

**THE VIOLENT MAINTENANCE OF THE
PORTUGUESE COLONIAL IDENTITY
AND THE SEARCH FOR A POSTCOLONIAL ONE:
LITERARY IMAGES OF PORTUGAL AS A
COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL NATION**

Anthony Soares
Queen's University, Belfast

The overarching purpose of this article is to consider the development of Portuguese national identity from a post-colonial perspective as it is portrayed in three literary works written in distinct periods of the country's history: Luís de Camões's *Os Lusíadas* (1572), Jorge de Sena's *Os Grão-Capitães* (1976), and José Saramago's *A Jangada de Pedra* (1986). One of the elements connecting these disparate texts is the violent undercurrent—whether actual or epistemic—that underpins the construction of Portugal's national identity: an imperial identity in Camões's epic poem, the maintenance of that imperial identity in Sena's collection of short stories, and the questioning of its postcolonial aftermath within a European context in Saramago's novel. The texts written in the twentieth century can also be read as modern reworkings of the voyage of discovery narrated in Camões's sixteenth-century poem, questioning those occasions where it is uncritically promoted, and where "*The Lusíads* is repeatedly presented in terms of praising the spirit of adventure, renewing knowledge of the seas and territories, attempting conquest and command of other people, and imposing Christianity as the true religion" (Seixo 306).¹

This is not to say that *Os Lusíadas* has been wrongly interpreted as a text that praises these elements of imperial expansion. Its very nature as epic demands a positive portrayal of them. Helder Macedo makes clear the different and competing purposes of the epic and pastoral, as "from the viewpoint of the pastoral, associated with the myth of the Golden Age, the very subject matter of epic celebration—voyages and quests, wars and conquests—reveals the degeneration and decadence that characterizes the Iron Age,"

adding that “the epic celebrates what the pastoral regrets” (1990, 32). Elsewhere, Macedo highlights the often conflicting critical reception of Camões’s work, stating that “the poetry of Camões has lent itself to the most contradictory and even conceptually irreconcilable interpretations,” offering as examples “Petrarchism and anti-Petrarchism in the lyric poetry; imperialism and anti-imperialism in *Os Lusíadas*” (2003, 63). The existence of contradictory readings of Camões’s work, and *Os Lusíadas* in particular, constitutes for some critics evidence of a lack of objectivity and a preoccupation with contemporary issues that distorts the realities of sixteenth-century Portugal. Thus Martim de Albuquerque criticises those who seek “conclusões justificativas dos posicionamentos ideológicos, das preferências ou visões políticas” in their analysis of Camões, which lead to “interpretações dirigidas e à rebours, sem outra vantagem que desvirtuar o pensamento de Camões e acentuar o obscurecimento e incompreensão do passado” (9). Albuquerque himself claims to adopt an approach in his analysis of Camões that, in his own words, “nor-teou-se por estritos critérios de índole científica, incompatíveis com interesses ideológicos, concessões de montra e livraria ou desejos de glória fácil” (9).

Notwithstanding Albuquerque’s admonishments, the reading undertaken in this article of *Os Lusíadas*, and of the works by Jorge de Sena and José Saramago, will be undertaken with precisely the type of ideological positioning that he warns against. In this case, Camões’s epic poem will be read as the cultural product of a distinct historical context and a poetic illustration of Portugal’s progress in the construction of an empire. It will serve to show how Portugal’s encounters with other peoples were resolved.² It is a reading that, whilst not laying the blame at the feet of a poet that Jorge de Sena described as “um homem de tanto amor” (1982, 26), will focus on the presence of violence as a material effect of Portugal’s imperial project.³ My reading seeks to supplement views of *Os Lusíadas* that see the poem as either an example of imperialist or amorous discourse, and to anchor the text in material conditions that are

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revisited in *Os Grão-Capitães* and *A Jangada de Pedra*.⁴ In other words, my intention is to link the discursive elements of *Os Lusíadas* to the violent manifestations of Portuguese imperial expansion that inspired their author, as well as the changing scope of the aggression that is seen to underpin Portugal's subsequent identitary positions, thereby working against what Benita Parry describes as the "abandonment of historical and social explanation" within postcolonial studies, where "'discursive violence' took precedence over the practices of a violent system" (4).

Thus, from a postcolonial perspective, the "grand resounding fury of the trumpet of war" (Macedo, 1990, 32) within *Os Lusíadas* should not be seen simply as a rhetorical device that attests to the uncontested supremacy of Western imperialism (Alves 97) to be analysed at a purely discursive level, but as a lyrical interpretation of the events that made up Vasco da Gama's first voyage to India. When Camões writes of the reaction of the Portuguese navigator to an attempted ambush on the Island of Mozambique, the result is an interpretation of a supremely violent act of punishment by a representative of Portugal's expansionist spirit. After the "furiosa e dura artilharia" (I:89, 2) of Gama's fleet has defeated those who had wished to destroy him and his crew, *Os Lusíadas* describes how the Portuguese are not satisfied, "Mas, seguindo a vitória, estrei e mata; / A povoação sem muro e sem defesa / Esbombardeia, acende e desbarata" (I:90, 2-4). The description of such an attack on the defenceless inhabitants of the land to which the Portuguese are newcomers arises from what Phyllis Peres has termed "the most resilient articulation of the master narration of the nation circa the age of discoveries," a "discourse of collectivity [which] glorified the divinely chosen Portuguese race, as well as the violence of Counter Reformation empire-building" (191). The violence meted out by the heroic Gama's fleet at the discursive level of *Os Lusíadas* echoes real events, which Joaquim Romero Magalhães determines to have been "utilização da artilharia que foi um mau começo" (9), since the Portuguese use of weaponry betrays "ignorância do meio mercantil a que chegavam, de graves

consequências” (9).⁵ Ignorance of others’ cultures and customs seems to accompany the imperialist spirit, so that “a guerra que os Portugueses levam a cabo é guerra *justa e santa*” (Albuquerque 153), making the use of violent means to achieve expansionist ends all the easier.⁶

In his short story, “Capangala não responde,” Jorge de Sena revisits the continent which was subjected to vengeful violence by Vasco da Gama, and portrayed by Camões in *Os Lusíadas*. The depiction of the Portuguese as heroic Argonauts led by the fearless Gama in the epic poem is replaced in Sena’s narrative by three soldiers simply known by their numbers (37, 401 and 54), who have seemingly been abandoned somewhere in the Angolan bush during the wars of independence to await what they foresee as a terrible fate. They become three navigators lost in a sea of African grass that hides a faceless enemy, and as the end approaches the reader becomes aware that these men have been sent to a foreign land they know little about in order to fight for a nation of which their knowledge is also somewhat faulty. The aggressive nature of their presence is brought to our attention as the narrator tells us that “Ao lado do 401, estavam pousadas as pistolas-metralhadoras, os cunhetes de munição, os sacos de granadas, as mochilas” (1989, 201). These weapons are to be turned against the enemies of colonial Portugal, described by the men in this narrative as “essa negralhada” (202) and “esta pretalhada” (207), terms that rob the native Angolans of any individuality, allowing them to be more easily demonised.

However, if Sena’s protagonists are engaged in ensuring that Angola is kept as a colonial possession of Portugal, soldier 401 makes it clear that, not only do he and his colleagues have no knowledge of the individuals they are fighting, he has little idea of the nature of the territory they are at war for, confessing “eu nem sabia que a África existia, nunca lia jornais” (205). This lack of knowledge extends to the soldiers’ own country, as their conversations reveal that they are not generally aware of the lives led by their fellow Portuguese citizens. As soldier 54 almost shamefacedly speaks about the dreams he entertained before coming to

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Angola, 401, to the amazement of soldier 54, reveals that he dreamt of the same things. Yet, throughout *Os Grão-Capitães* the reader is made aware that the ignorance displayed of Portugal and the wider world by various characters is due to a repressive regime, which is not only determined to hold on to its imperial identity, but also wants to colonise the minds of the Portuguese people with the only acceptable version of what the nation represents. In this enterprise, “the Salazar dictatorship used and abused the nation’s historical mythology, especially its colonizing and missionary aspects, to justify its politics in Africa and eventually enlist support for a bloody colonial war” (Kaufman and Ornelas 146). Jorge de Sena makes clear that any dissent from the official view of Portugal will be punished through an underlying sense of the threat of possible violence that can become a reality, such as the quashing by the regime of a naval revolt, recalled by the ship’s captain in “A Grã-Canária.”⁷ Indeed, in a letter to Vergílio Ferreira in which he writes of *Os Grão-Capitães*, Sena states that “a violência escatológica do livro e a agressividade dele [...] tornam-no absolutamente impubli-cável em Portugal” (Sena, 1987, 123).

Despite all their modern weaponry, and the insistence of official discourse that theirs is a noble endeavour, assured of success, the soldiers in “Capangala não responde” are certain that, far from meting out punishment to the rebellious natives, it is they who will come to a violent end at the hands of their enemies: “Vamos morrer aqui. Se a gente se separa, matam-nos. Se nos agarram juntos, matam-nos. Essa negra-lhada toda a esfaquear-nos” (202). The end that they foresee for themselves includes their own castration, the ultimate loss of virility, which Beatriz de Mendonça Lima contrasts with the erotic imagery of Camões’s *Os Lusíadas*, stating that, “em ‘Capangala não responde,’ a certeza da castração sugere um destino bem diferente daquele que fora prometido aos antigos heróis portugueses, protegidos de Vênus, que, ao se unirem às ninfas na Ilha dos Amores, se transformariam em semideuses e iniciariam uma nova raça de heróis,” adding that “a raça de anti-heróis de Sena sabia-se condenada à infecundidade” (170).⁸ The nature of the repression

these men have endured in Portugal has already brutalised them, robbing them of any morality or dignity in what they have been sent to do in Africa, so that 54 describes 401 as having shot three native Angolans “como se fossem bonecos de pimpampum” (212). By shooting people in the back—reminiscent of the destruction of the defenceless village in Canto I of *Os Lusíadas*—401 makes clear that there is no heroism in what he and his colleagues are doing, and he also emphasises how his perceived enemies have been dehumanised.

The arsenal of weaponry which Sena’s protagonists use is evidence of the relative technological sophistication of the Portuguese colonial war machine, a factor that is also present in *Os Lusíadas*, where the power of Gama’s fleet is frequently highlighted. The potential violence represented by the “Pelouros, espingardas de aço puras, / Arcos e sagitíferas aljavas” (I:67, 6-7) is denotative of the deficiencies of Portugal’s imperial project, which is characterised by relative ignorance of the “other” encountered by the colonizing subject.⁹ This makes it, in Eduardo Lourenço’s terms, a precarious project, “precário mas ainda vivo para realizar lá longe com outros potentados mais ricos do que nós, mas sem armas tão modernas como então eram as nossas” (117).¹⁰ Thus, the firepower of the Portuguese—“a gente belicosa” (I:42, 3)—is used to devastating effect against those who “por armas têm adagas e tarçados” (I:47, 6), obstacles to the imposition of Portugal’s dominion in the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean whose destruction is morally justified according to the criteria of the imperial nation. As Sena’s soldiers in “Capangala não responde” will vainly attempt to deny their enemies’ individual capacity to act by referring to them as a indistinguishable “pretalhada,” so too Camões’s navigators in *Os Lusíadas* dismiss many of those they encounter by labelling them as: “os que na errada Seita creram” (I:57, 1 7); “o Mouro astuto” (I:62, 5); “o falso Mouro” (I:72, 2); “Selvagem mais que o bruto Polifemo” (V:28, 4); and “gente bestial, bruta e malvada” (V:34, 4).¹¹

In *Os Lusíadas*, the discursive violence that destroys the identities of native peoples paves the way for the physical

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violence that will create the space—both ideological and physical—for Portugal’s imperial identity, and these same impulses are present in Sena’s collection of short stories. However, in *Os Grão-Capitães* the violence is directed at maintaining the idea of an imperial destiny that is presented as an intrinsic element of Portugal’s identity (and represented as such in *Os Lusíadas*) against those who would seek to fracture the Greater Portugal, whether they look to do so from the metropolitan centre or from the colonies. In Sena’s narratives, the protagonists are moving within a period of dictatorial control where “the constructions of Portuguese ‘identity’ which accrued to themselves an unquestioned hegemonic status were those which emphasized a national ‘specificity,’ a specific national *difference*,” which “finds its most cogent expression in the myth that the Portuguese sense of nationhood is (paradoxically) grounded on a temporally confined spatial displacement: the ‘voyages of discovery’” (Madureira 17). In Sena’s *Os Grão-Capitães*, the unresolved tension that is created by the propagation of the myth of Portuguese national identity based on imperial conquest, and the reality encountered by its metropolitan citizens in Portugal and the *Ultramar*, results in sterile violent acts and the fear that a non-conformist identity expressed in terms of a “deviant” sexuality might be discovered.

Thus, in “Choro de Criança,” a man caught engaging in a homosexual act by the main protagonist fears that the latter is an informant for Salazar’s secret police, and that the performative act that identifies his sexuality will now lead to punishment by the authorities. Similarly, in “A Grã-Canária” one sailor—suspected of being an informant—is sexually assaulted by another member of the crew as punishment for accusing him of being a communist and homosexual. This violence turned inwards, upon those who supposedly share a common identity, is part of the “violência escatológica” of *Os Grão-Capitães*, which Sena says he portrays through “exército, marinha, clero, guerra de Espanha, guerra de Angola, família, prostitutas e pederastas, literatos, etc.” (1987, 123). When Sena’s narratives conjoin violence with sexual activity, they become evidence of the frustration that

the imposition of a colonizing identity provokes which, as it cannot be directed against the regime that promotes that identity, seeks relief through internalised acts.¹² Such acts represent the fracturing of an identity whose construction is portrayed in *Os Lusíadas* as being undertaken by a united band of Portuguese heroes, in stark contrast to the three soldiers in “Capangala não responde,” for example, who spend much of their time verbally and physically abusing one another, so that two of them are killed at the hands of their own comrade-in-arms.

Violence is also present in José Saramago’s *Jangada de Pedra*, through forms that are not always as evident as in *Os Lusíadas* or *Os Grão-Capitães*. Helena Kaufman and José Ornelas use a language expressive of violent opposition, as they describe how “in *Jangada*, through a narrative placed in a hypothetical future, Saramago battles against the imposition of a fixed and closed meaning by any future official representation of the period” (162-63). Indeed, the characters in Saramago’s novel are once again taking on the loaded role of navigators, searching for national identities that can adequately encompass the rapidly changing realities brought about by the physical separation of the Iberian Peninsula from the rest of Europe.¹³ As the peninsula wrenches itself away, the violence and power of this extraordinary assault on the stability of national identities is evident, as through “toda a cordilheira pirenaica estalavam os granitos, multiplicavam-se as fendas” (Saramago 33), and this event sets in motion a multitude of journeys: that of the Iberian Peninsula itself, reincarnation in stone of the caravels of earlier centuries; those of the main protagonists who set off on a voyage of discovery through Portugal and Spain to gain an understanding of how they might have caused this continental breach; and of whole populations, either fleeing from areas that are deemed to be at risk, or drawn to those same areas out of curiosity.

These multiple journeys represent multiple questionings that repeatedly encounter vestiges of the past, making *A Jangada de Pedra* a novel that does not necessarily mark a radical departure from Saramago’s previous work since,

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although it does not focus on a particular historical event (as in *História do Cerco de Lisboa* or *Memorial do Convento*), it nevertheless examines the importance of the past in the development of identities, and challenges “a noção de o passado poder consistir apenas nas versões oficiais e canonizadas que todos conhecemos” (Sapega, 1995, 35). In its evocations of history from a fictional present that places Portugal in a postcolonial temporality, *A Jangada de Pedra* is not simply a product of a period in the country’s literary history especially concerned with “the silenced years of the Salazar regime and the so-called remote past, the source of national myths and symbols,” or “the African experience and colonial war” (Kaufman and Klobucka, 19). Although the 1980s and 1990s were decades when Portuguese writers—Saramago among them—were exploring such topics to a degree that may not have been the case previously, Jorge de Sena’s *Os Grão-Capitães* and Camões’s *Os Lusíadas* are nevertheless earlier works that concern themselves with the nation’s history and its encounter with other peoples.¹⁴ Indeed, a considerable proportion of *Os Lusíadas* is given over to a (re)presentation of Portuguese history in which, as António José Saraiva remarks, “a história de Portugal [...] reduz-se, excepto na parte a que se refere às viagens marítimas, a uma sequência de feitos militares” (139). What separates *A Jangada de Pedra* from *Os Lusíadas* and *Os Grão-Capitães* is that Saramago’s novel examines that past from a perspective in which Portugal no longer maintains the imperial identity that was present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the earlier works.

Nevertheless, the fictional postcolonial present of *A Jangada de Pedra* is repeatedly related to a colonizing and expansionist past, no more so than in the setting sail into the Atlantic of Portugal and Spain, an act that relaunches the debate surrounding Portuguese integration into a European identity or one that is turned towards other horizons. The novel’s inconclusive end leaves the Iberian Peninsula floating in the Atlantic Ocean, halfway between the Americas and Africa, continents that experienced the expression

of Spain and Portugal's imperialist designs, and whose violence is recalled by the narrator:

também foi destas terras do sul que partiram os homens a descobrir o outro mundo, e também eles, duros, ferozes, suando como cavalos, avançavam de couraças de ferro, na cabeça elmos de ferro, espadas de ferro na mão, contra a nudez dos índios, só vestidos de penas de aves e aguarelas, idílica imagem (85).¹⁵

This memory of the conquest of South America, although in a different geographical setting, is familiar from *Os Lusíadas* in the clear imbalance between the military might of the colonizers and that of those to be colonized, an imbalance that is present once again in Sena's "A Grã-Canária," where Franco's forces crush civilian opposition in Las Palmas, and is beginning to be contested "Capangala não responde." But whereas the soldiers in the latter narrative have been sent to maintain a colonizing identity established by the generation of Vasco da Gama, in Saramago's novel the maritime wanderings of the Iberian Peninsula can be seen as a literary representation of the possible destinies of future identity positions.

For Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Portugal's membership of the EEC (now the European Union) and its economic and political relations with former African colonies can be seen as "the reconstruction, in new terms, of the colonial, intermediary, transmission-belt role: Portugal acting as an intermediary between the core and the periphery" (67). This could be the role suggested by the Iberian Peninsula's mid-Atlantic positioning at the end of *Jangada de Pedra*, and its evocations of Portugal's expansionist past also correlates with Sousa Santos's view that this role "unites the colonial to the postcolonial period and it is an important ingredient of the autonomy of the state in the context of the integration into the EEC" (67). But that integration is a contested topic in *A Jangada de Pedra*, a novel where a minor character, Roque Lozano, on being told that he may no longer be able to see the rest of Europe replies, "Se eu a não vir, é porque ela nunca existiu" (71). For this Spaniard the project of European structural integration has had no perceptible impact on his life, hence the lack of a concrete Europe is of

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no great concern. Moreover, just as one of the soldiers in Sena's "Capangala não responde" confesses to knowing nothing of Africa, despite the fact that he has been sent there to keep part of it for Portugal, so too in Saramago's narrative we are told that "muita era a gente que de terras só conhecia aquela em que nascera" (140).

Likewise, for Europe—or the nations that make up the entity known as Europe—the disappearance of Portugal and Spain can be regarded as more of a relief than a threat, as "para certos europeus, verem-se livres dos incompreensíveis povos ocidentais, agora em navegação desmastreada pelo mar oceano, donde nunca deveriam ter vindo, foi, só por si, uma benfeitoria" (162). However, others see the Iberian nations as essential to their European identity, and so "milhões de jovens em todo o continente saíram à mesma hora para a rua, armados não de razões mas de bastões, de correntes de bicicleta, de croques, de facas, de sovelas, de tesouras" (165). But, in a repetition of the imbalance of weaponry seen in *Os Lusíadas* and "Capangala não responde," these dissenting voices are met with "Gases lacrimogéneos, carros de água, bastões, escudos e viseiras" (166), thereby suppressing the expression of a discourse that is seen as divergent from attempts to construct a unified European identity—the "quinta-essência do espírito europeu, sublimado perfeito simples, a Europa, isto é, a Suíça" (162).

However, *A Jangada de Pedra* does not construct a simplistic opposition between centralising attempts to impose a European identity and "any particular image or idea of Portuguese or Iberian identity" (Lough 162). What Saramago achieves in this novel is the highlighting of the ever-changing nature of identities, bringing to the reader's attention the repeated recourse to violence when attempts are made to impose a homogeneous identity, whether it be supra-national or national. The narrator often reminds us that the creation of the Portuguese nation was achieved through the use of violence, and that geographical limits, whose relative impermanence is also underlined, are almost always achieved through warfare and conquest. Even as the poor of Portugal head for the Algarve to occupy the hotels that have

been abandoned by the tourists and the rich, reaching the point where “às portas de Albufeira preparava-se a batalha campal” (101), Saramago’s descriptions of the ensuing conflict between the security forces and the “invaders” echo Portugal’s past battles against the Moors during the Christian reconquest of the peninsula, as well as those against the Spanish: “Teve o combate um preâmbulo oratório, tal como se usava dantes, na antiguidade das guerras, com desafios, exortações às tropas, preces à Virgem ou a Santiago” (101). In this conflict among the hotels of one of Portugal’s prime tourist resorts we are presented with internal invaders described as “intrépidos” (98), inheritors of the spirit of Portugal’s great navigators but, whereas the latter were engaged in an outward expansion, the former are busy reconfiguring Portugal itself under a new set of extraordinary circumstances.

Whilst these battles take place, and as the Iberian Peninsula drifts into the Atlantic, the nations that determine the global political landscape wrangle over how best to accommodate these nomadic nations into their view of the world:

De um ponto de vista de política prática, o problema que se discutia nas chancelarias europeias e americanas era o das zonas de influência, isto é, se, apesar da distância, a península ou ilha, deveria conservar os seus laços naturais com a Europa, ou se, não os cortando completamente, deveria orientar-se, de preferência, para os desígnios e destino da grande nação norte-americana. Ainda que sem esperanças de influir decisivamente na questão, a União Soviética lembrava e tornava a lembrar que nada poderia ser resolvido sem a sua participação nas discussões, e entretanto reforçou a esquadra que desde o princípio viera acompanhando a errante viagem, à vista, claro está, das esquadras das outras potências, a norte-americana, a britânica, a francesa (298-99).

These considerations over the future identities of Portugal and Spain bring to the fore the contrast that exists between the situation of the Portuguese in Saramago’s novel, and those found in *Os Lusíadas* and *Os Grão-Capitães*: in *A Jangada de Pedra* others are now determined to shape the world into a form that best suits them, whereas in Camões’s and Sena’s works the Portuguese were the ones who forcibly

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imposed their view of the globe. However, whereas in *Os Lusíadas* there is a shared vision of what the voyages of discovery and the construction of Portugal's empire signify, in Sena's short stories this is no longer the case, as the Salazar regime has oppressed its people to such an extent that what they do has lost all meaning and gives rise to the brutalisation of those who refuse to bear the colonial yoke any longer. Finally, in *A Jangada de Pedra*, the greatest threat of violence comes from those nations and international organisations that are determined to repeat the mistakes Portugal had committed during its time as a colonizing nation: to enforce adherence and obeisance to a single encompassing identity. The Portuguese and Spanish are now the ones to refuse (even if it is accidentally) the forced colonisation of their own identities, and they are left to rediscover their place outside a centralising discourse.

Notes:

1. Jorge de Sena, a dedicated scholar of Camões, repeatedly demonstrated his concern at the uses made of the poet and his work declaring, for example, that “era urgente e oportuno autenticar a grandeza de Camões, uma grandeza por demais acriticamente adivinhada, literariamente concedida, e politicamente utilizada” (1980a, 30), and that “Camões não tem também culpa de ter sido transformado em símbolo dos orgulhos nacionais, em diversos momentos da nossa história em que esse orgulho se viu deprimido e abatido” (1980b, 257).

2. Inevitably, this will involve a subjective interpretation of the historical period in which the text was written but, as Helder Macedo has recognised, in *Os Lusíadas* Camões suggests “that there is no history as such; there is only meaning that can be given to history.” And in a meta-historic awareness that it shares with the works of Jorge de Sena and José Saramago analysed later, Camões's epic poem realises that “this meaning ... depends on the reception of the text” (Macedo, 2003, 73).

3. For Sena *Os Lusíadas* represents “uma mensagem de nobreza, dignidade, tolerância, justiça e liberdade” (1982, 26), and in his exhaustive semantic study of the poem he notes that “numa epopeia em que tanto se trata de combates e de perigos, os verbos *matar* e *morrer* desempenhem tão pequeno papel” (1982, 38).

4. For an interesting discussion of what he terms as “conservative” and “liberal” interpretations of *Os Lusíadas*, see Hélio Alves's “Post-imperial Bacchus,” where he calls for “a new look at the epic text's ideology” (101). Balachandra Rajan also points out that “doubts about the imperial mission are expressed in *The Lusiads* but they are marginalized in relation

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to a triumphalist core,” and that “attempts have been made to move them closer to the centre and indeed revisionary readings of *The Lusíads* are heavily dedicated to such attempts.” However, in Rajan’s view, such attempts “skew the poem immoderately” (181).

5. As well as Magalhães’s analysis of the historical context from which Camões gathered material for his epic poem, Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* offers a detailed account of the figure that inspired the hero of *Os Lusíadas*, recounting—as Magalhães does—the three voyages the admiral makes to the East. António José Saraiva also comments on Camões’s own ignorance of the inhabitants of the eastern reaches of Portugal’s growing empire, stating that “o Poeta nunca sai da sua própria atmosfera, é impermeável à penetração civilizacional do Oriente: assim como partiu, assim voltou a Lisboa, com a memória recheada de clássicos e algumas observações e curiosidades mais, a juntar ao repositório de casos que aprendera nos seus autores” (133).

6. See David Quint’s essay, “Voices of Resistance: The Epic Curse and Camões’s Adamastor,” where he discusses the limits imposed upon resistance to the Portuguese within *Os Lusíadas* and the effacement of the African “Other.” Quint explains how “in Adamastor the human identity of the Africans has begun to disappear as they are merged with the storms of the cape,” in such a way that “the continuing resistance of these peoples turns into a cyclical repetition that seems to be a version of nature’s repeated regenerative cycles, but one that has been unnaturally thwarted and become demonic” (262).

7. Curiosity is also discouraged, which perpetuates the state of ignorance. In “Os Salteadores,” for instance, one of the characters proudly recounts the capture by a friend of some Spaniards wanted by Franco’s regime, and he mentions that there was no opportunity to speak to the captives: “Ninguém podia falar com eles, os ‘secretas’ não deixavam chegar-se” (162). Those who possess knowledge that is considered dangerous are left in no doubt as to their fates if they speak of what they know. This is the case of the man who witnessed the execution of the Spaniards by their guards as they were urinating at the side of the road, as he is threatened with the same violent death by the Portuguese secret police: “Sentaram-se ao lado do inspector que, sem falar comigo, guiou a camioneta até à minha porta. Aí, apeou-se e disse-me, ‘Fica sabendo que não viste nada. Vê lá se queres que te ponham a mijar.’ E foi-se embora” (167).

8. The topos of emasculation or castration can also be used to represent the disempowerment of the colonized. Mark Sabine comments on how “[Luís Bernardo] Honwana depicts colonial rule as the literal emasculation of Africa” (24).

9. Those deficiencies can be apparent to the colonized, as Sabine indicates in the case of Honwana’s short story, “Papá, Cobra e Eu,” where “Honwana alludes metaphorically to the colonizer’s use of brutality to disguise his inadequacy with the primacy amongst the black local dogs of Totó, who disguises his diminished stature by puffing up his significantly

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white fur and assuming um ‘aspecto terrífico.’ Like Totó, Honwana’s colonial masters disguise their weakness with displays of aggression, and through pre-emptive, destructive violence” (33).

10. For a critique of Eduardo Lourenço’s views on Portuguese national identity, see Ellen Sapega’s article, “No Longer Alone and Proud” (1997), Phyllis Peres’s “Love and Imagination among the Ruins of Empire” (1997), and Luís Madureira’s “The Discreet Seductiveness of the Crumbling Empire” (1995).

11. In terms of the religious opposition that these terms bring to the fore, Sena’s own analysis of the epic poem in his *Estudos sobre o vocabulário de Os Lusíadas*, which underlines the humanist nature of Camões, whilst referring to his view of the poet’s tolerant nature, particularly in relation to Jews, makes the following note: “Se Camões ignora, forçado por séculos de propaganda, a tolerância do Profeta e dos muçulmanos (quase pode dizer-se que a intolerância foi sempre uma invenção cristã que acabou envenando as religiões tolerantes que os cristãos perseguiam), não ignora a sua simpatia para com os judeus” (1982, 347). In this way Sena attempts to provide a context for the anti-Muslim sentiments expressed in *Os Lusíadas*, simultaneously highlighting Camões’s own liberal tendencies. For Martim de Albuquerque, however, “*Fé e Império* são duas noções intimamente enlaçadas no pensamento do Poeta. Camões viveu um forte ideal religioso, no âmbito da cristandade, e a sua visão imperial não pode ser questionada” (152). Also, see David Quint’s “Voices of Resistance,” which draws on the reference to Polyphemus (257-58).

12. Luís Madureira points to this phenomenon in António Lobo Antunes’s *Os Cus de Judas* where, in the midst of the Portuguese regime’s struggle against independence movements, “sexual frustration is prevalent, and masturbation (the sexual equivalent of self-referentiality) becomes conflated with the military action itself [...]. But the tenor of the title’s metaphor entails, in this sense, the substitution of the tropical ‘gaps’ in a cathartic geography of empire with solar anuses, epitomizing the sterility and emasculation which underpinned Portuguese colonialism (the substitution of an image of colonialism as impregnation with that of colonialism as ‘sodomy’)” (25).

13. The comparison to the navigators of the time of *Os Lusíadas* is made clear in *A Jangada de Pedra* on various occasions, such as in the description: “tinham sido como antigos e inocentes navegantes, no mar estamos, o mar nos leva, para onde nos levará o mar” (144). However, Francis Lough warns against overemphasising comparisons with *Os Lusíadas*, as “echoes of Camões in the novel have to be taken in the context of the multitude of literary and cultural references scattered throughout the text” (155). With the totality of Saramago’s fictional work in mind, Helena Kaufman also states that “a conquista marítima ou a criação do império estão presentes nos textos de Saramago como importantes pontos de referência mas não dominam a sua visão da História: antes entram em diálogo com os outros fragmentos do passado que se procura recuperar” (135).

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14. In the case of Jorge de Sena, Orlando Nunes de Amorim points to the relationship established by the author between literary creation and history, declaring that “a História sempre esteve entre as grandes preocupações do autor das (tão históricas!) *Metamorfozes*, e uma observação, por mais simples que seja, das suas obras de ficção revela que diferentes formas de relação entre Literatura e História aparecem em várias delas” (215-16). For other views on Saramago’s interrogation of history, see Teresa Cristina Cerdeira da Silva’s *José Saramago, Entre a História e a Ficção: Uma Saga de Portugueses*, Miguel Real’s “Saramago: la ficción como sentido de la historia,” and Luís de Sousa Rebelo’s “A consciência da história na ficção de José Saramago.” Francis Lough engages with Rebelo’s view of history in *A Jangada de Pedra* and the formation of Portuguese identity.

15. Saramago also gives us a striking image of the horrors of modern machines of war: “Valeram na emergência os helicópteros, esses artefactos voadores ou passarolas capazes de pousar em quase todos os lugares, e, quando de todo impossível, procedem à imitação do colibri, aproximam-se quase a tocar a flor, os passageiros nem precisam de escada, um saltinho e basta, entram logo na corola, entre estames e pistilos, aspirando os aromas, quantas vezes de napalm e carne queimada” (26).

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