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Submitted for the degree of DPhil on 13th January 2023.

(Minor corrections were submitted on 18th July 2023 and leave to supplicate granted on 31st August 2023).

Unruly Daughters: Complications of Epic and Identity in 20th and 21st Century Portuguese Women's Poetry

Abstract

This thesis considers the contributions made by Natália Correia, Luiza Neto Jorge and Ana Luísa Amaral towards re-visioning the male-authored canon, particularly Luís de Camões's *Os Lusíadas* (1572), Álvaro de Campos's 'Ode marítima' (1915), and Fernando Pessoa's *Mensagem* (1934). Complicating the epic genre from within by activating its own latent contradictions, these feminist poets articulate unconventional notions of authorship and subjectivity, as well as alternative civic destinies, and even non-teleological alternatives to the concept of destiny itself.

Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral create works which speculate on how the epic might be told in unruly, disorientating, and spectral ways, inverting masculinist assumptions about Portuguese history and grappling with how the national imaginary is haunted by the ghosts of the past. In the process, they imagine what might come from inflecting the national consciousness with the untapped potential of the marginalized - of women, the colonized, and the nonhuman; deconstruct national teleology; interrogate the nostalgic relationship the nation has nurtured with its seafaring past; and un-map the world Portugal has sought to know through its imperialist endeavours and anthropocentric vision.

Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* (1961) examines failed masculine heroic endeavours and repressed imperial trauma, and constructs a female-centred utopian vision rooted in a process of personal becoming-bodily and national re-birth. Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos* (1969) complicates epic by disarranging linearity and disrupting teleology, with its rhizomatic structure and surrealist style. Meanwhile, Amaral, '[embarca] sem mapa até ao fim/ do escuro' (Escuro, 2014), reconceiving marginalisation and absence as generative forces, so that "The

feminine [may be] re-defined as a moving horizon, a fluctuating path, a recipe for transformation, motion, becoming" (Braidotti, 2011: p.114).

Invoking literary heritage, these poetry collections develop an oppositional consciousness, through feminist, queer, posthuman countermemory and countergenealogies. Together they showcase how the marginalised feminine voice can provide alternative utopian possibilities.

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Cláudia Pazos-Alonso for her empowering encouragement of me throughout the DPhil. Our academic bond and friendship go back to my time studying with her as an undergraduate student at Oxford when she first inspired me to explore Portuguese women's poetry. On this path, I feel lucky to have encountered a panoply of new ideas and gender-conscious critical perspectives on the world which now happily inform and enrich my life. During my doctoral years, I have had the great pleasure of interpreting literature anew; seeing the many poems that we have had occasion to discuss together refracted through Cláudia's sensitive perception of their beauty has always been and is a wonderful honour. For all of her tireless hours of support in our supervisions (and far beyond our allotted hours), I cannot thank her enough.

Other colleagues and friends within the Portuguese Sub-Faculty in Oxford have also been long-standing supporters of my academic progress and wellbeing. Always generously giving of her time for pep talks and bolstering my confidence, Dorothée Boulanger has greatly extended my research interest in Lusophone ecology with her inspiring enthusiasm and expertise, and I am over-the-moon to have found in her a colleague and friend whose intellectual generosity knows no bounds. Café visits with Claire Williams have always brought me much comfort, and I thank her for her encouragement of me, not least to pursue my postgraduate degrees in the first place, and for all of her involvement in my academic development more broadly over the years. Simon Park and Philip Rothwell have given me immensely useful feedback on my thesis throughout the course of its development, with Simon also generously giving of his time to help steer me in relation to the poetry of Luís de Camões and its complexities. And without Gui Perdigão and all of Oxford's language instructors, I wouldn't know my first word of Portuguese – I thank them for tutoring me in this language that I love. The librarians I had the pleasure of consulting with, throughout my DPhil, have always been inordinately kind and helpful. The Biblioteca Pública e

Arquivo Regional in Ponta Delgada, led by Isabel Iva M. M. Matos Cogumbreiro Garcia, guided me practically in my research into the *espólio* of Natália Correia, while Joanne Ferrari (Taylorian Library) and Owen McKnight (Jesus College Library), besides ordering books for me with dazzling speed, have brought me much good cheer with their friendliness. To Jesus College, Oxford, and the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, I owe a great deal, in view of their financial support with my PGR Humanities scholarship.

Turning to my family, I would like to thank my grandmother for all the pride she has taken in supporting my studies, and for her ever-blooming rose garden, which has brought me much joy and help in times of need; my brother for his indefatigable support and cheerily humorous perspectives, which has always been a pick-me-up when I needed it most; and my mother for her heartfelt generosity, openness, and never-ending support and care of me. The support of all my friends and loved ones has meant so much to me. To Oleg, Adir, Matthew, Payam, Andrew, Roscoe, Marcio, Abdullah, Skaiste, Ole, Jesús, Rita, and Kida I owe many thanks for making me feel connected and happy and for giving me new perspectives throughout my studies. To Gracie, I am thankful for all her heartfelt support and generously-shared intellectual verve – our coffee mornings always leave me feeling inspired (we always have a whale of a time). To Benedict, I am grateful for all his kindness, for always being there for me with so much emotional and intellectual support, and for inspiring me to become enchanted by the more-than-human world.

Ana Luísa Amaral's sad passing in August 2022, during the course of my writing of this thesis, has left an absence in the world that is felt by so many who admired her for her compassion, political activism, and artistic achievement. I think about the quiet utopianism of her literature and hope to channel it in my life:

"Libertar no desejo o meu desejo e desejar o mundo para ti: um mundo onde eu estivesse e tu estivesses, perto de facto como eras realmente tão recente e tão longe" (*Ara*).

To Ana Luísa, I dedicate this thesis.

List of abbreviations:

OL	CAMÕES, LUÍS DE. *Os Lusíadas*, ed. Frank Pierce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).
M	PESSOA, FERNANDO. *Mensagem,* trans. by Jonathan Griffin, bilingual edition (Exeter; London: Shearsman Books Ltd; The Menard Press, 1992).
PAdC	PESSOA, FERNANDO. *Poesia de Álvaro de Campos*, ed. by Teresa Rita Lopes (Portugal: Assírio & Alvim, 2013).
AP	CORREIA, NATÁLIA. *Antologia Poética*, ed. Fernando Pinto do Amaral, 3rd edition (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 2018).
Poesia E	NETO JORGE, LUIZA, ed. by Fernando Cabral Martins (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim). AMARAL, ANA LUÍSA. *Escuro* (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2014).

UNRULY DAUGHTERS: COMPLICATIONS OF EPIC AND IDENTITY IN 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY PORTUGUESE WOMEN'S POETRY

INTRODUCTION

Twentieth and twenty-first century Portuguese women's poetry is alive with a critical feminist, anti-patriarchal and queer consciousness, written against the grain of a philosophical system which has historically privileged masculine notions of genius (Battersby, 1989). Women poets develop methods for transforming the Portuguese canon, both thematically and stylistically. This thesis is specifically concerned with the reworkings of the Portuguese epic tradition enacted by Natália Correia (*Cântico do país emerso*, 1961), Luiza Neto Jorge (*Dezanove recantos*, 1969) and Ana Luísa Amaral (*Escuro*, 2014).[1] If epics in the Western tradition have, at least since Virgil's *Aeneid* (19BCE), conventionally served as repositories of national origin stories and collective mythmaking, then to return to the epic tradition (not least from a feminist perspective) implies a critical examination of long-reigning (misogynistic) conceptions of national history, identity, and values. Complicating the epic genre from within, Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral articulate unconventional notions of authorship and subjectivity, as well as alternative civic destinies, and even non-teleological alternatives to the concept of destiny itself.

Of fundamental importance to these women poets' re-visionary enterprises is their dialogue with three canonical male-authored texts, namely: Luís de Camões's ten-canto epic poem, *Os Lusíadas* (1572), which celebrates Vasco da Gama's discovery of a sea route to India in 1497-1499; Fernando Pessoa's *Ode marítima* (1915), in which Portugal's seafaring mystique inspires a rhapsodic, anti-bourgeois, sensationist ode to piracy in the voice of the heteronym Álvaro de

[1] Developing Anna M. Klobucka's project of illuminating the emergence of female authorship in Portuguese letters (2009), and Owen and Pazos-Alonso's analysis of feminist genealogies in twentieth-century Portuguese women's writing (2011), my project seeks to extend this analysis specifically into the area of women's complications of the epic genre – bringing together these three texts into a single analysis for the first time.

Campos; and lastly, Pessoa's collection of esoteric poems concerning figures and themes from national history and mythology, *Mensagem* (1933), penned by his orthonymic self. Between them, these works establish a multi-faceted epic lineage, in which Portugal's association with the sea, over which it exerts mastery, runs deep. In all three instances, the genius of the male poet is emphasized – yet, specifically at play in *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem* is the notion of the poet as a prophet marshalling history into meaningful patterns with teleological implications for Portugal's future. Moreover, Camões's articulation of the civic role of the bard, who individually personifies Portugal's collective destiny, paralleling Vasco da Gama's maritime exploits by undertaking his own poetic "voyage of initiation" (Macedo, 1980), serves as the mechanism for galvanizing the nation towards the masculine undertakings of imperial conquest and patriarchal hero-worship. Similarly, Pessoa accentuates the poet's mythmaking function, through which he designs the spiritual destiny of his compatriots. These two landmark formulations of Portuguese identity generate an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991), and serve to document and reinforce the equation of nation and empire which is in evidence throughout the country's intellectual history. Co-opted by Salazarism, they helped to bolster the rhetorical arsenal of the Estado Novo dictatorship (1933-74) and fed the ecosystem of ideas sustaining it. The regime's policies of bellicose imperialism and oppression of women and vulnerable groups emerged from, and in turn cultivated, a cultural seedbed of national exceptionalism, overseas expansion, and masculine heroism – all espoused in certain interpretations of Portuguese epic, particularly those of the Estado Novo era, and reflected in the monumentalisation of the myth of seafaring Portugal. These notions have lingered on in the national consciousness ever since, albeit in more nebulous and attenuated forms.

Correia and Neto Jorge, in the 1960s, and Amaral, in 2014, explicitly respond to these texts in feminist vein with their own ambiguous complications of the genre. Pursuing an understanding of why the feminist critique of epic flourishes in the 1960s and 2010s involves considering two historical moments which are defined by crisis: in the former case, as Portugal is on the cusp of

losing its African colonies; in the latter, as the Eurozone crisis develops, disproportionately threatening southern European economies. With Portugal's status on the world-stage seemingly at stake in both instances, whether in terms of its maintenance of an overseas empire and hence international political power (in the twentieth century), or else in terms of its capacity to withstand financial crisis and survive a disadvantageous imbalance of political power within the European Union (in this century), such moments have presented – as they would have done for any European nation – the danger of a turning-inwards towards blind nationalism, self-preservationism, and a nostalgia politics calling for a return to former glory days, such as those associated with the inception of the Portuguese empire. The Estado Novo propaganda machine had been fed by precisely such sentiments as these in support of the colonial wars of the 60s and 70s; and it is worrying to note that they are the tools-of-choice of the new far-right populism of our own era, epitomized by the recent rise in vote share of the political party *Chega*,[2] whose political platform seeks to reverse progressive trends in multiculturalism and women's rights. The unruly feminist and queer poetry contemplated in this thesis has consistently resisted these faulty logics, instead perceiving in moments of a threatened (or dissolving) *status quo* a new opportunity to re-imagine Portugal. As such, its mode is anti-authoritarian, radically open to otherness (as it reaches beyond the selfsame), and – perhaps paradoxically, given its frequent revisiting of the past – anti-nostalgic.

All three poets create works which speculate on how the epic might be told in a female voice, inverting certain masculinist assumptions about Portuguese history. This thesis will analyse these poets' "double-voiced discourse" (Showalter, 1981), which invokes the social, literary, and cultural heritages of the muted (by inscribing femaleness in her text) and the dominant (by revising the literary canon and the system of values enshrined by it).[3] Relating to the Portuguese

[2] Chega's vote share has risen from 1.3% in 2019, the year of its foundation, up to 7.2% in the 2022 general elections. For more information see: Allen, 2022.

[3] "Double-voiced discourse" is a term that Showalter adopts from Lanser and Beck (1979: 86). Women's writing, described as "palimpsestic" by Gilbert and Gubar (albeit specifically in relation to nineteenth-

canon in this *unruly* way, by complicating the nation's literary inheritance, involves imagining what might come from inflecting the national consciousness with the untapped potential of the marginalized – of women, the colonized, and the more-than-human.[4] The solidaristic act of forging alliances with other marginalized beings, of fertilizing the poetic imaginary with insights which come from commingling with different genders, races, and species, is a powerful feminist strategy of resistance, and of becoming *unruly* (that is to say, of refusing to be ruled by a patriarchal, colonial, and androcentric world-order). This cross-pollination of marginal perspectives engenders a poly-nation, defying models of nationhood which rely on notions of singularity, individual exceptionalism, purity, unity, and masculine heroism, and instead activating notions of plurality, vulnerable codependency, hybridity, and gender fluidity. The formal *unruliness* of these feminist texts also renders them unclassifiable, as they oscillate between mirroring epic structures and turning them inside out, as well as displaying considerable metrical variety and a predilection for free verse, transgressing generic boundaries, and even presenting the problem of formal differences between editions.

These poets' deconstruction of nationhood perhaps goes even so far as to question the validity of national borders altogether. In this regard, it is worth noting that the *oeuvres* of all three poets under consideration bring transnational perspectives to bear on the question of Portuguese identity: for Correia, this involved the *ex-centricity* of her Azorean identity (in the sense of her

century texts [2000: 73]), contains a "dominant" and a "muted" story. Both of these "alternative oscillating texts [must be kept] simultaneously in view" (Showalter, 1981: 34): therefore, the feminist critic must explore how women's writing relates to and subverts the dominant male tradition of writing, as well as how it draws upon and, in turn, enriches the resources of the muted female tradition.

[4] Borrowing the term from ecologist David Abram (1996), I use 'more-than-human' throughout this thesis as a way of referring to the world beyond the solely human, including both animate beings (plants and animals) and inanimate matter (minerals). The term 'more-than-human' helpfully gestures to the interwovenness of human life with all other forms of life, by virtue of its additive logic, whilst also pointing towards other species' capacity to resist being fully contained within the human system, by exceeding it and remaining surplus (*more-than*). This choice of terminology equally allows me to avoid 'nonhuman' (an alternative term for 'anything other than human', often used by scholars within the field). To my mind, the negative prefix *non-* implies 'something which lacks the contents of the human', allowing 'human' to remain the privileged term. This presents a problem for any scholarship seeking to dismantle anthropocentrism and the binary thinking (of human versus nonhuman other) upon which it depends.

being positioned on the periphery of the metropole), combined with travels abroad, including on a political mission to the United States of America to spark interest in the plight of the resistance against fascist Portugal, in 1950, at the age of 26;[5] for Neto Jorge, this involved her time spent living in Paris from 1962-1970, where she would have witnessed the student protests of May 1968, and the revolutionary left-wing intellectual ferment of that moment in France, as well as her life as a literary translator of French poets (including Verlaine and Éluard); and for Amaral, this manifested itself in her intimacy with Anglo-American literature (from Shakespeare and William Blake to Emily Dickinson), as well as her international profile as an academic and poet.

Rather than constructing a national teleology, the three female-authored poetry collections examined in this thesis deconstruct the through-line of the nation's history and its perceived future goals, through the mechanism of *disorientation*. These collections dethrone authority figures from Portugal's past, interrogate the nostalgic relationship the nation has nurtured with its seafaring past, divest it of its supposedly crowning role within European geography, and un-map the world it has sought to know through its imperialist endeavours and anthropocentric vision. This disorientation means refusing to uncritically follow the course charted by pre-established routes, throwing oneself veritably off-course and relinquishing the anchoring certainties provided by stable notions of identity, thereby exposing oneself to the risks and opportunities of lostness. Relinquishing the certainties which serve as the familiar points of reference on the national compass (including the Salazarian triumvirate of 'Deus, Pátria, Família')

[5] Correia recounts the discoveries she made on this journey in *Descobri que era europeia* (1951). In this book of travel writing, she elaborates on the vital impact travel abroad imparts to her, in her development as a young artist. Coming to terms with what she perceives as the clash of cultures between the United States of America and Europe, she reveals her distrust of the pragmatic American pursuit of happiness (associated with acquisitive consumerism), since in her view it leads to the death of individuality cultural, emotional, and intellectual homogeneity, as well as even the negation of physical difference. She intriguingly asserts the need for the USA to face up to the ghost of its own repressed European identity, refuting America's mythology of self-determination. In addition, she explains that her travels, which give her the benefit of an outsider's perspective, help to deepen her appreciation of her native Europe's aesthetic culture.

clears imaginative space for citizens to countenance new possibilities for society's becoming otherwise than the *status quo*. In the poetries of Correia and Neto Jorge, surrealism's dismantling of reason and logic, and its startling juxtapositions, blending orderly reality with the disorderly world of dreams, elicit a proliferation of new prospects. Meanwhile, for Amaral, 'embarcar sem mapa até ao fim/ do escuro' (*Escuro*, 2014: 27) becomes the motto of this productively *disorientating* potentiality. To embark without a map implies divesting oneself of coloniality's cartographical obsession, stretching back to the era of the Discoveries and comprising the colonization of Africa, when mapping was intimately connected with the conquest of foreign lands and parceling-out of territories – an obsession which, to quote Zygmunt Bauman, reaches modernity in the form of the modern practice of "the filling of the blank spots in the *compleat mappa mundi*".[6] In its obsession with attaining completeness, along these lines, modern practice "suffers no void" (Bauman, 1991: 88). Disorientation, by contrast, emerges from a feminist poetics of lingering in the unmapped gaps, of reveling in indeterminacy, uncertainty, and ambivalence, and allowing these complications of certainty to bear marvelous fruits.

Just as *disorientation* presents an uncertainty of direction, an uncertainty of ontological stability comes to the fore in relation to *spectrality*. These complications of Portuguese epic grapple with how the national imaginary is haunted by the ghosts of the past. As María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren write, ghosts beg questions of us, relating to "the temporal and spatial sedimentation of history and tradition, and its impact on possibilities for social change; the intricacies of memory and trauma, personal and collective; [….] and the exclusionary, effacing dimensions of social norms pertaining to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class" (Blanco & Peeren, 2013: 2). Revisiting the epic involves interrogating the legacy of the Portuguese colonialism symbolically inaugurated in Camões's depiction of Vasco da Gama's voyage in 1487, and allowing oneself to be inhabited by the ghosts of those entities oppressed,

[6] The Latin jussive subjunctive makes this phrase an imperative, meaning: "complete the map of the world" (my translation).

marginalized, or subjugated by epic action: women, such as the weeping women of Belém abandoned by their husbands and sons (*OL*, Canto IV, stanzas 89-92); enslaved humans, flora and fauna living throughout Portugal's colonies; and, indeed, the men suffering amid the dissonance between their professed heroism and their suppressed vulnerabilities.

In summary, I refer to these feminist, queer and posthuman complications of epic by reference to *unruliness*, *disorientation*, and *spectrality* – three elements which all play a part, to varying degrees, in the poems I examine. Before expounding further on these concepts' theoretical derivations, I should like to provide a brief contextualizing history, firstly of the changing social situation of women in Portugal from the 1960s to the present day, and secondly of the development of feminism and gender theory in Portugal over the same period. This survey will hopefully serve to demonstrate the fluctuations in social and intellectual contexts which provide the backdrop to the poetic productions of Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral – however, given this thesis's investment in an anti-teleological, disorientating impulse, I also seek to derange notions of chronology by showing how the concerns of seemingly different eras nevertheless overlap, interpenetrate, and inflect one another, echoing backwards and forwards through time. It is this principle which, I believe, is at work in feminist re-readings of the past, whereby we can know the canon differently by activating its latent resonances and points of coincidence, connection, and simultaneity with both the present and future, conceived less as a chronological sequence and more as a multi-layered composition.

1. The Changing Social and Symbolic Situation of Women: From Dictatorship to Democracy

The writing of women's history is made difficult by historical record's passing-over of the lives of the disempowered in relative silence. Patriarchal history-making has recorded the deeds of 'great men' whilst overlooking the spheres of the everyday, the private, and the domestic – the primary spheres, in past centuries, inhabited by women. This is something which feminist poetry

seeks to redress by providing imaginative access to the repressed feminine within history. Even so, notable surveys of gender relations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have emerged in work by women's history scholars, including Virgínia Ferreira (1998), Vanda Gorjão (2002), Irene Flunser Pimentel and Helene Pereira de Melo (2015), and Andrea Peniche (2020). Drawing on a variety of sources – including legislative records, data collected by social observatories, propaganda, the personal testimonies from women involved in the feminist struggle, and newer historical research emerging from women's studies – they have drawn attention to women's courageous struggles for legal rights, contraception, family planning and abortion, painting a powerful picture of gender relations and the hard-won changes to women's social situation in Portugal from dictatorship to democracy.

Women's history throughout Portugal's Estado Novo period (1933-1974) was marked by a series of injustices. With its infamous declaration concerning the supposedly nature-based differences between the genders ("as diferenças resultantes da sua natureza e do bem da família" [see Revez, n.d.]), the 1933 Constitution (which was in force until 1974) set the tone for the prejudicial treatment of women which was to characterise the Estado Novo's forty-one-year duration. Gender discrimination against women and inequality between the sexes had indeed already been built into the Portuguese legal system long before the Estado Novo came into being, by the *Código de Seabra* (a set of laws, lasting from 1867-1967, which prescribed women's effective enslavement to their husbands upon marriage, giving them the power to control their wives' whereabouts, use of household wealth, and even intellectual property and right to publish). Spinsterhood was often an unhappy and perhaps unrealistic escape route, in view of the immense social coercion of women to marry and the economic precarity of not doing so – women's work was typically poorly paid, unqualified, and concentrated in traditional areas of industry, including textiles and food production, with minimal technological innovation. The little progress that was made towards women's equality during the years of the First Portuguese Republic (1910-26) – such as the introduction of a married woman's right to publish – was

immediately revoked upon the advent of military dictatorship. Women were largely excluded from formal employment (with only 21% of the total economically active population in formal employment, by 1971, being made up by women, while domestic labour was unrecognized), as well as having minimal access to education, and women's suffrage was not on equal terms with men until Portugal's democratic revolution in the 70s. With Portugal's signing of the papal Concordat in 1940, under Salazar (prime minister and *de facto* dictator from 1932-1968), women's subjugation had also officially been woven into a conservative religious framework.

Catholic gender roles were encouraged and prevailed throughout the period. Marriage became indissoluble (until the Concordat was revised in 1975); women were encouraged to imitate the Virgin Mary, as a model of feminine humility, chasteness, and motherliness, and to police their own behaviour; sexually repressed and compelled to live heteronormative lives, Portuguese women's sexual liberation was delayed relative to some other Western countries; similarly, their bodily autonomy was regulated, with abortion rights denied; contraception was discouraged (and reproductive health services were barely available). According to data from the *Associação para o Planeamento da Família* collected in 1967, maternal and infant health were poor (with 59.2 infant deaths per 1,000, and 84.6 deaths in childbirth per 100,000). Furthermore, the nuclear family model was espoused, and the husband (and father figure) was designated as the *chefe de família*. As head of the household, the man was effectively the family's only authorized decision-maker, being supported in this authoritarian role by article 1674 of the *Código Civil* of 1966. As Maria Manuel Lisboa has written in *Paula Rego's Map of Memory* (2018), contextualizing the painter's work in relation to the gendered context which it critiques, this hierarchical heteropatriarchal conception of gender roles produced a top-down (arboreal) social structure, with masculine authority stemming all the way from root to trunk to branch:

> Salazar's all-embracing blueprint for the nation set down hierarchical structures captained in decreasing order of importance by God and the prime minster, and then by the male citizen,

> husband and father, as benevolent bailiffs of national stability and well-being. Under the Estado Novo, the citizen was deemed to owe obedience to state and church, and the family was seen as the fabric of social stability, with a rigid structure defined by its internal configurations of power: the husband and father was the head of the family (*chefe de família*) and was authorised, both on a legal and quasi-legal basis, to exact obedience from his subaltern female relatives and children. (Lisboa, 2018: 8).

These gender politics, subordinating women to men, worked in concert with the Estado Novo's fascistic nationalism. Stripped of their individuality and heterogeneity, and conceptualized primarily as reproductively capable members of the Portuguese national collectivity, the state instrumentalized women firstly in the "biological reproduction of the nation" (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 22), to the extent that they were encouraged to mother future generations of obedient citizens, and secondly as "symbolic border guards and embodiments of the collectivity" (Ibid: 23), the protection of whom could notionally serve as an alibi for sending male citizens into armed conflict abroad. These gender politics are equally linked with what Spike Peterson has referred to as heterosexist nationalism (1999), in that they make heterosexual reproduction the cornerstone of the nation's survival.[7]

Meanwhile, even as the *Código do Trabalho* of 1966 finally allowed married women to earn their own money, publish, and benefit from the sales of their work, it was not until the April Revolution of 1974 and the advent of democracy in Portugal that women's legal equality with men made any significant progress, as these gender-based injustices began to be addressed. In May 1974, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came into force in Portugal, while the 1976 Constitution prohibited gender discrimination, established equality in marriage and instated universal suffrage. Following the lead of the World Health Organization's definition of

[7] According to Spike Peterson, "Group reproduction – both biological and social – is fundamental to nationalist practice, process, and politics". This group reproduction is inherently heterosexist: "Heterosexism presupposes a binary coding of polarized and hierarchical male/masculine and female/feminine identities (ostensibly based on a dichotomy of bio-physical features) and denies all but heterosexual coupling as the basis of sexual intimacy, family life, and group reproduction" (1999: 39). Heterosexist nationalism normalizes heterosexual desire, construing "women's bodies as objects of (male) sexual gratification and the means of ensuring group continuity" (Ibid: 40).

sexuality and sexual health as a human right in 1975, Article 67 of the Portuguese Constitution enshrined the right to family planning as a constitutional right in Portugal. The last quarter of the twentieth century bore witness to the increased presence of women in the workforce and in all levels of education, while the 2006 *Lei da Paridade* approved a 33% quota of representation from men and women on electoral lists for the *Assembleia da República*. And after years of feminist campaigning for abortion, a referendum in 2007 (in which yes to abortion won by 59.25%) finally conceded women this important right. Overall, varying degrees of success in women's equality have been achieved, with slow progress in important issues: even as women have gained rights within Portugal's legislative and constitutional framework, some social attitudes have been reluctant to evolve, with women still being disadvantaged by a gender pay gap and contending with the lion's share of domestic labour. As Andrea Peniche has explained (2020):

> A democracia colocou as mulheres numa encruzilhada: conquistaram o espaço público, mas não se libertaram das responsabilidades domésticas, o que significa que os modos de vida e os usos do tempo se mantêm muito desiguais e que as relações patriarcais continuam a marcar o quotidiano.

The difficulty of addressing the insidious persistence of patriarchal norms is compounded by the imbalance in progress between urban and rural areas, with greater accelerations towards equality happening in urban areas among educated milieu, while poorer rural communities lag behind.

Finally, even as the rhetoric of heterosexist nationalism has waned since the dissolution of the Estado Novo regime (in so far as Portuguese women now have greater capacity to choose whether to become mothers, with motherhood being conceived more as an individual right than a collective obligation), nevertheless the persistence of symbolic deployments of the feminine – whether it be in relation to domestic space, or to Portugal and Europe as embattled feminine entities – continues to have prejudicial implications for the lives of women and marginalized groups.

2. The Development of Feminism and Gender Theory in Portugal: From Second-Wave Feminism to Queer Theory and Beyond

The social critiques developed by twentieth and twenty-first century women writers are part of the struggle against these injustices of the Estado Novo era, and its legacies of entrenched division between the genders along heteropatriarchal lines. In the case of Correia and Neto Jorge, it is perhaps unsurprising that their most obvious target of critique was the Salazar regime itself (together with its misogyny, rhetorical framework, and colonial wars). Meanwhile, in the case of Amaral, the enemy is somewhat less clearly defined, and her critique addresses a wide range of targets including scientism, nationalism(s), and neo-liberalism – the latter of which Hardt and Negri have defined as the new face of empire (2001). Yet despite the shifting targets of feminist critique throughout the period examined in this thesis, I contend that all three poets are located at the avant-garde of feminist and gender-conscious struggle of their respective times, probing the prevailing power structures relevant to their eras. Equally, they are all concerned with giving voice to groups marginalized by heteropatriarchy, imperialism, and anthropocentrism – particularly women and non-normative gender identities, the colonized, and the more-than-human. The developments in feminism, over this more than fifty-year period (from the publication of the *Cântico do país emerso* in 1961 to that of *Escuro* in 2014), render visible new forms of marginalization, whose productive energies of resistance are salvaged and channeled in these complications of epic.

The first of the three poets contemplated in this thesis, Natália Correia (1923-1993), was herself an important theorist of gender, and her ambivalent relationship with internationalist feminist movements (particularly Anglo-American feminism) reveal something about the idiosyncratic shape of avant-garde Portuguese feminism in the same period. As Owen and Pazos-Alonso note, Correia recognized the importance of first-wave feminism's achievements, in education and suffrage, and was not insensitive to the uses of enlightenment humanist philosophy in liberating

women (2011: 228). However, she was sceptical about the benefits of women's assimilation into male culture, in the work-place and public sphere, because she was concerned about the continued disparagement of (what she thought of as) specifically feminine capacities, values and production. Correia developed a personal woman-centred philosophy of *Matrismo*, an explicit foil to the prevailing masculinist culture of Salazar's Portugal. Drawing on "anti-Christian pagan roots and surrealist conceptualizations of the inchoate feminine" (Ibid: 130) and postulating the need for women to follow "as próprias tendências culturais, que estão intimamente ligadas ao paradigma da Grande Mãe" (Correia, 2004: 65), Correia works within the realm of gender essentialism, whether strategic or otherwise.

To the extent that she espoused an essentialized version of femininity, her theorizations about writing and gender reveal points of connection with second-wave French feminism of the 70s, especially *écriture feminine* (i.e., the idea of a feminine style of writing connected with the rhythms of the female body) and Hélène Cixous's call for women to write with their bodies in 'La rire de la Méduse' (1975). Correia deconstructs the gendered binaries of Western culture – later pinpointed by Cixous's in 'Sorties' (a key essay in *La jeune née*, 1986) – revealing the interpenetration of opposites, in line with post-structuralism's revelation of the way in which terms in binary pairs depend upon one another for their meaning; she does this through an erotic celebration of women's corporeality and sacred connection to the natural world ("[a] sacralidade do amor terreno, ou [a] terrealidade do divino" [Correia, vol.1, 1993: V]). Flowing from her valorisation of femininity, which was allied with a somewhat unqueer understanding of heterosexual complementarity, Correia also espoused a notion of artistic androgyny which involved the artist's blending of masculine and feminine energies into a creative amalgamation.

This notion of artistic androgyny – highly prized by the surrealist movement – can also be found in the work of the second poet contemplated in this thesis, Correia's fellow surrealist Luiza Neto Jorge (1939-1989), whose work nevertheless contains a somewhat queerer conception of

identity. Neto Jorge's poetry bears witness to Portuguese feminism's developing interest, from the 60s – in line with what would later be theorized by Donna Haraway in her *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985) – in the points of intersection between human and more-than-human identities. Meanwhile, Correia's publication of the *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* by the three Marias, in 1972, offended public morality with its revelation of a multiplicity of female voices and the maturing of "female acts of countermemory" (Owen and Pazos-Alonso, 2011: 30) and an assertion of feminine identity as "contingent and non-absolute" (Ibid: 32).

With the advent of democracy in Portugal, there is the emergence of gender studies as an academic discipline available for study at university level, under the auspices of the third poet I analyse in this thesis: Ana Luísa Amaral (1956-2022). Amaral and Ana Gabriela Macedo's *Dicionário de Crítica Feminista* (2005) brings French post-structuralism and international developments in feminism fully into the fold of Portuguese letters, while Amaral's seminal collaboration with Maria Irene Ramalho dos Santos in their article 'Sobre a Escrita Feminina' (1997) effects a decisive move away from essentialising notions, altogether, and looks towards non-essentialising alternatives and queerness as a new path for Portuguese feminism. Amaral's queerful approach, explored by Marinela Freitas (2020b), and her conception of poetry as a no-man's land with voices inside, equally indicate a shift in Portuguese feminist poetics towards an increasingly queer and postmodernist approach. I explore how Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral's complications of epic reveal the emergence of an eco-feminist impulse, manifesting itself with subtle difference across time.

In summary, it is possible to trace the development of these three poets' approaches to questions of gender, across time, through the various waves of feminism analysed by Rosi Braidotti in her essay "Sexual difference as a nomadic political project" (2011) – with each wave generating knowledges and techniques which can nevertheless coexist in any historical moment and context. At stake in Natália Correia is what Adriana Cavarero has referred to as: "the

representability of a feminine subject as a self-representing entity" (1992: 32). Correia addresses the specific problem of woman's corporeality being devalued and shifts towards an appreciation of "women-based experience as site of knowledge" (Braidotti: 154). In Neto Jorge's poetics, meanwhile, there is the emergence of minoritarian subjects-in-becoming and a multiplicity of identifications (157), while in Amaral, the development of an "imaginary relationship to variables like class, race, age, sexual choices" produces yet further multiplicities in the self, involving the production of multiple voices across "multiple temporal axes" (157). Even so, each of these waves of feminist experience and thought can be seen to be overlapping, communicating, and developing simultaneously (even if to varying degrees) in each writer.

3. EPIC MYTHMAKING

The move to establish an essentialised Portuguese character and destiny in Portugal's male-authored epics is, in some sense, typical of the mythmaking process more generally: myths are stories which provide a natural justification for chance historical intentions, "making contingency appear eternal" (Barthes, 2009: p.168). In addition, myths have the capacity to engender community, especially in the face of existential threats, insofar as they entail a "collective agreement about some aspect of the unknown" (Lauter, 1984: p.6). Correspondingly, *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem* react to Portugal's marginalized status as a small nation on the European periphery, with an uncertain future (as much in the 1570s as the 1930s),[8] by aggrandizing its prospects as a bellicose, seafaring nation and implying the exceptional and enviable nature of its culture. In so doing, these texts evidence the tendency of Europe's "peripheral nationalisms", of countries that are anxious about their relative insignificance on the wider stage of European politics, to invent "compensatory claims to privileged uniqueness on

[8] Portugal's sovereignty from Spain was vulnerable in the 1570s. Its standing within Europe in the 1930s had been diminished following the British Ultimatum of 1890, a national trauma (Lourenço, 1982: p.27) which saw it isolated from its closest historical ally. However, the true national crisis, for Pessoa, came with the fall of the monarchy and establishment of the First Republic in 1910.

the European or global scale" (Klobucka, 1997: p.131). The danger of such exceptionalism lies in its tendency to arrange differences, in this case between nations and races, into hierarchical schema, wherein some supposedly national characteristics are deemed to be worthier than others. Nationalist and cultural exceptionalisms supply colonialists with the rationale for empire, domination, and subjugation, in the same way that the concept of heroic masculinity entails the subjugation of women.

The literary epic is indeed often characterized by its focus on this notion of exceptionalism, whether it be of the heroic male personages who populate it or, by extension, the communities which they represent: "The heroic world holds nothing so important as the prowess and fame of the individual hero... [t]he single man, Achilles or Beowulf or Roland, [who] surpasses others in strength and courage" (Bowra, 1945: 9). Meanwhile, epic's female characters fulfill symbolic functions, ranging from the Medusa's monstrosity (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.770), and Venus as divine providence interceding on behalf of the embattled Portuguese throughout *Os Lusíadas*, to Dona Tareja, who is described in *Mensagem* as "mãe de reis e avó de imperios", whose "seio augusto" suckled God's plan (*M*: p.24, l.3 and l.5) – in other words, as a symbolic mother of the nation. Given the degree to which the epic, together with mythology, has traditionally been wedded to an imbalance in gender roles, it is perhaps surprising that this mode should provide any hospitable terrain, or furnish any useful imaginative resources, to the woman writer. Yet, as Alicia Ostriker has suggested, modern women poets engage in "a vigorous and various invasion of the sanctuaries of existing language [i.e. within the male-authored canon], the treasuries where our meanings for 'male' and 'female' are themselves preserved" (Ostriker, 1982: 71). In the process, they deconstruct existing myths via Adrienne Rich's notion of "re-vision",[9] and create their own, substituting universalising archetypes for flexible prototypes (cf. Rachel Blau

[9] Adrienne Rich's notion of feminist "re-vision" entails "know[ing] the writing of the past [i.e. that of male-authored tradition], and know[ing] it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us." (1980: 35).

DuPlessis, 1975: 219).[10] Revealing myth's concealed contingencies, they thereby radically re-imagine the functions of mythology in post-modernity, in complicated and ambivalent ways.

4. UNRULY DAUGHTERS OF THE CANON: COMPLICATING GENEALOGY

Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral are Portuguese epic's unruly daughters. Articulating these feminist poets' relationship to the epic in terms of genealogy, using the language of filiation, draws attention to three interrelated aspects of their complexity. Firstly, they are – in one sense – the literary daughters of Camões and Pessoa, as well as of the mythologies which have accrued around these canonical male poets. In other words, these women poets inherit the legacy of Portugal's depiction as a seafaring nation in *Os Lusíadas* (1572) and *Mensagem* (1934), as well as the legacy of Camões and Pessoa's conflation with the nation itself in the Portuguese imaginary; these aspects provide the thematic building blocks from which a new, complicated epic poetry emerges. This canonical inheritance becomes a complicated dis-inheritance, to the extent that these poets resist the normative values (including gender norms, norms of authorial identity, and imperialist attitudes tied to seafaring expansionism) that are traditionally enshrined within the Portuguese Canon, particularly when interpreted through the prism of conservative or reactionary ideologies (notably Salazarism).

Secondly, the three poets establish feminist genealogical connections among themselves: a feminist genealogy of complicated epic emerges in the criss-crossing relationships between all three writers. Natália Correia and Luiza Neto Jorge were contemporaries working in similar milieux, affiliated in the sense of belonging to an emergent class of poet invested in avant-garde poetics from the 1960s onwards: Neto Jorge published in *Poesia 61* – which in broad terms

[10] In relation to feminist revisionist mythmaking, Rachel Blau DuPlessis defines prototypes as "original, model forms on which to base the self and its action – forms open to transformation, and forms, unlike archetypes, that offer similar patterns of experience *to* others, rather than imposing these patterns *on* others [....] A prototype is not a binding, timeless pattern, but one critically open to the possibility, even the necessity, of its own transformation. Thinking in terms of prototypes historicizes myth." (1975: 219).

represented a turning-away from social-realist poetics towards greater syntactical density and experimentalism – and Correia would include her, along with Maria Teresa Horta, in her anthology of Portuguese surrealism (*O surrealismo na poesia portuguesa* [1973]). Meanwhile, Ana Luísa Amaral, writing in the 2010s, may be considered the unruly daughter of the already-unruly daughters Correia and Neto Jorge. While it may be somewhat hard to prove explicit bonds of literary attachment between Correia and Neto Jorge, beyond the former's appreciation of the latter as a surrealist poet, by contrast, the connections between these two earlier poets and Amaral are abundant. Correia's connection to Amaral can be traced to the *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (1974), one of her (self-avowed) touchstone literary influences, which had been published at great personal risk by Correia. Similarly, Amaral has explicitly written on Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos*, as well as her corporeal poetics, in a collection of academic writings and literary criticism entitled *Arder a Palavra e Outros Incêndios* (Lisbon: Relógio d'Àgua, 2017: 27-28, 69-71). Furthermore, according to a queerly illogical temporality, both Correia and Neto Jorge may be considered 'daughters' of Amaral also, to the extent that we may read the achievements of the *Cântico do país emerso* (1961) and the *Dezanove recantos* (1969) through the lens of Amaral's own *Escuro* (2014) and her broader queer-feminist theoretical output, as one of Portugal's pre-eminent literary critics.

The third complexity which is suggested by speaking of the genealogical relations between these unruly daughters and the epic genre is encapsulated in the genealogical method of Michel Foucault (1926-1984). He writes:

> Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form on all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth

> or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. […] The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself.
> (Foucault 1977a: 146-147).

By acting as the Canon's unruly offspring, writing themselves into a new *feminized* genealogy of the genre, Portuguese feminist poets suggest that the Canon was always-already fertile ground for growing the offshoots of rebellion, containing the possibility of its own deconstruction. The collections examined in this thesis are, in this sense, enactments of canonical deconstruction. Foucault's genealogical method of tracing backwards the ways in which ideas and societal practices have evolved over time, in order to expose their historical contingency and therefore their capacity to be changed, is met with a corollary: the way Portuguese feminist poets return to the Canon in order to complicate stories of national unity involves an active process of extending the genealogy of epic into the present-tense of the time of writing, and indeed into the future, in an affirmatively feminist key. They are adding to the epic's heterogeneity, yet this is not simply a matter of the additive: they do not merely add more content to it, but rather, by making visible already-present, different, hidden aspects of the genre, they reveal the epic's own constitutive heterogeneity. Camões and Pessoa – when read in the light of feminist re-vision – become less unified, less stable, and more heterogeneous.

5. COMPLICATING EPIC

I examine two further key aspects of feminist complication of the epic genre, namely:

5.1. DISORIENTATING EPIC: COMPLICATING THE ORIENTATIONS OF THE HOMELAND

Epic narratives are often structured around the arc of an epic journey, an instantiation of "mobility in action" (Biggs & Blum, 2019: 4), which the active male hero (or heroes) embark(s)

upon and see(s) through to an end. In Virgilian epic, the journey involves a quest to establish a new homeland (as Aeneas flees Troy to fulfil Hector's prophecy of the establishment of a great new city overseas) while, in Camonian epic, the journey involves travelling away from and then returning to the familiarity of home (as Vasco da Gama explores new trading routes to the East, before returning to Portugal). As a community's ideological core, home serves as both "a fixed point of orientation and a transportable set of cultural values" (ibid: 3). On their travels, the protagonists traverse wide geographical expanses, crossing boundaries which divide the known from the unknown. These unfamiliar worlds are explored, mapped, conquered, and colonised – whether militarily or symbolically. In the process, epic heroes undergo personal transformations, with significance for the collectivity they exemplify, and establish a new home (or return to their original home) in possession of new knowledge, a good tiding, or a prize. Epics of nation-building which follow this pattern are therefore structurally (and, by extension, teleologically) orientated towards the homeland.[11]

Camões's mariners sail away from Portugal towards India, mapping out territories ripe for imperialist expansion and Christian crusades. Guided, at every turn, by the values enshrined in Portuguese history, their mission is one of national expansion abroad. Thus, even as the mariners are sailing eastwards (and notwithstanding other complications), *Os Lusíadas* broadly orientates itself *towards* Portugal. The nation's exultation, its hoped-for expansion, conceived as the culmination of its historical trajectory (as a politically cohesive unit, having consolidated Christian rule; as a birthplace of heroes; and as would-be pinnacle of all European and Christian

[11] Camões consciously modelled his *Os Lusíadas* on the foremost national epic of classical antiquity, Virgil's *Aeneid* (19 B.C.E.) – as evidenced by repeated comparisons of the Lusiads' exploits with those of the Trojan Aeneus (e.g. Canto I, stanza 3), and the characterisation of Venus, protectress of the Romans in Virgilian epic, as "afeiçoada à gente lusitana/ Por quantas qualidades via nela/ Da antiga, tão amada, sua romana" (Canto I, stanza 33, ll.2-4]). Regarded the *Aeneid*, David Quint explains that the epic's first six books are modelled on the continual wandering which characterises the romance aspect of Homer's *The Odyssey* (as the Trojans unsuccessfully attempt to settle outside of Italy), whereas the final six books stage a new version of the epic military narrative of *The Iliad* (wherein the Trojans fight the native Latins for mastery of the land that will become their Roman homeland). "The two-part Aeneid thus identifies epic teleology with narrative itself — the winners' story made possible by conquest" (Quint: 1993, 52).

seafaring prowess), are the epic's teleological goal.[12] Nationalism, in the broadest sense, can be described as an ideological orientation which places the fulfilment of the nation – conceived as a homogenous community with a shared culture and belief system – and its goals, at the apex of all priorities. And even as nationalist orientation points towards the promise of the future, suggesting forward-motion in citizens' teleological striving towards a shared goal, at the same time it is ironically generative of stasis, because it promotes an unthinking continuation of the national *status quo*.[13]

While nationalist epics are broadly *orientating*, in this way, Portuguese women poets' complications of epic are *disorientating*, both in the sense of provoking bewilderment and equally in the sense of throwing the nation off-course – that is to say, of challenging its habitual, linear, and genealogically-supported trajectory. While imperialist discourse (particularly under Salazar's dictatorship) had once encouraged Portugal to gain knowledge of itself by lining itself up with imaginary lines cut through maps, complicated feminist epic *disorientates* through its maplessness, its refusal to orientate itself using the conventional guiding principles of the sea and the horizon, the map (and other tools of empire-building), or the cool Apollonian light of masculine reason:

> Não eleger nem mar, nem horizonte.
> E embarcar sem mapa até ao fim
> do escuro
> (Amaral, *E*: 27).

[12] As Chapter 1 of this thesis explores, the orientation of Camões's epic towards the Portuguese homeland is at least partially complicated by the prophecies contained in the *Máquina do Mundo* episode (*OL*, Canto X), which reveal an endless encounter with proliferating and disruptive non-native difference – intrinsic to any project of imperial expansion – that awaits the Portuguese.

[13] This happens most powerfully by means of what Lee Edelman has referred to as "reproductive futurism" (2004: 28), which involves the promotion of heterosexual reproduction and veneration of the Symbolic Child. This practice secures a polity's genealogical survival while also allowing political progress to be endlessly deferred, as politics is conducted in the name of nebulously-defined future generations, who never grow up to see the fruition of the change promised to them.

The notion of disorientation is analysed by Sara Ahmed in her book *Queer Phenomenology* (2006). Taking Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* as a starting point, she discusses the ways in which bodies become orientated in space and begin to face in a given direction – whether at the level of the individual body or of the collectivity (since the interaction of bodies in space produces collective orientations). Space acquires direction through the way in which bodies inhabit it over time, for example by treading footprints in the ground, creating well-trodden paths which solicit other feet to follow suit; even water can acquire this directionality, as shipping routes are established, with ships being conceptualised as bridges from one land to another in imperialist networks of trade and conquest.

Furthermore, Ahmed reimagines queerness as *sexual* disorientation; "compulsory heterosexuality operates as a straightening device" and "bodies become straight by 'lining up' with lines that are already given" (2006: 23). Practising "nonnormative sexualities" (Jagose, 1996) "involves a personal and social commitment to living in an oblique world" (Ahmed, 2006: 161). If heterosexist nationalism seeks to determine citizens' sexual orientation, as well as their political and cultural affiliations, then *disorientation* – that is, the failure to orientate oneself correctly in the eyes of heteropatriarchy or heterosexist nationalism – represents the opening up of new feminist and queer experiments in living, which may be sexually liberating and politically enlivening. As Ahmed explains, "different orientations, different ways of directing one's desire, means inhabiting different worlds" (68).

This revolution of desire may lead us into a state of bewilderment, as the familiar coordinates of national identity, sexual mores, and gender roles are scattered and flung into new patterns, or else dispensed with altogether; "risking departure from the straight and narrow makes new futures possible, which might involve going astray, getting lost, or even becoming queer" (21). As Jack Halberstam argues, in *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire* (2020: 66-69), bewilderment

is both a state of being (a getting-lost in the wilderness) and an aesthetic strategy (an anti-Enlightenment confounding of orderliness, and an activation of the powers of the wild, in all of its ungovernability and complexity). Bewilderment, losing one's way in the wild and falling outside the orbit of the familiarities of home, can go hand-in-hand with losing one's civilised identity, thus opening up the possibility of transformation. Moving in opposite direction to colonial ways of knowing (such as navigation, settling, conquest, cataloguing, naming), the disorientation of bewilderment lies in magical, delightful, and scary forms of unknowing that are associated with enchantment, bafflement, and confusion. Bewilderment follows a collapse of reference and reconcilability: this process helps us to see things anew, because it helps to strip away our ready-made associations for things, stripping away the layers of symbolism that have accrued over time through language and social convention. Bewilderment is about: unmaking, undoing, unbuilding.

For example, Correia's surrealist bewildering of the human form as an empowering fusion of natural elements deriving from the Azorian landscape, in her *Cântico do país emerso*, establishes a productive allegiance between the human and the wild, which Luiza Neto Jorge expands upon in her portrayal of the unnarratable (and therefore unknowable and untameable) eruptions of the fertile female form, in her *Dezanove recantos*, while the collection sends out Deleuzian rhizomatic off-shoots at the level of form. Surrealism's depiction of a topsy-turvy "mundo às avessas" (Correia 1973: 100), elaborated through its "psychic automatism" and motivated by its rejection of "any control exercised by reason" (Breton [1924] 2011: 153), permits both Correia and Neto Jorge to undertake an explosive and "permanente insurreição contra a lógica" (Correia 1973: 100), illuminating areas of experience hitherto obscured by rationalist absolutism and allowing the world to be transformed through new interactions and alliances between seemingly disparate entities. Meanwhile, inheriting the legacy of these surrealist forays into the wild from 1960s' complicated epics, Amaral's project of relinquishing the security of maps, and following

the mysticism of William Blake into the half-light of poetic illumination, in *Escuro*, allows for that which is marginalised in map-making to resurface.[14]

5.2. SPECTRAL EPIC: COMPLICATING MEMORIALISATION

> No justice […] seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some responsibility, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead. […] Without this non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present, without that which secretly unhinges it, without this responsibility and this respect for justice concerning those who are not there, of those who are no longer or who are not yet present and living, what sense would there be to ask the question "where?" "where tomorrow?" "whither?"
>
> (Derrida [1993] 2006: xviii)

In his *Spectres of Marx* (1993), Derrida makes use of the concept of the spectre to develop his theory of hauntology (a French play on words, which evokes "haunting" as well as "ontology") to consider the ways in which the present is haunted by the past. The spectre – an entity who is both present and absent, existing between life and death, whose life has not yet been foreclosed – confounds the idea that the past is ever truly behind us. Emerging from Derrida's long interest in the subject's constitution through relations with alterity and in learning how to accommodate otherness respectfully (whether human, ghostly, or more-than human [Derrida 2008]), the spectre comes to signify ethical invitations, coming from the unresolved traumas of the past or even the as-yet unlived future, for those living in the present to bring about forms of justice and effect positive social transformation. Traditional history-making's mechanisms of memorialisation, of erecting "discursive definitional tombs" (Freccero 2006: 73), are means of

[14] That which is marginalised from the map includes everything abhorrent or inconvenient to the rational, historicising mind of the colonising explorer or imperialist. As Anne McClintock explains: "the edges and blank spaces of colonial maps are typically marked with vivid reminders of the failure of knowledge and hence the tenuousness of possession. The failure of European knowledge appears in the margins and gaps of these maps in the forms of cannibals, mermaids and monsters, threshold figures eloquent of the resurgent relations between gender, race and imperialism. The map is a liminal thing, associated with thresholds and marginal zones, burdened with dangerous powers. As an exemplary icon of imperial 'truth', the map, like the compass and the mirror, is what Hulme aptly calls a 'magic technology,' a potent fetish helping colonials negotiate the perils of margins and thresholds in a world of terrifying ambiguities." (1995: 28).

constricting the ambiguities and unresolved tensions of the past which would otherwise call to us, making these ethical invitations for justice.

Portuguese national epic displays just such a tendency to memorialise figures from the nation's past (both "real" and imagined). Just as Virgil's *Aeneid* lionizes Aeneus, the mythical founder of Rome, as a role model of virtuous, military leadership, worthy of contemporary imitation during the reign of Augustus, so too Camões's depiction of Portugal's founders and male genealogies of monarchs involves eulogizing hero worship. In Vasco's da Gama's speech to the King of Melindi (in Cantos 3 and 4 of *Os Lusíadas)*, the grandiloquence of which is pre-empted by Camões's invocation of Calliope (the muse of epic verse and mother of Orpheus), da Gama explains that he will sing the glories of his nation's "grão genealogia" (Canto III, stanza 3, l.6). He recounts the ascension of the Portuguese monarchy and its first few centuries of existence, with the meanings of individual monarchs' lives being decided, sealed, and delivered explicitly as lessons in statecraft. For example, King Afonso Henriques ("Um filho que ilustrasse o nome ufano/ Do belicoso Reino Lusitano")[15] comes to embody – through his epithetic association with the Roman god of war ("Fervendo-lhe no peito o duro Marte")[16] – Portugal's war-like spirit.[17]

The discursive entombment of Afonso Henriques as a zealous military leader has implications both for the flesh-and-blood man, whose complex and unknowable life is simplified, and for the national history which his life is deemed to illustrate and guide, as primogenitor of the "great lineage". As I am reminded by queer theorist Carla Freccero (who extends Derrida's work), the distilling of essentialist truths from historical lives, which are treated as exemplary (whether of

[15] *OL*. Canto III, stanza 26, lines 7-8.
[16] *OL*. Canto III, stanza 30, line 5.
[17] Afonso Henriques of the House of Burgundy (born c.1108) is the king most associated with the concept of the reconquest of Portugal from the Moors. Proclaiming himself king upon defeating the Moorish army led by the Almoravid governor of Córdoba (Muhammad Az-Zubayr Ibn Umar) at the Battle of Ourique in 1139 – the year which marks the beginning of the Portuguese monarchy – he reigned until his death in 1185.

virtue or of vice), activates the dangers of memorialisation (2006). Such effacement of nuance, of the ambiguities of a lived life, obscures these historical figures' queer potential.[18] In other words, what is effaced from the annals of history is these figures' disruptive capacity to disavow the smooth flow of any straightforward teleology of national development (such as they might give if they are seen to have left tangible inheritances, carried forward by subsequent generations). In fact, as spectres of history, these spectres unsettle Portugal by returning cyclically to haunt the nation – they are present-absences or absent-presences, which confound any sense of the uncomplicated moving away from, or complete(d)ness of, the past.

As Phillip Rothwell has argued, Portuguese cultural and political history is permeated with the memory of its *Empty Fathers* (2007): a series of paternal figures who failed to live up to standard notions of heteronormativity and masculinity authority, lacking one or another trait traditionally associated with the (Lacanian) paternal function. Examples include the childless Dom Sebastião who failed to secure the Portuguese line of succession, and Salazar, who styled himself as a celibate priest-like figure. As such, Portuguese history lends itself to being analysed through the lens of absence, of the failed promise of presence. A spectrality of epic would involve uncovering the way in which epic texts (and the cultural context which produced them) are themselves full of spectres, as well as considering how the ghosts of epic still haunt us today.

Being haunted by ghosts activates a host of possibilities: it might involve being afflicted by the return of suppressed traumas, or else call to our attention injustices suffered in the past by other people. These include both historical figures and undocumented lives, which we may be called upon to imagine, in the absence of historical data. Ghosts symbolise the existence of something unresolved or unfinished about a past event which requires our attention in the present.

[18] This is a theme to which Ana Luísa Amaral returns in her complicated epic *Escuro* (2014), which I explore in Chapter 4 of this thesis – see here for a fuller exposition of Carla Freccero's notion of queer spectrality and the dangers of memorialisation.

However, whichever way we conceptualise spectral visitations, they carry with them – as many scholars of the spectral turn have argued (Blanco and Peeren, 2013) – an ethical imperative: we are called to pay attention to the past, to heed the voices of the powerless, the marginalised and the suffering, and crucially to do so without bluntly imposing our own narrative upon them, least of all one based on our contemporary prejudices. As Carla Freccero asserts, the past must be allowed to remain populated by (or be re-populated with) ambiguities, contradictions, and queerness, for this serves as an antidote to any act of narrativizing history in favour of a dominant ideology. As Wendy Brown asserts:

> We inherit not "what really happened" to the dead but what lives on from that happening, what is conjured from it, how past generations and events occupy the force fields of the present, how they claim us, and how they haunt, plague, and inspirit our imaginations and visions for the future.
> (Brown 2001: 150).

Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral all contend with what lives on from the happenings of the days of empire and of Salazar. Their complicated epics include deathly imagery, as though wrestling with the ghoulish traumas of the past and present: the *Cântico do país emerso* envisages a drowned pilot at the helm of a sunken ship of state (*AP*: 110); the *Dezanove Recantos* depict a "deusa mão" (*Poesia*: 176), scratching beneath the earth to examine the dead, and fulminated flowers are strewn across the collection's surreally-depicted battlefields; and a host of queer spectres from Portuguese (literary) history haunt *Escuro*, as they had haunted Pessoa's *Mensagem* before, only differently. Haunted by the memory of preceding epics in the Portuguese canon, as well as their characters and their authors, these feminist collections revisit ghosts who are seeking the ethical redress of wrongs. Yet at the heart of this endeavour, there remains an unresolved tension: as feminist and queer writers seek to expose the perennial presence of certain haunting myths within the Portuguese imaginary, in doing so, might they run the risk of perpetuating their chokehold on contemporary culture? Even so, I contend that if we take textuality to be always-

already haunted by the ghosts of preceding cultural production and history, it follows that the task of writing is precisely always one of grappling with ghosts. Until such myths have been analysed from alternative feminist and queer perspectives, they cannot hope to be fully deconstructed. Rather than entirely exorcising the ghosts of the past, these complicated epics reimagine their meaning and communicate with them, and thus open up new possibilities for understanding the past differently.

6. The Structure of this Thesis: An Overview

This thesis is divided into four chapters (followed by as Conclusion), as follows:

Chapter I. National mythologies of seafaring Portugal: Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa: explores how the mythology of Portugal as a seafaring nation, with a teleology directed towards imperial greatness, is constructed through a particular mobilization of the literary Canon, involving totalizing interpretations of key authors and their epic texts – Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa – by the Estado Novo and nationalist thinkers throughout modern Portuguese history. Paying attention to the ways in which these authors' texts can be read against the grain of such nationalist, teleologically-minded interpretations, I seek to articulate how the Portuguese epic tradition provides subsequent feminist writers with a rich resource of ambiguities and tensions as well as gender-related blind-spots to be played with, revisited and addressed. A Derridean reading of Portuguese epic reveals how it is haunted by its own inconsistencies, and how its meanings cannot be fixed incontrovertibly.

Chapter II. Submerging Patriarchy, Emerging Matriarchy: Nátalia Correia's *Cântico do País Emerso* (1961): considers the radical body-consciousness of Correia's *Cântico do País Emerso,* whose enunciating voice is decidedly female. This poem-sequence revisits the foundational legends of Portuguese culture and re-writes them from a new vantage point, questioning their

systematic privileging of male agency, and deconstructing gendered dichotomies. It also refers to contemporary history, sometimes in oblique fashion to evade detection by censorship, setting notions of historical grandeur against the revelation of contemporary squalor and paucity of spiritual value, and in particular revealing the traumas of imperial rule in the Portuguese colonies in Africa. Its culminating fusion of the lexes of poetic craft, pregnancy, biology and romantic love engenders a romantic poetic voice capable of unstitching the binary divisions between civilisation and nature, and body and mind. These principles are reintegrated positively in a re-imagined and idealised 'pátria emergente', which is described as being lucidly elaborated by the poet's uterus, in a metaphorical inscription of the female body within the body of the text. Following my Michaelmas 2020 research trip to the Natália Correia archive in Ponta Delgada, this chapter now incorporates contemporary literary reviews and hitherto unpublished correspondence illuminating Correia's inter-textual relationship with Pessoa.

Chapter III. Queerly Dis-orientating, Rhizomatically Reimagined Epic: Luíza Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos* (1969): the *Dezanove Recantos* (1969) adopt the scaffolding of the epic mode in their division into parts (Proposition, Invocation, Dedication, Narration) and cantos, as well as their deployment of epic personages and the notion of the journey. However, these trappings of the genre are destabilized from the outset. Like Correia, Jorge uses surrealism to liberate words from their stable meanings in patriarchal culture. She also employs a Deleuzian rhizomatic structure – that is, an 'acentered, non- hierarchical, non-signifying system [...] defined solely by a circulation of states' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013: 22) – as a means of deconstructing the epic mode from within. The sense of a stable 'imagined community' (Benedict Anderson, 1991), normally created in epic narratives through teleological trajectories, is thus spurned and replaced with more fluid notions of community and allegiance. Moreover, the *Dezanove Recantos* coincide with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'Minor literature', since – unlike Camões's epic, for instance – they do not express a fixed Portuguese identity, but rather exhibit a language which pushes at the limits of the sayable; rather than passively representing given

states of the world, they are always already actively creating new ones by virtue of their eccentric linguistic qualities, ranging from startling neologisms to stammering semantics. Femininity and masculinity are queerly reimagined, as a host of relationally-(and rhizomatically-)intersecting queer and posthuman perspectives becomes thinkable.

Chapter IV. Queer Spectrality and Eco-Utopianism: Liberating Marginalized Feminine Voice(s) in Ana Luísa Amaral's *Escuro* (2014): *Escuro* magnifies the elegiac undercurrents of its male-authored precursors, and opens up a panoply of alternative voices and reimaginings of Portugal's contingent place within history. Through her probing of spurious unities and forms of transcendence, Amaral reminds us that the moral architecture upon which the nation's future is to be built is, as yet and indeed always, uncreated and flexible. In her exploration of interstices in historical record around such mythologized figures as Filipa de Lancastre and Mariana Alcoforado, Amaral reveals stories muted by patriarchy. It is worth noting how its characters, taken from epic stock, are revealed to be intimately, fallibly human, as the emotional content of their lives is allowed to shine through. A far cry from the bellicose monarchs of *Os Lusíadas* and the romantic martyrs of *Mensagem*, Amaral's vulnerable human subjects – or "queer spectres" (Freccero, 2006) – are figures of resistance and indeterminacy who meditate on, and suffer on account of, the destinies foisted upon them by the faulty logic and masculine ideals of statecraft and imperialist nation-building. As Amaral's mythical figures engage in self-querying auto-deconstruction, her own approach to myth is complicated and ambivalent. Moving beyond the confines of Portugal, this collection contemplates Europe's dystopian present and envisions global utopian alternatives.

Chapter I.

NATIONAL MYTHOLOGIES OF SEAFARING PORTUGAL: LUÍS DE CAMÕES AND FERNANDO PESSOA

1. Introduction

This chapter poses the question of how the Salazar regime co-opted Luís de Camões (c.1524-1580) and Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) into its nationalist ideology. I explore how the mythology of Portugal as a seafaring nation, with a teleology directed towards imperial greatness, is constructed through a particular mobilization of the literary Canon, a series of totalizing interpretations of these key authors and their epic texts by the Estado Novo and nationalist thinkers throughout modern Portuguese history. Effectively turning them into myths or icons and enshrining certain values in the national imaginary by their canonization, they divested their poems of all ambiguity, rendering them amenable to the regime's heterosexist, imperialist and religious orthodoxies. In tandem with my contextualizing reception studies approach, I use feminist and queer theory to examine the matters of gender and nation, and the gendered body in relation to epistemology – this will lay the ground for a later discussion of how Correia, Jorge and Amaral approach these same themes from critically different angles. Beyond these gender-related blind-spots which feminist poets revisit and address, I pay attention to the ways in which these Camões and Pessoa's texts can be read against the grain of nationalist, teleologically-minded interpretations, seeking to articulate how the Portuguese epic tradition provides feminist poetry with a rich resource of other ambiguities and tensions. A Derridean reading of Portuguese epic reveals how it is haunted by its own inconsistencies, and how its meanings cannot be fixed incontrovertibly. I place special emphasis on how the (critically) suppressed and subversive ambiguities of both writers have been (and can continue to be) reclaimed. Derridean deconstruction thus serves as my analytical tool for revealing this vein of radical indeterminacy

running throughout the epic tradition, from Camões and Pessoa onwards.

Os Lusíadas (1572) seems triumphally to project the Portuguese onto a trajectory of crusading expansionism overseas, with Portugal being figured as the beating heart of this enterprise, portrayed as the centre of European Christendom and the World. Portugal's history is depicted as a straightforward accrual of power and imperial potential through successive feats of male heroes, according to the poem's emphasis on masculine Lusitanian lineages. Yet, at the same time, the epic overflows with contradictions, aporia and excesses of meaning, which are noticeable in Camões's depiction of the disruptive surprise of the novelties encountered by the sailors on their voyage, and especially prominent in three episodes: Vasco da Gama's encounter with Adamastor, a subaltern who curses the imperial venture (in Canto V); the Isle of Love, with its complicated eroticism (in Cantos IX and X); and the culminating prophecy of the 'máquina do Mundo' episode, which fails to englobe or crown the epic in its entirety (in Canto X).

Fernando Pessoa's *Mensagem* (1934), at first glance, similarly seems to suggest a linear path through national history, celebrating the regal heroes of its past and conjuring an emergent sense of Portugal as a 'Fifth Empire' emanating cultural supremacy. However, Portugal as an entity, and Portugueseness, lack certainty of definition throughout the collection, shapeshifting through a series of obscure non-definitions in the collection's first two sections ('Brasão' and 'Mar Português'), and reaching an apotheosis only in the form of a nebulous mist in the book's third and final section ('O Encoberto'). Drawing on the myth of Dom Sebastião, the Hidden One, whose messianic second coming can be nothing if not a perpetual deferral, *Mensagem* – with its investment in unfulfillment – accords well with Derrida's notion of *différance*. In this sense, *Mensagem* is a text resistant to nationalist readings which would seek to find evidence of Portugal's capacity to signify univocally or to be present to itself (in other words, to contain its own meaning self-sufficiently).

Meanwhile, Álvaro de Campos's 'Ode marítima' (1915) takes the form of an ode which is filled

with epic content, seemingly promoting a vision of active masculinity (which takes the form of an exulted piracy) which abuses passive femininity (represented by the imagined victims of historical violence). Nevertheless, the Ode marítima is eccentric: the nation's historical epic tradition, which in Camões meant collective history ("os barões assinalados"), has been transplanted into the imaginative, delirious, and meandering mind of a singular (yet internally self-multiplying) character – complicating the notion of epic as either collective history-making or as a tool for interpreting national history teleologically. This is especially complicated by the fact that Álvaro de Campos imagines himself relocated backwards in time, to the era of the Discoveries, but not forwards, as Camões's text had sought to do through its prophetic rhetoric and forward-facing gaze. In yet another complication, Álvaro de Campos is assailed by the return of the repressed feminine, when he assumes the identity of a diabolical, feminized sea serpent, and yet again when he is affected by ephemeral traces of female influences from his childhood. He is concurrently assailed by a revelation of queerness associated with internalized traumas from a vulnerable childhood, in a problematization of masculine gender and heroic masculinity.

1.1. Derridean Deconstruction

As a philosopher of difference and indeterminacy, who refuted the Western metaphysics of presence, which may be said to undergird all forms of nationalism, patriarchy and gender binarism, Jacques Derrida's work may aptly illuminate how Portugal's masculine epic tradition always-already complicates itself from within. Derridean deconstruction supplies a means of identifying exclusions or suppressions in *Os Lusíadas*, *Mensagem and* 'Ode marítima' upon which the texts actually depend in order to erect and sustain their particular worldviews and systems of belief:

> "[D]econstruction is the vigilant seeking-out of those 'aporias', blindspots or moments of

> self-contradiction where a text involuntarily betrays the tension between rhetoric and logic, between what it manifestly means to say and what it is nonetheless constrained to mean. […] Derridean deconstruction exposes the limit of any system of ideality established as reality, whether that limit be evoked as the supplement, the margin, . . . or indeed as Woman." (Norris, 1987: 18).

Insofar as the Portuguese epic tradition, or at least its progenitor Camões, can be said to manifestly uphold a particular worldview, it is perhaps one invested in straightforwardness, a direction of travel from a fixed origin point towards a certain national *telos* (one of imperial expansion), and an upholding of the centrality of the *phallus* and the *logos* in determining meaning;[19] and yet, as Derrida reminds us, textuality's always-already self-contradictory nature, of which literature's equivocality is but the most self-aware manifestation, reveal how the free play of signifiers cannot help but undercut any determination for fixity expressed in teleological, phallogocentric discourse.

Bearing in mind Derrida's revelation, in 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' (2001b), that classical Western thought has neutralized our capacity to perceive the "structurality of structure" (that is to say, the way a structure is composed, how its parts relate to the whole) "by a process of giving it a center or of referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin" (2001b: 352)[20] which orientates, balances and organizes it, limiting the structure's play (i.e. its capacity to be reshaped, become unstructured, or to signify otherwise), we may be

[19] *Os Lusíadas'* phallocentrism, i.e., its privileged depiction of masculinity as the driving motor for all epic action, is in evidence from its opening lines. In Canto I's inaugural two stanzas, Camões declares his subject to be Portuguese arms and men who built a new empire, and the kings who achieved immortality through valiant deeds: 'As armas e os Barões assinalados…. E também as memórias gloriosas/ Daqueles Reis que foram dilatando/ A Fé, o Império….' (*OL*, Canto I, stanzas 1-2). Logocentrism, meanwhile, refers to the idea that, before everything else, there is presence ('the Logos, the undeconstructible origin of the meaning of being, the rationality of thought, the absolute interiority of truth' [Lucy, 2004: 71]). In *Os Lusíadas*, this logocentrism involves the transformation or sublimation of historical contingencies into the divinely-ordained revelation of a national destiny, such that Portugal's imperial expansion is finally attributable to the 'undeconstructible' presence of God as ultimate cause and prime mover. It is also worth noting that, although it is a self-consciously literary epic in the style of Virgil, Camões's poem assumes an additional authority deriving from a phonocentric bias, which Derrida claims to be an integral part of Western culture, by purporting to be part of an oral tradition of epic song: '*Cantando* espalharei por toda a parte/ Se a tanto me ajudar o engenho e arte' (*OL*, Canto I, stanzas 1-2 [my emphasis]).

[20] *Telos* is in fact yet another name which Derrida gives for the centre, the structuring principle of a structure, its point of fixity which keeps it glued together and limits play (2001b: 352).

reminded that in the case of Portuguese nationhood, its own structure has been sustained by an origin myth (the supposed recapturing and consolidation of Christian territories from the Moors, under masculine genealogies of medieval monarchs) and the *telos* of an imperial, seafaring destiny. Deconstruction's unsettling of structure serves the feminist cause of re-inserting contingency, doubt and play into the national story, allowing for deviations from a masculine *telos*.

In terms of deconstruction's usefulness to feminism, we may attend to its calls for exposing the gendered binaries upon which this phallogocentric system itself depends (including pairings such as Man-Woman, Mind-Body, Reason-Emotion, Light-Dark, with the latter term of each binary always being portrayed as both feminine and inferior). Deconstruction's twofold strategy for unravelling binary thinking, whereby, firstly, the hierarchy is inverted (such that binary logic is retained but subordinate terms are subversively privileged, with "Woman" for example taking centre stage) and, secondly (albeit *simultaneously*, rather than chronologically or progressively), the binary comes to be displaced by an alternative "concept" (which reformulates and explodes the original premise upon which the binary rested, and is unfailingly open to being reworked and superseded in turn),[21] reminds us of the ways in which feminism unsettles patriarchy by

[21] Derrida himself brought a series of sexualising terms into play which privileged the feminine, in an effort to redress (masculinist) Western philosophy's tendencies to portray itself as gender-neutral, its rendering invisible of the feminine. These included *hymen* and *double invagination*, terms which "theorize the (feminine) operation of deconstructive undecidability" (Dillon, 2017: 110). The former, a figure designating the protective membrane partially covering the entrance to the vagina, is described by Derrida as being "*between* the inside and the outside of a woman" (1981: 212-213); it appears, in his work, as a figure for a margin or liminality between desire and fulfilment, an undecidability, something which is lacking in man (or at least "man" as the self-designated, preeminent subject of subjectivity, assured of his own self-presence and centrality). Meanwhile, the latter term – invoked in Derrida's discussion of what constitutes genre(s) – refers to "an internal pocket larger than the whole" (1980: 58), the inward refolding of a narrative in a mise-en-abyme; I will return to this term later in this chapter. The relative good of Derrida's use of terms which (over-)invest the feminine with figurative meaning is rightly debated by feminists; my own approach, however, is to use these terms in strategic interventions into terrain dominated by phallogocentric bias. In a different move useful to feminism, Derrida displaces the man-woman binary altogether, with the word "dance" (in 'Choreographies' [McDonald and Derrida, 1982]), gesturing towards a new dynamic of gender relations figured as movement, rather than stasis.

emerging, as it were, from its own matrix, as one of its "uncontained consequences", [22] a form of excess. Derridean philosophy thus serves the feminist injunction of becoming unruly in the face of a patriarchal order which seeks to contain, suggesting ways of subverting, eschewing and undoing the logic of the oppressor.

2. Luís de Camões:

2.1. Camões as a Cultural Icon, or Camões-as-Text

Within the hall of fame of world literary icons, Portugal's Luís de Camões (c.1524/5-1580) stands alongside Dante, Shakespeare and Cervantes as an author of peculiar national significance, thanks to his canonization as Portugal's national bard. As Alan Freeland comments, Camões's rise to the status of symbol of Portuguese national identity was fulfilled in the nineteenth century (1996: 54), resulting in no small part from the high esteem in which his lyric and epic poetry was held by the Romantics (such as Almeida Garrett) and the intellectuals of the "generation of 1870" (including historian and Camões biographer Oliveira Martins). Their work helped to concretise the myth of the poet's life being inextricably intertwined with that of his nation, its literal equivalent, through the unproveable story of Camões's dying words to the effect that he was content to die with his nation; Portugal would fall to the Spanish crown in 1580, for a period of sixty years. As Oliveira Martins wrote in his *Camões: Os Lusíadas e a Renascença em Portugal* (1891):

[22] I borrow this term from Elizabeth Grosz, who enumerates the manifold ways in which Derrida's thought may fruitfully intersect with feminism in her article 'Derrida and Feminism: A Remembrance' (2005: 88-94), foremost among which is advocacy of *différance*, "this movement without containment, this force of differentiation without identity" (91). According to Grosz, "Derrida bypasses the framework of lack that has been used to characterize women for millenia in patriarchal discourses and instead posits femininity as excess, as indeterminability, as what unsettles and refuses to conform to a certain logic of presence and self-identity" (93).

> [E]m 1580, Portugal e Camões caíram na terra fria de uma sepultura. Expirando, tinha o poeta sequer a amarga consolação de acabar com a pátria. «Morro com ela», disse, e finou-se.
>
> *
>
> Não admira, pois, que desde então Camões ficasse na alma popular como símbolo da nação, e Os Lusíadas como a sua bíblia. Não admira que tivesse passado à condição de epónimo desta pequena pátria, tão semelhante a Atenas, e mais ainda a Esparta, na agitação da sua vida política, na grandeza da sua missão colonial, e também na miséria fúnebre da sua decomposição
>
> (1891: 115).

In the political sphere, the Republican movement of the late nineteenth-century saw in Camões, particularly upon the occasion of the Tercentenary of his death, in 1880, a rallying figure for their nationalist, identitarian politics, as well as their anti-monarchical stance. In this vein, *Os Lusíadas* was somewhat amenable to be read, at least selectively, as a critique of the decadence brought about by monarchical rule, on account of the frequent lamentations concerning the state of sixteenth-century Portugal under Dom Sebastião contained in the episode of the Velho do Restelo as well as frequent authorial asides (for example in Canto X, stanza 145, which declares the nation to be languishing in an "austera, apagada e vil tristeza").[23] As Abdool Karim A. Vakil points out, the Republicans' identitarian politics took on a "reductive and totalising circularity", which equated the poet with the nation, along with its people, its national tradition, its paradigmatic historical moment ("the Discoveries") and its colonial mission, such that the

[23] However, the poem's critique of national decadence under Dom Sebastião cannot be read as a simple rejection of the Divine Right of Kings. Indeed, Dom Sebastião's authority is hardly questioned; rather, his ego is massaged, as the poem persuades him to chart a new course for the nation. Indeed, as Eduardo Lourenço remarks, there is another key historical interpretation of *Os Lusíadas* which would have been amenable to the later twentieth-century Estado Novo regime (involving precisely its supposed promotion of single-minded authoritarian rule): "A exegese óbvia que se costuma fazer da relação Camões-Pátria é um espelhismo romântico. É Camões quem pessoaliza a Pátria, não é ela que o camoniza, que o problematiza. Na realidade, a altissonante e universal pátria camoniana não é ainda um individuo político-social, como ele, poeta, de algum modo já o é, mas o suporte de um «império» e de uma fé cuja irradiação reverte a favor de um rei (único soberano ou soberano único), o qual por sua vez se encontra fora da história, em sentido moderno, como encarnação que é do princípio monárquico, princípio de continuidade, anti-romântico, anti-trágico por excelência" (1982: 81).
The malleability of *Os Lusíadas*, its capacity to be co-opted by both Republicanism and Estado Novo authoritarianism, is proof of both its ambiguity as a text, and its attractiveness as a bible of Portuguese nationalism, from the nineteenth century onwards.

poem's celebration of Vasco da Gama's voyage of discovery was taken to imply Portugal's pioneering, expansionist spirit – a feat in need of revisiting, replicating and advancing, via "a republican reading of history as future-orientated identity" (1996: 42). In this exemplary early case of the Camões's usefulness to politics as symbolic capital, the Republicans claimed that the nation had reached its apogee with the era of the Discoveries and had been in decline ever since, necessitating a national regeneration that was necessarily synonymous with a rejection of monarchic rule and, consubstantially, with a revival of the national spirit identified in Camões, which the Republicans promised to bolster.

Under Salazar, the Romantics' appreciation of Camões found continuity. Approaching Camões as a unique genius, whose work was intimately intertwined with his life story as a mariner-poet who had crossed the equator, wielding sword and quill, and who lived through numerous star-crossed love affairs, became a habit of Camões criticism and adaptation. The myth of the individual genius, which supported this approach to Camões, stems from the tradition of masculinising genius identified by Christine Battersby in her seminal study of *Gender and Genius* (1989), according to which women's' creative capacities are deemed to be limited to their biological role within human reproduction, while male creativity has enjoyed sublimation in the realms of philosophy and the arts. Research by Patrícia Vieira into Estado Novo cinematic appropriations of his life story (2011), and by Tatiana Faia into theatrical redeployments of the myth of Camões (2018), reveal how a cult of reverence grew up around him, such that he could become identified as the ideal representative of the Portuguese nation, a paragon of virtues to be emulated by the masses.[24]

[24] It must be pointed out that this exemplarity of Camões was partially complicated in a film by the regime's favoured propagandist and filmmaker, Leitão de Barros. In *Camões* (1946), the poet's inconstancy in love leads him to disaster; such a portrayal served as an allegory for the need for Portuguese citizens to remain faithful to the political ideology of the regime (Vieira 2011).

According to Carlos Cunha, between 1895-1974, the Portuguese education system treated the study of literature as a "motor da regeneração nacional e do progresso, mediante a educação dos seus futuros dirigentes, modelados à imagem dos 'grandes homens' e do império" (2012: 255). The approach to Camões under Salazar was dominated by a rejection of the aforementioned interpretation of *Os Lusíadas* that was prevalent during the Republican-era and for the Geração de 70 (namely that the poem was both an epic and an epitaph, depicting the greatness of the nation in the very moment of its eclipse); this necessitated extirpating the epic's gloomier rhetorical episodes. Thus, the poem's expressions of anti-imperialist sentiment in narratorial asides, for example, were glossed over; recommended passages for study became those glorifying national history. One further aspect of the Estado Novo's approach to Camões involved emphasising his epic's uniqueness within world literature, as his own claims of originality were taken at face value. Finally, students' analysing and codifying the text's aesthetic qualities, treating formal technique as something pristinely apolitical, was encouraged; studies in textual reliability were equally encouraged, as a further distraction from the text's potentially subversive content. This was the version of Camões packaged for use in propaganda under Salazar, as part of a programme of instrumentalizing cultural production in service of national pride and imperial zeal.

2.2. Camões as a Poet, or the Ambiguity of the Poetry Itself

There have long been debates concerning how progressive or subversive Camões might have been, politically-speaking, particularly in relation to the themes of empire, other races, and Islam. In the post-1974 era, a number of anti-Salazarist, left-wing intellectuals (among whom we find Jorge de Sena [1977] and Helder Macedo [1980]) make the case for Camões as a political rebel, and apologists state that he ought not to be judged against modern standards with regard to his imperialist zeal and anti-Muslim rhetoric. This position is countered by Hélio Alves, who claims

that within the context of sixteenth-century Portuguese literature, there were other far more liberal-minded writers. Meanwhile José Gil and Helder Macedo, in their book *Viagens do Olhar* (1998), have perceived two systems at work within *Os Lusíadas*. On the one hand, there is the story of the founding of the nation. This involves the creation of an unambiguous, faultless identity: the "peito ilustre lusitano" (Canto I, stanza 3: line 5) that is developed through heroic male genealogies ("grão genealogia" [Canto III, stanza 3, line 6]) and the consolidation of national frontiers (related in the historical accounts of Cantos III-IV and VII-VIII). This is the story of the founding of an imagined community, a closed narrative structure depicting the fulfilment of a national destiny. On the other hand, there is the narrative of Vasco da Gama's voyage itself (about an unstable, live event, depicted as though unfolding in real time before the eyes of the poem's intended audience, Dom Sebastião – an adventure which is open to the unknown, to difference and uncertainty, to contingency and limitless possibility). The first system is one of closure, the second system is one of openness. Epic is evidently broad enough to contain within it a variety of such contradictions. For my part, I would like to invoke the question of what the poem's epic ethos might be, and how the poem might be said to undo itself, in the light of Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction.

2.3. Complicating Teleology in the "Máquina do Mundo" Episode

The "Máquina do Mundo" episode, situated at a point of culmination within the structure of *Os Lusíadas*, in Canto X, merits special reflection, particularly regarding its status as the overall narrative's teleological endpoint. Given that *Os Lusíadas* opens with a promise to reveal the ascent of the Portuguese to an attainment more glorious than that of the Roman Empire, through their revelation of maritime routes of global significance and their setting-in-motion of the expansion of an overseas empire meant to homogenise the whole world under Christian law and (presumably) Portuguese supremacy, via an epic feat that is meant to be historically verifiable

("puras verdades"), it stands to reason that this goal must be shown to be realised by the poem's close. What we find in Canto X are two prophesies, the first delivered in song form by an unnamed nymph, foretelling a series of heroic military exploits by the Portuguese abroad, and the second declaimed by the sea goddess Tethys, which describes the "máquina do mundo", a replica of the universe in miniature according to the Ptolemaic theory (whereby the ethereal realm and orbiting celestial bodies all encircled Earth in a matryoshka-style series of concentric spheres, with Earth, the abode of humanity, serving emphatically as the centre of the whole system), showing da Gama the path already mapped out for the Portuguese, along with all of the lands on Earth yet to be subjugated to their yolk:

> "Uniforme, perfeito, em si sustido,
> Qual enfim o arquetipo que criou.
> Vendo o Gama este globo, comovido
> De espanto e desejo, ali ficou.
> Diz-lhe a Deusa: – "O trasunto, reduzido
> Em pequeno volume, aqui te dou
> Do mundo aos olhos teus, pera que vejas
> Por onde vás e irás e o que desejas."
> (Canto X, stanza 79).

A *straight-forward* reading of the poem, such as those previously-mentioned nationalistic varieties deriving from Romanticism and Republicanism, or prevalent under Salazar, which tended to read the poem as a rallying cry for imperialism, would perhaps view this final (climactic) Canto both as an affirmation of the centrality of Portugal on the world-stage and as an exhortation for the nation to pursue a divinely-ordained mission of expansion. At an unconscious level, its shoring-up of anthropocentric bias. However, I intend to supply a perverse, Derridean complication to such a reading, one which reveals an irrepressibly diverse force of excess struggling against containment within Camões's "Máquina do Mundo"; it is somewhat appropriate, indeed, that the episode should be notionally voiced by a female character, since its unresolvedly problematic shape refuses to allow it to be coerced into serving phallogocentric order in any simple or uncomplicated fashion.

Camões scholar Hélio J.S. Alves provides an instructive point of entry, particularly in assessing the episode's own self-declared centrality to the entire poem's meaning; after all, it is here that the classical mythological framework receives allegorical explanation, that the Portuguese grasp the full extent of their past, present and future achievements, and that Dom Sebastião effectively hears the poet's final call to action. As Alves explains, not only does the ekphrastic "Máquina do Mundo", with its concentric spheres, visually represent the universe in its divinely-ordered entirety, it also mirrors the actual structure of the poem itself – for example, just as the world-machine involves a telescoping from outer layers to inner ones, so too the epic itself regularly telescopes between the outer realm of providential will (represented by the councils of the gods), and the inner realm of human activity unfolding through da Gama's voyage.[25] As such, within the context of the Isle of Love as an allegory of Parnassus (the mythical home of poets), "a representação da máquina do Mundo, situada no cume da ilha de Vénus" comes to function as "uma sinédoque, uma figuração *en abyme*, do poema inteiro." (Alves, 2011: 558). As an image of the world in a purportedly synthesised, idealised and eternal form, the world-machine is meant to legitimise, at an ideological level, whatever it integrates – including Portuguese history and (past, present and future) overseas expansion, along with the concomitant propagation of Christian faith in new territories – as the Portuguese ecstatically fulfil the plan laid out by Divine Providence.

Yet, as Alves is at pains to point out, the world-machine cannot, in fact, successfully integrate everything it seeks to, nor be taken as a perfect microcosm of the text itself, since it fails to account for a number of crucial elements, including: the narrative of the contingencies and

[25] Other examples of this inclusion of the poem within the "máquina do Mundo" episode include: the principal mythological entities, including Venus and Jupiter, appearing transposed as planets within the world-machine, still retaining traces of their figurative connotations of love and majesty; and da Gama viewing the (future) exploits of fellow Portuguese mariners, who replicate the active and "courageous" impulses of his own crew of principal mariners who have already been celebrated in *Os Lusíadas*.

surprises of da Gama's voyage; the mutable behaviour of human and divine entities, including da Gama himself, Adamastor, Bacchus, Tethys and Leonardo; as well as the poem's autobiographical input, together with its euhemeristic ethos (according to which mythological entities begin their lives as historical figures, whose lives gradually accrue symbolic meaning, ultimately effacing their human origins), both of which are temporally-circumscribed phenomena. Notions of progress, regress, evolution and contingency are incompatible, to say the least, with the revelation of ever-present, ever-stable, self-same eternity, and so the "máquina do Mundo" cannot but fail to contain all that it would claim to represent.[26]

Expanding on Alves's revelation of this fissure in the episode's consistency, I would like to turn to the unfulfillment of the structural promise engendered in Tethys's description of the universe with its concentric spheres, centring comfortingly around the Earth and its ruling inhabitant, Mankind. As Tethys elucidates, for da Gama, the composition of each sphere in turn, she moves us ever closer to the centre of the Ptolemaic system:

> "Neste centro, pousada dos humanos,
> Que não somente, ousados, se contentam
> De sofrerem da terra firme os danos,
> Mas inda o mar instábil exprimentam,
> Verás as várias partes, que os insanos
> Mares dividem, onde se apousentam
> Várias nações que mandam vários Reis,
> Vários costumes seus e várias leis.
> (X, 91).

Having been led to the terrestrial sphere itself, da Gama's attention is drawn first to Christian Europe, before being taken on a tour of Africa, the Cape of Storms, and ultimately to the Arabic

[26] It is true that the poem does offer a *Deus-ex-machina* and religiously orthodox solution to this conundrum, asserting that God himself has a privileged understanding, inaccessible to humans, of how such roughness would reveal itself to be smooth in the bigger picture (X:80); moreover, Renaissance Neoplatonism would arguably have seen in Camões's world-machine an opportunity to tease out its many-layered allegorical meanings in order to ascend the ladder of comprehension towards an approximation of divine knowledge. Even so, the text's inconsistencies, pinpointed by Alves and teased out further by means of a deconstructive analysis, cannot but beg questions.

world and even Brazil, and all the lands and cities in between that the Portuguese are fated to conquer – so many, in fact, all of which possess their own varied customs, ethnicities, topographies, riches and resources, that the sea goddess's speech takes on the language of uncountability, excess, and endless proliferation. On the one hand, this results in a profusion of references to "varieties", to "thousands", to "multitudes" and to "infinities" (by way of example, stanza 108 states: "As províncias que […]/ Vês, com várias nações, são infinitas"). On the other hand, unsurprisingly incapable of enumerating every single one of these locations, at one point (a little prior) Tethys candidly alludes to the "Cidades outras mil, que vou passando" (X, 106: l.7), glossing-over vast swathes of this Indian region, and presumably much else besides. The inevitable conclusion must be that the world-machine, this world-in-miniature, itself contains innumerable hidden recesses, whose diverse realities are passed over in silence.

What is, perhaps, most strikingly eccentric about her speech is that, having established a structural progression moving from outermost to innermost, from exterior to interior, anticipating the *telos* of the centre, her description of the Earth meanders and sprawls almost aimlessly. Even though the Portuguese themselves are meant to serve as the centre of the centre (as the soon-to-be rulers of all Earth's diverse lands),[27] and notwithstanding the fact that the Portuguese historically would indeed encounter the lands that are featured in the enumeration, nevertheless, Tethys's prophecy refrains from proleptically leaping forward far enough to depict a time in which Christian expansion has already been fulfilled. Instead, she shows us a world of (exoticized yes, but nevertheless also *irreducible*) differences, whose unification is always deferred to a time out of reach, far in the prophetic future. And while the imperatives of "Olha" (for example, X: 101-103) suggest Tethys's encouragement of a sight-based mode of perception

[27] Her speech ends with an exhortation for the Portuguese to return to their "pátria amada" (X, 143, l.2), which technically makes Portugal the final item she refers to, yet curiously not until *after* the survey of the "máquina do Mundo" itself ends (in Canto X, stanza 142): "Até'aqui Portugueses concedido/ Vos é saberdes os futuros feitos" (lines 1-2). One wonders whether this curious omission might mean that the mariners' own homeland is itself bracketed outside of the realms of knowability.

in a subject-object set of relations, objectifying the world before the acquisitive gaze of da Gama as an imperialist subject seeking knowledge of the world, it is nonetheless telling that Tethys's supposedly omniscient access to all of reality, on account of her being the mouthpiece of Divine Providence at this juncture, is invariably undermined by a sprinkling of assertions seemingly arising from hearsay, rumour and conjecture. As a consequence, her speech is tinged with the kind of partial knowledge a mortal mariner might derive from lived experience of coastal voyages: for example, the phrases "dize que" and "Dizem que" occur multiple times (X, 134: l.6; X, 98: ll.2-3; 124: l.1), as the origins, histories and mythologies of various localities are reported – though not confirmed, nor adequately dismissed as superstitions. In this way, the reported speech of the local inhabitants of these many pockets of the Earth is each given its moment to be contemplated, as Tethys embellishes these lands-to-be-conquered with hints of their own exotic peculiarities.

I contend that, in the light of these undercurrents of inconsistency – which not only partially displace the notion of Portugal as a unifying centre in relation to a world of uncontainable diversity, but equally disturb the revelation of a divine and eternal Truth – the "Máquina do Mundo" episode cannot straightforwardly function as the climactic attainment of the sought-after *telos* of *Os Lusíadas*. Reading the episode's failure to express straightforwardly through a Derridean lens, and particularly attending to the way in which such an ekphrastic representation of the universe/poem-in-miniature activates certain metaliterary possibilities, Derrida's figure of *invagination* comes to mind. It is a term with figural traces of the feminine. Derrida refers to invagination as an internal "pocket that is larger than the whole"; it is something like an "inward refolding" of a narrative,[28] appearing when a text seems to double over itself by including or referring to the whole of itself in miniature form. Invagination – which takes the undecidable shape of an intrusion into, or protrusion out of, a surface – figuratively co-implicates interior and

[28] Alice A. Jardine. *Gynesis: configurations of woman and modernity*. Cornell University Press, 1985.

exterior space by providing an opening which permits the outside to enter the inside, and vice-versa.[29] As such, it disturbs boundaries, and suggests the blurring of inside and outside, subject and object, self and other.

If the "Máquina do Mundo", a miniature version of all of space and time (which even invaginates the poem within itself), claims to reveal the past, present and future reality of the Portuguese, and that reality involves encountering a sprawling and vast realm of difference whose subsumption and homogenisation under Portuguese rule is figured as an event perpetually deferred into the future (thanks to Camões's transposition of both history and hope into the prophetic mode), then the implication is that Portugal cannot ever be fully present to itself. Moved by "espanto e desejo", da Gama's gaze is transfixed upon a representation of a hoped-for future for his nation, yet this future is depicted as an endlessly expanding encounter with difference; he is emphatically denied any culminating glimpse of what a longed-for utopia of Christian hegemony might look like, in its consolidated form. The Lusiads, moved by desire, are drawn into the description of the world-machine's interior, which reveals itself to be teeming with representations of (always yet-to-be subjugated) exuberant difference – including monstrous human-canine hybrids (X, 122), cannibals and believers in reincarnation (X, 126 and 127) and perpetually-flying birds of paradise (X, 132), all of which threaten to unsettle assumptions about human morphological stability and the species-barrier, Christian faith, and the Earth's role as home to the human species first and foremost. In other words, the Portuguese as self-present, autonomous crusaders of Portugueseness, Christianity and Humanity are presented as coming to be defined by an involution of all that is other to them, through their promised interactions with difference.[30] Thus, while Tethys massages the Portuguese ego in assuring them of their ultimate

[29] As J. Hillis Miller explains, "invagination is a turning *inside out* and *outside in* that is like turning the finger of a glove back into the glove, or the toe of a sock back inside the sock. What was the 'outside' of the glove or sock is now 'inside.' The outside surface becomes an inside surface." (Miller, 2017: 51-52).
[30] As previously mentioned, Anna Klobucka rightly points out the way in which *Os Lusíadas* may be viewed as a precursor of Gilberto Freyre's Lusotropicalism, the doctrine of Portuguese colonial exceptionalism

conquest of Earth's abundant diversity, her ex-centring presentation of the Portuguese as **nomads** across the globe may be seen as covert encouragement for them to disperse, rather than consolidate, their identity.

In Derrida's discussion of the human encounter with (animal) alterity, *in The Animal That Therefore I Am*, he claims that since, firstly, the Other is always irreducible and unknowable in its alterity, and, secondly, we ourselves are always re-constituted by our encounters with others (insofar as we "invent" the Other),[31] it follows that encountering otherness makes us unknowable to ourselves. Imperialism seeks to know Others, in the sense of capturing them within a net of signification which allows them to make sense according to the coloniser's own framework of understanding.[32] However, even if we envisage Tethys's prophecy of Portugal's eventual conquest of all these others having finally come to fruition, she would still have left a testament to all the irreducible traces of otherness which Christianity cannot ever fully account for or efface. Indeed, in poststructuralist terms, Christianity must acknowledge these traces as being involved in its own constitution. For, given that a religion is not simply defined by a prior set of precepts but rather by precisely that which it establishes as its opposite (Camões's faith claims *not* to be heathenism, cannibalism, reincarnationism, and so on), Tethys's speech – itself a form of unstable textuality merely posing as stable, Truth-transmitting phonocentrism – cannot but herald the failure of its own premise. The Portuguese can never fully subjugate these people, in the sense that the traces of their irreducible alterity will haunt Portugal, and Christendom,

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which became so amenable to the Salazar regime as it sought to justify its overseas empire, according to which the Portuguese were peculiarly accommodating of miscegenation (that is, an incorporation of ethnic otherness within the racial composition of the nation). What is apparent in Camões's text, at the end of the "Máquina do Mundo" episode, is that otherness is textually folded into the Lusiads' self-image, as reflected by the ekphrastic device of depicting a prophesised world of Lusophony which is a plane of endlessly-proliferating difference beyond the ken of human knowledge.

[31] Etymologically-speaking, the Latin word 'invenire' suggests "to come upon" or "to come into". In this sense, we thereby bring the other into ourselves by inventing them.

[32] For example, non-Christian belief systems are framed by Tethys as the result of ignorance of the true faith, rather than being complex systems of alternative cultural knowledge in their own right (X, 127).

indefatigably; the eternity-representing function of the world-machine will itself forever bear witness to them.

In response to seeing the "Máquina do Mundo" and hearing Tethys's exegesis of its prophetic contents, the Portuguese, taking the nymphs with them for spouses (X, 143), set sail from the Isle of Love and head for their homeland, cutting the serene sea with the prows of their ships (X, 144). Following the poem's complicated dénouement, Camões's closing stanzas contain an exhortation to Dom Sebastião to appreciate the commendable quality of his vassals and the lengths they are prepared to go to in his service:

> Olhai que ledos vão por várias vias
> Quais rompentes leões e bravos touros,
> Dando os corpos a fomes e vigias,
> A ferro, a fogo, a setas e pelouros,
> A quentes regiões, a plagas frias,
> A golpes de idolatras e de Mouros,
> A perigos incógnitos do Mundo,
> A naufrágios, a pexes, ao Profundo!
> (X, 147).

This stanza apparently hails the heroism of the Lusiads' fearlessness, with its insistent repetition of the preposition "a" eleven times, anaphorically running over five lines, in its enumeration of the sheer number of perils to which they subject themselves. Their comparison with animals from Christian iconography denoting courage (the lion of St Mark) and sacrifice (the bull of St Luke), respectively, carries the manifest implication that they are actively willing to imperil their bodies as sacrificial offerings on the altar of the nation. Additionally, the symbolically masculine energy of these male-gendered beasts, described as rampant and fierce, implies that the Lusiads' mission of maritime expansionism is to be fulfilled by means of unbridled aggression.

Nevertheless, the text also admits an alternative which undermines its apparent celebration of sacrifice and aggression, for – reading against the grain – it is not simply on behalf of the king

that they give up their bodies. Rather it may be that their bodies are given as gifts to these manifold sources of otherness; they are not simply fighting otherness, but perhaps also surrendering themselves to it, obliterating their own unity of self and anthropocentric dominance, as subsequent re-readings of the epic by Álvaro de Campos in 'Ode marítima' and Ana Luísa Amaral in *Escuro* corroborate – in the former case, by Campos's sado-masochistic fantasies of having his feminized body alternately penetrated by pirates and metamorphosed into a sea snake on the high seas, and in the latter case, by depictions of bodies being grazed upon by sea creatures (in 'A Génese'), and of sunken ships losing their functionality for humans by being turned into homes for fish (in 'Outras Vozes'). In the light of this deconstructive possibility or aporia in the text, the figurative comparison which sees the Lusiads transformed into lions and bulls may be inflected, however fleetingly, with an additional sense of radical animalising metamorphosis produced by this disseminating, self-fracturing encounter with difference. The following stanza (148), in which a clarification emerges, whereby all the above-mentioned encounters with otherness are declared to be struggles for domination undertaken in subservience to the king's will, reads as an over-protestation made necessary by stanza 147's ambiguity. In this way, Camões's text cannot be said to signify unequivocally; rather its not infrequent aporia provide veins of indeterminacy for mining by those who would seek to disturb epic *telos* and the national identity enshrined by it.

3. Fernando Pessoa

3.1. Fernando Pessoa as a Cultural Icon, or Pessoa-as-Text

Resembling Renaissance poet Luís de Camões (b.1524/25-d.1580), in terms of his centrality to the Portuguese canon, Fernando Pessoa (b.1888-d.1935) is "the inescapable giant of modern Portuguese letters" (Castro, 2009: 144). Credited with being the prime motor of Portuguese

Modernism, his creation of a coterie of heteronyms which gave voice to the multitudinous self is regarded by many, including Harold Bloom (*The Western Canon*, 1994), as a uniquely valuable contribution to world letters. Myth-maker of his own artistic practice, Pessoa succeeded in shaping his own reception among critics. While he was known to be an important poet during his own lifetime, most of his fame was arrived at posthumously, particularly following the efforts of his disciple Jorge de Sena (1919-1978). Emptied of personal content (with Pessoa being seen essentially as an "eccentric alienated from life", as Paulo de Medeiros notes [2013: 6]), Pessoa's life has been conflated with his fragmentary literary output, which is materially embodied in the trunk or 'arca' containing his life's work, uncovered after his death – teeming with masses of papers, fragments of indecipherable texts, and hitherto undiscovered heteronyms. This notion of Pessoa's life lived in (and as) literature, devoid of material substance (besides the surrogate body of the "arca"), has nourished a view of him as a ghost. A Pessoa industry has sprung up, prompted by and in turn shaping his presentation as a national icon, with statues of him haunting his preferred Lisbon cafés (such as A Brasileira on the Largo do Chiado), the creation of Pessoa-themed guided tours of Lisbon which follow in his footsteps, using his own tourist guidebook for inspiration, and even tourist trinkets being emblazoned with his trademark appearance (often suggesting his metonymic reduction to a disembodied trio of moustache, spectacles, and wide-brimmed hat). The fact that Pessoa lends himself to being depicted as an enduring ghost within Portuguese culture has fascinating implications for his status as a symbol of Portuguese nationhood. Suggesting the somewhat paradoxical nature of his role as poet-prophet of the nation's destiny, his ghostliness is what makes him both *knowable* and *familiar* (for it is an essential characteristic of his image as a national icon) but also *unknowable* and *unfamiliar* (for ghosts are insubstantial, slippery, ungraspable, intangible).

3.2. The Deferral of Portuguese National Identity in *Mensagem*

The only book of poems he published during his lifetime was *Mensagem* (1934), comprising forty-four short lyric poems written between 1913 and 1934. It is "an elegy for the epic as a genre" (Santos, 2003: 45) which surveys three periods of Portuguese history: its formation as a kingdom under medieval monarchs; its age of maritime discoveries; and, finally, a series of prophecies concerning its nebulous future. By virtue of its subject matter, it is perhaps this book, more than any other, which has connected Pessoa to the question of Portuguese national identity, as his own ghostliness resonates with the collection's anti-materialist impulse of extracting a spiritual essence from national history. Winning a prize organised by the Salazar regime in 1934 for poetic works communicating "a lofty sense of nationalist exaltation" (Zenith 2021: xvii), in a patriotic literature competition held under the auspices of the director of the Secretariat of National Propaganda António Ferro, proved that its (admittedly idiosyncratic) brand of mystical nationalism, or rational Sebastianism, as Pessoa himself put it, was (nevertheless) amenable to Salazarism, which selectively appropriated it. As Richard Zenith explains, Ferro had been personally at pains to see Pessoa's book published in time for its consideration in the contest, in no small part through the instigation of Pessoa's far-right nationalist friend Augusto Ferreira Gomes, who – in Zenith's words – argued that it was "a book that could rouse the Portuguese from their slumber and prepare Portugal to be a culturally proud, spiritually aware nation" (Zenith 2021: 851). With such a narrowly-conceived publishing debut (at least for a collection in the Portuguese language), exploring only one facet of his multi-faceted poetic *oeuvre*, Pessoa baffled his collaborators in avant-garde poetry circles, such as the co-editors of modernist literary magazine *Presença* (including Adolfo Casais Monteiro). Yet, as I hope to show, many of the concerns of Pessoa's broader modernist project – namely, disavowing the unity of the self, questioning identity, and (in poststructuralist terms) deconstructing the metaphysics of presence

– are in fact inherent to *Mensagem*, making it a deeply-complicated national epic, far less Salazarist than its early editorial history would imply.

Drawing on Derrida's concept of *différance* (which appears throughout the poststructuralist French philosopher's output, most notably in *Margins of Philosophy* and *Of Grammatology*), this part of the chapter will consider the poetics of unfulfillment in *Mensagem*, particularly the way in which Portuguese identity is continually deferred and never fulfilled. *Mensagem* refrains from making explicit what 'Portugal' is, except to describe it as nebulous fog ("Portugal hoje és nevoeiro", [1934] 2012: 91), in keeping with the Sebastianist myth which predicts the return of the lost king Dom Sebastião on a foggy day to rescue the nation from its moribund days. As *Mensagem* seemingly presents itself as a compilation of treasured national myths and iconography, which accrue across the collection's three sections, Portugal's identity in fact becomes less stable and more obscure. Each poem, and the esoteric anagrams sprinkled throughout the work, only add to the ambiguities at play in the collection as a whole, with the result that the nation's identity is endlessly deferred. Camões's *Os Lusíadas* expressly sought to establish a national teleology threaded throughout its history, running from its medieval conquest of Moorish territories and consolidation of national borders through to its crusading imperialist future, yet ultimately failed to express the culmination of this teleology convincingly in the prophecies of the "Máquina do Mundo". So too, Pessoa's *Mensagem* promises to contain an important message concerning Portugal's future but ultimately fails to unveil anything beyond the mist. This failure of teleological revelation parallels the disorientating skewing of national teleologies which occurs in Pessoa's other great sea-centric poem, the 'Ode marítima', which I will analyse subsequently in this chapter. I contend that the attainment of *telos* (a seeming centre or point of stability around which the meaning of the nation can be articulated convincingly) is eschewed in Pessoa.

Derrida draws on Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who portrayed language as a system of signs composed of signifiers and signified, whose relationship is arbitrary and relational, wherein meaning is determined by the differences between signifiers. Derrida suggests that the play of differing and deferring, which allows signification to take place, is made possible by the force of *différance* – a Derridean neologism which calls to mind both 'difference' (referring to the spatially-conceived differences, intervals, and alterities between a word and all of its neighbours in the dictionary) and 'deferral' (referring to temporal differences, that is, how words are determined by changes in meaning across time). As such, *différance* refers to "the systematic play of differences, of traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other" (Derrida, 1981: 27). Thus, inherent to the constitution of any concept articulated in language, according to Derrida, is the way in which that concept contains traces of everything which is supposed to be other to it (for instance, "man" only makes any sense by containing the trace of its supposed other within the gender binary, "woman"), as well as the endless deferral of its own self-constitution, by a process of temporal delay, throughout relating to an endless series of other concepts.

Portugal's constitution as the crowning head of Europe in the *Mensagem*'s opening poem 'O dos castelos' (*M*: 14), in the form of a Sphinxian body politic whose identity is delayed into the "futuro do passado" over the Atlantic Ocean, is an apt metaphor for the mystery of Portugal's deferral of self-presence and identity-realisation throughout the collection. *Différance* elucidates the way in which any teleological trajectory of spiritualist history-building (through the cumulative series of national emblems, portraits and historical figures from the era of maritime discoveries), which the collection may undertake, is nevertheless haunted by the impossibility of closure, by the prospect of an unresolvable enigma. A Derridean reading of the collection introduces the possibility of its structural progression being cyclical, interrupted, multi-layered, reversible, and stalled – a manner of complicating epic teleology which is also explored fully in

the complications of epic which emerge from Pessoa's other epically-inclined heteronym, Álvaro de Campos, and through to the feminist poets of the 20th and 21st centuries. In the poems 'D. Diniz' (*M*:28), 'O Infante' (*M*: 54), "Horizonte' (*M*: 56) and 'Padrão' (*M*: 58), for example, there is ample evidence of the endless deferral of meaning, in multiple expressions of *différance* (differing/deferring): "o oceano por achar"; "Senhor, falta cumprir-se Portugal! [54]; "de longe a abstracta linha" [56]; "O por-fazer é só com Deus." [58]; "O porto sempre por achar" [58], wherein the symbols of imperial success (the ocean, destiny, the port) all become intertextually woven together, through echoingly repetitive grammatical structures (especially the "por" plus infinitive structure), in a chain of deferred meaning, suggesting an unfulfillable yearning for something ever-recedingly further away. This implies that the heroic task is always the never-ending one.

In order to understand the intellectual context in which *Mensagem* emerged, it is instructive to consider the scholarship of Boaventura de Sousa Santos on Portugal's semi-peripheral European identity (2003), and that of María José Canelo who extends his argument by considering the impact of this identity upon the precise shape which literary Modernism took in Portugal (Canelo, 1998). According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003), twentieth-century Portugal inhabited Europe's semi-periphery. This is because, on the one hand, it was a marginalised power within Europe (in view of its economic subservience to Britain and the curtailment of its ambitions for further imperial expansion in Africa, following the British Ultimatum in 1890), yet, on the other hand, it could simultaneously sustain the conviction that, at least from the perspective of its own colonies, it remained the centre of political and military might. In this way it could still serve as a beacon of European civilisation. In the context of Portugal's conflicting sense of itself as both a Prospero and a Caliban, suggesting both its ambition as subjugator and the possibility of its own subaltern status within Europe, its modernist writers were engaging in an equally-conflicted artistic project: to articulate how Portugal could exploit its idiosyncrasies to create the

foundations for commanding a new cultural hegemony, based not on the superiority of its folk culture per se, but rather to make a virtue of its nebulous lack of definition, its openness. According to María José Canelo, Fernando Pessoa and other Portuguese modernists sought to elaborate a "cosmopolitan defence of the erasure of national borders" (90), representing Portuguese identity as "ever open" (90). This reconfiguration of national identity as not an originating root but rather as a mobile positionality marks a departure from traditional notions of nationhood. Whilst it still makes the problematic assertion of there being an essential quality associated with Portugueseness, it nevertheless departs from traditional notions of the pedigree deriving from pristine cultural genealogies.

Mensagem thus could be seen to represent an opening up of national identity, rather than a strict demarcation of its contours. Such a notion of radical uncertainty and openness, most notably present in *Mensagem*'s third and final section (entitled 'O Encoberto'), is concealed, if not made entirely absent, in Salazar-era anthologisations, which privileged readings of only certain poems amenable to the notion of heroic masculinity. The collection was selectively appropriated by the Salazar regime, with a number of its poems being anthologised and taught at school. Superficial readings of such poems as 'O Infante', 'Padrão' and 'Mar Portuguez' might encourage the hypothesis that *Mensagem* simply glorifies masculine progenitor monarchs and cements Portugal's imperial seafaring destiny, and *Mensagem* may even seem to support an exceptionalizing conception of Portugal sitting at the head of Europe ('O dos castelos'), propelled forward by ideological certainties supported through myth-making ('Ulisses') as well as implicitly shoring up a gendered hierarchy that positions men as public, heroic and prophetic creators of the national destiny, above women, who are merely viewed as a domestic insurance policy, being the human wombs of empire ('D. Filipa de Lencastre'). Yet a more attentive close reading, focussing on the formal, structural and semantic mechanisms of ambiguity and unfulfillment pervading the collection, permit it to be read as a problematization, rather than a corroboration,

of Salazar's ideas about gender, empire and Portuguese nationhood, and certainly as a complication of the epic mode. As the collection's second poem, 'O das quinas', suggests:

> Baste a quem baste o que lhe basta
> O bastante de lhe bastar!
> A vida é breve, a alma é vasta:
> Ter é tardar.
>
> (*M*: 16)

When viewed in relation to the attitude espoused in these lines, *Mensagem* appears to be a collection which glorifies notions of delay, deferral, and spiritual expansiveness, as opposed to the acquisition of mundane, material wealth and power. Indeed, the latter, through the alliterative wordplay around forms of the verb "bastar", is scornfully portrayed as nothing more than a repetitive cycle of sating petty appetites, a process which doubles back upon itself indefinitely, incapable of engendering forward motion or change; by contrast, it is in waiting for an eternally-postponed gratification that the soul becomes expansive. It is true that this politics of deferred attainment is, in at least one sense, anti-revolutionary, in that it implies the need to prologue the status-quo, suggesting a Christian mindset that finds solace in suffering, a kind of purification of the soul. Nevertheless, at the same time, this deferral implies an eschewal of many of the standard goals of any imperial endeavour: territorial gain, the accrual of resources and power, along with all concomitant teleologies of travel, exploration, and conquest.

At the surface level, *Mensagem* bears hallmarks of a collection of nationalist poetry: emerging in the context of Pessoa's calls for Portuguese intellectuals to revisit their literary heritage and make the conditions ripe for the emergence of a "supra-Camões", and drawing on the notion of "saudosismo" developed by the Teixeira de Pascoaes which fortifies the idea of the Portuguese sensibility being coloured by longing and regret, this 1934 collection is quite literally structured around the iconography of Portugal's regal history. As Michael Freeman suggests, the first section 'Brasão' ('Escutcheon'), which is divided into subsections each foregrounding a different visual

component of the Portuguese coat of arms, provides "an imaginary museum of the Portuguese past" (1988:14), by "[tracing] a symbolic path through Portuguese history" (13), and all of its personages, each with a spiritually-charged message, for the reader, distilled from their life story. The collection's second and third sections, 'Mar Português' and 'O Encoberto', respectively draw on the notions of Portugal's seafaring destiny and the cult of Sebastianism, further exploring Portuguese history and gesturing towards its future. However, as past and future are imbued with comparable atmospheres of haziness and malleability, the message of this apparently nationalist poetry collection is deeply obscure.

One of the paradoxes of *Mensagem* is that structurally-speaking, the collection both sets up nationalist teleologies and at the same time complicates and dismantles them. By beading together the most representative elements of traditional national iconography (from its deepest past through to its emerging future), it does indeed seem to imply a teleological approach to Portugal's national story. This is corroborated at another level by the invocation of Portugal at the head of Europe – which is proposed as the seat of the fabled Fifth Empire, meant to succeed the Greek, Roman, Christian, and British empires – looking out towards the Atlantic, "o futuro do passado", an epithet which implies the logical progression of the past into the future. This establishes a linear trajectory of time, predicting fulfilment of a sacrosanct destiny, with an exceptional role in the grand scheme of world history being imagined for Portugal. This is a notion which is entirely in keeping with Camonian epic. However, simultaneously, through the collection's aesthetics of uncertainty, and ethos of unfulfillment and deferral, the national story is rendered a blur, suggesting instability, malleability, and process. National heroes, like Bartolomeu Dias (1450-1500), the first European navigator to round Africa's southern tip, are given commemorative epitaphs; tombstone inscriptions which make sense of their lives. This implies their glorification, employing an extractive model of history-making which instrumentalises human life, coercing it into the form of commemorative tableaux in service of

constructing grand narratives. Yet such figures are hardly revered as agents of active masculinity; with the possible exceptions of the Infante Henrique, Dom João Segundo, and Alfonso de Albuquerque, they most typically symbolize melancholy, failure, fate-stricken passivity, madness, and immateriality.

What is more, as K. David Jackson points out, the trappings of epic are complicated by the introduction of adverse genre:

> Pessoa writes an adverse version of Camões's epic […] by crossing genres, filling his epic framework with other narrative genres in poetic form, such as the oral tale, autobiography, dialogue and prayer. [….] His purpose in injecting multiple genres with varied rhythms is to create a polyphonic and polytonal historical drama of epic proportions. (Jackson, 2010: 148).

Yet, complicating the use of history, which Ezra Pound had famously declared to be the defining feature of epic, "Pessoa annuls any possible resolution on the plane of history by projecting ultimate meaning beyond conscious action and by recurring use of paradox" (Jackson, 2010: 148-149).

> VIRIATO
>
> Se a alma que sente e faz conhece
> Só porque lembra o que esqueceu,
> Vivemos, raça, porque houvesse
> Memória em nós do instinto teu.
>
> Nação porque reencarnaste,
> Povo porque ressuscitou
> Ou tu, ou o de que eras a haste —
> Assim se Portugal formou.
>
> Teu ser é como aquela fria
> Luz que precede a madrugada,
> E é já o ir a haver o dia
> Na antemanhã, confuso nada.

When Pessoa's collection turns to considering the Portuguese nation's origins – which had occupied two whole cantos of Camões's *Os Lusíadas*, painstakingly tracking all of the military

and political achievements made by male dynasties of Portuguese kings – instead of clarity and detail, we find nebulousness and doubt. This poem on Viriathus, the Lusitanian leader who (ultimately unsuccessfully) opposed the Roman conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, seems at first to espouse an essentialist view of the Portuguese national make-up. This is because the speaker claims that the memory of Viriathus's instinct lives on inside the Portuguese, through a reincarnation (line 5, "reincarnaste") that seems akin to the Nietzschean notion of eternal recurrence, that is, a life that is continually relived, in endless cycles, the same way each time.

However, if Viriathus's instinct is being continually revived among the Portuguese, it remains unclear what this spiritual essence might boil down to. In stanza two, the Portuguese people are said to resuscitate *either* Viriathus himself *or* that for which he was the 'haste', a multivalent word meaning either 'flagpole' (i.e. for hoisting the national colours), 'shaft' (such as that of a spear) or 'stem' (i.e. of a plant). Following on from this, the metrical exigencies of line 8 require a hyperbaton which splits the reflexive pronoun from its corresponding verb ("Assim *se* Portugal *formou*"), causing the "se" to momentarily evoke its other potential semantic meaning of "if", evoking a sense of dubiousness which bleeds into the notion of Portugal as an unstable ontological entity. It is worth recalling, at this juncture, that the poem as a whole actually begins under the sign of this subjunctive-inducing word, "se", framing this entire pronouncement on the spiritual significance of this foundational figure as an entirely speculative (rather than purely revelatory) endeavour. Thus, it remains unclear who or what has given the nation its shape: whether this was truly the act of a (failure of a) founding father who reincarnates himself, whether instead it is the result of the nation's people themselves resuscitating this figure (line 6, "ressusitou", as though reanimating the dead), or else a self-reflexive act performed by the nation itself. The questions of agency, cause and effect remain murkily unresolved.

The third stanza only complicates things further, with the likening of Viriathus to a guiding light, a cold one preceding dawn, the promise of the coming day emerging from the 'confused nothing' of the pre-dawn. As far as origin myths go, Pessoa's text seems to emphasise the undecidability of the nation's origins, which can only be coaxed into shape – whether that be the shape of a patriotic principle (a flag to be waved upon a flagpole), a militaristic, sabre-rattling impulse (sustained on the shaft of a weapon), or an arborescence (growing and branching out from a stem, like a national genealogy) – through the speculative movements of a hypothesising voice: in this case, that of the poet himself. The poet is self-consciously declaring himself the author of this myth. Since the shadowy Viriathus, the figure ostensibly being lionized in this poem, ultimately failed to accomplish his life's mission of defending Iberia from its Roman invaders – making him a symbol of heroic failure, like so many of the figures who appear in *Mensagem* – it would seem that Pessoa's text deliberately enshrines failure, unfulfillment, and uncertainty as key components of the national character.

One of the difficulties with *Mensagem* is its tendency to espouse certain universalist ideals: the positive values of expansive soulfulness, ingenious madness, mind over matter (the title 'Mensagem' derives from the Latin *mens agitat molem* or "mind moves matter"), and the notion of Discovery (deemed to be inherently worthwhile in its form as an abstract intellectual process) are all posited as gender-neutral and absolute. And so, in its quest to uncover a "universal intellectuality, tied to several singularities of Portuguese history" (Balso, 2006: 227), the collection manifests a disregard for the complicating factors of gender, race and species, which would constitute the situated knowledges that give the lie to any project of neutrality or universalism conducted under the auspices of the (male) poet-as-prophet. As we see in the treatment of the only two female royals depicted, D. Filipa de Lencastre and D. Tareja, women are reduced to their bodily function as progenitors of male lineages of monarchs and nothing more. D. Filipa de Lencastre, like the enigmatic sphynx of the opening poem on Europe ('O dos

castelos'), is merely another riddle for deciphering by the poet. Ironically, depicting female figures, in this way, as inscrutable riddle-posers both suggests an ontological unknowability as well as an innate mysteriousness: the riddle of what a woman might be is answered with the tautological assertion that they are a riddle, yet ultimately it is a riddle grounded in their body with its maternal, procreative capacities.

D. FILIPA DE LENCASTRE

Que enigma havia em teu seio
Que só génios concebia?
Que arcanjo teus sonhos veio
Velar, maternos, um dia?

Volve a nós teu rosto sério,
Princesa do Santo Gral,
Humano ventre do Império,
Madrinha de Portugal!

Given that the feminine is figured as bodily in this way, it is revealing to consider how the collection goes on to revile the corporeal in the poem on 'Dom Sebastião', as that which is merely earthly and lacking the divine spark of inspiration:

Sem a loucura que é o homem
Mais que a besta sadia,
Cadáver adiado que procria?

This poem's attitude seems to be that without the madness of genius, man, who is taken to be the universal unit of human existence, is nothing more than a healthy beast (which I note, in Portuguese, is a feminine noun), a delayed corpse that procreates. The association of the healthy procreating body with death via the image of the delayed corpse explicitly creates a hierarchy between mind (which is privileged) and body (which is invested with a sense of *lack*, a typically masculinist, anti-exuberant and suspiciously Freudian approach to femininity). If, as Eduardo Lourenço claimed, there is a utopian impulse in the collection towards extracting universalising,

cosmopolitan values from Portuguese history and broadcasting them to the world,[33] it is nevertheless a project entirely marred by its deliberate suppression of the bodily and of femininity.

MAR PORTUGUÊS

Ó mar salgado, quanto do teu sal
São lágrimas de Portugal!
Por te cruzarmos, quantas mães choraram,
Quantos filhos em vão rezaram!
Quantas noivas ficaram por casar
Para que fosses nosso, ó mar!

Valeu a pena? Tudo vale a pena
Se a alma não é pequena.
Quem quer passar além do Bojador
Tem que passar além da dor.
Deus ao mar o perigo e o abismo deu,
Mas nele é que espelhou o céu.

This poem reinforces the connection between Portugal and its seafaring destiny. However, the precise affective response elicited, in relation to this destiny, is not clear-cut. Imagining the salty sea as a product of Portugal's tears, shed through the eyes of its female and child population who grieve for the loss of their male heads of households, killed in maritime disasters (stanza 1), the response that is foregrounded is one of sadness, agony, and thwarted hope. The whole poem is addressed to the sea ("Ó mar salgado") in the form of a second-person vocative address. This suggests intimacy, closeness, familiarity, perhaps recalling the Camonian notion of the Portuguese mariners being both literally and figuratively wedded to the sea. Line 3 begins with an emphatically inflected personal infinitive, in "Por te cruzar*mos*" (my emphasis), which cannot but imply the assertion of a collective identity. And yet the subsequent enumeration of those citizens who never crossed the sea, and were in fact left behind on Lisbon's shores – the mothers

[33] Eduardo Lourenço writes that: "A Mensagem onde esse patriotismo-outro se encarnará poeticamente não é Os Lusíadas de um Portugal sem realidade epopaica efectiva mas um Anti-Lusíadas, epopeia elegíaca da autodissolução da nossa particularidade histórica empírica como caminho, ascensão e transenção de todas as particularidades, suicídio sublime da personalidade na era de uma impersonalidade realmente universal e fraterna." (*O Labirinto da Saudade*, 1982: 108).

who cried, the sons who prayed in vain, and the brides who were left unmarried – complicates this notion of a straightforward, communal history of shared action: instead of shoring up a collective identity, the first-person plural inflection of "cruzarmos" rather strains against itself, and is exceeded by that which it cannot hope to contain (in this case, women and children); a hardly surprising consequence of masculinist history-making involving the glorification of heroic, imperialist enterprises in which the principle of action was reserved for the male sex. It goes without saying that the poem's opening stanza reinforces gender stereotypes concerning the roles played by men and women in the Age of the Discoveries.

Perhaps more subtly and provocatively, the sandwiching of the male between the female, in the arrangement of lines 3-5, such that "filhos" (line 4) are flanked on either side by "mães" (line 3) and "noivas" (line 5), implies a maleness that is contained within femaleness, the maleness of the children who are products of logics of mothering and heteronormative marriage that, in a backgrounded way, involve women in the construction of the fabric of the nation. Intriguingly, the masculine-gendered children are said to have prayed in vain, presumably for the safe return of their fathers. I recall that in *Os Lusíadas*, Camões's contention is precisely the opposite: that – even though shipwrecks did happen and are not denied within the grand scheme of the epic –, nevertheless, all of Vasco da Gama's prayers were answered by divine intervention. The Pessoan admission of prayers having gone unanswered draws our attention to notions of disaster at sea, the absence of God, and the attendant threat of meaningless.

The second stanza invokes the notion of the poet as a font of answers, suggested by the question-and-answer structure ("Valeu a pena? Tudo vale a pena/ Se a alma não é pequena"). Pessoa's espousal of the role of poets as unacknowledged legislators of life and politics comes to the fore, as he deciphers national history and makes pronouncements of benefit to the collective he serves. And yet this switch to a god-like omniscience, as the poet becomes an designer of

religious-sounding aphorisms, augurs a changed relationship with the sea, which is thenceforth referred to as an object acted upon by God himself (line 11). It is as though a relationship of true interpersonal relationship with the sea (one defined by an "eu" and a "tu") entails a intimacy cognisant of its own tragic undercurrents; whereas a distanced relationship of a godlike "eu" and an inanimate "ele"/"o mar" entails an erasure of tragic costs in favour of a narrative of heroic transcendence. The sea becomes an inanimate mirror reflecting the triumphant sky (line 12); a thin, shimmering veneer, perhaps, over an abyss (line 11).

With the exception of eight poems written in the first-person, most of the collection's poems whose principal subject is a historical personage are written in an appellative second-person form of address (could reply), or else in the third-person (traditional commemorative or memorialising mode). The poems of 'O Encoberto' (the third and final section of *Mensagem*) are deeply ambivalent about the fate of the nation.

NEVOEIRO

Nem rei nem lei, nem paz nem guerra,
Define com perfil e ser
Este fulgor baço da terra
Que é Portugal a entristecer —
Brilho sem luz e sem arder
Como o que o fogo-fátuo encerra.

Ninguém sabe que coisa quer.
Ninguém conhece que alma tem,
Nem o que é mal nem o que é bem.
(Que ânsia distante perto chora?)
Tudo é incerto e derradeiro.
Tudo é disperso, nada é inteiro.
Ó Portugal, hoje és nevoeiro...

É a hora!

Valete, Fratres.

The deictic time reference of this poem's final line (which begs the questions: when *is "*now", when *is* the time?) unsettles any sense of fulfilment. This, together with the irregularity of stanza

length (6 + 7 + 1) and the brevity of the line evidences a metrical irregularity which draws attention to a lack of perfection and uniformity – something which is mirrored in the uncertainty of verse forms across many of the collection's other poems (which often contain closing stanzas with unexpectedly uneven metres). This contributes to an impression of non-alignment which nourishes the unsettling of straightforward teleology. The suggestion of order in the collection (provided by structured rhyming poems and the esoteric, Rosicrucian framework) is undercut by the diversity of forms (since no two poems share the same overall structure). The collection thus closes, in 'Nevoeiro', with a lingering feeling of incompleteness, as any concrete sense of Portuguese nationhood is deferred beyond the final page, as the arrival of the prophesied hour ("É a hora!") fails to produce any concrete reality or utopian blueprint for society. Instead, Pessoa's *Mensagem* is a collection which luxuriates in the unfulfillment of national destiny.

3.3. The Queer Bewildering of National Identity in Álvaro de Campos's *Ode marítima*

3.3.1. Álvaro de Campos and National Identity

The 'Ode marítima' (1915) is Pessoa's refraction of the seafaring myth through the lens of his most unruly heteronym, Álvaro de Campos. A flamboyant, energetic, bisexual poet who saw it as his task to upset the humdrum and conservative securities of bourgeois society and abolish its dogmas, he revelled in a bohemian aesthetic of excess.[34] His poetry spills over the boundaries

[34] Pessoa's relationship to gender was always-already complicated by his recorded resistance to compulsory heterosexuality (Santos 2003: 165). Recourse to a creative combination of masculine and feminine traits, albeit within a clearly hierarchised scheme, drove much of Pessoa's thinking on the artistic mind. Pessoa famously defended his friend António Botto, who penned homoerotic poetry. Furthermore, his desire to create heteronyms, other versions of himself, led to the production of identities located across a spectrum of sexual diversity, including: the austere pseudo-asexuality of Ricardo Reis, the radical

of formal propriety, generic convention, and moral decorum, and this unruliness poses a threat not just to social mores, but indeed to any regimes of certainty – not least those deriving from stable notions of selfhood and nationhood. Against the metaphysics of presence, Campos offers a rupture which resonates with Derridean notions of irreducible difference. In his later text 'Ultimatum' (1917)[35] – a (possibly) self-parodying (but still philosophically incendiary), satirical invective in prose, lamenting Portugal's national decline following the British Ultimatum of 1890[36] and calling on the country to undertake an aesthetic and spiritual revolution – he would indeed call for the abolition of a series of dogmas relating to the supposed unity of the stable self. These included the "dogma da personalidade", the "preconceito da individualidade" and the "dogma do objectivismo pessoal" ([1917] 1981: 30). Once abolished, Campos foresaw liberating new possibilities for the individual's exploration of their own psychological multiplicities. This notion resonates with Pessoa's broader heteronymic project of fragmented personality, of the self that contains multitudes – even if the *Ultimatum*'s espousal of a Nietzschean-like interest in "a criação científica dos Super-homens!" (ibid) carries with it unsettlingly masculinist and authoritarian resonances.

Beyond these ideas, at a formal level, Campos experimentally embraced many of the tenets of Italian futurism, including the Italian futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's concept of *parole in libertà* or "words in freedom" (that is, "language free of syntax and logical ordering and thus better able to convey intense emotion rapidly" [Brogan and Preminger 1993: 446]). Campos's adoption of free verse form (with its flexible elision of the boundaries between poetry and prose)

bisexuality of Álvaro de Campos, and female heterosexuality, in the form of the hunchbacked letter-writing character Maria José.

[35] This manifesto-like prose text appeared in the only issue of *Portugal Futurista* (edited by Pessoa's modernist collaborator Almada Negreiros, in 1917.

[36] In 1890, Britain issued a memorandum to Portugal demanding that they withdraw forces from a disputed region in South-eastern Africa (a corridor linking Angola and Mozambique). This represented a major blow to Portuguese imperial plans and to the centuries-old Anglo-Portuguese diplomatic alliance (Vieira 2010: 120).

and stream-of-consciousness style (with its brusque shifts between ideas and breathlessness) also suggests an alliance between his poetic project and Marinetti's notion of lyricism more broadly:

> I declare that lyricism is the rarely found faculty of intoxicating oneself with life and with oneself. The faculty of changing into wine the muddy waters of the life that surrounds us and flows through us. The faculty of colouring the world with the unique colours of our changeable "I".
>
> (Marinetti [1913] 2009: 145).

This sense of self and external reality becoming interpenetrated – as though existing together on the same mental plane of expanded selfhood – was equally allied, in Campos's poetic output, with Pessoa's own uniquely Portuguese contribution to modernism's many –isms: "sensacionismo". This artistic movement was concerned firstly with "realis[ing] in art a decomposition of reality into its psychic geometrical elements" [Pessoa 2009: 153]), and secondly with maximising human beings' capacity for experiencing an abundance of sensations through a paganistic reanimation of sensual reality. Experiencing such sensations in multiplicities (and in simultaneity) was made possible, at a conceptual level, through the self-multiplying technique of heteronymy or polypersonality (Pizarro 2011: 34, 35).

Considering all of these innovations which take place in Campos's poetry, both thematically and formally, it stands to reason that his approach to national epic, on both counts, should prove both complicated and complicating. Published in an avant-garde literary journal (it was first published in *Orfeu* no.2, 1915), the 'Ode marítima' declared itself as a counter-cultural and artistically radical text, making it resistant to being subsumed easily within a national canon of literature (this time in contrast with *Mensagem*, the ethereal Sebastianism of which, besides its aesthetic merit, appears to have been enough to secure its canonization during the Estado Novo). Deepening the Ode's generic complications, Kenneth D. Jackson argues that Pessoa's work brims full of the concept of "adverse genres", with each of his various heteronymic voices adopting a genre in order to subvert it from within with "incongruent and inauthentic content, subverting

the familiarity of generic expression" (Jackson 2010: 17). If the ode form was classically a poem celebrating a thing, an idea or a person, which is associated with exalted feeling, by contrast the loose and capacious 'Ode marítima' becomes a vessel for "brutal reenactments of grand archetypes of the Portuguese historical voyages in Africa and Asia", via "pseudohistorical memories", as well as "hallucinations of nautical eroticism" (81), in a wildly sprawling reverie that celebrates the unending multiplicity of the self.

Perhaps the foremost complication effected by Campos upon the genre is his extraction of its attendant myth of seafaring prowess from the purview of a homogenised collectivity, and his transposition of it into the realm of the individual psyche. Whereas Camões sings of the "os barões assinalados" (which had marked *Os Lusíadas* out as a direct revision of the singular subject of Virgil's *Aeneid*'s, Aeneus, in favour of a collective race of heroes, the Portuguese), Campos projects *himself* into a grand maritime adventure as a protagonist who is *both* singular *and* plural. This sense of the self-as-multitude – with Pessoa as a coterie of heteronyms (one of whom, Álvaro de Campos, contains yet more multitudes within himself, in an endless *mise en abyme*) – conjures the prospect of every person's self-sufficiency as a nation (or even multiple nations) unto themselves. This dislocation of national epic from its straightforward connection with, and capacity to speak on behalf of, a homogenous collectivity is then compounded by the Maritime Ode's disorientating structure, which – as José Gil has suggested (2013) – involves the uncontrollable bifurcation of subjective emotions in response to objective stimuli (in what becomes an endlessly productive process, positing sensation as an unfathomable mixture of countless other sensations, associations and memories). This is concretised in the poem through the structuring device of the imagined flywheel, inside Campos's mind, spinning out of control and stimulating ever greater waves of sensation. If Campos's poem considers elements of Portuguese psyche and imaginary, then – as with *Mensagem* – those aspects are ultimately unobtainable, in their perpetual slippage from one shape to the next.

The 'Ode marítima' disturbs Portugal's bourgeois mentality as the nation that gave new worlds to the world (Camões, Canto II, stanza 46: "Novos mundos ao mundo irão mostrando") by complicating the notion of a homogeneous heroic collectivity. Campos interiorises the Portuguese epic and reveals it to be diverse, heterogeneous; inside him it takes the form of conflicting, gender-bending desires, as he channels the repressed aspects of epic. He challenges bourgeois respectability with the insult of "equivocal sexual rhetoric" (Santos 2003: 169). As Maria Irene Ramalho Santos discusses in her important critical intervention (2003), Álvaro de Campos inherits the "imperial eyes" (Mary Louise Pratt, 2008) of the British and Portuguese empires, in the sense of accessing and surveying the whole visual realm of their preceding conquests (with Álvaro de Campos's invented biography involving sea travel, following his trip to the Orient aboard a ship, along the Suez Canal, in 'Opiário'). However, rather than simply imbibing the reality of imperial conquest in a faux-naïve form of unheroic, passive, ego-less "anti-conquest" (whereby "the eye seems able to do little but gaze from the periphery of its own creation" [Pratt: 59]), instead Campos longs to see the world through the eyes of sailors throughout time (""enchestes o vosso olhar de costas que nunca verei!" [PAdC: 118]) as though wishing to actively participate – through his imagination – in their imperial conquests. He makes of himself a multi-faceted subject of active history ("Ser o pirata-resumo de toda a pirataria no seu auge," [*PAdC*: 124]) and passive victimisation ("E a vítima-síntese, mas de carne e osso, de todos os piratas do mundo!" [*PAdC*: 124]): the ode is thus the "sadomasochistic chant of the multi-sexual subject that originates a true aesthetic simultaneity of historical agency and victimisation" (Santos 2003: 177).

The 'ode marítima' thus explores a tension between masculinised seafaring mythology, on the one hand, and an emergent (if problematic) femininity and insinuated queer vulnerability, on the other hand. Seafaring masculinity is represented in the form of lofty ideals, represented by the

Platonic powers of a harbour landscape (the "Cais Absoluto" and "o Grande Cais donde partimos em Navios-Nações" [*PAdC*: 109], which is drenched in symbolism), as well the "Alma eterna dos navegadores e das navegações" (*PAdC*: 110), and by the aggressive song of the Great Pirate, who stirs reveries in Campos about fulfilling violent impulses and sadomasochistic desires. It is to femininity – a category which Campos wishes to inhabit, albeit problematically – that I now turn.

3.3.2. Emergent Femininity and the Queer Child

Femininity, in the 'Ode marítima' takes the shape of hysterical self-victimisation and queer gender-bending desire.[37] However, the ode does not merely figure the feminine in the guise of victimhood; there is an extent to which the repressed feminine within Campos himself emerges. As Jackson affirms, this poem's primeval voyage "represents being before self, rhythm before meaning" (81), complicating some the poem's masculine aggression through an excursion into a pre-ordered realm of chaotic, vital pulsations, akin to Kristeva's notion of the *chora*, which she associates with the pre-linguistic mother-child relationship. This emerges in the unbridled raucousness of the human voice ("Eh-lahô-lahô-laHO — láhá-á-ááá — àà à..." [*PAdC*: 127]) and the emphasis on musical rhythms and sensations, expressed in an alliterative and onomatopoeic style ("uma sinfonia de sensações incompatíveis e análogas/ Há uma orquestração no meu sangue de balbúrdias de crimes" [124]).

However, femininity is not purely passive in the 'Ode marítima'. As part of Campos's violent reveries of piratical exploits, he imagines metamorphosing into the nightmarish form of a demonic sea serpent:

[37] Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez – in one of few analyses of the 'Ode marítima' to foreground the question of femaleness (2007) – has written about the presence of women as victims, the feminization of machinery, and the multi-faceted sexuate being of Álvaro de Campos.

> Eu queria ser um bicho representativo de todos os vossos gestos,
> Um bicho que cravasse dentes nas amuradas, nas quilhas,
> Que comesse mastros, bebesse sangue e alcatrão nos conveses,
> Trincasse velas, remos, cordame e poleame,
> Serpente do mar feminina e monstruosa cevando-se nos crimes!
> (*PAdC*: 124).

This disturbing image goes some way towards complicating the notion of femininity as passive victimhood, even if it problematically relies on portraying active femininity as monstrous. Embodying the mysterious creatures who inhabited the shadowy edges of mariners' maps, there is something anachronistic about the sea serpent in the era of modernity. A mythical animal who figures the unknowability of the ocean (a Leviathan-like force evocative of chaos, confusion, and the disorderly forces of nature), she carries Biblical resonance, recalling the snake from the Garden of Eden, who is associated with mankind's Fall from paradise, having provoked Eve to commit her appetite-driven sin of eating an apple from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Campos's longing, subjunctive-laden desire to become the sea serpent, expressed in hissing sibilant sounds, as a summative animal-embodied expression of piratical crimes is somewhat paradoxical, in that the serpent's voracious appetite for the technologies of seafaring (the boats, the masts, the oars) surely implies that the seafaring pirates themselves are at risk of being devoured. As Jack Halberstam explains, wildness is "a form of disorder that will no submit to rule, a mode of unknowing, a resistant ontology, and a fantasy of life beyond the human" (Halberstam, 2020: 8). Whereas Camões conveyed the idea that the Portuguese, by their seafaring prowess, could provoke the elemental forces of nature themselves to fearfulness (as expressed by Jupiter in his prophecy of the future greatness of the Portuguese [in Canto II, stanza 47]: "Ó gente forte e de altos pensamentos,/ Que também dela hão medo os Elementos!"), Campos employs a feminine entity associated with wildness, here, to complicate the notion of nature's tameability. Although the sea serpent's monstrosity may be hard to redeem, in that she

evokes an expression of crime-infused violence, her appearance is nevertheless an important complication of anthropocentric narratives about taming the seas.

The unlocking of this repressed femininity, in the 'Ode marítima', dovetails with an exploration of the queerness of childhood. Resisting the normatively straight ego's development, the child version of Álvaro de Campos emerges as the Ode progresses beyond its initial orgiastic delight in violence on the high seas. The child-Campos's appearance can be linked back to *Os Lusíadas*, which represented tearful children attending the mariners' seaside farewell in Canto IV (stanza 92), as well as the male children on the shore praying for their male progenitors in Pessoa's 'Mar Portuguez' (*M*: 72). In this way, genealogical progression is re-imagined: rather than using children as symbols of futurity, of the generations who will continue to build the nation at home, here Campos turns backwards – reversing forward-facing teleologies – and instead using the figure of the child to express the interiority of a troubled nostalgia for one's personal past:

> De repente, como um relâmpago de som, que não faz barulho mas ternura,
> Subitamente abrangendo todo o horizonte marítimo
> Húmido e sombrio marulho humano nocturno,
> Voz de sereia longínqua chorando, chamando,
> Vem do fundo do Longe, do fundo do Mar, da alma dos Abismos,
> E à tona dele, como algas, bóiam meus sonhos desfeitos...
>
> Ahó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó — yy...
> Schooner ahó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó-ó — yy.....
>
> Ah, o orvalho sobre a minha excitação!
> O frescor nocturno no meu oceano interior!
> Eis tudo em mim de repente ante uma noite no mar
> Cheia de enorme mistério humaníssimo das ondas nocturnas.
> A lua sobe no horizonte
> E a minha infância feliz acorda, como uma lágrima, em mim.
> O meu passado ressurge, como se esse grito marítimo
> Fosse um aroma, uma voz, o eco duma canção
> Que fosse chamar ao meu passado
> Por aquela felicidade que nunca mais tornarei a ter.
>
> (PAdC: 130-131).

If the women's history is marked by absence, in the sense of women's lives not having been accounted for in masculinist accounts of history (so often populated by recitations of the actions of male agents, who are traditionally seen as the instigators of events, the contributors to linear progress, and the creators of rupture and change), this is in part because of the fleetingness of the evidence of women's lives – which are, by contrast, associated with ephemera (for example, the orality of stories and songs passed from mother to child, the nasality of feminine fragrance, the materiality of weaving and textiles).[38] As the repressed feminine emerges in the *Ode marítima*, it is worth noting that it is precisely figured as appearing in senses other than the visual: aroma, voice and eco. I detect an insinuation of a feminized form of memory, emerging into Álvaro de Campos's stream-of-consciousness, as the Great Pirate's Song is interrupted with an emergent, suppressed femininity.

> Uma gaivota que passa,
> E a minha ternura é maior.
>
> Mas todo este tempo não estive a reparar para nada.
> Tudo isto foi uma impressão só da pele, como uma carícia
> Todo este tempo não tirei os olhos do meu sonho longínquo,
> Da minha casa ao pé do rio,
> Da minha infância ao pé do rio,
> Das janelas do meu quarto dando para o rio de noite,
> E a paz do luar esparso nas águas!...
> Minha velha tia, que me amava por causa do filho que perdeu...,
> Minha velha tia costumava adormecer-me cantando-me
> (Se bem que eu fosse já crescido demais para isso)...
> Lembro-me e as lágrimas caem sobre o meu coração e lavam-no da vida,
> E ergue-se uma leve brisa marítima dentro de mim.
> Às vezes ela cantava a «Nau Catrineta»:
>
> *Lá vai a Nau Catrineta*
> *Por sobre as águas do mar*...
>
> […]

[38] In her book *The Colour of Angels*, Constance Classen examines how Western women have traditionally been associated with proximity to the sense of smell, touch, and taste, whereas men have been traditionally connected with the senses of sight and hearing, which evoke notions of rationality and distance (see Classen 1998; Howes, 2003).

Ó meu passado de infância, boneco que me partiram![39]

Não poder viajar pra o passado, para aquela casa e aquela afeição,
E ficar lá sempre, sempre criança e sempre contente!

Mas tudo isto foi o Passado, lanterna a uma esquina de rua velha.
Pensar isto faz frio, faz fome duma coisa que se não pode obter.
[…]

Evoco, por um esforço voluntário, para sair desta emoção,
Evoco, com um esforço desesperado, seco, nulo,
A canção do Grande Pirata, quando estava a morrer:

Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest.
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Mas a canção é uma linha recta mal traçada dentro de mim...

(*PAdC*: 132-134).

This extract evokes the vulnerability of childhood, a time surrounded by feminine role-model figures, who are figures of care, affection, and purveyors of cultural knowledge in the form of song and lullaby. This extract's final line resonates with queerness, as the straight line of the hymn to the masculine pirate (a song from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, therefore redolent of the pirates' quest for treasure, the reward of masculine derring-do) sits *uncomfortably* with De Campos. The effort to assume a conventional masculine position is precisely *an effort* ("um esforço voluntário"), and a failed one – a failure which speaks to an underlying queerness, deflating the belligerent masculinism of much of the poem's rhetoric. In her *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed has reimagined queerness as a sexual disorientation; "compulsory heterosexuality operates as a straightening device" and "bodies become straight by 'lining up'

[39] It is worth noting that this image of the toy appears in an early part of the poem: "E vós, ó coisas navais, meus velhos brinquedos de sonho!/ Componde fora de mim a minha vida interior!" (Pessoa, 2013: 113). These lines, when reconsidered retrospectively (after reading the poem in its entirety), create an unresolved tension between the sense of Álvaro de Campos's childhood past being like a broken toy (evoking the trauma of lost innocence, as well as suggesting a state of being un-re-creatable or unrepairable in the adult mind), on the one hand, and the imagination's continued capacity for childish playfulness, on the other. Naval things are viewed as building blocks in a child-like game, whose manipulation by the imagination enables the drawing of one's inner life (often associated in Campos with memories of the dreamlike life of the child) out into the open: everything becomes child's play, in Campos's queer imagination, as a way of dealing with gendered trauma, i.e., the violence that is done to the child as they are called into gender.

with lines that are already given" (Ahmed 2006: 23). In this light, the "linha recta mal traçada", links to an obliquity which recurs throughout the Ode (for example, an earlier exclamation: "Minhas marítimas feras, maridos da minha imaginação!/ Amantes casuais da *obliquidade* das minhas sensações!" [*PAdC*: 125], with its queering equation of the feminine with the masculine, as though Campos desired to become reincarnated as both nymph and mariner on Camões's Ilha dos Amores). All of this insinuates an oblique angle of queerness (relative to the normativity of the straight line) throughout the poem, which is traced back to Campos's childhood, and was nurtured through exposure to femininity.

The close of the 'Ode marítima' displays a cosmopolitan idealism, as Campos imagines the borderless potential of modern maritime life, and then splinters himself into the body of the tramp-steamer now departing from the harbour.

> Patriotas transitórios duma mesma pátria incerta
> Eternamente deslocando-se sobre a imensidade das águas!
> (PAdC: 140).

Tramp-steamers, vagabond boats with no set schedules, itineraries to abide by, or set ports-of-call, differ markedly from the caravels of *Os Lusíadas* or the forests-longing-to-be-boats of *Mensagem* ("E a fala dos pinhais, marulho obscuro,/ É o som presente desse mar futuro,/ É a voz da terra ansiando pelo mar", 'D. Diniz', *M*: 28). This vagabond boat defies predestination, and resolutely fails to slot into any national mythology of seafaring. It is a *flâneuring* boat appropriate to the *flâneuring* mind of De Campos,

4. Conclusion

A Derridean reading of Portuguese epic reveals how its meanings cannot be fixed incontrovertibly, and how it is haunted by its own inconsistencies. Even as *Os Lusíadas* seems triumphally to project the Portuguese onto a trajectory of crusading expansionism overseas, the

epic overflows with contradictions, aporia and excesses of meaning; its climactic episode, in which the Portuguese mariners are rewarded for their exploits with a sojourn on the Ilha dos Amores, where they are feted by amorous nymphs and given a vision of Portugal's imperial future (via Tethys's revelation of the prophecies contained within the "Máquina do Mundo" in Canto X), is disturbed by the spectre of empire's un-completability, due to the implied proliferation of diversity which imperial rule will never succeed in homogenising. *Mensagem* similarly espouses a poetics of unfulfilment, promising to explore Portuguese identity, and yet endlessly deferring the moment of its coherence into intelligibility. The nation is prevented from ever becoming a recognisable presence, except perhaps in the form of nebulous mists enshrouding an absent hero and failed king, Dom Sebastião.

Álvaro de Campos's 'Ode marítima', an ode seemingly filled with epic content which promotes a vision of active masculinity (taking the form of an exulted piracy) that abuses passive femininity (represented by the imagined victims of historical violence), is in fact eccentric: the forward-facing gaze of epic teleology is inverted and replaced with the backwards-facing, anti-historical mode of queer fantasy and phantasmagoria, allowing the repressed feminine to emerge in a (problematic but intriguing) monstrous, serpentine form, but also in ephemeral traces of female influences from a queerly-vulnerable childhood. Having interiorised national epic's seafaring mythology and the seashore's transcendental aura, Campos then translates it, internally, into a phantasmagorical vision of self-dispersion on the high-seas. The nation-in-miniature in Campos's mind is ultimately fractured twice over: firstly, by a centrifugal proliferation of images associated with aggressive masculine energy which, by its disorderly excess and free verse rapidity, suggests instability, chaos, and the inevitability of entropy; and secondly by the subdual of this aggressive masculine energy (associated with the wave-cutting thrust of Portugal's seafaring imperialism) through the emergence of repressed femininity and queer vulnerability. Following the *flâneuring* tramp-steamer at the end of the poem, Campos's stream-of-consciousness delivers, at its close, an enduring image of directionlessness.

As I explore in subsequent chapters, twentieth and twenty-first century Portuguese women's poetry picks up on and develops this anti-teleological, disorientating quality. It is equally open to being haunted by the ghosts of these epics, both in the sense of accommodating traces of the tradition's unresolved questions, its *revenants*, as well as in the sense of freeing the figures of Camões and Pessoa themselves from their entrapment within the stable frames of iconicity that associate them with the myth of seafaring Portugal. In so doing, feminist poetry – which intervenes in the Canon through an interweaving intertextuality, opens the structures of these texts, once deemed to be closed, restoring to them their own ghostly indeterminacies.

Chapter II.

SUBMERGING PATRIARCHY, EMERGING MATRIARCHY: NÁTALIA CORREIA'S *CÂNTICO DO PAÍS EMERSO* (1961)

1. INTRODUCTION

In *Pillar of Salt: Gender, Memory, and the Perils of Looking Back* (1998), Janice Haaken uses psychoanalysis and clinical psychology to explore the ways in which women remember and tell their stories about past traumas, which often appear to be layered with gendered and ambiguous meanings. Haaken describes how the process of remembering, or of "looking back", can feel "transgressive, even sinful" (Haaken 1998: 1). Lot's wife, who turned to salt as she looked back upon Sodom and Gomorrah, serves as the biblical instantiation of the dire penalties meted out to such rebellious women by patriarchy. As Haaken explains, in the Western imaginary, women typically figure as "transitional icons" who facilitate "masculine journeys of exploration and conquest" (Ibid: 1), and this privileging of male agency has contributed in parallel to a masculinising of historical and cultural memory. In the tradition of Portuguese literature, such is the case with the female figures in Camões's *Os Lusíadas*. For example, the goddess Venus, one of the only substantial female characters in the poem, is depicted interceding on behalf of the Portuguese mariners; her main (and perhaps only) function, at the level of narrative, is to aid them in their quest to expand the reaches of the kingdom. Furthermore, whereas men are granted agency in patriarchal legends and lineages, women have traditionally occupied positions of fixity, stasis, and passivity, around which the male universe undergoes transformative action.

In the context of mid twentieth-century Portugal, under the Estado Novo dictatorship (1933-74), Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* (1961) emerged at a time when the oppression of women and

their stories was the norm. As noted in this thesis's Introduction, the 1933 Constitution had excluded women from legal citizenship on the grounds that their purportedly natural sexual characteristics predetermined their exclusively domestic function in Portuguese society. Women served the regime, whether willingly or otherwise, as reproducers of the nation and its identity: in the biological sense, they begot future generations of Portuguese citizens; in the cultural sense, they acted as lynchpins of the family structure, educators of children, and muses spurring male action. Their procreative function was most highly prized, in accordance with the state-endorsed Catholic doctrine of the time. Indeed, as the feminist philosopher Christine Battersby has argued (1989), Western philosophy since Plato has traditionally formulated a distinction between male and female forms of creation, the former engendering works of art from the mind, the latter engendering offspring through a purportedly instinctual bodily process. As Nira Yuval-Davis has shown (1989; 1997), this gendered dichotomy (equating maleness with mind, and femaleness with body) provides the foundational bias for the inclusion of men in the public sphere of politics (that is, the realm of ideas), at the same time as it has historically justified the restriction of women to the private, domestic sphere, a supposedly uncultivated space devoted to children (that is to say, pre-social beings).[40]

Against this backdrop, Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* questions the legitimacy of all of these gender-related prejudices, and it does so through the mechanism of "transformative remembering" (Haaken 1998: 15). Appropriating some of the foundational legends of Portuguese culture, which took shape in literary form in Camões's *Os Lusíadas*, Pessoa's *Mensagem*, and the heteronym Álvaro de Campos's 'Ode Marítima', the *Cântico do país emerso* re-writes them from a new vantage point. In this way, the past is reactivated, and its latent meanings unearthed, in order for the building blocks of Portuguese nationhood to be recast into the always-provisional

[40] Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias identify ways in which women have been used as guarantors of the survival of states and national identities in *Women-Nation-State* (1989: 7), including as biological reproducers of the nation and as transmitters of cultural values from one generation to the next.

blueprint for a complexly open-ended alternative identity. In this sense, Correia's poetry arguably belongs to a trend of revisionist mythmaking in twentieth-century women's poetry.[41] This trend views the myths of the past from an oblique perspective, distrusting the notion of a Golden Age which such myths typically purvey (including the supposed greatness of the Portuguese voyages of discovery); questioning mythical systems of gender relations (for example, the division of Portugal along gendered lines into male seafarers, on the one hand, and wistfully abandoned housewives, on the other); and querying models of heroism which have excluded the feminine. Redounding to the *Cântico do país emerso*'s feminist credentials, it deconstructs the dichotomies of mind/body, public/private, and civilised/natural.[42] Adding to the text's complexity, the *Cântico do país emerso* also refers to contemporary history, sometimes in oblique fashion to evade detection by censorship.[43] It sets notions of historical grandeur against the revelation of contemporary squalor and paucity of spiritual value, and in particular reveals the traumas of empire.

Natália Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* is thus a writing-back against archetypal masculinist myths of nation and empire building. Comprising a Prologue and a poem-sequence in Sections I-VIII, it ostensibly depicts the poet-speaker's personal, mystically-inflected reaction to the event of a failed *coup d'état* attempt, led by Captain Henrique Galvão with the help of General Humberto Delgado.[44] This had involved the hijacking of the Santa Maria cruise liner (on 23rd

[41] For a seminal article on feminist revisionary mythmaking, which takes as its subject twentieth-century American women's poetry, see Ostriker (1982).
[42] In these dichotomies, maleness has historically been associated with the privileged primary terms, while femaleness has been attached to the disparaged secondary terms.
[43] As Correia recounts (in an unpublished typed manuscript entitled 'Pedem-me que diga algo sobre as devastações que a censura fez na minha obra' [n.d.: Cota 3936]), the *Cântico do país emerso* was one of eight texts, including her *Antologia de Poesia Portuguesa Erótica e Satírica* (1965) and anti-Sebastianist play *O Encoberto* (1969), that were "confiscadas por mais insurretas". Referring to her erotic poetry anthology, she affirms that her greatest act of de-mystification against the Salazar regime, for which she received the greatest opprobrium, was to attack "o puritanismo que serve de guardião a todas as ditaduras".
[44] Captain Henrique Galvão was an army officer, a deputy in the National Assembly, a colonial official in the African provinces, and a big-game hunter and naturalist. His fellow rebel, General Humberto Delgado,

January 1961), which was used as a rebel radio broadcast centre in an attempt to draw international attention towards the injustices of Salazarist Portugal.[45] In a complication of empire-orientated epic, the *Cântico do país emerso* first examines failed masculine heroic endeavours and repressed imperial trauma, in language which is reminiscent of, yet also parodies, Camonian and Pessoan epic. It provides a morbidly satirical account of contemporary Portugal under the Salazar dictatorship (in the Prologue and Sections I-IV), depicting the nation as a sunken ship with a drowned pilot. Subsequently, Correia's poem turns towards the construction of a female-centred utopian vision rooted in a process of personal becoming-bodily, and national re-birth in the present (in Sections V-VIII). Anticipating the "matriotism" of *Mátria* (1969), albeit in an embryonic form, the *Cântico do país emerso* depicts the female body as a fertile space, inhabited by more-than-human forces and imbued with life-giving properties, upon which a new nation may grow and flourish. The canticle's female-centred utopianism is emergent, growing like an embryo in the poet's womb, and expresses itself through the mysterious multivalence of surrealism, achieving an open-endedness which eschews all teleological exactitude. In regard to these themes, queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman (*Time Binds*) and feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz (*Volatile Bodies*) help me to examine Correia's queering approach to Salazarist imperial history-making and teleology, and her bodily poetics (with its investment in notions of fluidity).

The essentialist notion of *matrismo* ("matriotism"), an emphatically female inversion of "patriotism", appears in a variety of definitions throughout Correia's *oeuvre*. Postulating the

was a General of the Portuguese Air Force, a diplomat, and a failed opposition candidate for the Portuguese presidency in 1958.

[45] Galvão and Delgado had intended to undertake a second phase to this operation, which would have involved taking the Santa Maria to the island of Fernando Pó, where they would raise native forces before going on to attack Luanda, the capital of Angola, seeking to establish an alternative Portuguese government to unleash war upon the Salazar regime. Although they failed in this endeavour, they were nevertheless treated as freedom fighters by both American and Brazilian authorities, causing Salazar embarrassment on the world stage. For more details on the historical context of Salazar's terrible year of 1961, which included yet another attempted *coup d'état* by another military officer, General Botelho Moniz, see Fernando Rosas's *Salazar e o Poder: A Arte de Saber Durar* (2012: 246-256) and Filipe de Meneses's *Salazar: A Political Biography* (2010). Gallagher provides a brief summary of the impact of the Santa Maria hijacking on Portugal's standing on the world stage (2022: 199).

prehistoric existence of a universal matriarchal culture that was damagingly superseded by patriarchal rule, she seeks to reinstate matriarchy in the present through acts of poetic rebirthing. This hoped-for female-centric utopia is conceptualised as a realm transcending national borders, populated by "matriotas" (as opposed to "patriotas"), which would value women for their (purportedly) innately female qualities, described by Correia as "as suas próprias tendências culturais, que estão intimamente ligadas ao paradigma da Grande Mãe, que é a grande reserva, a eterna reserva da Natureza" (Correia 2004: 65)[46] – especially their motherliness, life-affirming immanence, closeness to the forces of nature, and ability to mix rationality with emotion (Correia, 1969b: 13-17).

The extent to which this essentialising attitude towards femaleness might have played into the misogynistic gender binarism of Salazar's own handbook is complicated by the unconventional associations which each "feminine" characteristic accrues, within Correia's ambivalent, multivalent, surrealist poetic output. For example, Correia's notion of motherhood transcends biological reproduction, coming to stand instead for broader principles of creative fecundity, pure potentiality, and even erotic power. Providing an escape route from the forces of utilitarian rationality associated with patriarchy, *matrismo* is a provocation to think the world anew by privileging repressed and feminine-coded aspects of the human psyche – a strategic necessity in response to the gender politics of the Estado Novo regime. Correia produced art which proleptically provides a rich resource to present-day feminist theorists and poets of embodied subjectivity. Acknowledging that *matrismo* is a perennial theme in Correia's work, and arguably one which emerges strategically, cyclically, and flexibly – making it undesirable for the literary critic to establish any sort of linear teleological explanation concerning its development – I

[46] This quotation is from an interview with Antónia de Sousa entitled "A missão da mulher é assombrar", which was first published in the *Diário de Notícias* supplement *Domingo* (Lisbon, 11th September 1983).

nevertheless contend that the canticle stages a *submerging* of patriarchy which, in a sense, clears the decks for Correia's evolving philosophy of female emancipation and *emergent* matriarchy.

The emergence of female-gendered body and voice in the *Cântico do país emerso*, as a precursor to *matrismo*, as I hope to demonstrate, shares many of the concerns of second-wave feminism from France (particularly the work of Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva). Cixous, for instance, entreats the woman writer to write *with her body* as per the guiding notions of *écriture féminine* (that is, to engage in writing which seeks to undermine phallocentric discourse by utilising the alterity of the repressed female libido, psyche, and body), providing a helpful corollary for the project of female-centred strategic essentialism which I perceive in Correia's poetry:

> Write yourself, your body must be heard... To write an act which will not only realize the decensored relation of woman to her sexuality, to her womanly being; it will give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal (Cixous, 1981a: p.250).

Cixous's insistence on a female corporeal presence in writing is mirrored in the *Cântico do país emerso*, notably emergent in Sections V-VIII of the poem, which resonates with her call for the uncensoring of female sexuality in a Christian and patriarchal context. Thus, in Section V, the female body is figured as an agent of historical change, rather than a merely passive object of male control. Then, throughout the whole of the second half of the *Cântico do país emerso*, it becomes a fertile site of imaginative possibilities, being depicted as a personalised, intimate resource belonging to the female-sexed poet-speaker herself which nevertheless also bears fruitful implications for the nation, to whom – given that the text is, after all, a response to and writing-back-against the national canon – she may be said to be addressing the canticle as a whole.[47] In this way, while epics tend to privilege the collective over the individual, subsuming

[47] The idea that Correia's poem is in some sense addressed to the Portuguese nation, while also containing resonances that are personal, finds corroboration in an interview with the journalist Bruno da Ponte (entitled "A minha Poesia está ligada aos Grandes Momentos da Vida Colectiva") which was first published in the *Jornal de Letras e Artes*, Lisbon, 22nd November 1961). Here, she explains that the *Cântico do país*

specific individual identities within the folds of an imagined national psyche, Correia complicates the universalising collective form of address by explicitly revealing its foundation in the specificities of a singular voice attached to a gendered body.

As in *écriture féminine*, this bodiliness is linked to the invention of a new language in Correia's poem. Giving voice to a femaleness that has been marginalised within the masculine Symbolic Order, the language of the *Cântico do país emerso* challenges patriarchal notions of order and logic, through surreal juxtapositions of images and ideas; it explodes linearity through the absence of a central narrative; it rejects male subjectivity's disingenuous claim to neutrality and universality by emphasising the sexed corporeality of the poet-speaker; and it dismantles the notion of the mind's superiority over (and independence from) the body, by fluidly blending the lexes of mind and body, and suggesting their interpenetratedness. The canticle's language is neither linear nor teleological, but rather communicates the interweaving of thought, memory and voice.

2. INVERTING THE PORTUGUESE CANON: GENDER AND NATION

In the *Cântico do país emerso*, Correia's reparative journey into Portugal's past, via both its history and its tradition of literary epic, involves a re-writing of Fernando Pessoa. Commenting on her debt to Pessoa, in 1985, in response to a query from the director of *Colóquio/Letras*, David Mourrão Ferreira, Correia writes:

> 'Particularmente devedora' não direi. Devedora como qualquer poeta da minha geração, sem dúvida. A poesia é sempre a mesma. Uma só linguagem de um povo desaparecido ou por nascer e que as gerações passam umas às outras em moldes diferentes.

emerso "marca o desafogo de uma tendência que se acentua nas minhas últimas produções, que é a compreensão de que a poesia se encontra ligada aos momentos mais importantes da vida colectiva e individual" (Correia 2004b: 23), indicating a certain belief in the poet's ability to tap into the *Zeitgeist*, intertwining imaginative practice and political activism.

> Contudo, aceito que, observando como Pessoa a linha épica, ele na *Ode Marítima*, eu no *Cântico do País Emerso*, este meu poema seja o *negativo voluntário* da exaltação pessoana da pirataria cuja perspectiva eu inverto de um ponto de vista feminino.
>
> (Correia 1985: Cota 21.834–21.839).

The notion of inversion, indicated by Correia as part of her method of writing back against the Canon, gestures forward to Ana Luísa Amaral's concept of the *avesso*: the underbelly of history, the reverse of the coin, which feminist and queer poetry have the capacity to uncover, flip, and allow to come to the fore. Similarly, Correia's capsizing of patriarchy implies the revelation of the suppressed feminine.

The bewildered admiration exhibited by the *Cântico do país emerso*'s contemporary reviewers in Portuguese newspapers tallies well with the collection's formal audacity, tonal ambivalence and conceptual unruliness. Dórdio Guirmarães,[48] in the *Diário Ilustrado* (17th Jan 1963), attends to the collection's rootedness in Portuguese history, seeing it as the dramatization of human experience taking place within the inexorable and unvarying flow of a national story stemming organically from the Era of the Discoveries, as well as emphasising the collection's lyricism, categorising it within the domain of the "epopaico-lírico" (Guirmarães, 1963). This lyrical quality is examined by another reviewer in *A Cooperação* (April 1962), who ponders the relative importance of the epic vein within the collection, noting the quality of "um sopro épico em transiência", while "O lírico espreita, a cada passo, na nota pessoal, na expressão sentimental de um fracasso, no tremeluzir de uma esperança" (Melo, 1962). These contemporary reviewers seem to be tapping into a sense of how the collection appears to be inspired by epic, and yet refuses to be contained by the genre's supposed tonal and stylistic conventions, instead sallying into the mysterious realm of the (feminine) collective unconscious, rather than historical epic's affirmative mode which involved clarifying and illuminating national history. Correia's collection is a surrealist lyric-epic in feminine key, displaying a personalising lyricism and

[48] Dórdio Guimarães would later marry Natália Correia in 1990.

female-inflected voice at odds with the masculinism of the imperial epic mode. Finally, in another review by José de Melo, in the *Ilhavense* (10th May 1969), the collection paradoxically displays both an adherence to, and a renunciation of, the norms of discursivity and rhetoric, within a wider authorial output comprising "o bizarro, o excêntrico, o dar nas vistas", elements which he claims are all ultimately subordinated to a unifying poetic personality. Perhaps the most interesting analysis comes from Dórdio Guirmarães, who describes the *Cântico do país emerso* as a "*Grande aventura* em que a carne pensa" (1963), homing in on Correia's innovative bodily poetics and philosophy. It is this poetics of unrepressed embodied thought which, I contend, is Correia's principal contribution to disrupting the epic genre from within.

The *Cântico do país emerso* signals its intertextuality with Camões and Pessoa in a variety of ways.[49] Its Prologue ("Memória da Minha Comunhão Poética com a Saga do Cavaleiro da Nossa Senhora da Liberdade" [*AP*: p.98]) employs the lexis of epic poetry from the very beginning. Its metonymic description of sea vessels as "os antigos pinhais" calls to mind the "falla dos pinhaes"(*M*: p28) which appear in the sixth poem of the first part of *Mensagem*, entitled 'D. Diniz', about the poet-king who was the "plantador de naus a haver". Correia's use of epithets, such as "argonautas do velo de ouro" and "o Capitão profetizado"(*AP*: p.98), similarly contributes to a sense of epic grandeur. This is subsequently reinforced in recurrent use of anaphora and other epic poetic devices within the *Cântico do país emerso*'s eight-part poem-sequence itself, together with the overall commencement of the poem's action *in medias res* ("Enquanto que no mar das Caraíbas" [*AP*: p.101]), in imitation of Canto I, Stanza 19 of *Os Lusíadas* ("Já no largo Oceano navegavam" [*OL*: p.5]). The Prologue's reference to "as lendas molhadas pelas lágrimas portuguesas de que feito o mar"(*AP*: p.98) equally evokes a poem from the second part of *Mensagem*, namely 'X. Mar Portuguez' (*M*: p.72, stanza 1, lines 1-2). Additionally, Correia's claim to have written the canticle "de um jacto"(*AP*: p.99) recalls Pessoa's

[49] Quotations are taken from the *Antologia Poética*, edited by Fernando Pinto do Amaral.

similar legendary claim to have written Alberto Caeiro's 'O Guardador de Rebanhos' (followed by the orthonym's 'Chuva oblíqua' and Álvaro de Campos's 'Ode Triunfal') all at once, in an irrepressible moment of inspiration (Pessoa, 1935). In addition, the *Cântico do país emerso*, like *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem*, is divided into a number of sections – a sequencing that is apparently suggestive of progression and epic development, even if the poem principally bears the hallmarks of epic by way of ironic appropriation, parody, subversion, and gender-conscious complications.

One of the most overt intertextual references to Pessoa is the presence in the Prologue of the "Mostrengo que estava no país de breu"(*AP*: p98) who circles Henrique Galvão's ship three times, no longer as a purely mythical manifestation of the dangerous forces of nature and the unknown – which in Camões took the form of Adamastor, confronting Vasco da Gama in his quest to circle the Cape of Storms – but rather a hardly-veiled cipher for Salazar himself ("os papagaios do Mostrengo que era uma ditadura com olhos de PIDE e dormia com eles abertos" [*AP*: p.99]). Whereas in *Mensagem* Pessoa withholds the reply of the Mostrengo to the helmsman, thereby enabling the monster to retain some of its unspeakable menace even after it has been challenged, as part of the solemnly maintained elegiac-epic tone throughout the entire collection, here the *Cântico do país emerso* presents Salazar's bathetically babbling reply (involving a twice-repeated accusation of Communist involvement in the Santa Maria hijacking: "Dinheiro de Moscovo!" [*AP*: p.99]). This follows on from Henrique Galvão's grandiloquent affirmation of the fighting spirit of the oppressed nation, and therefore produces a debasement in the overall tone, an ironic punctuation of the epic atmosphere. Equally, the poem's epigraph is taken from the Pessoan 'Ode Marítima', with which the *Cântico do país emerso* dialogues throughout, as evidenced in the image of "A roda dos ventos a roda do sol a roda do leme" (*AP*: p.107, Section IV, stanza 1, line 3) which replicates that of the spinning wheel of interiority,

of gathering thought processes, the "volante" that "começa a girar", in Álvaro de Campos's poem (*PAdC*: p.107).

Correia's text thereby inserts itself within the epic tradition, through the evocation of an epic lineage for her poem. Yet we immediately become aware of the ways in which the text is punctuated with irony, mockery and bathos. Epic epithets and attributes are in use, yet they will become absurd and satirical, most emphatically in the description of Portugal's overseas empire in the second stanza of Section I as "terra transportuguesa"(*AP*: p.101). Where the epic formula of *polyptoton* is used, it is mockingly combined with a popular expression in order to produce a tautology which hardly adds grandeur to the tone ("Mas o conto que ia crescendo com o acrescento de pontos insidiosos lá convenceu uns da NATO a despacharem torpedeiros…"[AP: p.99], calling to mind the popular saying "Quem conta um conto acescenta um ponto", which reinforces the notion of malicious rumour-mongering). When Pessoa is referenced at the start of the poem's Section II, in its first two stanzas, it is to refer to him as a mere "escriturário" and a "manga-de-alpaca que os deuses mandaram/ Fazer a escrita da nova Odisseia"(*AP*: pp.103, 104), whose heteronym Álvaro de Campos's 'Ode Marítima' is parodically evoked in the description of the stain that overseas imperialism has left on Portuguese history ("a nódoa marítima" [*AP*: p.104]). Moreover, the imbuing of imperial discourse with metaphysical import for Portuguese national culture, in the literature of Camões and Pessoa, as identified by Eduardo Lourenço (*Poesia e Metafísica*, 1983), is critiqued in the *Cântico do país emerso*. For example, the term "Metafísicas Índias Ocidentais" (*AP*: p.109, Section IV, stanza 13) – possibly referring to Salazar's attempt to create a narrative of colonial exceptionalism founded on the metaphysics of Lusotropicalism (a purportedly loving form of racial miscegenation, meant to be particular to the Portuguese colonial experience)[50] – rhymes with the preceding term "batalhas navais" (that is, the game of battleships, evoking the notion of child's play, or playground politics), underscoring

[50] This is explored further in this chapter's next sub-section.

with irony the way in which ties between East and West have been wrought more by situations of war committed by impetuous leaders, than by anything so profound as metaphysics.

It becomes apparent that what is ostensibly a celebration of the derring-do of Henrique Galvão and his band of conspirators, in their attempt to overthrow Salazar's regime with the Santa Maria hijacking, is in fact a critique of male-authored, bellicose narratives of historical progress, rupture and transformation. The Prologue ends with a tongue-in-cheek claim about how wonderful things could be if only the nation were steered at the helm by a Captain in the form of "um dos Cavaleiros dos Impossíveis que fazem a nossa historia"(*AP*: p.99). However, this image of the captain at the wheel is inverted by the time we reach the end of the fourth section of the poem (Section IV, Stanza 14), in the image of the ship which is half sinking, half afloat ("Tudo o que no cimo é barco e no fundo/ É piloto afogado entre corais sepulto" [*AP*: p.110]), evoking a sense of the blind aimlessness of the imperial endeavour, which has only outward splendour but is corrupted, empty and already dead within. In other words, while Henrique Galvão's intentions to oust the dictator may have been politically amenable to the anti-authoritarian intelligentsia, of which Correia was herself undoubtedly a part, his masculine warmongering methods and concomitant potential as a future authoritarian himself merely replicate the same masculine tendencies, myths and archetypes which already provided the very bedrock of the Estado Novo regime. The ambiguous referent of the word "Capitão" (is it Henrique Galvão, or is it Salazar?), throughout the poem (for example, *AP*: p.98, p.99, p.107, p.110), is testament to the ambivalence with which the hijacker pirates are portrayed.

In this way, the intertextual chain linking *Os Lusíadas*, *Mensagem*, 'Ode Marítima' and the *Cântico do país emerso* juxtaposes a series of distinctly different approaches to the theme of gender. Camões's poem emphasises the concept of male genealogies, particularly in relation to lines of succession from one king to another (especially in Vasco da Gama's relation of

Portuguese history in Cantos III-IV) and from one maritime explorer to another (as described, for example, in Tethys's revelations of future Portuguese navigators' successes in Canto X). *Os Lusíadas* thereby conjures the nation's seafaring imperial destiny into being by modelling an ideal of masculine behaviour based on imperial acquisitiveness and linear inheritances; meanwhile, Camões's women exist nearly exclusively on a symbolic level. While Camões's aesthetically rich and enigmatic classical mythological framework includes female entities such as Venus and Tethys whose identities are not quite as lacking-in-complexity as contemporary Christian allegorical interpretations claimed, it nevertheless seems hard to dispute that these female figures fit within a broader symbolic system that disempowers them. The Portuguese women who weep for their departed sailor husbands and sons at the end of Canto IV, together with Venus, Tethys and the nymphs of the Isle of Love, all display little agency and historical power beyond their usefulness as symbols either inspiring or rewarding male deeds of heroism.

In Pessoa's *Mensagem*, male genealogies function in a similar way to Camonian epic, although it is the romantic genius of these spiritually inter-connected male minds that is emphasised, rather than their capacity for military might or expansionist zeal. Female figures barely feature in *Mensagem*, with the exception of two royals: Dona Tareja ('Ó mãe de reis e avó de impérios') and Dona Filipa de Lencastre ('Humano ventre de império/ Madrinha de Portugal!'), both of whom are celebrated for no other reason than that their wombs engender further heroic male monarchs, thereby enabling the empire to grow. And in the rhapsodic odes of Álvaro de Campos, femininity takes the shape of either voluntary self-emasculation or hysteria. The 'Ode Marítima' is one such hysterical poem, the opening part of which (if not the entirety) is steeped in masculine philosophy. Before the complications of its later parts, the poem opens with Álvaro de Campos's turns of thought, his spiritual reverie, upon perceiving the distant shape of a steam-ship approaching the quay where he stands, as the physical reality of his surroundings is revealed to be drenched in metaphysical meaning. Privileging the role of male agency in history-making,

Campos thinks about how "Nós os homens construímos/ Os nossos cais nos nosso portos,/ Os nossos cais de pedra atual sobre água verdadeira"(*PAdC*: p.109). He goes on to consider how material reality accrues spiritual significance, continuing "Que depois de construídos se anunciam de repente/ Coisas-Reais, Espíritos-Coisas, Entidades em Pedra-Almas". These capitalisations evoke the transcendentalist Platonic notion of Forms, a philosophy which privileges immaterial abstraction above solid substance. Campos's poem is, at least in one sense, *prima facie*, about how the Portuguese landscape is suffused with this type of transcendental, mythical signification: the entire reverie is haunted by the "Alma eterna dos navegadores e das navegações!"(*PadC*: p.110), while the quay upon which he stands becomes a figure for all quays throughout history, as the individual is revealed to be forever enveloped in history and even pre-history, by the "misterioso receio ancestral à Chegada e ao Novo"(*PadC*: p.111).

Meanwhile, the *Cântico do país emerso*'s approach to questions of masculinity, history building and transcendentalism, is broadly ironic and deconstructive. The heroic endeavours of the male figures of Henrique Galvão and his band of sailors are treated quite ambivalently: on the one hand, politically-speaking, the hijacking of the Santa Maria was to be celebrated, insofar as the men sought to undermine the Salazar dictatorship internationally. On the other hand, Correia's poem revels in the bathos of the gesture. After all, the sailors were not overcoming great storms, natural disasters or "antigos riscos" (*AP*: p.105, opening of Section III), but rather were kidnapping the sitting target of a rag-tag bunch of economically privileged tourists and petty cruise-liner staff who were utterly defenceless in the first place. Moreover, notwithstanding their appearance in international news (which at least put the Estado Novo under the spotlight), their gesture was ultimately a failure, at least at home. In Portugal, the hijacking's impact was minimal except to bolster the dictatorship, which actually used the event to stoke fears of communist conspiracy (this is referenced in the poem's Prologue, in which the PIDE is described as having parrots who cry out the Estado Novo's official attack line against Henrique Galvão – that he is a

communist accepting money from Moscow ["Dinheiro de Moscovo! Dinheiro de Moscovo!"]). Moreover, Galvão's military enterprise simply aped grand narratives of masculine exceptionalism and heroic conquest, as suggested by the title of his subsequent memoirs on the hijacking, *Minha Cruzada Pró-Portugal: Santa Maria* (1961), also published in English in the same year (as *Santa Maria: My Crusade for Portugal*, with the title and subtitle inverted).[51] As the only possible male heroes of Correia's text, Henrique Galvão (the "Capitão dos Impossíveis" [*AP*: 98]) and his collaborator Humberto Delgado fade entirely from view as the collection progresses. Nevertheless, Galvão's anti-climactic failure does spur Correia's epic-complicating feminist gesture, the *Cântico do país emerso* itself – which moves from an examination of the failure of an epically-construed heroic masculine enterprise towards the production of an alternative feminist utopia centred on the power of the individual and embodied feminine voice.

As Julia Kristeva has proposed, from a semiological perspective in her *Desire in Language* (1980), intertextuality can be viewed as a means of subverting the symbolic order by making meaning irreducible to stable units. Thus, the incorporation of multiple source texts into a recipient intertext, and the conscious foregrounding of these multi-layered allusions, may be conceived as a means of de-hierarchising their canonical influence on the literary imagination through the production of a polyphony of unstable meanings. Consequently, Correia's irreverent amalgamation of material and tone taken from *Os Lusíadas*, *Mensagem* and the 'Ode Marítima', when refracted through her irony, satirical slant and *matrista* philosophy, arguably produces precisely this type of subversive intertext. The once-stable meanings of national identity and shared history purveyed by the epic tradition, especially in the form it took in Salazarist

[51] The *depósito legal* on the first edition of the *Cântico do país emerso*, stored on microfilm at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, is dated 23.XI.1961. This suggests that Natália Correia may have had access to or known about Henrique Galvão's book on the Santa Maria hijacking (*Santa Maria: Minha Cruzada Pró-Portugal*, 1961) around the time of her writing the *Cântico do país emerso*. Whether or not Galvão's memoir actually inspired Correia, it still seems that the rhetoric of aggressive (militaristic) male heroism was already part and parcel of Galvão's self-presentation as a "franco-atirador" against the regime (see Vargas, 2011: 7; and Alves, 2017).

propaganda and discourse, have been called into question. In their place, the poem substitutes an empowering re-appraisal of feminine creative power, and undermines the binaries of the mind and the body, and the personal and the collective. Ultimately, it is the female body (as a vehicle of knowledge), and female individuality (which is pitted in opposition to homogenising collectivisation, yet also paradoxically serves as a productive model for wider collective endeavour), which emerge as empowering feminist devices with which to combat patriarchal notions of womanhood, knowledge and authorship.

3. Writing Back Against Lusotropicalism: The Resurfacing of Repressed Imperial Trauma

3.1. Marginalised (More-Than-Human, Racially-Diverse, and Female-Sexed) Others:

Published in the same year as Gilberto Freyre's *O Luso e o Trópico* (1961), a book in which the sociologist gave definitive form to his theory of Lusotropicalism (which had been evolving throughout his career but developed most rapidly over the course of the preceding decade, following extensive visits around the Portuguese empire during the early 1950s at Salazar's invitation), Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* represents a form of literary resistance against this ideology of Portuguese colonial exceptionalism. According to Lusotropicalism, Portuguese colonisers' relationship with the tropics was apparently founded on prejudice-free, love-infused racial miscegenation (particularly of white Portuguese men with black women) as well as transculturation, resulting in a hybridised empire that was purportedly devoid of master-slave dynamics between its white and its black and mixed-race citizens. As Anna M. Klobucka explains, he claimed that Portuguese imperialism had occasioned "a symbiotic fusion of distinct ethnocultural elements into a new, 'Lusotropicalist' civilisational complex" (2008a: 473).

Although the Salazar regime had been initially slow to adopt Freyre's ideas in the 1930s and 40s, and – when it eventually did so – significantly downplayed his emphasis on eroticism by recourse to an alternative vision of Christian brotherhood, it nevertheless remains the case that Freyre's theories began percolating deeply into the regime's justification for empire, especially as an international clamour for decolonisation began emerging on the global stage (alongside the Algerian war of independence in the mid 1950s).

Correia's poem-sequence problematizes the Lusotropicalist account of Portuguese imperialism. Section I provides a description of Portugal's African colonies in satirical fashion, aping Freyre's account of miscegenation between Portugal and its so-called *províncias ultramarinas* (a paternalistic euphemism employed by the Estado Novo, which the poem mockingly translates as "Terra transportuguesa" [*AP*: 101]), which are revealed to bear no substantial resemblance to the metropole, with none of the tawdry markers of European civilisation (whose lack is ironically elaborated upon in stanza 4). The *Cântico do país emerso* goes on to expose Lusotropicalism as a smokescreen for racism and misogyny, as well as uncovering the Portuguese colonisers' abuse of the more-than-human world. The Portuguese overseas territories are described as a realm harbouring colourful fauna, enumerated as a menagerie of exotic creatures, non-native to Portugal, and maltreated:

> Selva atónita ainda pela desfloração
> O violento estupro dos machados
> As panteras tensas da iniciação
> O batuque dos seus sentidos alterados
> Os tigres encolhidos da contracção uterina
> Os gamos assustados dos seus peitos
> As gazelas da sujeição à força masculina
> E o elefante sossegado dos instintos satisfeitos
>
> (*AP*: 102).

This description of the natural world colonised by the Portuguese is filled with the disturbing language of environmental trauma, as the astonished forest and its creaturely inhabitants – who are hereby broadly characterised as female, with the tigers, for example, "encolhidos da contracção uterina" – suffer the violence and confusion of a human male invasion. The proliferation of the descriptive markers of passivity, instinct and non-rationality, in relation to the more-than-human world here, serves as a reminder of the way in which human beings have sought to separate themselves from nature by claiming to possess a superior capacity to reason:

> To be defined as 'nature' in this context is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the 'environment' or invisible background conditions against which the 'foreground' achievements of reason or culture (provided typically by the white, western, male expert or entrepreneur) take place. It is to be defined as a *terra nullius*, a resource empty of its own purposes or meanings, and hence available to be annexed for the purposes of those supposedly identified with reason or intellect… (Plumwood 1994: 4).

Yet it is worth pondering how, even as these more-than-human entities of the Portuguese overseas territories, in the *Cântico do país emerso*, are depicted as being subdued through their "sujeição à força masculina", they are nevertheless revealed to each possess the capacity for emotional responses ("atónita", "tensas", "assustados"), even to the point of responding in ways which exceed capture by human understanding: for instance, the presence of the elephant at the end of the list – with its idiosyncratically stoical calm, in the face of devastation, deriving from obscurely satisfied instincts – foils any simplistic notion of the defenceless passivity of nature, and repudiates the idea that the more-than-human world lacks its own structures of meaning. Furthermore, given the way in which racialised human Others, under colonial rule, have long been conceptualised as bestial, as part of their subjugation by white, Western man, it is noteworthy that – in the context of an examination of colonialism – Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* should do so much to valorise nonhuman animals. If, as Christopher Peterson argues, "the bestialization of racial others is owed precisely to the repudiation of white people's own animal being" (2012: 7), such that only ethnic difference from whiteness is construed as involving closeness to animality, then Correia's rediscovery of human animality, as the collection

progresses, may be seen indirectly as a tool of anti-racism, since it serves to explode one of white racism's rationales for the oppression of other races.

Returning to the notion of gendered violence evoked in the image of the (grammatically female-gendered) gazelles who are subjected to masculine force, this theme continues to resonate into the section's sixth and final stanza (now in consideration of human beings):

> Um português se fez ao mar
> Não para descobrir a Índia
> (Isso era o começo de um mundo
> Com ondas por fecundar) mas
> Para fazer um filho às vagas
> Fêmeas de gosto salgado e de ancas
> Largas. Mulheres que aderem à pele
> Como a salsugem. As únicas
> Que verdadeiramente se estorcem e rugem
> (*AP*: 102)

Here, empire building is revealed to be motivated by male sexual desire for the exoticised female other. Indeed, the penetration of the sea by the phallic prows of ships is a recurrent image in Portuguese literature, appearing in Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen's 'Lusitânia', for instance, a poem which uncritically sustains the national mythology of seafaring prowess (Andresen, 2010: 357). Here in the *Cântico do país emerso*, by contrast, this mythology is desacralized, as the women of the Portuguese empire are ironically depicted as modern-day, real-life Camonian nereids, with a tangible salty flavour, whose purportedly voracious sexual appetite and alternative mores provide Portuguese men from the sexually-restrained Catholic metropole with opportunities for exploitative fantasy-fulfilment. In this way, parodying Camões's maritime mythology, Correia's poem provides insight into the patriarchal, anti-idealistic, underpinnings of empire.

Section V of the *Cântico do país emerso* is immediately preceded by a pointed reference to the Isle of Love, through the appearance of the words "amorosamente" in the final stanza of Section IV (*AP*: p.110), and may to a certain extent be seen as an echo or reworking of the Camonian episode. The Isle of Love is the *locus amoenus* of orgiastic culinary and sexual gratification with compliant nymph-consorts that is gifted to the mariners by the goddess Venus as a reward for their heroic exploits, in Cantos IX and X of *Os Lusíadas*. As Anna Klobucka has explained, this episode functions as a kind of patriarchal parable: not only does it figure female bodies as passive, ever-willing objects of predatory male sexuality, but – given that the entirety of the poem is addressed to the heirless King Sebastian – the episode's emphasis on procreation as a necessary vehicle for imperial expansion also speaks directly to the need for the Portuguese monarch to secure his male line of succession, in order to perpetuate the masculine genealogies that sustain patriarchy itself (Klobucka, 2003). Meanwhile, Section V of Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* commences with the appearance of female bodies heeding a summons. This seemingly replicates the scenario of the Camonian nymphs responding to the summons of Venus. However, this apparent parallelism is betrayed by a set of differences and ambiguities, which reveal a process of feminist textual re-vision at work. Attending a bugle call ("clarim"[*AP*: 111]), women begin to fill "todos os portos" (we presume of the entire Portuguese nation or possibly even the world, given the lack of specific details and consequent ambiguity), called to action by way of a biological instigation:

> Enquanto que subitamente todos os portos
> Se enchiam de mulheres biologicamente
> Convocadas pelo clarim de uma madrugada
> Que faltava no mundo, uma madrugada
> Espécie de púbis que faltava em seus corpos...
> (*AP*: 111)

The use of the subordinating conjunction "enquanto que" ("whereas") suggests that this description of collective female behaviour is subsequently going to be contrasted with an alternative. Given the vagueness of the *Cântico do país emerso*'s precise points of reference and hence its polyvalence, I contend that this passage presents two possible contradictory readings. On the one hand, if the "clarim" evokes a military bugle-call for the mobilisation of troops, then it would appear that this undifferentiated mass of subaltern women is attending the summons of an authoritarian master: in this sense, these women, drawn in a collective portrait, are potentially being posited as the willing victims of patriarchy and the Salazar regime. They model a paradigm of female behaviour in need of deconstruction and superseding. On the other hand, if the dawn functions as an age-old metaphor for new beginnings, it may augur revolutionary change. This new dawn itself, figured as an absence or yet-to-be-actualised aspiration, is lacking externally in the world ("Que faltava no mundo"). Yet the women also experience it as a bodily lack ("Espécie de púbis que faltava em seus corpos") – a kind of pubis, or pubic bone,[52] missing from the women's bodies.

The poem hereby employs a strategically-essentialist citation of biological imperatives behind the women's behaviour, and invokes the idea of female bodily lack, in a potentially subversive and empowering way. Whereas the Western tradition, from Plato to Freud, has traditionally characterised women as lacking, or as merely empty vessels, here it is precisely the women's keen sense of what it is to lack (in the context of 1960s' Portugal, for example, lacking rights over the governance of their own bodies, and political agency) which brings them back into the forum of the public from an obliquely critical angle. The women are able to detect the lack of a new dawn in the Portuguese nation (and more broadly the world), by feeling it as a bodily lack of their own, a lack which brings with it a political consciousness. Thus, Correia reclaims the

[52] The pubis is part of the overall structure of the hipbone, necessary for standing upright as well as, evidently, for the exercise of sexuality and childbearing.

patriarchal imaginary's trope of woman-as-lack, and turns this sense of lacking into a notion of productive yearning. If women – as figured in the masculine tradition – are empty vessels, to be conquered and filled by the predatory appetites of men (as Camões's Isle of Love episode attests), then it is precisely their felt sensation of emptiness which makes them ideal sentinels of the absent but oncoming dawn of political awakening. Nonetheless, the question of these women's (dis-)empowerment remains unresolved, engendering a mood of doubtfulness and therefore also of potentiality.

Subsequently, the section's second stanza describes the festive atmosphere at the ports (which "se vestiam da gala/ Fremente das indormidas sensações"[*AP*: 111]), as they brim with flags, pennants and banners. However, these symbols of nationhood apparently herald a febrile ritual, whereby the women's tight dresses are torn in an act of sexual violence, revealing "ventres baldios/ Pedindo os arados ardentes da pirataria/ E a semente dos cravos sangrentos das violações". This evocation of the trauma of rape and female subjugation, an intrinsic part of the history of European imperialism overseas and nation-building more generally, unites a disturbing image of active female sexuality with an image of violent male sexual aggression. It equally invokes the stereotype of woman's grounded earthiness and supposed need to be cultivated. As Anne McClintock points out in her gender-conscious study of imperialism, *Imperial Leather* (1995), such symbolism has regularly been deployed in relation to the cultivation of colonial territories in Africa (McClintock, 1995: 26). Perhaps the *Cântico do país emerso*, having to do with the recollection of collective trauma of female bodily exploitation and harm, does so here in order to embark upon a restorative process whereby its budding female-voicedness garners the power to expose and imaginatively redress these wrongs committed against women. I contend that it will do so by providing a new poetic home for the (historically abused) female body and its own hitherto unheard voice.

Emerging alongside these continuing depictions of subjugated collectives of women, Section V's fourth stanza initiates a series of several stanzas all of which, with a single exception, begin anaphorically with the contrasting first-person subject pronoun "eu". This reveals the sudden emergence of the personal voice of the poet-speaker's self, with the "eu" further underscored by appearing strikingly at the ends of multiple lines, preceded by startling void-like gaps – pregnant pauses which suggest the gestation of something new:

> E eu de repente em todas elas achada
> Fugida a todos os maridos Eu
> Todas as filhas que envergonham os pais
> Todas as rainhas de reinos introvertidos
> Todas as prostitutas de sub-reptícios cais
>
> Eu poliedro de todas elas
> Coágulo de crisálidas pretas
> Asiáticas ninfas amarelas
> Europeais imaturamente brancas
> Americanas larvadamente fulvas
>
> [...]
>
> Eu todas as noivas raptadas por corsários
> Levada como uma faca entre os seus dentes labio-
> Laminada eu ponta de peitos eu gume de ventres
> Mandados lançar vivos ao mar Eu
> Todos os olhos por eles arrancados enforcados
> No lóbulo de suas orelhas pontas de verga
> Para pôr o brinco dos enforcamentos Eu
> Antro de saques de que os meus nervos andam faltos
> Com pólvora munições e mantimentos
> Em vez dos órgãos que a terra há-de comer
> Lavrada pelas pilhagens pelos assaltos
> Fertilizada pelo adubo dos arcabuzamentos
>
> Eu dividida entre os homens escuros da peleja
> [...]
>
> (*AP*: 111-112)

The first-person pronoun "eu" thus may stand in for the poet herself, who – through an act of the poetic imagination – divides herself between all of the various living subjects imagined in the poem, delving into the interstices between the private and the collective, and increasingly

imbuing the poem with a sense of the personal. As I discussed earlier, in relation to gender discrimination's function as a lynch-pin in the construction of nations, the divide between public and private has been used to relegate women historically to the realm of the intimate, the personal, and the confessional (in literature), on the basis of a supposed natural propensity to the domestic and the uncivilised. Correia hereby challenges this relegation of women to the personal sphere alone.

The poet-speaker encapsulates a series of female subject positions, all of which derive from the history of European sea-faring voyages and imperialism in Africa and across the globe. This foregrounding of the explicitly female-gendered poet-speaker's personal voice, especially insofar as it claims to inhabit a multiplicity of female perspectives ("todas as filhas", "Todas as rainhas", "Todas as prostitutas", "Eu poliedro de todas elas"), suggests a poetic project of unlocking a silenced, marginalised, and repressed, feminine voice from history. Moreover, as the above-quoted stanzas indicate, this free-floating feminine voice seeks to inhabit not only a plenitude of female subject positions, but also incorporates a broad spectrum of racial identities ("crisálidas pretas", "asiáticas ninfas amarelas", "europeias imaturamente brancas", "americanas larvadamente fulvas"). Correia's anti-Lusotropicalism hereby takes the form of racial performance, as the poet-speaker strategically adopts subaltern positions, with the poem evidencing cognisance of the contiguousness of marginalised femininity and marginalised racial otherness. At the same time, it engages in a double-motion of anti-essentialism, on the one hand (by suggesting that there is not a single feminine viewpoint, but instead an endlessly varied gamut of viewpoints), and of political collectivism, on the other hand (by suggesting the need for a bringing-together of these diverse women within the folds of a universal feminist struggle that is momentarily championed, in the poem, by the symbolic figurehead of the poet-speaker herself). This idea of there being a multiplicity of feminine viewpoints which paradoxically both *diverge* (by facing in different directions) and *converge* (by being joined together) is aptly encapsulated

in the metaphor of the polyhedron ("poliedro"), which is a singular, three-dimensional shape in possession of many flat, polygonal faces (a potentially limitless number), with straight edges and sharp vertices where these faces meet. Polyhedron-facedness thus invokes the paradox of a depth constituted by flatness, which aptly parallels surrealism's own conjoining of diverse planes, lexical fields and images, in constituting the depth of the unconscious mind.

The references to abduction, rape and piracy (for example, "Eu todas as noivas raptadas por corsários") call to mind Álvaro de Campos's desire to be taken and abused by pirates in 'Ode Marítima' (*PAdC*: for example, p.126 and p.128). This inter-textual dialogue in rhapsodic key is striking, as it suggests the usurpation of masculine-centred ideals of divinely inspired genius by the female writer, while at the same time accruing additional transformative meanings to the intertext. The *Cântico do país emerso*'s poet-speaker draws attention to her own femaleness, invoking the collective trauma of abduction and rape (at the hands of the corsair fleets) that is inscribed on women's bodies throughout history, and which she willingly takes upon herself in a Christ-like gesture of suffering. This transforms the expression of irrepressible and hallucinatory individual self-expansion in the 'Ode Marítima' into one which combines both the personal and collective experiences of women, suggesting an unleashing of marginalised feminine stories of both types.

3.2. Eroticising Historical Memory: Refusing to Refuse Pleasure

Queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman's work analyses erotic responses to history, and provides a useful lens through which to analyse Correia's treatment of history alongside depictions of the erotically charged female body. This is especially relevant insofar as these references to female bodies initially evoke historical abuses against them (such as the rape of colonised women), relating to tropes drawn from the literary archive (such as the nymphs of the Isle of Love), but then develop into positive erotic portrays of the female body. Contradicting Fredric Jameson,

who described history as pain and as the refusal of pleasure (2015: 102), Freeman suggests that there are surprising residues of positive affect to be recuperated even from broadly painful memories and traumatic or seemingly disempowering historical periods:

> residues of positive affect (erotic scenes, utopias, memories of touch) might be available for queer counter- (or para-) historiographies. […] [W]ithin this paradigm we might see camp performance as a kind of historicist *jouissance*, a friction of dead bodies upon live ones, obsolete constructions upon emergent ones, which I have called "temporal drag."
>
> (Freeman, 2005: 66).

Elaborating her theory of erotohistoriography, emerging from these ideas, Freeman explains that "[a]gainst pain and loss, [it] posits the value of surprise, of pleasurable interruptions and momentary fulfilments from elsewhere, other times" (Freeman, 2005: 59). Correia's canticle is full of such interruptions, which persistently draw attention to the body, continually shapeshifting and exceeding the limits of any singular symbolic interpretation, and thereby emerging as a Dionysian force to confound notions of chronological progress and teleology associated with traditional epics. The only discernible progress in the *Cântico do país emerso* comes from its movement towards revelling in bodiliness and sensation, producing a kind of textual pleasure in its abundant language of the body.

Freeman further comments that in opposition to heterosexually gendered figures for progress (i.e., "[t]he fecund maternal body that supposedly engenders natural history and the heroic male body that supposedly engenders national history" [61]), queerly-minded literature often creates figures for the body which defy interpretation along these lines. I see the *Cântico do país emerso*'s female corporeal imagery operating in this way, as Correia's poem revisits the founding tropes of female bodily passivity and reclaims them for empowering purposes – both in the assertion of bodily pleasure and in the ultimate figuring of the poet-speaker's body, which is engendering a new nation, as being merged with her Azorian motherland. This implies the act of reconnecting

to the figure of the maternal body, in sympathy with its cyclical rhythms, as a vehicle for the queer merging of natural and national history.[53] This helps with the reconceptualization of history not in linear terms, but rather in terms of cycles, and always attuned to the re-emergence of residues of positive affect (that may be involved, for instance, in queer bodies seeking one another out for pleasure against moral strictures and taboo, or in Correia's imaginary inhabitance of multiple racially-diverse women's bodies, all touching one another in the surreal shape of a multi-faceted polyhedron). In dealing with the repressed traumas of history, the stylistic eroticism of Correia's feminine voice – with its concern for the emergence of these repressed traces of erotic female energy, collected within herself across time and into the present – sets the stage for the emergence of the female body as a site of utopian possibility.

4. The Female Body as a Site of Utopian Possibility in Correia's Feminist Mythmaking

4.1. Deconstructing the Mind-Body Binary: The Body as a Vehicle of Knowledge

Following the *Cântico do país emerso*'s survey of the traumas experienced by marginalized beings throughout Portugal's history of Lusotropicalist, imperial missions overseas, and its investigation of fear-riddled life under Salazar (Sections I-IV), I find the stirrings of a reparative method of approaching history in an erotically-charged way. The emergent, embodied feminine voice will be crucial to the gestation of a new, emergent conception of the nation. In this context, the first three stanzas of section VII are key. The first stanza begins with a remarkable insertion of the bodily into the flow of the Poet's stream of consciousness:

> Entre mim e a cidade se ateia a perspectiva
> De uma angústia florida em narinhas frementes.
> Apalpo-me estou viva e o tacto subjectiva

[53] In a way, this is reminiscent of Julia Kristeva's concept of "Women's Time" (wherein the "repetition" of *cyclical* time, on the one hand, and the "eternity" of *monumental* time, on the other hand, rather than being mutually exclusive, become available to women simultaneously [Kristeva 1986: 188, 191]).

-me a galope num sonho com espuma nos dentes

E invoco-vos, irmãos, Capitães-Mores do Instincto!
Que me acenais do mar com um lenço cor de aurora
E com a tinta azulada desse aceno me pinto:
O cais é a urgência. O embarque é agora.

(*AP*: p.116)

The Cartesian notion of "Cogito, ergo sum" (trans. "I think, therefore I am"), which sustains Western philosophy's foundational belief in the hierarchy of mind over body, is hereby subversively reformulated in Correia's text in the equivalently taut and aphoristic phrase "Apalpo-me, estou viva". This line, which continues "e o tacto subjectiva/-me", suggests that touching oneself (in other words reconnecting with the body which is effaced by Western philosophy), is integral to the sensation of being alive and, a more radical idea, to the creation of subjectivity itself. The enjambment draws attention to the direct object pronoun "-me", foregrounding the self that is produced through the act of corporeal self-exploration, while simultaneously infusing the whole statement with a sense of flow, of excessive spillage. Nietzsche, a philosopher dear to Correia (cf. Owen & Pazos-Alonso 2011: 135-141), had also considered the radical consequences of not privileging the mind at the expense of the body. He saw the body as an active organism that participated fully in the will to power, although he nevertheless deemed the brain to be positioned at the top of the hierarchy of bodily organs. As we shall see, Correia's hierarchy of organs is, by contrast, rather different – hands, the uterus, the womb and the erogenous zones prove crucial. Correia's text incorporates the body in such a way as to destabilise the mind-body dualism, abolishing the gendered hierarchy of masculine mind and feminine body, as well as more broadly questioning the notion of subjectivity as being purely mind-related.

4.1.1. FEMININE FLUIDITY

In order to analyse how this may be seen as a gesture towards the reformulation of the West's systems of knowledge, it is worth considering the writings of feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, particularly her *Volatile Bodies* (1994). Arguing against the traditional burdening of women with exclusively corporeal associations, she nevertheless affirms that the body functions as a pivotal point between binary pairs. According to Grosz, the body sits indeterminably between psychical and social (since it is inscribed with social meaning, and yet is equally self-motivated by psychological traumas and instincts), inside and outside (firstly, since body language mediates the individual's communication with the outside world, and secondly since all bodily processes of consumption and excretion position the body as a gateway between these two states), and nature and culture (being a product of both). This makes it a useful tool of feminist critique, since its intermedial status confuses gendered binaries. Grosz further argues that the female body has been constructed by patriarchy on the one hand as lack, and on the other as "formless flow", viscosity, and lacking self-containment (Grosz, 1994: p.203). This formlessness threatens order with disorder. By contrast, solidity and self-containment, allied to notions of realism and self-identity, have traditionally been associated with maleness, supporting the Cartesian dualism of male-subject/ female-object (Ibid: p.204).

Reclaiming the fluidity of the female body (involved, for instance, in the experiences of having breasts and menstruating), for feminist purposes, may involve asserting the power of textual, poetic and relational fluidity and blurred boundaries as tools for deconstructing the rigid, logic-bound structures of patriarchal thought.[54] In this sense, the non-rigid structure of the *Cântico do país emerso*, with its variable stanza and line lengths, may be said to implement formal viscosity

[54] In their book *Bodies That Matter* (2011), Judith Butler contrastingly develops a constructivist argument, suggesting that the concept of the sexed body being outside of discourse and naturally possessing any essential characteristics (such as fluidity and so on) may itself be always-already discursively conceived.

to this end. Focusing on section VII alone, which is replete with repeated invocations to inspirational muses ("invoco-…"), the stanza line lengths are irregular, as follows: 4, 4, 12, 6, 8, 11, 5, 7, and 5. Three of these stanzas (the second, fifth and sixth) begin with the conjunction "E", and the seventh and eighth stanzas each comprise a single breathless sentence with no punctuation until the final line. This brief survey indicates the existence of multiple centres of gravity within a single section (here constituted by two bulky stanzas of 12 and 11 lines respectively), as well as revealing a flexible structure with multiple climaxes, within which there are run-ons of sense between one stanza and another. When reviewing the *Cântico do país emerso*'s first edition, I was struck by the complete absence of section breaks, which appear to have emerged only in subsequent editions. What ultimately became an eight-parted poem-sequence had originally been a single longform poem. This original form corresponds with Correia's assertion that the *Cântico do país emerso* had emerged "de um jacto" (*AP*: 99), in a reverie.[55] Thus, at a formal level, the visual appearance of uninterrupted fluidity is fundamental to the work's first edition, matching its thematic emphasis on the fluid viscosity of the female form. It is true that the connection between fluidity and femininity has been contested by some feminists, who rightly point out that, while feminine fluidity can challenge and confuse the boundaries erected by phallogocentrism, its invocation nevertheless also – at least potentially – represents a capitulation to the ruling symbolic order under patriarchy that essentialises women as purely primordial formlessness (Stephens 2014).[56] Entailed in such a characterisation is the risk of women's being subjected to manipulation, at a symbolic level, by the shape-bestowing

[55] This claim palpably imitates Fernando Pessoa's similar claims made about his famous "dia triunfal", on which he undertook the automatic writing of both Alberto Caeiro's *O Guardador de Rebanhos* and the orthonymic 'Chuva Obliqua', followed by the creation of Álvaro de Campos ("*Num jacto*, e à máquina de escrever, *sem interrupção nem emenda*, surgiu a *Ode Triunfal* de Álvaro de Campos", my emphases [Pessoa 1935]).

[56] Phallogocentrism is defined by Ana Luísa Amaral and Ana Gabriela Macedo, in their *Dicionário de Crítica Feminista*, as the combination of "phallocentrism" (the symbolic centrality of the male sexual organ in Western discourse, which is critiqued by Luce Irigaray in her *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1974) and "logocentrism" (the privileging of the authority of the spoken word, said to give immediate access to truth and presence, over the written word – critiqued by Jacques Derrida in *Of Grammatology*, 1967), upon which the stability of masculinist culture rests. (2005: 64-65).

orderliness of (civilised) masculinity. Even so, I contend that Correia's *Cântico do país emerso* takes the risk of strategically investing in precisely the kind of disruption of patriarchal order that a vigorous valorisation of fluidity makes possible, activating the (often disparaged) notions of free flow and uncontainability inherent in liquid form, and the potentiality and transformational power they imply.

4.1.2. BECOMING-HORSE

This valorisation of the symbolic feminine is coupled with an investment in recuperating what I refer to as the suppressed *animality of human being*. Commonly viewed as the Other of the human, "the animal often serves as the chief limit against which human propriety is instituted" (Calarco 2015: 57). Therefore, to seek to establish "zones of indistinction where traditional binary distinctions between human beings and animals break down" (ibid.) constitutes a radical act, challenging the discreteness and supremacy of human beings. This is what French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his psychoanalyst collaborator Félix Guattari elicit with their concept of *becoming-animal*.[57] This involves rejecting dominant notions of the human and imaginatively leaping into a state of being beyond the purely human, in order to enter into relation with non-dominant modes of existence. This reminds us of our fleshy embodiment, just like any other animal, and – by reinforcing our sense of our own animality – unravels our fiction of being stable, discretely-human subjects. In addition, as the philosophical duo write, "we become animal so that the animal also becomes something else" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 109). That is to say that, by recognising our own animality, we can begin to appreciate other animals differently too, appreciating their idiosyncratic agencies, and learning to treat them differently. This transformative process of *becoming-animal* posits the construction of human and

[57] I return in greater depth to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze in the next chapter, in relation to the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge.

animal identities as an unfinished collaborative process, continually displacing *the human*, which in turn continually liberates *the animal*, rendering essentialisation difficult.

In the light of this Deleuzian concept, Correia's self-rendering in equine form (with "narinhas frementes", and moving "a galope num sonho com espuma nos dentes") implies a leaping-into the situation of a horse – perhaps with a bit in its mouth, in view of the frothing – which establishes an allegiance between the subjugated feminine and the subjugated equine. In view of the poem's Prologue, in which Correia announces the "Saga do Cavaleiro da Nossa Senhora da Liberdade" (which, in terms of the historical context, refers to Henrique Galvão's re-baptism of the hijacked Santa Maria cruise liner as the "Santa Liberdade" [Correia 2018: 98]) as well as the archaicising reference to "um dos Cavaleiros dos Impossíveis que fazem a nossa história" (99), Correia seems to be implying that her own imagined horsiness comes with the capacity to channel male history-making as well as subvert and resist it, through an ambivalent straining at the bit of masculine control. She potentially also imagines her own liberation as a wild horse. Far from a symbolic hijacking of horses for purely symbolic purposes, I argue that this surrealist instance of *becoming-horse* involves a harnessing of equine energy for the joint liberation of both women and horses. This is because, by leaping into a horse-like mode of being, Correia valorises the horse's vigorous resistance to human mastery and its embodied vulnerability, as well as associating the horse with her own emergent and empowering anti-Cartesian philosophy of embodied knowledge.

4.1.3. SPECTRAL PREGNANCY

Furthermore, I assert that Section VII's second stanza – which ends with a phrase heavily reminiscent of the end of Pessoa's *Mensagem* ("É a Hora!" [*M*: p.106]) – implies that time has

come to supersede Pessoa once and for all, as the poem decisively writes back against its literary precursors ("O cais é a urgência. E embarque *é agora*" [my emphasis]). The following stanza (Section VII, stanza 3) evokes the full deconstruction of the mind-body binary, in a stream of consciousness reverie fusing the vocabulary of poetic craft, pregnancy, biology and romantic love – liberating space for the female artist to explore these semantic fields together. Indeed, as Owen and Pazos-Alonso have pointed out, Correia's *oeuvre* as a whole seeks to overturn the predominance of Apollonian rationality (the supposed preserve of the masculine mind) in Western metaphysics, and redress the exclusion of Dionysian chaos (associated with the feminine body [Owen & Pazos-Alonso 2011: 135-141]). This stanza shows the interpenetration of these two Nietzschean principles, in a series of surreal juxtapositions that are nevertheless described as being elaborated lucidly:

> Invoco-vos, filho rosado que não tive
> E que lucidamente elabora
> Meu útero pátria emergente
> Para nascer e ser saudável;
> Amado meu que não foste a meu lado
> Encoberto nuvem espectro
> Ausência que sulcou o meu leito
> Único mediúnico tecelão
> Entrelaçando os fios inefáveis
> De meus olhos minhas coxas meus cabelos
> Minhas carícias país irrevogável
> Onde o amor fornece o ar como um pulmão!
> (*AP*: p.116)

The first three lines of the stanza invert the concept of a phantom or hysterical pregnancy, invoking an alternative idea of an enlightened poetic gestation that formulates the nation-to-be ("que lucidamente elabora/ Meu útero"; "pátria emergente"). Just as the proliferating first-person subject pronoun was earlier underscored in Section V by being preceded by gaps (*AP*: 111, 112), so too here, in Section VII, "pátria emergente" appears after a (pregnant) pause, inscribing the

act of gestation visibly on the printed page.[58] This also integrates the theme of bodily processes within the poem: it is as though the poem is written with (at least) one aspect of the female body in mind. Furthermore, whereas the preceding section had evoked the image a child afraid of being born,[59] Section VII bears witness to the happy eliciting of a symbolic birth, as though encouraged by authorial invitation. Poetic gestation is based on the fluid interchange of affect and love, in light of the inviting second-person form of address ("Invoco-vos") combined with terms of endearment ("filho rosado").[60] It is noteworthy that the language of gestationality hereby attaches itself to the colour palette of rosiness, such that the "país de cor intervalar" (*AP*: 113), now being elaborated anew in the poet's womb, begins to acquire for itself a colour etymologically-rich with floral possibilities and symbolically rich with connotations of love, passion and (in the Portuguese context) miracles.[61] In addition, the mythic resonances of the Dom Sebastião myth ("Encoberto nuvem espectro") are evoked,[62] but only in the retention of his ghostly absence. This is seen not as a true lack, nor as a motive for sterility or stasis, but rather as the very spur to fertility and creativity ("Ausência que sulcou o meu leito"). This resonates with Wendy Brown's suggestion that the deliberate conjuring of ghosts (as traces of the past that "live" in the present) can be liberating:

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[58] Ana Luísa Amaral similarly makes used of such gaps on the printed page to explore moments of absence pregnant with possibility, as I explore in Chapter 4.

[59] The second stanza of Section VI contains a description of the poetic voice's visit to a deserted street, seemingly in contemporary Portugal under the shadow of Salazar's rule, where she either perceives an atmosphere resembling (or herself comes to resemble) "o choro solitário/ De uma criança inorganicamente com asas/ Que o medo de nascer apunhalou num ovário" (*AP*: 113).

[60] Natália Correia's intimate use of the second-person form of address, in this gentle invitation for the embryonic nation to be born, proleptically anticipates Ana Luísa Amaral's use of *tú* in her poems which address Europe, towards the end of *Escuro* – as I explore in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

[61] The medieval French poem, *Le Roman de la Rose* (a preeminent text in the courtly love tradition, written in two parts, c.1230–c.1275), is one of the inaugural instantiations of roses as symbols of love in European literature (Guynn 2008). In Catholicism, roses are also associated with the Virgin Mary (with the 5th century Christian poet Coelius Sedulius referring to her as a "rose among thorns"). In Portugal, the 'Milagre das Rosas' connects roses with miracles: giving bread to the poor, one wintry January, the compassionate Rainha Santa Isabel is surprised in the act by her miserly husband, Dom Dinis, who challenges her to reveal what is hidden in the lap of her skirt (the bread). Claiming it is roses, which the king doubts (given the time of year), the queen astonishes him by indeed uncovering a miraculous lapful of roses (Appendix Fig.1) – confounding his scepticism and escaping his uncharitable trap.

[62] In a single line, Correia condenses all three qualities associated with the *ghostly-absent* Dom Sebastião, who is often referred to as "O *Encoberto*" (the Hidden One) and is meant to return to his embattled nation on a *foggy* day.

> While ghosts are "furtive and untimely," coming and going as they please, they can also be conjured and exorcised – solicited, beckoned, invoked, dismissed – and thus made to live in the present or leave the present in a manner that shapes both possibilities for and constraints on the future (Brown, 2001: 151).

It is the exile of the Dom Sebastião myth to the ghost-realm, combined with his availability for conjuration and re-appropriation by the feminist poet, which proves productive, for it enables the weaving of ineffable threads ("Entrelaçando os fios inefáveis") – a metaphor which is itself suggestive of the art of intertextual weaving and creation. Thus, the ending part of the *Cântico do país emerso*, running from this seventh section and into the eighth section, asserts and will continue to assert the value of the romanticised poetic voice itself to address the ghosts of the nation's past, and to reimagine the nation itself as embryonic and malleable, through the feminist act of (re-)integrating mind, spirit, and body creatively.

At the root of the problem of how the female body is treated in patriarchy is that it is both effaced (in the sense that its own autonomy and pleasures are denied), and is at the same time assumed to be the full extent of a woman's identity (that is to say, "woman" is wedded to the terms "body", "object" and "domestic icon", rather than being allowed to exercise her mind and genius, or being conferred the status of subject or public figure). I contend that the *Cântico do país emerso* charts a creative space through which it becomes possible to navigate and overcome the divide between mind and body, a divide which has traditionally sustained the patriarchal binary between men (associated with the former) and women (associated with the latter). Indeed, Correia's poem-sequence suggests that an integration of mind and body would provide the chance for an unleashing of feminine creative potential. Since the 1933 Constitution had notoriously proclaimed all Portuguese citizens to be equal before the law, excepting women, "because of differences inherent in their nature and in the interest of the family", it was necessary for feminist critique during the Salazar dictatorship to respond to and challenge the strict association of women with their reproductive bodily functions and with domesticity. Suggesting that the female-gendered body could itself be a source of knowledge constituted a radical act,

providing a framework for overcoming the gendered split of mind and body in Cartesian and Christian thought.

Indeed, the emergence of the female body as the lynch-pin of a new system of knowledge which re-integrates mind and body – thereby saving them from their dualistic separation in patriarchal thought – does more than simply challenge the notion of femaleness as unintelligible, formless matter devoid of the capacity for intellectual self-shaping. In fact, the irrepressible female body of the *Cântico do país emerso* gains even greater significance through the explicit metaphorical connection that is traditionally established between the human body and the state within Western political philosophy. As feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero has perceived, there is a curious contradiction underlying this conventional use of the body as a metaphor for the state, via the notion of the *body politic*. According to this concept, society – with all of its component classes, professional sectors and citizens – is an interdependent, cooperative whole, in the same way that the body's various organs interact with one another to fulfil all of the bodily functions. At the "head" of society rests its commanding (patriarchal) leader, wisely directing the rest of the body, in perpetuity. The contradiction identified by Cavarero pertains to the incongruousness of describing "the aspired perpetuation of a political form" (Cavarero, 2002: 120), i.e., the public realm, using a material object that is as mortally frail as the human body. From the Greeks onwards, albeit with the notable exception of some mortality-conscious medieval writers, Western philosophy's formulation of the *body politic* has tended to seek to eschew this very question of the body's frailty, emphasising the body's role as home to the immortal soul (in Judeo-Christian thought) or else as the seat of the immortal idea machine that is the brain, or intellect, (in post-Enlightenment rational-scientific thought). Yet equally recurring in the history of this concept is the repeated, uncanny return of the *repressed* and (crucially) *gendered* body, even in the work of thinkers who were as committed to the suppression of corporeality, and as foundational, as Plato (Ibid: 5).

I contend that an equivalent process of uncanny bodily return, haunting the notion of the *body politic* of Portugal, inheres in the *Cântico do país emerso*. Taking the form of female bodies, in Section V, who are depicted sensing the lack which characterises the titular submerged nation ("pátria [e/i]merso"), it culminates in the revelation of the desire – or utopian impulse – within the female individual (who is the poet-speaker herself) to gestate, by the time Section VII arrives, a newly emerging nation ("pátria emergente"[*AP*: 116]). Furthermore, recalling the earlier reference in the canticle to Portugal as a ship of state ("[...] o *Navio-Nação* partia/ Do Cais Anterior Cais Poesia" [my emphasis, *AP*: 103, Section II, lines 1-2]), which is a metaphor adapted from Álvaro de Campos, then it is possible to contend that the *Cântico do país emerso* is structured as a critical juxtaposition of two divergent notions of Portugal.[63] The initial notion of a submerged and languishing Portugal, committed to its seafaring heritage (a ship of state captained by bellicose masculine heroes), is contrasted with a different notion of Portugal not as an invulnerable *body politic*, but rather as an embryo nourished by the uterus of a poet-mother. The reconfiguration of the body's significant organs, with the (masculine) head – the supposed seat of male genius – giving way to the (feminine) uterus, perfectly parallels the effacement of the masculine epic mode by the complicatedly feminine reappraisal of the epic mode taking place throughout the course of the poem-sequence. Moreover, the parataxis of Section VII, stanza 3, lines 10-11 ("meus olhos minhas coxas meus cabelos/ Minhas carícias país irrevogável" [*AP*: 116]), which equates the poet-speaker's own body with the concept of the irrevocable country, seems to proclaim that the self-determining female body, traditionally elided in cultural history (even though nations have effectively been built upon female bodies), is now inerasable.

[63] This textual echo from the 'Ode marítima' subliminally suggests a journey being undertaken into the realm of intertextuality, charting a course through the past. The switch from Álvaro de Campos's plural "Navios-Nações" (Pessoa 2013a: 109) to the singular "Navio-Nação" in Correia is pointed, drawing attention to the specificity of the Portuguese nation under critical examination.

Moreover, the notion of absence (evoked through the three synonymous and interrelated figures of the absent lover, the hidden cloud spectre, and the mediumistic weaver) functioning as a spur to creativity, since it is depicted itself weaving the ineffable threads of the future Portuguese nation, is explicitly feminised. The notion of weaving as a feminine art form harks back to classical antiquity, in the figures of women tapestry weavers – from the artful and overreaching Arachne, and wily Penelope, to the brutally traumatised Philomela – as well as the Fates, who were three thread-cutting goddesses. The metaphor echoes in modernity, too, in the stitch-laden poetry of Emily Dickinson, and in Barthes's notion of the erotic pleasure of a text, felt by its reader through losing themself in its "perpetual interweaving" (Easting, 1993: 106), its *tissue* or *texture*. Since Correia's canticle is explicitly invested in the mentally unshackling effect of (re-)instating a sense of corporeal vitality within the body of the text, then it can be said to partake of this Barthesian notion of visceral readerly pleasure. Moreover, this notion finds an additional parallel in Derrida's idea of the deferral of meaning along strings or sequences of words woven together. This deferral of meaning, without final or climactic resolution or product, is akin to an emerging, postmodern notion of utopianism, which I will examine in the concluding remarks to this chapter.

4.2. FROM THE EPIC MACROSCOPIC TO THE PERSONAL MICROSCOPIC

In Section VIII, the perspective shifts from the epic macroscopic to the personal microscopic, such that personal memories replace collective identity as a revolutionary space. The poet-speaker emphatically asserts "Não sou daqui" (presumably, "I am not [from the metropole, the Portuguese mainland]" [*AP*: 119]), having been breast-fed on oceanic breasts; her "país natal" is referenced, as is an ocean ("oceánicos"), the most immediately relevant one in the Portuguese context being the Atlantic Ocean, and there are additional references to volcanicity ("chuva de lava") and tropical flora ("a sombra dos palmares"). This patchwork of allusions points to the

Azores, Correia's birthplace, emerging within the poem-sequence as both a geographical site of otherness (beyond the frontiers of the Portuguese mainland), as well as an otherworldly utopic space. Indeed, in consideration of Correia's later collection of poems entitled *Mátria* which inhabits a similar lexical field, the Azores take on central importance within the utopian thinking of Correia's career and oeuvre. Furthermore, the insistence on being from elsewhere ("Não sou daqui") suggests a telescoping ability to step outside of the space of the nation so as to view it from an outsider's perspective, diagnosing its ills with freshness and from a marginal position. Describing herself as "mestiça de onda e de enxofres vulcânicos"(*AP*: 119, stanza 1, line 3), the poet-speaker adopts a performative racial identity implying an oblique positionality in relation to (white, hegemonic) Portugueseness, appropriating Freyre's aforementioned Lusotropicalism and undermining it from within.

Creating a personal religion for herself, ("Sou de mim mesma pomba húmida e brava"[*AP*: 119, Section VIII, stanza 1, line 4]),[64] the poet-speaker calls upon elements of her own body to "Levai-me", that is, to whisk her away in a reverie to an unspecified destination. Firstly, she calls upon the fish of her itinerant skin, as though she were a hybrid of human and aquatic animal ("peixes da minha pele itinerante" [*AP*: 120, stanza 6, line 1]); secondly her hands are equated to a white exile of branches, as though she were a tree ("ó minhas mãos branco exílio de ramos!" [*AP*: 120, stanza 7, line 1]); and thirdly her eyes are described as implicit mountains, as though her perspective on the world were as old as the hills ("olhos meus implícitas montanhas" [*AP*: 120, stanza 8, line 1]). Like a surrealist *cadavre exquis*,[65] the portrait of her body as a composite of

[64] The word 'pomba' is a pun, signifying both 'dove' (i.e., the physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit), and the female sexual organ. The poet-speaker playfully suggests that her personal religion is firmly rooted in corporeality.

[65] Adapting the parlour game called Consequences (a writing game in which a piece of paper would be passed from player to player, with each one adding a sentence and then folding the paper over to hide their contribution, ultimately producing a complete text made up of random juxtapositions), a group of Surrealist friends in Paris (namely André Breton, Yves Tanguy, Marcel Duchamp and Jacques Prévert) invented the "exquisite corpse" in around 1925 – a technique for constructing images of hybridised bodies (Dempsey 2019: 95).

elements drawn from nature suggests an interpenetration of human and more-than-human which challenges the human exceptionalism of Camões's imperialist epic, in which European subjects see themselves as both separate from and superior to nature, exercising a spurious, religiously-justified claim – as Christian crusaders and stewards of the Earth – to possess property rights over natural landscapes and their native inhabitants. Additionally, each of the body parts of the *Cântico do país emerso*'s poet-speaker is curiously animated, apparently having an agency of its own, with the capacity to draw her into a non-teleologically-orientated reverie. If there is a destination at all, it is her own body – a body which simultaneously belongs both to her and to the landscape itself: "Sóis os orgãos sensíveis da choupana/ Onde quero deitar a minha alma" (*AP*: 120, stanza 7, lines 3-4). The polite second-person plural form of address, "sóis", gives these sensitive organs (the "pele", the "mãos", the "dedos" and the "olhos", indeed all of the bodily extremities, which quite literally touch and perceive the world beyond the self), their own personhood. Combined, these organs form a surreal dwelling where the poet wants to lay down her soul, suggesting a peaceful union of body and soul.

In this way, the final section of Correia's collection contrasts sharply with the closing part of *Os Lusíadas*, in which the nymph Tethys seeks to reveal a teleological destiny for Portugal in the prophecy-filled *máquina do mundo* episode. Notwithstanding the invaginated complications outlined in the preceding chapter, this involves her declaration of the nation's expansionist destiny – involving the acquisition of new trading outposts, territories, and subjects, and the spread of Christianity among the (so-called) infidels, while treating the natural world as passive and ripe for colonisation. The *Cântico do país emerso* provides an alternative goal: an inward-facing journey of exploring one's own body, which is intimately connected with its surrounding environment. This anticipates Cixous's instigation in *La Rire de la Méduse* (trans. 'The Laugh of the Medusa', 1976) for women to explore their bodies erotically, rhapsodically, and thereby re-connect with a source of inspiration that had been historically shackled and repressed under

patriarchy. It also anticipates many of the concerns of critical eco-feminism, the discipline which, refusing the entrenched historical dualism of "human/nature", seeks to situate the human in ecological terms and the non-human in ethical and cultural terms (Plumwood 2003: 2).

Another genre-defying technique in evidence in this section is the relocation of the lexis of war from the epic sphere to the microscopic scale of the bellicose shaking of wildflower petals ("uma alma com pétalas guerrilheiras selvagens"[*AP*: 120, VIII, stanza 9, l.3]), yet another image which presupposes the interpenetration between the human and the non-human, at the same time as it appropriates and re-signifies the lexis of war in service of this intimately lyrical self-portrait. The following mention of the poet-speaker's aspiration that her soul should dance naked for the gods of the bonfire ("E dance nua para os deuses da fogueira" [*AP*: 120, VIII, stanza 10, l.3), perhaps even feeding the flames of this bonfire with her (incendiary) wood-fragrant thoughts ("Quero ter pensamentos que me cheiram a lenha" [*AP*: 120, VIII, stanza 9, l.1]) also calls to mind a poem from Pessoa's *Mensagem* on 'Fernão de Magalhães'. In this poem, the Titans, "filhos da Terra" (Pessoa, 2012: 57), are depicted vainly celebrating the death of the over-reaching Portuguese explorer.[66] Since Correia's female poet-speaker aligns herself inter-textually on the side of the mythological beings rejoicing in the destruction of Magalhães, who had defiled nature in his desire to circumnavigate the Earth ("quis cingir o materno vulto" [Pessoa, 2012: 57]), it seems that she joins in a celebration of the partial failure of his epic enterprise. She also harnesses a witch-like connection to the forces of nature, fuelled by profuse first-person affirmations of personal desire (with the word "quero" appearing multiple times in this section).

Another subversive element in this section is the (possible) invocation of a nominally male-gendered muse (or at least one who is grammatically masculine), referred to as the "anjo de

[66] Fernão de Magalhães organised the Spanish expedition to the East Indies (1519-1522), which resulted in the first circumnavigation of the globe. Magalhães was himself killed, however, in the Battle of Mactan on the Philippine Islands.

pedra do meu grito!", "Anjo esculpindo em pranto seco!" and "Anjo enxuto" (*AP*: 121).[67] His being invoked towards the end of the poem – rather than at the beginning – might be seen as yet another hammer-blow to convention, but what renders his presence an especially unsettling one is his ambivalent status as either a potential spur to the poet's creativity (since he appears within the context of a broader set of invocations of encouraging entities) or else as a monumental weight of negativity, drowning her gaze in the infinity of the heavens and her hands in the mud of an irresolute gesture – in other words, pulling her down to earth and potentially limiting her aspirations in a world where "ninguém tem pressa de ser ave" (*AP*: 121). This implicit desire to fly, together with these ambivalent lines addressing the Anjo as both muse and antagonist, suggest an intriguing potential intertextual relationship with one of Correia's literary foremothers, Florbela Espanca, who – in *Charneca em Flor* (1931) – had explored the agony of her enforced flightlessness in a patriarchal culture, alongside a potentially liberating self-identification with femininised nature.[68] These two concepts are similarly explored by Correia's *Cântico do país emerso*, as the thrice-invoked (and grammatically masculine) stone angel – suggestive of statuesque monumentality, and hence also of a masculine history that has been set-in-stone – is transformed into a series of feminine entities from the natural world in the collection's final stanza, which follows:

> Tece, ó aranha da luz no esconso da garganta!
> Coração de andorinha estrangulada!
> O luar o jardim a cigarra que canta
> O leito de verdura para eu me dar à esperança,
> Rosa que aspiro num esquivo vão de escada.
> (*AP*: p.121)

[67] This angelic figure calls to mind the muse-like character of Lars Nielson in Correia's later novel *A Madona* (1968).

[68] Florbela Espanca's untitled sonnet from *Charneca em Flor* (1931) which begins "Quem fez ao sapo o leito carmesim", in which the speaker asks a plaintive series of metaphysical questions about who made the world and her bleeding soul, closes with the following tercet: "Quem nos deu asas para andar de rastros?/ Quem nos deu olhos para ver os astros/ – Sem nos dar braços para os alcançar?!.." (Espanca [1931] 2013: 127). Meanwhile the collection, as a whole, celebrates a sexually-charged appropriation of feminized nature as an empowering poetic resource and escape route, albeit a complicated one (Pazos-Alonso 2013).

The shift from the previous stanza's line endings in "o", to assonantal rhyming in "a-a", here, is indicative of a shift from the masculine to the feminine. The sustained second-person form of address serves to metamorphose the Anjo into an "aranha da luz", activating the feminine symbolism of web-weaving spiders. The instigation for the "aranha da luz" to weave its webs "no esconso da garganta" indeed explicitly links the notion of arachnid weaving with the feminine poetic voice. As we have already seen in relation to the ineffable threads of a new nation being woven by the poet-speaker's uterus, earlier in Section VII, here the *Cântico do país emerso* returns to the feminine associations of weaving, in this case evoking the Greek myth of the weaver Arachne. Transformed into a spider by the goddess Athena for having dared to claim the superiority of her own tapestries to those made by divine hands, Arachne symbolises pride in female creativity. The image of the common swallow, which we have previously encountered in relation to the women attending biological summons at the ports and whose rape is alluded to at the beginning of Section V ("mulheres que emigraram de si mesmas como andorinhas" [*AP*: 111, stanza 3, line 1]), this time appears as a metaphor for the poet-speaker's vulnerable heart ("Coração de andorinha estrangulada" [*AP*: 121]), while also carrying over the wingedness of the angel into a more feminised image. Having previously been used to describe women's psychological disassociation following the trauma of rape, the swallow's re-appearance here in the singular suggests that their collective pain is now being registered and illustrated in the singular. The image of the strangled swallow perhaps also symbolises the potential for disappointment and the frustration of the common people's (particularly women's) will for change,[69] yet it is worth noting that the possibility of failure (but equally, by definition, of success)

[69] The *andorinha* (Latin name: *Hirunda rustica*) is a recurrent metaphor for femininity and ordinary people in the context of the Portuguese canon and Portuguese culture more broadly. For example, Florbela Espanca's aforementioned sonnet (see preceding footnote) asks the question: "quem vestiu de monja a andorinha"? ([1931] 2013: 127). This linking of the swallow's blue-glossed black appearance (with its characteristic blue-black breast-band and long, pointed wings and deeply forked tail with wire-thin elongated streamers [Svensson and Grant 1999: 242]), with that of a nun's dark, body-concealing habit (which typically drapes to the ground) establishes the bird's symbolic association with cloistered femininity. Moreover, ceramic swallows have long been used in Portugal to decorate azulejos, crockery,

animates utopianism's risk-taking enterprise of hopefulness in the face of the dystopian present. Any hope for positive change and transformation of women's destinies occurs in communion with nature (in "O leito da verdura…") and is notably located in the individual, rather than the collective ("para *eu me* dar à esperança" [my emphasis]).

In this way, the ending of the poem is decidedly a complication of Camonian epic style, in that no precise predictions of import for the nation's future are made; in this sense, Correia is closer in spirit to the style of Pessoa's *Mensagem* with its endless deferral of the significance and realisation of nationhood, and the shrouding of its final poem in mystery. The *Cântico do país emerso* contains no unifying message to the Portuguese nation, its closing stanza shrinking away from any evocation of collective national destiny, as it concerns itself more noticeably with the singular and the intimate. Turning away from the grand narratives, Correia's complication of epic encourages the paying of closer attention to the realm of the individual, reversing the logic of epic narratives which often see the individual's personality subsumed within broader notions of collective identity and archetypes of human behaviour. For example, Camões's Vasco da Gama, while he may be a powerful symbolic figurehead of the Portuguese nation standing at the helm of the country's overseas navigations and a potential model of male heroism, nevertheless lacks credibility as a complex human being.[70] Even (the orthonymic) Pessoa's seemingly far greater emphasis on individuals, who are drawn from Portuguese historical record, is in fact undercut by their portrayal as allegorical archetypes or paragons of particular ideals and virtues, rather than as complicated, multifaceted, or vulnerable entities in their own right – an ethical issue which is later redressed by Amaral in *Escuro* (2014). Indeed, a common feature of the feminist

and the façades of homes, ever since the artist Rafael Bordallo Pinheiro first fabricated and popularised them in 1891.

[70] According to João R. Figueiredo: "De um ponto de vista humano, a epopeia de Camões é, com poucas excepções, um deserto". He writes that – unlike the epic's divine nonhuman characters, who he describes as richly ambivalent creations – the official hero, Vasco da Gama, "não tem espessura psicológica nem moral" and acts entirely predictably, being "o agente de um programa que o transcende" (2020: 18).

complications of epic under examination in this thesis is the care with which they rescue the individual from being mechanised within the relentless machine of collective history-making. Correia does so via the incantation of a powerful, assertive, free-roaming feminine viewpoint (or voice) that augurs a female-led future utopia. In the *Cântico do país emerso*'s second half, it is personal identity which is cast as a revolutionary space, in paradigmatic opposition to the stultifying, flattening and homogenising imperatives of life under a dictatorial regime. Thus, the personal provides the model upon which wider society can then build alternative futures. It is important to note, therefore, that while critiquing masculine heroic exceptionalism with vigour, the *Cântico do país emerso* nevertheless does not discard the notion of individual exceptionalism, keeping alive the notion of the poet as a model worthy of imitation.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. THE INTRANSITIVE UTOPIAN MODE OF THE *CÂNTICO DO PAÍS EMERSO*

A utopia (signifying "no-place", yet additionally connoting "good place" in Thomas More's original neologism of 1516) is an imagined realm that depicts an alternative reality or society to the one inhabited by the writer. Exposing the constructedness (and therefore concomitant malleability) of contemporary reality, with all of its constituent elements and faults, utopias suggest that alternative ways of living are possible. However, in their totalising vision of better alternatives, utopias always run the risk of becoming dystopias; in view of the limitless and fluctuating spectrum of human desire, one person's heaven is inevitably another person's hell. In this vein, as Caitríona Ní Dhúill explains (2010: 162-164), postmodern theorists of utopia recognise the difficulty of unproblematically elaborating definitive goals for consensual social change, and posit instead the need to reconceptualise and reposition such goals continually. This involves a kind of utopian thinking that is not simply object-oriented, like a transitive verb,

but rather resists obvious goals, functioning like an intransitive verb (one that does not take a direct object). Such "social dreaming [...] works as a motivational force for change" (164).

The utopian thinking offered in the *Cântico do país emerso* develops from a complication of epic, nationalism, and Lusotropicalism. Rather than elaborating an actual utopia, which Correia would gesture towards with her evolving concept of the Mátria, the canticle poem-sequence instead engages in an indeterminate process of critique and feminist speculation. Taking as its starting point the epic mould of *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem*, it reworks the canon from within, elaborating a radical feminist re-vision which replaces a Portuguese collective destiny based on masculine heroism and imperialist expansion, with a non-totalising personal vision of female creativity and bodily (self-)knowledge. Rather than speaking to or on behalf of all Portuguese people, in the vein of a traditional national epic bard or poet-vates, the free-floating voice of the *Cântico do país emerso*'s poet-speaker nomadically traverses a series of different subject positions – "adventuring, without the masculine temerity, into anonymity" (Cixous, 1976: p.888), and even merging with the natural world (thereby relinquishing her borders and becoming porous with the more-than-human life and elemental forces of the Azorean landscape) – even if she still retains certain key aspects of an individualised voice by virtue of this female-gendered, non-metropole-located specificity.

Rather than pursuing linear culmination, Correia's poem is suffused with circularity, with certain phrases and notions recurring cyclically. These include the comings-and-goings of the avian images of the "andorinha(s)"(*AP*: p.111 and p.121), and the "pássaros que fui" and "pássaro ao sol"(*AP*: p.113 and p.115), as well as a profusion of repeated opening lines of stanzas, notably "Tudo quanto" (in Section IV), "Enquanto que" (in Sections V and VI), "Invoco-vos" (in Section VII) and "Levai" (in Section VIII). Importantly, the poem contains no self-evident climactic moment. In many ways, the poetic structure thereby suggests a return to rhythms of the female

body, including ovulation, which second-wave feminists identified as key features of feminine writing (Winnett, 1990), and which Julia Kristeva associated with the ebb and flow of directionless desire that is the chaotic maternal *chora* experienced in childhood (Kristeva 1984: 25-27), to which the *Cântico do país emerso* seems to allude in its final section (Section VIII, stanza 11, lines 1-3) with its reference to the goalless and enchanting child's play of kite-flying (wherein the kite flies skyward, but becomes caught in perpetual swooping mid-air). By incorporating these cyclical rhythms, the collection as a whole represents a powerful form of feminist resistance to the linearly teleological, self-fulfilling logics of masculinist epic.

The collection's final stanza, in which the poet-speaker has not ascended to any transcendental plane, but rather evokes the humble growth of a rose on an elusive stairwell, which she breathes in ("aspiro" [*AP*: 121]) – a word etymologically related to "aspiration" – crucially suggests that the poet-speaker's empowerment is an on-going ambition; as previously noted, the voice-quelling strictures of censorship are still in place, and the successful overthrowal of patriarchy remains a distant hope. This rose, embedded in the earth yet climbing the stairwell, serves as an emblem for the complication of narratives of spiritual transcendence, since flowers reach skyward yet are rooted down. In turn, this causes the formerly-disturbing mud-bound flightlessness occasioned by the stone angel's weight (in the preceding stanza) to be refigured as potentially empowering, because a connection to the green bed of the earth ("O leito de verdura") can lead to forms of flourishing. Furthermore, because of its ambiguity, the rose (in this instance) equally disturbs the burden of symbolic representation borne by femininity. For example, while the rose's traditional associations with femininity, love, and the Virgin Mary, might have been congruent and symbolically harnessed within the context of Section VII's promised birth of the "filho *rosado*" (my emphasis), its appearance here is, by contrast, an echo that is somewhat harder to read – except as a possible image of hope. As with Derrida's notion of *différance*, which posits the impossibility of pure presence or essential meaning, imagining

the deferral of meaning along a never-ending chain of signifiers, so too Correia's complicated epic poem inscribes a degree of hope which has not yet come to fruition, in the form of this rose that may be in the process of growing. The tantalising non-disclosure of its full significance, as the poem's final image, may precisely be tied up with the idea of an ever-changing, as-yet unfinished growth. The image of the rose also serves as an apt metaphor for the refusal to privilege either mind or body, as they instead become fused (with artistic genius becoming rooted in earthiness). Meanwhile, the presence of vegetal life at the close of the collection signals a similar refusal to undervalue plants as worldly companions in feminist undertakings. The poet-speaker's breathing-in of the rose – a habitually-feminised symbol of life, eros and romance, but whose ultimate meaning here remains ungraspable, perhaps even inaccessible to the hyper-rational Cartesian mind – ends the collection with a fragrance, an intangible good which is, at the same time, still powerfully generative and evocative of memories and life-affirming sensations.[71]

In this sense, Correia's poem-sequence is also anti-triumphalist and open-ended; it creates a space of possibility in which there is no foreclosure; the "pátria emergente" is being elaborated in the poet's womb, but is yet to be born. This space, which revels in absence or lack, thus comes into being alongside the inscription of this non-teleological, process-orientated poetry within (and against) the Portuguese literary canon. The *Cântico do país emerso* moves from the shipwrecked "país *emerso*" – which literally means "emerged country", but which generates cognitive dissonance through the similarity between "emerso" and its homonym "imerso",

[71] In such moments, Correia's poetry lends itself to being read through the style of reading advocated by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht in his book *Production of Presence*: that is, a "nonhermeneutic" method (2004: 2), which considers the way in which aesthetic objects can provoke, in their readers and contemplators, a series of rationally-inexpressible, affect-rich and irreducibly personal responses (including what he calls "*epiphany*, *presentification*, and *deixis*" [95]). Here, for example, the *Cântico do país emerso*'s ending leaves me with a felt impression of the rose's own idiosyncratic form of communicating with the world beyond itself – no matter how indecipherable its fragrant language may be, ultimately, to my limited human olfactory perception.

meaning "submerged" (therefore suggesting the re-emergence of the culturally repressed) – to the (no longer equivocally) positive-sounding "pátria *emergente*". This adjective suggests process rather than completion. As such, the poem-sequence is about the gestation of utopian alternatives and the dawning of a new and as-yet undiscovered future for Portugal – ambiguously materialising in the image of the rose. Repressed imperial traumas, and shackled female talent, are unleashed in this poem-sequence (which comes early within the overall development of Correia's female-centred utopian thinking). The "pátria emergente" is depicted purely in its gestation phase, without being defined or categorically blueprinted, and thereby avoids unwittingly becoming foreclosed to future reformation and change. With this being so, the *Cântico do país emerso* becomes invested above all in the notion of possibility, the impulse towards change, while the ever-adaptable, marginal, feminine voice serves as a conduit towards an ever-receding (and therefore non-totalising) horizon.

5.2. EMERGING MATRIARCHY, FROM THE *CÂNTICO DO PAÍS EMERSO* (1961) TO *MÁTRIA* (1969)

As the 1960s were drawing to a close, Correia published *Mátria* (1969), a collection dedicated to the elaboration of this female-centred utopianism. Poem I opens with an apocalyptic vision of the terrible excesses of the phallogocentric world order, with its ninth stanza considering the damage wrought by:

> lógica como paragógica
> arrogância que rumina a ruína
> ardidas pinhas do pinheiro Europa
> queimada lã da ovelha hiroxima
> (Poem I, *AP*: 135).

The arrogance of logic, or the scientific method – a legacy of Enlightenment Man which had been at the heart of the European colonial enterprise, establishing hierarchies between races on the basis of such dubious sciences as genetic profiling and phrenology – is denounced as little

more than "paragogical". Paragoge involves the elongation of words by adding syllables, and here I infer that what is suggested is a process of linguistic rarefication which shores up the privileged knowledge of experts, at the expense of intelligibility, accessibility, and accountability. Chewing the cud of its own ruin, patriarchy has arrogantly brought the world to the brink of universal holocaust – as Europe's pine trees, phallic symbols, point to the Portuguese colonial enterprise specifically (by referring to the materials used to build the caravels mentioned by Pessoa in the poem 'D. Diniz' in *Mensagem*) albeit in a wrecked state (being burnt), and with Hiroshima serving as the first lamb, its wool similarly burnt, sacrificed on the altar of nuclear war. In interviews, Correia certainly lamented the stultifying hypermasculine rationalisation of Western culture, "a impessoalidade e a desumanização do progresso tecnológico e científico (paroxismos do génio masculino)" (Correia, 2003: 148), of which such catastrophes as nuclear warfare were logical excesses, along with the concurrent exclusion of femininity, emotion, and nature as guiding principles in how to build good societies. A solution to this imbalance of masculine and feminine energies emerges, subsequently, in *Mátria*, which carries forward the utopian impulse already present in the *Cântico do país emerso*:

> O amor inventando o meu corpo lugar
> onde não se morre, carnal ninho do Espírito,
> mensageiro da origem palpitação de um ponto
> no crânio de cristal do meu amigo.
> (Poem XII, *AP*: 155).

As the female body is hereby spatialised and imagined as fertile ground for newness, the theme of utopianism returns, but crucially what is envisioned is a femaleness working in concert with maleness. Both genders are enriched by mutual fecundity and the re-incorporation of suppressed femininity, which is once again connected to the notion of fluidity, this time related expressly to a more-than-human liquid element (with the suggestion being that to incorporate the feminine is to incorporate the more-than-human also):

Homens com quedas-d'agua de mulheres por dentro
recrutas do amor matriotas celestes
únicos e radiosos de acordados
numa bela manhã de prata extraterrestre
(Poem XIII, *AP*: 157).

The submerging of patriarchy in *Cântico do país emerso* is, in a sense, part of the clearing-of-the-decks necessary for Correia's wider project of paving the way for an emergent matriarchy. Yet even matriarchy itself appears as a complicated utopian space in Correia – not simply straightforwardly a female space, it is one which also depends on the (re-)incorporation of femaleness into both men and women.

Connecting with Correia's own life-long interest in green politics,[72] I contend that the dual-emphasis that is placed, in the *Cântico do país emerso* and *Mátria*, firstly on nature and secondly on an embodied desire seeking expression – both of which are woven through the images of the hybridisation of Azorean landscape and human form (ocean-breast-fed and lava-rain-fathered [*AP*: 119]), as well as of wildly-energised human and horse, along with the human-throat-dwelling, light-weaving spider, the strangled swallow's heart, and the hoped-for rose, and finally the waterfalls of women interiorised in men, too – suggests the emergence in Correia's poetry of new forms of haptic ecology and "haptic communities" (Pettman 2021: 116). The bodies of human and more-than-human beings are (surreally) layered over one another, allowed to commune, and brought into touch.

[72] In a handwritten manuscript labelled 'Ecologia – Verdes Deusa-Mãe', contained in the Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Regional de Ponta Delgada (where the vast bulk of Natália Correia's unpublished manuscript documents are kept), Correia expresses sympathy for the green political movement in terms which relate to her own concept of the motherland, as well as suggesting that ecological thinking can help to restore the humanity of alienated mankind: "[...] levanta-se o matrismo dos Verdes, que na ressacralização da Natureza exaltam o princípio da Vida, encarnado na Grande Mãe, a Nutridora Universal./ Eis, quanto a mim, a grande e revolucionária dimensão da mensagem dos Verdes, por enquanto oculta, mas que terá de desocultar-se, de ser assumida num mundo em que exigindo o futuro da Terra e a reumanização do homem alienado" (Correia [n.d.]: Cotas 6197/6198 p.11).

Chapter III.

QUEERLY DIS-ORIENTATING, RHIZOMATICALLY REIMAGINED EPIC: LUÍZA NETO JORGE'S *DEZANOVE RECANTOS* (1969):

> "Multiplicação pela falta, por aquilo a que chamei uma vez o «o excesso da ausência», os *Dezanove Recantos* são forma – em voz de mulher – de recantar os dez cantos do poema épico de Camões, actualizando-os, ao mesmo tempo que sugerem uma escrita efectuada no mais íntimo e ínfimo espaço, através do uso da palavra «recanto»."
> ('Do Centro e da Margem: Escritas do Corpo em Escritas de Mulheres', in Amaral, 2017: 70).

1. INTRODUCTION

As Anna Klobucka writes, Luiza Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos* (1969) resembles "uma antiepopeia" or "uma epopeia apócrifa" (Klobucka 2009: 239); it is a complication of the epic genre in feminist key. It adopts the scaffolding of the epic mode in its division into parts (Proposition, Invocation, Dedication, Narration) and numbered cantos in a sequence, as well as its deployment of epic personages and the notion of the journey. However, these trappings of the genre are destabilized from the outset. While the work's title implies a recapitulation of Camões's ten-canto epic, the imperfect doubling of ten to make nineteen indicates incompleteness and a resistance to closure. This structural complication of the inter-text thus lends the *Dezanove Recantos* a form that is opposed to ideological certainties. Indeed, it extends the Derridean logic of endlessly deferred meaning which I have identified in Camões and Pessoa. In addition, like Natália Correia, Neto Jorge uses surrealism to liberate words from their stable meanings in patriarchal culture. She also employs a Deleuzian rhizomatic structure – that is, an 'acentered, non-hierarchical, non-signifying system [...] defined solely by a circulation of states' (Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 22) – as a means of deconstructing the epic mode from within; as such, the sequential ordering of the cantos, 1 to 19, is complicated by the absence of both narrative flow and goal-orientated logic, and the rhizomatic criss-crossing connections between the cantos. The sense of a stable "imagined community" (Anderson 1991), normally created in

epic narratives through teleological trajectories, is thus spurned and replaced with more fluid notions of community and allegiance.

Moreover, as Rosa Maria Martelo has observed (Martelo, 2006), the *Dezanove Recantos* coincide with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'Minor literature'. This is because, unlike Camões's epic or the Salazar-era adoption of epic discourse, they do not seek to express a fixed Portuguese identity. Instead, they exhibit a language which pushes at the limits of the sayable; rather than seeking to be an exact image of the world, or to represent given states of the world, they are always already actively creating new ones by virtue of their eccentric linguistic qualities, ranging from startling neologisms to stammering semantics. Allied with these linguistic eccentricities, the text summons into being a series of eccentric figures, whose identities (ranging from the mechanical to the animalistic and the pseudo-Biblical) disturb normativities, particularly in relation to anthropocentrism, gender norms, and heteronormativity. Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985) reminds us that it is in the interests of modern feminism to take into consideration the ways in which womens' identities intersect with technology and other species, as a way of escaping from essentializing notions of femaleness derived from the deterministic origin narratives favoured by patriarchy, such as the Biblical story of Eve. Such an approach empowers the woman as a cyborg, an amalgamation of multiple techno-bio identities, to critique the shoring-up of masculine power around the signifier of Man, which is also revealed to be unstable (in this web of interpenetrating catgeories).

As Ana Luísa Amaral has noted, in the quotation which serves as this chapter's epigraph, the *Dezanove Recantos* are in some sense a female-voiced re-vision of Camonian epic, which translates some of the themes of *Os Lusíadas* into the contemporary world, and by re-locating them transforms them. This ties in with a recurrent theme in Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry, which in Anna Klobucka's words is "a ironia da juxtaposição anacrónica de passados (míticos) com o presente (histórico)" (2009: 239), creating a dis-orientating effect. If Portuguese nationhood (in

its masculinist form) can be said to emerge as the effect of a repetition of past gestures – inherited through the medium of unchallenged canonical representations of Portugal, depicted on an imperialist teleology, which are then imitated – then, phenomenologically speaking, the nation's movement (its sense of its own possibilities for movement and the way it is orientated in the world) is cumulatively conditioned in this given direction. Neto Jorge's intervention to complicate epic representations of nationhood presents the opportunity for the nation to be swerved off-course, to become dis-orientated. As queer phenomenologist Sara Ahmed suggests, the failure to orientate oneself and one's desires along conventional lines (for example, towards heteronormativity) can be unsettling, but such dis-orientation leads to the hopeful prospect of "inhabiting different worlds" (Ahmed, 2006: 68), something which Neto Jorge's work explores in the indeterminate space "de um para o outro lado da invenção" ('Recanto 19', [1969] 1993: 204).

2. THE *DEZANOVE RECANTOS* AS A CRITICISM OF SALAZARISM

Published in 1969, at a crisis moment in Portuguese colonial history, Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos: Uma Epopeia Sumária* (a subheading included in its first publication) may be read as a critical response to decades of authoritarian rule under Salazar. Promoting a stance of bellicose imperialism in the name of an expansive Portugal with overseas territories, the Salazar regime was heavily invested in the notion of Portugal's exceptionalism as a colonial power, with a supposedly unique role on the world stage stemming from its trans-Atlantic and African ties. In addition, its patriarchal foundations ensured the suppression of women and non-normative subjects, and all political dissidence was quelled through a combination of brute force – via the PIDE – and cultural censorship. All of these oppressive elements of the dictatorship are surveyed and critiqued, albeit in oblique fashion, in the *Dezanove Recantos*.

Since 1961, which had seen the publication of Natália Correia's *Cântico do País Emerso*, the *Estado Novo* had been waging a losing battle to maintain its African colonies on three fronts

(Angola, Mozambique and Guinea), with dire economic and social consequences. The Colonial Wars (1961-1974) were fought in the name of maintaining the structural integrity of Portugal and its euphemistically named "overseas provinces". Young Portuguese men were indoctrinated in military ideology and sent to fight in the name of the fatherland, while women were expected to sustain the health of the nation, and foster the spiritual development of its youth, through skilful home economics and family care. With the incapacitation of Salazar and succession of Marcelo Caetano, his more liberally minded heir who promised "evolução na continuidade" (Porto Editora, 2022), in 1968, the country was poised on the verge of radical change. On the one hand, the long-term preservation of its African colonies was profoundly in crisis after seven years of conflict, as well as a growing sense of the illegitimacy of the imperial project both at home and abroad, foreshadowing the ultimate demise of Portugal's overseas empire. On the other hand, Caetano's more liberal style of governance promised economic growth, foreign investment and greater (albeit limited) financial support to rural regions of the metropole.

Like the stubbornness of its colonial wars, another perennially damaging feature of the regime was its promotion of the male-privileging ideology of gender binarism, which provided the justification for subordinating women and non-normative subjectivities. As mentioned in this thesis's Introduction, women had not been counted as full citizens ever since the 1933 Constitution, the fifth article of which had alleged the naturalness of women's relegation to the realm of the home. The notion of women having an independent voice was severely restricted by their strict association with the realm of the private, rather than the public, as well as by the gendering of both the political and the artistic spheres as masculine. Women's subaltern position would not begin to be addressed until after the 1974 Carnation Revolution and transition to democracy, with the 1976 Constitution finally giving women full and universal equal suffrage – irrespective of class, educational status or the need for head-of-household status – as well as full equality in marriage.

Sitting at this juncture, with the colonial wars raging and women's subjugation ubiquitous, the *Dezanove Recantos* urges rebellion against the Estado Novo's many dogmas. In certain ways, Neto Jorge's text, a complication of the epic, takes aim against the regime's slogan of "Deus, Pátria, Família" – a triumvirate encapsulating its religious orthodoxy, its nationalist rhetoric and masculine hero-worshipping, and its rigid structuring of gender roles within a heteronormative familial framework. It does so by writing back against male-authored epics in the Portuguese canon, or more specifically against the Salazar regime's own approach to such texts, namely Camões's *Os Lusíadas* and Pessoa's *Mensagem*;[73] by linguistic experimentation; by appropriation and redeployment of the sacred cows of Salazarist (religious, nationalist and familial) discourse; by incendiary surrealism; by replacing Salazarist arborescent structures (that is, power hierarchies stemming from root to trunk to branch, i.e., from God to dictator through to men and lastly women) with Deleuzian rhizomatic horizontality (involving a de-hierarchised connectivity between subjects); and by exploding Salazarist ideology from a marginal position that circumvents and displaces the centre.

[73] Salazar's approach to Camões can be ascertained, firstly, by examining the Estado Novo's approach to teaching *Os Lusíadas* in schools. The text was instrumentalised to inculcate patriotic sentiment, with primary school children being introduced to the text via prose adaptations (including the pedagogue João de Barros's *Os Lusíadas contados às crianças e lembrados ao povo* [Vichinsky, 2012]) that emphasised Camões's patriotic fervour, while secondary school students were encouraged to treat the text primarily in aesthetic and historicist terms, and to overlook its eroticism and self-contradicting, anti-imperial complexities (Cunha, 2012). Secondly, Salazar's homage to Portugal's seafaring past, with the 1940 exhibition of the Portuguese world in Belém (a site signifying the "birth, origins and claims of divinely ordained destiny" (Power and Sidaway: 870) in its proximity to the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, where Camões is buried), Salazar implicitly bolstered an association between poet and nation (see Almeida and Corkill 2009). This was cemented by Salazar's co-opting of the Dia de Camões – which had first been instituted by Dom Luís I on the 300th anniversary of the Renaissance poet's death on 10th June 1880 – as the 'Dia da Raça' (in 1944). Meanwhile in the case of Pessoa's *Mensagem*, as Richard Zenith explains, the Estado Novo's propagandist-in-chief António Ferro had been particularly keen to see the text published as part of his nationalist poetry competition of 1934, suggesting that its brand of messianic *sebastianismo* was amenable to Salazarist ideology, even if the regime could not have fully comprehended the text's ambiguities.

3. THE CRITICAL LANDSCAPE

Referring to her *Dezanove Recantos*, Neto Jorge said that they contained:

> "uma revolta das palavras que apelando para um novo discurso, partem, em força, à conquista de um mundo revolto, luminoso, ambíguo, de «um rito infindável» que as nossas palavras ora apreendem ora desfocam. Escrito de seguida, como um longo poema contínuo, quase narrativo, «uma onda fundente» banha as palavras, imprimindo-lhes o movimento e a incandescência" (quoted in Cameira, 2017: 3).

Sharing with her fellow poets of the *Poesia 61* group a distrust of poetry which promoted transparent and straightforward connections between poet, word and world (as in the case of post-war neo-realist poetry, which sought to enact change on the plane of social reality by means of directly representing societal ills, or *presencista* poetry, which often claimed to be the spontaneous outpouring of the poet's own powerful, and readily communicable, emotions), Neto Jorge – through her search for "um novo discurso" – was conversely interested in exposing and exploring the murky materiality of language itself. If everyday language under Salazar could be used to express dogma, disseminate propaganda, and foster gender discrimination, then it was the task of poets, working intimately with language, to expose these discursive mechanisms and seek to reinvent discourse, making other worlds possible ("à conquista de um mundo revolto, luminoso, ambíguo" [Cameira, 2017: 3]). Appropriating the language of conquest, in aid of a quest for ambiguity and the complicated illuminations it can bring, rather than the pure clarity of enlightenment – and, by doing so, to undertake a rebellion, and disturb the *status quo*, rather than sustain order –, Neto Jorge affirms the value of poetry as an anti-dogmatic, permeable type of discourse, openly inviting multiple interpretations.

Critics including José Ricardo Nunes (2000), Rosa Maria Martelo (2006), Anna Klobucka (2009), Marinela Freitas (2014), and Ana Luísa Amaral (2017) have all produced in-depth critical readings of the *Dezanove Recantos*. Anna Klobucka's identification of Luiza Neto Jorge's use of irony, via her anachronistic juxtapositions of the mythic pasts upon which epic-imperialist rhetoric was based during the Salazar regime on the one hand, with radically mismatched

historical presents on the other, provides me with a useful approach to the question of feminist complications of epic. Such unconventional temporal shifts also resonate with notions of queer time, which complicate the linear history making and genealogy formation often implied in Salazarian readings of the Portuguese epic. Considering Klobucka's affirmation that the *Dezanove Recantos* represents "uma antiepopeia" or "uma epopeia *apócrifa*" (Klobucka, 2009: 239), I seek to examine how queer and feminist theory can illuminate this question further, while also seeking to avoid the trap of binary-thinking implied by the term "anti-epic", which opposes itself too starkly with "epic". On the contrary, Portuguese feminist poetry exploits and extends this genre's own inherent ambiguities and aporia, affirming its perennial usefulness as a resource for feminism.

Marinela Freitas has identified areas in which Luiza Neto Jorge has contravened epic convention, "resgatando a matéria excluída da epopeia, o silenciado pela grandiloquência, a anti-heroicidade da ação heroica, a desunidade e a desordem na narrativa que se quer ordenadora e fundadora" (Freitas, 2014: 307). Her analysis of the humble, non-individuated heroes of the *Dezanove Recantos* prompts me to further pursue this line of inquiry into an examination of the hidden lives celebrated in the poem, the non-bombastic forms of existence which nevertheless generate forms of micro-resistance to authority. Freitas's remarks on the polyvalent and ambiguous use of language throughout the collection encourage me to further investigate Neto Jorge's poetry as a form of anti-dogmatic discourse, through a poetics of indeterminacy. Picking up on another line of inquiry initiated by Marinela Freitas and others, I equally explore Luiza Neto Jorge's negotiations of the "narratability" of the female form ("o corpo inenarrável" of line 15 of 'Recanto 13').[74]

[74] My analysis of the unnarratable female form in 'Recanto 13' is part of this chapter's omitted section on Femininity.

Rosa Maria Martelo's seminal Deleuzian reading of the *Dezanove Recantos*, in terms of the notion of minoritarian language, persuades me that Deleuzian philosophy more broadly can be said to resonate with the entirety of Neto Jorge's project of complicating the epic. I am invested in discussing the rhizomatic structure of the work and how this bears on Luiza Neto Jorge's assault on Salazar's teleologically orientated project for the nation. Beyond the critical literature as it stands, my contribution involves unpacking the implications of Neto Jorge's engagement with the nonhuman, animality and wildness, and how her project of de-centring the various centres and hegemonies of Portuguese life in the 1960s redounds in a radical de-centring of the human, which is revealed to be imbricated in an intricate web of relations between all manner of worldly beings, objects and movements.

4. Deleuze and The Rhizome: Structure and Subjectivity

> "In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, non-signifying system without a General and without an organising memory or central automation, defined solely by a circulation of states. What is at question in the rhizome is a relation to sexuality – but also to the animal, the vegetal, the world, politics, the book, things natural and articifical – that is totally different from the arborescent relation: all manner of 'becomings.'" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013: 22).

Neto Jorge's poetry intersects with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, particularly their work in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), on multiple levels. Building on the insights of Marinela Freitas and Rosa Maria Martelo, both of whom have identified elements of Deleuzian philosophy inherent to the *Dezanove Recantos* (whether it be in terms of the play of nomadic subjectivity [Freitas, 2014], or in the text's minoritarian literary qualities [Martelo, 2006]), I seek to illuminate the rhizomatic structure at work across the entire collection.

Deleuze and Guattari posit the 'rhizome' as an alternative to the 'arborescent', the latter being defined as any mode of thought taking the shape of a totalising, stably rooted, tree-like structure. Such thought – by virtue of its phallogocentrism, and its vertical orientation towards

transcendence – is reliant on a central, unshakeable premise (figuratively-speaking, this corresponds to the image of the tree trunk), from which all other thoughts may be said to derive or 'branch out', forming a progressive genealogy of ideas, one flowing logically from another. In this way, arborescent thought presupposes the organisation of knowledge along a linear root-trunk-branch system, ultimately subordinating all of the thought-tree's branch-like bifurcations back to a single point of origin.

By contrast, the rhizome – being a subterranean plant stem (seen, for example, in ginger, potatoes, irises and grass) that sends out roots and shoots from its nodes – grows horizontally and chaotically, having no single centre but rather an endless proliferation of centres. Thought that is structured rhizomatically has multiple entry points, produces startlingly illogical yet productive connections, and cannot be traced back to any single point of origin. The rhizome imagines a way of thinking which is open to new connections: it is heterogeneous, multiple, unpredictable. Equally, it is a tool for thinking about the world – not by way of representing it or reproducing it faithfully, but rather as a speculative map-making exercise.

A book can be designed rhizomatically: the rhizome-book, or map, "connects and articulates itself in reciprocal presupposition with the world" (Holland, 2013*:* 37). This means that it does not seek to erect an apparatus of representation-signification, or articulate what the world really *is*, but rather to interact with the world along parallel lines. In opposition to totalising narratives (for example, Salazar's depiction of Portugal's manifest destiny as an imperial power) which claim to manifest the truth of reality and the inevitability of destiny, rhizomatic texts are cartographic, in the sense of being interactive, rather than representational. They encourage readers to interact with the world differently, to chart new courses through its terrain on the basis of new possibilities revealed in the map.

Taking the rhizome as a metaphor for the *Dezanove Recanto's* structure helps to manifest the text's challenge to the Salazar regime's masculine, linear, arborescent, phallocentric discourse. Where Salazar posited a straightforward national-imperial destiny, as a culmination of the supposed trajectory of its history and cumulative efforts of its national father-heroes, in place of this, the open, non-narrative, multidirectional structure of the *Dezanove Recantos* presents the possibility of a non-teleological view of life and its everyday heroes (or perhaps anti-heroes). The text de-focalises the fatherland, with its former coterie of archetypal male heroes, by shooting off in unpredictable directions, having no recognisable plot, and bearing no obvious relation to national history, excepting its criticism of the then unfolding colonial wars. History as the story of genealogies of great men, evident in Camões's genealogy of the Portuguese in Cantos 3 and 4 as well as in Estado-Novo-era interpretations of Portuguese epic, unravels in the *Dezanove Recantos* through the text's anti-genealogical tendencies and its complication of memory. Whereas history is often viewed as the starting point for validating norms central to community identity, Neto Jorge's complicated epic undermines any notion of the stability of history through its rhizomatic mixing of the archaic with the contemporary, producing anachronisms which confuse notions of linear progress, as well as its emphasis on horizontal sibling relationalities as opposed to purely vertical paternal-filial ones. As Deleuze and Guattari declare, "the rhizome is an antigenealogy" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013: 10); Neto Jorge's rewriting of Camões conspicuously circumnavigates the matter of Portugueseness, whether in terms of ontology, ethnicity, or national history.

A subject emerging in a rhizomatic relation to other subjects is non-unified. Deleuzian notions of subjectivity threaten the stability of the unified subject of masculine, imperialist, nationalist discourse by calling into question the myth of its self-sustaining, self-directing, autonomous centeredness. For Deleuze and Guattari, the self is an illusion, a point of intersection of multiple contradictory forces of desire acting in the world and passing through human and nonhuman

subjects. By replacing the series of discrete characters who take centre stage in Camões's *Os Lusíadas* and Pessoa's *Mensagem*, all of whom are identifiable as historically-verifiable entities, Neto Jorge's text is filled with hazily-defined and emphatically *original* characters. They may be considered as proliferating assemblages of heterogeneous elements, such that a name (for instance, Garfo, Vaídio, Ilo or Ila) stands for the point of intersection of a criss-crossing web of semantic fields, within the collection's surrealist flow. In place of the self-directed willpower of a singular, unified subject (such as Vasco da Gama), or even a collective subject (such as 'the Lusiads') who seeks to bring about the fruition of a singular epic mission (for example, by attaining what it presently lacks by way of territories, wealth and power), Neto Jorge's non-unified subjects are, contrariwise, entities who become channels for abstract desires emerging in the world, to which they are ultimately subordinated. In view of this, it is instructive to reflect upon the role of desire within Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, which provides a framework for understanding how desire is portrayed in the *Dezanove Recantos*.

5. DELEUZIAN DESIRE IN THE *DEZANOVE RECANTOS*

Opposing the psychoanalytic model of desire, derived from Freud and Lacan, who suggest that desire is a subject's response to a perceived lack and consequent "longing for self-completion" (Mansfield, 2000: 45), resulting in the singular subject's projection of fantasies onto some external object (followed by the longing to fulfil those fantasies), Deleuze and Guattari's notion of desire, by contrast, replaces lack with plenitude. They maintain that the lack-centred Oedipal model fails to recognise that desire is a productive force, in and of itself, and that it precedes (rather than originating in) the subject. They discuss desire not in terms of subject-object relations, but rather as an impersonal force inherent in the world flowing through people, things and objects, and bringing them into interaction with one another in productive assemblages. Desire's visible manifestations, in the form of human couples, marriages or sexual acts, for instance, should be viewed – according to this model – merely as ways in which desire is allowed

to articulate itself within the present arrangement of cultural or social circumstances. In other words, they happen to be the only socially recognisable forms of desire, and are contingent and changeable.

In fact, desire occurs at the minute level of particularised interactions between things in the form of what the philosophical pair term *desiring machines*, referring to an act of producing an *assemblage* of *partial objects*: where a hand rests on a cushion, or lips connect with a drinking vessel, or a feather touches the skin, or an infant suckles on a breast – these connections are productive: they are "heterogeneous terms in symbiosis" (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 275). Partial objects, in free-floating circulation, are constantly establishing new and unconventional connections (thus forming new desiring-machines or assemblages) because of desire. In Deleuzian philosophy, "desire's basic function is to assemble and render machinic" (Buchanan 2018b). It is not that the subject makes these connections, but rather that the connections themselves leave behind a subject as a residue of production. Desire does not constitute a subject but instead flows through us continuously, being a force immanent in the world – which does not belong to us, but which sweeps us up with its restless energy. As Hannah Stark elucidates, "Desiring-machines shift the focus from the psyche and the interior, to the surface and the play of intensity. Desire is productive whether or not human agency is involved." (Stark, 2017: 53).

Desire is dis-articulated from subjectivity per se. No longer the purview of the subject, it is rather an incessantly productive force beyond individual control. According to Deleuze and Guattari, desire continuously occasions the production of new connections; it is an unquenchable hunger for newness. The *Dezanove Recantos*'s emblematic instance of desire of this type is one of dis-organised bodily love ("beijar-se dentro do estômago"),[75] surreally combining lips with stomach

[75] All quotations from the *Dezanove Recantos* in this chapter are taken from the version contained in the Fernando Cabral Martin edition by Assírio & Alvim (Neto Jorge, 1993).

in a kiss, evoked in relation to the figure of Vaídio in 'Recanto 5' (examined later in this chapter). Such a disorganisation of desire, as it has typically been conceived in Western philosophy and psychoanalysis, disrupts the notion of the self-determination of singular or unified desiring heroes, subjects or nations, at the same time as it re-focuses desire away from the goal of object-attainment and instead towards endless, chance proliferations.

This conception of desire is useful for feminism, because it avoids the construction of women as objects, or as identifiable, self-identical, gendered beings, at the same time as it evades their designation as subjects *who lack* (as per the Freudian notion of penis-envy). Deleuzian desire equally serves to deconstruct the idea of a straightforward heterosexual compatibility between dominant maleness (designated as subject) and compliant femaleness (designated as object). In Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos*, female figures are seldom, if ever, uncomplicatedly *feminine*, nor do they conform to tropes of mild servility, muse-like passivity, or Neiridian sexual receptivity. Figures emerge as multiplicities, as amalgamations of reams of surrealist images, and are often depicted as being permeated with desire. Disparate elements are absorbed into non-defined, non-linear, uncategoriseable states, while figures (including Vaídio and Dulcíssimo) and their associated characteristics are recycled in new contexts, eschewing fully rounded character portraits, in favour of figures who are *queerly* always becoming other than themselves.

6. THE WOMAN POET'S INTERVENTION IN THE EPIC TRADITION: CIRCUMVENTING, CIRCUMNAVIGATING, DE-CENTRING THE CENTRE

1 *Proposição:*

Contorno-vos. Socorre-se a terra de mim
Para vos contornar.

The opening lines of the *Dezanove Recantos* stage a feminist intervention in the epic tradition. Firstly, invoking an unspecified second person plural addressee ("vos"), which elsewhere in the

collection (cf. 'Recanto 8') is revealed to be masculine ("senhores") – therefore enabling their identification as patriarchal master figures –, the first-person voice of the poet-speaker announces that she will "bypass you", "skirt around you", "circumvent you" or "circumnavigate you" (since the Portuguese verb "contornar" contains all of these meanings).[76] This unnamed entity, the "vos", may stand in for any number of figures, including the censor, Salazar, or indeed the male-authored epic tradition more broadly – even potentially encompassing the reader as addressee of the poem too. This strategy of following the contours and circumventing the centre effects a de-focalisation of the fatherland, along with its many sustaining foundational tropes.

Secondly, the poet-speaker declares that the (female-gendered) earth resorts to her in order to bypass this unnamed "you". In this grammatically ambiguous phrase, it could also be that it is "the earth of myself" that self-reflexively comes to its own aid. In either formulation, it is clear that the human poet-speaker and the nonhuman other, the earth itself, are being placed on an even keel. Far from being a passive object, as in the tradition of Portuguese maritime epic – to be explored and ultimately subjugated –, the earth of 'Recanto 1' is not merely vulnerable, being lively, animated, and wilful too. From the very outset of her poem, Neto Jorge defies the discoverers' imperialist zeal, which Fernando Pessoa described in his poem on the subject of Fernão de Magalhães in *Mensagem* (1992: 68), who violates the earth with his own global circumnavigation. The elevation of the nonhuman to the status of equal partner in this feminist endeavour of circumnavigating tradition and patriarchal discourse marks the *Dezanove Recantos*, from the outset, with an anti-hierarchical, eccentric and anti-anthropocentric point of view. It also suggests that – in this anti-epic enterprise – the poet-speaker will strategically ally herself with, and respond to, calls of alliance from subjects located beyond the narrow realms of the self.

[76] 'Contornar' can signify 'circumnavigate' as in the following example: "Bartolomeu Dias contornou o cabo das Tormentas" (Houaiss, 2009: 536).

Finally, the notion of bypassing an unnamed but shadowy presence, seemingly located outside the poems themselves (in a similar way to the functioning of the "you" form of address in *Os Lusíadas*, which addresses Dom Sebastião), obliquely hints at the presence of the censor(s), whom the poet skilfully sidesteps – using obliqueness, the unsaid and the synonymous – in order to publish her collection without reprisal or cuts. The motion of bypassing the centre (represented by the "vós" of patriarchal, dictatorial, censoring hegemony) sets the *Dezanove Recantos* on a course of marginality, skirting around the centre in order to approach it from an oblique angle, and productively so from a nexus of feminist, queer and posthuman perspectives.

Moreover, given that the *Proposição* closes with a rendering-explicit of the kind of power wielded by the poet-speaker, being a "Poder que vos desfoca, dinamite", what seems to be posited (if we interpret the word "dinamite" as a definition of the "poder") is an explosion of patriarchy through de-focusing, de-centring and blurring patriarchy itself, along with all of its associated ideological trappings. In this sense, the *Dezanove Recantos* explode, like 'dinamita' ('Recanto 1'), all phallocentric discursive strategies. Alternatively, considering the collection's ambiguous register, the "dinamite" may be interpreted as a vocative, in which case it is the violence of the war-machine itself that is being de-focalised (and hence de-legitimised) through the poet's power. The fact that this ambiguity allows the dynamite to function on the one hand as a symbol of poetry's incendiary powers of deconstruction, and on the other as a symbol of the colonial violence which is precisely the target of this poem's critique, shows how the *Dezanove Recantos* radically destabilise univocality.

As the *Invocação* begins, the first figure to be invoked, indeed, is the ambiguous "Mestre luz equívoca entre a página e o poema", a liminal creation whose unplaceable grammatical gendering is noteworthy (with the words "mestre" and "o poema" being masculine, and "luz

equívoca" and "a página" being feminine, suggesting a queer figure who straddles and therefore confuses the gender binary). This places the *Dezanove Recantos* under the auspices of a force of equivocation, a prospect born out by the slipperiness of the text's content, the referents of words, and their meanings throughout. What is dynamited, according to lines 14-15, is "o evidente", which I tend to interpret as a reference to the notion that there is such a thing as common sense, or that reality is knowable and mappable in any rationalist, empirical (and indeed colonising) sense. This deconstruction of obviousness, or straightforwardness, is made palpable in the structure of the *Dezanove Recantos*, which follow no direct trajectory and have no narrative focus, making for no simple story or meaning. Indeed, evidencing many of the traits deemed by Rachel Blau DuPlessis to be the hallmarks of "feminist aesthetic" ('For the Etruscans', DuPlessis, 1990: 5), it is a text that is "multi-climactic" (9), organised as a series of interrelated fragments, as though precisely in imitation of an exploded structure (with rhizomatic unruliness). Having "multiple centres of attention" (ibid), it is structurally capacious, with an "anti-authoritarian ethics" (ibid), by not being limited to the pursuit of a single doctrine or dogma, least of all one tied to rationality or the self-evident.

Towards the end of the *Invocação*, the figure of the muse from classical epic is conjured, yet with a distinctly reimagined form and function:

Assim veio a Musa seus dedos apurados para
o exame dos mortos
deusa mão coçando-se
debaixo da terra
a empurrar

(Idade de reabsorção)

Bearing a relation of kinship with Rachel Blau DuPlessis's feminist notion of uncovering the resistant knowledges always-already inscribed within the stories of classical archetypes typically used for poetic inspiration, Neto Jorge's reconceptualisation of the figure of the muse involves a

meshing-together of muse and poet – creating a muse who refuses to be merely a puppet in the theatre of masculine discourse, or a lifeless object of inspiration to the canonical male epic poet. Rather than inspire her poetry to be purely lofty or transcendent, on the contrary Neto Jorge's muse is embodied and earthy (literally bound beneath the earth) as well as divine. She examines the dead – not in order to exalt them, or re-construct lineages of greatness from the dead men of history, but rather to suggest that their lives bear scars which threaten to resurface, scratching and pushing up from the depths into visibility. This is fitting, given that a feminist poet's intervention into the epic tradition is characterised, above all, by a sense of uncovering the gendered blind spots of preceding generations of bards. Furthermore, this muse is a hand, "deusa-mão", the bodily organ most associated with agency and the act of writing and authorship, suggesting that the poet herself will leave no stones unturned in her ethical resurrection of the genre.

As 'Recanto 1' progresses, in the *Dedicatória* we encounter the figures of Ilo and Ila, the latter of whom is later (in 'Recanto 13') described as the poet-speaker's own sister (lines 39-41):

> a Ilo um ovo fecundo o mundo
> a Ila viajante do espaço ínfimo entre dois planetas revolucionados

This "irmã" belongs to a new generation, one that is breaking free of the strictures imposed by the Ur-father and Ur-mother of 'Recanto 4', and conceivably capable of offsetting the tragic fate of the "irmão" who dies in 'Recanto 4'. Belonging to the same generation as the poet-speaker herself, therefore, the irmã Ila's presence in the *Dezanove Recantos* evokes the establishment of horizontal (Deleuzian) relationships, rather than ones dependent on hierarchies or successions of dynasties (as in the epic tradition). This even extends to a sibling relationship with the nonhuman entity Vaídio, who is sustained in the poet-speaker's mother's ovary (lines 17-18).

Imagined sibling relationships across the male/female gender divide (and even across the species barrier between humans and more-than-human animal)s, as well as intertwining masculinities and femininities (channelled through the sibling figures of "Ilo" and "Ila"), recur rhizomatically throughout the collection (most notably in Recantos 1, 4, 11, 13, 18, 19).

Moreover, in this introductory Recanto, the references to "ovário" (line 18) and "ovo" (line 39) which inaugurates an emphasis throughout the collection on the process, matrix and potentiality of (sexual and intellectual) reproduction, rather than merely the end products or brainchilds of this creative process. In line 39, Ilo, the fertile egg, is simultaneously described as the world itself, through a listing of correspondences that is unmarked by the expected punctuation (i.e. commas); in other words, a world that is full of undetermined potential.

In the same way, the philosophy of creativity espoused by the *Dezanove Recantos* contrasts markedly with Harold Bloom's theory of *The Anxiety of Influence* (1997), whereby competitiveness between male poets of one generation against the past masters who preceded them involves a rebellion of sons against fathers. The ethos of Neto Jorge's text is rather one of harnessing an awareness of the tradition of poetry that precedes her (namely Homer, Camões and Pessoa), which serves as fertile ground for the genesis of new palimpsests, involving blending, blurring and hybridisation. Her palimpsest-text actualises Homeric, Camonian and Pessoan resonances in a multiple layering, which undoes hierarchies, and instead suggests new formats for thinking through the problem of Portuguese identity. Whereas the logic of Camões's Renaissance intertextuality implies both paying homage to and superseding prior epic, Neto Jorge summons a host of marginal or unheroic elements of epic (including the family, the feminine, the domestic, the everyday, the monstrous, the animal, the colonised) and works within these blind spots of epic tradition past.

7. SURREALISM

In view of how Deleuzian rhizomatics privileges the formation of new connections following ruptures (along what Deleuze and Guattari termed "lines of flight" [Deleuze and Guattari, 2013: 9]) and equally implies the lack of stable centres and origins, it becomes possible to see the link that exists between rhizomatics and surrealism. They are two facets of a fundamental project, in the *Dezanove Recantos*, involving the defamiliarisation of the world in order to reimagine it anew – as a place of unending multiplicity and difference, irreducible to any single measure.

'Recanto 2' directly challenges the notion of rational man by evoking the liberation of the unconscious mind, declaring the surrealist tenor of the collection as a whole:

> 1 Viver, entretanto, é ver, ir vendo
> e também ver inclui dormir
> sem que nada se desfaça ou exclua
> no interior dos sonhos.

Complicating the idea that reality is directly, or empirically, accessible through the senses, the poem fuses *seeing* with *dreaming*, suggesting a productive fusion of the conscious with the unconscious, as thought is liberated from the shackles of rationality.

Neto Jorge's surrealist intervention in the epic genre brings a number of elements into play, namely: the tendency to de-naturalise, de-familiarise and disconcert (*dépaysement*), translating everyday objects into mysterious ones, a notion allied to the Freudian uncanny (*Das Umheimlich*); the marvellous; eruptions of the unconscious (which, in the *Dezanove Recantos*, augurs the intrusion of the darkest realities of patriarchy and empire); automatism; and the free play of unexpected and disruptive juxtapositions.

Natália Correia's 1978 lecture on Portuguese surrealism provides a further useful constellation of ideas against which to measure the surrealist qualities of the *Dezanove Recantos*. Of the five

distinctive features of Portuguese surrealism identified by Natália Correia, two seem particularly pertinent to the *Dezanove Recantos*. The first is the use of anamorphosis ("the visual operation that permits one to seize obliquely on a different shape of forms that, seen from a frontal perspective, unveil themselves as confusion" [Monteiro, 2005: 125]). And the second is adynata (the "enumeration of impossibilities [which] inverts things as they are disposed in the world", invoked "when a society or country is disintegrating"):

> "Such inversion has its origins when there exists a critical attitude towards a world in crisis and corresponds to the desire to accelerate that world's degeneration so that things may be reorganized in a new dispensation" (2005: 128).

According to Correia, then, surrealism's power, its creative provocation, comes from the bewilderment of normative or traditional discourse. Poetic surrealism's unconventional and illogical use of language and imagery, its free-roaming over sprawlingly vast and seemingly disparate semantic terrains, tears at the seams of a conventional world already in crisis, hastening its demise and conjuring radical visions of newness.

8. GENDER (FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY)

8.1. COMPLICATING FEMININITY

The *Dezanove Recantos* explore notions of femininity and masculinity, exploding them from within. Binary thinking – rigid, lacking in nuance, and always subordinating one of two terms to the other – underpins oppressive systems. So it was with gender binarism under Salazar, which underpinned the patriarchal dictatorship, justifying women's relegation to the purportedly private realm of the domestic (the site of unremunerated childcare, home-keeping and self-abnegation), while men were afforded citizenship rights, public power and the destructive exercise of military responsibilities overseas in the colonies. Turning to literature, in view of the consubstantial subordination of the female to the male in classical epic and Portuguese epic (*Os*

Lusíadas and *Mensagem*) – whereby male heroes are presented as actively forging national destinies while female figures are relegated to fulfilling the roles of muses or symbolic mothers of the nation – a literary recuperation of the feminine might, in itself, appear to be an important anti-epic and anti-patriarchal gesture.

Yet, as Rosa Maria Martelo has pointed out, Neto Jorge's response to the problem of activating female agency and desire was habitually enacted at the level of form rather than content (Martelo, 2001). At this juncture, it is instructive to return to Rosa Maria Martelo's arguments about the "corpo verbal" of Luíza Neto Jorge's poetry. Somewhat unlike Maria Teresa Horta, whose explicitly erotic poetry transforms the category of 'woman' from passive object into active subject, Neto Jorge's poetry generally does not often contain overt descriptions of erotic acts at the level of content (with the notable exception of 'Recanto 10'), although there are important instances of this. Instead, its eroticism is significantly enacted at the level of form, through the surrealist juxtaposition and rubbing-together of disparate elements, and cross-fertilising of images and ideas, bringing desire and fantasy to the surface of consciousness. The erotic charge of Neto Jorge's language itself is revolutionary, because it disturbs the discursive habits of language which ground gender norms in terms of an everyday biological obviousness and in terms amenable to religious orthodoxy. More than simply positioning its female-gendered characters as desiring subjects, her poetry insinuates the eroticism of female authorship itself. Moreover, it explodes the traditional binary categories of gender, themselves, along with all of their symbolic connotations. The *Dezanove Recantos* wander in and out of the feminine-coded space of the familial household, consider family relationships, and depict female corporeality, sexuality and eroticism obliquely – or rather, they examine how the female form and female desire are represented in culture. Tugging at the sutures that hold the fabric of (traditionally-conceived) female gender together (and ultimately male gender too), the text takes them to the point of their unravelling.

Opening femininity and masculinity up to critique and reformulation, by depicting processes of exceeding the boundaries of one's gender, the *Dezanove Recantos* ultimately point towards an identity-shattering queerness. The proliferation of sexual categories and ambiguously gendered characters in the *Dezanove Recantos* disrupts the notion of 'woman' as an obvious category, problematizing the idea that women have any natural, biological differences that justify circumscribing their social role or investing them with symbolic meaning. Against the notion of women's responsibility to mother the nation, the *Dezanove Recantos* point to ways in which purportedly female qualities are in fact co-opted by men for their own symbolic purposes. For instance, 'Recanto 9' depicts a male poet identifying himself with a breast in order to express milk, while 'Recanto 16' depicts "uma luminosidade quase cesariana/ na barriga do melhor amigo". Male lactation and pregnancy are gender-disrupting images, which simultaneously provoke questions about, in the first instance, the extent to which femininity is an empirical reality or merely a discursive category, available for strategic deployment, within a patriarchal system, in aid of asserting hierarchies (for example via the notion that, while women are destined to give birth to children, men are meant to give birth to products of the mind [see Battersby, 1989]), and, secondly, the degree to which the two genders are more fluidly-composed and intersecting than convention would allow. In place of femaleness and maleness as hegemonic identity positions, the text ultimately moves towards the development of a notion of human subjectivity that is permeated with facets of both genders, becoming creatively androgynous in nature, as well as simultaneously inflected with all kinds of (traditionally) abjected otherness: animality, machinery, and the non-human, in all of its many guises.

The *Dezanove Recantos* weave in a number of lexical fields which speak directly to the social position of women under Salazar. For instance, the preponderance of the lexis of family and the home, in the *Dezanove Recantos*, is noteworthy. Characters appear under the monikers of

"irmão", "irmã", "mãe", "pai", "o filho pródigo" (in particular, see 'Recanto 4'). The emphatic presence of family relations in a poem purporting to belong to the epic genre, within the Portuguese tradition, is unusual, and points to a strategic feminisation of epic space, through its being filled with the typical referents of the female experience of everyday Estado Novo life. If women were relegated to the private sphere, effectively "Home Bound" under Salazar (Ferreira, 1996), with limited opportunities for political activity and minimal scope for participation in civic life in the public realm, then the reformulation of the home as a space of everyday epic can be seen as an attempt to wrest the means of national myth-making from its male custodians. Furthermore, in an alternative strategy for destabilising the public-private binary, the *Dezanove Recantos* equally articulate the nuanced ways in which the private space is not as clearly demarcated as official rhetoric would claim, corroborating the feminist dictum that the personal is always-already political.

8.1.1. RECANTO 13: THE 'CORPO INENARRÁVEL' – THE FEMALE BODY

> Minha irmã é que nasceu a falar
> de um derramamento colossal
> da solidão.
>
> As mulheres, é espesso perfume lembrá-lo,
> têm ângulos ausentes no que vêem e no que falam e nas ocultas
> nebulosas do seu corpo
> o amante adivinha como um homem traído.
>
> Assim assim mesmo: nessa penumbra de metal candente
> anseia-se, decai a ansiedade
>
> e a mulher (Ila, irmã de Ilo o mundo, a minha irmã),
> que é repouso vasto enfurecido
> corre a apanhá-los,
> ao espelho, à flor,
> da cintura irrompendo como de um jardim
> para uma espécie de corpo inenarrável.

Neto Jorge's problematizing approach towards gender resonates with the poststructuralist emphasis on its social and cultural construction via discourse, and points towards an anti-

essentialist attitude towards what it means to be a woman. However, this approach is simultaneously rooted in an awareness of the marginalised position of women (and women artists) under the Salazar regime, and as such it also heeds and responds to the French post-structural feminist thinker Hélène Cixous's call for women to put themselves manifestly and defiantly into their texts, to make their presence felt (cf. Cixous, 1976: 875) – hence the Invocation's depiction of the female muse-hand scratching, insistently, under the ground, like a symbol of the return of the repressed. In one of her memorable interventions on the subject of gender, from within her wider poetic universe, Neto Jorge describes gender as an ill-fitting format (see Klobucka 2009: 242-260), a box that one is called upon to inhabit so as to become socially and culturally intelligible and yet which is entirely inadequate for accommodating the rich ambiguities of any identity. Indeed, it is a format that only fits in reverse ("do avesso"), that is, when it is being subverted. Furthermore, as Anna Klobucka has pointed out, throughout Neto Jorge's oeuvre there emerges an idiosyncratic vision of the eroticised female body which is a "dynamic and evolving universe unto itself" (Klobucka, 2008: 97-8), a "discontinuous, non-totalisable series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, speeds and durations" (Grosz 1994: 164), akin to Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the body – as well as resonating with the fluidity of feminine form explored in Correia's *Cântico do país emerso*. Neto Jorge's female body does not conform to notions of propriety, unity, or self-sameness.

While the fluid, cyclical structure of the *Dezanove Recantos* implies that all of the poems contained within the sequence relate to one another in some sense, there are two Recantos which, taken together, seem to speak most directly to the question of sex and gender – both in terms of the sexed female body, and the shaping of femaleness as a social construct through discourse. Recantos 13 and 14 contain an abundance of references to the female form and to the socio-cultural signifiers of femininity. On the one hand, this drawing together of the tropes

of femaleness and femininity, via a centripetal movement of concentration, brings them into sharp relief. On the other hand, the dislocation of these terms from any comfortable relationship to a stable referent, by way of an obviously- or individually-identifiable female body, provides these poems with a centrifugal force of expansion, explosion, dislocation and spillage. It is perhaps no coincidence that 'Recanto 13' opens precisely with this notion of spillage. Ila, the poet-speaker's sister (evidenced by cross-referencing the first-person possessive adjectives used in line 1 and 10), is described as having been born, Athena-like, already endowed with speech, speaking of "um derramamento colossal/ da solidão" – imbuing the abstract word solitude with a viscous-like materiality, both threatening to spill out excessively into all of reality, but also to spill away from its supposed referent, woman/women. I contend that the female gender, in these poems,[77] is a signifier being emptied of its meaning through excessive citation. As Marinela Freitas has written:

> the creation of highly gendered subjects may [...] work within a wider scope of modern strategies of decentring the subject: being excessively feminine may have the opposite effect of blurring conventional traits of femininity, of creating an effect of depersonalization by an excess of definition. (Freitas, 2007: 135).

Furthermore, 'Recanto 13' opens with a grammatical structure suggestive of answering a question ("Minha irmã *é que* nasceu" [my emphasis]), an unknowable one, steeping the poem's meaning in enigma. This calls to mind how women have often been cast in the role of mysterious riddle-posing sphinx, the counterpart to man as the eternal riddle-solving truth-seeker.

These poems invoke an array of traditionally womanly traits. The invocation of women's solitude, "solidão" ('Recanto 13', line 3) perhaps stands for patriarchal attempts to curtail female community building through the stifling of women's collectivities including feminist

[77] Anna Klobucka has referred to the poems/recantos of the *Dezanove Recantos* as "segments" in a "pseudo-epic sequence" (see 2008b: 97).

organisations. It equally calls to mind women's relegation to the private realm of domesticity (wherein solely familial relationships are possible), and the perennial blindness towards women's genealogies of cultural output. Women's beauty regimes, which, in Foucauldian terms (*Discipline and Punish,* 1977b), involve the rendering *docile* of female bodies through their self-objectification in relation to the male gaze, are subsequently evoked by the references to "perfume" and "espelho" (lines 4 and 13). The female form is considered via the evocation of its "ângulos ausentes" (line 5), which suggest its apparent curvaceousness, lack of angularity and supposed structurelessness – that is to say its characterisation by patriarchy as somehow "morphologically dubious" (Braidotti 2011: 226), contrasting with the purported unity and structural integrity of the falsely neutral (masculine) subject of Western philosophy. In similar vein, the "ocultas/ nebulosas do seu corpo" (lines 5-6) and "penumbra" (line 8) call to mind the notion of the female body as a dark continent, an unenlightened realm of unintelligibility. Meanwhile, female anatomy is evoked in the emphatic line-commencing reference to "a cintura" (line 14), with the hips being a focal point of the childbearing body, aligned with the Salazarian coding of women as heterosexual, biological reproducers of the nation, tied to their role as mothers. The word "ansiedade" (line 9) invokes the purported fragility of the female mind, calling to mind traditional associations between hysteria and the womb (*hystera*, in Greek). Yet more traditional associations, this time between the feminine and nature, are communicated in the words "flor" (line 13), which suggests delicacy and perhaps inertness, and "jardim" (line 14), signifying something natural yet tameable. Honey, "o mel" ('Recanto 14', line 2), potentially serves as a euphemism for female sexuality (a traditional metaphor reaching back to the *Song of Soloman* 4:11). Also suggestive of female docility and sweetness are the words "a apetência", "a doçura", "a ternura" (lines 4 and 7). Feminine capriciousness and uncertainty is then further evoked in "ventos vacilantes" (line 15). This excessive profusion of the trappings and tropes of femininity, saturating the lexis of both poems, draws attention to how essential notions of gender rely on precisely such clusters of symbols.

Developing its own pseudo-epic myth, 'Recanto 13' invokes the mythic figures of Ilo/Ila, brother and sister. Their unfailingly simultaneous appearances, wherever they appear within the collection, suggest a model of shared identity or even distributed consciousness, such that they are inconceivable except as a pair. Moreover, their respective male and female genders are complicated by the fact that Ilo (the apparently male entity, by virtue of the Portuguese masculine ending in "o") is first introduced as "um ovo fecundo o mundo" (Recanto 1, line 38), while Ila (the female entity, ending in "a") takes on the role of intrepid traveller, which is a staple identity of male epic heroes ("viajante do espaço ínfimo entre dois planetas revolucionados", Recanto 1, lines 39-40). Ila is introduced in Recanto 13 as "Minha irmã" (line 1), and then as "a mulher" (line 10). Intriguingly, line 10 – which describes Ila as "irmã de Ilo o mundo", and then as "a minha irmã" – may even suggest that the enunciating voice of this poem is Ilo himself, who is the world. At the very least, we are reminded of the poet-speaker's interrelatedness with these sibling entities, who are gendered, material figures for (female) embodiment and (male) earthiness. The notion of the first-person human poet-prophet, concerned above all with the fate of other human beings, is replaced, in favour of an earthy, ambiguously gendered voice.[78]

Recanto 13 offers its own interpretation on the (un)narratability of the female body ("corpo inenarrável"), a body which is nevertheless obliquely inscribed into the text through surreal word associations and mysterious descriptions. This poem's evocation of the unnarratability of the female body is part and parcel of an epic-complicating arresting of narrative flow, in that the female body – strategically exploiting its traditional associations with the natural world (hence the references to the "repouso vasto enfurecido", the "flor", and the "jardim") – detains narrative flow. Bearing in mind that the *Dezanove Recantos* begin with the expression of the earth itself

[78] This is ambiguous – the enunciating voice of Recanto 13 could be a further sibling of Ilo/Ila, or else could be Ilo (given the implications of the possessive adjectives in the poem).

having a will that is being channelled through the poet ("…. Socorre-se a terra de mim", 'Recanto 1', line 2), it follows that these elements of the natural world – seeming symbols of the female form, at one level – also take on an animate life of their own, themselves participating in this process of narrative detention. What is staged is a revolt of the backdrop, a revolt of the landscape, of the natural world, against the masculine oppressors who would seek to tame, categorise and demarcate land, territories and nature in the name of their imperialist ventures. In view of the traditional associations of femaleness with nature, the "mute, feminine ground on which the ascendant male subjects erects himself" (Alaimo, 2010: 135), supposedly static, passive, abject matter, Neto Jorge's strategic mobilisation of nature takes on special significance – it represents a risky but playful, postmodern appropriation of nature "as a mode of cultural critique" (Alaimo 2000: 133).

In keeping with this attention paid to the natural world, it is instructive to consider 'Recanto 13' in relation to the *oeuvre* of Florbela Espanca. 'Recanto 13' is inflected at the start with a melancholy tone, in its focus on the aforementioned notion of feminine/female solitude, absence and anxiety, calling to mind the lack-infused representation of women in the Western cultural imaginary. Not only does Florbela symbolise precisely this notion of the solitariness of the female genius within literary history (as well as indeed having been an artist who positively used her solitariness as a motor of her poetry, thematically incorporating notions of solitariness and unease), but her inclination for using nature-inspired images of flora, fecundity (calling to mind *Charneca em Flor* and its positive appropriation of femaleness/nature association within patriarchal thought), find a parallel in this Recanto's emphasis on the natural world, which culminates in an image of fertility in the final two lines of its final stanza. In these lines, the Ur-woman is bursting forth, from her waist, as though from a garden, into a species of unnarratable body – with the use of the gerund "irrompendo" indicating an unending process of becoming, whereby the figure of tamed nature ("jardim") becomes wild through erupting into the

unknowable, unclassifiable, unstoryable. To borrow Jack Halbertam's term, from his book *Wild Things*, the female body is thus *bewildered*, breaking free of the confining realms of classification and masculine, teleological narrative.

8.1.2. RECANTO 14: HONEY-FLUID STRUCTURING AND SELF-AWARE ARTIFICE

> Senti por sobre a áspera estrutura
> o mel correr
>
> como retrato do mel, como símbolo de líquido,
> apetência, doçura, sim
> como símbolo de líquido doce
> para além do puro mel que se entornava.

This Recanto hereby commences with a meta-textual commentary on structure building, beginning with poetic structures and, as such, the poem represents a meta-commentary on the *Dezanove Recantos*' intervention within the epic tradition. Neto Jorge juxtaposes what may be her own honey-fluid structuring technique ("o mel corer"), with the "áspera estrutura" – which may be a reference to Camões's rigidity of form (whereby the rigid metrical structure of *Os Lusíadas* is regulated by the rules of rhyme, line and stanza lengths). Rigid metre runs parallel with the rigidity of his conception of time (progressing steadily in the direction of an already-written, prophesied imperial future), whereby the fulfilment of metrical exigency, in formal terms, stands as a metonym for the prophetic fulfilment of the nation's destiny, at the level of content.

Neto Jorge's style is invested in the self-aware and affect-permeated acts of reading, interpretation, and representation. The honey, which is the fluid material of words in surrealist free-flow is emphatically *not* "pure honey", but instead is "a portrait of honey". In an anti-Platonic gesture, which declares and celebrates the artifice of poetry, it is a *symbol* of the liquid rather than the thing-in-itself. Yet precisely because it is *self-consciously* a symbol, it is also fluid, malleable, and structure-blurring. This is because, as symbolism's (more typical) function of determining value structures, by mediating reality, becomes consciously appreciated, its

contingency becomes equally apparent. This enables its reformulation. The revelation of artifice, which provokes the alienating *verfremdungseffekt* (as Bertold Brecht reminds us), is an anti-authoritarian, anti-propagandistic gesture, which upsets the security of ideology. Moreover, a certain tenderness ("apetencia" [stanza 2], "doçura" [stanza 3]) is linked to this fluidity, which ties in with this collection's emphasis on the personal, the domestic, and the feminine. Stanza 4's fluidly babbling quality, with its repetitions of "estava […] estava" and "passeando passeando", and equally alliterative "vaga de ventos vascilantes" contributes to this impression of fluid manifestations of desire and non-linear, non-rigid, non-logical structuring.

8.2. HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES AND THE COLONIAL WARS

Like other fascist regimes in Europe, Portugal's Estado Novo sought to cultivate a model of masculinity that would bolster its own power. Not only did this entail a strict delineation between the two genders, involving the subordination of women and privileging of men, but it also meant engendering male subjects to be strong and health-orientated (therefore useful in the armed struggles to sustain the colonial enterprise, as well as in manual labour in service of the nation), authority-serving and patriotic (therefore willing to obey all dictates from above), heterosexual and family-focussed (and so involved in the biological reproduction of the nation), and with a racist, Eurocentric, expansionist mind-set (that is, ready to support the regime in its acquisitive campaigns abroad for territory and resources, and desire to subjugate racialised others).

Such an imperially-minded male subject would subscribe to many of the central tenets of Camonian epic, as construed by Salazarian readings of it: firstly, that empirical knowledge of the world can be derived from sight – in other words that seeing is equivalent to knowing – such that the material world (which is treated as an object) may be apprehended by the exploring masculine subject through his representational schemes; secondly, that Portuguese history brims

full of morally-upstanding, male, imperialist heroes whose lives are to be emulated by their present-day sons; thirdly that the destiny of Portugal as a relatively small yet intrepid Christian nation is set on a teleological trajectory towards progress, expansion, and moral and spiritual transcendence; fourthly, that the virile, unambiguously-gendered body is a healthy body; fifthly, that all emotions deemed unhelpful to the imperial enterprise are to be overcome.

This bellicose male subject comes under scrutiny in the *Dezanove Recantos*, through its rhizomatic enterprise of confusing the arboreal straightforwardness of male heroic lineages and epic teleology, as well as its blurring of the boundaries of the male form and masculine subject, which become implicated (formally through surrealist juxtapositions, and thematically via the poems' interest in androgyny, queerness, deconstruction and the nonhuman) in the characteristic traits of its own supposed opposites. Against the backdrop of the colonial wars, and deconstructing this model of masculinity as inherently or justly violent (according to Salazarian colonial ideology), the *Dezanove Recantos* posits a masculinity that is in flux, feminised and vulnerable.

The language of warfare – including the domains of war machinery, armament production lines, fire, weaponry, combat, injury and death – presents itself throughout the *Dezanove Recantos*. By way of example, 'Recanto 6' includes references to "bombas", "revólveres", "mil mortos", "mil feridos", "enumerações metálicas", "oficinas metalúrgicas"; 'Recanto 7' contains "em plena guerra", "incêndio", "incendiador", "adaga", "inimigos", "gladiador"; 'Recanto 16' contains "a ressoar numa revolução"; 'Recanto 17' refers to "planalto em fogo", "fogo", "túmulo", "às armas!", "as armas e os varões", "o sangue", "um massacre", "batalha", "morte", "destruição", "corpors mortos"; 'Recanto 18' contains the line "Desses «em guerra» vos falo". This abundant imagery of war and violence points to a critique of the on-going colonial wars in Africa, which appears to permeate the collection irresistibly, through rhizomatically spreading across multiple

poems. Just as, during the Estado Novo, radio broadcasts infiltrated the home with the regime's gendered propaganda, indoctrinating men to be patriotic, militaristic and colonizing, so too the colonial wars themselves insinuate their way into the intimate space of the *Dezanove Recantos* (an intimacy discussed by Amaral in the epigraph to this chapter). Moreover, in opposition to colonial violence, it could be said that the avant-garde poetic practice evidenced in the poem-sequence invokes the lexis of war in order to bring to the surface the reality of colonial violence. Concurrently, there is an assault on the symbolic order as the poems enact a deconstructive effort against the very symbolic structures (in language) that promote imperialism, warfare and the patriarchal subjugation of others. Through their assertive intervention through explicit references to war, at a time of censorship, the *Dezanove Recantos* are therefore startlingly anti-violent.

The *Dezanove Recantos* have the shadow of war hanging over them, and they redeploy the language of warfare in surrealist imagery, juxtaposing images of destruction with other images of life and vitality. The fact that these juxtapositions function throughout the entirety of the collection means that the current of war is broken up by other streams, including domesticity, family, animality and so on. Therefore, structurally speaking, warfare is interspersed with other fields of meaning which displace or complicate it; the text presents a spectrum of life (domesticity and sexuality) and death (warfare and destruction). Neto Jorge's rhizomatically-organised text, with its criss-crossing of all of these fields of reference, implies that the colonial wars are not simply happening in a far-off place in the overseas territory, but rather emerge from the very fabric of the way Portuguese society is constituted, just as the forces necessary for countering Salazar's necropolitics are also present in seed.[79] That structural sense of the irrepressible

[79] By "necropolitics", I refer to the regime's intentional letting-die of dispensible colonized subjects and Portuguese soldiers, according to the logic of imperial warfare. Although this term was coined by Achille Mbembe (2019) to refer to violence committed by democratic regimes, I find it useful to implement retroactively as shorthand for the political organisation and legitimisation of killing more generally, especially with reference to colonial powers.

emergence of warfare in this epic of the everyday,[80] alongside other elements including family and so on, shows the integration and imbrication of all facets of national and personal life. The personal and the political cannot be separated, as the colonial wars and all other facets of life are interconnected.

The epic as a genre, particularly as it is manifested in Camões, is often about warfare. Epic poems are about how conflict with others is used to demarcate a sense of community identity. There are monstrous entities, including Adamastor, or inscrutable Orientals, who are situated on the boundaries of national territory, the boundaries of the known. They are to be tamed or fought against. Through fighting and conjuring into being a group called the enemy, the epic engenders a sense of identity for the warrior group, producing an "imagined community", to borrow Benedict Anderson's term for nations (Anderson, 1991). Beyond this, the epic – particularly under the lense of a Salazarian interpretation – is about drumming up a crusading zeal, about spreading an ideology. *Os Lusíadas* is explicitly addressed to Dom Sebastião to this end, with Camões's call for the extension of Christendom, in order to fulfil the prophecies contained in the "máquina do mundo" episode (Canto 10), and Pessoa is addressing a cosmopolitan artistic community to compel Portuguese culture on towards new heights.

Recantos 17 and 18 draw special attention to the interrelated questions of Salazarian masculinities, the authority of the male voice, and the necropolitics of the colonial wars – revealing the violent curtailment of life and diversity they imply, as well as delineating paths, however vaguely, towards life-affirming alternatives. Amongst the most enigmatic of all the *Recantos*, 'Recanto 17' is structured as stream of consciousness or surrealist enumeration

[80] This is especially suggested by the intimacy of the word "recanto", suggesting interior space, as well as Luiza Neto Jorge's own affirmation that the heroic action of this poem pertain to the everyday life of an average individual: "em viver e permanecer vivo, inventar a nova face de tudo, amar desvendando, desfalsificar – que outras acções heróicas não há!" (Jorge, 1969: 3).

punctuated throughout with eruptions of something akin to the Kristevan semiotic *chora*, as described in her psychoanalytic book *Revolution in Poetic Language* (Kristeva, 1986: 93-98): that is to say, the inarticulate sounds, babbling and gurgling associated with "the anarchic, pre-Oedipal component drives, and polymorphous erotogenic zones, orifices and organs" (Sarup 1993: 124), linked with the space of the nourishing maternal body.

'Recanto 17' begins with a question marked by a tone of incredulity extending over 6 lines, spilling from the first stanza into the opening line of the second, through enjambment: "Como podem dizer [....]// Isto?" (line 1 and line 6). Enunciating the question is the poet-speaker ("comecei eu" [line 1]). The third-person subject of the verb "poder" is revealed to be an unnamed group ("tipos", a generic word for a group of men, which homogenises them, setting them up in the symbolic role of ur-men or representatives of the patriarchal order). Following the question, which is itself interspersed with enigmatic references to a "planalto em fogo" (line 2), days without struggle ("os dias sempre lentamente/ sem luta" [line3]), and an imperfect tense marking the appearance of a first-person plural subject (line 4), there emerge from the second stanza onwards a series of parentheses, including: "(A vida? «Ah! Ah!»/ — mostrando os dentes)". The baring of teeth in response to the invocation of life suggests an extremity of emotion – whether of anger, frustration or pain.

As the poem continues, the depiction of life under the governance of the (nameless but evidently authoritative) "tipos" (to whom the poems' central questions are all directed, implying that they are the authorised purveyors of knowledge itself) is increasingly inflected with descriptions of death, unemployment and poverty (for example, "estávamos no meio/ do túmulo desemprego" [line 9-10]). In this sense, Neto Jorge's text seems to imply that life under the sign of patriarchy is a pallid and cruel substitute for either true vitality or good governance. Indeed, this sense that patriarchy is itself this poem's target of criticism is reinforced in the third stanza, in which a life

that has been lost forever is seemingly equated – via the poet-speaker's act of naming ("podem chamar-lhe" [line 12]) – with the personage of "esse que [...]/ *gritava* fecunfo fraco e franco" (lines 13-14, my emphasis), pointedly echoing an earlier description in 'Recanto 4' of another archetypal patriarchal entity, the father figure ("Meu pai *gritava*" [line 1, my emphasis]). The word of the father in patriarchal systems is law, a notion advanced in 'Recanto 4' by the Pai's God-like speech, as though passing judgement in its implied support of austereness ("comeu-se demais na terra" [lines 1 and 14]), a quality associated with the nation's frugal purse-keeper Salazar. Returning to 'Recanto 17', the alliterative list of homonyms ("fecundo fraco e franco"), through its semiotic texture privileging patterns of sound and rhythm over logical meaning, disrupts the logic of any would-be lawgiver. Additionally, it marks the masculine "esse" with feminine qualities of fecundity and weakness. Thus, Neto Jorge stages a resistance of poetic language in a feminine key against the rigid structuring principles of the dictatorial regime.

Moreover, the masculine third-person plural subject (referred to variously as "tipos" and "eles" in this poem) is linked to a notion of linear time through the metaphor of a disembodied transcendental flight inexorably moving into the future, in the following lines (16-18):

> «Em voo!» diziam eles (para o futuro!)
> não voo! nem vou! E embora recusasse fosse,
> como se diz, um pobre.

The reported speech in line 16 («Em voo!»), with its exclamation mark, appears to be an imperative, an order given by the nameless "eles" to the "pobre" of line 18. Adding detail to this instruction, in line 16, is the bracketed "(para o futuro!)", which is also similarly punctuated with an exclamation mark. This future-orientated flight implies a conception of time which the *Dezanove Recantos* as a whole undermine through their rhizomatic structure, defying any sense of a normative chronology – by means of circularity, cycles and multidirectional flow. It is therefore a principal target of the poem-sequence's critique. In view of 'Recanto 18''s subsequent

admission that "Desses «em guerra» vos falo", it is possible to assume that the unstated but patently suggested context are the colonial wars: the masculine authority figures ("eles") of 'Recanto 17' deliver an order which the "pobre" is forced to obey, no matter what his protestations may be – protestations which, it is worth noting, are voiced using precisely the same stammering semantics ("não voo! nem vou!" [line 17]) of the Kristevan *chora* which I have already identified as being a staple feature of the feminine poet-speaker's voice in this poem. A bond of shared innocence in the face of the Symbolic Order, which is ruled over by the poem's nebulous cast of patriarchs, thereby links the poet herself with the poor man. Painted for war with "pó de arroz/ nas bochechas" – implying a suppression of reality beneath a veneer of embellishment (arguably a parallel for the role of propaganda in sustaining war drive in the years following the emergence of independence movements in the African colonies in 1961) – the poor man is an individual caught up in master narratives beyond his control.

Stanzas 5 and 6 are pivotal because, by featuring quotations from Camões's *Os Lusíadas*, they draw special attention to Neto Jorge's complication of epic:

Se nada não havia (nem eu) ninguém ninguém
nas fotografias: gostas? chora! às armas!
as armas e os varões
no meio da alma e no corpo assinalados
no interior no escuro escorregavam, não podem! Gritavas,
agoniante parede a tua
pele, e o sangue.

Pois quando dia a dia (projecção das sombras)
nos lares a rádio a televisão as sombras
um massacre um corpúsculo duro
para tu seres peço-te, e eu, pedi-mo, o rochedo
imortal sobre a linha do meridiano (a cores!)
quebrando-a.

At this juncture, it is worth emphasising that, despite my advancement of a particular thesis regarding the possible identity of all of the subjects present in this poem, it remains the case that the referents for all of these subject pronouns and nouns ("eu", "me", "tipos", "eles", "um pobre",

and from Stanza 5 onwards "tu") are difficult to define, retaining their uncertain status within the overall narrative of the collection, in so far as there is one. By way of comparison with the Renaissance hypotext, whereas Camões makes his poem's addressee explicit (Dom Sebastião), and creates a collective "we" (the Portuguese) by way of engendering an imagined community, here – contrastingly – the subjects ('I's, 'you's, 'we's, and 'they's) blur multiple possible identity positions. There is no straightforward clarity of address, nor a singular statement of purpose, in this work.

The strategic inclusion of quotations from *Os Lusíadas* within a poem that is surreal – a stream of consciousness with surprising juxtapositions of images, with no clear addresser or addressee – arguably debunks the notion that it is the task of an epic poet to address and construct an imagined community with whom one can communicate lucidly; indeed, the lucidity of a divinely-inspired male prophet-poet is nowhere to be seen. There is no singular poetic personality unveiling the truth about Portuguese identity; rather, we have a poetic voice which is dubious about the existence even of any obvious Portuguese identity – Neto Jorge's internationalist outlook, born from her time in Paris around the time of the May 68 revolution, would additionally support this thesis. The tendency of the poem to complicate epic comes to the fore, as the *Dezanove Recantos* claim for themselves a space of confusion, of unimagining the collective community, and of uninheriting historical narratives and future-orientated trajectories. In this vein, the presence of seven unanswered rhetorical questions throughout this poem (including the "...Isto?" of line 6, and others in stanzas 5 ["gostas?], 8 ["E eu?"], ["A troco de que raiva...?"], 9 ["por que dinheiro?"], 10 ["por que regra?"] and 11 ["em excepção?"]) further undoes the certainty of the rhetoric of prophecy and progress in epic master narratives of national expansion. Neto Jorge's poem offers no simple solutions, as question marks proliferate throughout its unconventional punctuation.

Stanzas 5 and 6 form the centre of the poem, and perhaps offer the clearest reading in terms of a critique of Salazarism. The regime's vehicles of propaganda are referenced in Stanza 6, for example, in the form of radio and television – ideological tools for forming the ideal *docile body*, in Foucauldian terms, as well as the correctly gendered subject. The explicit intrusion of political propaganda into the domestic space ("lares"), at this juncture, explodes the binary between the public and the private. Forming a "projecção de sombras", calling to mind the deceitful shadows on the wall of Plato's cave which are merely shadowy projections of true realities outside the cave, this propaganda is deceitful and manipulative. Stanza 6's reference to a "massacre" goes on to insinuate the death toll of the colonial wars, in a revelation of what war-time propaganda either fails to disclose or else portrays in heroic terms as necessary deaths in service of the Fatherland.

Surrealism is the framework that allows Luiza Neto Jorge to channel a dissident political statement against Salazar into the heart of the poem, because either side of it we seem to be presented with the opt-out clauses conveyed by distracting and near-impenetrable surrealist enumerations of startling wordplay ("fecundo, fraco e franco" in stanza 3, and "l'amour, l'amourt" in stanza 7) as well as complex surrealist images ("flores// fulminadas" across stanzas 7 and 8). To an extent, nebulousness permits the evasion of censorship, even as it equally serves, on another level, to critique dominant systems of knowledge production that rely on establishing straightforward relations between causes and effects. Stanzas 5 and 6 thus appear to represent the return of the repressed, where a kind of clarity or directness emerges amid a sea of indeterminacy, subterfuge and obliqueness – yet it is a fleeting clarity which, rather than mirroring the self-assuredness of Salazarian propaganda's power-stabilising mechanisms, instead seeks to destabilise power through critique. One of surrealism's goals involved the liberation of the subconscious, and so it follows that the surrealist poems of the *Dezanove Recantos* stage the emergence of repressed realities as a way of critiquing the colonial enterprise.

Stanza 5's invocation of the opening line of Camões's epic in a modified version, splitting "as armas e os varões" from its original accompanying adjective "assinalados" with a supplementary specification ("no meio da alma e no corpo"), draws particular attention to the act of literary "re-vision" (Rich, 1972). As this stanza progresses, the transcendentalist logic of the Camonian hypotext – with its exaltation of superhuman force marshalled in the service of imperial expansionism – is undercut by a revelation of the bodily human cost of the wars that sustain empire: "agoniante parede a tua/ pele e o sangue" (lines 27-8). The precise identity of the "tú" is unknowable, yet, considering the imagery of bodily vulnerability being set against the backdrop of the colonial wars, it is possible to speculate that this may be a figure for the wounded soldier or subaltern colonized subject. If maleness under Salazar is war-like and dutiful in shouldering the physical burden of empire building, then the revelation of the male corporeal vulnerability gives the lie to grand narratives of masculine invulnerability.

The first-person voice of the poet-speaker subsequently intervenes with an act of ontological invention, saying "para tu seres peço-te, e eu, pedi-mo, o rochedo/ immortal sobre a linha do meridiano (a cores!)/ quebrando-a". In order for the second person subject to come into being, the "I" invokes the "rochedo immortal". This description of an immortal cliff is redolent of Camões's mythological creation Adamastor. In *Os Lusíadas*, this giant stands in for the Cape of Good Hope, who is circumnavigated and therefore defeated by Vasco da Gama, also stands in synecdochally for the whole of colonized Africa ('Aqui toda a Africana costa acabo' [V.50.v]). As a figure partially conflated with the "sub-Saharan black African", in terms of Renaissance suppositions about particular physical traits and melancholiness (explored by Josiah Blackmore, 2009: 130), Adamastor represents the subaltern. As David Quint has remarked, he is a figure for the return of the repressed, being at least partly a substitute for the Polyphemus-like African Hottentots subdued earlier in the epic by da Gama's crew (Quint, 1989: 128).

Building on this myth's susceptibility to being read through the lens of post-coloniality, therefore, the "rochedo immortal" of Neto Jorge's text may similarly invoke the point of view of the subjugated other, whose resistance breaks the straight line of the meridian – symbolising the overturning of the cartographic obsessions of the Renaissance Portuguese discoverers. Thus, in order for the vulnerable "eu" and "tú" of this poem to come into being, in a reciprocal relation, it is first necessary to overcome the homogenising effect of grand narratives of empire building, which rely on notions of dutiful collective enterprise. Subaltern resistance, in the form of a reworked invocation of Adamastor as a rebellious element of the natural world (the immortal cliff), additionally implies a world in which the obliteration of difference becomes impossible; the other, the "you", resists becoming subsumed within a European regime of world-building, refusing to become yet another point on the map of the Discoveries. In so doing, it makes itself visible as an agent. Contrasting with the parenthetically marked (and therefore conspicuous) dark shadows cast by propaganda (in line 29), the line of the meridian – in being broken – bursts into colour: "a cores!)". The revelation of difference, in the form of a plurality of colours, becomes another step in resisting propaganda's homogenising mission to foster conformity.

In stanza 7, there are allusions to the flowering and the non-flowering (the word "criptogâmica" in line 35 refers to a plant which does not produce flowers, and to organic lifeforms whose reproductive organs are hidden), to birth and death (including the possible allusion to stillbirth ("cedo demais/ vamos nascendo"). A post-structuralist reading of this stanza reveals how the co-presence of flowers ("(flor! flor!)") within the "criptogâmica" (in line 35), and the parity between birth and death (in lines 38-41), all queerly suggest that each term in the binary contains its own opposite. Furthermore, in view of the rhizomatic structure of the *Dezanove Recantos*, it is worth noting the continual, sporadic emergence of the language of wildness and the floral: the exclamation mark inflected 'flores' emerge here like symbols of the repressed unconscious,

having been explicitly associated with the feminine in 'Recanto 13'. Moreover, because of the potential link between, on the one hand, the motion of singular to plural leading from "a flor" (line 41) to "flores fulminadas" (lines 42-43) and, on the other hand, the same tension in number contained in the words "corpo(s) morto(s)" (line 48), which is presumably a figure for the war dead, it could well be that the flowers are yet another allusion to the men that have died in battle. Through the vulnerable symbol of the flower, they are being figured in the feminine. The line "ao(s) corpo(s) morto(s) de todos" (line 48) encapsulates the notion of the homogenisation of dead bodies – in the sense that a dead body loses its individuality – and the sense of a necessary grieving over individual deaths. The plural may refer to every single colonial subject and soldier killed during the anti-colonial struggles. Yet, as the simultaneous presence of the singular suggests, the machinery of warfare homogenises all bodies within a collective death.

Repetitive and stammering, in accordance with Deleuze's precepts for the linguistic strategies of a "minor literature" which would undermine a national canon from within (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986), the opening line of 'Recanto 18' appears to render explicit the content of the preceding poem: "Desses "«em guerra» vos *falo*, *falo* dos que..." (line 1, my emphasis). The formal "vos" pronoun would therefore refer back to the "tipos" of the preceding poem, making of Recantos 17 and 18 a pair of communicating vessels, spilling over one into the other. Moreover, this reference to "«em guerra»", featured in speech marks (standing out on the printed page) rhizomatically weaves a thread back through a number of different recantos in the collection, especially those which include the imagery of warfare. More specifically, the earlier 'Recanto 7' painted a "retrato de homem nascido/ «em plena guerra»", conjuring an image of a single man born at the height of war and using the same punctuation indicative of direct speech or citation. Upon reaching 'Recanto 18', the singular ("homem nascido") has become plural ("Desses"), suggesting a shift in focus from the individual to the collective. This oscillation between the singular and the plural further builds on 'Recanto 17''s aforementioned signposting

of movements from the singular into the plural, all of which had been foregrounded by the use of punctuation marks (including brackets, ellipses and exclamation marks). The first stanza of 'Recanto 18' also contains a chilling reference to the damaging impact of linear time and teleological trajectory of epic: the words "projetados para a morte" imply that projections into the future can be deadly.

However, the critique of epic's collective voicing of the nation reaches its peak in stanzas 4 and 5 of 'Recanto 18':

Amamos o mundo (quem?) o tempo (qual?) a luz (quando?)
a treva (onde?) tudo (?) todos (?!)
trepidantes trémulos
com a ajuda mental de partículas
de merda

Ou simples estados, frenesis, convulsivos, objectos,
alibis, a pique, patológicos,
risos, redundâncias, aços, lascados, alarmados,
conhecemos — além de nós, reais, —
os reis, os resíduos, o dente liliputiano
no sorriso do arcanjo.

The proliferation of bracketed question words with accompanying question marks, in stanza 4, explodes the notion of epic as prophetic pronouncement or as collective voicing of national identity and destiny. The authority of authorship is radically called into question. Rather than providing any answers or prophecies at all, the closing parts of the collection are thus figured under the signs of indeterminacy and querying. Even as the poet-speaker takes on the mantle of the collectivity in the first-person plural verb conjugation "Amamos" and "conhecemos", perhaps acknowledging the necessity of the collective voice (as a voice of rebellion), she nevertheless questions who is contained in this collective subject, revealing it to be contingent, problematized and open to interpretation. Stanza 5's juxtaposition between "nós, reais" and "os reis", from a Marxist perspective, draws attention to the hierarchical social relations between any kind of transcendental ruler and their earth-bound subject, emphasising the power relations

at the heart of religion and the cult of Salazar as dictator. However, the privilege of the subaltern, as ever, is to have this understanding of his or her own oppression – which is arguably the first step on the road to rebellion. The final image, which zooms in on the Liliputian teeth of the smiling archangel, invokes the idea of the smokescreen of a benevolent religion which sustains the rule of an emperor, like that of the fictional Liliput in Jonathan Swift's *Gullivers Travels*.

9. GENDER (QUEERNESS) AND DE-CENTRING THE HUMAN

Opening femininity and masculinity up to critique and reformulation, and depicting processes of exceeding the boundaries of one's gender, the *Dezanove Recantos* ultimately point towards an identity-shattering queerness. In place of femaleness and maleness as hegemonic identity positions, the text moves towards the development of a notion of human subjectivity that is permeated with facets of both genders, becoming creatively androgynous, as well as simultaneously inflected with all kinds of (traditionally) abjected otherness: animality, machinery, and the nonhuman in all of its many guises.

While femininity and masculinity are reworked in Recantos 13 and 14, and 17 and 18 respectively, there are other Recantos which forge paths beyond the gender binary through androgyny, or an identity-complicating queerness. Beginning with androgyny, it is noteworthy that the *Dezanove Recantos* represent maleness having female qualities, as in the references to the male poet expressing milk from his breast ('Recanto 9': "que um poeta se identifica com um seio/ para desvendar o leite"), and male pregnancy ('Recanto 16': "uma luminosidade quase cesariana/ na barriga do melhor amigo"). Men's co-opting of female qualities for their own symbolic purposes, in these gender-disrupting images of male lactation and pregnancy simultaneously provoke questions about, firstly, the extent to which femininity is an empirical reality or merely a discursive category, available for strategic deployment within a patriarchal system in aid of asserting hierarchies (for example via the notion that, while women are destined

for childbirth, men give birth to products of the mind [see Battersby, 1989]), and, secondly, the degree to which the two genders are more fluidly-composed and intersecting than convention would allow.

Moreover, the original Neto-Jorgian mythic entities of "Ilo" and "Ila" represent two sides of a dual sexual identity, which is both brotherly-sisterly and androgynous, and certainly fluid in terms of breaking down the typical attributes of each gender: in their first appearance in 'Recanto 1', it is the male entity "Ilo" who is described as "um ovo fecundo o mundo", therefore occupying the position of feminized, fertile, nature-associated, colonizable space; meanwhile, the female entity "Ila" is "viajante do espaço ínfimo", a traveller, and therefore equivalent to the male navigators of the Camonian epic hypotext. These are not self-defining, separable entities, but rub together, literally occupying contiguous lines within the structure of the poems. Through this friction, they almost create a third sex – which could be androgynous, in Virginia Woolf's sense of an undivided, resonant and porous creative mind, a "recognition of [fixed gender identities'] falsifying metaphysical nature" (Moi, 1985: 13) – providing an alternative to the binary gender system espoused by Salazar and the Catholic church. In the ambiguously gendered figure of Ilo/Ila, the *Dezanove Recantos* engage in thinking about androgyny as a productive foil to the ideology of gender binarism.

In relation to the queer, I draw on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's oft-cited and deliberately tentative definition, whereby queerness connotes "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't* be made) to signify monolithically" (1998: 8). Sedgwick's description of queerness is suggestive of porousness and permeability, for which the form of Neto Jorge's poetry is aptly accommodating. Furthermore, as Lee Edelman states, "[Q]ueerness can never define an identity; it can only ever disturb one" (2004: 17). The

gender-queer alternative subjects of the *Dezanove Recantos* embody animality and monstrosity (in the case of Vaídio, 'Recanto 5'), subverted religious iconography (the Anjo, 'Recanto 10') and impersonal desire (Dulcíssimo, 'Recanto 16'). Queerness calls into question the oppressiveness of the social organisation of desire, and opens up spaces of resistance to these norms, making it a useful prism through which to read the *Dezanove Recantos*'s pageant of ambiguously-gendered and hybridised entities as figures of resistance against sexual norms under Salazar. A radical decentring of the human takes place in the *Dezanove Recantos'* re-thinking of bodies as endlessly different, chipping away at the Salazarian social imaginary which sought to maintain maleness and femaleness as heterosexually-compatible discrete categories. The erasure of sexual difference and non-normative subject positionalities effected by Salazar is critiqued by Neto Jorge's text.

The *Dezanove Recantos* also stage a notion of hybridity, involving a fusion of elements usually considered discrete, producing surrealist *exquisite corpses* (with the *cadaver exquis* being a technique also used by Correia, as mentioned in Chapter II). The liberal humanist model sees the individual human being as the basic unit of life. Such a notion depends on the sense of human beings as having an embodied autonomy whose material contact with other bodies is limited, self-determined and fleeting, keeping the interval between self and other intact. In contrast with this atomistic self, then, the *Dezanove Recantos* posits models of being which involve the interpenetration of self and other, human and nonhuman, male and female, in a proliferating dissolution of binaries. The subject-object and self-other divides are consistently called into question. The disorder of categories, which is part and parcel of the surrealist mode, employed in the poems further this agenda of hybridity. Taking into account the Deleuzian notion of corporeal indeterminacy, whereby the idea of the singular subject is rejected in favour of a notion of subjecthood constituted by multiple, unpredictable webs of connection that come together in the form of assemblages, it is possible to see how the *Dezanove Recantos* presents

models of bodies that are amalgamations of multiple identities, and this comes together most especially in the monstrous figures of the machine-like Garfo and the animal-like Vaídio.

9.1. RECANTO 3: THE HUMAN: DE-CENTRED BY ANIMACY, COMPLEXIFIED BY CYBORGISM

> Começou então o Garfo
> autómato niquelado com o freio nos dentes
> a invader as capitais do corpo
>
> […]
>
> Ó Garfo automata fome desvairante ó puro estro
> pura e enfeitiçada boca
> tenros dentes seus faces por redimir
> mães aflitas
> correndo, recorrendo
> pelas 7 partes de tudo contornando-me.
>
> Comer – neste deserto – indestrutível, restaurante.
> Comer ver-se comer comer mais de tudo e mais
> comer do navio do espelho
> […]
>
> Ou pelo menos assim
> até que tudo
> se resolva e desenvolva
> activamente.
> (*Poesia*: 180).

Mel Y. Chen uses the concept of animacy – which, in linguistics, is a grammatical tool used to communicate the "sentience or liveness of nouns" (Chen 2012: 2) – to draw attention to the animated quality of the world beyond the purely human. Putting something other than human in the subject role in a sentence can unsettle anthropocentric assumptions about human beings' unique capacities for motivated action and agency. As Neto Jorge's poem gives life to the uncannily active automaton, Garfo, whose resemblance to the mythical bronze giant Talos of classical antiquity is striking,[81] it draws into focus the relationship (and resemblances) between

[81] As Adrienne Mayor explains, Talos was "an imagined android robot" (2018: 7). An "animated metal machine" in human form), in whose body flowed ichor (the blood of the immortal Greek gods), he was tasked with guarding the kingdom of Minos. He could roast victims alive by giving them a red-hot embrace, yet his weakness was his heels (from which his divine blood could be drained). As such, he is a

human and machine. An uneasy sense of the machine as an agent beyond human control is activated, as he invades the capitals of the body – as though the body were being imagined as a geographical territory he were attacking or infiltrating,

Like other figures in the collection, Garfo blurs gender distinctions (being nominally masculine, but having decorated feminine lips and tender teeth, albeit devouring ones [stanzas 3 and 4]), as well as being associated with the principle of absorption and consumption. Stanza 4 repeatedly and anaphorically references the activity of voracious eating, including the swallowing up of mythic symbols of Portuguese seafaring: the "navio" (evocative of the caravel, an imperial technology that made sea travel possible), and the "espelho" (or the mirror-like surface of the sea's water, referenced in Pessoa's *Mensagem* [*M*: 72]). Garfo's ambivalence is key: since machinic imagery appears rhizomatically elsewhere in the collection (such as in the "metal candente" associated with the female form in 'Recanto 13' [*Poesia*: 194]) as do teeth ("mostrando os dentes", 'Recanto 17' [*Poesia*: 199]), he is rhizomatically connected with other poems and entities. Earlier, in his first appearance, he is also described, in language reminiscent of Álvaro de Campos's machine-obsessed futurism and the 'Ode marítima' itself, as an "Eléctrico motor, louco navegante, máquina arborizada/ a lançar faíscas pelo mundo/ e sangue e seios e cílios sustentando o corpo" (*Poesia*: 176), with an arboreal quality which mixes the vegetality with the mechanical, and having the appearance of a vampiric *femme fatale*. Disturbing the "production of humanness" (Chen 2012: 3), he breaks down clear distinctions between ([male and female] human) animal and machine, agent and resource, maker and made. Yet, at the same time, despite Garfo's apparent aggressivity, the structure of 'Recanto 3' – as it moves into the fifth and final stanza – opens up the possibility of attenuating his voraciousness, with the "Ou pelo menos assim" suggesting the contingency of his frenetic machinic activity.

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disturbing figure who confounds distinctions between organic and inorganic, machinic and biological, as well as playing on incipient human anxieties concerning technology which continue into the present day.

In her *Cyborg Manifesto*, Donna Haraway discusses how a feminist cyborg aesthetics (that is to say, a feminist style of writing which does not demonise, but rather embraces high-tech culture and the "illegitimate fusions of animal and machine" it makes possible [2016a: 57]) may be a useful tool in the feminist toolbox. This is because cyborgism can serve to disrupt and dismantle the stable notions of Man (and the attendant binary systems of self/other, male/female, maker/made [2016a: 59]) upon which patriarchy erects itself. In this way, "[c]yborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our told to ourselves" (67). Reminding us that a "machine is not an *it* to be animated, worshipped, and dominated" but is rather an extension of "us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment" (2016a: 65), Haraway points out the need for feminists to learn to communicate well with all parts of their embodied reality, including machinic parts and technological extensions of the human.

In this way, Neto Jorge's invention of the cyborgian figure of Garfo – an ambivalent male-female, organic-inorganic, human-machine hybrid, potentially sinister in his violent voraciousness – serves as both a vision of the dangers of technology (especially when its own unique animacies are unleashed in wars of imperialism, as other poems in the collection suggest) but also a reminder of its being at least partially within-our-grasp, as an aspect of our own embodiment. It is therefore something we are ourselves *made from* and responsible for, even if it potentially also has the capacity to exceed our full control with its own animate power. Neto Jorge's poetry seems to indicate that we ought to come to know our machinic selves, in order to disturb and rectify anthropocentrism's obliviousness towards the ways in which machine agency can be manifested – for good or ill.

9.2. RECANTO 5: DE-CENTRING THE HUMAN THROUGH QUEER ANIMALITY

Alma elementar, a de animal.
No sorvedouro
se conserva extinta:

—alma de Vaídio esgatanhando.

Seu corpo de outra época
nas superfícies menores é corpo grado a incidir.

Seu corpo de animal
só fala de sorver
tudo o que encontrar

beijar-se dentro do estômago
almoçar nesse salão
a ternura fresca do peixe
da bebida;

coisa fulgente, alibi cheio de escamas, ao meio-dia.

This poem centres upon the enigmatic, eccentric and hybridised figure of Vaídio, "Alma elementar, a de animal", whose identity conflates spirituality with animality in equal measure – as demonstrated by the perfect balancing of the alliteratively and phonemically-similar words "alma" and "animal", with their being positioned at opposing ends of line 1. According to Christianity and centuries of Western philosophy, the rational nonmaterial soul (associated with the supposedly higher faculties of reason and speech) is an exclusively human possession, which raises humans above animals and earthly associations. For example, St Augustine, whose thought lies at the heart of the early development of Christian belief, embraced classical Stoicism's view that all earthly beings existed as a function of their usefulness to human beings, justifying this notion through Genesis's encouragement of human dominion over the Earth,[82] as well as via the belief that, unlike human beings, animals did not possess a rational soul (Steiner 2005: 118, 119). Later, Descartes picks up Aristotle's distinction between "humans with rational discourse

[82] Neto Jorge calls into question Christianity's endorsement of humanity's dominion over and subordination of animals, nature, and the planet itself – which is subjugated under the yolk of its human custodians follows the Biblical mandate for humanity to subdue and rule over creation [Genesis 1: 26-28]).

and animals who employ mere unconscious, nonrational codes and instinctual utterances" (Calarco 2022: 63) in formulating his own conception of more-than-human animals as soulless automata. Neto Jorge's Vaídio, who embodies the soul of an animal, confounds these ideas of human exceptionalism. As such, while the Christian story of Adam and Eve's creation in God's likeness (and their being given dominion over the earth and all its living creatures), has long nourished humanity's sense of superiority over and contempt for nonhuman animals, then it seems that Neto Jorge's text hereby articulates, in her poet-portrait of Vaídio, an anti-Christian idea of the irrepressible spiritual worth of animals. Moreover, it is noteworthy that – in structural terms – the first two stanzas reference the "alma", and then we arrive at the "corpo", implying a movement from the soul towards the body. This is an inverted hierarchy, within Western metaphysics – a direction of travel (from the abstract soul towards the more concrete level of the individual body) that effects an embodiment, grounding and materialisation of the figure of Vaídio. The dichotomy between soul and body is challenged, as the soul becomes grounded or earth-bound.

In this way, the dynamics of human-animal relations are brought into focus through the emergence in this poem of an attentiveness to the figure of animality, which both effects a displacement of the human from its privileged position of centrality within epic tradition as well as the possibility of exploring the animal as an aspect of the human, and vice-versa. In place of anthropocentrism, the *Dezanove Recantos* stage a re-imagination of what nature is, considering its animacy, agency, and participation in universal principles of desire (in the Spinozan-Deleuzian sense of an impersonal life force, in whose flows all living things participate), therefore producing a profoundly anti-Christian, anti-hierarchical notion of the natural world.[83]

[83] For the sake of contextualising how radical this gesture is, it is worth contemplating the ubiquitousness of anthropocentrism within the Western tradition – from Descartes' privileging of human consciousness as the true measure of existence, to contemporary narratives of saving the Earth, or else colonising space, for the sake solely of future generations of human beings. This ideology centres the human, displacing all

An entirely new mythical creation, Vaídio is the fourth addressee of the '*Invocação*', in which he is described in the following way: "Vaídio gato animal sustido/ no ovário de minha mãe vestíbulo e morgue" ('Recanto 1', ll.17-18). This suggests that he originates in the "vestibule-morgue" ovaries of the *Dezanove Recantos'* mythical mother figure – that is to say in the womb, which symbolically represents a liminal space, a crossing-over point between death and nothingness, on the one hand, and new life, on the other. In accordance with the poet-speaker's use of the personal possessive adjective ("minha mãe") to describe the mother in whose ovaries Vaídio is sustained, it would appear that a relationship of siblinghood is established between the poet-speaker and her own mythical creation. Poetic invention is thereby figured as a form of co-genesis between author and creation, with both being siblings from the same mother. Complementing this depiction of complicated family relationships, the gender of Vaídio is portrayed in a complicated manner too. While notionally male, in view of their being described as "gato sustido", they consistently appear to unite masculine and feminine elements. The word "alma" (line 1) is a feminine noun, complemented by the feminine adjective "extincta" (line 3), while "animal" (line 1) is a masculine noun, and Vaídio's name itself has a masculine '-o' ending. This ambiguity of gendered associations signals Vaídio as a queer entity, resistant to categorisation within the system of gender binarism espoused under Salazar.

In 'Recanto 5', Vaídio's reappearance in a new context *as an agent*, rather than a mere addressee of the poem (as in the *Invocação*), is an unusual gesture for the epic genre. He serves multiple

other life and materiality to the margins of our ethical attention and concern, or else instrumentalising them for human benefit. Human beings are hailed as exceptional, possessing rationality, language, mind, and agency; meanwhile, the 'nonhuman' animal – an abjected other, taken as humankind's opposite within this binary relationship (Calarco, 2022) – is figured under the sign of lack. Humans are thus set apart from other animals by means of a spurious species barrier (Midgley, 1996). The separation of animal life (*zoe*) from political human life (*bios*), with the former being subjugated by the latter, is – as Giorgio Agamben argues – one of the constitutive processes in the creation of the "anthropological machine" (Agamben, 2014: 33, 79).

functions, and indeed his re-appearance suggests a certain horizontality of structure within the *Dezanove Recantos*, which permit figures to surface, disappear and re-surface at intervals. He is, thus, connected to multiple Recantos by way of rhizomatic connections, rather than arboreal or linear ones – a possibility equally implied by the sharing of Recanto 5's lexis of corporeality, reproduction, death and consumption across multiple poems.

Vaídio seems to stand in for an elemental force of nature, like the whirlpool lair in which he resides, that is preternaturally old – an "extinct" species who has paradoxically been "conserved". The description of his conservation in a whirlpool calls to mind the story of Scylla and Charybdis from Homeric epic (namely, the *Odyssey*, Book XII). Charybdis was a beast who lay at the seabed, swallowing vast quantities of water and spitting them back out again, creating a whirlpool. Since Vaídio, in the course of this poem, is described as having a bodily instinct for swallowing ("Seu corpo/ só fala de sorver/ tudo o que encontrar"), this mythic association is strengthened. Furthermore, as this is the 5th Recanto, there is a sense in which it lines up sequentially with the 5th Canto of *Os Lusíadas*, in which the mythological border-dwelling, threshold-guarding Adamastor appears. Appearing at the mid-point of Camões's epic, this giant, who allegorises the Cape of Good Hope, marks the middle of Vasco da Gama's journey from Portugal to India, while Vaídio appears at midday (line 14), another kind of middle. Additionally, Vaídio's bulk ("é corpo grado", line 6) mirrors Adamastor's gigantic stature. This consequently begs comparison between Vaídio and these two precursor mythological figures (Charybdis and Adamastor), such that Vaídio ultimately resembles a palimpsest of both Homeric and Camonian depictions of monstrosity, yet with key idiosyncratic features.

Vaídio is linked to the image of the writer-muse's hand said to be scratching under the surface of the Earth, in 'Recanto 1', through the implication in 'Recanto 5' that he lies underwater ("no sorvedouro"), as well as through the use of the verb "esgatanhando" (which connotes the feline

way of scratching). Thus, whereas monsters in classical, medieval and Renaissance epic texts are othered even to the point of embodying the Kristevan notion of the abject (Kristeva, 1982), Vaídio is a fully-fledged member of the *Dezanove Recantos*'s pantheon of horizontally connected, non-hierarchically arranged sibling entities, none of whom may be said to signify by way of plot or character development, and even stands in as parallel figure for the writer.

Vaídio seems to straddle two spatial planes: (i) that of the elemental, natural world (in stanzas 1-4, in which he represents a force of nature, or a kind of endless thirst to swallow up all that he encounters), and (ii) that of the domestic, interior world (in stanzas 5-6, which feature predominantly domestic vocabulary: lunchtime ["almoçar"], the home ["salão"], meals ["peixe", "bebida"], and the passing hours of the day ["meio-dia"]). He is therefore a potential cipher for an interior emotional state, experienced within the realm of domestic life (something which women, as the hidden heroes of family life under Salazar, could be imagined experiencing): a kind of generative or nourishing self-love, which satisfies an inner hunger ("beijar-se dentro do estômago"), alongside the capacity to find delight and wonder in everyday household objects and routines, such as the preparation and consumption of food ("a ternura fresca do peixe/ da bebida"). Finding such enchantment in the everyday is, I believe, fundamentally a question of attachment to life, of opening up spaces for hope within regimes of negativity and despair. As new materialist and affect scholar Jane Bennett puts it: "to be enchanted is, in the moment of its activation, to assent wholeheartedly to life" (2001: 159).

Ultimately, Vaídio remains mysterious and enigmatic. The final line of the poem is particularly enigmatic, resisting explanation and refusing to allow Vaídio to fall under any straightforward allegorical framework – an explicating device that Neto Jorge's collection resolutely refuses to provide. This is dissimilar to the final Canto of Camões's *Os Lusíadas*, in which the nymph Tethys explains all that has come to pass in the epic in conventional allegorical terms. Such is Vaídio's

enigmatic quality, that he is even linked to the word "alibi", a word also suggestive of the poetic artifice at play in this poem. Neto Jorge's metatextual gestures, in this vein, are – as I have already suggested – part of the *Poesia 61* movement's concern with the iconicity of the text, and with refuting the viability of any position articulated by any sort of universal-neutral authoritative voice. The knowingness of Neto Jorge's poetic voice thereby reveals its own artificiality, reminding us that her mythic creations may be "alibis" for other purposes, other agendas, and that as such, her precursor texts (together with their legacies of selectively-simplistic interpretation), must be examined for the alibis they too use in the service of concealing ideological agendas (evident, for example, in how the Estado Novo's leaned into Camões's apparent national teleology of crusading progress and colonisation abroad). Alternatively, in view of the etymology of "alibi" (which, in Latin, is an adverb meaning "elsewhere"), it may suggest that meaning itself always lies "elsewhere", and can never be fully arrived at, since there will always be further rhizomatic connections to pursue, and an endlessly proliferating web of surrealist images and ideas resurfacing from the unconscious.

Margrit Shildrick analyses the ways in which what is monstrous is often construed by patriarchy to be that which does not comply to its own restrictive, misogynistic, rationalistic or scientifically-prescriptive norms (Shildrick, 2002). Monsters in feminist poetry may stand a chance of redemption or of being used differently. For example, Rachel Blau DuPlessis's Medusa is a figure of sympathy and, without straying from this particular mythical monster, Adriana Cavarero explains that the face of the Medusa evokes horror at acts of patriarchal and masculinist aggression (Cavarero, 2009). Thus, perhaps Vaídio, as a Charybdis-Adamastor palimpsest, is a figure whose configuration redeems or complicates the very notion of monstrosity. From his first appearance, Vaídio's hybridity seems to represent a crossroads, or point-of-intersection, between different states and locations of being (life/death; vestibule/morgue) and so too Charybdis and

Adamastor are halfway points or obstacles on a hero's journey. His liminality confounds exclusionary binary frameworks of "either/or", and instead suggest "both/and".

A key feature of Vaídio, already noted, is his animality, "seu corpo de animal". In this sense, he is a doubly unusual figure to appear in the epic as an entity seemingly with an interior life of his own, since his presence displaces humankind as the epic's central area of interest. Epics are typically about human endeavours and human exceptionalism, involving humanity's conquering of the natural world and subjugation of new territories. In the epic, monsters and animals stand in for the forces of the unknown, on the outskirts of the knowable.[84] Yet Vaídio is not merely one such symbol of nature's disorderly mysteriousness, to be overcome by the terrain mapping, ordering principles of man-led exploration and conquest (which is espoused by the heroes of *Os Lusíadas* for example). Instead, Vaídio is a figure of hybridity and desire himself, displacing the desires of human subjects from the centre of the frame. Neto Jorge's poem is about following *contours*, after all, (as seen in the promise to "contornar-vos" of the *Proposição*), and therefore about *displacing the centre*. While it is worth remembering that Adamastor himself is a desiring subject too, in love with the sea goddess Tethys, it nevertheless holds true that the story of his unrequited love for her is arguably a means of essentialising and psycho-analysing him, as a male subject desiring a female object, whereas – by contrast – Vaídio *kisses themself in the stomach*.

The use of the infinitive 'beijar-se dentro do estômago' helps to convey a sense of process. Their body speaks of processes ("é corpo grado a incidir" [line 6]; "Seu corpo de animal/ só fala de

[84] To make a comparison with the old English epic text *Beowulf*, it is pertinent to note that the protagonist's encounters with three monsters – the first of whom "Grendel" is described as a shadowy "*mearcstapa*" (l.103 [Heaney 2000: 8]) which we might translate as "border-stepper" – are about proving his masculine valour and heroism, as well as about defeating vices which threaten societal stability and the *status quo* – for instance, the dragon is greedy, and greedy rulers make poor leaders. To conquer the unknown is to reassert the *status quo*, in moral and social terms. (See: Symons 2018).

sorver" [line 8], "beijar-se" [line 10] and "almoçar" [line 11]). It is not that Vaídio is a subject desiring to act upon an object; instead, they are themselves a process, a channel for desire. They are unknowably ancient, conserved extinct in a whirlpool, yet equally the stuff of everydayness, with a corporeality that speaks of eating lunch in a home. They are the principle of consumption itself, of appetite, unleashed from the depths (as suggested by stanza three: "Seu corpo de outra época/ nas superfícies menores é corpo grado a incidir"), which – in the context of the repression of desire (especially female desire), whether for sexuality or for abundance or excess, under Salazar, feels especially pointed.

Vaídio's hybridity in terms of evoking traits associated both with animals (including instinctual appetites, as well as feline and fish-like behaviours and properties) and humans (including a soul and the capacity to speak, albeit with the body, and therefore perhaps metaphorically rather than literally) confounds the habitual distinction between the categories of human and animal. This innovative representation of animality serves to advance the philosophical task of rendering humans and animals as indistinct, by way of resisting the "anthropological machine" (Calarco, 2015: 53) – that is, the whole (and highly suspect) performative apparatus of philosophical justifications for human superiority over animals. Given that the Portuguese colonial enterprise in Africa, like other imperial endeavours, treated native Africans as less than human or as "animalized" people (in order to justify European superiority and rule), such a literary project of delegitimising the human-animal hierarchy, published at the time of the colonial wars, takes on an even greater political charge.

9.3. Queering Religion and Parodying Heteronormativity

> Mal se abria novo túnel
> e o verão, em sua flora andrógina, em seu elevador
> subia lesto
>
> logo as patas do Anjo se erguiam
> sobre o sexo
> esmagava-o sorvia-o ilusionava-o

para que parecesse não o sexo
para que parecesse um céu
residencial

onde entrassem famílias
com minúcias
de pai a mãe e a filhos

a baptizarem-se
sucessivamente
num curto-amor-coito-circuito.

'Recanto 10', in which the figure of the 'Anjo' presides over a cosmic orgy, re-contextualises biblical lexis and makes irreverent use of Christian imagery, subverting religion by appropriating and re-imagining elements of Catholic iconography. This poem opens with another invocation of the *in medias res* trope from epic poetry, setting the time of the action in a new season ('verão'), throwing us dis-orientatingly into a new time, and also a new space ("novo túnel"), as though tunnelling into a new realm of the human psyche.[85]

Already complicated in terms of their gender, angels offer rich potential as figures of sexual ambiguity, which may go some way towards explaining their usefulness to Portuguese feminist poets – including Maria Teresa Horta – who are concerned with questioning conventional notions of gender. The image of the "androgynous flower" of summertime, in this re-canto, creates an expectation of complicated or neutral genderings in this poem. Indeed, as José Ricardo Nunes has pointed out (Nunes, 2000: 35), this interest in androgyny filiates Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry with surrealism, in view of founding surrealist André Breton's insistence on reconstructing "the primordial Androgyne […] and its supremely desireable, and tangible, incarnation within ourselves" (Breton, 1969: 301-302). The androgynous figure of 'o Anjo' is invoked, who – on animal-like "patas" which invest this mythical entity with a more-than-human animal-like quality – stands upon 'o sexo'. This may be a cosmic sex organ.

[85] It is worth considering how the time references in the poem all belong to differing categories of time: 'meio-dia' vs. 'verão', and so on.

The Angel is depicted engaging sensually with the sex organ ('esmagava-o', 'sorvia-o', 'ilusionava-o'), a creative act which results in the organ being reshaped into something resembling a celestial residence, for families to enter into, to be baptised 'num curto-amor-coito-circuito'. The sexual language here is bold and dangerous at a time of censorship. According to one possible interpretation, proposed by Nunes, this type of neologism, which amalgamates words, "visa à ultrapssagem dos próprios limites das palavras enquanto unidades distintivas, modelando espaços indiferenciados a partir da sua interpenetração" (Nunes, 2000: 51); as such, the interpenetrating lexical fields of biological reproduction and electrical engineering serves to desacralize human sexuality, calling to attention its mechanical quality, or perhaps even the eroticism of electricity.

From another perspective, I observe that the image of circuitry (which is hereby interrupted or "short-circuited", typographically, through hyphenation) is key to Neto Jorge's poetry more generally: her poems follow circuitous and interrupted paths, resulting in a kind of agrammaticality and a stammering syntax, by way of critiquing or at least side-lining logical or rational discursive modes associated with linearity and genealogy-construction. This tongue-in-cheek representation of the Angel's cosmic orgy, with families baptising themselves in a 'short-circuit', is a send-up (and problematization) of heteronormativity under Salazar. A short circuit is something that has gone haywire, askew. It follows that there is something amiss in hegemonic Catholic doctrine's logic of equating love with heterosexual reproduction alone, which forbids desire and alternative sexualities.[86] In this way, the parodying of religion and queering of

[86] As such, Neto Jorge targets what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has referred to as "the heterosexual imperative" (1993: 93), whereby the "hermetically closed procreative heterosexual dyad" (78) is presented not only as natural but as History itself: "The making historically visible of heterosexuality is difficult because, under its institutional pseudonyms such as Inheritance, Marriage, Dynasty, Family, Domesticity, and Population,

heteronormativity, in 'Recanto 10' (which serves as the collection's technical mid-point, being flanked by nine recantos on either side), brings about the short-circuiting of the heterosexual matrix, suggesting that the centre itself is broken. This tour-de-force of liberated sexuality also bleeds into the nearby poems (for example, the word 'verão' spills over and is repeated in the opening line of 'Recanto 11'), suggesting a rhizomatic sense of connectivity, excess or overflow, enabling the hyper-connectivity of this poem's electrical shortciruitry to stand for the structure principles at work in the collection as a whole. This implies a sense of horizonal connectivity back-and-forth along a chain (of [hyphenated] signifiers, of images, of ideas), rather than any form of straightforward progression, since – rather than flowing from point A to point B and then stopping – electricity follows a neverending loop in a circuit; with electricity there is no culmination, only flow, movement, and the possibility of rhizomatic new connections (with a short circuit being like an electrical rhizome).

10. Deleuzian Desire and the Figure of Dulcíssimo

'Recanto 1' (extract)

Dedicatória:

Sobretudo a Dulcíssimo, o amor em bruto, vinte vezes
banido 20 vezes assente sobre o chão 20 vezes
eternas a bater com a memória
no fundo mar

'Recanto 16' (complete)

Dulcíssimo, coração do corpo, expande-se desata-se
desintegra-se pelos calcanhares de minha mãe
cansada
olha-me nos ombros
afasta-se no índico

Movimento mais que uníssono: órgão sonoro
a ressoar numa revolução

heterosexuality has been permitted to masquerade so fully as History itself —when it has not presented itself as the totality of Romance" (10).

número odífero
número de oiro negro sinal da mão que se coça
debaixo da terra
a empurrar-nos

— Vestígio nosso?
— Nossa absorção, respondo eu.

Tenta abrir o jacto para beijar em voo
um passageiro tenta ordenar o trânsito com um beijo
nos dedos destruídos
mas consegue pouco:

uma luminosidade quase cesariana
na barriga do melhor amigo.

The figure of Dulcíssimo, one of the addressees of the 'Dedicação' ('Recanto 1'), occasions perhaps the most emblematic instance, within the *Dezanove Recantos*, of the disintegration of the singular, unified subject. This takes place according to the (il)logic of rhizomatic subjectivity – in other words, he becomes discernible as a character only insofar as he provides the nodal point of connection between a series of irreducibly different semantic fields, each connected in a rhizomatic chain. His queerness becomes visible in his unique and gender nonconforming name, which provides a masculine superlative form for the adjective "dulce", a quality typically coded as feminine (often used, for instance, in relation to the Virgin Mary[87]). Having been described in the Dedication as "brute love", while bearing an intertextual similarity with Pessoa's 'O Mostrengo' (1992: 60) through the repeated word "vezes", as well as being associated with the sea (since he is depicted beating with memory in the deep sea), Dulcíssimo subsequently makes a named appearance in 'Recanto 16'. Here, he is a heart engaged in present-tense reflexive verb actions: he disintegrates himself by (or perhaps *through*) the heels of "minha mãe/ cansada", and drifts off into the Indian Ocean, in a possible reference to the journey undertaken by Vasco da Gama in *Os Lusíadas*.

[87] The 'Salve Regina' prayer contains the verse "Oh dulcis Virgo Maria".

As Margrit Shildrick has pointed out, the heart is often taken as a symbol of what it means to be human, being seen as "the seat of life, the source of love, the locus of human emotional pain", and anatomically-speaking "the pump that powers the bodily processes needed to sustain human life" (Shildrick, 2013). As such, the heart is often identified as the body's centre, with its system of veins and arteries being, by extension, centred and linear. Poetry concerned with the organ of the heart, as in the paradigmatic case of the emotion-laden love lyric wherein Orphic subjects sing of longing for an objectified other, often also evokes a set of assumptions about individualised human identity. Yet Dulcíssimo, as a general principle of love and desire, is an impersonal force ("o amor em bruto" ['Recanto 1'], who, in the context of human desire's denial and repression under Salazarism, has been "banido"). While his name individualises him, to some degree, as the personification of the heart, nonetheless the depiction of his disintegration suggests the breaking-down of a centralised system (reminiscent of the short-circuitry of 'Recanto 16') into something more diffuse. This, together with the distancing effect of his incapacity to look the poet-speaker in the eye ("olha-me nos ombros") and his drifting aimlessly away into the Indian Ocean, all serves to blur and obfuscate, rather than neatly delineate, his personhood.

As stanza two begins, his name is replaced by a noun ("Movimento mais que uníssono") and, following a colon, he becomes a sonorous organ caught in the process of fulfilling an action ("a ressoar numa revolução"), resounding with revolutionary auguries. This descent into impersonality implies a reimagination of the heart as a symbol, not of individual desire, but rather of the expansion and disintegration of a singular self into a collective urging, a revolution. This movement is an aromatic number (line 8), a number of black gold (line 9), and a harbinger of the muse-hand beneath the earth, scraping and impelling us forward, perhaps from thought into action.[88] In this sense, the revolution that is being willed into being has to do with *the return of the repressed*, that is to say the return of *desire*, perhaps to the Portuguese people themselves.

[88] This calls to mind Emma Goldman's celebrated dictum, "revolution is but thought carried into action".

Unusually in the context of the collection as a whole, the possibility of national specificity, that is to say a clear reference to Portugal, emerges because of the reference to the Indian Ocean – the former locus of Portuguese national desire (or, at least, that of the zealous colonising tendencies attributed to its monarchs and leaders in historical and epic accounts), which was directed towards overseas expansion.

Whereas the first appearance of the "deusa-mão" (in the 'Invocation') involved the hand pushing up the earth without any indication of an object (or object pronoun) attached to the verb "empurrar", the resurfacing of the female poet-muse's hand scratching under the earth in the second half of stanza two of 'Recanto 16' is in fact accompanied by an explicit first-person plural pronoun, which is the collectivity being compelled into action ("a empurrar-*nos*" [my emphasis]). Female authorship, which in Neto Jorge's complicated epic involves reconfiguring femaleness by innovatively depicting an embodied muse as a resistant and active proxy for the author, is thus potentially construed as a catalyst enabling the collectivity to change course, albeit crucially with no clear goal in sight, let alone any teleological end-point. The rhizomatic structure at play, which sees the resurfacing of figures such as the muse-hand sporadically across the collection, in this way, further contributes to this sense of cross-fertilisation of fields of reference inspired by the woman poet's surrealist complication of epic form.

The third stanza introduces direct speech and, by extension, foregrounds the notion of relationality, which intervenes to further disrupt linearity and complicate the stability of the Dulcíssimo's character portrait. The implication is that desire implies relationality, occasioning rupture followed by new connections. An unspecified voice asks the question of whether this (Dulcíssimo, the personification of desire, or perhaps the muse-hand) is a "Vestígio nosso?" ("Vestige of us?" or "Our vestige?"), to which the "eu" (the first-person poet-speaker perhaps) is seen to reply: "Nossa absorção, respondo eu". A perfect chiasmus is formed, in terms of the

positioning of the first-person plural possessive adjective relative to the noun, across the two lines, suggesting an equation of the two terms "vestígio" and "absorção".[89] It is also worth noting that the word "absorção" echoes the language of the 'Invocação' ('Recanto 1'), which had announced an era of absorption "(*Idade de reabsorção*)" subsequent to the primary appearance of the "deusa-mão". This stanza thus potentially reinforces the link between the "deusa-mão" and the "eu" (the female poet-speaker), at the same time as it suggests that desire itself is a repressed element from the past being absorbed in the present. This serves as an apt emblem of the way in which the *Dezanove Recantos* are themselves an exercise in uncovering the gendered blind spots of the literature of the past, and using them to revitalise the epic tradition in the present, combining past and present in a creative, de-hierarchised, absorptive amalgam.

Finally, stanza 4 opens with a verb – an action ("Tenta abrir...") presumably being carried out by Dulcíssimo. The Portuguese language's lack of requirement for the subject of the verb to be made explicit contributes, at this juncture, to the continued dissolution of Dulcíssimo from being a stably named, noun-based entity, to becoming a movement or a verb. In surrealist fashion, the poem ends with an evocation of Dulcíssimo's whimsical desire-fuelled flights of fancy ("Tenta abrir o jacto para beijar em voo/ um passageiro" [line 14], "tenta ordenar o trânsito com um beijo [...]/ mas consegue pouco" [line 15 and 17]), the failed yet productive results of which are described in stanza 5 via a gender-disruptive image of male pregnancy: "uma luminosidade quase cesariana/ na barriga do melhor amigo" (lines 18-19). The preponderance of words associated with kissing, the presence of fingers and the muse-hand, and the queer image of male pregnancy, rhizomatically draw together strands and images from a number of poems within the collection, including Vaídio's self-reflexive stomach kiss ('Recanto 5'), the "deusa-mão"

[89] It may be noted that a perfect chiasmus may seem a somewhat unrhizomatic structure, in that it creates a balanced formal pattern, rather than shooting off in an unexpected direction. This suggests that the *Dezanove Recantos* does not entirely relinquish orderly structuring at strategic points, while still using such moments to reveal eccentric ideas.

('Recanto 1'), and male lactation ('Recanto 9'). The rhizomatic structuring of the *Dezanove Recantos*, which allows for this series of images to be spread throughout the collection, permits their criss-crossed convergence in the figure of Dulcíssimo. According to Lauren Berlant, "The more attachments, the more transformation: the 'rhizomatics' of desire produce a model of embodied affect constantly branching out" (Berlant, 2012: 65). It is this impression of affective branching out, away from singularity and unity and towards multiplicity and difference, which characterise the collection as a whole.

11. CONCLUSION

The rhizomatic structure and surrealist style of the *Dezanove Recantos* complicates epic by disarranging linearity and disrupting teleology. Subjectivity and desire are de-personalised, and made multiple, free flowing and unstable, problematising the dual notions of a collectively willed national destiny and unified Portuguese identity. The collection reworks epic themes and tropes, for instance reimagining the figure of the muse as a goddess-hand scratching under the Earth, portending the return of the repressed, and by doing so it creates a new model for interrogating the Portuguese Canon from a feminist, queer and Deleuzian perspective. Neto Jorge's text produces a contingent and anti-nationalist revision of the epic, and a queer re-imagination of gender, opening up a panoply of feminist, queer and posthuman alternatives to the narrow and restrictive identity positions offered under Salazar.

The *Dezanove Recantos*' inhabitation of an "(Idade de reabsorção)" ('Recanto 1') calls to mind the classical notion of the Ages of Man (the ages of gold, silver, bronze, heroes, and iron) present in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (lines 109-201) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book 1.89–150). This sequence of Ages points to a linear movement of decline, a progressive fall from greatness. Considering that Camonian epic also relies on such a linear trajectory, except in reverse,

envisioning progress from darkness towards a brighter era for an ever-expanding Christendom, with Portugal at the helm, it is instructive to contemplate how Neto Jorge's proposed "age of reabsorption" could be said to complicate this, through its emphasis on reintegration, the processual, and a sense of "ongoingness" (Haraway, 2016: 1). Such a process neither seeks to extol, nostalgically, a bygone golden era, nor does it prophesy an idealised future. Instead, it insists on creatively combining the past with the present, through a kind of reckoning. The repressed returns and is reckoned with, through the intervention of the muse-hand examining the dead and scratching under the earth, leading to an unshackling of the mind from the burden of repression itself, and a fuller intensity of life in the present tense. (Indeed, this liberation of the ghosts of the past, who cohabit space with us, is a theme which Ana Luísa Amaral, writing in the 2010s, examines in her own complicated epic, *Escuro*). The verb *absorver* contains within it *sorver*, a word associated with Vaídio ('Recanto 5'), whose voracious appetite models the free flow of desire which is one of the guiding themes of the *Dezanove Recantos*.

Ambiguous and indeterminate in style, 'Recanto 19', the collection's final poem, seems to stage an amalgamation, or a palimpsest, of authorial styles. The "alguém" of stanza 1, who is dying, is "uma pessoa a inventor uma escrita/ a sorrir inventando letras para o relato de tudo", at once a purveyor of totalising narrative like Salazar, and yet also a possible substitute for Camões himself, via the Camonian echo in the presence of "esferas a rolar" (reminiscent of the "máquina do mundo" at the close of *Os Lusíadas*), as well as a figure for the critical subject who will leave no stone unturned. Meanwhile the "alguém" of stanza 2, who is contemporaneous with the poet-speaker ("que à hora a que estou tinha a dizer"), may stand for Neto Jorge herself. Playfully amalgamated in the hyphenated, compound personality of "Ela-e-Ela", in stanza 3, naïve and naked as Adam and Eve, this figure of creative androgyny implies the dawning of a new world, one in which – according to stanza 5 – situated knowledge replaces totalisation, with the image of a song being sung from a corner ("que no seu canto, pois, cantava"). This layered form,

through the de-hierarchised combination of past and present, speaks to Kristeva's notion of intertextuality as "a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva, 1986: 37). Queerly non-binary, Neto Jorge's complicated epic follows the accommodating principle of "both/and" rather than the dichotomous logic of "either/or" – of rhizomatic and multi-directional connectivity, rather than arborescent linearity. This "both/and" vision avoids finality, remaining indeterminate, porous and open-ended.[90]

I share José Ricardo Nunes's view that, contrary to the singularity of Camões's "viagem iniciática" (Macedo, 1980) in *Os Lusíadas* – at the end of which the sailors are ultimately rewarded for their heroic exploits with the erotic pleasures of the Isle of Love (in an allegorical like-for-like exchange) – the *Dezanove Recantos,* by contrast, offer a proliferation of innumerable "micro-viagens". The effect is that "a cada passo somos confrontados com o surgimento de inadiáveis ilhas dos amores" (Nunes, 2000: 48), which reward us with the pleasures of everyday life, rather than a utopian or spiritual dream of totality. Nevertheless, I also believe that the rhizomatic multi-directionality of these miniature voyages, which skew teleology in favour of a generatively dis-orientating panoply of new possibilities (including the incorporation of eccentric identities, including the queer, the machinic and the animal), do nevertheless imply a utopian desire for the nation to contemplate becoming something new, something other than the mere sum of its past events – in doing so, it may allow its identity to become malleable, and prone to metamorphosis.

[90] In this sense, the final line of the *Dezanove Recantos* ("Assim termina."), with the apparent finality of its full-stop, can only be understood ironically. This is not least because the collection, at the length of nineteen re-cantos, forever remains on the verge of fully doubling Camões's original ten, and therefore latent with the unquenchable affect of anticipation.

Chapter IV.

QUEER SPECTRALITY AND ECO-UTOPIANISM: LIBERATING MARGINALIZED FEMININE VOICE(S) IN ANA LUÍSA AMARAL'S *ESCURO* (2014)

1. INTRODUCTION

Unpacking the imperialist notions associated with the heroic poetry of Camões in *Os Lusíadas* (1572) and the Sebastianism of Pessoa in *Mensagem* (1934), as well as critiquing their possible consecration of masculine ideals and certain marginalization of the feminine, Ana Luísa Amaral, writing in 2014 – as Portugal was already being enveloped by the Eurozone crisis[91] – explicitly responds to these texts in feminist vein with her own ambiguous, pseudo-epic, anti-triumphalist collection of poems, *Escuro*. Magnifying the elegiac undercurrents of its male-authored precursors, this collection opens up a panoply of alternative voices and reimaginings of Portugal's contingent place within history. Through her probing of spurious unities and forms of transcendence, Amaral reminds us that the moral architecture upon which the nation's future is to be built is, as yet and indeed always, uncreated and flexible. In place of grand national destinies, Amaral offers a humble remedy: that of the ambivalent half-light of poetry shining in the dark. Additionally, in her exploration of interstices in historical record around such mythologized figures as Filipa de Lencastre, and in her incorporation of the fictional Mariana Alcoforado among her roster of characters, Amaral reveals stories muted by patriarchy and offers non-essentialising prototypes for human behaviour and thought. At the same time, she radically

[91] The Portuguese financial crisis of 2010-2014 was accompanied by a politics of austerity, implemented by the liberal-conservative government of Pedro Passos Coelho (in power from 2011 to 2015). This involved damaging cuts in public services and public sector pay, reducing people's access to social safety nets. Amaral has lamented and mobilised political activism against austerity and critiqued the growing hegemony of financial industries in Europe (2021).

challenges the notion of an uncomplicated national genealogy predicated on the "reproductive futurism" (Edelman, 2004) of *straight*forwardly historical lines of succession, such as the frequently heteronormative, monarchical ones of Portuguese epic.

Following the suggestion by Maria Irene Ramalho dos Santos that *Escuro* is the product of 'a mutual poetic interruption of the epic by the lyrical and the lyrical by the epic' (2014: p.161), I will examine how its male and female characters, taken from epic stock, are revealed to be intimately, fallibly human, as the emotional content of their lives is allowed to shine through, in a critique of the concept of heroic masculinity which underpins the epic tradition. A far cry from the bellicose monarchs of *Os Lusíadas* and the ethereal martyrs of *Mensagem*, Amaral's vulnerable human subjects are figures of resistance who meditate on, and suffer on account of, the destinies foisted upon them by the faulty logic and masculine ideals of statecraft and imperialist nation-building. As figures who are drawn from both historical and literary record, these voices form a chorus of queer spectres (Freccero, 2006), whose haunting of the present moment unsettles notions of the legibility of the past in terms of cause and effect, and of linear, heteronormative time (both of which sustain the institutions of empire and patriarchy), since "spectral being and doing open us up to porous, permeable pasts and futures – suffused with affect and its ethical implications – that enable us to mourn and also to hope" (2006: 69).

As I consider the ways in which Amaral's *Escuro* re-imagines the past and restores its ambiguities, the work of Carla Freccero – and this notion of "queer spectrality" (Freccero, 2006; 2007) which she elaborates – provides me with a useful analytical lens. Acknowledging the constructedness of history-as-textuality, Freccero encourages us to recognise how certain ideological imperatives in traditional historiography have foreclosed the multiple meanings of historical personages' lives. This is typically effected through the erection of what she calls "discursive definitional tombs" (2006: 73): by either commemorating or colonizing the stories of the (carefully-selected)

dead, in order to render their lives conventionally meaningful as part of a cause-and-effect narrative, such discourse represses the affect-laden ambiguities and traumas of these lives. This is especially true of the historically-driven, archetype-manufacturing epic genre, espoused by Camões and Pessoa. Individual uniqueness is subsumed within collective history-making, which effectively becomes an act of cannibalism against the vulnerable. Since "cannibalism is the desire to make what is other same, to annihilate or assimilate the other by incorporation" (88), traditional historiography implies the destruction of alterity through assimilation.

By contrast, Freccero's queer historiography questions the "done-ness" of the past by invoking the spectre, a figure for traces that are lost and voices that could have spoken, haunting the present with an ethical imperative of redress. It insists on an ethical relationship with the past, and an engagement with the repressed desires of past times and mortal creatures. As a *revenant*, which repeats in the present, the spectre is an amalgamation of past and present, challenging notions of "originary purity, simplicity and unmixedness" (85). Its haunting of the present implies a surplus element of unfinished-ness and the need for a working-through of trauma. Furthermore, "[h]aunting engages alterity" (85), since the ghost is always an other; it is an "excorporation" that is the flip-side of cannibalism (87). The queer historiographer seeks to find these lost traces and suppressed voices, desiring an empathic identification with the ghost whilst simultaneously respecting its difference – an ethical enterprise which Amaral's *Escuro* undertakes poetically.

Escuro also re-works the Pessoan myth of the "drama em gente" from a feminist perspective, suggesting an alternative function for the poet. At the same time, the collection avails itself of the marginalized feminine of Western phallogocentric discourse as a poetic resource capable of unlocking utopian possibilities; its opening with a short, versified dedication ("À Catherine, e à ilha:/ a utopia/ que é a praia do possível" [*E*: p.7]), to someone unmistakably female in name but nevertheless unidentifiable (since her relationship to the author is not specified in the text),

alongside the concept of utopia itself, is perhaps an early testament to this within the collection.[92] Yet, if Amaral's *Escuro* can indeed be said to contain something akin to a utopian discourse, then it is a discourse that remains justifiably skeptical of macro-perspectives of society and history, while being "[ethically underpinned by] the subject's relationship with the other and the experience of everyday life" – that is, the kind of utopian writing which critic Fernando Arenas has identified in contemporary Portuguese writing (2003: 91). This chapter explores *Escuro*'s critique of heroic masculinity and the encoding of genius as a male preserve, and studies its invocation of multiple re-imagined male and female voices, before reflecting upon the utopian possibilities entailed firstly in deconstructing nationalism and Eurocentrism, secondly in gesturing dis-anthropocentrically towards flourishings of a more-than-purely-human world, and thirdly in revealing marginalized feminine voice(s).

In 'Outras Vozes', the collection's fourth poem, the poet-speaker – by entering a new conception of time and space through an exercise of the imagination – elaborates a position from which the marginalized feminine, in alliance with other marginalized subject positions (both in terms of race and species), may be unlocked:

> Fechar os olhos e por dentro ecoar em passado.
>
> Pensar «podia ter outra cor de pele, outra pelagem».
> E o tempo virar-se do avesso, e entrar-se ali,
> em vórtice, pelo tempo dentro.
> Escolher
> (*E*: p.25, ll.1-5).

This stanza, which opens the poem, encapsulates the concepts of utopian thinking, queer

[92] It is likely that the dedicatee is Catherine Dumas, Professor at the Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 University, a long-standing colleague of Amaral and accomplished critic of her poetry. Even so, I am persuaded that the omission of the dedicatee's surname performs the paradox of both increasing intimacy (by suggesting a relationship that is on first-name terms) and of decreasing specificity (by de-coupling the first name from its patrilineal surname). Thus, *Escuro* begins by evoking a femininity already imbued with the empowering absence of male genealogy, which nevertheless lingers hauntingly in the background. This concept is explored throughout the collection.

spectrality, and the marginalised feminine voice, which all reach to the heart of Amaral's complication of the epic. It contains a profusion of infinitive verb forms, imbued with the potentiality of actions that are available though not-yet-concretised. It also figures time as upturned ("do avesso"), neither straightforward nor teleological, auguring the queer time at work in the collection as a whole, wherein different layers of time overlap, coincide, and touch one another.[93] The notion, in line 1, of closing one's eyes and echoing in and/or with the past implies an affect-infused and intimate attentiveness to past-ness. This "echoing" equally conjures its own namesake, the nymph Echo, who is the quintessential instance in myth of a female voice being figuratively silenced and turned into an absence of selfhood, who nevertheless attentively reproduces other people's voices, functioning as their ghostly recurring trace. Absence, emptiness, and concavity – traditional associations of femaleness in the Western imaginary, as previously noted (Cixous, 1980a; Irigaray, 1985) – are indeed precisely the conditions needed for an echo to occur. Thus, it is the marginalised feminine that is in prime position to be haunted by ghosts and become ghostly itself, responding to the ethical imperatives that visit us from the past. In this regard it is worth recalling that the first poem of the collection, 'Das mais puras memórias ou de lumes' (*E*: 13-15), which uses a categorical first-person voice that is author-like, is full of absence in the form of mid-line gaps, reminiscent of another highly-celebrated poem by Amaral which figures the author herself as absent, entitled 'Minha senhora de quê' (quoted in Ramalho, 1998: 135). In other words, *Escuro*, as a whole, opens under the signs of absence and empty space, as the poet closes her eyes and becomes a resonance chamber within which the past may echo and reverberate.

[93] Queer theory's temporal turn has involved the creation of diverse methods and focal points for critiquing normative conceptions of time, including: the development of personal, affect-permeated conceptions of time, i.e., "a queer desire for history" (Dinshaw 1999, 2012); queer negativity's opposition to reproductive futurity and the self-repeating investments that are made in the name of the Symbolic Child at the expense of political action in the *here-and-now* (Edelman 2004); critiques of historicism, linear narratives of progress, and chrononormativity (Halberstam 2005; Freeman 2010); and the development of positive theories of queer utopianism which consider the *there-and-then* of queer futurity ("a warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality" [Muñoz 2019: 1]).

2. THE CRITIQUE OF HEROIC MASCULINITY AND GENIUS ENCODED AS MALE PRESERVE

In order to explore Amaral's approach to revising the literary canon and the system of values enshrined by it, it is first necessary to examine the epic intertexts from the dominant male tradition she critiques.[94] It is helpful to begin by considering figurations of Dom Sebastião, the final monarch of the Avis Dynasty, and perhaps the central mythical personage of the Portuguese nationalist imaginary. In their respective invocations of him, both Camões and Pessoa advance poetic projects imbued with imperialist zeal and masculinist assumptions. In *Os Lusíadas*, Dom Sebastião serves as addressee, as evidenced by the opening invocation to the monarch (*OL*: canto I, stanzas 6-18). He is the "bem nascida segurança,/ Da lusitana antiga liberdade", in whom Camões entrusts the expansion of Christendom and defeat of Islam (*OL*: canto I, stanza 5), whose followers, according to the epic poem, are to be Vasco da Gama's adversaries on his maritime adventures, taking the form of caricatured Moorish "others".[95] Indeed, Camões makes explicit his imperialist-xenophobic instigation that the monarch should take action to expand Portugal's empire overseas and defeat its Moorish foe, in a pair of stanzas which additionally figure this conquest in gender-based terms:

> "E enquanto eu estes canto, e a vós não posso,
> Sublime Rei, que não me atrevo a tanto,
> Tomai as rédeas vós do Reino vosso:
> Dareis matéria a nunca ouvido canto.
> Comecem a sentir o peso grosso
> (Que polo mundo todo faça espanto)
> De exércitos e feitos singulares,
> De África as terras e do Oriente os mares.
>
> Em vós os olhos tem o Mouro frio,
> Em quem vê seu exício afigurado;

[94] This is one element of the "double-voiced discourse" of women's writing, a concept which originates in the work of Lanser and Beck (1979: 86) and is developed by Showalter (1981: 34) – as noted in the Introduction to this thesis.

[95] As C.M. Bowra states, "The conviction that his country is the real champion of Christendom is a driving force in Camões's poem" (1945: 134).

Só com vos ver, o bárbaro Gentio
Mostra o pescoço ao jugo já inclinado;
Tétis todo o cerúleo senhorio
Tem pera vós por dote aparelhado,
Que, afeiçoada ao gesto belo e tenor,
Deseja de comprar-vos pera genro."

(Canto I, stanzas 15-16, in Camões [1572]1973: 4).

Metonymically, the monarch stands for Portugal itself, such that Camões's call to military action is addressed to the nation as a whole, yet Dom Sebastião's idiosyncrasies are not without relevance to the ideological import of the message. Camões implores Dom Sebastião to generate, by his reign, the subject-matter for future epic poems by 'grasping the reins of his kingdom'. This formulation may imply an association of the king with the Greek god Helios, who drove the chariot of the sun across the sky each day, in much the same way that Dom Sebastião is envisioned spreading the light of Christianity across the pagan world, which is purportedly ripe for enslavement. Tethys, the nymph-queen, is invoked as a feminine symbol of the sea that invites penetration by the prows of the masculine ships on their colonial enterprise, as she offers a dowry of treasures to her prospective son-in-law Dom Sebastião, who is invited to wed the sea itself. The evocation of this symbolic marriage, while ostensibly an instigation to focus on building his nation's seafaring credentials, obliquely draws the audience's attention to the young king's unmarried and childless state, which was putting late sixteenth-century Portugal at risk of having no heir to the throne. His childlessness ultimately occasioned the transfer of the Portuguese crown to Phillip II of Spain upon Dom Sebastião's death, during his epoch-defining failed crusade to Morocco in 1578. Irrespective of the ultimate outcome of his reign, Camões's interpolation of Dom Sebastião into the structure of his poem, as the ever-present addressee of its moral and political imperatives, indicates the poem's function as a manual of kingship, promoting the subjugation of the feminized natural world towards the ends of empire-building.

Pessoa similarly makes use of the figure of Dom Sebastião to imbue his own pseudo-epic collection, *Mensagem*, with nationalistic and imperialistic meaning, by extracting from his life

story an esoteric, spiritual significance, linking him with the concept of frenzied male genius. It is worth dwelling on Pessoa's *Mensagem*, which is arguably Amaral's principal inter-text, as *Escuro* explicitly re-writes many of its lyric poem-portraits. In Pessoa's 'Dom Sebastião, Rei de Portugal', Sebastião delivers a first-person declaration of his own greatness, which he ascribes to his Icarus-like overreaching and divine madness, entailed in his doomed Morrocan crusade:

> Louco, sim, louco, porque quiz grandeza
> Qual a sorte a não dá.
> Não coube em mim minha certeza:
> Por isso onde o areal está
> Ficou meu ser que houve, não o que há.
> ...
> Sem loucura que é o homem
> Mais que a besta sadia.
> Cadaver adiado que procria?

The misogynistic overtones of the final three lines, in which a man without the inspiration of madness is described derogatorily, via a metaphor sounded in a feminine key, as "[uma] besta sadia", and then subsequently as a procreating corpse-in-the-making, creates a morbid association between femaleness, bodily procreation and death, on the one hand, and an affirmative association between the nexus of maleness, creative genius and immortality, on the other. Femaleness is ultimately linked with the material body, which is defined negatively in terms of its mortality, whereas the mind, which is masculine, transcends the body. The reproductive qualities of the female body are therefore subordinated to the supposedly superior (re)productive energies of the male genius, who 'gives birth' to immortal ideas and art, of which *Mensagem* itself is an example. The body may therefore be abandoned ("Ficou meu ser que houve") while the immortality of the male genius's ideas live on ("o que há"). Pessoa closes *Mensagem* with an evocation, in the final poem of the collection entitled 'Nevoeiro', of a foggy day, whose arrival, according to legend, would herald the return of the messianic Dom Sebastião to restore Portugal to the glory of its Golden era of overseas expansion.

Amaral's invocation of Dom Sebastião and the "nevoeiro", in her poem 'O Nevoeiro' (*E*: p.49) is altogether different from her precursors. She neither interpolates the king as an addressee, nor speaks in his voice; nor does she draw on the legend of the mist for any fatidic or mystifying symbolism. Instead, Dom Sebastião becomes a shadowy, unheroic background presence, a disembodied spectre, whose story is recounted by the "nevoeiro" itself. This self-reflexive poetic meditation on the eerie latency of Sebastianism within the Portuguese imaginary reveals its depletion as a source of national succour, and ultimately (and somewhat paradoxically, in the light of this poem's very existence) its near-exhaustion as a source of poetic inspiration. The shift in subjective viewpoint from D. Sebastião, representative of autonomously heroic, white European maleness, to the mist itself, equally unsettles the centrality of the anthropocentric perspective.

The mist learns the tale of Dom Sebastião from an anonymous third-person plural entity ("Aprendi-*lhes* as palavras/ e a ler o que *diziam*" [emphasis added]), which Amaral evokes throughout her collection, seemingly in reference to the nameless collectivity of Portuguese people who tell and re-tell the nation's myths from one generation to the next. From these voices, the mist learns of Dom Sebastião's disappearance from the Battle of Alcácer-Quibir, which is accompanied by a reference to his animal companion, a greyhound, with whom he is famously depicted in portraiture (Appendix: Fig.2), whom he has abandoned. It is striking that Amaral equates the king's disappearance with his abandonment of the dog, rather than his abandonment of the Portuguese people (for which he is more habitually criticised in historical discourse). Indeed, the poem takes a keen interest in the nonhuman aspects of the Dom Sebastião myth, with the king's love for his greyhound ultimately figured as redemptive, while the creation of the mist – albeit with certain anthropomorphic characteristics – is depicted in literalised, meteorological and geological terms, rather than being figured explicitly as the mythical product of artistic-prophetic genius.

Having learned of the inclusion of the Portuguese nobility ("os de olhos mais de luz"), among the fallen on the battlefield, the mist considers their privilege and greed, before making its own moral pronouncement on the event:

> E eu soube sempre,
> mesmo quando era só água em finíssimos átomos,
> espalhada pelo céu e rente ao mar,
> que ser tão poderoso ou menos poderoso:
> uma deslocação de ar
> sem peso que contasse

The voicing of this anti-triumphalist, bathetic sentiment by the "nevoeiro" is a startling departure from the phatic self-assuredness of *Mensagem,* whose closing line ("É a Hora!", *M*: p.106) heralds the realisation of its own prophecies. From the mist's nonhuman perspective, Amaral exposes the way in which the value of quests for power, such as that epitomised in the colonial crusading mission to northern Africa conducted by the Portuguese nobility in 1578, can only be sustained by myths that are ultimately fallible human constructs. When scrutinised through the lens of relativism, such myths amount to little more than "uma deslocação de ar/ sem peso que contasse". Following this reflection, Amaral continues to literalise the mist, divesting it of its ethereal aura, and at the same time deepens the spectral quality of Sebastião himself:

> Nunca o vi, a ele,
> antes de me ver eu feito nevoeiro,
> e ele continua a ser-me
> leve sombra sem corpo
>
> Formei-me a partir de uma peninsula,
> e fui avançando devagar,
> cobrindo tudo,
> ano após ano,
> século após século,
> com ele atravessando-me o corpo,
> o seu corpo e meu sem formas definidas

The attention Amaral pays to the criss-crossing of Dom Sebastião's and the mist's bodies, by evoking their interwoven togetherness within Portuguese mythology as the two faces of the same

hoped-for Second Coming, is inflected with vulnerability and queerness. This is due to the implied intermingling of their nebulously-defined yet male-coded bodies, as well as to their inherent insufficiencies as autonomous beings. Exceeding the discursive tomb into which he has been placed by traditional history, Sebastião's identity becomes queerly blurred with the de-mystified (and re-mist-ified) "nevoeiro", whose reclamation of a meteorological "body" generates this queer possibility of bodily inter-penetration. Finally, Amaral turns to an examination of the way in which both figures inhabit interstitial spaces, while simultaneously indicating the exhaustion of both figures. They are reluctant to be saviours of the Portuguese people:

> Mas o farol não há
> e eu habito entre tempos,
> aprisionado a elipses de tempo,
> e a ele:
> os dois presos à história
>
> Se ao menos esse galgo que ele amava
> nos guiasse, por fim,
> como fio ou farol,
> para dentro do tempo
>
> E eu voltasse a ser nuvem,
> e ele, só imagem —

The Nevoeiro describes itself and D. Sebastião as "prisoners of history", yearning for the freedom that would be possible if D. Sebastião's beloved greyhound could, like a thread ("fio") or a lighthouse ("farol"), finally guide them into the fibres of time itself. The reference to the "fio" evokes Ariadne who, in Greek mythology, used a thread to guide Theseus through the Minotaur's labyrinth. This myth is reworked by Amaral in her play-poem *Próspero Morreu*, in which Penelope of the *Odyssey* becomes Ariadne's mother, a re-imagined *lineage* made possible via their shared relationship to thread-weaving (Homen, 2012)[96] – with threads, webs and weaving

[96] Amaral's re-appraisal of Penelope as a figure useful to feminism may come in part from the notion that her threading (and wily, nightly de-threading) of her tapestry is sustained by a desire to remain independent from her male suitors (despite her original confinement, in the narrative of Homer's *Odyssey*, to the role of Odysseus's waiting wife).

being well-known tropes for female creativity (Miller, 1988; Amaral & Martelo: 2006). Conversely, the inflexible, phallic lighthouse, described in line 50 of the poem as "de linhas sólidas e unidas", with its connotation of rationalist illumination (as stanza 11 implies, it would utterly dispel the mythic mist), may be taken to stand in for the principle of masculinity. The inclusion of the nonhuman greyhound within the frame of the myth, as it symbolically has the potential to carve a third way between the principles of femininity and masculinity, produces the means by which the myth could be deconstructed, rendering the *nevoeiro* into another nonhuman, non-anthropomorphised entity, a "nuvem", and D. Sebastião into "só imagem", rather than an active agent shaping Portugal's future via mythic influence, as "Portugal's primary empty father" (Rothwell, 2007: p.47). The notion of his being reduced to an 'image' may call to mind his most famous portrait, which hangs in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, where he stands alongside the almost-out-of-frame greyhound – which Amaral's text has brought centre-stage. This posthuman feminist reworking of the "nevoeiro" myth is therefore not about the elimination of either the mist or D. Sebastião from the Portuguese imaginary. Rather, it is about re-figuring them as permeable, vulnerable entities.

Amaral's poems on two further male representatives of the medieval Portuguese monarchy continue to turn heroic masculinity on its head, developing the fallible side of these lionised figures. In 'O Promontório' (*E*: pp.36-38), the patriarchally-erect Infante D. Henrique,[97] standing on his promontory, recalling his depiction at the head of the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* (Appendix: Fig.3), in fact yearns to turn his back on it and enfold himself into the darkness of the night, evoking the death-drive (ll.52-54).[98] In a gesture reminiscent of Álvaro de Campos in the

[97] According to Cavarero (2016), rectitude is a patriarchal posture, implying self-sustaining autonomy, whereas inclination implies openness to others and is associated with the feminine, emblematized in Leonardo da Vinci's oil painting *The Virgin and Child with St. Anne* (1503-19).

[98] Sometimes referred to as Thanatos, in post-Freudian thought, the death drive (a much-disputed concept in psychoanalysis) manifests itself in behaviours which cannot be explained by the pleasure principle, and which take on the appearance of a desire for self-destruction. It connects with a "tendency inherent in all organic things to return to an inorganic [i.e., non-living] state" (Buchanan: 2018).

'Ode Marítima' – in which the Pessoan heteronym, looking out from a deserted wharf and catching sight of a steamer-ship coming in, is first transported into rhapsodic reveries before ultimately regressing into a queerly vulnerable and child-like state (see Chapter 1) – the Infante D. Henrique looks out to sea:

> Olho ao longe os navios
> Mas não me dizem nada

This bathetic statement, devoid of emotion, reveals a man who is uninspired, joyless and "cheio de dúvidas sobre o que terá ou não realizado" (Ramalho, 2014: 164). In stanza 6, a reference is made to Pessoa's own canonical character-portrait of the king, in *Mensagem* ('O Infante D. Henrique' [Pessoa, 2012: 41]), as the epitome of solitude. D. Henrique resists this portrayal, in a metaliterary moment, saying "Houve quem sobre mim falasse" (l.22) – a vague, de-personalising subjunctive phrase which suggests a lack of intimate connection between poet and subject, as the king explains that he fails to recognise himself in Pessoa's description. Then, in stanza 8, the king self-identifies as "pasto longo para história de livros/ mas a minha história só eu a devia saber", using phraseology which recalls an earlier description, within the collection, of sea-bed animals using the bodies of drowned mariners for their pasture (*E*: 'A Génese', p.22). This metaphor, which conceives of historical figures as nourishment for history books, emblematises the swallowing-up of individual stories ("a *minha* história" [l.33, my emphasis]) within collective history-making (which, as I previously mentioned, Freccero has identified as an intrinsic result of conventional historiographical method). Amaral's reworking of D. Henrique's story allows him the chance to resist this process, to reject serving as merely another link along a chain of lionized imperial monarchs.

Amaral also lays bare the affective history of D. Pedro I, in 'O retrato'. His torment, as a grieving lover following the death of Inês de Castro, mediated through the form of a portrait, is seen

through the eyes of his subaltern squire. The figure of the squire, unknown to the annals of history yet someone who would have been in close daily proximity and interaction with the king, provides Amaral with an ideally-positioned perspective on the untold nuances of D. Pedro's anguish. Rather than being seen as a tragic hero capable of turning his suffering into aggression to enact vengeance (*OL*: canto III, stanza 136), Amaral's D. Pedro I is converted from being an active protagonist into a passive object, yet one brimming with an ever-mutating emotionality:

> eu conhecia-lhe os tons
> as paletas de cor por detrás da iris dos olhos,
> as formas mutantes
> conforme as jardas de sofrimento

There is a veiled sense of homoeroticism in the squire's intimate memories of his master's eyes, as D. Pedro becomes an exquisite object of aesthetic contemplation. As Lee Edelman writes, in a Western visual culture which "naturalizes maleness and situates femaleness in the place of representation" (Edelman, 1994: 208), any overt representation of the male body, especially if it demands that we gaze upon it lingeringly, runs the risk of effeminizing it by bringing it inside the realm of representation and therefore "subjecting [it] to visual interrogation" (164). *Spectacularized* in this way (to use Edelman's term), the male body is exposed to the possibility of a queer reading, which finds it brimming full of excesses and non-normative idiosyncrasies – and Amaral's poem encourages precisely such a reading, firstly through its ekphrastic opening which evokes D. Pedro's masculine beard-sporting, sword-gripping portrait and the canvas's own material body, with its folds of thick oil paint in relief, and subsequently through the squire's homo-affectively charged exploration of the depths of D. Pedro's eyes, penetrating "behind the iris of his eyes". Heterosexist masculinity, which notionally wears an armour of impenetrability and abhors the homosexual man's openness to being penetrated, would see this as a symbolic breach of heterosexual propriety. Furthermore, the squire's discovery, in D. Pedro's eyes, of a painterly spectacle of colour palettes and shifting shapes connoting a rich emotional world

beyond the exterior surface of his stern, regal masculinity, implies the collapse of masculinity's embargo against male emotion. Indeed, the poem's evocation of colour palettes behind the eyes sets up a contrast between the constraints of royal portraiture's depiction of the king, which align with techniques of historical memorialisation, and the affect-infused multi-dimensionality offered by the squire's loving memory of the king's eyes, in a personalisation of history. Finally, it is worth noting that, whereas sight, in colonial narratives, becomes the human faculty of acquisitiveness and subjugation *par excellence* (it is worth recalling that Tethys asks the mariners, in *Os Lusíadas*, to cast their eyes over the world they will acquire for the Portuguese empire, which is visually represented for them in the *Máquina do Mundo*), here Amaral presents us with male eyes which are not the active emitters of a possessive gaze, but rather passive objects of delicate aesthetic beauty.

Returning to the notion of queer spectrality, Amaral's poetry is indeed "open to the possibility of being haunted, even inhabited, by ghosts" (Freccero, 2006: 80). Her character-portrait poems resonate with the unfinished, unfixable emotional content of past lives. In view of their use of punctuation, it is noteworthy that not a single one ends with the finality of a full-stop, instead ending without punctuation, or with a question mark, or with a Dickinsonian elongated dash. In this way, Amaral keeps her characters' stories open to instability, interpretation, change and re-writing, "open[ing] up sites of possibility effaced, if not foreclosed, by (hetero)normative historicisms" (p.81). Amaral's invocation of historical figures – who in Camões featured as originators of the Portuguese nation, and in Pessoa as harbingers of the coming of the Fifth Empire – evokes instead a sense of affect-rich queer spectrality. In the case of male figures (as I have sought to show), this articulates the secret weariness and vulnerability of their lives, and in the case of female characters (to whom I will now turn), it expresses the repressed desires and revelation of the female – and feminine – voice.

3. CREATING A SPACE FOR A MULTIPLICITY OF WOMEN'S VOICES SILENCED BY HISTORY

Turning to the way in which Amaral activates the muted female tradition,[99] it is salient to consider the ways in which *Escuro* opens up space for the voices of women silenced by historical and literary record. In 'A Cerimónia', Amaral creates a character study of Filipa de Lencastre. Camões only mentions her fleetingly in *Os Lusíadas*, as one of the two "ilustríssimas inglesas,/ Gentis, fermosas, ínclitas princesas", Filipa and Catarina, who in 1387 were married to John of Portugal and Henry III of Castile respectively, by way of a joint alliance between the Iberian nations and England – an instance of the patriarchal use of female bodies as tools of international diplomacy in the medieval period. Pessoa's invocation of Filipa de Lencastre is similarly revealing in terms of its reductive focus upon her reproductive function, as the mother of an illustrious generation of Portuguese 'genius' princes: she is emblematically referred to as the "Humano ventre do Império,/ Madrinha de Portugal" (*M*: p.32). As we have seen with reference to Pessoa's poem on Dom Sebastião, women have traditionally been debarred access to literary expression and to the class of creative genius on the basis of a "sex-gender system which [...] identifies writing as masculine and insists on the incompatibility of creativity and procreativity" (Hirsch, 1989: p.8). Subverting this system, Amaral works to carve out a space for the everyday experience of motherhood within her writing not only as a legitimate subject for literary expression, but indeed as a stimulus for reflection upon the role of women within history and the need to redress the exclusion of their domestic, affective, personal histories from the annals of History proper.

'A Cerimónia', which is a poem delivered in the form of a first-person stream-of-consciousness monologue, depicts Filipa contemplating her lost childhood of pastoral bliss in England, on the occasion of her marriage to D. João I of Portugal. With the curtains drawn in the early half-light

[99] This is the other constituent element of the "double-voiced discourse" of women's writing. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, the inscription of femaleness within a text invokes the social, literary, and cultural heritages of the muted female tradition.

hours, Filipa looks out of the window, evoking female entrapment within domesticity as well as a longing to escape. Then, in the interstices between the hours of her official queenly duties that day ("enquanto não chegavam as horas do dever"), having delved into, and lamented over, her memories, she conjures her children into her mind:

> Quando acabei as recordações
> e o choro de silêncio,
> chamei-os na minha mente
>
> A todos ofereci prendas

She proceeds to offer each of her (male) children, from eldest to youngest (though none is named in the poem, instead being referred to sequentially with ordinal numbers), a particular gift – each one symbolically appropriate, in terms of each prince's historical reputation. To the first child of the 'Illustrious Generation', Duarte I, the future philosopher king, she gives "um ceptro/ enfeitado de papel e de palavras"; to the second, presumably Pedro, 1st Duke of Coimbra and future regent of Portugal, she gives "uma espada de aço brilhante"; to the third, Prince Henry the Navigator, she gives "o gosto pelo mundo"; and to the last of her children in the list, presumably Fernando "o Infante Santo", described in historical record as having had poorly health during his childhood years, which were spent largely by his mother's side, she gives the gift of the story of her crossing the 'green sea' with its 'tall foam', from England to Portugal. As she tells him of the sea, she herself dreams of the shores she has left behind, which she refers to "as *margens* que havia deixado/ para trás" (*E*: p.42 [my emphasis]). This is telling, for it is indeed her emergence, albeit briefly, from the margins of historical record which the poem itself enacts. Amaral underscores the centrality of Filipa's personal ties of affection to each child, in addition to highlighting her role in their upbringing – thereby recovering the mother's own personal investment and impression upon national history. Amaral then depicts Filipa struggling with her own conscience over whether the gifts she gave her children, in her reverie, were the right ones, as she imagines alternative gifts, especially for the second of her children, Pedro, whose sword (which she fears

is equivalent to "o resto de matar e de morrer") she would turn into a plough or a lamp, and to whom she would impart an appreciation for "como é belo o mundo/ e poder falar dentro dele". This evocation of the beauty of being able to speak in the world poignantly resonates with this queen's own effacement as a flesh-and-blood mother with individual attachments to her children, and hopes and fears about their futures, beyond her status as a symbolic mother of the Portuguese nation. Rendering visible, through motherly eyes, the parental anxiety wrapped up in legacy-making, as well as the impossibility of making gifts to future generations without unduly influencing them or exacting a debt from them (whether wittingly or otherwise), thereby producing unintended consequences, this poem problematises the coercive element inherent in models of linear inheritance; un-inheriting the past, or inheriting it differently, are important imperatives in Amaral's complication of epic tradition.

In the fourth-to-last stanza of the poem ("Mas o que fizeram de mim"), we return to yet another intervention from an anonymous third person plural entity, which apparently evokes the people who arranged her boat journey from her beloved England to Portugal to be wedded into the Portuguese royal family, since this anonymous third person plural form reappears two lines subsequently ("me ajudaram a subir para o bote/ e depois para o navio/ que me haveria de levar a uma terra/ que eu não conhecia") – and therefore, we may infer that this third person plural could be understood to refer to representatives of the patriarchal order at large. Finally, in a manner similar to other of the mythical figures depicted by Amaral in *Escuro*, Filipa evinces an awareness of her own mythical status, contemplating the collective memory that has been retained of her ("a memória que de mim ficou"), and asking plaintively why this collective memory has excluded all that was dear to her, in the form of her pastoral recollections of her homeland:

> E a memória que de mim ficou,
> porque não fala ela dos meus campos verdes
> e das sombras dos rebanhos que os atravessavam?

[...]

Por que outra noite trocaram
O meu escuro?

The final two lines of the poem, which match the title of this middle section of the collection, are similarly mysterious in terms of their referent, begging the question of who the third person plural "trocaram" may refer to. However, in the light of my previous speculations on the possibility of its referring to representatives of patriarchy, as well as to the collective voice that passes the patriarchal mythic tradition down throughout the generations (as in 'O nevoeiro'), I wonder whether this statement too is haunted by the spectre of the patriarchal distortion of women's identities, with all of their personal (rather than merely publicly-facing, symbolic) facets. Filipa has been denied the right to author her own inner self ("o meu escuro"), which has been traded away – just like her body – and replaced by a feeling of alienation. As a result of her exile from England, as well as from her mother tongue, and even from a possible future in which she could bear witness to the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487) which would savage her homeland (although in strictly chronological terms, this event occurred after her death in 1415, indicating a "willful perversion of [...] temporal propriety" that is queerly anachronistic [Freccero, 2006: p.2]), she is left in a state of agonised doubt. The prevalence of question marks at the end of each of the last four stanzas of the poem corroborates this. Thus, the use of "Por que outra noite/ trocaram/ o meu escuro?" as the second section's overarching title indicates that this sense of injustice at the effacement of Filipa's personal history, hopes and dreams, extends to all of the other historical and mythical personages included in the collection. Resonating with queer spectrality's contestation of the "foreclosure of the future self-constructions" (73) that were once available to the dead person, in life, Amaral's poetry re-activates these lost historical possibilities,

un-anchoring figures from the security of their historical moorings and re-visioning Portuguese history from an affect-suffused, marginal perspective.[100]

In another poem with a female subject, 'A Carta', Amaral invokes the figure of Mariana Alcoforado. A Portuguese nun in the Convent of the Imaculada Concepção in Beja, she is, according to scholarly consensus, the invented author of the French-language epistolary fiction *Lettres Portugaises* (1669). In effect, she is ventriloquized by the actual writer, Gabriel-Joseph de La Vergne. The nun's letters are addressed to her lover, the Marquis of Chamilly, forming a monologue that charts the course of their romance from amorous passion through to doubt and despair (upon his abandonment of her); in this sense, her story epitomises certain patriarchal assumptions about women's sentimentality and vulnerability. Subsequently re-invented in a variety of guises by the 'Three Marias' in their co-written feminist classic *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (1972), an annotated version of which has been edited by Amaral herself (Barreno, Horta and Costa, 2017), Mariana Alcoforado has become an emblem of the abnegation of female authorship and voice throughout Portuguese history, as well as the possibility for feminist redress of this enforced silence.

The poem's title, 'A Carta', is immediately evocative of personal life-writing, re-enforcing *Escuro*'s personalising, affect-fuelled complication of epic; autofiction would make an unusual intrusion into the heart of any collection seeking to tell the shared story of the entire Portuguese

[100] In his review of *Escuro* for *Colóquio-Letras* (2014), entitled 'Obscura luz', Eduardo Lourenço singles out 'A Cerimónia' for close inspection, perhaps because of its inter-textual link with Pessoa's *Mensagem* (in which Filipa de Lencastre features as the mother of the Portuguese empire). Despite having emphasized Amaral's feminist poetics of deconstruction ('é uma mestra da desconstrução poética' [199]), as well as her perpetual desire to go beyond merely imitating the canon ('Ana Luísa não se contenta com uma revisitação mimética' [200]), he tellingly slips into a masculinist reading of this poem-portrait, suggesting that it depicts Filipa as "sobretudo princesa da nostalgia, de todas as nostalgias" (201). On the contrary, I contend that Amaral's intervention in this story – by animating the queen's anxieties for a future that, from her perspective, is still in-the-making – precisely complicates the iconography of the wistful female entrapped in nostalgic longing for the past. Amaral's feminist re-vision is thus fresher than Lourenço's review allows for.

people. The genre, in its epistolary form, also carries with it the shadow of masculinist assumptions about (supposedly) feminine sentimentality and melancholia – overshadowed by the habitual depiction of abandoned women letter-writers in the male-authored tradition ever since Ovid's *Heroides*.[101] Nevertheless, it is precisely this re-evaluation of the collective destiny from a microcosmic, vulnerable, personal-and-political perspective, via the re-instatement of "embodied-and-[historically-]embedded" individual voices (Braidotti, 2014) who are emphatically dis-articulated from the collective destiny of the nation, which is the hallmark of Amaral's project of "re-vision".

Situated within the second half of the collection's central section, the poem takes the form of a monologue in Mariana's voice. It opens with one of the only instances of an explicit address being made, to a generically-titled third-person plural male addressee: "Senhores". Since the only real identifying facet of this addressee is Mariana's accusation that they are the ones who have constructed the narrative of her life, one may assume that "senhores" might refer to all of the unnamed representatives of patriarchy who preserve the masculine symbolic order itself, including masculinist or patriarchally-minded readers, critics, and literary scholars.

Na vossa história, senhores,
eu fui só voz,
em vez de gente inteira

Inteira nunca o fui,
dobrada ao meio pelo escuro das vestes,
pelas juras forçadas que cumpri,
pelo dever que me ditou meu pai

Mariana laments the effacement of her embodied reality, having been reduced by patriarchal imperative to nothing more than a solitary and dispossessed 'voice' – that of her ventriloquizing male inventor – "em vez de gente inteira". The use of the word "gente", here, potentially evokes

[101] For a fuller discussion of women's autofiction in the Lusophone world, see: Blanco and Williams 2017.

the "drama em *gente*" (emphasis added) of Fernando Pessoa, pre-eminent modernist poet of Portugal, who is Amaral's ever-present intertextual interlocutor in *Escuro*. It also implies that the right, on the one hand, to a wholeness of identity ("Inteira nunca o fui"), and on the other hand, to an exploration of the potential multitudes within oneself, in the Pessoan mode, has historically been denied to women. Mariana attributes this lack of wholeness to her subjugation to patriarchal imperatives: she is forced to 'double over' ("dobrada ao meio"), weighed upon by her dark habit, the solemn vows she was forced to take, and the duty dictated to her by her father. The word "escuro" which will be used multiple times throughout the course of the poem, with alternating meanings, implies in its initial usage the relegation of women to the dark and hidden corners of historical record; it is only the imaginative leap of poetry in a feminine voice which can bring their stories to light, and, to an extent, this revelation is precisely what the poem enacts.

Porém, fui eu que as fiz, às letras dessas cartas,
Eu, que as fui construindo devagar,
Na escuridão da cela

O resto foi roubado por vós
e noutra língua,
em mitos que vos eram
necessários

Não fui só voz:
Fui eu, dona de mim
porque as letras me foram, e o amor,
e o ódio vagaroso

At this point, the persona-writer Mariana frontally addresses the question of the authorship of her letters, a thorny matter throughout the critical history of the ur-text. Like the Three Marias, who "depart from the long established, scholarly debate over the authorship of the *Lettres Portugaises* and the biographical existence of a real nun, in order to make her a source of inspiration for their own letters and verses" (Owen, 1995: p.181), Amaral's Mariana claims the validity of her status as writer, in categorically affirmative statements including the first-person pronoun "eu", which

is typically omitted in standard grammatical usage, by way of re-instating the feminine "I" into the body of the text. The "escuridão da cela", the prison-like nun's cell, with its associations of conformity and the historical anonymity of its inhabitants, becomes the locus of creative endeavour, an inadequate though necessary "room of one's own". Darkness is hereby rendered synonymous with the inadequate conditions for literary endeavour experienced by women historically, yet equally of feminine resilience in the face of such conditions. Just as Filipa de Lencastre's moment of reflection, which is the root of the inspiration for her poem, comes in the darkness of the early morning, Mariana asserts that her letter-writing took place in the darkness of the cell; Amaral's re-signification of darkness within the course of 'A Carta', and then throughout the collection as a whole, points to a reclamation of women's voices both from the obscurity of historical record and from the prejudicial claim that the conditions which have historically worked against female creativity are sufficient cause to dismiss their creative endeavours as the products of irrational, uncivilised, underdeveloped or insufficiently-schooled minds. Furthermore, Mariana's direct address to the "senhores" indicates an accusation levelled squarely at patriarchy, the institution which sustains hierarchical gender binarism and seeks to deny women the right to re-shape the symbolic order, excluding them from culture via its own processes of myth-making ("em mitos que vos eram necessários"). Yet again, in a tone of vindication, Mariana declares that she was more than merely a voice; instead, she was in fact "dona de mim", a term charged with strong inter-textual resonance with the title of Maria Teresa Horta's incendiary poetry collection "Minha Senhora de Mim" (1971) as well as Amaral's own debut poetry collection "Minha Senhora de Quê" (1990), and which evokes the central theme of the poem: the relationship of women to writing.

Só não moldei
as grades da prisão onde vivi:
essas, moldastes vós
até incandescência 35

Mariana continues her monologue, here, by contrasting two forms of construction: that of her letter writing, carried out in the darkness of her cell, and that performed by her patriarchal jailers, in their metal-work, moulding the bars of her prison to the point of "incandescence" – a term which is antonymically opposed to the semantic field of darkness and half-light in which her marginalised writing thrives. It is noteworthy, in this regard, that the collection *Escuro* opens under the aegis of epigraphs from mystical writers William Blake and San Juan de la Cruz, whose poetry revels in ambiguities and intangible spiritual experiences.

E assim eu fui-vos voz,
e doce mito. E nada mais
vos fui

Quero dizer-vos hoje,
neste tempo tão escuro,
mas de um escuro diverso do que tive:
adeus

Deixai-me o escuro, o meu.
Porque ao lado da minha,
A vossa ausência, essa que em mim plantastes,
Nada é.
Tomáreis vós saber o que é ausência

Ausência: eu: demorada nestas linhas.
Dizer com quanto escuro
A noite se desfaz
E se constrói —

These four stanzas, which represent the final quarter of the sixteen-stanza-long poem, conclude by emphasising Mariana's consciousness of her own mythical status: she recognises that she has served patriarchy as a "doce mito" (l.47). Having drawn attention, in stanza twelve, to the categorisation of her letters as "literatura" by patriarchy, "uma palavra nova e ágil", Mariana proceeds to reclaim her speaking voice ("Quero dizer-vos hoje" [l.49]) in order to bid farewell to the patriarchs. Stanza fifteen opens with Mariana's imperative "Deixai-me" (l.53), addressed to the "senhores" – a clarion-call for ethical action in the present, delivered by this spectre of female marginality. In the same line, Mariana climactically divests the word "escuro" of its

negative connotations, reclaiming it for herself by using the possessive pronoun "meu". Darkness is subsequently wedded to the concept of absence, in the following two lines, again through the implementation of a possessive "minha [ausência]" (l.54), which contrasts to the absence imposed on her by literary tradition (l.55).

The history of the notion of woman-as-absence, or woman-as-lack, is long, but Irigaray homes in on Freudian psychoanalysis, which spuriously diagnoses women as suffering from penis envy, and therefore from a supposed inherent sense of lack in terms of their genital configuration. Women's relative absence from the Western Canon, until recently, together with the absence of women's experiences from historical record, further contribute to this sense of women's absence. Since Mariana has previously, in stanzas eleven and twelve, asserted her role as an inventor of absences (with an oblique suggestion that even her romance with the Marquis of Chamilly is an invention, and therefore evocative of a male absence which serves as a spur to creativity and the generation of metaphors ["E os actos dele foram-me as metáforas", l.40], by way of literary expression of the female experience), it becomes evident that absence, like silence, is undergoing a process of re-signification. If the feminine is, however spuriously, associated with absence in the Western imaginary and male-authored canon, then absence can be re-imagined as a generative force. Voices which speak from the margins of the hegemony may be apt to deconstruct the darkness of ignorance (as their approach may be informed by an oblique, non-normative and ethically-attuned perspective), while simultaneously creating a new form of darkness (such as the evocative half-light ambivalence of poetry).

The line which opens the poem's final stanza is testament to this process of reclamation: "Ausência: eu: demorada nestas linhas", with its unconventional syntax reminiscent of Emily Dickinson (and indeed the poem will end with a Dickinsonian dash), evokes the centrality of absence to feminine experience, and yet it is precisely this absence which functions as its

creative force, as it luxuriantly, suspensefully, gapfully structures the poetry itself. Mariana's gesture of letter-writing is, ultimately, an appeal to personal subjectivity and history, as opposed to the collective history of epic. It reveals one of the many marginalised and muted individual lives that lie beneath the surface of history and mythology. Mariana Alcoforado is, moreover, a figure from outside of the Camonian/Pessoan canon. Her appearance in *Escuro* points irrevocably to the inscription of a female genealogy, via the female-authored *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, a text whose own structure of layered temporalities, its letters and fragments pointing in multiple temporal directions at once, "allows for feminine identity to be asserted as contingent and non-absolute" (Owen & Pazos-Alonso, 2011: 32). By further re-working the already-multiple Mariana, in the context of *Escuro*, 'A Carta' adds yet another temporal and textual layer to this non-unitary figure.[102]

4. UNLOCKING UTOPIAN POSSIBILITIES:

4.1. PORTUGAL AND EUROPE: EXCEPTIONALISM IN RUINS

Amaral's poem 'Europa 2', which is the fourth-to-last poem of the collection, is a pointed riposte both to the figuration of Portugal as the head of Europe in Camões (*OL*: canto III, stanza 20), as well as more explicitly – in meta-textual terms – to the opening poem of Pessoa's *Mensagem* 'Primeiro: O Dos Castellos'. In Pessoa's poem, Europe is symbolically described as a woman reclining from East to West, whose elbows rest upon Italy and England, her head, which has the face of Portugal, resting upon her right hand while she gazes, sphinx-like, out into the Atlantic:

[102] Rounding out my critique of Lourenço's review of *Escuro*, I also believe that he mischaracterises 'A Carta' when he describes it as the "cântico dos cânticos de todas as seduzidas e abandonadas" (204). While such a description helpfully gestures towards the delicate musicality and lyricism of the poem, it nevertheless fails to account for the way in which Mariana is allowed, in Amaral's poetry, to transform herself from being a universal stereotype of the seduced and abandoned woman into a much more complicated, resistant, and empowering figure of poetically-productive absence.

Fita, com olhar sphyngico e fatal,
O Occidente, futuro do passado

O rosto com que fita é Portugal.
(*M*, p.14).

Both Camões and Pessoa thus invoke the notion of Portuguese exceptionalism in their respective projects of nationalist mythmaking, with Pessoa's figuration of Europe being founded in specifically gendered language, whereby the Greek myth of the riddle-spinning half-woman, half-lion sphinx is invoked, implying that Europe's future is a riddle which the male poet-prophet may solve or shape. As Cirurgião postulates, Fernando Pessoa thus sets himself up in the role of riddle-solver Oedipus, with *Mensagem* enacting the process of decipherment that culminates in his prophecy of the arrival of the *Quinto Império* (1990: p.42). For Portugal's two most canonised male poets, the myth of Portugal's exceptional status within Europe is principally advanced through the notion that, despite its relatively small size and population compared with other European countries, it nevertheless could positivize its deficiencies: for instance, its marginalised location at the outermost Western edge of the European mainland is figured as essential to its success as an outward-facing, expansionist, seafaring nation. Thus, as the face of Europe, Portugal is privileged with vision through time and space, and may set its sights on the goal of expansion. As Anna Klobucka has suggested (1997), the nations that inhabit peripheral positions in Europe have often sought to compensate for their perceived insignificance on the stage of European politics and culture by attempting to turn the margin into a pivotal centre, claiming a Messianic role in defence of authentic European culture from enemies, both internal and external (as in the case of Salazar's dictatorship, which claimed to be defending Europe from communist infiltrators and heathens abroad). Sebastianismo, with its "belief in Portugal's mission to redeem not only itself but to save Christian/Western civilisation in general" (Kaufman, 1997: 170), is, therefore, a case in point.

In contrast to Camões and Pessoa's myth of Portugal's exceptionalism and their prophecies of its glorious future, Amaral's 'Europa 2' depicts a sense of universal malaise and decline, subsuming Portugal within Europe, in a critique of Europe-wide inertia in the face of present-day catastrophes. Even the catastrophes themselves are far from being solely European in nature; rather they are global ones relating to migration and refugees, overbearing international capitalism, war and injustice. Coming not at the beginning but rather towards the end of *Escuro*, Amaral's study of Europe thus inverts the structure of *Mensagem*, as well as its tone – matching her predilection for the "avesso" (for turning things on their head or imagining things in reverse or inside out). 'Europa 2' belongs to a pair of poems; it is preceded by 'Europa 1', a poem in the first-person, in which the speaker, seeming to address her words to Europe, the second-person addressee, situates herself in a contemplative stance, "ao teu alcance,/ mas tu: impossível?" (ll.4-5), thus reflecting on the (ir)reality of a continent she loves ("o amor de ti", l.2), but which lies asleep ("o teu sono", l.1). The closing stanza of this poem sets the scene for an encounter between the poetic voice and Europe:

> Descoberta,
> sentei-me ao teu alcance,
> à espera dos teus olhos—

The referent of the adjective 'Descoberta' is indeterminate, since it could refer to either the speaker or Europe itself. The term resonates with our historical consciousness of the ill-fated "discovery" of the New World (an event depicted as a catastrophe in the earlier poem 'A Génese'), and is suggestive of subalternity, exposure and vulnerability. This reverses the historical hierarchy between colonizing Europe and the colonized New World, while simultaneously establishing a bond of empathy and inclination between speaker and object, who both potentially share in the condition of being "discovered". The speaker seats herself within the reach of her object, implying both humility and concern. It also implies that the poet's brutally pessimistic vision of Europe's present state, which is to emerge in 'Europa 2', is being born out

of an attitude of love, more than mere despair (which an isolated reading of 'Europa 2' might suggest). For, in addition to the numerically-conjoined sequencing, the two poems are in fact stitched together, visually, by the final elongated dash of 'Europa 1'. This signals the co-existence of empathy (which is the predominant sentiment of 'Europa 1') with frank and even scathing political analysis (the prevailing tone of 'Europa 2'), and calls to mind the dictum attributed to Hannah Arendt that politics is the application of love for the world, however imperfect and brutalising the world may be. The attitude of the speaker thus differs radically from the self-assured, masculine challenge-seeking which characterises Pessoa's self-identification with the riddle-solving Oedipus in *Mensagem*. Amaral, instead, patiently and empathetically seeks to engage the reciprocal gaze of her object, Europe, ("à espera dos teus olhos").

However, the longed-for gaze is not returned. The "tu" of 'Europa 1' appears incapable of reply, and so 'Europa 2' takes the form of a third-person description of a moribund, visionless continent. In place of solving riddles about the national destiny, the poet-speaker merely asks questions of her own – ironic, hope-deflating questions, which deconstruct notions of European exceptionalism. For example, the first stanza opens with Europe being described as "seeing very little", paving the way for stanza two's opening query: "Alguma vez fitou?". Moreover, instead of encountering a figural image of Europe-as-woman, with the bodily integrity to assure unity amongst its constituent parts, and with the face of Portugal gazing sphinx-like into the Atlantic Ocean, the poet-speaker is rather confronted with the horrifying vision of a Europe dismembered and in disarray. Following a century marked by imperialist ambition across Europe, wars have tragically disfigured Europe's people and its own figural body: "Guerras a destruir-lhe/ solo e gentes" (ll.14-15); "Não tem olhos agora de fitar, se alguma vez/ os teve: perdeu-os noutras guerras" (ll.17-18); Não tem olhos, nem mãos,/ nem fita nada, a Europa. Nem cotovelos tem/ que possam suportar justiças e bondade" (ll.20-22). This spectacle of Europe's disfigurement,

which unsettles its singularity and human likeness, offends the notion of the ontological dignity of bodies.

Resonating with Cavarero's notion of "horrorism", Amaral's portrait of an immobilised Europe bearing all the hallmarks of the horror-stricken (including frozenness and passivity), except for her apparent insensateness, calls to mind the mythological dictate that "horror has the face of a woman [the Medusa]" (Cavarero, 2009: 14). The gorgon's gaze petrified her victims, yet – in one version of the myth – she petrified herself through her slayer Perseus's game of mirrors, coming to represent "the unwatchability of one's own death" (p.8). Cavarero's neologism, developed in response to contemporary forms of political violence – including terrorism, chemical warfare and genocide – that disproportionately occasion civilian casualties, implies a shift in viewpoint, from the warrior's to the victim's, whereupon the petrifying, passive-rendering force of horror exceeds the dynamic, flight-inducing force of terror. In Amaral's poem, the abasing quality of this all-encompassing violence has caused civilisation (with its music ["sinfonias abertas"], painting ["as cores"], architecture ["rochas pintadas"] and literature ["palavras"], in lines 7-10) to become bracketed. The poem is a lamentation for the loss and cheapening of life through contemporary scientific rationalism, neoliberalism and warfare. The "química luz", emphatically underscored as "os lumes tão *reais*" (emphasis added), contrasts with *Escuro*'s habitual references to the dreamlike half-light of poetic inspiration. Meanwhile, the reference to "os nomes amputados/ pelos números, mesas de número fartas" evokes, on the one hand, the algorithmic control of human life by neo-liberalism (the new global empire, according to Hardt & Negri [2001]), whereby individuals become merely statistics or numbers in a system, and on the other, the number-branding of death-camp prisoners during the Holocaust. Europe's inhabitants have been levelled to the status of nameless "mortos por múltiplos disfarces", their individualities obliterated – a reminder of the effacement of individual, affective histories by the force of collectivising notions of history and national destiny. Horrorism denotes the horror that

accompanies the violent erasure of singularity and the exploitation of vulnerability (Cavarero, 2009: p.19).

Europe's blindness connotes lack of vision. Europe has been incapable of foreseeing the disasters that now afflict it, despite the prophecies contained in its storehouse of master narratives, such as *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem*. Indeed, these texts' exultations of heroic masculinity, imperialism, patriotism and (hetero)normative history-making, have only nourished the ideologies ravaging the continent and rendering it a dystopia. The "becoming-minoritarian-of-Europe" (Rosi Braidotti, 2006), evoked in Amaral's poem, is about critiquing Europe's myth of cultural exceptionalism and dominance, recognising its flaws and decentring it within the global system. The final three lines of the poem conclude its pointed critique of European (and Portuguese) exceptionalism:

> E mesmo aqui, se para aqui olhasse, nada veria,
> A não ser outros gritos. Sem voz. Sem sul.
>
> Sem esfinge que deslumbre.

The "aqui" of the penultimate stanza is perhaps a reference to Portugal itself, which is not explicitly mentioned in the poem, conceived as merely one location among many possible ones. The deictic quality of "aqui" makes it contingent on the provenance of the utterance which is complicated by the unknowability of the lyric speaker's positionality and identity, beyond being associated with Amaral herself as a Portuguese but also emphatically transnational poet, in view of her Anglophone influences. This draws attention to the radical de-centring of Portugal; its mythic status, in *Escuro*'s epic inter-texts, at the head of Europe is deconstructed. It becomes one cry among many others ("outros gritos"), in a panorama of primeval Munschean screaming, yet without an articulate voice of its own. "[S]em esfinge que deslumbre", there is no riddle worth solving nor any dazzlement, and the poem closes, unusually within the context of the collection

as a whole, with a full-stop. All of this points to the necessity of a new redeeming utopian mentality and a new voice, and the prospect of a new *deslumbramento* which – amidst the loveless, barren wastes of a blind contemporary Europe – might yet have the capacity to seduce, instil desire, or inspire awe, as the ambivalent half-light of poetry itself may do.

4.2. FROM DYSTOPIA TO ECOTOPIA: FLOURISHINGS OF THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLD

Escuro's next poem taps into this utopian impulse by instating a shift in tone towards positivity, re-opening the semantic fields of dazzlement, harmony and solidarity. Calling to mind the collection's inaugural poem ('Das mais puras memórias: ou de lumes', *E*: 13-15), which opens with an image of the pure joy of a blood-red summer sky recollected from a time between childhood and almost-adulthood, 'Geografias, e a partir do ar' indicates the emergence of a perspective on the Earth that is sustained in aerial suspension.

> Imprecisa equação de variantes:
> estas linhas brilhantes e minúsculas,
> que ao olhar se desfazem, espiraladas
> em luz, enroladas em língua, antigas
> como o mundo
>
> Quanto é preciso para harmonizar?
> Com quantos movimentos se apaga
> comoção e o que lhe é dentro?
>
> Bastaria uma onda, mãos unidas,
> músculo em fúria, imenso, que
> no meio destas linhas se deslumbrasse.
> Assim: mãos, os vários estados
> da matéria
>
> Um tigre de neurónio emocionado,
> guarda ao seu irmão —
> (*E*: 62).

In a rather enigmatic key, 'Geografias, e a partir do ar' – having used images of spirals and rolling so as to obscure and complicate the concept of the straight lines, associated throughout *Escuro*

with political borders and imperially-coveted horizons and shorelines, as well as the notion of the poetic line itself – invokes the surprising image of the tiger, suggesting a swerve towards the nonhuman as a spur to human artistic endeavour, as well as calling to mind both Amaral's own collection *A Arte de Ser Tigre* (2003) and the William Blake poem 'Tyger, tyger, burning bright'. In Blake's poem, the tiger is addressed with a series of unanswerable questions, calling to mind something sphinx-like, enigmatic and fearsome; Amaral's invocation of the tiger, at this moment in *Escuro*, supplants the absence of Europe-as-sphinx, suggesting that a new, dazzling and awe-engendering form of poetic inspiration is emerging on the horizon.

Opening *Escuro*'s third and final section, entitled 'Outra Fala', the poem 'Amar em Futuro' opens with a conditional "se", followed by verb forms in the future subjunctive ("entrar" [l.3], "habitar" [l.8]): its uncertainness and conditionality contrast markedly with the prophecy-driven final sections of *Os Lusíadas* (whose "máquina do mundo" episode describes Portugal's glittering future) and *Mensagem* (with its closing declaration of "É a Hora!"). The inter-textual link with *Os Lusíadas*, via the titular word "Amar" which recalls the Isle of Love episode (Cantos IX and X), is explicit. The chanceness of this possible future, depicted by Amaral, emphasised by the use of "se" (an "if" which initiates a hypothetical which plays out, contingently and conditionally, in the subjunctive mood), suggests that teleology will play no role in it. As Ahmed meditates, "'perhaps' shares its 'hap' with 'happiness'. The happy future is the future of the perhaps" (2011: p.178). Amaral's poem provides a vision of a world seemingly uninhabited by humans, where "a paz seria toda". Borderless, passport-less and unpeopled ("sem corpo/ ou passaporte para lado nenhum"), this is a "patamar versificado em vida". This image of horizontality is reminiscent of Spinoza's notion of a plane of immanence – a zone of collapsed binaries, in which all exists or remains *within*, as opposed to being *beyond* or *outside*; in Deleuzian philosophy, such a plane signifies an escape from hierarchical notions of value determined by vertical transcendence. The

use of the word "versificado" underscores the creation of the plane by poetic means. This is a world "[sustido] pela voz" (l.22), sustained by the voice of the poet.

Following a shift of a thousand of years into the future, the earth has given over to the steady movement of artfully-rendered tectonic plates "em arabesco" (l.14), which are described as "transbordando gestos que ainda são// da infância" [ll.18-19], suggesting a new world in its infancy. The geological time of this future-world extends far beyond that of human life, beyond the scope of human dynasties; over the course of the poem, as a whole, the time scale will extend in increments of unfixably-expansive thousand-or-so-year time units "mil anos, pelo menos" (l.10-11, l.20), reaching three thousand years into the future and beyond ("além de três mil anos", l45). Indeed, the collection's shift in emphasis, at this juncture, from those past epochs preserved in the ideologically-tinted ambers of Portuguese cultural memory and canonical literature, towards the deep time of unfathomably-distant futures,[103] complicates the straightforwardness of epic time conceived as a steady, linear accretion of actions that add up to a national story. Amaral's future subjunctive does not even promise the survival of the human species, let alone the Portuguese nation; instead, the very world is imagined in the process of being reborn.

There is also a resurgence of nonhuman, aquatic life forms, principally figured by "golfinhos":

> Bater de coração, em suave arritmia, uma
> morada, um barco (que aqui seria a cápsula
> de luz), um espaço de magia e micro-sons,
> ou gestos de golfinhos, a língua dos golfinhos
> transformada em linguagem de sal

[103] This indicates an interest in the notion of Anthropocene time – that is, the time scales upon which long-term human impacts on planetary systems become visible. As David Farrier suggests: "[t]he Anthropocene involves us in a kind of deep-time negative capability, inducting us into the strangeness of a temporality that vastly exceeds both personal experience and intergenerational memory" (2019: 5). The "geological status" (5) of the human, revealed in this long-view, additionally puts the stability of the lyric "I" under pressure: the present tense utterances appropriate to a first-person voicing of experience, emotion or thought are rendered inadequate for addressing the vastness of Anthropocene time. This may go some way towards contextualising Amaral's use of a future subjunctive, enunciated by an unlocatable voice (albeit hardly an omniscient one, on account of its speculative quality), in 'Amar em futuro'.

Since Europe, in 'Europa 2', had been described as a "golfinho em dor/ Preso nas redes", in a metaphor for vulnerability, apt for a twenty-first century facing global ecological crises, the re-appearance of dolphins in happier conditions here underscores the contrast between Europe's dystopia and this nation-less world's utopian possibilities. The thriving of the dolphins also serves as a reminder that a state of vulnerability is not occasioned simply by an absence of power, but rather, as Pick explains, it is a product of relations of power (Pick, 2018: 422). With humanity, subjugator-in-chief of all other species and destroyer of their conditions for life, hypothetically subtracted from the picture, the dolphins may flourish; thus, the reader is ethically re-orientated in relation to the world's nonhuman others. Furthermore, the dolphins are portrayed as cultural beings, with their own gestures and language – the building blocks of all cultures, societies, and relationality. Amaral's oceans teem with voices, and other species are revealed to have their own semiotic systems, which are far from being the sole preserve of humanity.

Ultimately, the image of this world of slowly-moving tectonic plates as "um cego aprendendo a ler a cor da vida"(l.23) recalls the blindness of Europe, which had been bathed only in the cold light of a blue moon over its trenches, in the preceding poem. Optimistically, 'Amar em Futuro' contains a profusion of references to colour, perhaps suggesting that new colours can emerge through utopian thinking. Relinquishing nationalisms equally becomes inevitable, once Andrómeda, "tiver, refeito o céu e o espaço/ sidereal, acrescentado a si mais uma estrela" (ll.29-30). This might even point to a speculative future in which the feminine no longer bears the symbolic burden of representation: this Andromeda is not the sacrificial maiden of Greek myth, but a galaxy acquiring new stars for itself, and nothing more. In yet another reparative gesture, this poem may be said to "re-member" the disarticulated limbs of Europe's body; semantic echoes of 'Europa 2' appear and are re-contextualised, allowing Europe to be put back together again in a new form.

Set in an intergalactic setting, 'Amar em Futuro' allows us to imagine an Andromeda-eye view of a posthuman world, where life teems in the oceans and tectonic plates create interlocking artistic patterns. This vision takes place emphatically within the mind of the poet-speaker; this is her speculative fiction, her dream, with everything explicitly sustained by the poetic voice itself ("sustidos pela voz", l.22). This is a strangely beautiful apocalypse, or an "apocalypso", to borrow a term from the *Ecotopian Lexicon* (Bellamy and Schneider-Mayerson 2019: 22), that is conjured into being by a poetic voice open to nonhuman agency, creativity and flourishing beyond the margins of the purely-human. However, the poem ends with a Dickinsonian dash, leaving its ending open and ambivalent – if it is a utopia, it is nevertheless not a prescription.

4.3. The Poet as the Liberated Voice of the Marginalised Feminine

The collection's final poem depicts the liberation of the marginalised-absent feminine through the work of an unconventional poetic mode, which augurs a hope that is timeless. The title of this closing poem, 'O Drama Em Gente: A Outra Fala', immediately establishes an intertextual relationship with the *oeuvre* of Fernando Pessoa. His "drama em gente" was indeed a project committed to dispelling notions of the unitary subject, through the modernist idea that a single poet contained within himself multitudes, and could "depersonalise" himself to give voice to a coterie of dramatic characters. It was, nevertheless, still one indebted to Western notions of the singularity of the male genius; the "heteronymous homosocial community" of unique, male voices (Klobucka & Sabine, 2007: p.19) predominantly excluded the feminine. The paratextual material of manifestos and letters to friends (such as the 1935 letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro), which contributed to the mythologizing of Pessoa in the Portuguese imaginary, constructed an interpretative framework which viewed each heteronym as a self-sustaining, enclosed poetic idiom, each with an autonomous voice. Each of the individual voices was thus a poetic genius

in his own right, while they were all ultimately subsumed, as traditional Pessoan scholarship would have it, within "a philosophically inclined (and confined) theatre of the mind" (2007: p.4) directed by the ur-genius, Pessoa himself. While more recent scholarship has sought to indicate the degree to which each heteronymic voice is enmeshed in the other (cf. Castro 2013), as well as their (sometimes) queer explorations of embodied phenomena (Klobucka and Sabine 2007), it remains the case that traditional interpretations of the heteronyms have tended to emphasise how (supposedly) uniquely delineated and singular they are as disembodied, dramatic characters.

Ana Luísa Amaral's re-vision of the heteronymic project in 'O Drama em Gente: *A Outra Fala*' (emphasis added) – which can mean both "the other speech", but equally "the female other speaks" – opens up space for the emergence of the repressed feminine. Ana Luísa Amaral retains the idea of the non-unitary self, which is useful to her project of de-essentialising women's identity in Western tradition, while at the same time re-investing her poetry with a highly personal element. In this sense, Amaral's achievement matches that ascribed by Rosi Braidotti, in her seminal *Nomadic Subjects* (2011), to Luce Irigaray, the French philosopher of sexual difference: that is, Amaral "focuses on the potential for transformation contained by the feminine as the sociosymbolic location of privileged otherness" (p.91). Since women have, both materially and symbolically, endured the costs of the masculine privilege for autonomous self-definition, which has turned women into the "other of the (self-)Same" (to use Irigaray's terminology [cf. Braidotti, 2011: p.97]), the significance of Amaral's feminist project of engendering a place whence to speak cannot be underestimated. Having activated the countermemories of female figures from Portuguese history (Filipa de Lencastre) and the countergenealogies of female artistic endeavour (Mariana Alcoforado), as well as critiquing normative notions of (white, male, human) subjectivity, *Escuro* closes with a poem which makes the stake of the individual woman-poet in this collectively-useful endeavour explicit. It equally activates a sense of the two-way

interconnectedness of the personal and the collective, without necessarily privileging either term within the pair.

O DRAMA EM GENTE:
A OUTRA FALA

O lume que as rodeia,
a estas vozes,
não foi feito de sol, embora dele
herdasse um rasto de paisagem,
nem se moldou em luz,
que a noite lhe foi sempre o estado puro

O lume que as sustenta,
a estas vozes,
é mais de dentro, e eu não o sei dizer

Pressinto-o só,
e há fases, como em lua, em que o sinto a chegar:
ondas de mim, tempo herdado em camadas
de espessuras diferentes

Mas sempre deste tempo
é o lume que as prende, a estas vozes,
e ao prendê-las as solta
sobre o tempo —

The poem describes "the light" enveloping "these voices". The demonstrative adjective which designates the voices as being *near to* the speaker uttering the poem – the phrase "a *estas* vozes" (my emphasis) appears three times throughout the course of the poem (ll. 2, 8, 15) – suggests that these voices belong to the whole preceding gallery of characters who have appeared throughout the collection, and who are ultimately encompassed in the "drama-in-people" of this poem's title. The feminine "other speech" (or "other-who-speaks" ["a outra fala"]), which (or who) is supplementary to the poem's title (both grammatically in that it [or she] follows a colon, but also in the ambivalent Derridean sense of both surplus and substitution), thus speaks with the voices of all the collection's marginalised, vulnerable, and queerly spectral personages. Despite their distance in time and space from the present tense of the (ultimately first-person) utterance that is the poem itself (since first-person singular verb forms emerge in lines 9-11),

these voices are *close by*. This further corroborates the impression of the poet-speaker's being ethically attentive to the return of ghosts *in the here and now*.

In addition, the balanced interplay of imagery of lightness and darkness – whereby "o lume" recurs three times (in stanzas 1, 2 and 4 [ll. 1, 7 and 15]), "sol" once (stanza 1 [l.3]), "lua" once (stanza 3 [l.11]), "a noite" once (stanza 1 [l.6]), and "luz" itself once (stanza 1 [l.5]) – indicates their co-presence and mutual involvement within the process of illumination. Equally, a degree of indeterminacy between light and darkness is connoted, in view of the paradoxical idea that this light has "inherited a sliver of landscape" from the sun (ll.3-4), while enjoying its purest form at night-time (l.6). From the not-yet light of early dawn of 'A Cerimónia' (*E*: p.41, ll.14-17), to the "resplendent" darkness of the deep depths of the sea inhabited by 'Adamastor' (*E*: p.55, ll.7-9), or the restful darkness longed-for by the Prince D. Henrique, who is surreally trapped in an "elipse de luz" in 'O Promontório' (*E*: p.38, l.35; ll.52-54), and Mariana Alcoforado's reclamation of "o escuro, o meu" as a metaphor for personal creativity, the collection is demonstrably filled with depictions of uncertain states of light, twilight, half-light, and darkness in which dreams, desires and poetry flourish. As Medeiros reminds us in his introduction to *Escuro*, "[light] discriminates and makes borders, whereas the dark allows for a blurring and eventual erasure of all borders" (2016: 9-10), and it is indeed this quality of darkness to unsettle the fixity of things which pervades Amaral's poetry.

Furthermore, from a perspective which takes account of the gendering of light sources within the Western imaginary, it becomes evident that the references to the sun and the moon carry with them a gender-charged symbolic dimension. While the "lume" that illuminates Amaral's voices is not "made of sun", it has nevertheless "inherited" from it a sliver of landscape; yet at the same time, in lines 10 and 11, the arrival of the "lume" is intuited in phases resembling non-linear lunar cycles. As Hélène Cixous notes, the sun (day) and the moon (night), are mythically ascribed

to the realms of the masculine and feminine respectively, within a hierarchized opposition, which privileges the former over the latter (1980a: pp.90-91). Bearing in mind the appearance of the verb "herdar" in each of the stanzas containing a reference to sun and moon, I posit that the poem thereby invokes a dual inheritance of masculine and feminine traditions (once again, in line with Showalter's notion of "double-voiced discourse"), doing so in order to reform both. The arrival of the "lume" is equated, by means of the colon which ends line 11, with the arrival of "ondas de mim, tempo herdado em camadas/ de espessuras diferentes". With the personal element having already been foregrounded in stanza 2, line 9 (which is precisely the poem's midpoint), wherein the "lume" is described as being an interior one and the first-person pronoun "eu" appears in relation to an admission of the poet-speaker's unknowingness ("e eu não o sei dizer"), the appearance of the "ondas de mim" continues this trend.

Thus, just as the collection began under the sign of the personal – with its first poem, 'Das mais puras memórias: ou de lumes', evoking childhood memories in a first-person poetic voice resembling the poet's – so too it ends with the personal. The first-person voice returns, having spread out in "ondas de mim" throughout various personages of Portuguese mythology and history, engendering new perspectives. Yet, this "I" is flexible and porous, bearing the traces of every other voice in the collection, which it has inhabited, as is evidenced by the self-doubting tone and syntactical open-endedness that it shares with the character-portrait poems. Traversing different times and spaces, in a non-linear fashion over unmapped poetic territory, Amaral creates a composite voice of marginalised people and mythical beings. Indeed, in the poem's final stanza, the poet's illuminating "lume", to which the voices are said to be "fastened", simultaneously unfastens and releases the "ondas de mim" (or perhaps the voices) across time, in the paradoxical formulation: "e ao prendê-las as solta/ sobre o tempo". This metaphor spatialises time, thereby collapsing temporal and spatial logic. This allies Amaral's poetic project with a minoritarian impulse, generating a non-unitary conception of selfhood and poetic voice,

which speaks not of a universal human condition but rather of the existence of an infinite number of potential positionalities which co-exist horizontally, ex-temporally and across borders. Since historically, authority is male and rational, Amaral's poetry instead revalorises notions of intuition and uncertainty: "eu não o sei dizer" contrasts markedly with the final affirmative "É a Hora!" of Pessoa's *Mensagem*, in a gesture that is entirely non-grandiose and anti-vatic. Equally emblematic, in this regard, is the way in which the meaning of the word "escuro" has, throughout the collection, evaded the finality of definition, remaining nebulous and multivalent.

Finally, the image of the "ondas de mim" participates in the gesture of re-locating the valence of water imagery from the realm of grand maritime conquests into the personal realm of interiority, selfhoods, and feminine authorship. Given that no two waves have exactly the same shape, nor fall with precisely the same frequency, yet, even so, repeat unendingly in accordance with the cyclical movements of the moon, the word "ondas" equally connotes the notion of repetition-with-difference which is a staple technique of performative feminist "re-vision". Furthermore, while the sea has occupied "centre stage" in the Portuguese imaginary, as Rothwell has argued, principally signifying a watery bridge that connected Portugal with the territories of its imperial conquests, both realised and potential, across the world (because "[t]he sea, in *Os Lusíadas*, represents Portugal at its most assimilative", 2004: p.95), Amaral's *Escuro* symbolically severs this bridge. The collection's fourth poem 'Outras Vozes' (*E*: pp.25-27) – with which I originally introduced the theme of the marginalized feminine voice at the beginning of this chapter – re-imagines the Portuguese caravel not as a vehicle of transport, but instead as a vessel emptied of cargo and crew, without a flag, whose sail has become decorative rather than functional, lavishly adorned with feathers, and which, sunken, has been transformed from an instrument of unfettered human greed into an incidental home for fish ("um barco novo habitado de peixes/

brilhantes como estrelas", *E*: p.27).[104] Yet, as Stennett has suggested, the sunken boat is not purely or even necessarily a symbol of the failure of empire, even though it does depict its demise; rather, through its dismantling and artistic reconstruction, "the ship's vacant hull [becomes] a space in which new, creative possibilities are imagined" (2017: 28): as human-time and fish-time intertwine, through the artful process of poetry, a post-human, non-anthropocentric utopia emerges.

5. CONCLUSION

Whereas Pessoa and Camões avowed Portugal's crowning exceptionalism within an already-exceptionalised Europe, Amaral re-imagines a borderless world of horizontality, rather than hierarchy, and turns to other forms of marginalisation in need of positive valorisation. Contrasting with the archetypal, national heroes of Pessoa and Camões, Amaral's gallery of marginalised, vulnerable, spectrally-queer, uncanny and non-unitary subjects become prototypes for what Braidotti terms a "nomadic consciousness", or "peripheral consciousness" (2011: p.60). They "[resist] assimilation or homologation into dominant ways of representing the self", their "memory is activated against the stream" and they "enact a rebellion of subjugated knowledges" (p.60); in their self-awareness as myths, her mythical figures become self-representing entities.

[104] This image of the sunken ship calls to mind a poem by Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, another inheritor of Camões and Pessoa's work. Written in her 1947 collection *Dia do Mar* (Andresen, 2011: 110), the poem 'Navio Naufragado' (which directly follows a poem about a mournful Camões, entitled 'Gruta de Camões'), depicts a shipwreck: the ship's former captain is now a white skeleton, with seaweed for veins and a jellyfish for a heart, while aquatic vegetation and ghostly deep-sea animals, together with ponderous mermaids, encircle the wreckage. The image of the sinking or sunken ship (and sometimes also its drowned pilot, who also featured in Natália Correia's *Cântico do país emerso*), is thus a recurring image in Portuguese women's complications of epic. This is true in both poetry and the visual arts (see Maria Helena Vieira da Silva's 'História Marítima-Trágica ou Naufrágio' in Appendix: Fig.4). Triumphalist imagery of caravels forging imperial routes on the high seas is inverted, as the tragic cost of shipwrecks are evoked, and the natural world and elemental forces of the sea claim the lost ships of empire for their own alternative uses.

Reworking Pessoa's heteronymic project of carefully-delineated, exceptional male voices, Amaral's own *drama em gente* is more self-consciously fluid. She creates space for the emergence of marginalised feminine voice, reconceiving marginalisation and absence as generative forces. "The feminine is re-defined as a moving horizon, a fluctuating path, a recipe for transformation, motion, becoming" (Braidotti, 2011: p.114), permeating the collection and rippling out into the world as "ondas de mim". Invoking literary heritage, *Escuro* is inscribed within the literary traditions of the *dominant*, against which it develops an oppositional consciousness, and the *muted*, through feminine countermemory and countergenealogies. Amaral's poetry *both* critiques the notion of myth-making (which is depicted as the root of European decline) through her deconstruction of national myth, *and* engages ambivalently in a process of feminist revisionary counter-myth-making: as Rothwell discusses (2012: pp.271-274), the concept of "both/and", rather than the binary of "either/or", is fundamental to feminist avant-garde literary practice.

While each Lusitanian of *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem* represented merely one facet of the collective Portuguese soul, Amaral refuses epic history's effacement of particularity, difference, and individuality; her human and nonhuman figures retain their irreducible complexities and ambiguities, and as such they resist being co-opted by master narratives which would seek to contain them. Finally, Amaral's poetry espouses the capacity of marginalised feminine voice(s) to provide ethical redress and alternative utopian possibilities, so that the colours of the world may be painted anew. Eschewing the conventional privilege enjoyed by humanity as the most valued species of all, whose hallowed future is traditionally secured in grand narratives and epics, her poetry moves beyond the narrow confines of anthropocentrism, making space for contemplating how nonhuman others may flourish amidst the toppled ruins of a (maritime) imperial tradition which had overlooked, subjugated and colonised them.

CONCLUSION:

Towards A Feminist Poetics of Indeterminate Voice and Ecological Desire

Natália Correia, Luiza Neto Jorge and Ana Luísa Amaral, in liberating Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa from reductive readings, discover in the epic tradition deriving from them a rich resource of complexity from which to build their own complications of the genre. Unleashing the repressed undercurrents of femininity (including the female body and voice) from Portuguese history, their interventions complicate epic – both as a genre, and as an ethos informing Portugal's national psyche. Revealing epic's skewed gender politics and anthropocentrism – which involve its marginalisation of unconventional masculinity and self-aware feminine voices, on the one hand, and its staged subjugation of racially-othered people, the monstrous, and the more-than-human, on the other hand – these feminist poets elicit the present absences of the genre's marginalized others. These marginalized beings and voices are explored and made into tangible (if also potentially ambivalent) presences, giving them a chance to perform transformative work upon the Portuguese cultural imaginary. In the process, Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral – in feminist, queer, and ecologically-conscious keys – challenge and deconstruct the homogeneity and patriarchal foundations of Portuguese nationhood, in addition to its straightforward (heterosexist) and human-centred teleological trajectory.

1. Feminist Poetics Against Certainties: Towards Indeterminacy

In terms of their poetic voices' positionality, that is to say, their self-conscious positioning both spatially and temporally, the *Cântico do país emerso*, the *Dezanove Recantos*, and *Escuro* manifest the emergence of what I term a *feminist poetics of indeterminate voice*, beginning with

Correia. Although I am inclined to think of her poetic voice as a decidedly female-gendered and proudly-Azorean one (in pointed defiance of poetic tradition's privileging of the disingenuously-neutral masculine voice, as well as rebelling against the authority of the metropole), I believe it nevertheless displays certain ambiguities which problematise, from a feminist viewpoint, the univocality associated with epics written in the style of poet-prophets. Inheriting Pessoa's tendency to replace Camões's observational empiricism with fantastical reveries, Correia's own poetic voice displays a dubiousness in its omniscience, its demiurgic capacity to survey all reality being convoluted by the employment of a surrealist mode brimming with oneiric energies, which are suggestive of a wishful, exuberant dream engendered by desire. Her voice roams freely through space, porously imbibing every reality it encounters – absorbent in its sponginess and oozing in its fluidity ("Embebo-me na solidão como uma esponja/ Por becos que me conduzem a hospitais." [Correia 2018: 114]), following the porous seams of her fantasy wherever they may lead, as though into the depths of a collective unconscious.[105]

Similarly, having absorbed Álvaro de Campos's desire to contain within himself "toda a humanidade de todos os momentos" (Pessoa [1916] 1993: 26b), Correia complicates this influence in her canticle by inhabiting multiple subject positions that are emphatically both racially-diverse and female:

> Eu poliedro de todas elas
> Coágulo de crisálidas pretas
> Asiáticas ninfas amarelas
> Europeias imaturamente brancas
> Americanas larvadamente fulvas
> (Correia 2018: 112).

[105] The mention of hospitals could suggest that Correia's poetic voice is on a reparative mission to heal a sick nation. However, this may come at a high cost since – in an alternative reading made possible by the poetry's multivalent ambiguity – it might lead her, in her poetic frenzy, to confinement in mental health institutions. As Foucault explains in his *Discipline and Punish*, hospitals can be used as instruments of social regulation, exerting disciplinary power in the taming of human bodies (1977b).

Facing in manifold directions all at once, Correia invests femininity with a sense of plurality, resisting containment within the essentialising Salazarist model of benignly passive femininity. Reaching out beyond her status as a European subject, a position which is hereby depreciated in its association with immaturity, she also incorporates and elevates imperialism's other subjugated women into her song of resistance.[106] Notwithstanding Correia's own *matrismo*-informed essentialism, I contend that her revelation of the complexities of femaleness – with the diversity of its many faces being brought together in solidarity even as their multi-directionality is sustained, a union-without-shared-orientation aptly represented in the polyhedron (a single three-dimensional shape whose sides all face in different, even opposing, directions) – does much to subvert the simplicities of Portuguese epic's prior depictions of women. The stirrings of indeterminacy in Correia, through her female-embodied but nevertheless fluctuating poetic voice which resists resolution (and perhaps fluctuates precisely on account of her notion of the feminine as fluid), is intensified further still by the way in which the "poetic word", in Correia's avant-garde style, is "polyvalent and multidetermined, adheres to a logic […] exceeding that of codified discourse and fully comes into being only in the margins of recognized culture" (Kristeva 1980: 65). As such, her text is a space for the cohabitation of "nonexclusive opposites" (71), in a disruption of orderly systems, binary thinking, and logical language. These nascent indeterminacies flourish further in Neto Jorge's and Amaral's subsequent complicated epics.

Avant-garde linguistic experimentation links the *Cântico do país emerso* with Luísa Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos*, which carries forward Correia's challenge to the epic genre's aspiration to smooth univocality and omniscient narratorial style. This collection foregrounds the materiality of the word, with neologisms which foreground their stitched-together constructedness (e.g.,

[106] This desire to reach beyond the narrow confines of the self – through temporary, imaginative inhabitations of other subject positions – is a form of "relational ethics" (Braidotti, 2022: 237). It concerns thinking through with what will become of women *in the first-person plural*. By the time the female-authored tradition reaches Amaral, this concern produces a poetry of "Uma Terra de Ninguém com Gente Dentro" (Amaral 2013), contingently bringing the marginalized together in a resistant chorus of voices.

"corto-amor-coito-circuito" [Neto Jorge 1993: 190]), and pregnant typographical pauses on the page (also similar to those of Correia), highlighting the fabricated quality of linguistic expression itself. They also exhibit stuttering semantics and contain self-consciously ironic theatrical asides which call into question the narrating voice's authority (notably in 'Recanto 18', with its bracketed interrogatives and histrionic punctuation, as in stanza 4's "(quem?) […] (qual?) […] (quando?)/ […] tudo (?) todos (?!)" [1993: 202]), querying the legitimacy of epic's pretence to speak certainties on behalf of a collectivity, as well as undermining its pomp and grandeur of tone. Posing precisely as a revision of *Os Lusíadas* – whose ten cantos claim to tell "tudo sem mentir, puras verdades" (Canto V, stanza 23, line 8), purporting to give a historically-accurate account concerning the nation's origins and even prophesying its future – the *Dezanove Recantos*'s own message to the Portuguese nation is obscure, and ultimately indeterminate, because of the collection's doubt-riddled poetic voice, bewildering surrealism, and subtraction of easy frames of reference. Indeed, even the collection's geography is unknowable and indeterminate, with the *Proposição* referring to "um mar/ em contra-luz" [Neto Jorge 1993: 177], while the closest I can find to specific locations are a Parisian metro stop ("e sair como todos em Sèvres-Babilónia" [177]), the appearance of which de-centres Portugal from the heart of epic action, and a fleeting mention of the Indian Ocean (the fading locus of Portugal's old empire-building missions). Eschewing any totalising narrative, indeed potentially staging the death of such writing ("Vejo por fim alguém morrer/ que era uma pessoa a inventar uma escrita/ a sorrir inventando letras para o relato de tudo"), this collection is paradoxically both a scaling-back of the epic (into the intimacy of minute space, i.e., the titular nineteen "corners") and simultaneously an expansion of its spatial and thematic scope, reaching cosmic magnitudes of queerness: for example, with the figures of Ilo, "um ovo fecundo o mundo", and Ila, "viajante no espaço ínfimo entre dois planetas/ revolucionados" [177]). Telescoping between these two scales, the poetic voice never settles – either in its location, or its identity. Rather, across the collection, it becomes hybridised, restlessly incorporating within its own rambunctious style the

diverse qualities of all of the myriad mythical entities that it considers (who proliferate in a cavalcade, and whose heroic stature is undeterminable).

Meanwhile, Amaral's meditative act of closing her eyes and echoing internally with the past ("Fechar os olhos e por dentro ecoar em passado [Amaral 2014: 25]) suggests a voluntary and temporary becoming-blind, in a shutting-down of traditional epic's visual mode – in which the acquisitive male gaze, promoting scopophilia, roams over landscapes it wishes to conquer. It also indicates an internalisation of the past, which is thereby allowed to echo differently within the resonant space of the poet's inner psyche. Taking on board the mystics' privileging of the half-light of poetic inspiration, *Escuro* – which is presided over by William Blake and San Juan de la Cruz, in its epigraphs – revels in the indeterminacy of unreason, as it engages in speculative fabulation about the past, just as its predecessors (the *Cântico do país emerso* and the *Dezanove Recantos*) revelled in surrealism. Turning time inside out ("o tempo virar-se do avesso" (25) and stepping into the vortex of a history-imagined-otherwise, Amaral contravenes conventional historiography's clarity-seeking teleological accounts of national development (and the co-opting of individual lives within grand narratives which it necessitates). Her own uniquely "queerful" perspective (Freitas 2020) thus fertilises the past, distorting its conventional shape in order to liberate the future from living forever in its thrall. Moreover, Amaral's poetry exhibits ethical attentiveness to the lives of Portugal's queer spectres, who are restored their vulnerability and ambiguity, and seen in a gentle light. Finding productivity in absence (such as in Mariana Alcoforado, the cloistered nun who inspired a feminist genealogy), Amaral unlocks the marginalized (and absence-inflected) feminine voice from history – a voice that, like Emily Dickinson (Amaral's beloved poetic foremother), tells the truth but tells it aslant – *Escuro* imagines its rippling-outwards across time and space. And when this voice encounters the difficulties of telling the story of this planet's future, it avoids Camões's prophetic mode, and shifts instead (in 'Amar em futuro') into the speculative future subjunctive, a grammar of

indeterminate outcomes.

Structurally-speaking, these indeterminacies in the poetic voice are supported by an undecidability of narrative outcomes – a feature shared by all three of the feminist complications of epic considered in this thesis. Even as the poems are consummate in terms of their poetic construction, nevertheless their completeness is complicated by their avoidance of totalising pronouncements, their disorientatingly anti-teleological flows, and their anti-triumphalist and incomplete endings, ranging from: the gentle hopefulness of a bed of greenery and the fragrance of a rose in an unassuming stairwell, in Correia; to an imperfect doubling of Camões's ten cantos to a premature nineteen, and an ironically perfunctory "Assim termina.", in Neto Jorge (1993: 204); and a Dickinsonian em dash at the end of *Escuro*, suggestive of the spillage of meaning beyond the confines of the printed collection itself. And this structural inconclusiveness, which leaves the collections' endings indeterminate, is matched by an indeterminacy of form. The surprised reactions of contemporary reviewers of the *Cântico do país emerso*, (discussed in Chapter 2); the recurrent problem of how lyric and epic can coexist, and the difficulty of generic categorisation which this provokes; the move away from structured metre to free verse; the minimised length of the collections relative to classical and Renaissance epics; and the editorial trouble of where the text's divisions come (with the first edition of Correia's collection exhibiting an even greater fluidity of form, in its lack of numbered sections, than it would acquire in subsequent editions) – all of these aspects imply an unruliness of form, and a generic uncontainability.

This feminist poetics of indeterminate voice – characterised by its fluidly-flowing female embodiment (Correia); surrealist language (Correia and Neto Jorge); self-consciously faltering authority, and emphasis on the technicity of language and the mediated quality of vision (Neto

Jorge);[107] and dual-pronged interest in the half-light of poetic illumination and in speculative fabulation (Amaral) – complicates what Donna Haraway has referred to as "the god trick" of "a conquering gaze from nowhere" (1988: 581). According to Haraway, in Western philosophy and science, the sensory system of the eyes has been used to signify:

> "[A] perverse capacity – honed to perfection in the history of science tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy – to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power".

The white, male gaze claims for itself "the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation", with the human voice serving merely as a vehicle for expressing that which the eyes have seen. Objectivity's epistemological "god tricks" include totalisation (an omniscient view "from nowhere", seeking to explain away all that it surveys within a single framework of meaning) and relativism (a view "from everywhere" all at once, without any discernment or value judgement), both of which deny the need for "location, embodiment, and partial perspective" (584). By contrast, the indeterminate voices of Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral revel in uncertainties and ambiguities which betoken the partialness of their access to reality. Furthermore, their investment in a panoply of sensory perceptions – such as Correia's attachment of hope to the breathing-in of a rose's fragrance, Neto Jorge's emphasis on the sensual tastes of daily life ("beijar-se dentro do estômago/ almoçar nesse salão/ a ternura fesca do peixe/ da bebida)" [1993: 183]), and Amaral's closing of her eyes in order to resonate internally with audible echoes of the past – gestures towards the existence of alternative epistemologies beyond the visual (and often allied with the more-than-human) which may prove useful to feminism.[108]

[107] By the technicity of language, I mean language's status as a technology or tool, that is both imperfectly-crafted and ideologically-suspect, rather than an innate human capacity for pure, unmediated expression of reality. Regarding the similarly mediated nature of vision, Recanto 6 of Neto Jorge's *Dezanove Recantos* makes reference to "zonas de transparência múltiplas" that are seemingly perceived through "binóculos a aumentarem a reduzirem" (1993: 184).

[108] Considering this feminist poetry's exploration of new sensory possibilities which are opposed to masculinist culture's stultifying visual orientation, it is worth returning to Correia's affirmation that "A minha pátria não é esta/ Bússola quebrada dos impulsos" (*Cântico do país emerso*, section VIII, fourth

2. Feminist Poetics and the More-Than-Human: Desiring an Affinity with Unruly Nature

Turning to the ecological implications of such a poetry, I contend that this delving into alternative worldviews and sensory systems represents a challenge to the humanist certainties which keep an anthropocentric world order in place. Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral explore how feminist poetry – despite all of nature's many troubling associations for women[109] – might express an affinity for the natural world. This sets the stage for the emergence of an eco-utopianism, in 20th and 21st century Portuguese women's poetry, which learns from and resonates with the exuberance of the more-than-human world. These unruly complicators of national epic begin an engagement in dis-anthropocentric work, which they embark on to varying degrees, often complicating the authority and autonomy of human identity in the process, either by dethroning it from its position of centrality or by depicting its (productive) permeability to the more-than-human world.

Defining the 'Anthropos' at the heart of Anthropocentrism has traditionally been a privilege enjoyed only by the powerful. As a consequence, human-centeredness has in effect involved the shoring up of the authority of White, European Man,[110] whilst marginalized human beings (including women and racially-othered people) have been excluded from accessing full human

stanza [*AP*: 119]). Diagnosing (imperialist) Portugal as a broken compass of impulses suggests its disconnection from the invigorating natural rhythms and sensory intensities which the feminist poet can tap into.

[109] Proximity to nature may worry feminists on account of the nature-based discourse, used to justify women's oppression, which equates women with (and limits them to) their assumed reproductive capacities and biology – as exemplified in Portugal's 1933 Constitution. Stacey Alaimo provides a thorough and stimulating survey of Western feminism's warring approaches to the troublesome question of nature in her 'Introduction: Feminist Theory's Flight from Nature' to *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* (2000).

[110] This is the "Enlightenment subject" who is "rational, bounded, integral, sovereign and self-aware", and acts as "the figure around which we ordinarily construct notions of political and social agency" (Chen and Luciano 2015: 190).

status. Concurrently, Man has used the discourse of speciesism to justify the oppression of more-than-human animals, whose devaluation within the hierarchy of life (relative to the transcendentally-enlightened human species) has helped to secure his pre-eminence. This attitude can be traced back to Aristotle, who claimed that while human beings may share certain core faculties with animals (namely "sense perception", "imagination", "appetite" and "spirited desire"), their rationality (which makes possible the formulation of "universal concepts") sets them apart from animals by facilitating contemplation and practical deliberation (Steiner, 2005: 63). Furthermore, given how European cultures have long imagined nature as feminine (Merchant 1980), and have concurrently defined woman as being "mired in nature" – a literal embodiment of its earthiness, hence existing on the devalued same plane of immanence as the more-than-human – women have been "thrust", along with more-than-human animals, "outside of the domain of human subjectivity, rationality, and agency" (Alaimo 2020: 2). Therefore, so long as the "humanist discourse of species" goes unchallenged, it "will always be available for use by some humans against other humans […] to countenance violence against the social other of whatever species – or gender, or race, or class, or sexual difference" (Wolfe 2003: 8). In their challenge to the anthropocentric logics of epic and nationalism, Portuguese feminist poets must therefore grapple with how to liberate femininity and animality, together, from their man-made shackles of oppression. Unlocking the marginalized feminine in their indeterminacy-fused complications of epic, Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral already challenge masculinist constructions of the human – and as the feminine is unlocked, so too is the more-than-human.

Considering how the male-authored Portuguese epic tradition relates to the more-than-human world, I recall Camões's Isle of Love (canto IX, *Os Lusíadas*), with its problematic depiction of the courtship between the male mariners and the nymphs who serve as female representatives of the sea – and of colonized subaltern women under Portuguese rule, as Klobucka suggests (2002). The Isle of Love's virginal territory is a bountiful *locus amoenus* wherein "Os fermosos

limões ali, cheirando,/ Estão virgíneas tetas imitando" (canto IX, stanza 56), appearing as a distinctively *feminised* environment that invites male sexual exploitation. The nymphs themselves are "humanas rosas" (stanza 68) – plant-like humans, immanent and figuratively rooted to the ground that is under appropriation.[111] The imagery of hunting (stanza 70), as the sailors aggressively stalk their prey like hunting dogs and the nymphs wilfully victimise themselves (suggesting anything other than harmonious complementarity between the two genders), trivialises a sexual violence which aptly metaphorizes anthropocentrism's treatment of the natural world as a fertile, feminized object and resource, ripe for subjugating and plundering. Meanwhile, in Fernando Pessoa, Álvaro de Campos desires to be transformed into a demonic feminine entity – a "[s]erpente do mar feminina e monstruosa" (Pessoa 2013a: 124), fattening herself by feasting on the crimes of the poem's piratical men – who serves as a vengeful avatar for epic's repressed feminine energies. This complicates the notion of feminine nature's inert passivity and benignity, yet still upholds the idea of the monstrousness of active femininity – which is, furthermore, appropriated as a vehicle through which the male poet-speaker may channel his own megalomaniacal fantasies. The gender-biased aspects of the handling of nature by Camões and Pessoa are redressed in the feminist complications which follow them.

The unruliness of Correia's female-centred body politics in the *Cântico do país emerso* – involving her refusal to conform to the Estado Novo-sponsored Catholic model of virginal and body-averse femininity – acquires more than a measure of its empowering force through the poet's reclamation of touch, a sense which is associated with the more-than-human. The value

[111] The description of the nymphs as human roses is worth pondering over: the plantification of the human suggests an aestheticization of the feminine, rendered static and beautiful, yet also potentially thorny. If we consider the idea that plants – which are rooted to a single spot, not being endowed with motility (as the acquisitive seafaring voyagers are) – exist in a non-oppositional relationship with the environment in which they grow, as the plant philosopher Michael Marder informs us (Camden Arts Centre, 2020), then we might in fact take this "plantification" as inadvertent praise (albeit still of the essentialising kind) for the feminine, *as being precisely the opposite of the aggressive principle of masculinity*.

of touch is so often disavowed on account of Western culture's privileging of sight (together with its attendant angel the cool light of reason) as the preeminent sense for knowledge-acquisition, whereby knowledge is figured as the empirical cataloguing of visually-accessible reality. Yet Correia's resists this logic in her rapturous, surrealist reworking of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*:

> Apalpo-me estou viva e o tacto subjectiva
> -me a galope num sonho com espuma nos dentes
>
> (*Cântico do país emerso*, AP: 116).

Here, she claims (and stakes her claim to) the value of touch, and does so specifically in imitation of horses, whose sense of touch is highly sensitive and sophisticated. Uncovering and liberating the repressed female body, in this way, is an act which may go hand-in-hand with recognising the interconnected oppression of women and more-than-human animals, both of whom have been traditionally mischaracterised as mindless bodies, to be objectified, mastered, and oppressed, and associated with what Kristeva has called the "abject" (1982). Correia also draws on a strength that comes from liberating what I shall refer to as the repressed *animality of being human*. By this term, I mean the often-unacknowledged qualities we share with other animal species, including our creaturely vulnerability but also the full enjoyment of multiple sensory capacities, in addition to the unique alternative epistemologies they make possible. Correia also makes use of avian imagery in an empowering way. She transforms her initial metaphor of oppressed women migrating away from themselves like swallows in the *Cântico do país emerso*'s fifth section ("Mulheres que emigraram de si mesmas como andorinhas" [Correia 2018: 111]) into another more personal image of avian vitality, complexly combining images of bird-like freedom with the perception of taste and internal biological processes within her body. This takes place at the end of the sixth section, preceding the emergent nation's lucid elaboration in the poet-speaker's womb, and therefore forms an obscure part of the nation's re-birth being summoned into being:

E essa ansiedade de mim mesma me virgula
Pausa de pátria entressonhada. É um crisol.
E o fruto agreste da linfa ardente que em mim circula
Sabe-me a sol. Sabe-me a pássaro. Pássaro ao sol.

(Correia 2018: 115).

Connecting herself to a modernist female genealogy of nature-orientated poetry, of which Florbela Espanca in her *Charneca em Flor* (1931) is the foremost exponent (Pazos-Alonso 2013), Correia incorporates richly diverse and multivalent elements from the natural world into her complication of epic, as a mechanism of surrealist complexification as well as a personally-inspiring lexical field of vitality and unruly forces which exceed human understanding and control. With her utopian hopes for Portugal being ultimately manifested, in the poem's final lines, in the modest form of a rose's fragrance breathed-in on an unassuming stairwell, Correia also invokes plants and their uncanny ability to grow anywhere, even in the most unexpected places, suggesting the tentative but tenacious growth of new forms of life beyond the collection's close.

This writerly sympathy with plant life is also reflected in Neto Jorge's rhizomatic structuring of the *Dezanove Recantos*, which mirrors the sprawling, non-linear growth processes of rhizomes and their root systems. Meanwhile, this surrealist poet's hybridised representations of femininity in a (far from pristine or clearly organised) world – which bustles vibrantly with unnarratable female bodies, alongside machines (including Garfo) and animals (including Vaídio), all of whom are moved by more-than-human forces (like Dulcíssimo, an embodiment of the principle of desire) – reveal her affinity with Donna Haraway's finding in her *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985) that:

> "[T]here are […] great riches for feminists in explicitly embracing the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of clean distinctions between organism and machine and similar distinctions between organism and machine and similar distinctions structuring the Western self. It is the simultaneity of breakdowns that cracks the matrices of domination and opens up geometric possibilities" (2016a: 53).

The breaking down of boundaries between the human, other organic life forms and the technological undermines what counts as nature in the first place. It also offers up the advantage of reworking nature and culture such that "the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other" (2016a: 9). Moreover, this permits Neto Jorge to broaden epic's coterie of agential entities, as machines and animals reveal their own surprising animacies, and the (grammatically female-gendered) earth herself even has the power to circumnavigate her nebulously-defined, second-person plural masculine antagonist (the collection's unnamed addressee, "vos"), by seeking out the poet's aid (175).[112] In this way, Neto Jorge taps into "alternative figurations for non-human and distributed posthuman subjectivity" (Braidotti, 2022: 90), which de-centres the human from the frame of epic action.[113]

Amaral's *Escuro* continues this posthuman interest in subjectivities and agencies beyond the human. The sunken hulls of the Portuguese caravels are reimagined becoming inhabited by fish, who have made new homes for themselves in the wreckages of human folly (Amaral 2014: 27). Meanwhile, the 'Nevoeiro' ('mist') of Sebastianist myth takes on a life of its own, articulating a cryptic desire that Dom Sebastião's beloved greyhound might guide these prisoners of history out of history and into the liberating nebulousness of unsifted, non-delineated, ahistorical time itself (Amaral 2014: 51). Finally, as if provoked by the preceding intervention of "um tigre de neurónio emocionado" (62), suggestive of human and more-than-human co-authorship and

[112] Countenancing the possibility that all matter is agential, in the sense of being something which "feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers" (Barad 2012: 60), "reads and writes, calculates and copulates," (Kirby 2011: 95), or which has the capacity to "question, solve, control, calculate, protect, and destroy" (Wilson 2004: 82), opens up new pathways for a material feminism to learn to think *with* matter in order to "destabilize anthropocentric and humanist ontological privilege" (Braidotti and Hlavajova [eds.] 2018: 242). Opening oneself up, in this way, to the "surprises of nonhuman agencies" (Alaimo, 2016: 9) can also provide feminists with the energising emotional resources and intensities of curiosity, delight and wonderment.

[113] It may be objected that, in the Portuguese context, epic does pay some attention to beings who are other than purely human, such as nymphs or mythological entities, including gods. However, taking the latter as an example, I contend that, in their allegorical function as representatives of warring human vices and virtues, they are heavily anthropomorphised – perhaps even reinforcing the distinction between humans and more-than-human animals (in depicting humans as somehow god-like).

mutual inspiration of poetry, 'Amar em futuro' goes on to imagine a world of thriving aquatic life and artful tectonic plates in a mysterious future inflected with love (65-66). Amaral's speculative fabulation, in the interstices and blind-spots of the epic tradition, is a way of helping us to fill in the gaps in our emotional awareness of, and imaginative connection with, the more-than-human world.

In this way, the strategic allegiance of women with the more-than-human is a recurrent theme in these feminist complications of epic. Rather than simplistically retreating into nature to pose as "angel[s] in the ecosystem" (Plumwood 1994: 9) or else taking the opposing path of engaging in a "feminist flight from nature" (Alaimo 2000: 13), these feminist poets choose instead to "transform the gendered concepts – nature, culture, body, mind, object, subject, resource, agent, and others – that have been cultivated to denigrate and silence certain groups of humans as well as nonhuman life" (13). Their multi-faceted adventures into the more-than-human through a feminist, queer, and posthuman poetics begins the work of breaking down the "anthropological machine" (Agamben, 2004: 33, 79)[114] – perhaps best epitomised in the Portuguese epic tradition in Camões's *máquina do mundo*, with its avowed message of human mastery over the natural world and territories across the surface of the Earth – and, in its place, opening up a "world of many worlds" (Marisol de la Cadena, 2018). Such a world would involve the coexistence of divergent ways of knowing the world that pay greater (and more compassionate) attention to more-than-human life, respecting its own unique perspectives and styles of inhabiting the Earth.

Invoking literary heritage as a starting-point, Correia, Neto Jorge and Amaral develop an

[114] As Giorgio Agamben argues, the separation of animal life (*zoe*) from political human life (*bios*), with the former being subjugated by the latter, is one of the constitutive processes in the creation of what he terms the "anthropological machine" (Agamben, 2014: 33, 79). This machine is a "performative apparatus" (Calarco, 2015: 54), in the sense of sustaining itself through repeated acts which cumulatively generate an illusion of naturalness and inevitability, continually bolstering and regenerating the notion of human supremacy.

oppositional consciousness, through feminist, queer, posthuman countermemory and countergenealogies. Their poetry echoes Camões and Pessoa differently, and challenges memorialisation of the past, allowing history to acquire ambiguity. Together, by activating the notion of absence-as-productivity, they showcase how marginalised voices can provide alternative utopian possibilities. This utopianism is erotic in quality, calling upon us to fall in love with the future, as though compelled by an erotic charge – emerging from within the female body (Correia); from the new connections forged by Deleuzian desiring machines (Jorge); and from embracing the more-than-human world (Amaral).

Appendix: Image References



Fig.1
***O Milagre das Rosas* by André Gonçalves (1685-1754)**

Oil on canvas, c. 1735-40.
Igreja do Menino Deus (Lisbon).

The painting depicts St. Elizabeth of Aragon, Queen of Portugal, and King Denis of Portugal.



Fig.2
***Retrato do Rei D. Sebastião* by Cristóvão de Morais (dates unknown)**

Oil on canvas, c. 1571-74.
100cm x 85cm.
Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (Lisbon).



Fig.3
Statue of the Infante D. Henrique, on the Padrão dos Descobrimentos, Lisbon

This is Portugal's national(ist) monument to its seafaring heritage, commemorating the historical figures involved in Portugal's golden age of overseas exploration. The Infante D. Henrique stands erect at the front of the group, as though on a promontory's edge, surveying the sea.



Fig.4
***História Trágico-Marítima ou Naufrágio*, by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva (1908-1992)**

Oil on canvas, 1944.
81.5cm x 100cm.
Museu Calouste Gulbenkian.

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