an aesthetic inspired by Deleuze in the service of new concepts of the conscious and unconscious.

Eduardo Lourenço, 2005



The works of philosopher and essayist José Gil are marked by original thought fuelled by the contribution of the social and human sciences. Starting from a reflection on information gleaned from various disciplines, like ethnology, the history of medicine, psychiatry, political philosophy, the author shows in *Metamorfoses do corpo* the sometimes subtle links between various forms of power (political, social, therapeutic) and the use of the body's energies. From exotic societies to the dawn of modernity, José Gil reviews the analyses of Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Sahlins, Clastres, Deleuze and Guattari on various themes: the gift, magic, the role of the body in therapy, forms of power, the birth of the State. In distancing himself from structuralism and semiotics – without neglecting some of their findings – he proposes another method of analysing power adding other elements to Foucault's notion of bio-power.

Using such phenomena as prestige, charisma, psychotic transference, dance language, as well as the mechanisms of transforming bodily forces by manipulating the signals and devices which harness them, Gil has constructed new concepts, making a radical break with the phenomenology of the body put forward by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.(...)

Eduardo Lourenço, 2005

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## *The dancer's body*

1. Everyone is familiar with the general characteristics of Merce Cunningham's choreography: its rejection of expressive conventions, the decentred stage space, the autonomy of the music and the movements, the incorporation of chance into choreographic method, etc. All of these characteristics submit to a coherent logic, which works on the principle that one can render movement in itself, without external references. The idea, for Cunningham, was to do away with mimesis in danced movements: the mimesis of "figures", the mimesis of a stage space that reproduced outside space, and even a kind of mimesis of "interiority", since the body was thought to be capable of translating the emotions of a subject or group.

These three aspects in turn conditioned others, such as the opening out of space. In Cunningham's words: "The classical ballet, by maintaining the image of the Renaissance perspective in stage thought, kept a linear form of space. The modern American dance, stemming from German expressionism and the personal feelings of the various American pioneers, made space into a series of lumps, or often just static hills on the stage with actually no relation to the larger space of the stage area, but simply forms that by their connection in time made a shape. Some of the space-thought coming from German dance opened the space out, and left a momentary feeling of connection with it, but too often the space was not visible enough because the physical action was all of a lightness, like sky without earth, or heaven without hell" (Cunningham, 1992: 37).

The characteristics common to ballet and modern dance (that of Loïe Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham) from which

Cunningham is attempting to free himself, can be grouped according to three principles: a principle of expression, by which movement is supposed to express emotion; a principle of verticality, which although it may not always direct movement upward, denies the body's weight; and, a principle of organization, whereby the body of the dancer or group of dancers forms an organic whole whose movements converge towards a common goal.

These three principles are related. In *Embattled Garden*, choreographed in 1958, Martha Graham sought to have danced movements reproduce "the interconnections of these emotions [sexuality, anguish, tension, intensity of emotional experience] by delineating a relationship between the body's centre and its periphery, and between the pelvis and the rest of the torso" (Foster, 1986: 73). The organic body served to express feelings, whose quality and sublimity inflected the direction of gestures upwards, towards the pure sky. Moreover, the representation of the outer world was translated into situations and behaviours engaging bodies, often described by means of a narrative.

We know that Cunningham combats these three principles by employing two essential weapons: incorporating randomness into choreographic method and decomposing "organic" sequences of movement by multiplying traditional articulations.

The adoption of randomness as a choreographic method has wide-ranging effects: once it becomes open-ended, movement is no longer the product of a centralized will, that is, of a subject wishing to express personal feelings in a particular way. In fact, the very notion of a subject (or "body-subject") tends to disappear.

The relation between music and choreography, two fields that have traditionally operated

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(Metamorphoses of the body), 1980

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*Fernando Pessoa ou a metafísica das sensações* [Fernando Pessoa or the metaphysics of sensations], 1988

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[Salazar: the rhetoric of invisibility], 1995

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[Profundity and surface – Essay on Saint-Exupéry's 'The Little Prince'], 2003

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### Italian

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## English

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*Cimetière des plaisirs*. Paris: La Différence, 1990.

*Métamorphoses du corps*. Paris: La Différence, 1985

in unison, is also affected. Since chance is now what directs the changes in danced sequences, the connection to music no longer holds. No longer does music provide the “signposts” by which dancers guide themselves through alterations in space, rhythm, or relations with the movements of other dancers. Cunningham has given chance such importance that dancers might not receive the musical score for a piece until the day of the première. The outcome is not hard to guess: music and dance become two divergent series that intersect only at certain “structural points”, and between which no relation is established. Cunningham comments that, “It is essentially a non-relationship” (Cunningham, 1951a: 52). This Deleuzian term indicates to what extent Cunningham’s choreography can be seen to resonate with a Deleuzian theory of series.

A third consequence of incorporating chance into dance is particularly interesting: the break it produces in the traditional frame (or code) governing corporeal possibilities, and how it opens the body out to other previously unexplored movements. This implies yet another break, this time with the traditional “models” governing the co-ordination of movements. These models, used in ballet as well as in the school of Doris Humphrey, always presupposed an organic image of the body as a finished whole. “That was surely one of the reasons I began to use random methods in choreography, to break the patterns of personal remembered physical co-ordinations”, says Cunningham (1951a: 59).

The latter relates to another procedure Cunningham systematically employs to undo the organization of the body: by multiplying articulated movements, such that sequences are no longer co-ordinated organically, they gain a sort of autonomy stemming from the very autonomy

of “parts of the body”. It is the relation of whole-to-parts that is thereby dislocated.

Cunningham’s technique gives as much freedom as possible to parts of the body, so that series of disconnected movements can take off and develop at the same time in the same body. Cunningham writes: “This involves the problem of balance of the body, and the sustaining of one part against another part. If one uses the torso as the centre of balance and as the vertical axis at all times, then the question of balance is always related to that central part, the arms and legs balancing each another on either side and in various ways, and moving against each other. If one uses the torso as the moving force itself, allowing the spine to be the motivating force in a visual shift of balance, the problem is to sense how far the shift of balance can go in any direction, and in any time arrangement, and then move instantaneously towards any other direction and in any other time arrangements, without having to break the flow of movement by a catching of the weight, whether by an actual shift of weight, or a break in the time, or other means” (1951b: 253).

Once the centre of balance (torso or spine) has become an autonomous mobile force rather than a static vertical axis, it becomes possible to disarticulate movements from one another, since they no longer have to relate to a fixed body part, but can relate to one that is itself mobile. And since movement has been decomposed into multiplicities, a limb no longer has to align itself with only one body part and with that part in only one position to derive a sense of balance, when numerous parts are available. Any part of the body can now enter into composition with several mobile and plastic axes: movements of the arms and legs will anticipate future points of balance, while simultaneously

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balancing the body at “this moment”. Call this a paradoxical or metastable sense of balance - as Deleuze would, after Simondon - presupposing tension and movement and especially a sort of decomposition of the whole body into its parts.

Once configurations of arms and legs on either side of the body dissolve, and movements of limbs disconnect, a mobile balance is achieved, inducing the simultaneous superposition of multiple positions in space. These movements achieve a maximum power of deformation and asymmetry through non-organic variation, as if many bodies were to coexist in a single body.

This increase in articulation allows divergent series of movement to arise at the same instant: a series of gestures disconnected from another series of gestures in the same body; the series wrought by any dancer’s body in relation to another body; the music series and that of danced gestures, individually or in groups.

But, given that Cunningham has rejected all referents, meaning that he has rejected any motivation (be it emotional or representational) for movement other than movement itself, the question remains as to what triggers the series of gestures. How can movement, of itself, give rise to movement?

2. Cunningham’s greatest difficulty can be formulated as follows: in performing a radical critique of traditional choreographic languages, and in rejecting any external referent other than movement itself, how was he able to transform what remained on the plane of movement after his critique, into the units of a new language?

In dance, the very notion of critique lends itself to debate. When everything takes place on the practical level of danced gesture, there can be no movements that signify negation (of other movements). There are no “negative movements” - for all is affirmative and positive in the presence and fullness of danced movement. Then, what sense does it make to refuse or deny traditional choreographic languages? Even if one invents parodic or satiric movements (as is the case with many choreographers making fun of classical ballet), movement does not actively negate

except when it becomes a sign, is doubled, and registers at the semiotic level. In itself, in its kinetic and muscular manifestation, movement is purely affirmative. A negative and negating movement would be one that is self-constraining.

Why would it be necessary to negate traditional choreographic languages? Why not simply discard them? In fact, isn’t this what Cunningham does?

The problem is this: if Cunningham invents a new language without referents, this can only be the outcome of the negation of referential languages, in other words of the negation of the referents of these languages. Such an operation, not restricted to the kinetic level, would thus remain on the aesthetic plane. While one can imagine pure movement without meaning (referent), as a kind of acrobatics or gymnastics (possessing meaning only as dictated by its aims), it is more difficult to conceive of pure movement that is also aesthetic, that is, movement unconditioned by any external elements, yet fulfilling a number of requirements - such as semantic saturation, infinitude or singularity - that make of it an object one could call “aesthetic”.

The task, then, consisted in hooking the critique onto a sort of artistic metalanguage, to ensure the radical nature of the negation of all internal and external referents, in and by movement itself: a negation of movement by movement that would still preserve the formal aesthetic traits of negating movement.

Clearly, this “artistic metalanguage” could be neither a true metalanguage, nor could it really be said to be artistic. Dance is not a language, first of all, the non-verbal nature of its movements rendering the idea of a meta-language inconceivable. Second, whatever the frame to which the movements were to remain attached while danced movements performed their necessary negations, its progressive dissolution had to achieve a sort of “degree zero of art”: the absolute prerequisite for the emergence of a virgin territory where a new language and a new aesthetic frame could come about. In other words, Cunningham’s choreographic language springs at once from a critique of earlier languages and from virgin ground.

It is to this paradox that all of Cunningham's creative work has had to answer: how do you radically discard "the old" without abandoning the aesthetic domain?

3. One can also pose this question otherwise, by substituting "linguistic unit" and "metalinguistic unity" for "language" and "metalanguage". Though these expressions are as "theoretical" as the ones they are replacing, they have the advantage of more adequately designating the reality: the unit would simply be a minimum series of movements out of which the unity of a danced language would take shape.

The question then becomes: what metalinguistic unity does Cunningham create that is capable of transforming itself into (or acting as) the unit of a new language with no referent other than itself?

Remember that critical decomposition and construction are being undertaken in the name of a new unit(y) of movement which, in a sense, does not exist yet, for it is also the result of the destruction of the earlier languages.

Cunningham goes about it by making an empty space outside and inside.

Outside: He empties stage space (which is also the space of bodies, beyond the personal body that filled it in work such as Martha Graham's). This involves opening out the stage space so that all kinds of events can take place; "A prevalent feeling among many painters that lets them make a space in which anything can happen is a feeling dancers can have too. Imitating the way nature makes a space, and puts lots of things in it, heavy and light, little and big, all unrelated, yet each affecting all the others", writes Cunningham (1992: 38).

Inside: He strips the dancer's experience of all representational and emotional elements that might drive movement (as in ballet or modern dance). He goes about this by forcing the dancer's attention to focus on pure movement, i.e. on "the grammar". Awareness of the body is focused on the energy, articulations, movements, and not at all on emotions or images constructing a narrative, in which case consciousness commands body awareness. Cunningham turns this around to make body awareness command consciousness.

In stripping away emotions and representations that might otherwise trigger movement, it is clear that Cunningham simultaneously empties the stage and the space of the body, which had always been an emotional space. In stripping away images and affect from corporeal experience and in emptying out space, grammar emerges, but what used to motivate or trigger movement has disappeared. For grammar to "become meaning" as Cunningham loves to say ("the grammar is the meaning"), that is, for grammar to be able to become a constitutive element of movement, "danced grammar" has to "fill itself" with meaning; that is, this movement has to be danced, and has to invent its own logic, its own triggering elements, and its own orientation.

What then, one may ask, will replace the discarded elements? And, what will play the roles once assigned to the imagination, emotion and the space of the body? As discussed earlier, it appears that the roles will be taken up by the new unit (or unity) of movement itself, from which other new language combinations will emerge.

4. What does it mean to "empty out movement"? The process entails creating vacuoles of time inside of movement, by means of techniques much like those used in yoga or Zen meditation. (The importance of both of these practices for Cunningham is well known.) This involves liberating the rhythms of thought from the movements of the body, especially from those of breathing. Since thinking is no longer bound to the rhythms of the body, its base speed can slow down between one point and another, because space expands, whereas its surface speed may accelerate indefinitely. And since thinking is no longer swept along by breathing (since breathing is under control and independent of cardiac and other rhythms), it does not have to run, having nothing to follow but its own movements. Breathing, in turn, detached from thought, no longer speeds up with fear nor relaxes with feelings of serenity.

Isn't this what Cunningham does? He decomposes "organic" gestures of the body through movement. He disconnects movements from one another, as if each movement belonged to a different body. Moreover, he assigns arbitrary periods of time to be "filled up" with choreogra-

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phy. Finally, Cunningham makes thought espouse movement and movement only, and he does so in two ways: both in creating vacuoles of time between movements of the body, and in preparing for the construction of a plane of immanence where the actions of the body can no longer be distinguished from the movements of thought.

We can now understand what is involved in “emptying out” or excluding emotions and images from the sphere of movements: by concentrating solely on movements, these two series can be freed from that of gestures. For their part, the void or vacuoles allow articulations to proliferate so that movements are no longer linked together on the surface, but are joined by means of a profound continuity. As has sometimes been said of Cunningham’s style: his movements “float”.

The question remains as to what makes these floating movements come together again on the surface to form danced sequences.

5. Several pending problems have yet to be addressed: (a) As we have seen, the emptying out and filling up of movements involved in the destruction and construction of a new language in turn imply the formation of a plane of immanence. For, in disconnecting movements from each other and in disconnecting these from thought, we are preparing a new osmosis whereby thought and the body become one, and whereby a new fluidity, a new kind of movement, may circulate on this plane of immanence that is dance.

This new osmosis comes about through body consciousness: having made itself a body of thought, consciousness orders and directs from within danced movement. What I mean is this: body consciousness implies a field of consciousness simultaneously constituted as a point of consciousness, which then becomes separate. The field of consciousness allows itself to be permeated by the body and thereby acquires two properties:

- o It gains the plasticity, continuity, consistency, and pervasiveness of the self awareness proper to the body;
- o As it spreads throughout the body, it transforms into a map of the body; a whole cartography of the body and its movements is drawn.

The point-of-consciousness gains the power to influence the movements of the body by following this map.

(b) We seem to have located the unit of movement that maintains movement in the aesthetic sphere, even as it transforms and annuls itself in the process of negating earlier choreographic languages. It is a unity composed of virtual movement. It is an empty unit of (actual) movement.

The unity belongs to a virtual body whose composition takes place while the composing movements are themselves in decomposition. The multiplication of articulations and gestures (which will give birth to divergent series of movement) enable the construction of a body whose virtuality ensures the profound continuity of the movements that make up the dance.

Let us be more precise about the concept of a virtual body. As we have seen thus far, Cunningham decomposes gestures in the balancing act of the body-in-movement, so that the nexus of positions of bodily parts is no longer that of an organic body. One could even say that to each of the simultaneously held positions made up of heterogeneous gestures there corresponds a different body. (Organic, yes, but out of the multiplicity of organic virtual bodies that constitute one same body there emerges an impossible body, a sort of monstrous body: this is the virtual body.) This body prolongs gesture into virtuality, since what follows from gesture can no longer be perceived by and in an empirical, actual body.

It follows that there is no single body, like the “proper body” of phenomenology, but rather multiple bodies. The body of the dancer, Cunningham’s body, but in fact the body of all dancers, is composed of a multiplicity of virtual bodies.

The unit of virtual movement (or the virtual unity of movement) creates a space where “everything fits”, a space of coexistence and of consistency of heterogeneous series. It ensures several functions: as a non-actual movement stemming from the emptying out of movement, it guarantees that movement can “reflect” back on itself, since every empirical movement is now doubled by a virtual entity to which it is linked. This means that there is a doubling of

movement whereby it is now both virtual and actual; it can therefore “double back on itself” from the virtual point of view. “To double back on itself” can mean “to negate itself” as well as “to refer back to itself”. The virtual point of view becomes the source for a new type of actual movement and a new choreographic language.

The act of discarding certain classical movements can now be seen as equalling their negation, since the actual movements replacing the earlier ones have been achieved through the emptying out/exclusion of the earlier units, which is to say an emptying out/exclusion for the virtual-in-formation. The outcome is a unit(y) of virtual movement that makes the transformation (of the movements of classical languages) from actual to virtual take on a value of negation (the monstrous body as the negation of the organic body).

That is how the virtual unity of movement founds the complex “metalinguistic” operations needed to posit a kind of non-verbal negation, and how it maintains movement, across its decomposition-negation, at the aesthetic level of dance.

6. I would like to conclude by saying a few words about the plane of immanence of dance, a notion I had surreptitiously introduced without justifying it. But first, I would like to summarize a few of our research results:

(a) The virtual (‘meta-infralinguistic’) unity of movement is what persists as ‘pure movement’ once one has discarded all of the emotional, representational and expressive motivations of the body;

(b) This enables the construction of a virtual plane of movement where all of the movements of bodies, objects, music, colour acquire a consistency, that is, a logic or a nexus;

(c) It also enables the re-organization of movements of the body without recourse to external elements, since the actual movements of the body of the dancer obtain their impetus from the virtual plane and from the tensions produced there.

The virtual plane of movements is the plane of immanence. Its tension or intensity = 0, but on it are engendered the strongest intensities. On it, thought and body dissolve

into another (‘thought’ and ‘the body’ as empirical facts); it is the plane of heterogenesis of danced movement. To paraphrase Deleuze, one could describe the characteristic immanence of this movement as follows: *what moves as a body returns as the movement of thought*. As Cunningham says: ‘It is that blatant exhibition of this energy, i.e. of energy geared to an intensity high enough to melt steel in some dancers, that gives the great excitement. This isn’t feeling about something, this is the whipping of the mind and body into an action that is so intense, that for the brief moment involved, the body and mind are one (Cunningham, 1997: 98). In other words, intensities are circulating on the body-without-organs.

But, where is this plane of immanence located, and by what traits is it characterized? It is the virtual, invisible plane that founds the perception of a continuum of movements during a performance. In a fairly old text, Susanne Langer describes at length the perception of danced movement: ‘The dance is an appearance, if you like, an apparition. It springs from what the dancers do, yet it is something else. In watching a dance, you do not see what is physically before you – people running around or twisting their bodies; what you see is a display of interacting forces, by which the dance seems to be lifted, driven, drawn, closed or attenuated, whether it to be solo or choric, whirling like the end of a dervish dance, or slow, centred, and single in its motion. One human body may put the whole play of mysterious powers before you. But these powers, these forces that seem to operate in the dance, are not the physical forces of the dancer’s muscles, which actually cause the movements taking place. The forces we seem to perceive most directly and convincingly are created for our perception: and they exist only for it. ... Anything that exists only for perception, and plays no ordinary, passive part in nature as common objects do, is a virtual entity. It is not unreal; where it confronts you, you really perceive it, you don’t dream or imagine that you do’ (Langer, 1951: 341-42).

For Susanne Langer this plane of virtual forces is a ‘dynamic image’. For us, it is clearly the plane of immanence.

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Her very penetrating description shows to what extent dance is not, as per the old cliché, an art of the ephemeral. On the contrary, this virtual plane which we 'perceive' (with our eyes, but also with our whole bodies which tend to repeat the perceived movements) ensures the continuity of gestures and movements. Never has the spectator of a danced performance felt anxious about the disappearance of images in time. And it is not psychological memory which retains the passing moments, but rather the present gesture, which is incorporated into a more profound, virtual continuity.

It is the plane of immanence that lays out the profound continuity, as well as the consistency of all movements taking place in choreographic space. What we 'see' beyond and by virtue of the visible is not ephemeral as are the sequences of movements or the gesture-signs of the dancer. The plane of immanence is always there, and dance unfolds on its permanent surface, independently of its gestures and yet existing only by means of these gestures. The plane of immanence enables the coexistence of all of these movements though it never moves, and is also never still; empty, autonomous, enveloping signs and bodies, thought and movement, of dancers as well as of spectators, it is the ground zero of movement, never static, and consisting of a certain emptiness that constitutes its very texture.

To dance is to create immanence through movement: this is why there is no meaning outside of the plane nor outside of the actions of the dancer. Questions like, 'how do you achieve this kind of choreography?', 'how do you translate this kind of choreographic idea into danced movement?' or, 'how do you express that kind of feeling through movement?' deserve only one answer. As Cunningham would say: 'How do you do it? By doing it'. Because only danced gesture yields meaning: emotion is born of movement and not the reverse.

Cunningham wills immanence: for him, meaning does not transcend movement and life. The meaning of move-

ment is the very movement of meaning. This is why, as he affirms, 'movement is, in itself, expressive'. Or, again: 'If the dancer... dances, everything is there. The meaning is there, if that's what you want. When I dance, it means: this is what I am doing' (Cunningham, 1997:86). (...)

Translated by Karen Ocaña

Excerpt from *Movimento total, o corpo e a dança*  
Lisbon: Relógio d' Água, 2001, 275 pp.

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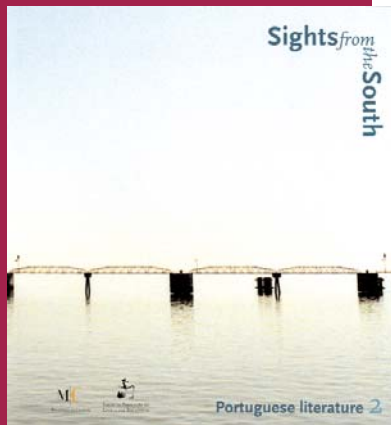
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