Regionalisms and Resistance in the Twentieth-Century Portuguese Novel

Spatialized Ideologies

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Peter Haysom-Rodríguez

LEGENDA
Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Cultures 63
Modern Humanities Research Association
2024

Published by Legenda
an imprint of the Modern Humanities Research Association
Salisbury House, Station Road, Cambridge CB1 2LA

ISBN 978-1-83954-313-5

Copy-Editor: Richard Correll

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Regionalisms and Resistance would not have been possible without individuals from numerous walks of life. The kind and generous team at Legenda — Graham Nelson, Hilary Owen, Catherine Davies and the outstanding copy-editor Richard Correll — have helped me to realize my dream, of having a book to call my own. Having started this project as a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Nottingham, I must of course give thanks to UoN as my host institution. This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (grant number AH/L50385X/1), through the Midlands4Cities AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership. The stellar supervision and support of Mark Sabine and Rui Gonçalves Miranda has been invaluable, particularly after the profound upheavals of the past four years. I would also like to thank Jean Andrews, Steve Roberts, Adam Sharman and Álvaro Bouzon Vidal (plus the entire Modern Languages & Cultures Department at UoN) — you have all enriched my research and my social life, through casual and formal conversations, seminars, conferences and cultural events. At Leeds, Richard Cleminson has provided essential suggestions and mentoring, while Sofia Martinho, Carmem Mackle, Steph Dennison, Inês Dias, Pete Watson, Stuart Green and Emma Cayley, among others, have also aided me immeasurably — thank you for your camaraderie and steadfast friendship. Several other eminent scholars have offered insightful suggestions on this work, particularly Carmen Ramos Villar, Dorothée Boulanger, Pedro Eiras, Marinela Freitas, Maria João Reynaud, Isabel Pires de Lima, Helena Carvalhão Buescu, Alda Correia, Aquilino Machado, António Manuel Ferreira and Roberto Vecchi. *Obrigadíssimo por tudo*!

Outside of academia, I have been strengthened by some exceptional human beings: in Devon, Harry, Jess, James, Richard and Julia Harley (the 'Bandicoot Brigade'), Alice Pettitt, Lydia Manchip, Ellie George, George Fielding, Krysia Rollinson, Trefor Thynne and Lyuda Thynne; in London, Sian Williams, Mikey Cole, Matt Tyler, Louise Barker and Michael Yoganayagam; in Hinckley, Ed Williams; in Ilkeston, Jess Denman; in Pitstone, Jenny and James Cooper; in Nottingham (and then Spain), Juliet and Simon Breden; in Portugal, Juliana Teixeira, Sofia Araújo and Nuno Azevedo; in Costa Rica, my second family — Juan Bautista Rodríguez and Roxana Troz, plus all participants in the multiple WhatsApp groups. My last round of gratitude must go to my Mum and Dad (Liz and John Haysom), who have put up with this project (and with *me*) so gracefully, having provided me with space, time and support during COVID-19, surgery and chemotherapy. I am equally grateful to my loving husband Alonso Haysom-Rodríguez, who has unfailingly encouraged me in person and online, to Nana (Wendy Wynn), and to my brother (Tom Haysom) and sister-in-law (Abby Haysom), all of whom have believed in me since the beginning.

P.H.-R., Wakefield, June 2024

NOTES ON THE TEXT

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The novels examined in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 (by Aquilino Ribeiro, Agustina Bessa-Luís, Lídia Jorge and José Saramago) will be referred to using the following abbreviations:

Faunos	*Andam faunos pelos bosques*
Lobos	*Quando os lobos uivam*
Sibila	*A sibila*
Dia	*O dia dos prodígios*
Levantado *Raised*	*Levantado do chão* *Raised from the Ground*
Caverna *Cave*	*A caverna* *The Cave*

All translations into English, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. In Chapter 2, I am indebted to, and influenced by, Patricia McGowan Pinheiro's 1963 translation of *Lobos*, but I have produced my own renderings in order to foreground certain textual nuances. In Chapter 4, I exclusively use Margaret Jull Costa's translations of *Levantado* and *Caverna*, while highlighting certain aspects of the Portuguese original where appropriate. The chapter notes and Bibliography highlight my previous research on *Novas cartas portuguesas*, Rui Lage and Aquilino Ribeiro.

INTRODUCTION

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Politicizing the Region, Resisting through the Rustic

O tempo é outro tempo nas terras pequenas

[Time is different in little lands][1]

— Ruy Belo

On 24 June 2016, I was rudely awoken: not only by the United Kingdom's unexpected decision to exit the European Union, but also by the immense gulf between 'remain' and 'leave' areas of the electoral map (particularly between London and England's north-eastern counties), signalling intense 'spatial inequality' and 'uneven [regional] development' that had been overlooked by Westminster-based policy makers.[2] British media and political narratives would subsequently make sweeping generalizations about northern England, as a 'so-called regional backwater that had failed to shake off the effects of deindustrialisation'.[3] Four months later, my sleep was once again curtailed by Donald Trump's surprise election as US President, which reflected similar geographical divisions and would later be associated with the post-industrial 'left behind' of 'small-town America', seemingly abandoned to irrevocable decline.[4] Over the past decade, such sentiments (justified or unjustified) of regional neglect and marginalization have been linked to the rise of right-wing populist movements in various Western nations (including France, Italy, Spain and, yes, Portugal), through a phenomenon described as 'the geography of discontent'.[5] In the Portuguese case, *Chega* [Enough] — an extreme-right, arguably xenophobic and racist party — has enjoyed considerable success in recent national elections, particularly within the Algarve region and the (formerly Communist-affiliated) hinterlands of the southern Alentejo.[6]

Clearly, these troubling political developments cannot be attributed to regional inequalities alone — indeed, as intersectional theorists highlight, one factor of identity reveals only a partial truth — but the emergence of an increasingly fractured and acrimonious ideological landscape begs several questions. Firstly, what lessons can be drawn from Portugal, a relatively small European nation that nevertheless contains a significant degree of regional diversity? Secondly, how can narrative fiction — as opposed to the rather blunt instrument of party-political propaganda — illuminate the diverse, complex and often conflicting ways in which regional geographies and spatial dynamics might contribute to more substantive ideological projects? Finally, to what extent does 'literary regionalism' — a topic

that, at first sight, is not particularly sexy or appealing — allow an insight into the ideological discourses and counter-discourses of twentieth-century politics, and of the authors that lived under them?

Although much scholarship has been published on regionalist literature(s) in various national contexts, critics have historically concentrated on rather superficial aesthetic concerns, such as stereotypical regional tropes, 'illuminations of [...] landscape', and '[local] color'.[7] Certain studies — including those of British, French and Brazilian fiction — have highlighted the ideologies developed by specific twentieth-century 'regionalist' authors (or groups of authors), but these analyses have often been constrained in terms of the time periods covered, or the worldviews that such writers espouse.[8] Rigid, formalist approaches have also stymied analysis of such works; as K. D. M. Snell argues, 'it is hard to conceive of a subject that has been more paralysed by disciplinary boundaries than the study of regional fiction'.[9] A more innovative analysis of regional identity's place in contemporary fictional production is Chloe Ashbridge's *Rewriting the North: Contemporary British Fiction and the Cultural Politics of Devolution* (2023), which foregrounds 'constitutional questions' and 'the interplay between space, place, [...] social power and contemporary class struggle' in recent English novels.[10] Such monographs demonstrate the continuing importance (and enduring academic appeal) of regionalist literary dynamics.

Regarding Portuguese fiction, attention has been paid to depictions of rural customs and local folklore, to the presence of regional language and dialect, to the breadth of regional spaces portrayed in twentieth-century literature, and to the longevity of regional landscapes as ingredients of canonical narratives.[11] This scholarship, however, has frequently overlooked the multifaceted political dimensions of many 'regionalist' novels and short stories, which are not simply *about* Portugal's regional landscapes and communities, but *weaponize* and *deploy* those narrative elements for ideological ends. Nonetheless, since the late 1970s Portuguese critics have tentatively addressed the shifting political uses of regional geography within twentieth-century fiction. Carlos Reis's scholarship, for instance, has associated Portugal's Marxist-influenced neo-realist fiction of the 1930s to 1950s with the agrarian, poverty-stricken and economically exploited regional communities of the Ribatejo and Alentejo; according to Reis, Neo-Realism contained 'motivações ideológicas [...] que obrigam a repensar a problemática do *regionalismo* na criação literária' [ideological motivations [...] that force one to reconsider the question of *regionalism* in literary production].[12] Maria Alzira Seixo's comments on early post-revolutionary novels (1974–82) are also noteworthy, in her claim that such narratives re-organize and re-configure existing understandings of 'a terra' [land] in Portuguese national culture, in pursuit of new symbolic meanings: 'a terra como paisagem, [...] como sociedade, [...] como espaço do drama político' [land as landscape, [...] as society, [...] as space of political drama].[13] These arguments are limited, though, by their chronological restrictions, and, in Reis's case, by their concentration on Marxist-affiliated literature.

In recent years, Ana Maria Costa Lopes and Alda Correia have published studies approximating to *longue durée* outlines of regional space (and of its ideological

significance), in modern Portuguese fiction. Costa Lopes's article 'Diferenças regionais e os seus reflexos na literatura' (2008) rightly asserts that regionalism '[a]travessou várias épocas e interpretações, em função das escolas literárias e das ideologias políticas professadas, ora mais à direita, ora mais à esquerda' [traversed several periods and interpretations, according to literary schools and declared political ideologies, both on the right and on the left].[14] Nonetheless, what ostensibly begins as a diachronic overview of regional variation soon transforms into a mapping exercise, with sections dedicated to depictions of the Minho, Beiras and Algarve, amongst other individual provinces.[15] Alda Correia's monograph *Narrative and Space: Across Short Story Landscapes and Regional Places* (2017) rejects this schematic approach, contending that multiple ideological uses of regional environments were apparent between the late nineteenth century and the 1950s: 'landscape marked by idealisation (fresh and healthy)'; 'landscape marked by decadence'; 'landscape marked by oppression and aggression/rebellion'.[16] Notwithstanding this insight, my readings of twentieth-century novels reveal that these 'landscape markers' are not mutually exclusive — even with regards to the same author or narrative — nor are they the *only* relevant criteria for assessing the ideological significance of regionalist fiction. Furthermore, any attempt to examine the 'progressive' or 'resistant' political potential of regional dynamics in literature should firmly reject the musings of Nazi-affiliated philosopher Martin Heidegger, from which Correia's approach fails to distance itself.[17] Finally, there are chronological limitations in Correia's study, and an exclusive focus on the short story rather than the politically potent novel form. Therefore, no over-arching study of the multiple, complex and (occasionally) competing ideological uses of the region in twentieth-century novels has yet been completed.

Regionalisms and Resistance addresses this gap, by conducting a diachronic study of the interactions between *regions*, *regionalisms*, *ideologies* and *resistances*, in selected Portuguese novels published during the twentieth century. The rationale for examining the novel lies in its status as a literary form that, according to Lennard Davis, is 'heavily oriented towards the ideological', and which is often capable of developing and sustaining more complex and intricate political dynamics than a poem or short story could.[18] In selecting my corpus, I sought regional diversity wherever possible and appropriate, although this has not been an overriding concern; indeed, one of the narratives examined has *no* specific geographical setting, although its strategic problematization of spatial imagery made it eligible for inclusion. A range of publication dates throughout the twentieth century was judged to be essential, in order to coincide with multiple political regimes in modern Portugal, and to conclude with a narrative that is roughly contemporaneous to the country's unsuccessful referendum on 'Regionalization' in 1998 (see Chapter 1). Regarding the authors chosen, it was necessary to include ideological outlooks that are distinct and complementary, while maintaining a targeted focus on the specific *texts* under examination rather than on each author's entire *oeuvre*. Overall, my approach prioritizes detailed textual analysis (e.g. close readings of extracts, imagery, symbolism and specific lexical choices), whilst taking care to historicize,

and to consider these narratives alongside pertinent theoretical conceptualizations of regional space.

Accordingly, this book comprises theoretical texts that allow regional environments to be understood as vital components of broader ideological projects. Departing from the so-called 'spatial turn' that has occurred in several disciplines since the 1960s, the politicization of geographical dynamics has been apparent since Henri Lefebvre's assertion that 'social space' is (ideologically and systematically) 'produced', which destabilized perceptions of natural or immutable geographies.[19] Equally important was New Left critic Raymond Williams's critical examination of (idyllic) countryside versus (threatening) city dichotomies in literary production, and his claim that one should concentrate on distinctions 'between forms of settlement and forms of exploitation', rather than on 'the more conventional contrast between agricultural and industrial development'.[20] 'Postmodern', 'feminist' and 'postcolonial' interventions followed, examining the relationship between geographical space and other literary discourses, culminating in Franco Moretti's (slightly hyperbolic) assertion in the late 1990s that 'geography shapes [and has shaped] the narrative structure of the European novel'.[21] Following this logic, more recent theory has dedicated itself to 'reclaiming provincialism' (in both the humanities and social sciences) from 'pejorative' connotations and 'belittling stereotypes';[22] a focus on geographically circumscribed literatures, then, should not be viewed as a niche or archaic endeavour.

In this context, working definitions of *region*, *regionalism*, *ideology* and *resistance* will be fundamental. Firstly, one must establish, as Douglas Powell does, that discourses around the *region* are not simply 'about a stable, boundaried, autonomous place[,] but about a cultural history'; regionality often denotes an (apparent) 'uniformity of certain cultural attitudes, behaviors, and artifacts in a socially and naturally defined place', which 'is itself an assertion of power'.[23] For João de Pina-Cabral, the relationship between 'regional identity' and 'sociocultural differentiation' is 'inseparable', albeit 'complex' and 'historically mediated'.[24] In his view, 'regions differ in the bases for their existence', depending on 'the role they play at higher levels of integration'.[25] Moreover, Williams notes that some intranational geographical spaces are more likely than others to be regarded as 'regional', with this epithet frequently (but not exclusively) applied to 'subordinate areas', often through the lens of class-based prejudices.[26] It should be stressed that this term, having derived from the Latin *regere* [to rule], implies an unequal relationship between government and territory that is nonetheless 'far from fixed'.[27] Similarly, the Portuguese scholar Moisés Martins argues that a *região* [region] is not merely a semantic concern, but the product of political struggle and juridical imposition, as well as 'o objecto de um teatro que encena [...] [as] relações entre a nação e as comunidades locais' [the object of a theatre that stages [...] relations between the nation and local communities].[28] There is an evident association here between (intranational) regionality and (international) coloniality, as I will address in subsequent chapters. Above all, this monograph defines the *region* as a historically and culturally constructed sub-national territory, that may (or may not) be accompanied by political or administrative rationalization.

Secondly, the concept of *regionalism* warrants re-evaluation, in both political and literary terms. Again, I shall begin by defining this term by what it is *not*: one should avoid simplistic connotations with provincial 'local color', for our interest does not lie with the 'regional novel' which (according to Williams) has 'so isolated its region, and thus projected it as internally whole [...] that it is unable to recognize the complex internal processes, including internal divisions and conflicts, which factually connect with those wider pressures'.[29] Hence, it is helpful to view regionalist literary discourse 'as the site of a dialogical critical conversation', rather than a 'fixed literary genre'.[30] That said, regionalism does not (necessarily) function as an equivalent to regressive 'nationalist' projects, as Roberto Dainotto suggests, nor does it merely 'compete' with other political struggles, as asserted by Frank Davey.[31] Instead, *Regionalisms and Resistance* will be guided by Powell's proposal, that regionalist cultural production 'can provide a rhetorical basis for making claims about how spaces and places are connected to spatially and conceptually broader patterns of meaning'.[32] Powell further states that '[t]o understand the full effects of the impact of injustice, of uneven development, of racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism, [...], [one] must reclaim the supposedly tranquil or quiescent [...] spaces of regional culture as vital spaces of cultural strife'.[33] On this basis, the present monograph offers a starting point for widening the ideological possibilities offered by regionalist cultural production in the Lusophone sphere; although my analysis of selected Portuguese narratives does not cover *all* of the discriminations listed above, it will present a productive lens for re-interpreting the uses of seemingly 'tranquil' or 'quiescent' regional spaces, landscapes and dynamics within the twentieth-century novel.

Several disclaimers must be attached to this definition, however. Firstly, regionalist literary discourse often contains an emotional component, approximating to Williams's notion of a 'structure of feeling' attached to 'the idea of settlement',[34] but moving beyond this. Yi-Fu Tuan's concept of 'topophilia' is pertinent: describing this notion as 'the affective bond between people and place or setting', which is 'vivid and concrete as personal experience', Tuan affirms that 'topophilia rings false when it is claimed for a large territory', meaning that it 'cannot be stretched over an empire', but it can be felt for 'the home region'.[35] In addition to evoking (and problematizing) such emotion, my understanding of regionalism overwhelmingly applies to *rural* diegetic environments, given that, as Dominic Head suggests, 'regional/provincial settings cannot so easily be detached from their literary effects [...] when the rural is combined with the regional'.[36] This approach also befits the relative scarcity of Portuguese fiction that 'resists' from regional cities, such as Porto, Braga and Coimbra. Moreover, the novels studied herein, while not spanning the entire political spectrum from communism to fascism, provide evidence that 'identification with the rural [and regional] world can generate wildly divergent political responses'.[37] I therefore use the term *regionalisms* to denote distinct ideological projects that are united by their political deployment of regional spaces, but do not foreground geographical location above all else; thus, regionalist dynamics function here as essential elements of more comprehensive ideological frameworks, within Portuguese literary fiction.

On this note, I shall turn to *ideology*. At its most mechanical level, one can consider Martin Seliger's outline of 'sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, uproot or rebuild a given social order': a broad and inclusive definition, applicable to numerous authorial worldviews.[38] Nonetheless, an explicitly geographical understanding of ideological frameworks is also necessary. For Lefebvre, ideology 'only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and by thus taking on body therein', while John Rennie Short's notion of 'environmental ideologies' allows for a politicized interpretation of spatial dynamics: '[Environmental] [i]deologies reflect not only the distribution of power in society but also the struggle for power in society. [They] bear the imprint of contest, struggle, victory and defeat'.[39] As Irving Howe notes, though, whether a novelist intends to defend or discredit a political ideology, '[their] novel cannot finally rest on the idea "in itself" '; they 'must drive the politics of or behind [their] novel into a complex relation with the kinds of experience that resist reduction to formula'.[40] Similarly, this monograph understands 'regionalist ideological projects' as distinct sets of political ideas that are articulated within — but do not dominate — specific novels, through intervention within geographical and social space and the strategic deployment of regional locations, landscapes and dynamics.

Finally, one must consider *resistance*. A pertinent starting point is Michel Foucault's much-cited notion of 'a multiplicity of points [...] everywhere in the power network', which are 'mobile', transitory' and 'distributed in irregular fashion', resulting in 'resistances that are [...] spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent' alongside 'others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial'.[41] James C. Scott, for his part, outlines a more peasant-focused understanding of resistance: that of 'hidden transcripts' comprising subtle and tacit actions, which operate 'below the line' of detection by a dominant power, and straddle an 'immense political terrain [...] between quiescence and revolt'.[42] Scott also argues against a sole emphasis on 'peasant rebellion', asserting that 'foot dragging', 'dissimulation', 'false compliance' and 'feigned ignorance' often replace 'collective outright defiance', if the latter is unfeasible.[43] These comments by Foucault and Scott apply to the multifarious (and, occasionally, contradictory) 'resistant' dynamics apparent in the Portuguese novels studied herein. 'Resistance', then, will stand for explicit or implicit political actions or behaviours directed against an external State, organization, collective body, economic system or other hegemonic entity, which may emanate from any point on the ideological spectrum and which may encompass radically different final objectives.

Through the definitions outlined above, I hope to assure readers that my approach will not err into geographical determinism, essentialism or regional stereotypes, and that the distinct ideological positions of each novelist will be accounted for. Despite some isolated references to ecological concerns, *Regionalisms and Resistance* does not adopt an eco-critical approach, nor does it focus on questions of regional autonomy (or, as Ashbridge puts it, 'the cultural politics of devolution'),[44] given that the novels studied here do not rest solely on these ideological grounds. Instead, each

chapter will follow a distinct methodological (and, where applicable, theoretical) framework, in recognition of the diverse, often contradictory 'regionalist ideological projects' that can be detected in Portugal's political history, cultural production and individual twentieth-century novels.

Chapter 1, '"Outside Lisbon there is nothing": Political and Literary Regionalisms in Modern Portugal', will conduct a comprehensive diachronic overview of the impact that the country's regional differences, geographical inequalities and distinct ideological landscapes have had on modern Portuguese politics and literary production. I shall begin with an outline of the Portuguese State's problematic relationship with its constituent provinces, followed by analysis of regionalist political organizations, movements and discourses during the First Republic (1910–26). I will then address political, social and economic imbalances that characterized Portugal's regional spaces during the *Ditadura Nacional* [National Dictatorship] (1926–32) and the *Estado Novo* [New State] (1933–74) — with an eye on both the regime's ultra-conservative and imperialist ideological doctrine, and the extent to which Portuguese peasants in various provinces remained 'apolitical' — followed by an evaluation of regionalist dynamics and discourses in the post-revolutionary era. The second part of this chapter will chart the political uses of regional space and geographical dynamics in modern Portuguese literature, concentrating on the novel. Following an overview of late nineteenth-century narratives, I will interrogate the geographical and ideological precepts of 'Neo-Romanticism' (1890s–1910s), the so-called 'regionalist period' (1920s–1930s), 'neo-realist' fiction (1930s–1950s) and post-revolutionary novels, alongside other seminal works that do not fit neatly into the categories above, but nevertheless espouse regionalist ideological dynamics.

Subsequently, Chapter 2, '"A cheap rebellion": Aquilino Ribeiro's Ambivalent Regional Resistance', will examine two novels published at different moments of Ribeiro's career — *Andam faunos pelos bosques* [*Fauns are Walking in the Forests*] (1926) and *Quando os lobos uivam* [*When the Wolves Howl*] (1958). The chapter will insist that readings of these narratives as regionalist and ideological are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary and inter-dependent. My analysis of Ribeiro's earlier novel will establish a distinction between (a) visible (or explicit) facets of its regionalist ideological project — which, through plot, characters' actions, utterances and narratorial remarks, critique political and religious authorities under the First Republic — and (b) concealed (or implicit) ideological dynamics within this narrative, which oscillate between conforming to, ironically subverting and challenging romanticized or 'fetishized' modes of representation pertaining to the Beira Alta highlands and their inhabitants. My observations on the latter novel will follow a similar *visible* versus *concealed* structure, while commenting on the distinct political, social and economic circumstances affecting Beira Alta rural communities under authoritarian rule. I shall argue that, in this later narrative, Ribeiro pursues a discernibly oppositional (yet non-Marxist) political project, which mobilizes the tropes of nostalgia, atavism and topophilic emotion, in service of an ideological project that can be read simultaneously as conservative and radical.

Building on this critical framework, Chapter 3, '"I don't identify with this

feminist provincialism": The Regionalist Sexual Politics of Agustina Bessa-Luís and Lídia Jorge', will turn to the interaction of regionalist dynamics with gender roles and female authority within twentieth-century Portuguese society, in Bessa-Luís's *A sibila* [*The Sibyl*] (1954) and Jorge's *O dia dos prodígios* [*The Day of Wonders*] (1980). My comments on *Sibila* will address the narrative's refusal to present an unequivocally bucolic Entre-Douro-e-Minho agricultural environment, or to engage in simplistic binary contrasts between rural and urban communities, while sardonically undermining tendencies to 'feminize' pastoral settings and to associate such gendered spaces with nostalgic rusticism. Afterwards, the novel's sexual politics of 'resistance' will be evaluated with regards to its highly equivocal perception of the 'northern matriarch' as a model for female advancement, and its promotion of the 'telluric Sibyl' as a harbinger of *potential* social change, capable of meaningfully challenging Portuguese society's patriarchal foundations if those powers of foresight are fully realized. Similarly, my examination of *Dia* will highlight the ways in which it destabilizes preconceptions of an apparently 'remote' and 'picturesque' pre-revolutionary rural Algarve, and of the semi-erotic relationship between Algarvian peasant women and their geographically specific environment. I will then interpret each of the novel's various 'female authority' archetypes, critiquing supposed 'matriarchs' and positing the community's sibylline figure as a 'regionalized' (coastal) model, thereby anticipating women's participation within post-dictatorial Portuguese society.

Finally, Chapter 4 — '"We imagined we lived at the end of the world": José Saramago's Militant Particularisms' — will interpret Saramago's *Levantado do chão* [*Raised from the Ground*] (1980) and *A caverna* [*The Cave*] (2000). It will argue that these two novels deeply embed rural communities, regionalist concerns and spatialized thinking into an anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist project, corresponding to the theoretical reflections of Raymond Williams and David Harvey, amongst others. In relation to *Levantado*, I will contend that the author systematically deconstructs territorial stereotypes of rural 'remoteness', 'ignorance' and 'bliss', while critiquing Salazarist and capitalist exploitation of Alentejan regional space. Following this, I will outline the spontaneous political agency that Saramago attributes to the region's agricultural proletariat, which functions in a liminal space between localized conditions and universal struggle; in other words, a form of 'militant particularism'. My reading of *Caverna* will develop this line of thought in relation to a geographically non-descript diegetic environment, which nonetheless challenges spatial dichotomies and presents a series of inter-dependent locales increasingly affected and controlled by contemporary capitalist processes, culminating in an ominous and all-encompassing 'Centre' complex. This novel's politics of resistance, I will suggest, stems from its highly subversive treatment of nostalgia and mourning in a rural context, which involves keeping alive a (messianic) 'struggle for emancipation' in the face of impossible odds, through the precise localization of anthropological remains.

The overriding objective of *Regionalisms and Resistance*, then, is to demonstrate the degree to which significant twentieth-century Portuguese novels not only *insert* regional spaces, landscapes, tensions and dynamics into political discourses, but

also, and more importantly, *rely on* those regionalist concerns in order to develop, articulate and reinforce their respective ideological messages. The narratives in question may not always propose radical or revolutionary political and social change; indeed, they may not even be internally coherent in the ideological projects that they espouse. They are, however, intensely *political* and *oppositional* novels, which seek to resist through spatialized ideologies.

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CHAPTER 1

❖

'Outside Lisbon there is nothing': Political and Cultural Regionalisms in Modern Portugal

> What separates us from our past is, at most, a geographical distance. Nothing is lost in time.[1]
>
> — Roberto Dainotto

The Lisboner João da Ega, from Eça de Queiroz's classic 1888 novel *Os Maias* [The Maias], proudly articulates the widespread assumption contained in this chapter's title: that the national capital is Portugal's sole *locus* of political, social, economic and cultural significance.[2] As I shall now demonstrate, this centuries-old perception is reflected in political events, socio-economic developments and cultural production across multiple political regimes. Nevertheless, the geographical complexities of (continental) Portugal are not confined to the binary tensions between capital and province — one must also consider dichotomies that have developed between urban and rural communities within a given region, between the North and South of the country, between territories experiencing unique sociological and historical material conditions, and between the *litoral* (the coastline, mostly developed) and the *interior* (inland areas, sparsely populated).[3] This chapter will take the factors above into account, outlining the importance of regional tensions in Portugal from the end of the nineteenth century to the early twenty-first, encompassing the final years of the monarchy, the First Republic (1910–26), Portugal's dictatorial era (1926–74), the revolutionary period (1974–76) and the post-1976 democratic epoch. I shall assess the ways in which both politics and cultural production have constructed distinct (and yet inter-connected) 'regionalist' ideological projects, including (but not limited to) nationalism, imperialism, Marxist-influenced social realism, and post-imperial reflections of Portuguese territorial identity, in an increasingly globalized context.

Far from the Madding Terreiro do Paço: Political Regionalisms

Superficially, continental Portugal has maintained a national cohesion that many other European (and Western) nations have not matched. Tom Gallagher argues that since 1294, the country has enjoyed 'perhaps the world's most stable

continental frontier' and a 'relatively impressive degree of cultural unity' — although his suggestion that 'no linguistic, racial or religious minorities or any note exist' is questionable, given the prevalence of a minority language (*mirandês*) alongside minoritized Roma and Jewish communities.[4] Nonetheless, as Pina-Cabral indicates, regional 'social identity' lacks consistency across the country, with multiple territorial overlaps and 'ambiguous' regional integration in several instances.[5] Lisbon's historical pre-eminence is of course undeniable, as a major site of departure for fifteenth-century maritime exploration, as an imperial metropolis, and as a global trade centre, conveniently located on a river estuary at Europe's western edge. According to Douglas Wheeler, once Portugal's reliance on subsistence agriculture had given way to imperial interests in the fifteenth century, agrarian communities outside Greater Lisbon merited noticeably less government attention and investment: 'Lisbon dominated the official life of Portugal, while the rural masses remained largely unaffected by political changes'. By the late seventeenth century, Wheeler contends, Portuguese society was largely divided between the (capital-based) 'political nation' and an 'apolitical and passive' rural majority: a 'Lisbon–provincial cleavage'.[6] Although the northern capital Porto held a certain industrial significance in the eighteenth century, this had been eclipsed by Lisbon's financial power by the mid-nineteenth century.[7]

An equally significant regional tension is between northern and southern Portugal. This binary between two 'halves' has been attributed to multiple distinctions: higher population density in the North; greater small-scale property ownership in the northern countryside than in the southern *latifundia*; Christianity's relatively greater historical prevalence in the Minho than in territories south of Lisbon.[8] As several scholars highlight, perceptions of racial difference have also developed: due to prolonged Moorish/Islamic control of southern Portugal (as part of *Al-Andalus*, until 1294), the Entre-Douro-e-Minho became associated with white European inheritance, whereas southern territories (especially the Algarve) have been linked to Arabic ethno-racial heritage and, later, miscegenation with prevalent African slave populations.[9] Indeed, such preconceptions that Portugal's national 'roots' resided in the 'white North' would influence debates on eugenics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Richard Cleminson notes.[10] In the mid-nineteenth century — following the Liberal-Absolutist Civil Wars of earlier decades — North–South political divisions contributed to physical conflict, as indicated by two flashpoints: a revolt in the Alto Minho against António Bernardo da Costa Cabral's liberal government in 1846 (dubbed the 'Maria da Fonte' rebellion), sparked by plans to build new roads, implement new levies and to tax burials within churchyards; and the 'Patuleia War' of 1846–47, in which northern absolutist forces resisted Queen Maria II's constitutional monarchy.[11] For Manuel Carlos Silva, these rebels objected to the government's centralizing policies, and to its failure to respect the rural North's religious and community traditions.[12]

More broadly, the final decades of the Monarchy (1870–1910) involved increasingly adverse conditions for Portugal's agricultural communities, leading various public intellectuals to pursue national rural development policies.[13] Nonetheless, such

measures were resisted by both large-scale agrarian landlords (e.g. in the Alentejo) and urban industrialists, operating within a third regional tension: *caciquismo*, or 'boss rule' (derived from *cacique*, the term for indigenous kings and tribal chiefs in the Americas).[14] This 'narrow patronage system' involving 'government manipulation' is judged to have been commonplace during this period, with the *Partido Republicano Português* [Portuguese Republican Party, PRP] advocating for political decentralization and reformed local government in the 1890s and 1900s, in order to combat such practices.[15] That said, few aspects of overall Republican sentiment (e.g. attention to industrial and agrarian unrest in Greater Lisbon and the South; secularism) coincided with northern conservative interests, meaning that the subsequent regime had little chance of satisfying this constituency.[16]

Regionalist tensions of the First Republic

If, for David Birmingham, the collapse of the Monarchy in 1910 was a 'Lisbon revolution', favouring public servants and industrial workers based in the capital, a clear consensus on the Republican regime is that, alongside 'instability' and financial constraints, it did not address 'the other Portugal' beyond Lisbon and Porto.[17] The Republic's 'regionalist' shortcomings, according to scholars, included: its failure to transform 'traditional landowning patterns' or 'deteriorating agrarian conditions' in central and southern areas; its pursuit of a secular or even anticlerical agenda (thereby alienating northern peasant communities); deficient investment beyond the capital; and the PRP's revocation of its earlier promise to decentralize political authority, opting instead for a Unitary State in the Republic's 1911 Constitution.[18] The latter decision contributed to the growth of political organizations and manifestos during this period, concerned with regional autonomy, federalism, municipalism or, more broadly, 'regionalism' (used here as an umbrella term).[19] While defending greater sovereignty for Portugal's provincial communities, including Porto and the North, the Alentejo, the Beiras and the Azores archipelago,[20] these movements frequently went beyond calls for administrative or bureaucratic reform. In many instances, regionalist initiatives were used as platforms to denounce political *caciquismo* and to air grievances against the Terreiro do Paço (Lisbon's government quarters). This discourse is evidenced by an intervention at the *Congresso Nacional Municipalista* [National Municipalist Congress], held in 1922: 'O novo regime [...] conservou a velha estrutura viciada e carcomida. [...]. [...] a mesma centralização; a mesma dominação das províncias pelo Terreiro do Paço; [...] os mesmos processos de caciquismo' [The new regime has preserved the old vice-ridden and rotten structure [...]. [...] the same centralization; the same domination of the provinces by the Terreiro do Paço; [...] the same processes of *caciquismo*].[21] Nonetheless, these decentralizing projects did not approximate to separatism or rejection of the Portuguese nation; as Daniel Melo notes, they often defended national identity, renewal and/or regeneration, within a territorially coherent State.[22] Such proposals were defended across the period's political spectrum, despite disagreements between moderates and radicals regarding the form decentralization should take.[23] Extreme right-wing movements in favour of these policies included *Integralismo Lusitano* [Lusitanian

Integralism] — an ultra-conservative, Monarchist and nationalist organization — which sought a traditionalist system of local governance.[24] Regionalist initiatives on the Left included the 1921 federalist programme of the *Partido Comunista Português* [Portuguese Communist Party, PCP], which proposed that Portugal join the recently formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.[25] Consequently, support for regionalist ideas did not pertain exclusively to any particular party doctrine or ideological standpoint within the First Republic's political climate.

Many of the Republic's political, social and economic crises can be linked to such geographical complexities and regional dynamics in continental Portugal. Aside from Monarchist mobilization in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho and Trás-os-Montes — as evidenced by the *Monarquia do Norte* [Monarchy of the North] rebellion of 1919, involving Porto, Mirandela and other northern towns[26] — the policies pursued by the regime's key figures evidently exasperated extant tensions between regions. Specifically, the 'anticlerical' actions of the Republic's dominant Prime Minister Afonso Costa (separating Church and State; expelling certain Christian orders) — have been criticized for a failure to accommodate strong Catholicism outside Lisbon, Porto and the increasingly 'secular' Alentejan countryside.[27] As Gallagher notes, this programme propelled northern and central rural communities 'into the arms of reactionary and obscurantist forces', particularly after 1917, when visions of the Virgin Mary and a so-called 'Milagre do Sol' [Miracle of the Sun] were reported in Fátima (Santarém district), thereby bolstering the Catholic Church's position within Portuguese society.[28]

In addition, the Republic's preoccupation with urban industrial unrest, and its inability to address distinct socio-economic conditions within northern and southern agrarian areas, should be highlighted.[29] According to Nancy Gina Bermeo, while the *minifundia* [small-holder] system of land ownership in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho limited wealth inequalities and enhanced 'social cohesion', the *latifundia* system [large landlord-dominated estates] in the South (especially the Alentejo) 'enhanced radicalization rather than co-optation'.[30] The latter's historical propensity towards militancy is evidenced by strikes and protests in the southern Alentejo between June 1911 and January 1912, which the Republican government, in collaboration with local landowners, violently repressed.[31] Although a radical Agrarian Reform proposal (supported by socialists, Communists and anarchists) sought to address imbalances, it never came to fruition, nor did 'land socialization' plans formulated by peasant unions.[32] Furthermore, educational divides (operating upon regional distinctions) were not conducive to territorial cohesion or support for the Republican system; as Wheeler notes, greater illiteracy rates (67–85%) characterized the northeastern districts of Braga, Bragança and Vila Real where, coincidentally or not, 'monarchism was strongest and republicanism weakest'.[33]

For some, then, it was not by chance that the 26 May 1926 military *coup d'état* (abolishing the First Republic) originated in the relatively conservative northern city of Braga; Gallagher and Ventura view the rebellion as a 'provincial' reaction against Lisbon — 'the main stronghold of the PRP' — which seemingly ignored and scorned rural Portugal.[34] Although the location from which the coup was launched

was also related to logistical factors (e.g. the presence of major army barracks), it can also be viewed as emblematic of Portugal's aforementioned geographical divides. Moreover, the Republic's eradication by a Minho-based movement foreshadowed the subsequent regime's policies and 'regionalist' ideological precepts.

Peasants and politics under authoritarianism

Following a *Ditadura Nacional* [National Dictatorship, 1926–32], Portugal's *Estado Novo* regime — led by António de Oliveira Salazar (1933–68) and Marcelo Caetano (1968–74) — involved various elements: a one-party system (*União Nacional* [National Union]), a 'Corporatist State' (comprising government control of industry and the workforce), a rigorous censorship regime, and a nationwide secret police force known first as the *Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado* [State Surveillance and Defence Police], the PVDE, and later as the *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* [International State Defence Police], PIDE, alongside approximately 20,000 spies and *bufos* [local informants].[35] While Enzo Collotti and others describe the *Estado Novo* as 'fascist', the terms 'nationalist' and 'Catholic authoritarian' (as well as 'ultra-conservative') are also useful, given the regime's preoccupation with Portuguese imperial identity, national pride, Catholic social norms and moral traditionalism.[36] The regime's infamous slogan *Deus, Pátria, Família* [God, the Fatherland and the Family] epitomizes these concerns, as articulated by Salazar in a 1936 speech (in Braga, no less): 'Não discutimos Deus e a virtude; não discutimos a Pátria e a sua história; [...]; não discutimos a família e a sua moral' [We don't contest God and virtue; we don't contest the Fatherland and its history; [...] we don't contest the family and its moral values].[37] Such patriotic overtures did not prevent rebellions in peripheral Portuguese territories, however, as evidenced by attempted military uprisings in 1931, in Madeira, the Azores and Portuguese Guinea (Guinea-Bissau).[38]

Regarding regional tensions and divides, the *Estado Novo*'s party statutes and 1933 Constitution were ostensibly committed to decentralization, but the dictatorship is widely regarded as having co-opted and homologized the more reactionary regionalist programmes of the Republican era, in service of an ultra-patriotic agenda.[39] Ricardo Agarez dubs this programme 'national-regionalism', according to which 'national and regional identities were not seen as incompatible, but as fundamentally complementing each other'.[40] An equation of regionalist dynamics with heightened 'nationalist' spirit is evidenced by contemporary treatises, such as Domingos Deusdado's *Regionalismo e patriotismo* [*Regionalism and Patriotism*] (1934): 'Regionalismo, é o amor pátrio sublimado; é o amor cimentado no [...] cantinho em que nascemos [...], ao recordar a aldeia distante' [Regionalism is sublime love for the Fatherland; it is love rooted [...] in the little corner we were born in [...], whenever we recall our distant village].[41] Accordingly, the *Estado Novo*'s official discourse and propaganda programme — managed by the *Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional*, later *Secretariado Nacional de Informação* [National Propaganda Secretariat, SPN; National Information Secretariat, SNI] — has been associated with a 'pastoral ideology', predicated on 'a romanticized vision of the rural', 'medieval simplicity', and 'love of the land'.[42] This ideological construct was articulated through a *política*

do espírito [politics of the spirit], idealizing rural ethnography, folklore, gastronomy, agriculture and fishing, via cultural events, competitions and propagandistic exercises, including the 'Jogos florais' [Floral Games] (1936–49) and the 'Aldeia mais portuguesa de Portugal' [Most Portuguese Village in Portugal] (1938).[43] Accompanying such folkloric and ethnographic projects — based on assorted regional stereotypes — was Portugal's burgeoning cinematic industry; as Patrícia Vieira notes, films like Chianca de Garcia's *Aldeia da roupa branca* [Village of White Clothes] (1939) deprived rural populations of 'agency' and promoted a 'domesticated natural sublime', suggesting that nature could be 'tamed', and thereby 'tout[ing] the superiority of an existence in tune with nature as opposed to the supposed artificiality of urban living'.[44]

This convergence of 'regional' and 'national' bucolic ideals corresponds to an over-arching theme in *Estado Novo*-era ideology: a pluricontinental imperialism, encompassing so-called 'regional identities' (which, in reality, forcibly combined metropolitan Portugal and overseas colonial territories). Although previous twentieth-century regimes had been colonialist, the dictatorship's foregrounding of imperialist policies and discourse, as well as its strategic deployment of regional geographies for such purposes, was notable. These tendencies can be observed in numerous examples of musical and audio-visual propaganda, including song lyrics written for the *Mocidade Portuguesa* [Portuguese Youth] organization, which paired towns and cities of continental Portugal with those of the Atlantic islands and African and Asian colonial territories: 'Em Sagres como na Beira, | na Praia ou na Terceira, | em Dili, Macau, Bolama, | Angola ou no Funchal, | [...] | aqui é Portugal!' [In Sagres, just like in the Beira | in Praia [da Vitória] or Terceira | in Dili, Macau, Bolama | in Angola or in Funchal | [...] | here is Portugal!].[45] Maps from this period further contributed to this notion of imperial collectiveness, including Henrique Galvão's 'Portugal não é um país pequeno' [Portugal is not a Small Country] (1934): this map posits the regime's imperial possessions as natural extensions of continental Portugal's frontiers, with overseas territories such as Macau, Goa and East Timor positioned to neighbour the Minho, Trás-os-Montes, the Beiras, the Alentejo and the Algarve.[46] Above all, the government's coordination of colonial exhibitions was instrumental in establishing a line of logical continuity between region, nation and Empire. For instance, Portugal's first Colonial Exhibition — held in Porto in 1934 — epitomized the regime's 'new emphasis on representing both internal and overseas "provinces" ' in their 'internal diversity', displaying 'condensed and formulaic' metropolitan folklore and cultural products from imperial jurisdictions.[47] This discursive strategy became more explicit and coherent in the 1940 *Exposição do Mundo Português* [Exhibition of the Portuguese World], a high-profile, high-budget display of Portuguese history and culture based in Lisbon's Belém district. According to Luís Trindade, the organizers sought to airbrush Portugal's middle-class and urban society out of existence, in favour of idealized peasant communities within a *Centro Regional* [Regional Centre], positioned alongside a *Secção Colonial* [Colonial Section].[48] Both of these exhibition areas staged 'authentic' lifestyles using 'imported' indigenous peoples and

rural citizens from metropolitan, Azorean and Madeiran communities, combining images of regional and colonized populations to construct a 'new hybrid identity'.[49]

In subsequent decades, the 'impression of unity'[50] engendered by such events was used to facilitate and justify the regime's continued imperial presence, despite post-war international pressure to relinquish overseas possessions. In 1951, for example, Salazar's government extended the legal designation of 'províncias' [provinces] to encompass Portugal's overseas territories, and, in 1960, the dictator likened emerging African independence movements to regionalist programs, deriding them as 'certos problemas que apenas respeitam à organização administrativa e a maior ou menor descentralização ou autonomia' [isolated problems that only concern administrative organization, and greater or lesser degrees of decentralization or autonomy].[51] In 1961 — the year that Portugal's Colonial Wars began with an uprising in Angola and the Indian annexation of Goa — conservative academics were voicing similar sentiments in order to ridicule independence struggles, as evidenced by Herlander Machado's public lecture: 'Visaram Goa... Agora visam Angola... Talvez a venham a defender relativamente ao Minho ou ao Algarve, para não dizer que visarão um dia a [...] Comarca de Figueiró dos Vinhos!' [They targeted Goa... Now they are targeting Angola... Maybe they will demand the same for the Minho or the Algarve, or even target [...] the district of Figueiró dos Vinhos!].[52] Thus, having cemented the indivisibility of Portugal's regional and colonial territories in the Portuguese popular psyche, the Salazarist dictatorship and its ideological brethren disparaged African nationalist insurgents as 'provincial'.

Concurrently, the *Estado Novo* carried out a series of non-consensual rural development projects within metropolitan Portugal, described by scholars as *colonização interna* [internal colonization].[53] Aside from early initiatives like the 1929 *Campanha de Trigo* [Wheat Campaign], designed to upscale Alentejan agricultural production, the most prominent of these was increased afforestation, which involved expropriating the *baldios* [uncultivated lands], held in common ownership by central and northern peasant communities, and repurposing them as pine or eucalyptus forests (see Chapter 2, regarding Aquilino Ribeiro's *Quando os lobos uivam*).[54] Secondly, one can highlight a succession of hydroelectric *barragem* [dam] construction projects, leading to the evacuation and destruction of centuries-old communitarian villages like Vilarinho da Furna in the Serra do Gerês (1969–71) — not unlike the eradication of various rural communities in northern England and Wales from the 1930s to the 1960s, with long-lasting cultural consequences.[55] This array of schemes has led scholars to ponder whether the dictatorship was committed to traditionalism or (enforced) modernity; while D. L. Raby insists that Salazarism's focus on 'ruralism and self-sufficient poverty' was 'purely reactionary', or 'the antithesis of modernisation', Tiago Saraiva contends that its agenda was not atavistic, but rather a transformed, hyper-modernist, even utopian ruralism: 'Mountains covered with forests, green irrigated plains, productive wheat fields: this was the idyllic landscape of Salazar's New State'.[56]

Notwithstanding such comments, one should consider the regime's commitment to explicitly traditionalist social policies which, in many cases, interacted with

regional stereotypes and stock images of peasant existence. This is particularly apparent in the *Estado Novo*'s gender-conservative discourse, extolling the supposed virtues of the Portuguese nuclear family, and presenting images of contented, pious and domesticated rural women.[57] As Ana Paula Ferreira highlights, efforts to limit Portuguese women to 'the role and consequent duties of the savvy mother-housewife' often equated the generic 'Woman' with a 'natural order of things', with 'fetish[ized]' rural women depicted as nominal heads of agricultural households'.[58] Simultaneously, the Salazarist women's organization *Obra das Mães para a Educação Nacional* [Mothers' Work for National Education, OMEN] focused almost exclusively on charitable endeavours within rural areas, rejecting 'collectivism, industrial society, urbanization and modernization' and promoting rurality to defend an (apparently) threatened nation.[59] As I will outline presently, such anti-feminist, anti-urban discourse was both commonplace in Salazarist Portugal and lampooned by more subversive cultural production throughout the period.

In terms of peasant political consciousness during this regime, it is clear that the aforementioned ultra-conservative values were promoted at all levels and scales of Portuguese national life, particularly in 'schools, the Church, the official party, and the elaborate apparatus of the corporate state', including State-dominated *casas do povo* [rural workers' organizations/guilds].[60] Joyce Riegelhaupt notes that, despite its regionalist pretensions, the *Estado Novo* was a 'highly centralized political system' involving 'the direct appointment by the state of low level officials', thus disempowering rural communities and denying them political agency.[61] Furthermore, she argues, 'local desires, policies, or conflicts could be communicated upward', but 'they could not be acted upon locally', resulting in peasants who were 'marginal actors in the Portuguese political system', attributed 'a minimal role of apathetic acquiescence'.[62] According to Raby, this assessment was broadly shared by the clandestine Communist opposition, which struggled to recruit agricultural labourers from central and northern Portugal and adapted its propaganda for those regions (with mixed success) to accommodate small-scale land ownership patterns and anti-revolutionary beliefs.[63] Nonetheless, much evidence suggests that peasants throughout continental Portugal rejected *Estado Novo* policies towards their communities and responded with unrest, despite contrasting rationales and distinct worldviews among them. In northern and central Portugal, rural protest chiefly arose from the dictatorship's afforestation programme, leading to civil suits against the authorities' plans, as well as boycotts, arson and physical confrontations with the *Serviços Florestais* [Afforestation Services].[64] For Dulce Freire, this peasant resistance was dedicated to preserving traditional practices within the *baldios*, derived from insecurity due to the prospect of enforced modernization.[65] As I will examine in Chapter 2, regarding Ribeiro's literature, such communities in the Beira Alta (and in other northern and central territories) can be regarded as violently defending continuity over socio-economic transformation.

This quasi-conservative resistance was counter-balanced by manifestations of peasant radicalism: in 1958, for instance, peasant strikes aimed at addressing socio-economic inequalities and injustices (in both agrarian and urban/industrial

environments) occurred amongst the agricultural workforces of Covilhã and other Serra da Estrela towns.[66] Above all, unrest in the Alentejan and Ribatejan *latifundia* was incited by land ownership inequities and perennially exploitative working conditions. In fact, the aforementioned class conflicts under the Republic reached a new intensity under the *Estado Novo*, due to the regime's repressive actions which 'forced a political definition' to 'the organization of opposition based on economic grievances', and contributed to the southern rural proletariat's 'radical political consciousness'.[67] Raby observes that this socio-economic group practised 'continued and growing militancy, becoming a permanent thorn in the side of the regime', and undertaking 'chronic' militant action from the 1940s onwards.[68] Multiple peasant disturbances demonstrate this pattern of militancy — in the Ribatejo district (1944), in Montemor-o-Novo (1945 and 1958), and a successful eight-hour working day campaign (1962) — thereby convincing the PCP leadership that this region's labourers would offer the party a 'shock brigade', in the event of substantial revolutionary activity.[69] The early post-Salazarist period would illustrate such radical propensities, but they would not necessarily follow Communist Party direction (or, indeed, its doctrine).

Revolution, reaction, rurality, regions: post-dictatorship

By the late 1960s, the *Estado Novo* was visibly weakened, particularly by its insistence on fighting Colonial Wars against insurgents in Portugal's African territories (from 1961 onwards), thereby consuming significant economic resources and causing thousands of casualties on both sides. There was also a severe crisis in the agrarian economy, accompanying Portugal's transition from a majority rural country to a predominantly urban one — exacerbated by government 'neglect' — and large-scale peasant emigration (especially from the North), to large cities or abroad (e.g. to France).[70] Simultaneously, the hitherto sparsely populated Algarve experienced socio-economic transformation due to burgeoning international tourism, leading to noticeable construction and infrastructure development, a 'mixture of trepidation and excitement' within local communities, and certain 'expression[s] of freedom' not observed elsewhere in the country, such as illicit sex tourism.[71] In this evolving demographic context, the stage was set for a re-evaluation of Portugal's regional dynamics.

Once the Carnation Revolution had occurred on 25 April 1974, deposing Marcelo Caetano and inaugurating the 1974–76 *Processo Revolucionário em Curso* [Ongoing Revolutionary Process, PREC], regional tensions (on political, social and economic grounds) quickly resurfaced, as ultra-right and extreme-left factions vied for control. Although moderate democrats initially shared political power with the Communists and the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* [Armed Forces Movement, MFA], right-wing militants in (relatively) conservative northern towns engaged in 'violent anti-MFA demonstrations, and attacks on the Communist Party offices', while numerous Azoreans and Madeirans held anti-revolutionary protests in their respective archipelagos.[72] As the new authorities attempted to inform and politicize Portugal's seemingly passive peasant populations, they faced regionally specific

challenges and circumstances. While 'urban party organizers' were criticized at the time, for travelling to rural communities in order to 'teach before trying to learn',[73] the MFA pursued a more geographically targeted approach. As Sónia Vespeira de Almeida details, the MFA was engaged in multiple *Dinamização Cultural* [Cultural Dynamization] and *Acção Cívica* [Civic Action] national campaigns between 1974 and 1975, involving literacy brigades, health education, theatrical activities and clarification sessions.[74] These initiatives explicitly required that the MFA *regionalize itself*, abandon urban centres and march towards villages, with an 'Operação Nortada' [Operation North] aimed at Viseu, Vila Real and Bragança; other targets included the Beiras and the Azores archipelago, while less priority was given to the Alentejo and the Algarve.[75] Notwithstanding these efforts, the MFA encountered hostility on various occasions, including being attacked by the inhabitants of Tomar (Santarém district) and being denounced in local press articles by a cleric in Lamego, who deployed a regionalist and anti-communist lexicon.[76] Despite such objections to the armed forces' activity, this northern and conservative 'regionalist discourse' — echoing that of the defunct authoritarian regime — was not totally removed from the MFA's either. For Almeida, the MFA's approach idealized peasant culture from the North and Centre, concentrated on bucolic, 'authentic' rural imagery, and constructed a '*pastoral* revolucionária' [revolutionary pastoral],[77] none of which would have appeared particularly misplaced in an *Estado Novo*-era propaganda exercise. Concurrently, regionally situated cinematic productions — including António Reis's and Margarida Cordeiro's semi-ethnographic *Trás-os-Montes* (1976) — were criticized in certain quarters, for constructing 'false' portraits of north-eastern peasant communities.[78]

One should not neglect the political agency of the peasants themselves, however, which was apparent in various contexts, despite distinct regional conditions in post-authoritarian Portugal. Although the Alentejan and Ribatejan rural proletariats had a prior record of militant action (as discussed above), the actions of these rural labourers were unprecedented: between December 1974 and mid-1976, more than one million hectares of agrarian territory — 23% of its total, almost entirely south of Santarém — were occupied by peasant workers and farmed collectively, as agricultural cooperatives.[79] Although contemporaneous studies attributed these occupations to the PCP (in the form of infiltration and direction), subsequent scholarship suggests that they were self-directed and spontaneous; in Bermeo's view, these seizures 'were not the product of orchestration "from above" but were instead the outgrowth of [...] structural changes that allowed people to take action from below'.[80] Alongside this organic capacity for militancy, she affirms, the phenomenon reflected socio-economic specificity, being 'a regional social revolution [...] within the national political revolution' justified by 'the sociology of the South'.[81] Simultaneously, individuals and organizations involved in agribusiness elsewhere — particularly in northern and central areas — aggressively opposed governmental and peasant-directed challenges to traditional landholding practices, through anti-Marxist protests linked to the *Confederação dos Agricultores de Portugal* [Farmers' Confederation of Portugal, CAP].[82] Gallagher notes a heightened counter-revolutionary 'backlash' among peasants north of the Ribatejo, due to fears

that 'radical' provisional governments in Lisbon (including PCP ministers) would forcibly extend agricultural expropriation, or allow the occupations to spread.[83] According to Manuel Carlos Silva, this apparent northern conservatism amounted to survival strategies, in the face of perceived existential risks to settled livelihoods, while Caroline Brettell suggests that rural labourers in such areas — who had tended to emigrate abroad before the Carnation Revolution — typically held a 'strong anti-communist' and 'pro-work-ethic' worldview.[84] Although the issue of land ownership was partly resolved by the Socialist government's Agrarian Reform laws of 1977 (addressing land inequalities and returning occupied estates to their original owners), memories of this period have fed into notions of geographical distinctiveness and unique regional identities within post-revolutionary Portugal.[85]

Accompanying this contested transition from dictatorship to democracy (ending in 1976) was institutional change, including political autonomy for the Azores and Madeira archipelagos, partly in response to the *Frente de Libertação dos Açores* [Azores Liberation Front, FLA], and the *Frente de Libertação do Arquipélago da Madeira* [Madeira Archipelago Liberation Front, FLAMA], both inspired by successful nationalist struggles in Portuguese Africa.[86] However, aside from a commitment to 'regionalization' in the new democratic constitution, and the introduction of *Poder Local* [Local Power/Municipal Government] in 1976, little attempt was made to devolve political power at a regional or district level within continental Portugal.[87] Gallagher's assertion that 'the [government's] centralizing imperative strengthened' during this period is hyperbolic, but a lack of tangible decentralization contributed to new political and academic discussions surrounding territorial governance and regional development.[88] Concomitantly, observers have emphasized geographical patterns in the Portuguese electorate's support of left- and right-wing parties — especially the centre-left *Partido Socialista* [Socialist Party, PS], the centre-right *Partido Social Democrata* [Social Democratic Party, PSD] and extreme-left PCP — since the first free elections of 1975. While claims of 'three Portugals: the North, the Center, and the South' are crude and dated, the North and North-East's relative adherence to the PSD, Greater Lisbon's association with the PS, and the Alentejo's fidelity to the PCP clearly characterized multiple Portuguese elections of the late twentieth century.[89]

On a broader ideological level, Portugal's geo-political position was profoundly affected by post-Salazarist decolonization, which formally concluded Portugal's colonial presence in overseas territories (bar Macau, relinquished in 1999). This sudden reduction of the country to its medieval borders inevitably affected Portuguese national identity; as outlined by Eduardo Lourenço, Portugal had hitherto relied on imperial possessions as 'espaços compensatórios' [compensatory spaces] and, at the moment of its amputation (i.e. return to its internal dimensions) faced a geo-political reckoning.[90] In this context, a key coping mechanism was the country's adherence to the European Economic Community/European Union [EEC/EU] in 1986, in pursuit of a continental outlook. Nonetheless, the impact of European integration has been critiqued as neither uniformly beneficial nor evenly shared, with *litoral–interior* divisions resurfacing, a concentration of tourism along the Algarvian coastline, still-prevalent *caciquismo* hindering regional distribution

of EEC/EU funding, and a population shift toward Greater Lisbon, leading to an increasingly 'urban outlook'.[91]

That said, Portugal's deferred adherence to modern capitalist globalization in the 1980s did not simply eradicate its rural communities; rather, the country's late twentieth-century landscape was 'marked by the juxtaposition of traditional and modern forms of production, consumption and social reproduction'.[92] Moreover, conflicts occurred in specific regional contexts that strongly recalled peasant struggles of the dictatorship era; in 1989, for example, inhabitants of the Lila valley (Valpaços, Trás-os-Montes) refused to allow a company to plant eucalyptus trees on a neighbouring estate, resulting in large-scale protests, destruction of seedlings, arrests and police violence. As outlined by Ricardo Rodrigues, the locals' aversion to eucalyptus cultivation — vindicated by recent forest fires elsewhere in Portugal — clashed with a market-driven commitment to increasing the profitability of forests, as promoted by Aníbal Cavaco Silva's PSD government.[93] This episode — reminiscent of *Lobos* — demonstrates two enduring dynamics within post-revolutionary rural Portugal: firstly, that the attitudes of centralized authorities and private enterprises had not substantially developed from the *Estado Novo*'s 'internal colonization' policy; secondly, that northern peasant communities were still violently contesting socio-economic (in this case, neo-liberal) transformation, reflecting the complex dynamics of continuity and change in particular regional contexts.

With these extant territorial divisions in mind, António Guterres's PS government explicitly attempted to decentralize political authority in 1998, when it held a national referendum on whether continental Portugal should be divided into eight predetermined administrative regions. The result of this plebiscite — 64% against — revealed unresolved geographical issues; Gallagher states that the referendum's defeat 'illustrated the degree to which the centralizing ethos had put down strong roots in [...] Portuguese political culture'.[94] This appraisal is slightly exaggerated, given that the proposed regional boundaries and powers were regarded as flawed, and that the the Yes and No campaigns' rhetoric arguably exasperated regional divisions rather than healing them.[95] Nonetheless, the results were both regionally and ideologically differentiated: the only supportive region was the left-leaning Alentejo — indeed, the PCP was accused of seeking 'permanent control' over the agricultural South through regionalization.[96] Conversely, Portugal's northern and central provinces rejected the proposal — alongside plebiscites on legalizing abortion, in 1998 and, less uniformly, in 2007 — cementing those areas' status in the national imagination as ultra-conservative, Catholic bastions.[97] At the turn of the century, then, several geographical inequalities and fundamental differences of outlook between regions of continental Portugal were yet to be resolved.

Into the 2000s, new indications of regional inequalities emerged, including infrastructure deficiencies: in 2001, an inadequately maintained bridge over the Douro River (at Entre-os-Rios) collapsed, killing seventy; in 2018, a quarry road landslide in Borba (Alentejo) killed two. Concurrently, fatal forest fires have increasingly afflicted rural communities over the past two decades, as epitomized

by the death in 2017 of sixty people in Pedrógão Grande (Leiria), a municipality with a high eucalyptus tree concentration. In addition to the (national and global) ecological anxieties that such incidents induce, the Pedrógão Grande fires suggested considerable territorial imbalances; according to *Financial Times* journalist Peter Wise, this tragedy exposed 'wounds [...] inflicted by decades of neglect, rural flight and remoteness from political power', contributing to a 'widened [...] poverty gap' between regions (particularly following government austerity measures between 2009 and 2015).[98] While this analysis does not explain the scientific inevitability of *some* wildfires occurring, it does reflect the increasing attention being paid in Portuguese journalism and academia to (human and environmental) *desertificação* [desertification] within eastern rural communities, frequently linked to poverty, underdevelopment, emigration, low birth rates and an ageing population.[99] Although the decline of inland Portugal is not absolute, with eco-tourism, digital nomads and small-scale manufacturing supporting some eastern towns and villages, the ideological discourse of rural 'demise' has been compelling, as the cultural geographer Álvaro Domingues notes: 'muitos crêem que o que realmente se perdeu foi o próprio paraíso, a versão bucólica e pastoral do mundo rural perfeito' [many think that what was actually lost was paradise itself: a bucolic and pastoral version of the perfect rural world].[100] Such sentiments are displayed in twenty-first-century documentaries and dramas, including *Ainda há pastores?* [Are there any Shepherds Left?] (2006) and *Volta à terra* [Return to the Land] (2014).[101]

The political fallout from these developments has been multifaceted: while António Costa's recent Socialist government committed to granting more power to municipalities and fostering economic development within the *interior*, the centre-right President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has publicly denounced the various 'Portugais' [Portugals] that he believes to coexist, especially after the Pedrógão Grande tragedy.[102] The perceived inland crisis has also contributed to reconfigurations of Portugal's ideological extremes: while the PCP had dominated working-class industrial cities in the South (e.g. Palmela and Setúbal) and rural Alentejan municipalities (e.g. Montemor-o-Novo) for decades, in the 2021 Presidential Elections, the aforementioned *Chega* displaced the radical Left in many such communities, at least partly through its reactionary, essentialist defence of 'o mundo rural' [the rural world] in public rallies.[103] André Ventura, the party's controversial leader, articulated these localities' shift to the extreme Right in telling remarks: 'quebrámos o mito das terras de esquerda e das terras comunistas' [we've shattered the myth of Communist lands and lands of the Left].[104] Thus, over centuries of imbalances between Portugal's capital and its provinces, between the country's regions, and *within* those regional spaces, regionalist ideologies have played a fundamental role in public discourse, notions of territorial identity, geographical cohesion and the likelihood of political confrontation. As I shall now demonstrate, twentieth-century Portuguese fiction consistently evoked and appropriated these regionalist dynamics, albeit not always in an aesthetically or ideologically coherent manner.

In my Lands: Regionalist Ideologies in the Portuguese Novel

As indicated previously, my objective here is not to engage in a cartographical or encyclopaedic 'mapping' process of Portugal's regional literatures, nor to emphasize regionalist fiction as an ideological end in itself. Rather, I shall highlight ideologically divergent authors sharing an interest in regional space as a discursive means, throughout the previous century. The 'relationship between literary regionalism and national ideologies' in modern Portugal is clear; for Alda Correia, 'Liberal ideology, Republicanism and the Estado Novo [...] interfered in this relation, using, transforming and finally, fighting it'.[105] Yet, it was not just Portugal's various regimes that transformed this relationship, but an array of socio-political factors and worldviews, as I shall now argue.

Pastoral settings and themes in Portuguese literature can be traced back several centuries, to theatre (including Gil Vicente's play *Tragicomédia pastoril da Serra da Estrela* [Pastoral Tragicomedy of the Serra da Estrela] (1527)), and to the *novela pastoril* [pastoral novella], a sixteenth- to seventeenth-century fictional genre inspired by the classical bucolic eclogue.[106] By the mid- to late nineteenth century, however, much Portuguese literary production reflected the societal concerns of European Romanticism: various works of fiction concentrated on hitherto neglected rustic communities, as featured in Alexandre Herculano's *O pároco de aldeia* [The Village Priest] (1851), and by the development of *contos rústicos* [rustic short stories] in the 1860s and 1870s, which established a precedent for regional-rural diegetic environments.[107] In terms of the emerging *romance* [novel] genre, Júlio Dinis's novels concerned with the Minho — including *As pupilas do senhor reitor* [The Pupils of the Parson] (1866) and *A morgadinha dos Canaviais* [The Heiress of the Canaviais] (1868) — have been criticized for their idyllic cultivation of 'a flower garden which, albeit harbouring a few worms in a few buds, is suspiciously evocative of [...] Romantic pre-lapsarian paradises'.[108] Concurrently, Camilo Castelo Branco's Romantic (but often sardonic) fiction is considered to have denounced 'quasi-medieval social structures' in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho: *A queda dum anjo* [The Fall of an Angel] (1866) 'plays with the traditional dichotomy of [urban] corruption [...] [versus Portugal's] conservative rural heartland', whereas *Novelas do Minho: um retrato de Portugal* [Novellas of the Minho: A Portrait of Portugal] (1875–77) ironically manipulates *minhoto* traditions, local dialect, archaic aristocratic estates and continuing class-based prejudice.[109] The ideological implications of regional space were, therefore, embryonic at this stage.

Regional spaces, nationalist aspirations

In the late nineteenth century (encompassing the final decades of Portugal's Monarchy), a more precise doctrinal approach to regionalist literature began to crystallize. Alongside the urban/rural dialectical tensions seen in Cesário Verde's poetry (1873–86), and the northern 'neo-Pastoralism' associated with António Nobre's poetic collection *Só* [Alone] (1892/1898), numerous essayists and fiction writers pursued a 'Neo-Romantic' cultural and political nationalism.[110]

For Augusto da Costa Dias, this *Geração de 90* [Generation of 1890] involved an intellectual contradiction between the national and the regionally particular, with any nationalist pretensions dissolved in folkloric imagery and bucolic atavism.[111] Nevertheless, certain literary essays reflect the period's aforementioned consciousness of regional inequalities: Alfredo Cunha and Trindade Coelho's so-called 'manifesto nacionalista' [nationalist manifesto] (1893) instructed authors to 'ir às províncias do país buscar [...] a saúde e o vigor' [go to the country's provinces and fetch health and vigour]; Alberto de Oliveira's *Palavras loucas* [Foolish Words] (1894) called for Lisbon to be culturally sidelined: 'É preciso castigar Lisboa não a fixando na história [...]. Quiz-se fazer passar por Portugal, aos olhos da civilisação' [we must punish Lisbon by removing her from history [...]. She tried to pass for Portugal in the eyes of civilization].[112] Oliveira, described as 'the first theorizer of regionalist literature in Portugal', explicitly defends a regionally based national spirit, encompassing multiple territorial identities and dispositions: 'Portugal é o Minho, o Doiro, as duas Beiras, o Alemtejo, o Algarve. [...]. Cada temperamento escolheria a provincia propria' [Portugal is the Minho, the Douro, the two Beiras, the Alentejo and the Algarve. [...]. Each temperament would choose an appropriate province].[113] Appearing in parallel to this doctrine were the 1890s short stories of Fialho de Almeida (set in the Alentejo) and Trindade Coelho (focusing on Trás-os-Montes) which, despite their distinct degrees of realism, are regarded as precursors to twentieth-century regionalist authors.[114]

A significant publication at the end of this decade was Eça de Queiroz's posthumous *A cidade e as serras* [The City and the Mountains] (1901). While this author was no stranger to geographical stereotypes (as seen in his aforementioned *Os Maias*), the later novel constructs an explicit dialectical tension between urban and rural environments. Readings of this narrative — which depicts the disillusionment of bourgeois protagonists Zé Fernandes and Jacinto with cosmopolitan life in Paris, and their subsequent escape to a simple, relaxed rural existence in a Douro Valley estate — have been conflicted; the novel's positing of oppositional social values, represented by the decadent (and somewhat generic) city and the seemingly idyllic mountains, have been reappraised as ironic and progressively minded.[115] Moreover, there are commonly overlooked regional dimensions to the novel, including its allusions to conservative and absolutist rebellions in the mid-nineteenth-century Entre-Douro-e-Minho, amongst other 'local specificities', all of which posit Eça de Queiroz as a practitioner of ideological regionalism.[116]

Early twentieth-century Portuguese cultural production was characterized, to some degree, by the gradual eclipse of *saudosismo* (a ruralist, nostalgia-oriented literary movement linked to Teixeira de Pascoaes) by Portuguese modernism, predominantly associated with metropolitan, cosmopolitan and futuristic themes, including poetry and fiction by Fernando Pessoa, Mário de Sá-Carneiro and Almada Negreiros.[117] Nonetheless, certain modernist literature and visual arts indicate that it was not an entirely urban phenomenon, such as the ironic bucolism of Alberto Caeiro, Fernando Pessoa's poetic heteronym,[118] and the stark, ominous rural landscapes of Amadeo de Souza Cardoso's paintings, epitomized by his *Título*

desconhecido (Mountains) [*Title Unknown — Mountains*] (1912), which appears on the cover of this monograph. Even so, a number of self-consciously 'regionalist' authors characterized the 1910s and 1920s, therefore being contemporaneous with political regionalisms during the Republic. Alongside the Beira Alta-oriented fiction of Aquilino Ribeiro (to be discussed in Chapter 2), one can highlight regionalist fiction by Manuel de Brito Camacho (Republican minister and later High Commissioner to Mozambique), focused on the Alentejo, by Antero de Figueiredo, concerned with the Minho region, and by Hipólito Raposo (the ultra-traditionalist founder of *Integralismo Lusitano*), whose short stories portray the Beira Baixa.[119] The Terceira-born Vitorino Nemésio's notion of *açorianidade* [Azoreanity], as expressed through his poetry and prose from 1916 onwards, can also be associated with this trend, although, as an 'insular' concept, it is slightly detached from my focus here.[120] Certain scholars, then, highlight a regionalist literary movement in the 1910s and 1920s, judged to have enjoyed near-universal acclaim within Portugal's intellectual elite.[121] In reality, however, it was far more contentious: while the author and Republican politician Jaime Cortesão hyperbolically praised regionalism as '[o] começo de uma nova era da humanidade, uma forma verdadeira do nacionalismo' [the beginning of a new era for humanity, an authentic form of nationalism], it was denounced by Fernando Pessoa as 'uma degeneração gordurosa do nacionalismo' [a greasy debasement of nationalism] and 'uma doença do que não há' [an illness of absence].[122] The movement's problematic reception is epitomized by the public correspondence between the Algarvian José Dias Sancho and José Maria Ferreira de Castro in 1925: although Sancho regarded regionalist fiction as a perennial (and therefore, unarguable) tradition, Ferreira de Castro decried it as a 'pretenciosismo literário' [literary pretentiousness] preoccupied with ethnographic detail, and with little prospect of long-term survival: 'Ele morrerá entre o realismo e o naturalismo [...] asfixiado' [It will die, suffocated, between realism and naturalism].[123] For several eminent authors, then, literary regionalism within Portugal acquired a pejorative meaning, viewed as a limiting, isolating and/or myopic practice.

Akin to the regionalisms articulated by Republican politicians, regionalist novels and short stories from this period are regarded as promoting national unity and patriotism, rather than territorial discord.[124] Nevertheless, the ideological manifestations and implications of this literature were heterogeneous, as Verdelho outlines: 'não há um regionalismo único, com características fixas em todas as latitudes, mas regionalismos vários, com aspectos diversificados, a par de aspectos comuns fundamentais' [there is no single regionalism, with fixed characteristics in all directions, but rather multiple regionalisms, with a range of characteristics, as well as certain fundamental commonalities].[125] Although her statement refers only to early twentieth-century fiction, it rings true for novels published before, during and after the Salazarist regime.

Supporting and/or challenging the pastoral paradigm

As Portugal slid into authoritarianism, the country's regional geography and territorial tropes were politically weaponized in literature that was sponsored and encouraged by the regime, or that was fundamentally opposed to it. The *Estado Novo*'s aforementioned regionalist-nationalist propagandistic projects — which sought to 'strengthen traditional patterns of rural dependence' — were complemented by literary anthologies like the *Antologia da terra portuguesa* [Anthology of the Portuguese Land] (1957–66), a series that 'appeal[ed] to sentiments of nationalism and regional pride'.[126] To further this aim, the dictatorship financially supported *bibliotecas rurais* [rural libraries], *casas do povo* literary magazines, and academics dedicated to examining 'a vida rural' [rural life] in the Portuguese novel, such as António Álvaro Dória.[127] The influence of Salazarist ideology on Dória's work is palpable, particularly in his description of rural existence as 'pitoresca' [picturesque], his praise for 'os defensores do regresso à Igreja' [those that defend a return to the Church] and his denigration of 'literatura revolucionária [...] de carácter retintamente político e panfletário' [revolutionary literature, with a markedly political or pamphlet-like character].[128] Hence, despite considerable levels of illiteracy amongst the Portuguese peasantry (especially in Trás-os-Montes and the Entre-Douro-e-Minho), the authoritarian regime strove to control both the production and consumption of literature relating to regional-rural communities.

Nevertheless, numerous authors of this period deployed regional settings, landscapes and characters in order to fundamentally oppose authoritarian (and/or capitalist) political, social and economic norms, in defiance of government censorship. Miguel Torga's fiction is instructive: he authored several rural short story collections set in his native Trás-os-Montes, notably *Contos da Montanha* [Tales from the Mountain] (1941) and *Novos Contos da Montanha* [New Tales from the Mountain] (1944), as well as the novel *Vindima* [Grape Harvest] (1945), focused on the struggles of harvest workers in Douro Valley wine estates. These rustic narratives, with violent and/or criminal peasant protagonists, clearly contest the idyllic notions of Salazarist discourse.[129] Similar anti-bucolic dynamics can be observed in the Alto Douro short story collection *Contos bárbaros* [Barbarous Tales] (1939), by João de Araújo Correia, while Ferreira de Castro — notwithstanding his previous repudiation of regionalist literature — addressed human and environmental struggles in the Serra da Estrela, through his 1947 novel *A lã e a neve* [The Wool and the Snow].[130]

The most programmatic repudiation of *Estado Novo*-era 'pastoral ideology' came in the form of Portugal's neo-realist literary movement, popular from the late 1930s until the 1950s. With its perception of artistic production as mimetic or reflective of socio-economic realities, Neo-Realism has been linked to the contemporary Soviet Union's 'socialist realism', and to the Brazilian 'northeastern novel', which, in the 1920s and 1930s, drew attention to poverty-stricken inland *sertões* [backlands].[131] Neo-Realism's doctrine is taken to include a descriptive or documentary tone and an anti-individualistic, Marxist-influenced ideological framework, approximating to dialectical materialism.[132] Several authors affiliated with this movement combined their literary commitment with political activism: Alves Redol and Joaquim Soeiro

Pereira Gomes were prominent PCP members, with Redol being arrested for his militancy. While neo-realist fiction's preoccupation with agricultural environments is a commonly identified trope,[133] scholars have interrogated its political use of regionalist dynamics: although, as mentioned, Carlos Reis considers the movement to have dramatically reconfigured regionalism's place in literary production, João Gaspar Simões labels it 'um regionalismo sem regionalismos' [a regionalism without regionalisms] — in other words, an ideologically homogeneous use of regional settings.[134] Neo-Realism's diegetic environments were not monolithic, however: Manuel da Fonseca's *Aldeia nova* [New Village] (1942) and Fernando Namora's *Seara do vento* [Harvest of the Wind] (1958) portray Portugal's inequitable southern *latifundia*; Redol's foundational neo-realist novel *Gaibéus* [Rice Paddy Workers] (1939) concentrates on Ribatejan rice cultivation, defining itself as 'um documentário humano fixado no Ribatejo' [a human documentary focused on the Ribatejo]; Carlos de Oliveira's novels, such as *Casa na duna* [House on the Dune] (1943) and *Uma abelha na chuva* [A Bee in the Rain] (1953), denounce decadent bourgeois landowning families living between Coimbra and Aveiro — a swamp-like territory that the author dubs the 'Gândara'; certain novels by Redol focus on the Douro Valley wine industry, referred to as his *Port wine* cycle.[135] Although certain territories were neglected, most notably the Entre-Douro-e-Minho's *minifundia* estates, possibly due to their smallholding practices that clashed with Neo-Realism's ideological precepts, this movement broke with the prevailing bucolic paradigm to a significant degree, across multiple regional contexts.[136]

Nonetheless, neo-realist literature arguably neglected other socio-political concerns, including the aforementioned 'association of the "natural" with Woman'; Ferreira argues that such literature, operating under the 'implicit banner of Marxist internationalism', encompassed few female authors, and largely reinforced the dominant reactionary sexual politics of the period.[137] The burden of challenging this patriarchal hegemony therefore fell to (middle-class) woman writers, several of whom converted regional geographies into ideological tools. Whereas Maria Lamas's semi-ethnographic *As mulheres do meu país* [The Women of my Country] (1948) maps and denounces the material experiences of peasant women and female industrial workers across distinct regions, Natália Correia's poetry and fiction — particularly *A madona* [The Madonna] (1968) — constructs a radical feminine concept of *matrismo* (a quasi-matriarchal insistence on maternal spiritual ancestry), partly by evoking her 'Azorean island motherland' (São Miguel).[138] The controversial feminist text *Novas cartas portuguesas* [New Portuguese Letters], published by Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa in 1972 and immediately banned, arguably goes further; this book conducts a intersectional critique of inequalities within Salazarist Portugal, on the basis of gender, geographical location, class, employment, education and race.[139]

In the work of certain novelists, though, the relationship between regionalist dynamics and oppositional ideologies (anti-authoritarian; anti-capitalist; anti-patriarchal) is more ambivalent. This is true of the post-1950 novels of Agustina Bessa-Luís (see Chapter 3) and Vergílio Ferreira; both of these authors eschew neo-

realist themes and Marxist-affiliated ideological frameworks, while maintaining a critical, philosophical perspective on socio-economic transformation within Portugal's hinterlands — as indicated in Ferreira's *Alegria breve* [Brief Joy] (1965), which addresses rural depopulation.[140] As Chapter 2 will outline, Aquilino Ribeiro's *Lobos* has been likened to neo-realist fiction, but it firmly rejects Marxist configurations of Beira Alta peasant opposition and revolt. Finally, Almeida Faria's 'Lusitanian tetralogy' novels (1965–83) denounce dictatorial oppression and social injustice affecting Alentejan rural labourers, but, in Machado's view, reject the formulaic ideological and rhetorical templates for which Neo-Realism was criticized.[141] Numerous Portuguese authors opposed to the dictatorship period, then, deviated from programmatic approaches to denouncing regional injustices.

Political geographies in the post-revolutionary novel

The 1974–76 PREC period — characterized by the abolition of censorship and 'an open field of ideological confrontation' within cultural production — transformed Portuguese writers' responses to rapid political, social and economic transformation.[142] Subsequently, post-revolutionary novels' critical exploration and revision of 'national history' is significant, as is the emergence of numerous women writers and new female perspectives during the 1970s and 1980s.[143] What Eduardo Lourenço calls 'a descoberta de um Portugal oculto' [the discovery of a hidden Portugal] following decolonization is apparent in several narratives from the mid-1970s onwards, by Lídia Jorge, Olga Gonçalves, José Saramago and others, whereas Isabel Allegro de Magalhães has identified a certain 'earthiness' — '[t]he expression of a special relation to the earth, to places, to nature and rhythms — in Maria Gabriela Llansol, Maria Velho da Costa and Hélia Correia, amongst other women writers.[144] Correia's *O número dos vivos* [The Number of Survivors] (1982) and *Montedemo* [Demon's Mountain] (1983), for instance, denounce the patriarchal oppression of women residing in 'unchanging [...] peasant communit[ies]' in Mafra, and on Portugal's Atlantic coast.[145]

Maria Alzira Seixo, extrapolating from Carlos de Oliveira's *Finisterra* (1978), Lídia Jorge's *O cais das merendas* [Picnic Quay] (1982) and José Saramago's *Memorial do convento* [*Baltasar and Blimunda*] (1982), contends that male and female novelists of this period elevated 'a terra' [land] from the secondary status of background to a fundamental diegetic (and, therefore, ideological) element: 'É como se tivesse passado a ter sentido *escrever a terra* em vez de *escrever sobre a terra*: [...] a terra passou a ser uma espécie de objecto primeiro ou mesmo de sujeito irradiador' [It is as if authors have gone from *writing the land* instead of *writing about the land*: [...]: land has become a kind of principal object, or even a radiating subject].[146] Although Seixo's contention that pre-1974 novels that pre-1974 novels only wrote 'about the land' is debatable, she astutely posits regional spaces and communities as central to post-revolutionary literary ideologies. Similarly, Helena Kaufman regards 'regional divisions' as one of several 'zones of the minor' (alongside 'class and gender differences') explored in 1980s novels by Jorge and Saramago, which 'privilege fragmentation, particularity, locality, anti-authoritarian and anti-author centered

discourses'.[147] On similar grounds, *Gente feliz com lágrimas* [Happy People in Tears] (1988), by the Azorean author João de Melo, combines anti-Salazarist denunciation, a focus on regional isolation and marginalization (within São Miguel), and eco-critical commentary on the Azores' unique climate conditions.[148]

From the 1990s onwards, issues like neo-liberal globalization, rural depopulation and anti-racist consciousness have increasingly informed narrative depictions of regional space. Besides Saramago's *A caverna* (2000) — which, as Chapter 4 will outline, critiques late capitalist geographical transformation — Mário de Carvalho's 2003 novel *Fantasia para dois coronéis e uma piscina* [Fantasy for Two Colonels and a Swimming Pool] has been noted for its critique of the 'new rurality', with former Alentejan *latifundia* now presented as 'place[s] of leisure' and of rustic tourism: a mode that some might regard as 'post-pastoral'.[149] Concurrently, Jorge's *O vento assobiando nas gruas* [The Wind Whistling in the Cranes] (2002) depicts the encroachment of large-scale construction projects in the coastal Algarve, while also developing a post-colonial critique: a multi-generational family of Cape Verdean immigrants is 'incarcerated' within poor quality, ghetto-like housing, which the protagonist's family seeks to demolish for real estate interests (although such marginalization is more typical of Greater Lisbon than the Algarvian coast).[150] Valter Hugo Mãe's twenty-first-century novels, such as *O nosso reino* [Our Kingdom] (2004), have also been highlighted for depicting unusual rural environments, featuring returning emigrants and located on a liminal plane between the past and present.[151] As a post-script, it is important to note recent poetry that critically revaluates nostalgic rustic stereotypes: the northern author Rui Lage, in such works as *Corvo* [Raven] (2008), *Estrada nacional* [National Highway] (2016) and *Portugal possível* [Possible Portugal] (2022), sardonically (and eco-critically) questions preconceptions of demographic decline, rural 'death' and desertification.[152]

To summarize this history of regionalisms, Portuguese literature (particularly the novel), from the late nineteenth century onwards, has adopted regional geography and geographical dynamics as a key ingredient within wider ideological discourses. Although the tone and purpose of these ideological regionalisms have varied according to each author's political outlook, their manipulation of regional landscapes and communities to explore and/or critique wider socio-political issues can be detected in novels written across multiple regimes. As the subsequent three chapters will argue, novels by Aquilino Ribeiro, Agustina Bessa-Luís, Lídia Jorge and José Saramago demonstrate a breadth and variety of ideological projects in which regional space is fundamental, as well as certain thematic and aesthetic commonalities between these writers' conceptions of regional space.

Notes to Chapter 1

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3. See, for instance, Maria Fernanda Alegria, José Afonso Teixeira and Jorge Umbelino, 'Norte/sul e litoral/interior: duas divisões dicotómicas de Portugal continental', *Finisterra*, 25.49 (1990), 5–56.
4. Tom Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth Century Interpretation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p. 1.
5. Pina-Cabral, 'Sociocultural Differentiation and Regional Identity in Portugal', pp. 11–12.
6. Douglas L. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal: A Political History, 1910–1926* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp. 5–6, 19.
7. A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. II: *From Empire to Corporate State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 120; David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 128.
8. Gallagher, 'Peasant Conservatism in an Agrarian Setting: Portugal, 1900–1975', *Iberian Studies*, 6.2 (1977), 58–68; Manuel Carlos Silva, 'Camponeses nortenhos: "conservadorismo" ou estratégias de sobrevivência, mobilidade e resistência?', *Análise social*, 23.97 (1987), 407–45; Pina-Cabral, 'Paved Roads and Enchanted Mooresses: The Perception of the Past among the Peasant Population of the Alto Minho', *Man*, 22.4 (1987), 715–35 (pp. 725–26).
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12. Silva, 'Camponeses nortenhos', p. 425.
13. Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth-Century Interpretation*, p. 16; Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, pp. 7–8.
14. Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth-Century Interpretation*, p. 16; Priberam dicionário, 'cacique', *Priberam dicionário*, 2021, <https://dicionario.priberam.org/cacique> [accessed 18 January 2024].
15. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, p. 27; Daniel Melo, 'O lugar das propostas descentralizadoras e autonomistas na reinvenção de Portugal', in *Representações da República*, ed. by Luís Manuel Bernardo, Leonor Santa Bárbara and Luís Andrade (Vila Nova de Famalicão: Edições Húmus, 2013), pp. 765–78 (p. 770).
16. Rui Ramos, Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa and Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, *História de Portugal* (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2009), pp. 582–83.
17. Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, p. 151; Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth-Century Interpretation*, p. 23.
18. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, p. 156; Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth-Century Interpretation*, p. 23.
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22. Melo, 'O lugar das propostas descentralizadoras', p. 768.
23. Ibid., p. 766.
24. Cordeiro, *Nacionalismo, regionalismo e autoritarismo*, pp. 220–21.
25. Melo, 'O lugar das propostas descentralizadoras', p. 770.
26. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, pp. 196–97.
27. Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. II, p. 131; Nancy Gina Bermeo, *The Revolution within the Revolution: Workers' Control in Rural Portugal* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 26.
28. Gallagher, 'Peasant Conservatism in an Agrarian Setting', p. 61; Ricardo Alves, 'Fátima e a transformação do catolicismo português', *República e laicidade*, 2008, <https://www.laicidade.org/documentos/republicanismo/fatima/> [accessed 19 January 2024].
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34. Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth-Century Interpretation*, p. 35; Ventura, 'Centralismo e regionalismo', p. 116.
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37. António de Oliveira Salazar, cit. in Fernando Rosas, 'O salazarismo e o homem novo: ensaio sobre o Estado Novo e a questão do totalitarismo', *Análise social*, 35.157 (2001), 1031–54 (p. 1036).
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39. José António dos Santos, *Regionalização e regionalismo: perspectiva histórica e geográfica* (Braga: Livraria Cruz, 1984), p. 30; Ventura, 'Centralismo e regionalismo', p. 116; Fernando Catroga, 'Geografia e política: a querela da divisão provincial na I República e no Estado Novo', in *O poder local em tempo de globalização*, ed. by Fernando Taveira da Fonseca (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 2005), pp. 171–242 (p. 216).
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44. Melo, *Salazarismo e cultura popular*, pp. 219–21; Patrícia Vieira, 'The Nature of Portuguese Cinema: Environment on the Silver Screen', *Journal of Lusophone Studies*, 2.1 (2017), 112–33 (pp. 116–21). As Vieira notes, however, later Portuguese films were more critical of this bucolic paradigm, particularly *Novo Cinema* [New Cinema] of the 1960s. See Ibid., pp. 126–27.
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52. Herlander Machado, *Regionalismo e nacionalismo* (Lisbon: Manuel A. Pacheco, 1961), p. 15.
53. Maria Elisa Oliveira da Silva, 'Estado, território, população: as ideias, as políticas e as técnicas de colonização interna no Estado Novo' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Lisbon, 2020).
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Revolution in Northern Portugal', in *Contemporary Portugal*, ed. by Graham and Makler, pp. 281–98 (p. 285).
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CHAPTER 2

❖

'A cheap rebellion': Aquilino Ribeiro's Ambivalent Regional Resistance

Quando o homem
diz a terra e a permite
a confirma
resiste
e entreabre

[When a man
speaks of the land and permits it
he confirms it
he resists it
and opens it ajar][1]

— Maria Teresa Horta

Aquilino Ribeiro (1885–1963) has long been respected as a canonical author in Portugal, during his lifetime and after his death, leading to his interment within Lisbon's National Pantheon in 2007. Ribeiro's fiction, commencing with the short story collection *Jardim das tormentas* [*Garden of Storms*] (1913) and concluding fifty years later with *Casa do escorpião* [*The Scorpion's House*] (1963), encompasses a multitude of novellas, *crónicas* [columns], short stories and novels, including *Terras do demo* [*The Demon's Lands*] (1919), *Faunos* (1926), *A casa grande de Romarigães* [*The Mansion of Romarigães*] (1957) and *Lobos* (1958). Although some of his works are located in urban environments, he is commonly regarded in Portuguese literary criticism and in the nation's collective imagination as a 'regionalist', who brought the landscapes, language and agricultural communities of his native Beira Alta region (particularly the Serra da Nave and Serra da Lapa highlands) into representation.[2] At the same time, Ribeiro's political interventions and activism have been well documented, including his association with violent Republican activists in 1908 before fleeing to Paris in exile, his participation in armed attempts to overthrow the *Ditadura Nacional* in 1927, and his public support in the late 1940s and 1950s for the *Movimento de Unidade Democrática* [Democratic Unity Movement] which sought the demise of the *Estado Novo*.[3]

On that basis, scholars have debated the ideological significance (or insignificance) of Ribeiro's fiction: on the one hand, Henrique Almeida has cautioned against arbitrarily searching for thematic and ideological references that might corroborate the author's status as an 'enfant terrible', while Salazar pointedly separated Ribeiro's 'oppositional' political activity from his 'great' literary production in public remarks: 'É um inimigo do regime. Dir-lhe-á mal de mim, mas não importa: é um grande escritor' [He's an enemy of the regime. He'll speak badly of me to you, but it doesn't matter: he's a great writer].[4] Clearly, such conscious (and unconscious) attempts to minimize the ideological contribution to Ribeiro's novels are problematic; they stifle anti-Salazarist readings of his work and seek to 'tame' the author in political terms. On the other hand, Luís Vidigal posits Ribeiro as a politically engaged novelist, listing ecological awareness, aversion to State control and egalitarianism as key Aquilinian themes.[5] This position is more helpful, but it fails to consider how Ribeiro's literary regionalism and his novels' ideologies might be intrinsically linked to one another; I would venture that superficial and *non-political* definitions of the term 'regionalist' have repeatedly hindered readings of Ribeiro's literature through an ideological lens. To that end, Alfredo Margarido has described Ribeiro's regionalism as ideological *praxis*, stating that 'parte ele da convicção, prático-teórica, de que a unidade mínima da organização social portuguesa é constituída pela aldeia' [it departs from the practical-theoretical conviction that the smallest unit of social organization in Portugal encompasses the village].[6] This observation is both productive and double-edged; although Ribeiro's 'sordid peasant provincialism' (according to Álvaro Domingues) contrasts sharply with the *Estado Novo*'s idealized and folkloric portrayals of the rural populace, the novelist and the regime occasionally shared a certain 'ruralizing ideology', when positing the rustic *aldeia* [village] as central to the Portuguese national imaginary.[7] Building on this scholarship, the present chapter will argue that Ribeiro's novels express and explore pertinent socio-political concerns not *in parallel to* their regional settings, but *through* their treatment of regional environments and regionalist dynamics. Moreover, it will examine the dialectical friction within Ribeiro's narratives between idyllic, romanticized views of the Beira Alta and a markedly anti-bucolic, transgressive discourse.

Accordingly, one should outline a uniquely 'Aquilinian' literary and ideological understanding of regionalism, as a tool for analysing *Faunos* and *Lobos*. Ribeiro's *Terras do demo*, for instance, emphasizes the wild isolation of his Beira Alta birthplace: 'nunca Cristo ali rompeu as sandálias, passou el-rei a caçar ou os apóstolos da Igualdade em propaganda. Bárbaras e agrestes, mercê apenas do seu individualismo se têm mantido, sem perdas nem lucros, à margem da civilização' [Christ never ventured there in his sandals, nor did the King ever pass by on a hunt, nor did the preachers of Equality spread their propaganda there. Savage and wild, only by virtue of their individualism have these people kept themselves, without loss or favour, detached from the civilized world].[8] Decades later, however, Ribeiro would repudiate literary regionalism operating on purely linguistic terms: 'Fazer literatura regionalista é descrever a região com os modismos de linguagem, formas

dialectais ou corruptelas' [To create regionalist literature is to describe the region through linguistic fads, dialects or bastardizations].[9] Further, the author rejects both nineteenth-century 'bucolism' and twentieth-century 'regionalist' aesthetic tendencies ('Ambos os conceitos são a meu ver destituídos de valor imanente' [in my view, both of these concepts lack immanence]), and he questions the viability of regionalist cultural production in a country as (seemingly) homogeneous as Portugal: 'se existe um regionalismo francês ou germânico [...], pode havê-lo num país como o nosso, todo do mesmo cerne[?]' [if there is such a thing as a French or German regionalism [...], could one exist in a country like ours, which has the same core throughout?].[10] Ideologically speaking, Ribeiro derides populist (i.e. neo-realist) fiction for focusing too narrowly on class politics ('o populista não compreende que a literatura discorra sobre outro tema que não seja as misérias da plebe' [the populist cannot conceive of a literature that focuses on something other than poverty faced by the common people], and simultaneously critiques contemporary regionalist writers for legitimizing the regime's discourse: 'o que se pretendia era traduzir nos figurantes da literatura regionalista os reflexos da doutrina e graça de Deus. [...] haviam de ser conformes com a cartilha, sem deixar de sê-lo com o folclore e com a moral política, a reinante' [their aim was to reflect and translate the doctrine and grace of God into cameo characters in regionalist literature. [...] they had to comply with the primer book, as well as folklore and ruling political morals].[11] Here, the reader has clear evidence that, even if Ribeiro's work has been linked to the *Estado Novo*'s 'pastoral ideology', that was not the novelist's intention.

Even so, the author's reflections demonstrate two significant facets of Ribeiro's ideological regionalism, as seen in *Faunos* and *Lobos*: (a) his belief that excessive attention to aesthetic descriptions and linguistic peculiarities results in insufficient, inauthentic and shallow renderings of Portugal's regional communities; (b) his rejection of 'rustic bucolism', resulting in depictions of the Beira Alta *serras* as a battlefield and politically contested *locus* (although not in a Marxist understanding of rural territory, as a means of production). In addition, two self-evidently ideological statements that Ribeiro expressed in his final years are pertinent, and will guide this chapter's literary analysis. The first is the novelist's ironic confession, in a 1957 interview, that 'Fui sempre rebelde, mais ou menos; uma rebeldia barata' [I've always been a rebel, more or less; a cheap rebellion]; the second is a remark within his (posthumous) autobiography that 'Para um homem ser revolucionário numas coisas tem simultaneamente que ser conservador noutras' [For a man to be revolutionary in some ways, he must be simultaneously conservative in others].[12] Although such utterances might be viewed as superficially compliant with the *Estado Novo*'s reactionary socio-political discourse, both of these comments hint at internal tensions and potential inconsistencies within the author's ideological outlook, between 'conservative' and 'radical' conceptions of resistance against centralizing and/or authoritarian institutions. Accordingly, this chapter will examine the extent to which such contradictions coexist within Ribeiro's spatialized ideologies.

Before examining these dynamics in *Faunos* and *Lobos*, though, some theoretical considerations are necessary. If 'conservatism' can be described as 'the quality of

not usually liking or trusting change, especially sudden change',[13] then these two novels reflect this definition. Nevertheless, the conservative aspects of Ribeiro's narratives link to broader political arguments about rustic communities: to quote Eric Hobsbawm's comments on peasant politicization, 'the difference is not one between "traditional" societies "without politics" and "modern" ones with politics. There is politics in both'.[14] Although, in some respects, Ribeiro's *serrano* [highland] characters appear engaged in a struggle 'for adjustment of the old, [...] [for] the defence of the traditional society against some threat or the restoration of the old ways', these narratives also suggest that ' "[t]raditional" societies are not static and unchanging, exempt from historic change and evolution, nor is there a single model of "modernisation" which determines their transformation'.[15] On the one hand, these novels repeatedly evoke an emotion akin to Tuan's 'topophilia' — 'the affective bond between people and [circumscribed] place or setting' — which could be interpreted as atavistic to a certain degree (or certainly presented as such).[16] On the other hand, Ribeiro's nostalgic allusions to rural existence and to anxieties of loss (especially in *Lobos*) can be understood in progressive and 'radical' (albeit non-Marxist) terms. This becomes particularly evident when one considers Alastair Bonnett's comments on the radical potential of nostalgia: 'The radical eye is often represented as looking beyond "backward villages" and "dirty old towns" to the gleaming modern vistas of tomorrow. Yet it is within the old places, the real places, [...], that narratives of popular identity [...] are found and admired'.[17] While the 'radicalism' articulated in *Faunos* and *Lobos* rejects Marxist revolutionary doctrine, there is a clear awareness — particularly in the latter case — that modernizing impulses should be resisted when these are (a) non-consensual and (b) imposed by centripetal, fascist political institutions. This assertion, in turn, supports anti-colonial readings of the novels, insofar as they critique *internal* and *external* colonization processes during Portugal's twentieth-century imperial enterprise; Ribeiro, like Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, evokes 'structures of location and geographical reference [...] that are not otherwise connected to one another or to an official ideology of "empire" '.[18] Although this final argument is more subliminal, it cannot be disregarded with regards to Ribeiro's novels from 1926 and 1958.

Hence, I shall posit *Faunos* and *Lobos* as 'ideologically regionalist' novels, on two accounts. Departing from Frank Davey's discrimination between 'visible regionalisms' and regionalisms that '[convert] geography into a sign that can conceal the presence of ideology', I shall argue that the regionalist aspects of these two narratives are firmly ideological, on both *explicit* and *implicit* levels.[19] In the following sections on *Faunos* and *Lobos*, I will contend that these novels *openly* lampoon and contest the dominance and interference of religious and political authorities within regional communities (and, by extension, colonized populations). Additionally, I will note that these two narratives contain more subtle political critiques, which reveal themselves through close readings of their diegetic environments (and the *serrano* characters' relationship with those landscapes), including seemingly bucolic passages that, upon closer inspection, approximate to denouncement or parody

of hegemonic discourses. Overall, I will demonstrate that Ribeiro's supposedly 'cheap' literary rebellion advances a powerful, mutually reinforcing relationship between regional (Beira Alta) diegetic environments and their 'resistant' ideological messages, both of which occupy a liminal space between *atavism* and *radicalism*.

Fauns (and Demons) in the Hills: *Andam faunos pelos bosques*

In November 1926, mere months after the *coup d'état* that ended Portugal's First Republic, Ribeiro published *Faunos*, set within villages scattered throughout the Serra da Nave and Serra da Lapa highlands. The plot revolves around a series of unexplained local events: it commences as Abbot Padre Jesuíno's attention is called to the apparent rape of shepherdess Micas Olaia, at the hands of a mysterious 'creature' roaming the highlands. Subsequently, more reports emerge in the surrounding villages of peasant girls seemingly losing their virginity to this unknown figure. In parallel, the romantic liaisons in the highlands between certain priests (such as Padre Teodoro) and local girls are detailed. When appeals to political and religious authorities to address the problem are ignored, priests from the surrounding parishes anxiously seek solutions and local citizen Pedro Jirigodes coordinates an armed hunt for the perpetrator among the highlands, involving hundreds of peasants from different villages in the vicinity. When this expedition fails to identify the rapist, Jirigodes attempts a smaller stakeout with himself and the local 'madman' Baltasar, who sleeps in what he regards as the 'sacred mountains'; following an argument, Jirigodes kills Baltasar and abandons his body. Meanwhile, another priest Padre Dâmaso discovers in his churchyard what appears to be a 'cult' of *serrano* men and 'deflowered' girls worshipping the unidentified being ('o *Inefável*' [the unspeakable one]), which they believe to be imbued with divine significance. Eventually, with no success in unmasking or stopping the predator, the nearest Bishop organizes a synod in Viseu (the regional capital), to be attended by all the clergy serving in highland areas affected by this phenomenon. At this meeting, theological debate abounds regarding these events; while one parish priest, Padre Moura Seco, claims that these occurrences are the work of 'fauns', Padre Dâmaso affirms that 'demons' have invaded the highlands. The conclusion of the synod, however, is that *both* of these mythical creatures are involved; the rapes are deemed to be the consequence of human 'instinct' and lust which has spread across the region. At the narrative's end, Padre Dâmaso, having been cured of his naïve perceptions of human behaviour, finally submits to his own lust for the house's servant girl, Silvana.

Several scholars have addressed this novel's insistence on regional identity: according to David Mourão-Ferreira, *Faunos* defends 'continentalidade' [continentality] and inland space, against the *maritime* or *oceanic* imagery commonly associated with Portuguese national identity (as seen in literary epics like Luís de Camões's *Os Lusíadas*).[20] Other critics, such as Rui Lage, have highlighted this narrative's ironic (and erotic) inversion of the Arcadian ideal and of Catholic doctrine, and the role that priests and politicians play within this novel

in controlling, repressing and distorting a 'bondade primordial' [primordial goodness].[21] Building on these observations, my reading of *Faunos* will address the inextricable relationship between this novel's political critiques and its ideological deployment of a Beira Alta diegetic environment. Specifically, I will outline the narrative's satirical treatment of governmental and ecclesiastical authorities within a regional setting, and its destabilization of the precepts on which prevailing Catholic doctrine rests, through the Beira Alta priests' contradictory attitudes towards tradition and modernity. I will then examine the novel's ambivalent treatment of regional (highland) landscapes, which simultaneously lampoons bucolic aestheticism and evokes topophilic attachment (and, potentially, atavism). Therein lies Ribeiro's regionalist rub, which veers unpredictably between *conservatism* and *radicalism*.

'The State and the Church': visible ideology

Firstly, it will be important to outline the *explicit* instances of ideological critique contained within *Faunos*, beginning with the novel's unflattering treatment of regional and national political authorities. This disdainful tone is evidenced by the narrator's reference to local political office holders as 'regedores patudos' [big-pawed justices of the peace], and to Padre Dâmaso's father as a despised local official: 'O pai dele era um homenzinho de Foz Coa, meio ajudante de escrivão, meio beleguim, destes párias das vilas, que vivem a esburgar os ossos que lhes largam os gordos burocratas' [His father was a little man from Foz Coa, half clerical aide, half bailiff; one of those small-town outcasts that survive by picking the bones thrown to them by fat bureaucrats].[22] Moreover, specific incidents within the diegesis critique the indifference that Portugal's governing institutions exhibit towards localized circumstances facing the Beira Alta's highland villages. This is apparent in the highlanders' failed attempts to secure outside assistance in tracking down the highland rapist, as narrated through an evidently ironic tone: 'Em sua tribulação, apelou o serrano para os homens da governança e santos bons advogados. Dos primeiros, alguns responderam por chalaça; dos celestes patronos, em despeito de reiterados votos e rogativas, nenhum se dignara ainda responder à deprecada' [In their plight, the highlanders appealed to those men in government and to the good and holy lawyers. From the first group, some replied in jest; from the holy advocates, despite repeated prayers and entreaties, none had even bothered to respond to their petition].[23] The unhelpful reaction of the authorities — ridicule and silence — is depicted as geographically circumscribed, but also widespread; the collective, non-inflected noun 'o serrano' suggests a common pattern throughout the region.

Simultaneously, *Faunos* satirizes the aforementioned *caciquismo* that was common in early twentieth-century Portuguese politics, although, curiously, the author denounces such clientelistic practices through the activities of local Catholic clergymen rather than through representatives of the political class.[24] Specifically, the reader observes the unusual *serrano* custom of parish priests being *elected* by their parishioners, leading to bitter rivalries between opposing camps of corrupt clergymen, as evidenced by Padre Jesuíno's rant to Padre Teodoro about a previous

election: 'Tivemos as eleições da paróquia, [...], e o homem, espicaçado [por] [...] um títere que ocupa uma cadeira vitalícia em S. Bento e foi duas vezes ministro, quando noutro país não chegaria sequer à craveira de contínuo, aparece-me arvorado em cacique' [We had Parish Council elections [...], and that man, spurred on by [...] a puppet who has a seat for life in São Bento and has twice been a minister, when in any other country he wouldn't even keep his seat, suddenly arrived promoted to a *cacique*].[25] In these explicit references to 'safe seats' in the Portuguese parliament, and to the existence of 'caciques', *Faunos* equates Lisbon-based, seemingly corrupt national political institutions with the Catholic Church's 'spiritual authority', within a highly localized diegetic environment. While the Catholic clergy might be viewed as superimposing itself onto civilian institutions here,[26] it would be more accurate to describe the relationship between Church and State as a partnership of equals, in which religious and political leaders regularly collaborate. Thus, Ribeiro gestures towards an actual (or perceived) state of affairs that transcends both the novel's regional setting and the Portuguese national context; the author's critique of the Beira Alta corresponds to confessional states or established churches on a transnational level.

This conflation of the two authorities is highlighted in the Viseu synod scene, when a priest remarks: '[Esta situação] [e]xige a acção combinada da lei e da moral, que é o mesmo que dizer, do Estado e da Igreja' [this situation demands that the law and morality — which is the same as saying the State and the Church — work together].[27] Such comments can be read as an *exposé* of theocratic tendencies and excessive Catholic influence within central and northern inland communities and, accordingly, as an approval of secularist policies pursued by Republican politicians at a national level (as mentioned in Chapter 1). Moreover, the narrative's treatment of peasant reactions to the mysterious highland predator reveals a sardonic attitude towards contemporary religious 'occurrences' elsewhere in rural Portugal. Specifically, Maria da Encarnação's interpretation of the *Inefável* figure as a holy sign ('O eleito do Senhor abriu-me os braços e em seu seio amoroso santificou-me' [the Lord's chosen one opened his arms to me and sanctified me in his loving bosom])[28] functions as an eroticized parody of the 1917 *Milagre do Sol* in Fátima, and of the Catholic Church's political instrumentalization of said 'miracle'. Given that, as outlined earlier, the Fátima affair was incorporated into Catholic doctrine and heavily publicized for decades afterwards, it is highly possible that a Portuguese or international reader would have interpreted Maria da Encarnação's remarks (alongside this character's name) as a sexualized pastiche of the supposed apparition of the Virgin Mary.

As António Manuel Fernandes notes, though, while *Faunos* lampoons early twentieth-century provincial clergymen in some respects, it is not a simplistic anticlerical *roman à thèse*.[29] Indeed, Ribeiro's preface to the novel indicates a realistic (rather than hostile) perception of Beira Alta clerical figures: 'Não me digam que são devassos ou pagãos; são sacerdotes de Cristo, dignos sacerdotes dentro da lei natural, com lisura e singeleza [Don't tell me that they are libertines or pagans: they are Christ's priests, worthy, honest and simple priests obeying

natural law].[30] Thus, the author defends *Faunos*'s provincial clergymen and stresses their *plausibity*, in anticipation of potential ecclesiastical objections. Concurrently, the author's allusion to 'natural law' depicts the Catholic priests' submission to sexual desire as *inevitable*, thereby positing clerical vows of celibacy as nonsensical or hypocritical. Indeed, Ribeiro's comment that his fictional clergymen should not be regarded as 'pagans' produces ideological ambiguity, as to whether Catholicism and its competing spiritual practices represent social modernization or anachronism. Turning the widespread equation of non-Catholic belief with Paganism on its head, the author critiques the significant cultural and social (rather than theistic) influence of Catholic institutions within remote peasant communities, in Portugal and more broadly.

Accordingly, one observes the coexistence of Catholic and 'paganistic' practices that is frequent in Ribeiro's fiction,[31] although this relationship is somewhat antagonistic in *Faunos*. Padre Dâmaso, for instance, fiercely denounces local religious practices that do not align with traditionalist Catholic doctrine, such as the aforementioned voting system used to elect parish priests within the highland villages: 'Votos como este da Penha do Vouga, para lá dos limites da freguesia, deviam ser abatidos nas Constituições do Bispado. São uma sobrevivência pagã, fonte só de libertinagem' [Votes like these in Penha do Vouga, beyond the parish borders, should be removed from the Diocese Constitutions. They are but a remnant of paganism, a source of licentiousness].[32] Dâmaso's remarks here reveal his efforts to delegitimize local democratic participation, as an outdated (indeed, *primitive*) exercise, while Padre Teodoro replies that this 'tradição veneranda' [revered tradition] of semi-political suffrage has the ability to enthuse and 'rejuvenate' the *serra*'s 'isolated' villages: '[Estes votos] [t]êm uma coisa a recomendá-los: serem uma digressão, insuflarem um pouco de ar novo à vida destes povos, encurralados entre montes' [These votes have something to be said for them: they are a distraction; they blow a little fresh air into the lives of these folk, penned in by the mountains].[33] Teodoro's assertion can be read as double-edged, however, in his eagerness to entertain the local peasantry, about which, incidentally, he is rather condescending.

This battle for hearts and minds between Catholic doctrine and paganistic vestiges resurfaces at the end of the diegesis, when Dâmaso ponders the conclusions reached at the Viseu synod, and their wider implications for the institution that he represents:

> Repontava do horizonte, no ciclo sem fim das coisas, a era pagã, a era do instinto. [...]. [A] religião dominava ainda [...]; mas dominava em cérebros e não em corações. Era uma sobrevivência, atitude ou rotina, roble sem ter húmus onde mergulhar as raízes.
>
> [Beckoning from the horizon, in the endless cycle of things, was the age of paganism, the age of instinct. [...]. Religion still ruled [...]; but it ruled in heads, not in hearts. It was a surviving residue, mindset or routine, an oak tree without humus into which it could plunge its roots].[34]

This passage suggests a reversal of the priest's previous position, in that organized religion is now regarded as a relic, still in a position of control but on a cerebral

level rather than an emotional one. Simultaneously, Dâmaso believes a 'pagan era' of 'human instinct' to be dawning, which is posited as a 'resurgent', cyclical return to a primordial period. At the heart of these competing claims of 'backwardness' within the Beira Alta lies a deeper struggle between the entities that Catholicism and Paganism represent in this novel: tradition versus modernity, and theocracy versus democracy. In effect, Ribeiro's fluctuating portrayals of these two belief systems destabilizes a fundamental assumption held by Portugal's Catholic establishment of the time, regarding the country's inland rural communities: that peasant 'conservatism' and adherence to ritualistic 'anachronisms' was socially and politically desirable. Subsequent observers of religious and political trends in inland Portugal attest to this continuing anxiety in the twenty-first century, in that both 'secular humanism', and Christian faith at a 'local rather than doctrinal level', represent a clear challenge to Catholic Church hegemony.[35]

Indeed, the clergy's preconceptions of *beirão* 'backwardness', 'isolation' and moral 'purity' are lampooned at several points in the diegesis, beginning with the priests' concerns in Chapter 3, regarding the sexual depravity that they believe to have polluted the area: 'o espírito de imundície que corria à solta pelos andurriais da Nave' [the spirit of filth that was running wild through the godforsaken paths of the Nave].[36] These complaints that a previously virtuous corner of the country has been contaminated with immorality are voiced most vociferously by the priests at the Viseu synod: 'Se Satanás [...] era príncipe do mundo, e possuía o dom da ubiquidade, admirava que o seu casco de bode calcasse terrinhas que não têm história nem vêm nos mapas?' [If Satan was the Prince of the World, and had the gift of omnipresence, was it surprising that his cloven hooves might ride over little lands that have no history or place on the map?].[37] This comment clearly exhibits prevailing stereotypes pertaining to Beira Alta highland villages (and more broadly, to inland communities in other regions): that they are places of little national interest or political significance, which are nevertheless permeable to moral corruption if left unmonitored or bereft of clerical guidance. With this paradigm established, I shall now outline the ways in which *Faunos* challenges such preconceptions through its 'concealed' ideological messaging.

'Nature seemed to keep a sacred silence': concealed ideologies

To this end, I will examine the more subtle 'regionalist' ideological dynamics of *Faunos*, with specific reference to Ribeiro's portrayal of a Beira Alta highland diegetic environment. On the one hand, the narrative can be read as a critique of bucolic aestheticism, in its ironic rendering of 'natural' exoticism and its depiction of the *serra* landscape as a violent battlefield. On the other hand, if one examines the narrative's landscape descriptions, the characterization of specific protagonists, and Ribeiro's own comments in the preface, a level of topophilic sentiment is evinced which, while clearly rejecting the romanticized and idealized imagery of much contemporary regionalist fiction, nevertheless emphasizes the *significance* of Beira Alta peasant communities.

Firstly, *Faunos* contains passages that destabilize bucolic imagery, as Ribeiro's detailed environmental descriptions in Chapter 1 demonstrate. Specifically, the idyllic passage 'milagre do ar puríssimo, ouviu-se o chocalho dos rebanhos badalejando longe [...]; [...] [e] o doce solilóquio do ermo' [amongst this miraculous and purest air, one could hear the rattle of cattle bells ringing in the distance [...]; and the sweet soliloquy of the wilderness] is preceded by a more ambivalent one: 'Gemia um carro lá longe e parecia naquele gemer vibrar toda a melancólica languidez do crepúsculo. [...]. Voluntariamente, parecia guardar a natureza religioso e grato silêncio' [a car groaned in the distance and, in that groan, all the melancholy languor of the twilight seemed to pulsate. [...]. Nature seemed, deliberately, to keep a sacred and pleasant silence].[38] In this excerpt, Ribeiro's reference to the twilight's 'melancólica languidez' [melancholy languor] can be read as a foreboding pathetic fallacy or, alternatively, as suggestive of a lethargic, depressing atmosphere. Above all, the author's repetition of 'parecia' [seemed] gestures towards a bucolic *appearance* that masks a harsher reality, whereas the verb 'guardar' [to keep] in the second excerpt suggests the concealing of a secret truth under a veneer of silence. From its opening chapter, then, *Faunos* questions 'pastoral' expectations of regionalist literature via its ambiguous depictions of the Beira Alta landscape.

More systematically, Ribeiro's narrative associates bucolic natural imagery with the sexual objectification and voyeuristic observation of Beira Alta peasant women. This is evident from the opening chapter, when the narrator directly links Padre Jesuíno's lust for rural girls (in this case, Micas Olaia) with the idyllic view from his balcony: 'Jesuíno retirou os olhos do panorama encantado. E, saudoso dos bons tempos, quando moças novas e fagueiras o escoltavam para as romarias, [...], foi esconjurar o Demónio do seio mimoso da zagala' [Jesuíno took his eyes away from the delightful panoramic view. And, longing for those good times when sweet young girls would escort him to the festivities, [...] he went to banish the Devil from the shepherdess's delicate bosom].[39] Here, the priest's thought association between his beautiful rustic vistas, memories of attractive peasant girls from years past, and Micas Olaia's breasts clearly equates aesthetic appreciation of the highland landscape with sexualization of the female body. This fetishistic paradigm is sustained in the following chapter, which describes various village communities marching towards the highlands, and directly compares the blooming of mountainous plants with the 'flowering' of pale young girls: 'às vezes, como desopilação da natureza, floria mocinha, mais branca e graciosa que açucena num tojal' [sometimes, like a sigh of relief from nature, a young girl would bloom who was whiter and more graceful than a lily on a gorse bush].[40] This bucolic (and highly problematic) portrayal of female highlanders is most clearly articulated during Padre Teodoro's assignation with his lover Leopoldina in a forest clearing, during which the narrator associates the priest's yearning for her body with the fragrant *flora* and fertile soil surrounding them:

> Espojaram-se, na cabeleira farta, luxuriosa de todos os rescendores que exala a terra: erva-maria, alfazema, amentilhos de soutos, dum odor quase genésico, feno cortado que derrama aquele perfume de amêndoas, especial das bocas

> lascivas, saudáveis. Por muito, muito tempo, os olhos dele deliraram com o espectáculo delicioso.
>
> [They laid down together in the lush and lustful grass, which gave out all manner of magnificent earthly smells: wormseed, lavender, woodland catkins with an almost primordial odour, and that freshly cut hay fragrance of almonds, a favourite of healthy and desiring mouths. For a long, long time, his eyes remained delirious, fixed on the delicious spectacle before him.][41]

This chapter is, as José Carlos Seabra Pereira suggests, a moment in the diegesis when idyllic natural imagery is fused with erotic desire; Teodoro's 'delicious spectacle' is both the surrounding landscape *and* an objectified rural woman.[42] Such renderings of female peasant sexuality seemingly validate Ana Paula Ferreira's critique of 'rural fiction' by Ribeiro (and his male contemporaries), which, in her view, inadvertently mirrored reactionary political and social discourse through an exoticization of female rustic bodies.

Nevertheless, I would argue that the extent to which *Faunos* adopts such imagery a-critically is debatable, given that the novel directly distinguishes between perceptions of pastoral beauty and the unpleasant reality — social and physical conflict within rural space. Ribeiro's undermining of bucolic preconceptions is clearly evidenced, for instance, in the narrator's ironic tone on several occasions. This is apparent as Padre Dâmaso strolls around the outskirts of Viseu, during the priests' synod: 'Cucuritavam os galos com perfeita vocalização rural, e Dâmaso deixava espairecer os olhos, inebriado da bucólica, a que a sombra das torres não roubava a graça rústica e a candura' [The roosters were crowing in perfect rural tones, and Dâmaso, intoxicated by the bucolic scene whose rustic grace and purity were undiminished by the towers' shadows, let his eyes rest upon it].[43] Ribeiro's exaggerated use of idyllic adjectives here suggests his acknowledgement of prevailing rural stereotypes (and romanticized literary depictions of such environments) in Portuguese fiction. Conversely, a subsequent scene alludes to the constant presence of violence in this apparent 'recanto [...] humilde e pacato' [humble and quiet place],[44] when Dâmaso is shocked by a violent peasant altercation on the horizon close to Viseu: 'Dâmaso ficou horrorizado, porque a cena bárbara lhe recordava Caim e Abel, o furor supinamente selvagem, fatídica e sagradamente telúrico que nas primeiras idades só se satisfazia matando' [Dâmaso was shocked, because the barbaric scene reminded him of Cain and Abel, of the utterly savage, fateful and divinely telluric wrath that, in the first ages of mankind, could only be satisfied by killing].[45] The priest's reflections here are significant for several reasons: his recollection of Cain and Abel evokes a post-Edenic descent into barbaric fratricide, thereby disrupting his hitherto paradisiacal view of the Beira Alta landscape, subverting preconceptions of the local peasantry as docile or placid, and associating the rustic populace with violent primitivism. Indeed, the link established between savagery and 'divinely telluric wrath' challenges contemporary notions of rustic bucolism, through a biblical metaphor (the murder of Abel by Cain).

These tensions between *idyllic* and *demonic* Beira Alta imagery correspond to a broader symbolic division within Ribeiro's novel, between images of the 'faun' and the 'demon'. This tension is explicitly outlined during the priests' synod in Viseu;

while Padre Moura Seco believes that the local girls in the highlands have been graced with the presence of fauns — which he calls 'seres benignos e universais' [benign and universal beings][46] — Padre Dâmaso counters that these occurrences are *rapes*, for which the Devil and demons are responsible. Firstly, one should note that 'Faun' — alluded to, of course, in the novel's title — derives from 'Faunus', the half-human, half-goat Roman deity of forests, fields and herds, frequently associated with agricultural fertility and/or with the spirit of forests.[47] Furthermore, there is an inherent affinity between this pre-Christian deity and the Catholic priesthood: just as Faunus was the Roman god of shepherds and flocks, so the priest's role is to act as a 'pastor' to his flock of followers within his community. Moura Seco's thesis that fauns are responsible for sexual deviance therefore posits these mythical creatures as direct competitors to the local clergy. Conversely, Dâmaso's attribution of blame to 'uma legião de demónios' [a legion of demons] evokes pre-modern or medieval fears of forest environments in European culture: as John Rennie Short notes, for instance, '[t]he traditional agrarian view saw forests as the home of evil spirits. European folklore is populated with demons and dangers who dwell in the forest'.[48] More broadly, these competing interpretations allow for differing ideological perceptions of the highlands' symbolic importance: according to Tuan, such mountainous landscapes have historically been viewed either as 'sublime, the abode of the gods' or as 'ugly, distasteful, the abode of demons'.[49] Ribeiro's decision to evoke *both* of these images prevents reactionary political forces from co-opting his fictional Beira Alta *serras* into a bucolic national ideal, and Marxist readers from interpreting these highlands in exclusively materialist terms.

Faunos's highlands, then, are posited as spaces marked by conflict and contestation, which is made apparent not only in the macabre events that happen within them (e.g. Baltasar's death at the hands of Pedro Jirigodes), but also in their natural appearance, which the narrator repeatedly likens to a battlefield. This can be observed, for example, in the decidedly militaristic description of the *serras* in Chapter 6: the narrator states that 'Os horizontes estendiam-se até onde consentia o parapeito dos altos' [The horizons spread out as far as the parapet of the peaks would allow them], alludes to a 'torre normanda' [Norman tower], and mentions that the 'penedais' [boulders] are arranged 'por batalhões' [by battalions].[50] Coupled with this martial imagery is Ribeiro's depiction of the region's highlanders as fierce warriors; in Chapter 2, for instance, Pedro Jirigodes's expedition to hunt the *Inefável* encompasses hundreds of *serranos* from different villages, 'em pé de guerra com grande fúria e denodo' [on a war footing, with great rage and courage].[51] This scene, outlining the coordination of distinct communities on a common 'war footing', has already been posited as a parody of the 'catalogue of ships' in Homer's *Iliad* designed to question Portugal's history of maritime exploration,[52] but there are also more geographically specific allusions at play. For example, the weapons carried by some of the villagers are defined as 'catanas da Maria da Fonte' [machetes from the time of Maria da Fonte] which, together with the narrator's subsequent reference to 'os povos patuleias' [Patuleian peoples], associates the Beira Alta highlands with historically significant (and anti-liberal) peasant rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century.[53]

This notion of collective, synchronized military activity unfolding within the *serras* is undermined, however, by the heterogeneity of the villages involved. This is apparent in an economic sense, with some *serranos* wielding primitive implements like 'ganchos, partazanas, espetos de ferro' [hooks, polearms, iron skewers], and others carrying state-of-the-art rifles: 'Floreavam armas de toda a espécie, desde a Mauser, último modelo, à caçadeira de boca de bronze' [All kinds of weapons appeared, from the latest Mauser rifle to the bronze-plated shotgun].[54] Through this diversity of weaponry, Ribeiro emphasizes that, despite the *serranos*' solidarity and collaboration, they have varying degrees of purchasing power and access to twentieth-century military technology. Accordingly, the author upends any suggestion that the local populace subscribes to docile and bucolic stereotypes, while questioning preconceptions that these communities are (equally) backwards or technologically uncivilized. Aside from these economic distinctions between different groups of *serranos*, each village is also 'ethnically defined', through derisory comments that approximate to racial slurs, including 'tribos bravias' [wild tribes], 'horda troglodita [troglodyte horde], 'anegralhados de tez' [with a blackened complexion], 'mestiços de cigano e moiro' [a mix of Moorish and Gypsy blood] and 'caras tisnadas' [darkened faces].[55] While these remarks suggest potential prejudice on the narrator's part, they also represent the villages' hostile perception of each other, in explicitly racialized terms. Accordingly, Ribeiro's novel can be read as a provocation against essentialist concepts of regional identity — in that there is a pronounced lack of homogeneity and harmony amongst the inhabitants of a specific regional space — which connects with broader socio-political issues in the Portuguese imperial space. Such imagery is potentially critical of historical race-based concepts of regional difference within continental Portugal, given the limited, sub-national geographical unit within which the diegesis takes place.[56] Moreover, this excerpt gestures towards the imperialist policies pursued by early twentieth-century Portuguese governments (under the First Republic and *Estado Novo* regimes), according to which African and Asian colonies were posited as 'natural' extensions of Portuguese territory, akin to 'regions'. In Ribeiro's refusal to corroborate this notion, with a (seemingly disparaging) emphasis on racio-ethnic heterogeneity, *Faunos* challenges preconceptions of ubiquitous peasant 'backwardness' within both the *metrópole* [continental Portugal] and the *ultramar* [overseas colonies].

Finally, notwithstanding the multiple strategies outlined above that Ribeiro deploys to undermine bucolism, there are certain aspects of *Faunos* that gesture towards ruralist nostalgia; specifically, this novel produces a form of Beira Alta-oriented 'topophilia': the 'affective bond' between (regional) inhabitant and landscape, as developed by Tuan. This emotional paradigm is apparent from the author's preface, which outlines Ribeiro's own sentimental (and potentially *irrational*) connection to the territory and natives of his Beira Alta birthplace:

> [S]into a tenacidade teimosa, um pouco absurda, talvez indefensavelmente idealista, dos camponeses da Beira, meus avós, que viviam e morriam no sonho de converter chavascais em floridos vergéis. Esse meu empenho — seja questão

> de probidade, seja atavismo da rija e obsessa alma beiroa — é superior ao meu raciocínio, aos raciocínios mais robustos deste mundo.
>
> [I feel the stubborn, somewhat absurd, and perhaps unforgivably idealistic doggedness of the Beira peasants, my ancestors, who lived and died for the dream of transforming wastelands into blossoming gardens. This endeavour of mine — whether it be a question of integrity, or of my atavistic, haunted and rough Beira soul — is superior to my own reasoning, to the strongest reasoning in this world].[57]

This extremely personal outburst from the author — intensified by its self-deprecating tone and biting alliteration — is notable for the precedence that sentiment assumes over reasoning, and for its open acceptance of atavism as a structuring element of the subsequent diegesis. Such assertions appear to converge with extant ultra-conservative (and, subsequently, *Estado Novo*) conceptions of a nostalgic 'ideologia ruralizante'; as Renato Nunes notes, this political project awarded primacy to the traditional 'aldeia' as the fundamental basis of Portuguese society, and Ribeiro's fictional portrayals of the Beira Alta potentially contributed to such images.[58]

Aside from Ribeiro's own paratextual comments, this 'topophilic' paradigm is prominent in Ribeiro's characterization of Baltasar, the ill-fated 'madman' who roams the *serras* alone, is disliked by almost all locals, and is eventually killed by Pedro Jirigodes. In Chapter 1, for instance, Feliciana describes this figure as a near-feral, monstrous individual: 'É um desinfeliz que anda a monte com os lobos. Ninguém lhe dá pousada, ninguém gosta dele, porque [...] é ruim, mais ruim que um saco de lacraus' [He's a sorry soul who roams the mountains with the wolves. Nobody gives him shelter, nobody likes him, because he's nasty, nastier than a bag of scorpions].[59] Nevertheless, Baltasar clearly lives in more harmony with the surrounding mountainous landscape, *flora* and *fauna* than any other character. In Chapter 6, this is made apparent through Baltasar's admission to Jirigodes that he sleeps in the highlands and secretly drinks from the udders of goats: 'Eu vivo mais na serra que nos povos. A serra é minha amiga, a cada canto me oferece dormida. Chego-me às cabras [...] e mamo. [...]. A serra... quero-lhe como a minha mãe' [I spend more time living in the highland than in the villages. The highland is my friend; it offers me shelter at every turn. I approach the goats [...] and I suck their udders. [...]. I love the highland like my mother].[60] Given such excerpts, it is hardly surprising that Ribeiro is viewed as an ecologically conscious author; *Faunos* collapses the boundary between human and non-human here, favouring a seemingly equitable ontological relationship between the two, as defended by Donna Haraway and other post-humanist philosophers.[61] Despite this zoomorphism, though, Baltasar is shown to be extremely pious, regarding the highlands as sacred and in direct contact with God: 'A serra tem vida, sente, fala e escuta. Fala para Nosso Senhor [...]. Ouve Nosso Senhor, para isso tem os picotos levantados ao céu. Não, aqui não mata. [...]. Tudo isso é corpo de Deus' [The highland is alive: it feels, it speaks and it listens. It speaks to our Lord [...]. It listens to our Lord, which is why its peaks rise towards the sky. No, thou shalt not kill here. [...]. All of this is the body

of God].[62] This quasi-biblical depiction of Baltasar is reinforced by his name — one of the magi present at the Christian Messiah's birth — while the character's violent death within the *serras* likens him to a martyr: a Christ-like figure of sacrifice, perishing within a sanctified space. Thus, Ribeiro's representation of this character jars with, or at least complicates, potential ecocritical readings of *Faunos*.

Nevertheless, the narrator's depictions of the Beira Alta highland landscapes and specific landmarks arguably play a greater role in evoking 'topophilic' sentiment than the emotions experienced or expressed by any single character. For example, this paradigm characterizes monuments of religious importance in the *serras*, such as the local chapels visible to Baltasar and Pedro Jirigodes in Chapter 6: 'tinham a mística suavidade de padroeiro a abençoar; reluzindo no meio das matas, e delas, como escada de Jacob, ascendia aos ares uma coluna de celestial pureza' [As they lay glistening in the middle of the forest, they had the mystical softness of a patron saint's blessing; and, like Jacob's Ladder, a column of heavenly purity rose up into the sky].[63] Nonetheless, while Ribeiro's imagery here seemingly alludes to divinity, replete with biblical similes, such notions are undermined by Ribeiro's exaggerated bucolism ('enchiam as colinas da brancura fragrante dum campo de açucenas' [the hills were filled with a pure whiteness, scented like a field of lilies]), and by his parodic likening of the chapels to 'velhas mendigas cobertas de velhas capuchas' [old beggar-women shrouded in old hoods].[64] Once again, *Faunos*'s apparently idyllic rural scenarios become double-edged and tinged with irony.

Above all, the author regularly attributes biblical significance to natural landmarks within the novel's diegetic environment, with a particular focus on rocky outcrops and mountainous peaks visible on the horizon. In Chapter 2, for instance, the reader encounters the following tremendous panorama: 'Os picotos, recortados na brancura espacial, tinham o ar expectante de ser alguma vez Sinai, enquanto os penedos dormiam os sonos brutescos, letárgicos, dos primeiros monstros da criação' [The peaks, carved out of the blank space surrounding them, seemed expectant that they would one day be Sinai, while the boulders slept the rough, sluggish sleep of the first monsters of creation].[65] Ribeiro's comparison of the peaks to Egypt's Mount Sinai — the place where, according to Christian, Jewish and Islamic texts, Moses received the Ten Commandments — inevitably associates the Beira Alta highlands with ancient and 'divine' characteristics,[66] as does the quasi-biblical reference to creation's 'first monsters'. In this sense, the *serras* function as 'locations of hierophany' which, according to Tuan, are 'sacred places', 'identified with some form of divine manifestation or with an event of overpowering significance'.[67] Similarly, an earlier sequence links a singular rocky outcrop to Moses' leadership of the Israelites through the desert: 'um penedo que, pela linha majestosa, podia muito bem ser a rocha em que já ignorados e primitivos Moisés, condutores de tribos, viessem bater com a ludibriante vara de bronze' [a boulder that, judging by the august line, could very easily have been the rock on which forgotten and primitive Moseses, leaders of tribes, had struck their beguiling bronze staff].[68] While these holy allusions are awe-inspiring in some respects, there are certain caveats: Ribeiro's use of the adjective 'ludibriante' [beguiling] denotes deception or falsity, whereas

his repetition of plurals ('Moises'; 'condutores'; 'tribos') removes geographical specificity from the historical/religious allegory, thereby increasing the Beira Alta's relevance to global human history.

The ambiguities outlined above, then, suggest that the author is not concerned with projecting a crude image of divine purity onto the Beira Alta highlands, but with restoring a psychological sense of 'centrality'[69] to the heterogeneous communities of this region, to counteract their prevailing peripheral mentality. In addition to this ideological manipulation of mountainous territory, the novel's repeated comparisons of the *serras* to 'seas' and 'oceans' re-configures the Beira Alta's significance within national historical narratives. This image first appears as a simile in Chapter 2 ('Aloiravam ao longe as searas, lembrando, ao descoser da serra, a fímbria de espuma dum mar de leite' [the straw-coloured harvests abounded across the horizon, recalling the foamy fringes of a milky sea strewn over the highlands]), and becomes a metaphor in Chapter 6, when Pedro Jirigodes observes the *serra*'s 'wave-like' movement: 'Jirigodes apercebeu-se-lhes do movimento nas lombas, ora crespas, ora ondulosas, na estirada das colinas' [Jirigodes noticed the curly, wavy motion in the grooves and pathways of the hills].[70] As I shall outline in Chapters 3 and 4, with regards to Lídia Jorge and José Saramago's fiction, the tension that Ribeiro establishes in *Faunos* between rural and 'oceanic' imagery has a highly symbolic function. Here, the author suggests that the Beira Alta highlands are intimately connected with Portugal's historical precedents of global maritime exploration (and Empire), from which these communities are presumed to be disengaged or isolated.

Moreover, Ribeiro repeatedly links the highlands to highly significant incidents and battles, over millennia of human history and religious practices. In Chapter 2, for instance, the narrator associates the *serra* with the Crucifixion of Jesus, the Roman Empire's defeat of Attila the Hun, and the Ottomans' final defeat of the Byzantine Empire: 'O mundo caía no solene colapso das grandes horas: a morte de Cristo, a batalha dos campos Cataláunicos, a tomada de Constantinopla' [The world echoed the solemn collapse of great historical moments: the death of Christ, the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains, the conquest of Constantinople].[71] This logical link between the *serras* and global historical events is intensified in Chapter 5, when an article in the local *Voz da verdade* gazette compares the *Inefável*'s presence to Christ's arrival: 'Da mesma maneira que o Messias veio à luz nos desertos da Judeia, elegeu ele agora para teatro estas terrinhas humildes, entre as serras altas' [Just as the Messiah emerged from the deserts of Judea, he has now chosen these humble little lands, nestled amongst the highlands, as his stage].[72] Despite the irony in this remark, it is telling that both *Faunos*'s narrator and its highland characters seek to challenge the restrictive stereotype of Portugal's inland *serra* communities as 'remote', or 'excluded' from the borders of civilized society (and, indeed, of Christendom).

Returning to the attitudes and assumptions of the local Catholic clergy, it is clear that this narrative destabilizes the sweeping generalization, articulated by several priests in Viseu, that the Beira Alta highlands 'have no history or place on

the map'. Rather, several priests in Viseu establish a principle of moral equivalence between sexual behaviour within urban centres and 'rustic' environments: 'Sejamos indulgentes! A harpa eólia de Eros vibra em todos os tons por esses mundos além, tanto entre rústicos como civilizados' [Let's be fair! Eros's Aeolian harp strums all sorts of notes, among the rustic worlds just as much as the civilized ones].[73] These comments, in turn, lead Padre Dâmaso to reflect that moral depravity is occurring within urban and rural communities to the same degree: 'O que nas aldeias serranas se cometia a céu descoberto, a favor dum ardil selvagem e por isso mesmo desconcertante, grassava nas cidades, nas grandes metrópoles da civilização, com outro estilo, mas não com menos denodo' [The sins being committed in broad daylight within highland villages, through wild (and, therefore, unnerving) subterfuge, were also raging in the cities, in the great metropolises of civilization, in a different but equally glaring manner].[74] On this basis, the author confronts attempts by Portugal's contemporary religious establishment to confine the country's inland communities to a state of isolation, detachment and discursively produced moral purity, all of which would define the *Estado Novo*'s political, social and religious propaganda of subsequent decades.

Consequently, Ribeiro's ideological project throughout *Faunos* contains multiple (and seemingly irreconcilable) facets. The first of these is a denunciation of political *caciquismo* and Catholic doctrinal hegemony which, in the author's view, collaborate in order to subordinate and subdue inland peasant communities. Coupled with this is a systematic, self-conscious deconstruction of existing bucolic literary projections onto inland Portugal (and fetishized female subjects), which Ribeiro problematizes in his violent and conflict-ridden rendering of the Beira Alta highlands. The second of these ideological aspects is an unmistakable insistence on topophilic sentiment and characteristics, which the novelist weaponizes to counter presumptions of 'rural remoteness', and to re-centre the *serranos*' perception of their existence within Portugal and in a global context. In doing so, however, the author lays himself open to charges of complicity with a reactionary ruralism and preoccupation with 'village' purity that would come to define Salazarist propaganda in later decades. Following this analysis, one can argue that *Faunos*'s 'concealed' ideologies are more prominent and substantial than its 'visible' ones. Conversely, *Lobos*'s political statements are more overt and combative, although the novel also articulates subtle and implicit ideological dynamics in its portrayal of the Beira Alta peasantry, as I shall now demonstrate.

The Anxiety of Conservatism, or, *Quando os lobos uivam*

Aquilino Ribeiro's literary production and political activity between the 1930s and 1950s was, for some sectors of the anti-Salazarist opposition, insufficiently committed to overt resistance against the *Estado Novo*. This sentiment was articulated by the Communist Party leader and neo-realist writer Álvaro Cunhal, who accused Ribeiro of having become '[um] inofensivo cidadão, dando esplendor ao regime como notável homem de letras' [a harmless citizen, giving prestige to

the regime as a renowned man of letters].[75] In a preface written for *Lobos* in 1963, Cunhal questioned the author's prior 'revolutionary' commitment, and described much of his previous fiction as being oblivious to Portugal's socio-economic realities: 'Aquilino nem sempre foi claro, com frequência se mostrou reservado e arisco às solicitações da luta popular [...]. Salvo nas suas últimas obras, Aquilino não pode ser considerado um escritor realista' [Aquilino wasn't always clear, often appearing reserved and averse to the demands of popular struggle. Aside from his last few works, Aquilino cannot be called a realist writer].[76] While Cunhal's comments here are a somewhat unjust and myopic comparison between Ribeiro and neo-realist literary precedents, he does make an important point regarding *Lobos*: this narrative contains a markedly resistant tone and brazenly political subject matter that distinguishes it from many of the writer's previous works. These explicit and implicit ideological facets of Ribeiro's 1958 novel will be addressed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The diegesis — set in an unspecified period during the *Estado Novo* — begins as Manuel Louvadeus returns to his family home in the village of Arcabuzais, within the fictional Serra dos Milhafres and the Bouça do Rei municipality, having emigrated to Brazil ten years prior. Upon Manuel's return, he instantly hears from neighbours about the government's plans to carry out afforestation of the 'baldios' in the *serra*, and agrees to support the locals' opposition to the project. A public meeting takes place at which Lisbon-based agronomists (Lisuarte Streit da Fonseca and César Fontalva) present their plan to the local peasants, who then voice their strong disapproval. While Fontalva develops some sympathy for the villagers' perspective, Streit shows little interest in their objections. Fontalva befriends Manuel, who shows him the *Rochambana* — a dilapidated farm in the highlands belonging to his hermit-like father Teotónio Lovadeus, in an area that is coveted by the authorities for its afforestation project. Later, the government presses ahead with its afforestation plans, leading to violent confrontation in Sector 1 (Streit's sector), in contrast to the peaceful reconciliation that takes place in Sector 2 (Fontalva's sector). Following this violent showdown, the authorities round up local agitators to use as scapegoats, while small-scale sabotage of the afforestation continues. A *Tribunal Plenário* (essentially, a show trial) sits in Porto to judge the rebellious peasants, with the authorities attempting to label the *serranos* as 'communists', despite little evidence that these peasants have any concrete awareness of Marxist doctrine. Many of the peasants are defended by Dr Rigoberto, a trusted and liberally minded local lawyer, who uses his platform to launch a diatribe against the *Estado Novo*'s behaviour towards these Beira Alta communities. All the rebels — including Manuel — are found guilty and most are given long sentences in jail; the government proceeds with its afforestation, hastening the demise of the Louvadeus family's farming activity. Teotónio murders a local *guarda florestal* [forest ranger], and later destroys the government project by committing arson across the highlands. The novel's final scenes take place some years later, after the *serra* has become a barren wasteland; two wolves search for food and stumble across the bones of the ranger murdered years before.

This novel is the only one examined within *Regionalisms and Resistance* to have directly experienced Salazarist censorship: the author was put on trial in 1959 (and later acquitted) for 'crimes contra a segurança do estado' [crimes against State security], 'ofensas à honra e consideração do Presidente do Conselho de Ministros' [offences to the honour and esteem of the Prime Minister] and 'ofensas à Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado' [offence caused to the International and State Defence Police], amongst other accusations.[77] In self-defence, however, Ribeiro rebutted these claims that *Lobos* amounted to mere anti-Salazarist propaganda: 'Quem possua o mais elementar conhecimento do que é o trabalho de um escritor de ficção reconhece a diferença incomensurável que há entre um romance [...] e um panfleto' [Anyone with the most basic understanding of a fiction writer's work can see the immeasurable difference between a novel [...] and a pamphlet].[78] Thus, the novelist attempted to dissociate his latest novel from (usually, Marxist-inspired) pamphlet literature, despite the prosecution's claims to the contrary. The Salazarist authorities' rather simplistic ideological understanding of *Lobos* is particularly apparent in the 1959 censorship report, which explicitly describes the narrative as 'um romance panfletário' [a pamphletary novel] and protests that its sole aim was to 'fazer um odioso ataque [à] actual situação política' [conduct a hateful attack on the current political setup].[79] In addition to this superficial equation of fiction and political propaganda, the censor comments on Ribeiro's 'undignified' and 'insulting' treatment of various authority figures, civil servants, police forces and courts, all of which are plainly mentioned in the diegesis.[80] Furthermore, Nazaré's remark that 'basta folhear o livro, encontra-se logo matéria censuravel [*sic*] em profusão' [simply by leafing through the book, one can immediately find abundant censurable material][81] suggests a careless, surface-level digestion of Ribeiro's narrative, without consideration for its implicit, semi-conservative ideological facets, which cannot be ascertained without a detailed critical examination of its regional dynamics. Concurrently, left-leaning critics have tended to limit their analysis of *Lobos* to its most visible attacks on the political and social *status quo*, as exemplified by Cunhal's 1963 comments: '[Pela primeira vez na sua vida] O estilista, o prosador regionalista, transforma-se num romancista social, realista e revolucionário' [For the first time in his life, the stylist, the regionalist prose writer, became a social, realist and revolutionary novelist].[82] Here, the PCP leader indicates that 'regionalist prose' and ideologically resistant literature are mutually exclusive — an argument that this monograph strongly contests — and makes little attempt to examine the novel's more subtle political aspects. Twenty-first-century scholars have made equally questionable remarks: Fernandes, for instance, claims that *Lobos* displays binary divisions 'entre as forças do bem, os serranos, e as forças do mal [...] do Estado' [between the forces of good, the highlanders, and the forces of evil, from the State], likening the novel to mid-twentieth-century neo-realist narratives.[83] Other observations, though, have illuminated more contemporaneous (and less explicitly 'political') aspects of this novel, including its relevance for ecologically conscious, post-humanist thought, and its 'prophetic' predictions of rural demographic decline (from the 1960s to the present).[84]

In light of these comments, my analysis of *Lobos* will firstly address the novel's

overt 'censurable material': its satirical depiction of the *Estado Novo* authorities, its explicit critique of an anti-democratic system that disregards the wishes and needs of Portugal's inland communities, and its proposals for alternative political models that, nonetheless, do not give credence to Marxist solutions. I will then examine the *concealed* ideological processes at work within Ribeiro's narrative, which include its ironic treatment of supposedly bucolic Beira Alta landscapes (and, simultaneously, of the peasant women that reside within them), as well as its expression of conservative anxiety, in the face of territorial transformation and agricultural decline propelled by modernizing political and economic forces. I will contend that these more complex aspects of *Lobos* have been systematically ignored or obscured due to the novel's reputation, as a classic, paradigmatic literary rebellion against Salazarism.

'A mirror of the reality surrounding us': explicit critiques

Firstly, it is important to highlight this novel's overt (and highly satirical) allusions to the governing regime's manipulation of apparently 'autonomous' municipal government institutions through corruption and collusion, and via the systematic insertion of political allies into positions of local authority. This issue is apparent from Chapter 2, which depicts an open 'consultation' meeting attended by Streit and Fontalva, by municipal authority figures, and by representatives of the surrounding peasant communities. Here, the narrator is particularly unflattering and cynical with regards to Dr Labão, the *Presidente da Câmara Municipal* [Municipal Mayor] of Bouça do Rei: '[o] lídimo representante da política nova e seu arauto' [the legitimate representative and herald of the new politics].[85] This description of the Mayor inextricably ties the character to a Lisbon-based political leadership, thereby undermining any notion of sovereign municipal authority; indeed, despite his initial promise to defend the highlanders' ancestral rights, Labão refuses to intervene during the meeting (or subsequently) to safeguard his constituents' interests. Rather, over the course of this chapter the narrator repeatedly highlights the Mayor's overriding self-interest and professional ambition:

> [U]m oportunista de primeira, dobrado a todos os ventos [...]. [...]. Além de presidente da Câmara, era conservador do Registo Predial *in partibus infidelium* e politicão. Querendo deixar abertas todas as perspectivas à vidinha [...], ronronava agora à sua volta melhor que gato maltês.
>
> [A first-class opportunist, who would follow whichever way the wind was blowing [...]. [...]. Alongside his role as the Mayor, he was also an honorary Land Registrar and a big-league politician. Wanting to keep all harvesting opportunities open [...], he was now purring more than a Maltese cat at those around him.][86]

This excerpt humorously demonstrates the ambivalent position that Labão occupies, between ostensibly governing in his *local* constituents' interests and pursuing his political designs on a *national* level, 'cosying up' to apparently influential civil servants from Lisbon. Simultaneously, this character is referred to as the 'crónico presidente da Câmara' [chronic Mayor], suggesting that his occupation of the Mayor's Office — and the *malaise* that his management of Bouça do Rei has

caused — is a perennial, paralyzing condition.[87] One is instantly reminded here of Ribeiro's lampooning of *caciquismo* in *Faunos*, in a political rather than religious sense.

Similarly, other facets of the dictatorship's local and national governmental structure are satirized through the political establishment of Bouça do Rei, which includes the municipal head of the *União Nacional* [National Union], the regime's institutional political party: 'o Dr. Basílio Esperança parecia, hermético e fixe, cortado num tabuão de cerejeira. A sua força dentro da União estava naquela tendência para a imobilidade' [The impassive, hermit-like Dr Basílio Esperança seemed to have been cut from a cherry tree trunk. His strength in the Union was precisely this tendency towards intransigence].[88] This depiction of the (ironically named) *Esperança* [hope] manifestly mocks Salazar's monk-like public image, as well as the notoriously reactionary Bishop of Lisbon (and friend of the dictator), Cardinal Manuel Gonçalves *Cerejeira*. Through such depictions of decrepit authority figures, Ribeiro lampoons the so-called 'new politics' that Labão purports to embody, and, therefore, the *New State* dictatorship that harboured ultra-conservative ideological persuasions.

In addition to these blatant parodies of *Estado Novo*-era political figures, Ribeiro's critique of local government structures in *Lobos* (as in *Faunos*) extends further back, to the historical precedents of *caciquismo* and clientelistic practices seen in Portugal during the Monarchy and the Republic. This corrupt system of influence peddling is clearly outlined by Manuel Louvadeus's comments to César Fontalva in Chapter 4, about their Mayor:

> [Labão] não se cansava de oferecer jantares aos magistrados e burocratas do concelho [...]. Muitas [...] peitas arrepiavam logo marcha para casa do senhor juiz, do senhor delegado, do conservador ou do presidente da União Nacional [...]. No concelho, [...], assente em arnelas feudais, predominava, como em todos os da mesma índole, o nepotismo obrigado à perna de vitela [...].
>
> [Labão was constantly throwing dinner parties for the town's magistrates and bureaucrats [...]. Many bribes were soon redirected to the judge, to the deputy, to the registrar or to the National Union President. In this town, rooted in feudal practices, as in all those of the same kind, nepotism through the exchange of veal legs held sway].[89]

In the passage above, one can in fact identify two levels of bribery: the various gifts in kind that Labão receives directly from his highland constituents — most of which eventually find their way to the stomachs of *Estado Novo* figures — and the informal dinners that the Mayor offers to those same individuals, in pursuit of professional advancement. In this sequence, Ribeiro links the acceptance of bribes on a *localized* level with a *national* epidemic of nepotism and subornment ('como em todos os da mesma índole' [as in all those of the same kind]). Simultaneously, the author suggests that this recourse to the 'peita' [bribe] is a mere continuation of medieval or feudal tributes, as the etymology of that term suggests.[90] Indeed, during the peasants' trial in Chapter 9, Dr. Rigoberto repeats this term, establishing a connection between the 'local politics' of Bouça do Rei and a broader prevalence

of corruption: 'se me disserem que é lamentável que a política local de Bouça de Rei se faça a poder de pernas de vitela, responder-lhes-ei que é um estilo como outro qualquer. Realmente quem manda ali é a peita' [if you were to tell me it's unfortunate that local politics in Bouça do Rei is conducted through veal legs, I would reply that it's a way of doing things, like any other. In truth, bribes call the shots there].[91] Thus, Rigoberto generalizes 'local politics' to signify the entire country's institutional corruption, from the smallest village parish to Lisbon's corridors of power; thus, regional space functions as a microcosm of the Portuguese nation.

Moreover, *Lobos* depicts certain Beira Alta *serranos* as colluding with the Lisbon-based regime, such as Julião Barnabé (to whom the locals assign the comical nickname 'Lêndeas' [louse]). In Chapter 4, for instance, César Fontalva's visit to the Barnabé household reveals that Julião (the authorities' local informant) has secured an agreement for his two sons to be employed by the government: 'Metem muita gente? O senhor director Streit prometeu a meu pai contratar-nos para guardas, a mim e a meu irmão Modesto' [Are you recruiting many people? Mr Streit promised my father that he would hire my brother Modesto and me as rangers].[92] Bruno's question highlights the nepotism permeating local and national layers of authority, with Fontalva's response ('Sim, senhor, a proposta está para Lisboa' [yes, sir, the proposal is on its way to Lisbon]) implying a contractual relationship between Lisbon-based political power structures and regional collaborators.[93] Furthermore, the notion of collusion between national State representatives and local citizens and institutions is reinforced by the mutual support between *Estado Novo* ministers and the Catholic clergy, with parish priests explicitly championing the government's afforestation project during their sermons: 'Em algumas freguesias, a rogo do ministro, que era grande amigalhaço da Igreja, os padres tinham subido ao púlpito: — *Deixem lavrar a serra que é para vosso bem!*' [At the behest of the Minister, who was a bosom buddy of the Church, the priests in some parishes had stepped up to the pulpit: 'Let them plough the highlands — it's for your own good!'].[94] Within this excerpt — which recalls the 'Church and State' partnership characterizing *Faunos* — the narrator's informal lexical choices ('amigalhaço' [bosom buddy]) and openly satirical tone humorously associates centralized political power with locally implemented religious authority.

Given these multiple targets of political satire within the novel, it is often unclear whether the highlanders' hostility towards external interference is directed against Lisbon specifically, or against the very notion of nationally imposed structures. Superficially, Ribeiro's narrative constructs a dichotomous tension between the Beira Alta's *serranos* and *lisboetas* [Lisboners] who threaten the highlanders' lifestyle. Such a dynamic is evident from Chapter 1, when Manuel Louvadeus and his peasant neighbours discuss the afforestation plans, expressing antagonistic attitudes towards what 'the capital' is proposing. Justo Rodrigues's interjection in this scene is particularly divisive: 'a serra é nossa e muito nossa. Queremo-la assim, estamos no nosso direito. Desta forma é que nos faz arranjo. Os de Lisboa querem-na coberta de pinhal...?' [the highlands are ours, and very much so. We want them

like this, and we're within our rights to do so. This is how they suit us best. And those people from Lisbon want them covered in pine forests...?].[95] The character's derisory reference to 'those from Lisbon', contrasted with the first-person plural possessive pronoun 'nosso' [ours], underlines the binary opposition that the locals establish between their particular way of life and the conditions that the national capital seeks to impose.

This opposition to the government's project assumes a more aggressive, violent tone in Chapter 3, when one of the local peasants proposes insurrection as a response to the *lisboetas*' plans: 'Então temos batalha [...]. A batalha da serra dos Milhafres com os rifenhos de Lisboa' [So, we've got a battle ahead of us. The battle between the Milhafres highlands and the *rifenhos* from Lisbon].[96] Ribeiro's use of the term 'rifenhos' is provocative in two senses: while it can have the pejorative meaning of 'riff-raff', it also has a racially charged significance, in relation to natives of northern Morocco's Rif mountains.[97] Accordingly, the highlanders' attitudes toward Lisbon-based interlopers indicate a perception of *racial difference* between citizens of the rural North and those of the southern capital — or, alternatively, between 'Celtic' whiteness and Lisbon-based 'Moors', the latter of which are posited as 'barbarian' invaders of an 'authentically Portuguese' rural community. This imagery, while (justifiably) unlikely to survive a twenty-first-century Critical Race Analysis unscathed, demonstrates the acutely political deployment of regional difference in Ribeiro's novel, in line with historical racializations of Portugal geographical divides.[98] As in *Faunos*, these intimations also gesture towards the Lisbon government's imperialist policies and discourse, by drawing attention to racio-ethnic distinctions from the perspective of a *colonized*, rather than *colonizing*, populace.

Nonetheless, the seemingly binary manner in which *Lobos*'s characters distinguish themselves from the (generically defined) *lisboetas* is complicated, when it transpires that Lisbon is not the only location to be associated with political authority. Porto, for example, is depicted as a significant urban centre from which dictatorial power emanates. Following the violent confrontation between the *serranos* and the government afforestation team and the peasants rebels' arrest, in Chapter 7 they are transported from Bouça do Rei's municipal prison to the northern city where they will be judged. This movement from the municipality to the northern capital is associated with a need to subject these *serranos* to the full force of the *Estado Novo*'s judicial system, with the implication that it would be too onerous or inconvenient for the Public Prosecution Service to travel to a Beira Alta municipality. The trial therefore takes place within Porto's Plenary Court, with the rebels being forced to complete their jail sentences in that city's prison, far from their families. In this way, Ribeiro's critical positioning is not directed at the generic metropolis, but at the disproportionate power wielded and exercised *from* specific urban environments in Portugal, far removed from the daily realities and conditions experienced by Beira Alta highlanders and other inland communities.

This attack on power structures throughout authoritarian Portugal, rather than on the urban centres where such power is concentrated, is complemented by

repeated references to historical models of absolutist, theocratic political control. Streit is referred to by the narrator as 'o delegado do Poder absoluto' [the delegate of absolute Power] — with the word 'Poder' capitalized' — whereas Rigoberto declares during the trial that the State is 'a ponto de se tornar em pensamentos e obras uma caricatura de califato' [in terms of its thoughts and actions, close to becoming a caricature of a Caliphate], thereby alluding to historical Islamic caliphates in the Iberian Peninsula under *Al-Andalus*.[99] Moreover, the suggestion of medieval feudalism is introduced through the municipality's name *Bouça do Rei* [the King's fallow field], which associates the novel's plot set during the Salazarist dictatorship with Portugal's monarchical legacy. In this way, Ribeiro projects national preconceptions of the Beira Alta's 'primitiveness' and 'underdevelopment' back onto the dictatorship's own anachronistic conduct, within Portugal's regional (and colonial) spaces.

Beside these historical allusions, *Lobos* repeatedly deploys spatialized and geometric imagery, in order to denounce the political *status quo* and its indiscriminate application of 'justice' within mid-twentieth-century Portugal. This is apparent from the prosecution's motives, outlined by the narrator at the beginning of the highlanders' trial: 'Todos os fenómenos de natureza social têm o seu epicentro e aqui era-o o poder, sempre a tiritar as maleitas da autoridade, distribuindo, às cegas, pancadaria do cobarde' [All social phenomena have their own epicentre, and here it was power, always spreading the fevers of authority, blindly dealing out cowardly blows].[100] This reference to judicial power as the 'epicentre' of a 'social phenomenon' is significant; although it is devoid of any geographical precision, the passage nevertheless weaponizes terminology and imagery related to centrality, in its critique of the *Estado Novo*'s actions. Further, Dr Rigoberto's speech to the municipal meeting deploys an oceanographic simile, when condemning law enforcement officers' actions within Portugal's geographically remote communities:

> Há tirante mais despótico nestes tempos que um guarda, um regedor, o simples polícia dum jardim?! Como a ressaca, que deixa o cisco miúdo, isto é, o cisco do cisco, precisamente a partir do ponto mais distante a que chega a ondulação, assim sucede com os abusos da autoridade. Quanto mais reles, mais longe do poder central, mais prepotentes.
>
> [Is there a more despotic tyrant than a ranger, a justice of the peace, a mere garden policeman? Just as a breaking wave leaves the tiniest speck (that is, the speck of a speck) at the very furthest point of the tide, so it is that abuses of authority happen. The punier they are, the further they are from central power, the more power they have].[101]

Through this comparison between the oppressive behaviour of local policemen and tiny specks on a tide, Rigoberto suggests that the further away such figures are from centralized institutions, the greater their ability to *abuse* the authority that they have received from the State. Further, the lawyer's exclamation implies that such authorities have failed in their supposed duty to protect peripheral communities, and that the Lisbon-based government only takes an interest in such areas when those territories (or their resources) can be exploited. This passage potentially

critiques the dictatorship's policies towards *colonial* spaces as well as regional ones.

Similarly, one can observe several attempts by the dictatorship's delegates to abdicate responsibility for their attacks on these Beira Alta highland communities. Specifically, Chapter 6 depicts Streit's ill-fated attempt to defuse a violent confrontation with the *serranos*, by claiming that he is simply complying with governmental directives: 'Eu sou apenas um mandatário. [...]. Que posso eu? Os senhores deviam dirigir-se às autoridades do distrito, ao administrador, ao governador civil, e expor-lhes as suas razões. [...]. A mim não, que sou uma espécie de cabo de ordens' [I'm only a representative. What can I do? You gentlemen should go to the district authorities, to the civil governor, and explain your reasoning to them. [...]. Not to me: I'm just a functionary].[102] The agronomist's instructions to the highlanders to complain to higher authorities are particularly insincere, given that, as mentioned, these regional leaders are repeatedly shown to be in collusion with Streit and with other 'delegates' of the *Estado Novo* political establishment. Further, Streit's deflection of responsibility is contradicted by his declaration, at the *beginning* of the altercation, that 'responsável pelo que aqui se está a fazer, pessoalmente, não é ninguém. Quer dizer, é toda a gente, o Estado, o senhor, eu' [nobody is personally responsible for what's going on here. Or, in other words, it's everyone: the State, you, me].[103] Hence, while the agronomist initially conflates his individual authority with that of the State, he then backtracks and attempts to dissociate himself from those same governmental institutions in order to escape conflict with hostile *serranos*. Finally, Streit disingenuously claims that he wishes to respect the highlanders' will ('não tenho prazer algum em contrariar a vontade das populações' [I get no pleasure from defying the will of local communities]), despite his geographical and cultural distance from them: 'Eu não os conheço, moro muito longe daqui' [I don't know any of you, I live far away from here].[104] In this way, national government representatives oscillate between retention of power bestowed upon them by centralized authority, and abdication of that responsibility wherever politically convenient.

Nonetheless, César Fontalva (in contrast to his colleague Streit, whose fidelity to the dictatorship's doctrine is unquestionable) presents a productive alternative to the *Estado Novo*'s coercive control over regional communities. Having avoided violence in his designated afforestation sector — by ordering that the work be stopped — this agronomist then makes a controversial statement at the highlanders' trial: 'eu sei muito bem que a tendência hoje é impor a vontade de cima pelas armas e outros meios de violência [...]. [...]. Uma gradação desta autoridade discricionária vem desde o mais alto, o chefe, até o mais ínfimo, o regedor' [I'm fully aware that it's common nowadays to impose the will of higher powers through weapons, and other forms of violence [...]. [...]. There are gradations of this arbitrary authority from the highest level — the boss — to the lowest — the justice of the peace].[105] Fontalva's testimony can be viewed as a significant challenge to prevailing political orthodoxy on several counts, beyond its evident references to State aggression. On the one hand, by describing the regime's authority as an extension from national government to the lowest parish official, the agronomist denounces Salazarism's

violent dominance over the entire apparatus of local political organization. On the other hand, his comments strike at the heart of a key contradiction within the *Estado Novo*: its inability (or refusal) to reconcile localized needs and desires with the dictatorship's national economic objectives, implemented via various projects from the 1930s onwards like the previously outlined *Campanha de Trigo*. This critique also corresponds to the *Estado Novo*'s enforced development of *colonatos* [agrarian settlements] in colonial-era Angola and Mozambique which, as in *Lobos*, were often directed by agronomists.[106]

More broadly, the narrative's central premise — of an afforestation project imposed on Beira Alta highland communities without their consent — exposes the regime's disregard for the *serranos*' use of the *baldios* when confronted with the economic potential that these lands offer to the centralized State (and to private enterprise, largely based elsewhere). This attitude is highlighted in Streit's perfunctory statement, at the municipal consultation meeting, that 'O espaço bravio interjacente representava no plano nacional prejuízos económicos intoleráveis. Não se justificava a sua manutenção' [the intervening wilderness was resulting in unacceptable economic losses in national terms. Its preservation could not be justified], thereby insisting that *national* development plans must always override the consent and concerns of *regional* communities.[107] Later, Rigoberto's comments at the trial makes this criticism explicit: 'o sentido nacionalista de omnisciência de que está imbuído o poder, já há algumas décadas, tolheu-o de procurar um compromisso em que se conciliasse com a letra do seu programa o interesse local' [the nationalist sentiment of omniscience that has characterized political power, for some decades now, has prevented the authorities from seeking a compromise between their programme and local interests].[108] In this antagonistic juxtaposition of 'nationalist sentiment' with 'local interests', Ribeiro suggests that for all the 'regionalist-nationalist' claims of Salazarist ideological discourse, national policy objectives are deemed to be incompatible with needs in regional (or indeed, colonial) territories.

At times, Ribeiro's critique of the *Estado Novo* assumes an overtly *anti-colonial* tone, with Rigoberto alluding to the Beira Alta native as an 'aborígene' [aborigine][109] and to the State's interventions as 'colonization' ('porque não retiram para outras regiões a população dos lugares que pretendem colonizar?' [why don't you relocate to other regions the communities living in places that you're trying to colonize?]), which inevitably recalls Portugal's imperial exploits.[110] Despite the proximity of *Lobos*'s publication to the outbreak of Portugal's Colonial Wars, though, the more explicit historical referent for its denunciations of 'colonialism' is the dictatorship's aforementioned *colonização interna* [internal colonization] policy, which involved the controversial afforestation of *baldios* relied upon by northern peasants for basic subsistence and 'communitarian' farming practices.[111] Ribeiro's literary riposte to this political strategy includes a playful questioning of the Beira Alta highlanders' position within the Portuguese nation: while Streit insists that 'O serrano da serra dos Milhafres é um português como qualquer outro português. Temos de tratá-lo em conformidade' [the Serra dos Milhafres highlander is a Portuguese like any other Portuguese. We must treat him accordingly], Rigoberto

stresses that 'O serrano da serra dos Milhafres é um português muito à parte' [the Serra dos Milhafres highlander is a very distinct kind of Portuguese].[112] In this way, key protagonists (representing the State and the Milhafres highlanders, respectively) espouse conflicting perceptions of the Beira Alta peasants' status within the national body politic.

Lastly, one should highlight *Lobos*'s ideological critique of unfavourable socio-economic conditions within a regionally specific Portuguese space which, despite its literary precedents, is a decidedly *non-Marxist* one. Evidently, the novel highlights material deprivation and a lack of public investment within the Serra dos Milhafres, as articulated through César Fontalva's testimony at the criminal trial:

> A região carecia de estradas, de água potável, de comunicações telegráficas e telefónicas, de postos sanitários, [...], dos rudimentos de que se acham dotados por toda a parte os agregados similares. Não se fala em estabelecimentos de diversão, teatro, cinema, bibliotecas. Isso para a terra é música celestial.
>
> [The region lacked roads, drinking water, telephone and telegraph communication, health centres [...], all the basic amenities that similar households everywhere else had access to. Entertainment venues, theatres, cinemas and libraries were out of the question. For these lands, such things were from another world.][113]

In this association of a specific inland region with deficient infrastructure, Ribeiro attributes the highlanders' seemingly 'backward' existence to insufficient attention paid by the national authorities, particularly when compared with 'similar households' elsewhere in the nation. Fontalva then explicitly claims that 'Se o serrano levava uma vida bastante primitiva é porque era pobre e pouco favorecido pelo Terreiro do Paço' [if the highlanders led a very primitive life, it was because they were poor and overlooked by the Terreiro do Paço].[114] This critique of Lisbon's Terreiro do Paço — the symbol of a distant and disinterested seat of national government — echoes historical denunciations of the capital's disconnect with inland communities.

Elsewhere, the novel directly addresses regional inequalities within continental Portugal, which are mainly articulated through courtroom testimony at the highlanders' trial. Fontalva's remarks, for instance, evince a considerable unease with rural poverty as viewed from a *lisboeta* perspective: 'O baixo nível de vida bradava aos céus. Como podia coexistir no nosso tempo a sua miséria com o esplendor, bem que relativo, [...], do Estoril, Figueira, Lisboa [?]' [Their low standard of living cried out to the heavens. In our day and age, how could their poverty coexist with the (admittedly, relative) grandeur of Estoril, Figueira [da Foz], Lisbon?].[115] While taking care to avoid an excessively crude spatial dichotomy, through the qualifier 'admittedly, relative', Fontalva nevertheless juxtaposes the deprivation of the Beira Alta highlands with the luxury of the national capital and of fashionable coastal resorts (favoured by the affluent political and banking classes, and by foreign elites). This monologue can therefore be interpreted, to a certain degree, as a geographical reading of poverty and economic inequality within the nation, with Ribeiro's Beira Alta highlands functioning as a microcosm of Portugal's interior.

Due to these clear condemnations of regionally concentrated material poverty in the 1950s, one might be forgiven for establishing parallels between *Lobos* and neo-realist fiction; indeed, the very name *Serra dos Milhafres* recalls the avian imagery of 'milhafres' and 'milhanos' [kites] frequently associated with revolutionary hope in neo-realist narratives.[116] Notwithstanding these allusions, it would be mistaken to equate *Lobos* with the neo-realist literature of previous decades, for several reasons. Although one of the rebel *serranos* (João Rebordão) is a Communist Party member, Ribeiro's narrative clearly contests the conflation of anti-Salazarist opposition with a Marxist (or quasi-Marxist) worldview. This is particularly evident during the highlanders' trial, when the narrator outlines the prosecution's strategy: 'saiu-se com as razões costumadas, já clássicas, [...], o pressupor em qualquer levantamento das populações, qualificado em direito de "desobediência colectiva", o dedo de agitadores comunistas' [the normal, now classic reasoning was wheeled out once again [...], the assumption that any popular uprising — legally termed 'collective disobedience' — had been stirred up by communist agitators].[117] Through these efforts to equate 'collective disobedience' with Communist manipulations, Ribeiro attacks the deliberate simplicity with which the regime pursued dissident Portuguese citizens of diverse geographical origins and political persuasions (including, from 1961 to 1974, Marxist and non-Marxist independence movements within Portugal's colonial territories).

The authorities' McCarthyite strategy during the highlanders' trial manifests itself through several key tactics. Firstly, the prosecution labels Manuel Louvadeus as a 'criptocomunista' [crypto-communist],[118] and (unsuccessfully) seeks to demonstrate that he has been indoctrinated by the Soviets: 'o réu foi alguma vez a Moscovo? [...] Sabe o que é o comunismo?' [has the defendant ever been to Moscow? [...] Does he know what communism is?'].[119] Secondly, the peasants' trial takes place alongside that of a completely unconnected group of factory workers, who are suspected of a Moscow-directed mutiny: 'modo de completarem o ramalhete subversivo, haviam-lhes adjungido um feixe de operários de Riba do Pisco, acusados pelos patrões multimilionários de terem, à ordem de Moscovo, pregado a rebelião' [in order to finish off the subversive bouquet, they had lumped them in with a bunch of factory workers from Riba do Pisco, who had been accused by their multi-millionaire bosses of having started a rebellion, on orders from Moscow].[120] Particularly significant here is how these industrial workers are indiscriminately 'attached' to the *serrano* rebels, who are on trial for a totally different reason; Rigoberto lambasts this decision as '[a] homogenização de matéria criminal' [the homogenization of criminal matters].[121] This fervent objection to the situation implies an authorial desire to *separate* the two instances of revolt, rather than promote an all-encompassing trans-regional solidarity or class consciousness.

Much to the prosecution's chagrin, however, it fails to transform the *serranos* into Marxist revolutionary scapegoats, largely due to those highlanders' patent lack of engagement with political theories or ideological frameworks: 'O Ministério Público teimou em forjar comunistas daqueles labregos incultos [...] [.] O fraco deles era saber menos de doutrinas políticas do que do dogma da Santíssima Trindade'

[The Public Prosecution stubbornly insisted on making communists out of those ignorant bumpkins. The problem was, they knew even less about political doctrines than about the dogma of the Holy Trinity].[122] Moreover, the notion of 'política' [politics] itself is lampooned by the peasant defendants, with Alonso Ribelas (accidentally or intentionally) mis-pronouncing that term: 'Saiba Vossa Senhoria que eu de *políticas* não percebo patavina' [You should know, Sir, that I haven't got the foggiest idea about *politigs*].[123] Nonetheless, this apparent lack of political engagement does not preclude these highlanders' adherence to an *oppositional* ideology, as Ribelas's remarks demonstrate: 'agora cortaram-me o nome para não votar contra o Governo. Nós todos na serra estamos à uma contra o Governo. [...]. Quem governa o mundo [...] deve ser sempre algum filho de má mãe, que as coisas vão de mal a pior' [Now they've struck my name off so that I can't vote against the Government. We highlanders are all opposed to the Government. Who governs the world [...] must be some real son of a bitch, for things are getting worse and worse].[124] Thus, the *politigs* espoused by the novel's peasant agitators repudiates the (generic) 'Government' that controls their affairs from afar, while rejecting dogmatic or programmatic notions of political activity — including Portuguese Communist Party ideology.

In this sense, Ribeiro's interest lies in the ontological rationale behind the highlanders' political attitudes and actions, which are consciously distinguished from preconceived ideological doctrines and epistemological frameworks. In the first half of the narrative, for instance, Manuel Louvadeus asserts that the peasants' inability to articulate their opinions should not be misconstrued as acquiescence to authority: 'Para nós serranos [a restrição] é sempre opressão, ainda que se não proteste, ainda que não saibamos exprimi-la' [for us highlanders, restrictions always mean oppression, even if we don't always protest, even if we don't know how to articulate it].[125] In fact, the subsequent violent events of the diegesis surpass Louvadeus's earlier comments, with the highlanders' resistance demonstrating an independence of thought that the patronizing, classist authorities cannot bring themselves to acknowledge. This is apparent from the Prosecutor's reticence at the trial: 'Lá admitir que nas massas pudessem fermentar princípios de revolta, *sponte sua*, ao sentirem-se lesadas nos interesses ou contrariadas, não queria admitir e negava-se a compreender. Tudo era obra das organizações clandestinas' [There was no way he could admit that rebellion could spontaneously simmer within the popular masses, when their interests were damaged or thwarted; he refused to believe or understand it. Everything must be the fault of clandestine organizations].[126] What Ribeiro critiques, then, is the *Estado Novo*'s tendency towards sweeping generalization in its denunciation of all opponents, as 'indoctrinated' or 'controlled' puppets of a higher organizational power.

To this end, the peasants' 'resistance' to the government afforestation project is frequently portrayed as sporadic and inconsistent, in contrast to the uniformity that might characterize mass adherence to a coherent, fixed ideological framework. This is apparent in the diverse, unpredictable peasant reactions to the government's proposal: 'nas aldeias referidas, condensava-se uma certa resistência, mais latente aqui, mais explosiva além, contra o regime que se pretendia instaurar' [in the

villages mentioned, a certain resistance was condensing — more dormant here, more explosive there — against the regime that they were trying to establish].[127] Ribeiro's use of the verb 'condensar-se' [to condense] denotes a quasi-chemical process of coalescence, whereas the qualifying adjective 'certa' [certain] produces ambivalence; it highlights the lack of a clear consensus or common purpose amongst the *serranos*. This inconsistency amongst the perspectives of the Serra dos Milhafres peasant communities continues into Chapter 4, as the agronomists and highland rebels head towards violent confrontation:

> Se em algumas aldeias os moradores eram solidários em face da intromissão do Estado [...], já noutros a cizânia invadira o campo, apartados para uma banda os resistentes, para a outra os contemporizadores. [...]. De modo que levantarem-se as dez aldeias, [...], como um só homem, não era coisa absolutamente inevitável.
>
> [If the inhabitants of some villages were united against the State's intrusion, in others, discord had invaded the land, with the rebels on one side and collaborators on the other. [...]. Thus, it was not completely inevitable that the ten villages would rise up as one man.][128]

Accordingly, the highlanders of *Lobos* are depicted as a heterogeneous group that cannot be categorized as a singular political unit, with a common aim. Peasant 'resistance' in *Lobos*, then, holds some affinity with Michel Foucault's definition of the term — as 'distributed in irregular fashion' along a 'multiplicity of points' — in contrast with more rigid, programmatic Marxist theorizations of revolutionary proletarian behaviour.[129] Rather, Rigoberto's declaration at the end of the highlanders' trial, that 'a política deve ser o espelho da realidade ambiente' [politics must be a mirror of the reality surrounding us] is key to understanding this novel's divergence from Marxist political (and literary) theory.[130] While the notion of a 'mirror held up to reality' gestures towards socialist realist and neo-realist concepts of art — as mimesis or documentary — it is noteworthy that Rigoberto's remarks do not posit *fiction* as 'the mirror of our surrounding reality', but rather *politics* itself. Instead of favouring a model of dialectical materialism leading to socialist revolution, the political framework outlined by Rigoberto defends democratic, collective decision-making, and a concern for the reality 'surrounded' or 'enveloped' by the Serra dos Milhafres. It is on this note that I will turn to the *veiled* ideological aspects of *Lobos*, which are intimately related to Ribeiro's treatment of his Beira Alta diegetic environment.

'The obsessive eternity before our eyes': implicit ideological dynamics

Firstly, on several occasions *Lobos* sardonically mimics romanticized bucolic discourse to expose the hollowness of the dictatorship's 'pastoral ideology' and its idyllic propaganda. This strategy can be ascertained, for instance, when the agronomists Streit and Fontalva arrive in Bouça do Rei for the first time and are presented with the following view:

> Dos montes, se não escorria o leite e mel das terras da promissão [...], um sol regaladamente musical arrancava da terra negra, do arvoredo versicolor e das

> vinhas retardadas pelo Inverno uma geórgica da mais espectacular agronomia. Uns segundos apenas se detiveram em êxtase. Distraíram-se ainda [...] com as roseiras das platibandas, cujas lindas e frescas flores dir-se-ia se tinham postado ali para lhes darem as boas-vindas em nome da botânica local, desvanecida.
>
> [Even though the milk and honey of the promised land wasn't dripping down the mountains [...], a cheerily musical sun was emerging from the black earth, versicolour groves and vines stunted by the winter, producing the most spectacular agronomic, Georgic scene. For a few seconds, they simply stood there in ecstasy. They were then distracted [...] by the rosebushes on the verges, whose fresh and beautiful flowers could have been placed there to greet them in the name of the (withered) local botany].[131]

In this extensive passage, the reader is initially given the impression of an inviting, colourful, plentiful and vibrant rustic panorama. However, these images, like the landscape descriptions in *Faunos*, simultaneously undermine and ridicule 'bucolic' notions of inland Portugal emanating from the Salazarist dictatorship of the period. While the clinical reference to 'agronomy' alludes to Virgil's *Georgics* (rather than the Roman poet's more idyllic *Eclogues*), the mentions of 'black earth' and 'stunted vines' cast doubt on the region's fertility. Concurrently, the narrator implies that the alluring *flora* with which these outsiders are confronted has been staged and arranged by nature itself, in order to 'welcome' the agronomists into the area, and to present an illusory idyllic impression.

Furthermore, *Lobos*'s satirical treatment of the regime's 'ruralist' doctrine extends to its depictions of Beira Alta peasant women. Taking as an example Jorgina Louvadeus (Manuel's daughter), this character is clearly objectified by a male gaze — that of the agronomist César Fontalva, who later marries her. In Chapter 4, Fontalva becomes besotted with Jorgina at first sight: 'um bonito rosto, olhos pretos, dentes brancos, se mostrou à janela [...]. E foi como se descesse sobre aquele acervo de tintas soturnais uma chuva de rosas' [a beautiful face, with dark eyes and white teeth, appeared at the window [...]. And it was as if a shower of roses had descended on that array of gloomy hues].[132] Here, *Lobos* echoes *Faunos* in its 'fetish[ized]' equation of 'Woman' and 'natural' imagery, while retaining a sense of irony.[133] Moreover, Fontalva's 'intentions' with this young woman are presented as being largely *sexual*, as can be ascertained from his lascivious contemplation of her body: 'perguntou-se: Como será ela de corpo e de maneiras? [...]. [...] só com a ideia de que ia poder vê-la à vontade [...], sentiu uma onda cálida brotar-lhe na cabeça, descer ao coração, inundá-lo todo de graça, ternura, voluptuosidade' [he wondered: what would her body and gestures be like? [...]. [...] the mere thought that he would be able to look at her freely made a warm wave rush through his head and down into his heart, flooding him with grace, tenderness and voluptuousness].[134] Following these voyeuristic thoughts, Fontalva interrogates his chauffeur about the beauty of Beira Alta peasant girls and their openness to casual sexual intercourse: 'E em matéria de femeaço, que tal? As raparigas são bonitas? [...]. Fáceis? Era onde queria chegar' [And what about the women, what are they like? Are they pretty? [...]. Are they easy? That's what he was getting at].[135] Such passages demonstrate the author's conscious use of discursive tendencies to objectify (in a sexual manner) Portuguese

peasant women, and to associate them with eroticized images of domesticity and 'natural' fertility.

Beside this subversive and ironic critique of extant bucolic stereotypes, there is a more ideologically ambivalent aspect to *Lobos*'s portrayal of the Beira Alta *serras*, and of the local peasants' relationship with that environment. Specifically, several highland characters within this novel express a strong sentiment of *topophilia*, in a manner analogous to that of *Faunos*. This emotion is evoked during the consultation meeting in Chapter 2, when Rigoberto repeatedly stresses to the agronomists the symbolic importance of the highlands to the surrounding peasant communities: 'aldeias e serras estão consubstanciadas até a sua fibra mais íntima. [...]. A serra, em tanto que realidade geográfica, é uma coisa e [...] em tanto que factor psicológico é outra' [the villages and the highlands are bound together in the deepest vein. [...]. The highlands are one thing as a geographical reality and [...] quite another as a psychological factor].[136] In this 'topophilic' manner, the lawyer emphasizes the centrality of the local mountainous landscapes for the peasants' identity and well-being, thereby establishing a pattern of *serrano* behaviour that will dominate the subsequent diegesis.

This emotional and psychological attachment to the local environment is particularly apparent in Manuel and Teotónio Louvadeus, both of whom maintain a fierce attachment to remote and 'wild' highland peaks of the Serra dos Milhafres. Specifically, on his return to the Beira Alta after years spent in the Brazilian desert, Manuel repeatedly articulates an intense attachment to the solitary outcrops of his birthplace: 'No meio da serra, livre debaixo do Sol e das estrelas, livre na terra e no céu, é que eu gosto de me ver' [In the middle of the highlands, lying free under the Sun and the stars, free on earth and in heaven, is where I like to be]; 'afinal a minha alma ficou cá nos penedais' [in the end, my soul has remained here amongst the boulders].[137] Moreover, the religiously named (Manuel) Louvadeus, like Baltasar in *Faunos*, regards the highland environment to be 'sagrado' [sacred],[138] and associates his distaste for murder with the 'sanctity' of the local landscape:

> Olha que matar um homem é coisa muito séria. [...]. Destruir esta máquina tão admirável que é a vida de um homem [...] não há nada no mundo que o justifique. [...] Por isso, estoirar com ela antes do tempo é grande pecado perante o sol, as estrelas, as serras ao longe a olhar para nós [...].
>
> [Beware, for killing a man is a very serious thing indeed. [...]. There's nothing in the world that could justify destroying that wonderful machine that is human life. [...]. So, to do away with it before its time has come is a huge sin before the sun, the stars, the highlands watching over us in the distance [...].][139]

In his perception of the Beira Alta *serras* as a sacred ground that must not be sullied by violence, Manuel echoes his predecessor's Baltasar's refrain 'aqui não mata' [thou shalt not kill here] (a commandment that, in both novels, is ignored by others). Further, this character clearly does not consider the Serra dos Milhafres to be a 'remote' or 'detached' corner of the world: he compares the local rocky peaks to the mountain towering over the sprawling, cosmopolitan city of Rio de Janeiro: 'bronco e imponente, um Pão de Açúcar traduzido para português' [coarse and

imposing, a Sugarloaf Mountain translated into Portuguese].[140] Hence, Manuel insists on the centrality of the Beira Alta highlands and their inherent connection with global metropolitan centres, rather than their marginality and detachment from them.

Manuel's father Teotónio exhibits a similar degree of intense territorial attachment, but this elderly *serrano* is depicted as a less benevolent figure. In contrast to his granddaughter and daughter-in-law, who reject the intimidating wilderness of the *serra*, Teotónio eagerly identifies with the desolate highlands and accompanying *fauna*, such as the local wolves and his dog *Farrusco*: 'O *Farrusco* fazia-lhe companhia, animal de ar livre, tão misantropo como ele' [*Farrusco* kept him company, an open-air animal, as misanthropic as himself].[141] In a subsequent chapter, Teotónio's identification with his dog extends to zoomorphism, when he threatens the traitorous Bruno Barnabé: 'As ameaças saíam-lhe da garganta involuntariamente como o arruaçar do *Farrusco*' [These threats came out of his throat involuntarily, just like *Farrusco* when he growled].[142] Thus, Teotónio's well-being directly depends on his continued residence within the wild highlands which, given that he is eventually forced to abandon his Rochambana estate, posits this character as a martyr and victim: 'O velho não queria outra casa, nem dormia bem senão ali na sua enxerga de palha. Tirá-lo da serra era roubar-lhe anos de vida' [The old man didn't want any other home, nor could he sleep well on any other bed than his straw mattress. Taking him away from the highlands would take years off his life].[143] Nonetheless, Teotónio's 'topophilia' differs from that of his son Manuel (and indeed of Baltasar in *Faunos*), in the violence that he eventually perpetrates on human beings within the highlands, and even on the *serra*s themselves. In one macabre scene, he murders the forest ranger Bruno Barnabé and buries his body under a stream, leaving the corpse in a darkly ironic, quasi-biblical pose: 'Quedou de cara para o céu como os fiéis defuntos na terra santa' [He was left face up, like deceased worshippers in the Holy Land].[144] Subsequently, Teotónio sets fire to the *serra* after he is forced to leave it, thereby highlighting the sinister and menacing potential of topophilic emotions, and of the *Estado Novo*'s inability to comprehend such sentiments within local populations. A purely ecological treatise, then, this novel is not.

Moreover, the powerful topophilic emotion that these protagonists experience and articulate does not uniformly coincide with the more ambiguous attitudes of the narrator, and of the implied author, towards *Lobos*'s diegetic environment. This relates to a further ambivalence in the ideological message of Ribeiro's narrative: its attitudes towards continuity and change within Portugal's rural interior. As Vidigal notes of Ribeiro's other works, certain passages in *Lobos* appear to defend 'conservative' or 'traditionalist' values, and to reject rapid modernization or socio-economic transformation on the terms favoured by successive Lisbon-based governments.[145] Several excerpts make direct reference to the rural North's historical propensity for anti-liberal revolt, as evidenced by an allusion to old rifles used by the 'trauliteiros' — a Monarchist political and paramilitary movement active in northern Portugal during the First Republic.[146] Similarly, the narrator's description of the *serranos*' revolt as a 'nova Patuleia' [new Patuleia] associates the

rebels with a nineteenth-century conservative precedent: that of the previously outlined Patuleia War, waged by northern absolutist partisans.[147] Meanwhile, Fontalva's courtroom testimony defends the rebels by equating their motivations with the government's, affirming that both entities are driven by a desire to conserve a fixed *status quo*: 'A força arrogava-se de manter uma ordem determinada, os populares uma antiga tradição' [the authorities were upholding a certain idea of order; the peasants were upholding an old tradition].[148] Hence, the agronomist suggests that the *Estado Novo*'s desire to maintain 'order' over remote areas of its territory and the *serranos*'s efforts to *preserve* their ancestral rights are analogous, with an inherently 'conservative' outlook guiding the rebels' political engagement.

Nonetheless, this notion of 'peasant conservatism' is problematized during the trial, when the prosecution accuses Manuel Louvadeus of having incited unrest within 'uma das serras mais adustas e pertinazmente conservadoras do Portugal laborioso' [one of the most unsullied and stubbornly conservative highlands in the industrious country of Portugal].[149] A significant contradiction emerges here: it is the *serranos*' steadfast resistance to radical change that has caused them to revolt against the *Estado Novo*'s 'modernizing' afforestation project. Accordingly, the 'forças atávicas' [atavistic forces] of the Beira Alta highlands are pitted against Streit's (and, by extension, the dictatorship's) determination to force technological 'progress', 'development' and 'renovation' onto the seemingly backwards Serra dos Milhafres.[150] As the agronomist declares: 'O progresso não é um ferro de engomar. Alguma coisa vai cilindrando na sua marcha. Sempre assim foi. [...]. Entravar a renovação do mundo [...] não é de admitir' [Progress is not a neat little iron. Something always gets steamrollered in its path. It's always been that way. [...]. It's not acceptable [...] to block the renovation of the world].[151] Thus, Streit articulates the *Estado Novo*'s contrarian stance of enforcing territorial transformation, while simultaneously perpetuating a reactionary social discourse, concerned with the traditional nuclear family and the rigid maintenance of a romanticized rustic existence.

There is, then, a reticence on Ribeiro's part to depict the Serra dos Milhafres' peasantry as an entirely retrograde populace, or, indeed, to defend a 'conservative' socio-economic state of affairs against all attempts at modernization. In fact, *Lobos*'s strategic positioning between continuity and change is best described through Fontalva's remarks at the trial: 'Ao contrário da opinião corrente, os habitantes da serra dos Milhafres e o meio donde provinham não lhe parecerem bravios e muito menos improgressivos' [In contrast to common opinion, he did not believe that the inhabitants of the Serra dos Milhafres — and the environment from which they came — were wild, let alone opposed to progress].[152] Rather, Manuel Louvadeus demonstrates an eagerness to develop infrastructure and defends equitable development within the Serra dos Milhafres, rather than the undemocratic 'steamrollering' of rural communities pursued by the dictatorship: 'Quero dotar a terra em que nasci com escola digna, hospital, luz eléctrica, telefone, água potável, civilizá-la, pois que está bem na barbárie' [I want to give the land I was born in a decent school, a hospital, electricity, telephones, drinking water; I want to civilize it, because right

now it's pretty barbaric].[153] In this way, one can trace a development in the author's reasoning, from an 'atavismo de rija e obsessa alma beiroa' [atavistic, haunted and rough Beira soul] in *Faunos*, to a more problematic and anguished attitude towards tradition and transformation in *Lobos*.

Accordingly, my final remarks on this novel will address its complex treatment of rural permanence vis-à-vis transformation. On the one hand lies the notion of durability, encapsulated at the beginning of the diegesis (when Manuel Louvadeus returns to his family home): 'achava tudo tal qual! Os dez anos de ausência apagaram-se como um sopro perante a obsessiva eternidade que se lhe oferecia ao lance de olhos. [...]. [...] as coisas conservarem-se ali iguaizinhas, estáticas, teimosas no seu ar de encantamento' [he found everything just as he had left it! Those ten years away were snuffed out instantly by the obsessive eternity before his eyes. [...]. [...] his things had stayed there, exactly the same, motionless, in their stubbornly enchanted air].[154] Ribeiro's productive notion of 'obsessiva eternidade' [obsessive eternity] here offers several potential interpretations: while the word 'eternidade' gestures towards the stability of Manuel's homestead and of his local community, the reference to 'obsession' simultaneously evokes anxiety and uncertainty regarding the ability of these Beira Alta highlands to remain 'static' indefinitely. As Fernandes notes, the novel frequently alludes to agricultural and demographic decline within inland Portugal, which is apparent from the opening chapter: 'O solo não produzia' [The soil wasn't producing]; 'A gente sumia-se na emigração' [People were vanishing due to emigration].[155] In more figurative terms, one can identify multiple instances of apocalyptic imagery within *Lobos*, including quasi-biblical invocations of final judgement and fire.[156] This notion of rural apocalypse is reinforced by Rigoberto's mournful lament that the highlands have become an 'infinito rebotalho arqueológico' [endless archaeological slag heap],[157] and by the total abandonment of the Serra dos Milhafres in the novel's final pages. If subsequent Portuguese novelists have described Ribeiro's Beira Alta rural settings as a testament to dying (or dead) ways of life,[158] then *Lobos* is, to a certain degree, their death certificate; the narrative critiques government practices that the author (correctly) predicted would contribute to rural de-population, forest fires and territorial transformation. There is a suggestion, therefore, of 'eschatology' produced by excessive anthropocentric intervention,[159] resulting, paradoxically, in human absence within a rural environment.

Due to these contradictions, I contend that *Lobos*'s treatment of rural atavism and nostalgia can be understood as politically *transgressive* and *radical*, rather than *reactionary*. Firstly, the anxiety of loss articulated in this novel corresponds to what Yi-Fu Tuan terms 'local patriotism'. According to Tuan, this dynamic 'rests on the intimate experience of place, and on a sense of the fragility of goodness: that which we love has no guarantee to endure', in sharp contrast to ultra-nationalistic, imperial patriotism, which 'feeds on collective egotism and pride'.[160] Analogously, the territorially limited patriotic emotion evoked in *Lobos* offers alternative ideological readings. More overtly, the novel challenges the dictatorship's intra-colonial exploitation of inland regions such as the Beira Alta, through afforestation projects

and other 'internal colonization' projects. By extension, Ribeiro's denunciation of the *Estado Novo*'s destructive, extractivist internal colonialism subtly critiques the regime's international imperialist project, focused on Portugal's African and Asian overseas colonies. Thus, the narrative recognizes that 'topophilia rings false when it is claimed for a large territory',[161] weaponizing topophilic attachment to a limited territorial entity, in order to develop broader political critiques of contemporary government policies.

Finally, Ribeiro's apparent nostalgic yearning for a disappearing rural existence can be viewed as ideologically 'radical' in Bonnett's terms, given that, in *Lobos*, 'nostalgia works within and against the present [...] reconstitutes modernity, [...] is not just reactive but reaches out and down to shape our hopes for the past and the future'.[162] Similarly, this novel does not simplistically reject all attempts at modernization: democratic and humanist (albeit non-Marxist) solutions for ensuring the Beira Alta's future are envisioned by Manuel Louvadeus — but never realized — whereas the dictatorship's determination to construct 'fascist modernist landscapes' within the *serras* demonstrably results in decline and destruction.[163] Hence, like more recent British fiction on similar themes, *Lobos* 'embodies a tension [...] between attachment to older ways of life and the recognition that change is inevitable'; this novel's ideological project is not purely atavistic, nor does it conform to a politically and socially regressive conception of nostalgia within a rural context.[164] Instead, a delicate conciliation of past and future takes place, involving anti-fascist, anti-colonial, democratic and incrementalist solutions for the Beira Alta's survival and development.

Ribeiro's 'cheap rebellion' in *Faunos* and *Lobos*, then, is only fully appreciated as an ideological project when the explicit political critiques of these two novels (against clerical and political authorities) are considered alongside the more subtle facets of these narratives: their complex treatment of Beira Alta highland landscapes, and of the human dramas that take place within them. On the one hand, these two novels demonstrate an awareness — and a rejection — of reactionary 'pastoral' and 'bucolic' tropes within twentieth-century Portuguese society. On the other hand, both narratives reflect a certain atavism in their evocation of topophilic sentiment which, despite its productive capacity to convince inland rural communities of their own 'centrality', nevertheless converges with the *Estado Novo*'s peasant-oriented 'ruralizing ideology' to a certain degree. Some key distinctions should be noted, however: while *Faunos* articulates topophilic emotions in its narration and paratext as well as its characters, *Lobos* distinguishes between the topophilia expressed by protagonists and the narrator's ironic perspective, which is much more ambiguous regarding the virtues of rustic nostalgia. Indeed, this latter novel defends the right of highland rebels (and, by extension, other colonized communities) to contest enforced modernization, and refuses to paint those same peasants as entirely resistant to change or development. This predicament can be summarized, in Ribeiro's words, as 'obsessive eternity'. In Chapters 3 and 4, similar themes will be examined, but they will address other significant ideological concerns that Ribeiro does not completely subvert: namely, the the portrayal and position of 'regional women',

which my analysis of Agustina Bessa-Luís and Lídia Jorge will address, and the role of class consciousness and anti-capitalist politics in 'militant particularist' resistance, which my reading of José Saramago will explore. It is clear, though, that *Faunos* and *Lobos* encapsulate a literary paradigm: the ideological instrumentalization of regional space.

Notes to Chapter 2

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CHAPTER 3

❖

'I don't identify with this feminist provincialism': The Regionalist Sexual Politics of Agustina Bessa-Luís and Lídia Jorge

> Mulher sem homem é como terra baldia
> e forno de pão a alumiar sem préstimo.
>
> [A woman without a man is like a barren wasteland
> and a bread oven fired up to no purpose][1]
>
> — The Three Marias

While Aquilino Ribeiro — writing before and during the *Estado Novo* — simultaneously evoked and lampooned tendencies to 'fetishize' rural women, certain novels by Agustina Bessa-Luís and Lídia Jorge in the mid- to late twentieth century articulate a more systematic 'regionalist sexual politics', exploring regional dynamics through a *gendered* ideological lens. Although these narratives do not invite explicitly 'feminist' readings, Bessa-Luís's *Sibila* and Jorge's *Dia* present subversive regionalist perspectives on the position of women within Portuguese society, during the authoritarian regime and immediately following the Carnation Revolution. On the one hand, these novels ironically explore local eccentricities and tensions between regional and national politics, with socio-economic change in distinct areas of rural Portugal assuming feminine contours. On the other hand, regional identities and sexual politics are closely intertwined in these narratives: *Sibila* — through a bourgeois, property-owning female protagonist — systematically destabilizes superficial preconceptions of a 'northern matriarchy', and replaces this problematic model with a 'telluric Sibyl' archetype of female agency; *Dia*'s array of Algarvian peasant women critiques stereotypes of female 'power' in specific locales, and offers the positive alternative of a counter-patriarchal lineage, paving the way for subsequent female liberation.

Theoretically speaking, although 'stereotypes of rural women as traditional and reactionary' abound, one must consider the interaction between gender norms and regional dynamics.[2] Doreen Massey, for instance, claims that 'intersections and mutual influences of "geography" and "gender" are deep and multifarious', with particular locations often being attributed 'masculine' and 'feminine' charac-

teristics.[3] Massey identifies a long-standing 'association between place and culturally constructed images of "Woman"' in geographical discourse, on two levels: 'the first is an association between place and "Home" and the second imbues place with inevitable characteristics of nostalgia'.[4] Further, romanticized feminine stereotypes have been linked to the 'rural idyll', through a common focus on 'beauty and purity'.[5] These comments correspond to the gendering of regional spaces within modern Portuguese literature, particularly during the *Estado Novo*; as highlighted in Chapter 1, the state-sponsored OMEN and similar organizations cultivated images of contented, female peasants, while early to mid-twentieth-century social discourse and cultural production stressed a quasi-eroticized 'association of the "natural" with Woman'.[6]

A related concept is that of (perceived or actual) 'female authority' within specific regional environments, which in some instances is described as 'matriarchal'. The anthropological term 'matriarchy' generally corresponds to a society or community in which women, *rather than men*, exercise economic, domestic, public or spiritual authority and positions of leadership, with associated features including *matrilineality* (the transfer of property and kinship through the female line), *matrilocal marriage* (whereby a husband joins his bride's family home), and *matrifocality* (the primacy of the mother in domestic and family-related affairs).[7] Concerning literary production, Millicent Bell has identified a (somewhat problematic) matriarchal paradigm within women's regional fiction in nineteenth-century America that one ought to consider. According to Bell, woman's attachment to domestic spaces 'remained intact in the denuded rural world [,] [...] making the not-quite-deserted village a matriarchal stronghold where female strength preserved the bonds of community and the vital relation of humanity to nature'.[8]

This semantic association between domesticity, rustic environments and matriarchal archetypes could equally apply to twentieth-century Portugal: national and international anthropologists and ethnographers have identified such features within Portuguese agricultural communities. These claims are both enduring and wide-ranging: Caroline Brettell stresses the 'matri-centrality' of certain north-western villages; Margarida Durães outlines the historically enhanced financial responsibilities of Minho women; Jorge Dias mentions matriarchal 'traces' seemingly existent in the Alentejo, and supposed female 'social dominance' in the Algarve.[9] Clearly, such comments on matriarchal practices within distinct Portuguese regions risk slipping into sweeping generalization; Shawn Parkhurst, for instance, criticizes generic, myth-based characterizations of the matriarchal 'North' which, in his view, ignore specific, localized economic conditions and actual male authority (despite superficial appearances).[10] It is precisely this strategic questioning of regional matriarchal archetypes and stereotypes (in the context of a reactionary dictatorship) that the present chapter will illuminate, with regards to *Sibila* and *Dia*.

A final notion to consider is that of female 'wisdom', 'prophecy' and 'sibylline' characteristics that, despite not amounting to overtly feminist politics, often subvert patriarchal paradigms and challenge male hegemony. This motif in regionalist women's writing is also affiliated with telluric imagery, as Bell outlines: '[f]emale

regionalism celebrates an older source of life-vigor which has been forgotten or exhausted by modern society. The close emphasis on nature [...] has more than a descriptive function — it is a reminder of the immemorial linkage with all life which female wisdom preserves'.[11] For Bell, this 'life-vigor' manifests itself in the 'mythic figure' of a 'herb-gathering wise-woman', whose spiritual significance goes beyond superficial matriarchal precepts: 'This white witch, Sybil [*sic*], earth-mother, [...], maintains the forgotten powers and knowledge of the Mothers'.[12] Accordingly, one must consider the (female) 'Sibyl', a recurring figure in Greek, Roman and African mythology, depicted as a girl or childless woman with the gift of prophecy, often acting as an 'oracle' and channelling the voices of gods.[13] As several scholars attest, Sibyls in 'ancient tradition' are frequently located in isolated spaces, such as coastal caves and rocks, or within the 'rural domain'.[14] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, when discussing the 'revolutionary' and 'anti-hierarchical' potential of the sibylline figure, contend that isolated dwellings (such as caves) may act as spaces of feminine subversion or self-affirmation: 'the cave is a female space and it belonged to a female hierophant, the lost Sibyl, the prophetess who inscribed her "divine intuitions" on tender leaves and fragments of delicate bark'.[15] If one is to extend this analysis to 'remote' or insulated environments within continental Portugal, a connection emerges between regionalist discourse, sibylline fictional characters and dissident or non-conformist sexual politics.

Accordingly, this chapter will conduct an analysis of *Sibila* and *Dia* preoccupied with the following characteristics within these two novels: (a) their ironic portrayal of regional dynamics, bucolic discourses and fetishized images of 'rural women' in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho and Algarve; (b) the extent to which these narratives support or destabilize existing preconceptions of 'matriarchal' practices; and (c) the subversive, anti-patriarchal potential of sibylline or 'prophetess' female characters within the novels' respective regional environments. I shall argue that Bessa-Luís's and Jorge's sexual politics interact with regionalist ideological dynamics, to produce ambivalent and complex images of the 'rural woman' and her agency within Salazarist (and post-Salazarist) Portuguese society.

A sibila: A Subversive, Gendered Portrait of the Entre-Douro-e-Minho

Agustina Bessa-Luís's roots in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho (Vila Meã, in the Douro valley) have been well documented, and linked to the northern rural environments of novels like *Sibila* and *Vale Abraão* [Abraham's Valley] (1991).[16] Regarding the relationship between region, ideology and gender in Bessa-Luís's fiction, in a 1986 interview the author pointedly deployed the word 'provincianismo' [provincialism] to express her disagreement with contemporary feminist agendas: 'Sou muito pouco participante das ideias feministas, desse provincianismo feminista [...] que se desenvolve por toda a parte, hoje' [I identify very little with feminist ideas, with this feminist provincialism that is emerging everywhere these days].[17] This term has several relevant meanings in Portuguese: it can refer to the 'usos ou maneiras' [habits or customs] of a specific geographical province, to a 'backward' mindset

that derives from unfamiliarity with 'cosmopolitan' social norms, or, conversely, to the 'síndroma provinciano' [provincial syndrome] of fascination with large urban centres and superficial symbols of modernity, as critiqued by Fernando Pessoa.[18] Bessa-Luís's allusion to 'feminist provincialism', then, appears scathing, although her claim that it is developing *everywhere* is somewhat contradictory. Above all, the author's comment invites readers to view her novels' sexual politics as intrinsically linked to 'provincial' (or, indeed, *regional*) characteristics.

Likewise, one should consider Bessa-Luís's ideological contradictions: although the writer consistently avoided direct commentary on the *Estado Novo* during that regime, she later claimed that dictatorship-era censorship had been 'mais vivido [...] em Lisboa do que propriamente na província' [more apparent in Lisbon than in the province as such], thereby implying that regional variations had existed in terms of political freedoms.[19] Twelve years after the dictatorship's fall, the author claimed post-revolutionary socialist ideology had had a *inhibiting*, rather than *liberating*, effect on Portuguese public life: 'o 25 de Abril, com todos os benefícios que trouxe, trouxe também uma enorme inibição às pessoas [...]. [...]. Vão-se sentindo apertadas, numa espécie de colete de ideologia de que elas não podem fugir' [the 25th April Revolution, alongside all the benefits it brought, also led people to become enormously inhibited. They're feeling more and more constricted, within a sort of ideological straitjacket that they can't break free from].[20] Further, Bessa-Luís defined herself as a *rooted* 'conservative' ('[e]m certo aspecto, sou o que se chama conservadora. No que se refere a um enraizamento que constitui o melhor da minha cultura' [in certain ways, I am what is called conservative. Regarding a rootedness that represents the best of my culture]), and as suspicious of progressive agendas: 'São úteis, possivelmente, mas não quer dizer que sejam sábias' [they are potentially useful, but that doesn't mean they are wise].[21] Thus, the author maintained some reservations about Portugal's move to the political Left after 1974, and seemingly posited herself as a geographically rooted, 'small-c' conservative. This image is belied, though, by her public support for legalization of abortion in the 2007 referendum, and by *Sibila*'s subversive agenda, as I shall now demonstrate.[22]

The novel's plot — like that of Fernando Brito's 2023 cinematic adaptation — follows several generations of the Teixeira family, residing in the *casa da Vessada* [house of fertile land] agricultural estate within an enclosed Entre-Douro-e-Minho valley. The narrative begins in the mid-twentieth century, as Germana ('Germa') — the heiress who has recently inherited the property — recalls her aunt Joaquina ('Quina') Augusta to her cousin. The diegesis then shifts back to the late nineteenth century, when her grandfather Francisco Teixeira had married her grandmother Maria da Encarnação, and follows the gradual rise of their daughter Quina as she gains financial control of the estate, and becomes embedded in the local social and economic hierarchy. Key to Quina's status is her reputation as a 'Sibyl', with supposedly magical powers of clairvoyance, alongside her shrewd consolidation of the family's wealth and property. In the novel's second half, Quina suffers an Icarian fall into timidity and ill-health after she adopts the illegitimate child of an old friend's servant. This boy (Custódio) grows up to be physically and emotionally weak, and yet increasingly psychologically domineering over his adoptive mother,

to the alarm of Germa and others. The narrative's final chapters speculate as to whether the ageing Quina will make her niece Germa the chief heiress — thus maintaining a *matrilineal* line — or favour Custódio; on her deathbed, she chooses the former. When Custódio's failure to accept this decision leads to his violent suicide, Germa assumes control of the Teixeira estate (and her late aunt's position), thereby maintaining a female line of succession. Finally, the narrative returns to the present, with Germa, now the estate's owner, sitting pensively in Quina's rocking-chair.

Previous readings of *Sibila* have raised several relevant issues for a regionalist ideological approach: Laura Bulger and M. Moreira da Costa believe this novel to depict a closed, clan-like community, removed from national and international events, which clearly merits critical consideration.[23] Other readings contend that 'nature' and the 'feminine universe' are inextricably linked in Bessa-Luís's fiction, producing a quasi-paganistic, harmonious symbiosis between female characters and their natural surroundings.[24] Such comments, while pertinent, do not consider the ultra-conservative dictatorship governing Portugal in 1954, and its impact on the period's cultural production. Due to Quina's unusually authoritative character, and the central role that women play in the *casa da Vessada*, certain critics have characterized this diegetic environment as a 'northern matriarchy', reflecting supposed social, economic and demographic specificities of the rural North.[25] Nonetheless, scholars have seldom considered whether *Sibila* does indeed depict an a-critical 'northern matriarchy' and, if so, how this archetype might be incoherent or politically problematic.[26] Accordingly, my reading of Bessa-Luís's novel will address two concerns: firstly, how *Sibila* offers a (critically) gendered perspective on regionalist dynamics and on social, economic and demographic change within twentieth-century northern Portugal; and secondly, the narrative's sexual politics, by questioning its apparent 'northern matriarchy', and evaluating the ideological implications of its (regionalized) sibylline archetype.

'Confined, closed, without horizon': Bessa-Luís's gendered regional imagery

Initially, one should note *Sibila*'s construction of a specifically Entre-Douro-e-Minho 'provincial' environment: although the fictional *casa da Vessada*'s exact location is never indicated, local topological details mention Porto, the Douro River, the Serra do Marão and the Minho coast.[27] Simultaneously, allusions to regional folklore include the superstitious practice known as the 'menino do fole' [caul baby] — used by Quina to alleviate Custódio's reluctance to speak — and the straw hat worn by Estina, which recalls the humble peasant clothing seen in Camilo Castelo Branco's fiction.[28] Bessa-Luís goes beyond references to regional settlements and practices, however: like the highlanders of *Lobos*, *Sibila*'s local community is associated with the aforementioned Patuleia conflict, with Quina singing old war songs as a child: 'cantava com a vozinha trôpega quadras irreverentes a respeito da Patuleia, em cujas trincheiras combatera o marido de Narcisa Soqueira' [with a shaky little voice, she would sing cheeky ditties about the Patuleia [War], in whose trenches Narcisa Soqueira's husband had fought].[29] This association is bolstered by

Maria da Encarnação's recollections of 'a revolta do povo que não quisera entregar os celeiros, numa altura de revolução e de guerrilhas' [the revolt of the people who didn't want to hand over their granaries, at a time of revolution and guerrilla warfare] — a direct reference to the Patuleia conflict, which emphasizes her family's connection to regionally specific historical memory.[30]

Nonetheless, these characters regularly connect with national events and circumstances, beginning with the protagonist's nickname: Quina — meaning 'group of five' — directly corresponds to the 'quinas' on Portugal's coat of arms, seen on Monarchical and Republican flags. The national turbulence and revolutionary fervour of the period (late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) is represented through Maria da Encarnação's brother José, who uses his local estate to host Republican activists and other revolutionary intellectuals: 'Entusiasta dos ideias efervescentes da República, tinha a casa muito frequentada por políticos, homens de futuro, paladinos de movimentos revolucionários' [Being a fan of the then bubbling ideas of the Republic, his house was often visited by politicians, men of the future, the crusaders of revolutionary movements].[31] Although José's 'escapadas à província' [getaways to the province][32] are initially infrequent, following the 1910 Republican Revolution he deposits his daughters there due to fears of 'sedições, turbulências' [sedition and turbulence], and returns to Porto to deal with urgent political affairs.[33] Further to this ironic juxtaposition of urban turmoil and rustic tranquillity, Bessa-Luís alludes to the apparent political divide between Portugal's second largest city (notorious for its Republican agitation) and northern Portugal's inland villages and small towns that (as mentioned in Chapter 1) supposedly had Monarchical sympathies. In a humorous scene, when José returns from Porto to triumphantly announce the Republic, Maria quickly hides Monarchical symbols in her home: 'mandou serrar as coroas que encimavam os escudos' [she ordered that the crowns topping the coats of arms be sawn off], suggesting an ancestral connection with the defunct regime.[34] Moreover, Bessa-Luís, like Ribeiro in *Faunos*, sardonically alludes to Portugal's Fátima phenomenon — by 1954, a key element of the *Estado Novo*'s ultra-Catholic propaganda — through a supposed Entre-Douro-e-Minho appearance of the Virgin Mary: 'certa virgem cujo aparecimento na região não fora confirmado pela Igreja' [a certain virgin whose appearance in the region hadn't had confirmation from the Church].[35] Therefore, claims that this community is removed from national and international history appear somewhat misplaced.

What *can* be said about the novel's agricultural community, however, is that it is a *self-contained*, intimate environment. Chapter 2, for instance, evokes an atmosphere of proximity and unity amongst the inhabitants: 'a aldeia toda parecia fundida num só lar, os apelos e as pragas elevavam-se no ar limpo e gelado, com uma clareza rude e familiar' [the whole village seemed to merge into one single home; the calling and the cursing rose up through the clean, icy air, with a rough and intimate clarity].[36] Here, Bessa-Luís's depicts a sociable and cohesive Entre-Douro-e-Minho village scene, which is then directly linked to the Teixeira family's female members; as Chapter 9 mentions, the *casa da Vessada* women are constantly kept abreast of all events within their community: 'Toda a freguesia, com suas casas, seus campos e suas gentes, e as origens deles, e também todos os seus pensamentos e movimentos

todos, passavam naquela lareira' [The entire parish, with its various houses, fields and peoples, and their roots, as well as all their thoughts and movements, passed by that hearth].[37] The author hereby constructs an environment of northern rural intimacy that is frequently *gendered*, revolving around the Teixeira family's female members.

Closely related to this intimate environment is *Sibila*'s seemingly bucolic imagery, and its apparently romanticized descriptions of the Entre-Douro-e-Minho countryside around the *casa da Vessada*. This aesthetic is apparent from the beginning of the narrative, immediately prior to Germa's recollection of her family's history: 'O tempo estava morno, impregnado dessa quietude de natureza exaurida que se encontra num baque ondulante, de folha, ou na água que corre inutilmente pela terra eriçada de canas donde a bandeira de milho foi cortada' [The weather was tepid, infused with that stillness of drained nature found in a rippling valley of leaves, or in the water running idly through the cane-studded earth, from which the corn leaf had been cut].[38] Equally sensorial depictions of the local landscape appear in Chapter 3, when Quina is praying in the moonlight: 'Os mochos piavam no monte, que era como um paredão onde quebravam todos os sons. Pelas portadas de vidro, [...], viam-se as nuvens prateadas, como vagas, e a lua esverdeada, que parecia deslocar-se pelo firmamento, velozmente' [the owls were hooting up on the hill, which was like a huge wall on which all kinds of sounds broke. Through the glass shutters [...] silvery, hazy clouds could be seen, as could the emerald moon, which seemed to be floating swiftly towards the heavens].[39] In this latter example, Bessa-Luís portrays the nearby hilltop as a place of biodiversity and natural harmony, and associates the colourful moon overhead with celestial providence.

At other moments in the diegesis, the supposed natural purity of *Sibila*'s Entre-Douro-e-Minho environment is explicitly *feminized*, as evidenced by Chapter 5's description of floral, virginal vegetation (albeit next to roads): 'as bermas todas onde nasciam morangos-bravos, as "pascoinhas" lilases com que se enfeita a mesa da visita pascal, juntamente com alecrim, a "coroa de virgem" que cresce em florações entre os lódãos' [all of the roadsides where wild strawberries were sprouting, alongside the lilac wild citrina 'Easter flowers' — used to decorate the tables for Easter visits — plus rosemary, the 'Virgin Crown' that grows between lotus blossom trees].[40] The estate's fertile soil is then directly linked to the childbirth experienced by generations of rural women, next to a perennial tree: 'Aquela terra negra, [...], onde a mesma árvore foi fiel e deu durante tanto tempo o seu fruto, onde tantas mulheres gritaram a sua hora de parto' [That blackened earth, [...], where the same tree had always been loyal and had given its fruit for so long, where so many women had screamed during childbirth].[41] Accordingly, suggestions that 'nature' and the 'feminine universe' are inextricably linked in *Sibila* can be entertained, but they must also be historicized; the novel's interaction between femininity and Entre-Douro-e-Minho landscapes — like Ribeiro's female peasants and their relationship with the Beira Alta highlands — should be read in light of extant tendencies to 'fetishize' rural women, and to situate them within a seemingly 'natural' social order of feminine limitation and subservience.

Hence, it would be misleading to argue that Bessa-Luís reproduces bucolic tropes unconsciously or a-critically, in line with the Salazarist regime's regionalist-nationalist discourse. In fact, a number of seemingly idyllic passages in *Sibila* can be viewed as self-consciously trite, sardonic or satirical. This is particularly apparent from Quina's pastoral prayer in Chapter 3; here the narrator uses platitudinous language, while ironically alluding to 'primitive' peasants: 'Era um clamor doce, imperativo e quente, um alento de fé tão cheio de pura espiritualidade como só se encontra nesses clãs primitivos, para quem a solidão e a natureza são excelsas formas de pensamento' [It was a sweet, warm and imploring cry — one of those breaths of faith, of pure spirituality, that are only found in such primitive clans, for whom nature and solitude are the most sublime forms of thoughts].[42] Subsequently, Quina's prayer is tinged with facetiousness, as she juxtaposes pleas for fertile fields and bounty with references to deceitful friends and rent-dodging tenant farmers:

> Abençoai os nossos campos, para que eles tenham água e nos dêem pão. Abençoai a nossa casa, o nosso gado, os nossos criados. Abençoai os nossos homens, os nossos frutos, que tudo aconteça para bem. Levai para longe a fome, a peste, a guerra e os amigos que mentem. [...] Abençoai também os nossos moinhos e os caseiros deles, que não pagam a renda há tanto tempo...
>
> [Bless our fields, so that they may have water and give us bread. Bless our house, our cattle, our servants. Bless our men, our harvests; may they all bring prosperity. Deliver us from hunger, from plague, from war and from friends who bear false witness. Bless, also, our mills and their tenants, who have not paid their rent for so long...][43]

The humoristic tone above is palpable, in that the protagonist's adherence to performative religious ritual is accompanied by cynical pragmatism. Moreover, Quina's attempts to banish external threats, such as hunger, plague and war, has two significant effects: firstly, her appeal challenges preconceptions of rural isolation, given that she is afraid of external tribulations; secondly, she reminds the reader that Entre-Douro-e-Minho rural communities were indeed severely impacted by armed conflict and illness in the early twentieth century, given the enlisting of local men to fight in the First World War, and numerous deaths due to the 1918–20 Spanish Flu pandemic.[44]

Elsewhere, idyllic preconceptions of the Entre-Douro-e-Minho are systematically undermined through Bessa-Luís's anti-bucolic landscape descriptions. This is evident in Chapter 6, when the new Abbot comes to dine at the *casa da Vessada* and bears witness to the austere, somewhat unsettling panoramic view:

> Bonito é isto — disse ele. E apontou com o garfo os campos em declive [...] e que estavam reluzentes de chuva, ressumando uma frescura ligeiramente depressiva, inquietante, pois tudo parecia demasiado circunscrito, fechado e sem horizonte, naquele vale onde a água cachoava sem fazer torrente, onde as árvores tinham parado de crescer [...].
>
> ['This is beautiful', he said. And, with his fork, he pointed at the rolling fields [...] glistening with rain, exuding a slightly melancholy and disconcerting freshness, for everything seemed too confined, closed and without horizon,

> within that valley where water cascaded without forming a flood, where the trees had stopped growing [...].][45]

This vista is significantly drearier than the apparently idyllic renderings seen elsewhere in the narrative; despite the Abbot's remarks on the valley's apparent beauty, Bessa-Luís's contradictory pairing of 'freshness' with the adjective 'inquietante' [disconcerting] produces a jarring dissonance, whereas the suggestion that this atmosphere is 'horizon-less' deviates from depictions of spatial openness earlier in the diegesis. Finally, the author's references to 'stunted trees' denote a barren, bleak landscape in which 'os próprios vultos dos jornaleiros [...] comunicavam solidão' [even the day labourers' shadows [...] conveyed solitude], thereby undermining images of feminine fertility articulated elsewhere.[46]

Further, Bessa-Luís deploys this clerical character to lampoon romanticized, 'fetishized' and quasi-sexualized notions of Portuguese 'rustic women', with the following description of grotesque female devotees at the Abbot's previous Minho parish: '[um] lugarejo do Minho, à beira-mar, onde tinha por rebanho um punhado de sargaceiras que comungavam antes da confissão e que aos vinte anos eram velhas, os dentes apodrecidos, as pernas deformadas pelo salitre' [a seaside hamlet in the Minho, where his flock had been a handful of women selling gulfweed, who would receive communion before confession and who would grow old by their twentieth birthday, their teeth rotted, their legs disfigured by saltpetre].[47] Thus, *Sibila*'s portrayals of agricultural communities (and of rural women) within the Entre-Douro-e-Minho oscillate between *conforming to* and *reacting against* bucolic tropes and rustic archetypes, with apparent pastoral imagery clashing with drab scenery, undesirable labour practices and repugnant peasants.

Simultaneously, Bessa-Luís both evokes and challenges common urban versus rural dichotomies within mid-twentieth-century Portugal, through her treatment of certain female characters. Several women connected to Quina and to the *casa da Vessada* vehemently reject the urban environments of Lisbon and Porto, as demonstrated by the disinterest of Narcisa Soqueira (the Teixeiras' neighbour) in visiting such cities: 'Precisava de dez vidas ainda para conhecer isso tudo tão bem como conheço a minha freguesia'; '[Augusto] Arrastou-a ainda para a capital' [I would need another ten lifetimes to become as familiar with all that as I am with my own parish; [Augusto], nevertheless, dragged her to the capital].[48] Likewise, Elisa Aida (Quina's childhood friend who marries a foreign aristocrat) prefers the seemingly lazy, leisurely pace of the northern countryside over life in Lisbon: 'Fora porque ela amava essa existência desleixada, sem deixar de ser dissipadora, que não se acostumara nunca à capital' [It was because she loved that slovenly (and, unavoidably, careless) existence that she had never adapted to life in the capital].[49] Moreover, Elisa evidences a quasi-fetishistic relationship with rustic customs and dress, which her husband then strongly disapproves of: 'Enquanto rapariga, ela tomava como divertimento mascarar-se de camponesa e, com uma toalha de renda pelo rosto, comparecer nas eiras das esfolhadas. [...] Que *chica pueblana* você me saiu! — recriminava o conde' [As a girl, she would entertain herself by dressing as a peasant girl and, with a lace cloth over her face, would appear in the corn threshing

floors. [...] 'What a country *chica* you've grown up to be!', the count would reproach her].[50] A certain degree of class snobbery is patent here, in that Elisa's husband voices displeasure and embarrassment at his wife's peasant-like appearance; thus, Bessa-Luís challenges discourses of humble rustic contentment promoted throughout Salazarist Portuguese society.

In addition, while there is a clear gulf between the attitudes and lifestyles of the Teixeira sisters and those of their Porto-dwelling female relatives, these distinctions are manifestly based on stereotypes and regurgitated doctrines. Firstly, Estina's and Quina's cousins maintain an idealized notion of the rural Entre-Douro-e-Minho ('elas vinham tomadas dessa adoração romântica pelo campo, a curiosidade do rústico, a pretensão do simples' [they were captivated by that romantic worship of the countryside, a curiosity for the rustic, a desire for simplicity); secondly, these girls apparently enjoy greater sexual freedom than their provincial cousins, as indicated by their 'meias curtas, a cintura muito baixa, marcada com faixas de *liberty*' [short stockings, low waistlines, branded with *Liberty* stripes].[51] This exaggerated juxtaposition of female characters in urban and rural environments questions the strategies and organizations developed by the *Estado Novo*, designed to minimize migration to large cities, believed to harbour threatening, subversive sexual politics.

Similarly, Bessa-Luís's portrayal of Porto, while unflattering, rejects a simplistic contrast between urban and rural communities. This is apparent in the experiences of Quina's brothers (João and Abel) of residing in the city, as outlined in Chapter 9: 'João [...] vivia na cidade uma existência de pobre, engavetado num prédio de andares e tendo por horizonte as varandas onde se arejavam tapetes velhos e as mulheres papagueavam com [...] familiaridade' [João [...] led a poor man's life in the city, boxed inside a multi-storey building, with a horizon of balconies where old rugs were aired out, and where women would chatter intimately like parrots].[52] Although the adjective 'engavetado' [boxed] here gestures towards urban overcrowding, the narrator's reference to João's 'horizon of balconies' directly recalls earlier depictions of the *casa da Vessada* valley, as 'confined, closed and without horizon'. Moreover, the allusion to women 'intimately' chattering across Porto's rooftops gestures towards the 'rough and intimate clarity' previously associated with the rural Entre-Douro-e-Minho. Far from simplistically contrasting rural beauty and urban unseemliness, then, the narrative *equates* the city and the northern countryside on several occasions, refusing to idealize either environment.

Sibila is equally ironic when associating rural/regional space with nostalgic sentiment — an association which, as Massey suggests, has reactionary implications. A key example of Bessa-Luís's cynical approach to nostalgia is Elisa Aida's attachment to her rural childhood home: 'ela sempre voltava para a província, aos lugares onde se criara [...]. Ficara-lhe da infância um gosto bravio pelas coisas do campo, as estradinhas poeirentas que percorria agora na sua caleche verde-escura, fazendo pasmar os aldeões que regressavam das feiras' [she would always return to the province, to the places where she'd grown up [...]. A wild taste for countryside things had stayed with her since childhood, for the dusty little roads she was driving along now in her dark-green calèche, astounding the villagers who were returning

from the market].[53] In this excerpt, the narrator explicitly links Elisa's fascination with rustic pleasures to her romanticized peasant infancy, which contrasts sharply with the shock that aristocratic comforts (e.g. her *calèche* vehicle) cause to local agricultural workers when she returns in adulthood. Similar cynicism surrounds Quina's cousin Adriana, who shelters from a marital indiscretion in her father's estate: 'Um escândalo do marido, [...], fizera-a buscar refúgio na velha mansão de província onde o pai morrera e onde todos os lugares tinham um bafo de infância' [One of her husband's scandals [...] had forced her to seek refuge in the old provincial mansion, where her father had died and where every nook and cranny blew a gentle childhood breeze].[54] Here, Adriana's provincial estate functions as a *locus* of convenient escape and comforting sentimentality, in the face of social embarrassment or family strife.

Accordingly, Bessa-Luís frequently depicts the *casa da Vessada* as a declining rural community, due to twentieth-century urbanization and emigration patterns.[55] Equally apparent, however, is the heavily gendered lexicon that Bessa-Luís deploys around this increasingly redundant way of life, as indicated by Germa's childhood memories: 'de súbito, Germa sentiu uma saudade imensa da casa da Vessada, [...], [...] cujo encanto, originalidade, perfume e graça se lhe revelavam agora, como acontecia com uma matéria fóssil, morta, carvões sepultados na terra' [suddenly, Germa felt an immense nostalgic yearning for the *casa da Vessada* [...], [...] whose charm, singularity, smell and grace revealed themselves to her now, just like a dead, fossilized material, like pieces of coal buried in the earth].[56] This passage, which associates stereotypical images of femininity (enchantment, scent and grace) with death, burial and commemoration, precedes the ageing Quina's realization that her estate is nearing its demise: 'Pela primeira vez, Quina via aquela casa fechada e vazia, como amarrotada entre a treva e já feita ruína, recordação, passado. E teve a impressão de estar a assistir a alguma coisa irremediavelmente acontecida, e afastando-se dela' [For the first time, Quina was seeing that house closed and empty, as if crumpled amongst the darkness, now transformed into a ruin, a memory, a remnant of the past. And she felt as if she were witnessing something irretrievably happened, from which she was moving further and further away].[57] Images of irrevocable decay here are intensified by the past participle of 'acontecer' [to happen], suggesting a time period from which Quina is becoming increasingly estranged. Germa then articulates this sentiment definitively at the novel's end: 'A família chegou, pois, ao seu auge — é preciso que pereça, então' [The family, then, has reached its peak — it must therefore perish].[58] Nonetheless, while the narrator seemingly makes essentialist generalizations, describing all women as inextricably tied to the past ('as mulheres são rebarbativas às inovações. No fundo da sua natureza, há um apelo ao primitivo, ao antigo, ao passado' [women are repulsed by innovations. Deep within their nature is a call to the primitive, to the old, to the past]), this gender dichotomy is too trite and simplistic as to signify Bessa-Luís's sole intended message.[59] As outlined above, rural (female) and urban (male) binary tensions throughout the novel should be treated with healthy scepticism.

In fact, *Sibila* frequently problematizes superficial oppositions between female (agricultural/archaic) and male (industrial/modernizing) professional roles. Despite

Quina's brothers' move to Porto, João stubbornly maintains a meagre and shabby *quintal* behind his city home, suggesting a subconscious attachment to his agrarian roots: 'Uma faixa de terreno, com um eriçado de estacas de feijoeiro, via-se em baixo. Era exíguo e pobre' [a narrow plot of land, containing a prickly row of beanpoles, could be seen below. It was meagre and poor].[60] Likewise, while Abel derides the decline of his family's agricultural traditions, he expresses jealously and resentment towards Quina's power over that heritage: 'O nosso futuro não está na lavoura, vê-se. Entretanto, Quina conseguiu apropriar-se da representação de todo o nosso passado de lavradores' [Our future doesn't lie with farming, that much is clear. Quina, however, has managed to seize control over how our entire farming past is represented].[61] Male Teixeira family members, then, demonstrate a bitter awareness that their family's agricultural patrimony (or, more, specifically, its *representation*) has been appropriated by a female genealogical line, to be inherited by Germa. The 'espécie de aristocracia *ab imo* [...], da terra' [sort of aristocracy from the bottom [...], from the earth] referenced in the novel's opening pages,[62] then, operates in accordance with seemingly matriarchal precepts. Nonetheless, as I shall now outline, Bessa-Luís's treatment of the 'northern matriarch' archetype is far from complimentary.

The Matriarch versus the Sibyl

Sibila undoubtedly references several matriarchal features and characteristics within its Entre-Douro-e-Minho rustic environment. 'Matri-centrality' is alluded to when Quina's extended family is described as a 'corte feminina' [feminine court], and when the narrator affirms that, generally speaking, traditions are inherited through the maternal line: 'os nomes das casas transmitem-se pelos filhos varões, mas os seus costumes são herança de mulheres' [the names of houses are passed down to male offspring, but their customs are the legacy of women].[63] Further characteristics of matrilineality are associated with the Teixeira dynasty, including the fact that Abel accidentally receives the surname of Maria da Encarnação, 'fulcro de continuidade e de calor' [mainstay of continuity and of warmth], meaning that her grandchild Germa will inherit her surname.[64] It is significant, then, that Quina designates Germa — rather than Estina or any surviving male relative — as the principal heiress to her estate, thereby securing matrilineal control of the *casa da Vessada* over successive generations. Indeed, this genealogical link between Quina and Germa becomes unmistakeable when the aunt designates her niece as her 'herdeira absoluta' [absolute heiress], explicitly recalling Quina's previous status as the property's 'senhora absoluta' [absolute mistress].[65]

Alongside this seemingly matriarchal family structure, the presence and actions of men are frequently posited as 'fatais' [fatal] for the *casa da Vessada*'s fortunes, with Francisco Teixeira described as incompetent, lazy and disloyal:

> Começavam a fazer-se visíveis os resultados da fanfarronice estróina de Francisco Teixeira. O desequilíbrio doméstico tomava, com o tempo, uma feição mais grave. Os gastos do amo, o seu profundo desleixo das terras, obrigavam agora a família a uma estreita temperança. Às vezes o dinheiro faltava para pagar as jornas, para comprar o gado necessário à lavoira.

> [The results of Francisco Teixeira's flamboyant, spendthrift ways began to emerge. Over time, this household imbalance took on more serious implications. The master's expenditure, and his profound neglect of the landholdings, were now forcing the family to make strict economies. At times, there was no money to pay the wages, or to buy the cattle needed for ploughing].[66]

Moreover, like their father before them, João and Abel exhibit 'um gosto de mándria, de frívolos costumes, de prazeres' [a taste for slacking, for frivolous habits, for earthly pleasures], contributing little to the estate and leaving their female relatives to complete agricultural labour alongside domestic tasks: 'Deixavam às mulheres os cuidados da lavoura, [...], e saíam a flanar pelas freguesias, deitando sortes aos amores. Eram muito do pai, eles' [They would leave the cares of farming to the women [...], and stroll around the parishes outside, trying their luck with lovers. They were much like their father].[67] Similarly, Custódio — Quina's pampered adopted son — shocks visitors with his idleness: 'Meu Deus, Quina! Porque não pões uma enxada nas mãos deste rapaz! Estás a criar um vadio na tua casa' [My God, Quina! Why don't you put a hoe in the boy's hands! You're raising a loafer within your house].[68] In these instances, Bessa-Luís ridicules the images of male leadership, peasant diligence and patriarchal virtue (accompanied by female submission and domestic dedication) that, as mentioned in Chapter 1, characterized much Salazarist propaganda.

Nonetheless, reading *Sibila* simply as a 'realistic' reflection of matriarchal northern Portugal is problematic, for several reasons. Beyond the aforementioned inaccuracies and preconceptions that such an approach entails, no concrete details within the narrative make this association between the Entre-Douro-e-Minho and matriarchy explicit. Indeed, one ought to consider whether the novel claims to represent an objective matriarchal social reality in Portugal's rural North, or whether it functions as a metonymy of an established 'northern matriarchy' stereotype in Portuguese cultural memory. I would argue the latter: overwhelmingly, the author is concerned with destabilizing, re-configuring, re-shaping and re-purposing the 'myth of matriarchy', rather than simply reproducing it.

In addition, the central role of women within the Teixeira household does not imbue those female family members with matriarchal authority; rather, their freedom to pursue individual passions and careers is restricted by male indolence or absence: 'As mulheres viam-se a braços com toda a responsabilidade, o que não era novo para elas' [The women were left shouldering all the responsibility, which was not new to them].[69] Moreover, not all Teixeira women are committed to agricultural labour, administration and management; Estina is preferred and indulged by her mother during her childhood, in contrast to the physical demands imposed upon Quina: 'Estina recebera uma educação cuidadosa, era cheia de prendas [...]. [...] Enquanto ela optava pelas tarefas que lhe permitiam permanecer sentada nos bancos da cozinha, [...], Quina ficava entregue dos trabalhos que exigiam maior actividade e energia' [Estina had been raised gently, always showered with gifts. [...]. While she would choose tasks allowing her to stay seated on the kitchen benches [...], Quina was left in charge of jobs requiring more energy and activity].[70] Estina's position within the family's supposedly 'matriarchal' framework is further

undermined by her marriage to Inácio Lucas; despite Lucas's physical abuse, she refuses to leave him,[71] thereby complicating the novel's apparent binary opposition between authoritative women and indolent, submissive men. Finally, the fact that the Teixeira household employs numerous female domestic workers functions not only as a reminder of class differences within twentieth-century Portuguese society, but also as a limitation on the northern matriarchy's prospects for *all* women within that regional context.

Above all, Quina embodies the restraints and contradictions of the matriarchal female archetype within the Entre-Douro-e-Minho countryside. Certainly, *Sibila*'s 'Promethean woman'[72] demonstrates financial and entrepreneurial acumen, within the *casa da Vessada* and in her wider local community: 'Quina era imprescindível com o seu tacto político a respeito de relações, negócios, contratos. Nas feiras fizera-se conhecida, [...], cumprimentando aqui, escolhendo gado mais além' [Quina, with her political tact concerning relationships, business and contracts, was indispensable. At the fairs she made herself known, greeting people here, choosing cattle there].[73] Nonetheless, from an early age this character develops a sceptical attitude towards her supposedly matriarchal extended family:

> A corte feminina sempre tão numerosa em que vivia, incluindo suas tias e casas continuadas por elas, causava-lhe irritação, pois ela lastimava desde menina o ser considerada um número entre a descendência de raparigas submissas e incapazes que se destinam a uma aliança tutelada, e que, mesmo atingindo o matriarcado, eram vencidas.
>
> [The invariably large feminine court in which she lived — including her aunts and the homes that they sustained — irritated her, for, since her childhood, she had resented being another branch in the family tree of those submissive and incompetent girls, who were destined for a managed alliance, and who would be defeated, even as they reached the matriarchy].[74]

This excerpt — including the novel's only explicit use of the term 'matriarcado' [matriarchy] — reveals Quina's belief that apparent female dominance eventually produces submissive women, who find themselves defeated. The protagonist's cynical view of other women intensifies in her later years, when she ponders their enslaved condition: 'havia nessa condição de escravas regaladas alguma coisa que a fazia sentir-se frustrada como mulher' [in that condition of indulged slaves, there was something that made her feel frustrated as a woman].[75] Here, one can read the oxymoron 'escravas regaladas' [indulged slaves] as a thinly veiled critique of social policy under successive Portuguese regimes (and particularly under Salazarism), which made illusory promises of domestic female authority.

In fact, Quina avoids embracing her *femininity* as a means of achieving financial success and independence, preferring the respect given to her as an agricultural landlord — the traditional domain of the *paterfamilias*: 'sentia mais prazer pelas honras feitas ao seu nome de proprietária, do que pela galanteria dedicada à mulher' [she was more pleased by the honours that her name received as a landowner, than she was about the chivalry afforded to her as a woman].[76] The character's personal ambitions are therefore simultaneously patriarchal and territorial, as indicated by

her approximation to Abraham, the quintessential, divinely ordained patriarch: 'as suas ambições proliferaram como a tribo de Abraão e encheram a terra inteira — que não era um globo ligeiramente achatado nos pólos, mas todo o espaço até aos limites dos seus conhecimentos' [her ambitions multiplied like Abraham's tribe and filled the entire earth — which was not a globe slightly flattened at its poles, but all of space, unto the limits of her knowledge].[77] While this passage posits Quina as 'usurping the founding power of Old Testament patriarchy' and seeking to 'possess the phallus',[78] a spatial interpretation is also possible. The protagonist's desire for limitless territorial expansion is clear — throughout not just the terrestrial 'globe', but 'all space' — although there is a caveat: Quina's ability to achieve this depends on her *knowledge* of the world around her, thereby posing a limitation. This character's patriarchal ambitions are therefore explored, and problematized, through geographical imagery.

In addition, several female family members have unusually masculine physical attributes, including Quina's 'máscula altivez' [manly haughtiness], Quina's and Maria's 'acentos viris' [virile facets], and Quina's estranged aunt, a 'musculosa amazona' [muscular Amazon] with abnormal strength — a direct reference to the Amazons (female warrior tribes) of Greco-Roman mythology.[79] *Sibila*'s construction of an Entre-Douro-e-Minho matriarchal dynasty, then, should be questioned: is this succession of northern rural women simply a group of men with vaginas, relying on patriarchal norms and 'phallogocentric ventriloquism'[80] to maintain respect and authority? Or does Bessa-Luís question the rigidity of 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits, in an approach that might today be regarded as *queer*?

Quina's position between masculine and feminine tropes is indeed unstable, not least because her childhood influences are both paternal ('Entre Quina e o pai foi [...] surgindo uma espécie de aliança secreta' [between Quina and her father [...] a sort of secret alliance was emerging]) and maternal: 'desde muito nova, lidava sob o estímulo da mãe' [from a young age, she struggled under her mother's encouragement].[81] Quina appears to have little respect for patriarchal societal norms, choosing never to marry and advising Germa against the error of matrimony: 'não te cases nunca. É a maior desgraça que pode acontecer a uma mulher' [never get married. It's the greatest tragedy that can befall a woman].[82] The narrative then posits motherhood as a dangerous fate for the female protagonist: Quina's 'desvario todo maternal' [entirely maternal folly] in adopting Custódio transforms her into 'uma mulher constantemente acabrunhada por uma certa timidez' [a woman constantly haunted by a certain timidity], and dominated by a pampered boy.[83] The protagonist's destiny then, is that of an extraordinary woman punished by a male for her earlier achievements in traditionally masculine spheres: 'venceu e foi vencida' [she defeated, and was herself defeated].[84] The verb 'vencer' [to defeat] — repeated several times throughout the novel — is here rendered in the active voice followed by the passive, suggesting a double bind of initial success and subsequent downfall, the latter of which results from Quina's acceptance of a *maternal* role. If, following Adrienne Rich, '[p]atriarchy depends on the mother to act as a conservative influence', having 'created images of the archetypal Mother which reinforce the

conservatism of motherhood',[85] *Sibila* portrays maternal roles — and the supposed 'northern matriarchy' — as detrimental to Portuguese women, operating within an ultra-patriarchal national context.

Accordingly, Bessa-Luís's treatment of a prevailing regional matriarchy stereotype is not *Sibila*'s most politically subversive aspect, although its destabilization of that image can be read as ideologically potent. Instead, the author's portrayal of the Sibyl emerges as the narrative's most significant (and most *regional*) challenge to extant gender roles within mid-twentieth-century Portuguese society. Admittedly, the novel distances itself from the Sibyls of classical Greco-Roman mythology, rejecting the cave-dwelling archetype in a rather gruesome manner: Estina's handicapped daughter is found dead in an isolated, cavern-like mine shaft: 'uma mina abandonada, covil de morcegos' [an abandoned mine; a lair of bats].[86] Nonetheless, what is at stake is Bessa-Luís's 'ironic' rendering of this mythological figure,[87] the extent to which it is *regionalized*, and its subversive potential in terms of Portuguese sexual politics.

Quina — the titular Sibyl of the novel — clearly assumes 'telluric' characteristics, associated with the rustic environment from which she derives her wisdom and powers of prophecy: 'Mercê dum sentido finíssimo para se embrenhar nos fenómenos da natureza, humana ou simplesmente do meio vital, [...], depressa adquiriu uma sabedoria profunda acerca de todos os ritmos da consciência, do instinto, das forças telúricas' [By virtue of an intense ability to immerse herself within natural, human (or, simply, life-giving) phenomena, [...], she quickly acquired a deep wisdom about the rhythms of consciousness, of instinct, of telluric forces].[88] Through repeated simile, Bessa-Luís links Quina's gift of anticipation to her being attuned with the local rustic environment:

> Como o que distingue para lá das montanhas qual a sombra de fumo, de pó ou de nuvem; como o que na floresta conhece o rasto do animal em tempo de caça ou tempo de amores; como o que aspira no vento o perigo, como o que pressente na atmosfera a confiança ou a traição, assim ela vivia [...].
>
> [Like that which, beyond the mountain peaks, can distinguish the shadow of smoke from that of dust and of clouds; like that which, in the forest, can recognize animal trails in hunting or mating season; like that which can detect danger in the wind, like that which can sense trust or betrayal in the atmosphere, so did she live [...].][89]

Through this close relationship with surrounding *flora* and *fauna*, Quina frequently deploys her soothsaying abilities in order to manage agricultural tasks within the estate: 'uma aranha que tecia a sua teia duma folha a outra dum pé de malva a decidia a mandar espalhar o grão na eira, ou os carolos de milho ainda húmidos da debulha' [a spider spinning its web from one mallow plant leaf to another would persuade her to have the grain spread out onto the threshing floor, or the corn cobs still wet from the threshing].[90] At other moments, this 'Sibyl' is called upon to interpret her friends' dreams involving farm animals: 'Olha, sibila, sonhei esta noite com galinhas [...]. Que será que me espera?' [Hey, *sibila*, I dreamed about hens last night. What does it mean for me?].[91] Furthermore, Quina's sibylline persona is

associated with the smell of apples and other fragrant flora, a motif that first appears at the beginning of the novel: 'aquela sala, de tecto baixo, onde pairava um cheiro de pragana e maçã' [that low-ceiling room, in which a smell of chaff and apples lingered].[92] These fragrances are then linked to Quina's presence in the *casa da Vessada* ('[a]quela sala que cheirava a maçã e a folhelho' [that room smelling of apples and corn husks]), and, ultimately, to Germa, when she inherits the 'Sibyl' sobriquet from her late aunt: 'Ela move-se ritmicamente, baloiçando-se naquela sala onde se recolhem em pilhas as maçãs; todo o ar rescende a maçã que suga da própria pele a frescura [...]. Eis Germa, eis a sua vez agora e o tempo de traduzir a voz da sua sibila' [She moves rhythmically, rocking back and forth in that room collecting piles of apples; the surrounding air emanates the aroma of apples, which suck their freshness from their own skin [...]. Here is Germa, this is her turn now; the time has come to translate the voice of her Sibyl].[93] To a certain extent, this semi-bucolic, sensorial lexicon recalls the aforementioned 'pastoral ideology' of the period, and Salazarism's 'fetishized' equation of rural women with 'natural' characteristics. While there is little regional specificity attached to this vocabulary, Bessa-Luís's sibylline imagery often recalls a 'regionalist' ideological precedent.

Overwhelmingly apparent, though, is Bessa-Luís's use of sibylline figures (particularly Quina) to advance dissidence and transgression. Beside the protagonist's life-long virginity — 'frequently associated with sibyls'[94] — which conflicts with Salazarism's insistence on marriage and motherhood, *Sibila* deploys this mythological archetype to challenge binary preconceptions of urban 'civilization' and rustic 'backwardness'. The narrator seemingly depicts the protagonist's prophetic abilities as primitive and savage, in contrast to modern man's apparent development: 'assim ela vivia, intensamente adaptada com essa capacidade selvagem de defesa, de astúcia, de previsão e pré-conhecimento da vida e das coisas e que o homem civilizado, [...], vai perdendo ou nunca desenvolve por completo' [thus did she live, intensely adapted with this wild capacity for self-defence, for guile, for prediction and for foreknowledge of life and of things, all of which today's civilized man [...] is gradually losing or never completely develops].[95] This juxtaposition of 'wild' and 'civilized' functions as a dual dichotomy — a geographical as well as gendered one — which initially suggests 'a quasi-mystical representation of Portugal's rural, preurban past in terms of intuitive, prerational [...] sybilline thought'.[96] The importance of irony and hyperbole to this novel should not be forgotten, however: if, as noted above, regional stereotypes are systematically undermined throughout *Sibila*, one can assume that Bessa-Luís's simplistic contrast here between rustic female ignorance and educated male civilization is an intentional, self-conscious lampooning of that dichotomy.

Another way in which Quina's sibylline persona disrupts the patriarchal *status quo* is through the threat that this character poses to male family members: Quina's misogynistic brother-in-law Inácio, for example, aggressively labels her a 'bruxa' [witch], revealing his pathological fears of a rustic prophetess: 'Foi aquela bruxa que veio augurar isso? Foi esse rato com asas?' [was it that witch who foresaw it? Was it that mouse with wings?].[97] Inácio is intimidated by his sister-in-law's faculties,

and with good reason: Quina gradually achieves an 'ascendência espiritual' [spiritual ascendency], especially over those men that belittle her 'qualidades inatas' [innate qualities] as primitive magic.[98] Thus, Bessa-Luís recuperates some key emancipatory possibilities of the sibylline archetype, according to feminist scholars: the 'revolutionary "mother-goddess myth"', granting 'power and dignity to women' (Gilbert and Gubar); and the 'female wisdom', 'life-vigor' and 'forgotten powers and knowledge' (Bell) denoted by the mythological Sibyl figure within female regional fiction.[99] Overwhelmingly, it is this anticipatory vision of female agency, as opposed to simplistic matriarchal stereotypes, that informs *Sibila*'s sexual politics.

Quina's supernatural, anti-patriarchal powers are limited, however, by her deficient *awareness* of those 'soothsaying' faculties ('Quina nunca soube até que ponto a sua condição espiritual era poderosa' [Quina never knew the degree to which her spiritual condition was powerful]), which extends to her authority over the male sex: 'Conhecia os homens sem o aprender jamais' [she knew men, without ever realizing it].[100] Hence, Custódio is able to manipulate and weaken his adoptive mother, reducing her from an 'oráculo da geração anterior' [oracle of the previous generation] to the harbinger of 'advertências moralistas' [moralistic warnings].[101] In this sense, Bessa-Luís's Entre-Douro-e-Minho version of the sibylline myth has revolutionary *potential* with regards to the role of women in Salazarist Portugal, while remaining, as scholars have outlined, a 'superação inconclusa': an unfulfilled opportunity for female advancement. *Sibila*'s reader is left with an *anticipation* of future social change at the end of the diegesis, particularly when Germa assumes her aunt's sibylline legacy: 'quem é ela para ser um pouco mais do que Quina e esperar que os tempos novos sejam mais aptos a esclarecer o homem e a trazer-lhe a solução de si próprio?' [who is she to go a little further than Quina, and to hope that the new ages are able to enlighten man and offer him a solution for himself?].[102] The pointed reference to 'new ages' here suggests opportunities for future transformation within Portuguese society, towards a more just (yet not necessarily *equitable*) relationship between the sexes. *Sibila*, then, can be interpreted as a prolepsis of sorts, but one that is fraught with ambivalence; whether Germa will make full use of the revolutionary tools that her sibylline aunt had at her disposal (but had never *understood*) remains uncertain. Bessa-Luís's novel seemingly operates within the restricted 'horizons' of *Estado Novo* Portugal — in terms of female agency as well as the allowances of censorship — but it does not hesitate to *subvert* the ultra-patriarchal *status quo*.

In summary, I have hesitated to label *Sibila* a 'feminist' novel in an archetypal sense, not only because the author explicitly rejects what she terms 'feminist provincialism', but also because an analysis of this narrative through the lenses of regional dynamics, matriarchal stereotypes and sibylline archetypes allows for a productive understanding of its gendered regionalist discourse. Specifically, the author exploits and challenges idyllic stereotypes of the rural Entre-Douro-e-Minho through a (destabilized) dichotomy, deconstructs preconceptions of a 'northern matriarchy' and recalls the classical 'Sibyl' in a regional context, as a way

of *anticipating* social change, rather than as an emancipatory figure *in itself*. Many of these features are apparent in Jorge's *Dia*, which problematizes political and gendered tensions within the rural Algarve of the early 1970s.

O dia dos prodígios: The Rustic Algarve with a Feminine Twist

Lídia Jorge has frequently alluded to the influence of her birthplace — the Algarvian village of Boliqueime — on her fictional output, having pointedly remarked: 'Ninguém nasce livre da terra. Não vale a pena fugir' [Nobody is born free from the land. It's no use running away].[103] Nonetheless, Jorge has also rejected a 'regionalist' epithet, claiming that her fiction both evokes and transcends rooted identities: 'não escrevo sobre regiões ou cidades, [...], mas sim sobre outra coisa mais vasta [...]. [...] a essência do literário é um fantasma que se levanta sobre os horizontes da Terra, e que se eleva o mais possível do solo sem nunca a perder de vista' [I don't write about regions or cities, but rather about something broader than that. The essence of the literary is a ghost which rises over the Earth's horizons, and which reaches the highest possible height over the soil without ever losing sight of it].[104] Accordingly, this author has brought her distinct life experiences — including her residence in Lisbon and then in Mozambique during the 1964–74 War of Independence — to bear on various novels, set within the Algarve (e.g. *Dia*, *O cais das merendas*, *O vento assobiando nas gruas*), in Lisbon (*Notícia da cidade silvestre* [*News from the Wild City*] (1984)), and in colonial-era Mozambique (*A costa dos murmúrios* [*The Murmuring Coast*] (1988)).

Ideologically speaking, Jorge's standpoints are, like Bessa-Luís's, often idiosyncratic. While the author's negative view of Portuguese colonialism is articulated in *Dia* and *A costa dos murmúrios*, she has distanced herself from both the Left and the Right, instead adopting a 'humanist' political positioning.[105] Regarding sexual politics within Portuguese society, Jorge's commitment to women's rights and to the dismantling of long-standing social restrictions is evidenced by her support (alongside Bessa-Luís) for legalizing abortion in 2007.[106] That said, the author's attitudes towards female characters in her fiction is complex and, significantly, *geographically situated*, within a southern, Mediterranean (rather than Atlantic) context: 'my novels take stock of a Mediterranean image of woman. Their strength is powerful and subversive, more invisible than socially apparent'.[107] Jorge also resists the 'simplistic dichotomy' of 'traditional' feminist authors: 'I don't portray [women] as victims; neither do I give them good characters to contrast the evil ones'.[108] Although this understanding of 'feminism' appears slightly reductive, here her comments nonetheless mirror my reading of *Sibila*; in *Dia*, notions of female authority within a 'Mediterranean' — specifically, Algarvian — regional environment offer an ambivalent (*ergo*, productive) line of enquiry.

Jorge's novel — written in an unconventional form, devoid of chapters, and mainly using the full stop as punctuation — is set in the fictional Algarvian village of Vilamaninhos between the summers of 1973 and 1974. Its key structuring occurrence is the sudden appearance, in the centre of the village, of a snake; after

it has apparently been beaten to death by local peasant Jesuína Palha, it flies into the air and disappears. Following many months of discussion amongst the villagers about possible explanations for this episode, news of the Carnation Revolution filters through to the community, culminating in a fleeting visit by soldiers from Lisbon as part of the MFA's Cultural Dynamization Campaign. When the soldiers fail to conduct a meaningful exchange of perspectives and ideas with the villagers, or to provide an explanation for the flying snake incident, the locals disregard the MFA and continue to act as if nothing has changed, at which point the diegesis concludes. Between the flying snake incident and the final scene, the diegesis oscillates between the intimate lives of different households in Vilamaninhos: Carminha Rosa and her daughter Carminha Parda (illegitimate daughter of the former parish priest), who courts the young soldier Manuel Amado, followed by Sergeant Marinho, and finally the local Macário; the elderly José Jorge Júnior (descendent of the village's founder) and his wife Esperança Teresa, who constantly reminisce over their family's history; Pássaro Volante, who abuses his wife Branca, while she gradually acquires supernatural powers of perception and clairvoyance (while embroidering a dragon outline onto a quilt); the unmarried Jesuína Palha, who toils in the fields and seemingly exercises control over the other villagers' behaviour; Matilde, who runs the store-cum-tavern that functions as the village's meeting place; and José Maria, the non-native *cantoneiro* [municipal worker] who pines for Branca, frequently laments the intransigence of Vilamaninhos's inhabitants, and eventually leaves the community in frustration.

Previous readers of Lídia Jorge have stressed the narrative's 'relatively primitive', 'preindustrial' and 'folklorist' environment, arguing that 'nothing ever happens' within this (apparently) archaic, isolated and ignorant Algarve.[109] While Helena Kaufman acknowledges *Dia*'s representation of those who are socially 'marginalized' (by gender, region or class), Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, Ana Margarida Dias Martins and Ana Paula Ferreira recognize the novel's integration of 'subaltern', structurally excluded rural communities into Portuguese history and post-revolutionary national politics.[110] Concerning the sexual dynamics of *Dia*, Lígia Silva argues that, apart from Branca, Vilamaninhos's female inhabitants 'conve[y] an essentialist conception of gender, identifying women as victims of patriarchy who conform to their fixed roles as wives and mothers', whereas Sara Ceroni describes the village as a 'medieval world dominated by patriarchal values in which [most] women are subaltern, under-represented and oppressed'.[111] Martins's position is more nuanced, noting that Jorge's depictions of peasant women and of the rural Algarve combine to produce a 'strategic exoticism' of southern coastal communities, which are linked to Portugal's recently dismantled Empire: 'what gets exoticized is a southern gendered local'.[112]

Notwithstanding these observations, few critics have addressed the intimate relationship between *Dia*'s regional diegetic environment and its (various) models of female authority. Hence, my reading of this narrative will again be two-fold: firstly, I shall outline the narrative's construction of a regionalist ideological project that is explicitly *gendered*, by re-assessing Vilamaninhos's (apparent) isolation from

national and international events, and by highlighting the role of female characters in depicting continuity and change within rural Portugal (specifically, the Algarve). Secondly, I will evaluate the narrative's portrayal of archetypes pertaining to female authority and/or agency: the supposed 'rural matriarch' — which, as in *Sibila*, is a highly questionable figure — and the sibylline prophetess represented by Branca, who, like Quina, offers some potential for *future* female liberation, within a regional (Algarvian; inland and coastal) setting. I shall argue that just as the novel's depiction of a close-knit Algarvian community contains explicitly *female* contours, its representatives of 'female authority' are clearly *regionalized*, with significant implications for women's agency within post-Salazarist Portugal.

'What a rustic smell': an Algarvian bucolic fetish

First of all, *Dia* constructs (and subverts) multiple images of Algarvian distinctiveness and isolation. In addition to topological details (references to Faro, Silves and the Serra de Monchique), regional particularities abound, including orthographic representations of the *algarvio* dialect: one can note localized slang and multiple characters' use of non-standard vowels, both of which infect the narratorial voice: 'Esperança Teresa falava punhões e caragos, *lavantava* o objecto do chão' [Esperança Teresa was saying some shits and fucks, she was *pecking* up the object from the ground].[113] The novel's descriptions of domed, fragile, uninsulated and reflective buildings also emphasize the quintessential 'whitewashed' architecture of the Algarve, and the vulnerability of such houses to inclement weather: 'as paredes frágeis, abauladas como se quisessem desabar ao menor trovão. Feitas as casas para os dias de sol, apenas para os dias de sol' [the flimsy walls, domed as if they wanted to tumble at the slightest thunder. They were made for sunny days, only for sunny days].[114] Concurrently, the narrator's references to the village infrastructure ('o resto da antiga [estrada], da macadamizada, sinuosa e às lombas, como correnteza de telhado mourisco' [the remains of the old road, the macadam one, winding and inclining, like the curve of a Moorish roof]) clearly evoke the Algarve's long-standing, visually evident Moorish heritage.[115]

Nevertheless, while these allusions adroitly establish an 'Algarvian' atmosphere, it should be noted that Vilamaninhos's precise location within the region is never specified, and that *Dia*'s introduction 'warn[s] the reader' against viewing the novel as representational: this (extra-diegetic) paragraph defines the subsequent diegesis as an 'história' [story], occurring within the 'breve tempo de uma demonstração' [brief time-span of a demonstration].[116] Hence, in contrast to the mimetic aspirations of certain regionalist and neo-realist trends in Portuguese fiction, Jorge presents a synthetic version of Algarvian identity that is conscious of its own artificiality, prompting the reader to constantly question and problematize its regionalist characteristics. For instance, while Vilamaninhos's inhabitants display ignorance and isolation to some extent, Jorge simultaneously undermines this notion. The narrator comments that 'Quem uma vez não saiu de Vilamaninhos não conheceu nem conhecerá a realidade da terra' [Whoever has never left Vilamaninhos has never known — nor will they ever understand — the truth about the earth], while

the villagers often appear to have 'no knowledge of current national events' during the revolutionary period.[117] Indeed, *Dia* emphasizes a significant delay between the 25th April coup and the peasants' awareness of it; Maria Rebôla belatedly announces this news in May, clearly conscious of the time lag: 'O que faz vossemecê nessa triste posição? No dia em que se acaba de saber que soldados e grandes chefes fizeram uma revolta?' [What are you doing lying in that sad position? On the day we've just found out that soldiers and leaders staged a revolt?].[118] This impression of deferred temporality is strengthened shortly afterwards, through Jesuína Palha's belief that the visiting MFA soldiers hail from a place '[o]nde os séculos têm outra idade' [where the centuries have a different age].[119] Following the anthropologist Edwin Ardener's observations regarding so-called 'remote areas of the globe', Jorge's portrayal of Vilamaninhos corresponds to communities that 'have been perceived to exist on a different time-scale from the "central" areas', while actually challenging such preconceptions.[120]

Further, Jorge establishes a historically recurring antagonism between the marginalized rustic Algarvian protagonists, and representatives of Lisbon-based authority.[121] José Jorge Júnior's tales of his ancestors reveal altercations between local peasants and emissaries from the capital; his great-great-grandfather had abandoned the nearby village of Vilamurada, due to soldiers from Lisbon repeatedly 'passing through' on their way to Silves or Faro, pillaging and (presumably) raping in the process: 'As tropas dum rei que morava em Lisboa passavam por ali quatro ou cinco vezes no ano, a galope, para as bandas de Silves e Faro. Pilhavam a criação, pisavam a salsa' [The troops of a king living in Lisbon would pass through there four or five times a year, as they galloped towards Silves and Faro. They would plunder the livestock, they would trample the parsley].[122] José's emphasis on soldiers' journeys from the Portuguese capital, and his use of the indefinite article — *a* king — recalls the Algarve's status as a separate political jurisdiction from Portugal in previous centuries. The categorical refusal of José's ancestor to recognize the Lisbon monarch's authority ('se era rei, que reinasse na terra onde morava' [if he were indeed a king, he ought to reign in the land where he lived]) establishes an historical precedent of iniquitous power relations between Portuguese territories, ostensibly '[a]té que veio a república' [until the republic arrived].[123]

In fact, this pattern is shown to extend into the *Estado Novo*, when the authoritarian government gives water prospectors permission to 'pillage' the region's natural resources: 'Autorização? [...]. Você bem sabe que em Lisboa governa gente que não proíbe que se procure a água. Desde que as custas sejam por conta dos interessados' [Authorization? [...]. You know full well that the people governing in Lisbon don't prevent us from looking for water. As long as the interested party is the one who pays the bills].[124] In this way, Jorge denounces historically recurrent political corruption and centralized governance of Portugal's various regions, without consultation of local populations on key decisions like the extraction of natural resources. The MFA soldiers — the supposed harbingers of revolutionary improvement — are then posited as direct descendants of the aforementioned 'king's troops', with the adjective 'garboso' [dashing] used to describe *both* military

forces.[125] The villagers' reaction to the MFA provides a final reinforcement of this analogy: 'Todos tinham a certeza que desde o tempo dos reis nunca mais se vira de igual' [Everyone was sure they'd never seen anything like this, since the time of the kings].[126]

Notwithstanding this construction of a (seemingly) binary historical tension between the rural Algarve and Lisbon, Jorge's novel suggests several parallels, connecting the apparently remote Vilamaninhos and a *global* topographical context. This is evidenced by the link established between Carminha Parda and her soldier fiancé Amado, stationed thousands of miles away in a Portuguese African colony:

> Para além das casas, a estrada. Para além da estrada, o mato. Para além do mato os figueirais, e as outras terras, e as outras ainda. Para além de todas as terras, o mar. Para além do mar o sul, e no caminho do sul mais extremo, o bojo da terra [...]. [...]. Ainda para além do sul tão extremo, que já passa a ser norte em relação ao que ainda resta, nessa direcção.
>
> [Beyond the houses, the road, Beyond the road, the woods. Beyond the woods, the fig trees, and other lands, and others beyond. Beyond all the lands, the sea. Beyond the sea, the South, and on the way towards the southernmost point, the bulge of land [...]. [...]. Beyond even the southernmost point, which is considered North in relation to what remains in that direction].[127]

This excerpt, with its relentless focus on southward movement, establishes a geographical continuum between the rural Algarve, the Algarvian coast, the 'ocean' and the (ambivalently defined) 'South', reflecting Jorge's determination to 'inscribe' Vilamaninhos within a 'Global South' discursive space, in the context of Portugal's belated decolonization process.[128]

Simultaneously, Jorge's strategic deployment of maritime and oceanic metaphors (in themselves suggestive of Portugal's imperial history) constructs a productive tension between Vilamaninhos's psychological *detachment* from the outside world, and its physical *proximity* to it.[129] On the one hand, villagers demonstrate ignorance of the sea, as evidenced by their comic unfamiliarity with marine creatures like sharks: 'Dizem que nas praias deu à costa um tubarão vivo. E Matilde Santiago disse. Isso é bicho de terra ou de mar?' [They're saying that a live shark washed up on the beaches. And Matilde Santiago said. Is that a land creature or a sea creature?].[130] On the other hand, the MFA soldiers' arrival coincides with local children simulating the act of swimming: 'começaram a esbracejar, esboçando gestos de natação' [they started to wave their arms around, mimicking swimming strokes].[131] Through such scenes, Jorge implies that these Algarvian peasants have at least a minimal awareness of the coastline. Moreover, repeated references to the Algarvian *barrocal* — a cultivated 'zone of transition' between the region's coastal and mountainous areas — emphasize this space's liminality: 'o barrocal de carrasco e tomilho cheiroso e cinzento, fica mais lilás na banda do mar' [the *barrocal*, made from holm oak and thyme, fragrant and grey, becomes more lilac towards the sea].[132] By problematizing Vilamaninhos's relationship with the coastline in this way, Jorge challenges the village's apparent ignorance and seclusion, in line with Ardener's (seemingly contradictory) assertion that 'remote areas are in constant

contact with the world'.[133] Branca Volante's sibylline trajectory is also intimately connected with this geographical dynamic, as I shall outline presently.

Therefore, Vilamaninhos's supposed disconnection from external affairs is by no means absolute. Although the villagers appear unaware of the ongoing Colonial Wars — 'Guerra, que guerra? Oh gente ignorante, será preciso ter um filho ou um afilhado no serviço para se poder falar dessas coisas sem dar explicações?' [War, what war? Oh, you ignorant lot, do you need a son or godson to be fighting in the forces, to talk about such things without needing an explanation?] — this lack of awareness is qualified: the elderly Manuel Gertrudes affirms that he can 'perceber' [understand] the colonial conflict, due to his service in the First World War sixty years prior.[134] Further, Gertrudes describes World War I as the 'primeira guerra deste século' [first war of this century], thereby demonstrating his knowledge of *subsequent* armed conflicts in the twentieth century.[135] Later, during the MFA soldiers' visit, Gertrudes recalls local young men who had fled Vilamaninhos in order to avoid conscription into the armed forces — a potential allusion to the *Estado Novo*'s conscription activities: 'Nesta terra de há uns tempos para cá não há soldados. Fugiram aos quinze anos, com receio de que a guarda os viesse buscar a cavalo para serem soldados à força' [There haven't been any soldiers around here for some time now. They all fled at the age of fifteen, out of fear that the national guard would come to pick them up on horseback and force them to fight].[136] Thus, this Algarvian peasant community is not as oblivious to external political events and circumstances as it initially appears. Even the characters' remarks on their own supposed rustic 'backwardness' ('Muito atrasado nas nossas bandas' [very backward down our way])[137] indicate an internalized psychological condition rather than an objective reality; if the villagers' ignorance of external circumstances is as complete as they claim, one is forced to consider how they *know* that they are indeed underdeveloped, in relation to other communities.

Equally questionable is the apparent tranquillity and passivity of Vilamaninhos, repeatedly emphasized by the narrator ('Vilamaninhos [...] cozida de quietude. Mansidão' [Vilamaninhos [...] full of stillness. Meekness]) and by the villagers ('tão pequena é esta terra. E tão grande o seu silêncio' [so small is this land. And so great is its silence]), to the extent of self-conscious hyperbole.[138] In addition, when Matilde and Gertrudes lament the lack of activity and progress within the village ('E afinal nada aconteceu. [...] Não há sinais. [...] Estou em crer que tudo aparece desligado' [And, after all that, nothing has happened. [...]. There are no signs. [...] From where I'm standing, everything seems disconnected]), their remarks appear excessively categorical and crude.[139] Further, the villagers disagree amongst themselves regarding the definition of a meaningful 'occurrence'; Jesuína Palha's obsessive focus on the flying snake episode directly contrasts with calls to mourn Carminha Parda's fiancé, killed in the Colonial Wars: 'E Manuel Gertrudes disse. Pensem antes no soldadinho morto. E Jesuína Palha disse. Pensem antes nos dias que se seguiram ao voo da cobra' [And Manuel Gertrudes said. Think about the poor dead soldier instead. And Jesuína Palha said. No, think about the days after the snake flew away].[140] Above all, Palha's speech during the soldiers' visit, demanding

an explanation for the previous year's incident ('Como é possível que passem por aqui e não expliquem o que se passou nesta terra?' [How can you come through here and not explain what happened in this land?]), underlines the priority given to internal activity over external events, irrespective of their plausibility.[141] This 'crucial moment', when the villagers compete with the MFA soldiers to decide 'who is the subject of history', also questions *on whose territory* occurrences of fundamental significance have occurred; Palha's use of the demonstrative pronoun 'esta' [this] (in contrast to revolutionary Lisbon, described as 'essa terra' [that land]), reinforces the village's claim to historical importance.[142]

Thus, Jorge underlines the latent, undetected activity of this supposedly 'immobilized' and detached rural community, as epitomized by the following description of the vicinity: 'No ar havia um sussurro das coisas acontecidas' [A rustling of things happened filled the air].[143] Although the past participle here does not specify whether these occurrences took place in a *recent* or *distant* past, this excerpt is highly reminiscent of Quina's witnessing of 'something irretrievably happened' in Bessa-Luís's *Sibila*. Nonetheless, Jorge's use of the noun 'sussurro' [rustling] gestures towards subtle, dormant and unnoticed movement within an apparently inaccessible rural community; in this way, Vilamaninhos recalls Ardener's contention that '[r]emote areas are event-rich, or event-dense [...] like a small-scale, simmering, continuously generated set of singularities'.[144] Jorge's Algarvian narrative, then, seeks to destabilize metropolitan presumptions of superiority over Portugal's supposedly docile, 'apathetic' and disengaged rural communities, in the wake of the *Estado Novo* regime.[145]

Following this identification of a regionalist ideological discourse within *Dia*, one must consider how this dynamic is *gendered*; the novel contains multiple Algarvian female protagonists, whose characterization destabilizes certain preconceptions of peasant women within Salazarist Portugal. At first sight, Jorge appears to conform to bucolic (and slightly erotic) rustic stereotypes, as seen in Matilde's vista of the Serra de Monchique from her tavern: 'A taberneira à porta a ver o sol meter-se com acenos de luz atrás do risco cinzento e violeta de Monchique como fumegante' [the tavern landlady is stood at the door, watching the sun descend with gestures of light, behind the grey and violet profile of the smouldering Monchique mountains].[146] Indeed, throughout the diegesis, sexually charged language is frequently associated with the local environment, both rustic and coastal. This is apparent when Carminha Parda's views of Algarvian architecture are associated with feminine sexual release ('Como se uma nuvem de ocre e terracota líquida tivesse vindo das partes do mar abrir as pernas sobre a rua do empedrado' [As if a cloud of ochre and liquid terracotta had come from the direction of the sea, to open its legs over the cobbled street]), thereby intensifying her own sexual desire: 'Apetece-lhe estender-se. Mostrar-se e sacudir o pólen da sua meninice. Abrir a blusa, desapertar os atilhos que lhe seguram os seios. Adejar as ancas e dizer aqui aqui' [She wants to spread herself. To show herself, and shake off the pollen of her childhood. To open her blouse, and unfasten the straps keeping her breasts in check. To flaunt her hips and say here, here].[147] These overlaps between the Algarve's natural surroundings and

female erotic expression can be read as self-conscious, critical reflection on *Estado Novo* discourse, and on its 'fetish[ized]' tendency to equate 'Woman' with 'natural' domesticity, as noted by Ferreira.

Throughout *Dia*, Jorge emphasizes the internalization of this rural 'fetish' by Vilamaninhos's female residents, through several characters' efforts to maintain a bucolic aesthetic. This is evidenced by Maria Rebôla's cleaning of an abandoned local church, in the hope that an authentically 'rustic' fragrance will one day please the Prior based in Faro: 'Quando o senhor prior de Faro chegar, [...], há-de abrir as narinas para dizer. Quão cheirosa, irmãos. Quão cheirosa a rusticidade' [When the esteemed prior from Faro arrives, [...], he'll open up his nostrils to say. What a smell, brethren. What a rustic smell].[148] Moreover, a prolonged narrative arc involves the importance of 'tidiness' for Vilamaninhos's female residents, beginning with Carminha Parda obsessively cleaning dirt from her windows, and Jesuína Palha's jealousy towards the well-kept street outside the Carminhas' house.[149] This motif becomes more explicit as the plot develops: Carminha Rosa rushes to beautify her house and garden, in order to meet Manuel Amado's (urban) expectations ('Destrinçar e unir esses despojos caseiros que atapetam o quintal e o transformam em coisa sórdida, imprópria para os olhos de quem vem de terras onde a limpeza terá um cheiro a permanente alfazema e rosmaninho' [To sort and untangle that household clutter carpeting the backyard, making it a sordid and unfit sight for those hailing from lands where cleanliness has a permanent rosemary and lavender smell]). Subsequently, Jesuína Palha critiques the Carminhas' deteriorating hygiene standards, following Carminha Parda's various romantic entanglements: 'Então onde está a limpeza desta rua?' [So where's the cleanliness in this street?].[150]

As Ferreira notes, these characters' constant attention to superficial aesthetics, pleasing fragrances and façades reflects the Salazarist dictatorship's 'propaganda da boa dona-de-casa guardiã moral' [propaganda of the good housewife and moral guardian], with women made solely responsible for cleaning, tidying and beautifying the family home.[151] Through the anxious efforts of Vilamaninhos's women to meet external expectations of fragrant hygiene, Jorge problematizes ruralist imagery that, during the authoritarian regime, had associated femininity with such idyllic domesticity. Accompanying this parodic discourse is the dichotomy that emerges between the rustic Algarve's (supposed) moral virtue and the capital's sexual freedom after the Carnation Revolution. Second-hand reports arriving from revolutionary Lisbon suggest that 'As raparigas da cidade dizem que estão com a cinturinha assim. Da grossura das minhas duas mãos [...]. De tanto bailharem nas ruas' [The waists of the city girls, they say, are all like this. As thick as my two hands put together [...]. From so much dancing in the streets].[152] This passage — reminiscent of the 'low waistlines, branded with *Liberty* stripes' detailed in *Sibila* — humorously reflects the social expectations of Algarvian peasant communities vis-à-vis sexual licentiousness in the national capital. The tension that emerges, then, is between regional and metropolitan moral standards, operating within a binary gendered logic, which the author questions and critiques accordingly.

Jorge's sardonic treatment of geographical, gendered dichotomies also assumes colonial contours on several occasions. For instance, Sergeant Marinho's complaints of putrid smells and irritating insects within Portuguese Africa ('tem de se tapar o nariz de tal forma cheira a podre e a azedo. E os bichos' [you have to hold your nose; that's how rotten and rancid it smells. And the bugs]) are then associated with the *fauna* and unpleasant odours of Vilamaninhos: 'Viriam as pragas. Esses bichos seriam tantos como os figos. [...]. Viam-se sair da terra. [...]. Do estrume das paredes' [The pests would come; as many bugs as there were figs. [...]. They could be seen flying up from the earth. [...]. From the dung on the walls].[153] Hence, although Marinho regards Portuguese Africa as a 'masculinized' space, in contrast to the supposedly feminine Vilamaninhos ('Lá. Tudo é macho. [...] Depois aqui' [There. Everything is male. [...]. But then here]),[154] the *similarities* between these two environments actually outnumber their *differences*. *Dia*'s critique here is two-fold: firstly, the author contests male attempts to ascribe arbitrary genders and gendered imagery to geographical locations — as critiqued by Massey; secondly, she lampoons *Estado Novo*-era imperialist propaganda, by (sardonically) portraying the Portuguese Empire as a singular, uninterrupted geographical identity. These positions, maintained by the overseas combatant Sergeant Marinho and by the Salazarist regime respectively, cannot both be correct; accordingly, Jorge weaponizes patriarchal 'male' and 'female' geographical labels in service of an anti-colonial critique.

Closer to home, *Dia* examines recent social, economic and demographic transformations within rural Portugal,[155] through a gendered critical lens. Key female characters are associated with noteworthy socio-economic changes within the Algarve during the 1960s and 1970s, such as the burgeoning tourist industry's advancement from luxury coastal resorts towards the Algarve's inland villages.[156] When several local women discuss how to 'atrair aqui os passantes da nova estrada' [attract those travellers using the new road to visit us here], Jesuína Palha outlines a plan 'que obrigasse todas as excursões que vão para Faro e Portimão, a fazerem escalada aqui' [that would force all excursions going to Faro and Portimão to make a stop here].[157] Regardless of this proposal's feasibility, Palha's remark highlights her awareness of, and engagement with, recent patterns of economic development and transformations of territory within the region. The fact that a female (albeit masculinized) villager articulates this proposal exemplifies Jorge's gendered approach to demographic transformation within the Algarve.

Similarly, *Dia* describes the emigration and depopulation impacting Vilamaninhos using feminine imagery, such as similes and metaphors related to infertility or declining natality. This is apparent in several references to the settlement's population decline: 'A povoação vai ficando um ovo emurchecido. Que fede, gorado, e não gera' [The village is becoming a shrivelled egg. Which reeks, is doomed, and doesn't beget].[158] Alongside this comparison between the village and a (barren) mother hen, Jorge presents Vilamaninhos itself as infertile, given that the community's river has dried up and left sterile land in its wake: 'Só em baixo o rio. Grande sulco aberto. É uma lembrança de coisa passada, onde foi possível plantar laranjeiras. Colher laranjas' [Only down below is the river. A big open furrow. It's

a memory of something from the past, where one could plant orange trees. Pick oranges].[159] The author's evocation of natural fertility — a traditionally 'feminine' trait — is clear in the nostalgic image above, with the community's wistful recollections of more bountiful times being intrinsically linked to a gendered tension between fecundity and sterility.

Despite this imagery, *Dia*'s female protagonists often seek to preserve their village's agrarian heritage. On the one hand, male characters like João Martins and José Maria impotently bemoan the decline of traditional farming practices: 'Já ninguém lavra' [Nobody tills the land any more]; 'Em breve ninguém saberá o que é um arado' [Soon no one will know what a plough is].[160] On the other hand, Palha, 'resto de ceifeira' [remnant of a female reaper], toils in a solitary wheatfield, the village's last representative of a diminishing agricultural 'way of life'.[161] This notion of irrevocable decline is reinforced by Jesuína's sudden awareness, at the end of the diegesis, that she is going blind ('Só agora reparo que ando a perder a vista. Começa a escurecer mais cedo' [Only now do I realize that I've been losing my sight. It's getting dark earlier]),[162] a passage that offers two potential readings: that this character's declining vision (and impending darkness) is now preventing her from carrying out agricultural tasks, or that she is only now aware of the extent to which her labour has become redundant. Nevertheless, through Jorge's depiction of peasant women like Jesuína Palha, the author articulates her commentary on the rural Algarve's transformation through a distinctly *female* perspective; just as Quina assumes control of her family's agricultural legacy in *Sibila*, Palha nostalgically (and unsuccessfully) attempts to conserve archaic socio-economic practices, in the face of accelerating demographic change. Overall, the distinct female archetypes contained within Vilamaninhos are used to examine and critique preconceptions of (regional) female authority, as I shall now outline.

Feminine role models of the Algarve

Multiple protagonists in *Dia* — including Jesuína Palha, Carminha Rosa, Carminha Parda and Branca Volante — allow Jorge to destabilize multiple models of female agency. Vilamaninhos, like Bessa-Luís's *casa da Vessada*, can be described as a 'matriarchal' society in certain respects,[163] with Palha being an obvious example. This character clearly occupies a position of local leadership from the beginning of the diegesis, when she bombastically arrives on the Carminhas' street at the head of a group of villagers, proceeding to narrate her encounter with the flying snake: 'Jesuína Palha. À frente. [...]. Em fileira miúda, rapazes e crianças vinham [...] acompanhando o passo da subida' [Jesuína Palha. In front. [...]. In a little line, boys and girls came, following the pace of the climb].[164] Tellingly, Palha is then described as the loudest and most prominent local voice reacting to news of the Carnation Revolution: 'as vozes são altas, não sendo porém nenhuma nem tão, nem mais poderosa do que a de Jesuína Palha' [the voices are loud, but none is as powerful, or more so, than Jesuína Palha's].[165] Finally, Jesuína aggressively insists that the MFA soldiers provide an explanation for the flying snake incident ('não puderam avançar, porque Jesuína Palha [...] postou-se em frente. E disse. E a cobra?

[...]. E Jesuína insistiu. [...]. É forçoso que falem' [they couldn't advance, for Jesuína Palha [...] had put herself in their way. And she said. And what about the snake? [...]. And Jesuína insisted. [...]. You must speak]),[166] pushing herself to the forefront to demand clarification on the village's behalf. This authoritative 'spokesperson' and defender of Vilamaninhos's interests can also be likened to Quina in *Sibila*, and to the goddess-like 'earth-mother' figure envisaged by Bell, due to her relationship with the surrounding Algarvian *flora* and *fauna*: 'Jesuína Palha sentia-se senhora do silêncio e das cigarras, e de todos os bichos miúdos, que andando à solta, espreitavam o invasor. Uma mulher de preto, munida de arma de metal. Recurvada' [Jesuína Palha considered herself the lady of the silence and the cicadas, and of all the small bugs that, as they freely flitted around, were watching out for the invader. She was a woman dressed in black, brandishing a metal weapon. Bent over].[167] This excerpt posits Palha as a simultaneously commanding, menacing and *telluric* authority figure, in the vein of a guerrilla fighter (or predatory animal) lying in wait for a belligerent force.

Nevertheless, *Dia*'s portrayal of Palha as a 'matriarch' is arguably parodic, on several accounts. While her humorous name suggests a female Christ/Messiah-like figure made of straw, this character displays ultra-masculine qualities — such as *macho* body language — much like *Sibila*'s Quina: 'Jesuína Palha, fazendo balançar as penduras das orelhas, dez vezes mais varonil do que um homem, batia no peito em frente do carro dos soldados' [Jesuína Palha, with her ear hoops swaying furiously, ten times more manly than a man, was beating her chest before the soldiers' car].[168] Simultaneously, Palha's adherence to patriarchal societal norms is evidenced by her frequent moral judgement of the Carminhas, and of their amorous relationships: 'Isto é o sinal próprio do mal das mulheres que abrem a porta a qualquer um. [...]. A quantos oh Carminha? A quantos tu já deste a pinquinha?' [This is what happens to immoral women who open their door to anyone and everyone. How many, ey Carminha? How many men did you give your cherry to?].[169] Through these attempts to censor and stigmatize female sexuality, Palha upholds the Salazarist patriarchal model and defends ultra-conservative social values; thus, this female peasant seeks to possess a 'phallic symbol' (the flying snake), not unlike the patriarchal Quina.[170]

It is not through a one-dimensional, 'matriarchal' individual, then, that *Dia* offers an ideal of female political agency. Rather, Jorge establishes a tension between matrilineal customs and patrilineal genealogies, within Vilamaninhos — whose name, incidentally, can be read as a sardonic reference to 'brotherhood', through the diminutive 'man*inhos*' [little brothers].[171] Specifically, José Jorge Júnior's tales of previous generations defend a patrilineal foundational myth; addressing his wife Esperança, José Jorge recalls his great-great-grandfather who was apparently discovered abandoned in a basket (an allusion to the discovery of Moses on the banks of the Nile, in the Book of Exodus). This recollection, however, is tinged with humour: 'O avô do avô desse meu avô, que comigo andou ao colo, nasceu das ervinhas. Encontraram-no dentro dum balaio como se fosse uma mão-cheia de figos para dar a porcos' [The grandfather of my grandfather of my grandfather,

on whose lap I sat, was born in a clump of reeds. They found him inside a wicker basket, as if he were a fistful of figs to be fed to the pigs].[172] Then, repeating the verb 'gerar' [to beget] multiple times, José Jorge outlines the patrilineal, quasi-biblical progression of his clan ('Manuel Jorge gerou a José Jorge. [...] e meu avô, [...], gerou a José Jorge [...] que me gerou a mim' [Manuel Jorge begat José Jorge. [...]. And my grandfather [...], begat José Jorge [...] who begat me]), culminating in himself, the village's self-proclaimed Old Testament patriarch (albeit 'abraham' with a lower-case a): 'Eu [...] sentado com sandálias de abraão a receber os vindouros' [I am sat, wearing abraham's sandals, waiting for the years to come].[173] There is a double-edged irony here, however, given that José Jorge never mentions *maternity* in his male genealogy, even though a witch-like 'velha muito velha' [very old, elderly woman] made this dynasty possible, by discovering his ancestor in the first place; just as the male patriarch outlines his own patrilineal dynasty, this line is simultaneously undone.[174]

Conversely, Esperança Teresa frequently interrupts her husband's patrilineal monologue with her memories of childbirth (including that of her still-born daughter): 'eu doze vezes di à luz, José. Tu te alembras?' [It was twelves times I gave birth, José. Remember?].[175] Reinforcing her 'maternal past', Esperança insists on her own fundamental importance in the family dynasty as mother to their children which, in her view, José Jorge has disregarded: 'Tu costumavas dizer que eu deitei-os ao mundo. Mas que todos saíram de ti. Grande mentira. Tu esqueces-te José Jorge, que a gente é como a galinha? O galo gala. Mas a galinha põe o ovo, choca o ovo, bica o ovo, ajuda o pintainho a nascer' [You used to say that I threw them out into the world. But that they all came from you. What a big lie. Have you forgotten, José Jorge, that we're like hens? The rooster does his bit. But the hen lays the egg, hatches the egg, pecks at the egg, helps the chick into the world].[176] Esperança's use of 'mother hen' and 'egg' as metaphors to represent her maternal responsibilities is significant: it suggests that Vilamaninhos's aforementioned demographic decline (filtered through the image of a shrivelled, sterile egg), is closely associated with male failure to acknowledge maternal contributions. If Vilamaninhos faces an existential threat, then, it is predicated on patriarchal grounds, rather than matriarchal ones.

Finally, Jorge portrays Branca Volante as a striking alternative model of (Algarvian) female agency, due to her supernatural 'sibylline' powers. This character, whose forename suggests a new beginning or revelation, overcomes her husband's abuse and domination through supernatural powers, such as the ability to foresee future events, hear distant sounds, sleep with her eyes open and read minds.[177] Branca's developing supernatural abilities are explicitly tied to her embroidering of a dragon onto a quilt — a dragon that appears to come alive as her assertiveness and autonomy develops: 'De que lhe servia a colcha, esse animal feroz e escamudo com que lhe havia entretido os dias? Quanto mais a prendera mais a soltara por um recanto escondido da liberdade. Imparável' [What use to her was the quilt, that ferocious, scaly animal with which she had filled her idle days? The more it had kept her locked up, the more it had freed her, through a hidden corner of freedom. Unstoppable].[178] Here, Jorge evokes the hidden, yet unrelenting, freedoms

of women in cloistered or isolated environments, through Branca's embroidered dragon (and, later, Branca herself): 'Branca rota e nua, ágil como a cobra que vira voar sobre a cabeça de toda a família da rua, ergueu meio corpo' [Branca, torn and naked, agile like the snake she'd seen fly over all the heads of those families in the street, pulled half her body up].[179] In this scene, this character represents a serious, physical challenge to her abusive, misogynistic husband Pássaro — a misogyny symbolized by the 'phallic' flying snake.

Furthermore, Branca develops a capacity to make concrete (and accurate) predictions of Vilamaninhos's future, which are juxtaposed with the implausible, messianic 'premonitions' articulated by other villagers: 'Eu tenho um grande pressentimento. Que uma nova maravilha vai acontecer sobre o redondo do mundo. Uma gente nova vai povoar a terra' [I sense a great premonition. That a new wonder will come to pass on this planet. A new people will inhabit the earth].[180] This vague 'feeling' has limited potency over the course of the novel, as demonstrated when the (increasingly blind) Palha finds herself unable to foresee future events: 'Ah punhão. Desde ontem que me cheirava a pressentimento de coisas. [...] [N]unca pensi que uma coisa dessas viesse a acontecer-me' [Oh shit. I've had a bad feeling something would happen since yesterday. I never thought something like that would happen to me].[181] In contrast, Branca can anticipate occurrences within the village using the more precise, categorical terms 'previsão do futuro [prediction of the future]', 'antever' [to anticipate] and 'prever' [to foresee], the last of which appears in the novel's proleptic introductory paragraph: 'A todos atribuirei os eventos previstos' [I will attribute these foreseen events to everyone].[182] At the end of the diegesis, Branca provides a detailed prediction of her community's future: José Jorge will die in the coming months, Macário will impregnate Carminha Parda, and 'outsiders' will eventually arrive — a recognition of tourism's future impact on the inland and coastal Algarve.[183] Meanwhile, Branca's growing prophetic abilities mirror her increasing power over Pássaro, as evidenced when she unexpectedly fights back against him: '[os vizinhos] nunca tinham pensado que Branca, uma só vez na vida, fosse capaz de outro gesto senão o da obediência, comedimento e castidade' [the neighbours had never thought that Branca was capable, even once in her life, of any other behaviour except obedience, restraint and chastity].[184] In turn, just as *Sibila*'s protagonist is mistrusted by her northern male relatives, Branca's capabilities disturb and threaten her Algarvian husband, who disparages and downplays them: 'A tua virtude, Branca, de ouvir para além dos outros é falsa fantasia. [...]. Ou tu és louca ou estás tísica e forçoso é que te separes dos teus filhos e de mim próprio' [Your talent, Branca, for hearing things beyond other people is a complete fantasy. Either you're crazy or you've got consumption, which means you'll need to stay away from your kids and even from me].[185] Accordingly, this 'mythical female prophetess' has been described as the novel's most provocative female figure, akin to Bessa-Luís's subversive protagonist in *Sibila*.[186]

If Branca Volante functions as a sibylline figure,[187] though, her regional contours should not be neglected. While *Sibila* constitutes an Entre-Douro-e-Minho, telluric rendering of the Sibyl archetype, Branca functions as an Algarvian — albeit

less explicit — version. According to Pássaro, his wife resembles a stubborn, fugitive mule ('[Pássaro] pôs-se a despontar vigorosa contra a insolência de uma mula tão louca como a mulher' [Pássaro vigorously fought back against the insolence of a mule, a mule as crazy as that woman]); an animal that he can sexually penetrate at will: 'Pássaro cavalga. Branca é um dorso macio de aragem pelada' [Pássaro rides her. Branca is a smooth horseback, accompanied by a naked breeze].[188] What *Dia* emphasizes, though, is Branca's sensorial connection with Portugal's southern coastline. In contrast to her fellow villagers, Branca repeatedly hears (without seeing) the distant sound of waves lapping on the Algarvian shore: 'Chego a ouvir as ondas. Este tam tam que vem e vai. [...] Branca acorda com os rumores distantes. Da água caindo nas folhas muito antes da nuvem chegar. Do ruído das ondas das praias. Branca ouve, mas nunca viu. Um tumulto alagado' [I can hear the waves now. This crash that comes and goes. [...] Branca wakes up to the sound of distant whispers. From water drops falling on leaves long before the clouds arrive. From the sound of the waves on the beaches. Branca hears it, but she's never seen it. A flood of turmoil].[189] Hence, Jorge's Sibyl is characterized by a geographical *liminality* — between rural and coastal sibylline archetypes — as epitomized by the aforementioned Algarvian 'barrocal'. Branca, the regional prophetess, therefore oscillates between a (presumed) rustic isolation, and a conscious relationship with a national (and global) context. Thus, her transformation from a (seemingly) submissive, mule-like spouse into an oceanic, goddess-like model of female power is intimately linked to the novel's ambivalent Algarvian setting; she is at once a *regional* and *regionalized* Sibyl.

Both novelists, then, offer an explicitly gendered perspective on regionalist dynamics within twentieth-century Portugal, with female protagonists and accompanying landscape descriptions that challenge geographical dichotomies (e.g. 'remote provincial community' versus 'civilized capital/city'), and male attempts to project 'feminine' attributes onto certain regional spaces. Simultaneously, these authors destabilize superficial notions of 'matriarchal authority' within the Entre-Douro-e-Minho and Algarvian countryside, seeking to replace these problematic models with prophetic sibylline figures. What is significant though, are not the regional stereotypes that these two novels explore, but their strategic *use* of them in service of broader, more complex sexual politics. Although Bessa-Luís and Jorge explicitly discourage conventional 'feminist' readings of their fiction, it is clear that *Sibila* and *Dia* use the Sibyl — a harbinger of future female agency — to advance timely political agendas pertaining to women's rights in Portugal. While Bessa-Luís's Quina appeared within a near-complete vacuum of serious discussion regarding the position of women within Portuguese society, Jorge's Branca emerged at a pivotal moment following the Carnation Revolution: Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo (as mentioned, an avid reader of *Dia*) became Portugal's first female Prime Minister in 1979, followed by acrimonious parliamentary debates on the legalization of abortion in 1982. In light of these developments, Bessa-Luís's and Jorge's Sibyls can be read as (northern and southern) clairvoyants, of women's advancement deferred.

When compared with other narratives explored in this monograph, Bessa-Luís's and Jorge's regionalisms certainly hold some affinity with the visible and concealed

ideological facets of *Faunos* and *Lobos*, while offering a more sustained and substantial critique of idealized gender relations than Ribeiro's Beira Alta novels. However, although *Sibila*'s and *Dia*'s regional women are *marginal* in certain respects, neither narrative systematically critiques class-based distinctions, demonstrating little preoccupation with economic inequality or the consequences of modern capitalist processes. It is these aspects of José Saramago's 'militant particularisms' that my final chapter will address.

Notes to Chapter 3

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163. Serra, *O realismo mágico*, p. 224.
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166. Ibid., p. 182.
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CHAPTER 4

❖

'We imagined we lived at the end of the world': José Saramago's Militant Particularisms

In some cases, non-violence requires more militancy than violence.[1]

— César Chávez

Upon winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1998, José Saramago paid tribute to his illiterate peasant grandfather, from the Ribatejan village of Azinhaga: 'O homem mais sábio que conheci em toda a minha vida não sabia ler nem escrever. Às quatro da madrugada [...] levantava-se da enxerga e saía para o campo [...]. Viviam desta escassez os meus avós maternos, da pequena criação de porcos que [...] eram vendidos aos vizinhos da aldeia' [The wisest man I ever knew in my whole life could not read or write. At four o'clock in the morning [...], he got up from his pallet and left for the fields [...] My mother's parents lived on this scarcity, on the small breeding of pigs that [...] were sold to the neighbours in our village].[2] Here, Saramago not only pays tribute to the rural poverty experienced by his ancestors, but also firmly asserts their political agency or, to quote Lefebvre, their 'peasant wisdom'.[3] In a 2002 interview, Saramago explicitly acknowledged this rustic influence on his worldview, literature and activism: 'Eu creio que seria outro se eu tivesse nascido numa grande cidade e tivesse crescido num meio [...] urbano, desenvolvido' [I think I would be different if I had been born and raised in a big city... and had grown up in an urban, developed environment].[4] As with Ribeiro, Bessa-Luís and Jorge, however, Saramago's interest in familial rural connections extends beyond the merely biographical sphere, into the explicitly political and, in this case, *militant*. In addition to his literary output, the author's sympathy for the plight of deprived peasant communities (within Portugal and internationally) is evidenced by his vocal support for Brazil's *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* [Landless Rural Workers' Movement] — an organization dedicated to combatting rural poverty and challenging inequalities in land ownership — over several decades.[5]

It is with such concerns in mind that Saramago's active membership of the PCP (from 1969 onwards), and his repeated endorsements of communist ideals, should be interpreted; in the writer's public statements, ideological arguments are frequently articulated in *spatialized* terms. In an interview with Carlos Reis, for instance,

Saramago defines 'ideology' as an inescapable 'sea', containing various social, political, religious, ethical and cultural components: 'nem sequer é legítimo pensar que se poderia viver fora dessa espécie de mar, porque aí é onde se respira, aí é onde se está, é onde nos alimentamos no plano mental' [one can't even think that it's possible to live outside of this sort of sea, because it's there that we breathe, it's there that we find ourselves, it's there that we nourish ourselves mentally].[6] This oceanic imagery can be read as a metaphor for the shifting geographical dynamics and deep personal experiences that informed Saramago's worldview, as a politically engaged individual, public intellectual and author. Moreover, the notions of immersion and situated experience evoked by this metaphor are fundamental for deciphering Saramago's ideological uses of geography: Saramago's concept of a sea denotes paradoxical conceptions of maritime space, as both a barrier and a conduit between demarcated territories and political worldviews. The liquidity and fluidity inherent to this image also suggests a rejection of territorial binaries — such as 'urban versus rural' and 'centre versus margin', both of which inform this chapter's analytical framework — and a resistance against ideological hegemonies.

Critical interpretations of Saramago's 1980s novels (e.g. *Levantado*, *Memorial do convento* and *A jangada de pedra* [*The Stone Raft*] (1986)) have amply highlighted their preoccupation with bringing marginalized or excluded communities into representation, particularly in terms of socio-economic class.[7] Studies of how Saramago's fiction relates to geographical (and, specifically, *regional*) dynamics, however, have been less comprehensive. Although Maria Alzira Seixo addresses *Memorial do convento* and its critical portrayals of the Portuguese 'fatherland' (via Lisbon and Mafra), her geographical analysis is confined to fleeting references to that novel.[8] Conversely, Rui Jacinto's insightful observations on Saramago's 'cartographic' practices and 'hierarch[ies] of places' correspond solely to the non-fictional *Viagem a Portugal* [*Journey to Portugal*] (1981), whereas Mark Sabine and Anna Klobucka have briefly commented on geographical tensions in Saramago's narratives, including 'Iberian regionalism' (Sabine) and 'rooted cosmopolitanism' (Klobucka).[9] Roberto Vecchi's pioneering study of the 'countryside/city dialectic' in *Levantado* is helpful but tentative, meriting a deeper, more sustained analysis of this novel (and, indeed, Saramago's later narratives).[10] Beside Helena Kaufman's aforementioned comments on 'particularity' and 'locality' in Saramago's fiction, the most systematic examination of 'location' and politics in his work is that of Mary L. Daniel, which identifies 'lococentricity' as a central characteristic of his 1980s novels. Although Daniel pinpoints 'spatial identification' as a 'parable or pretext for [Saramago's] ironic critique of socio-economic systems, geo-political developments, nationalistic self-appraisal [...] and ontological introspection', this statement is rather sweeping. Beside their chronological limitations, Daniel's comments risk simplifying these novels' ideological arguments, and/or subordinating such geographical tensions to a basic narrative device.[11] Indeed, as this chapter will assert, regional dynamics — in the guise of 'militant particularisms' — are an integral and indispensable component of Saramago's ideological discourse, within his earlier novel *Levantado* and his later narrative *Caverna*.

In my analysis of these two novels, then, I shall draw upon political and cultural theorists who recognize the mutual interaction between spatial and ideological tensions. Raymond Williams's observations, concerning the historical conflation of 'urban versus rural' dichotomies with political and economic processes, will be key: 'People have often said "the city" when they mean capitalism or bureaucracy or centralized power'.[12] Equally significant are Williams's reflections on the 'abstraction of the city' as an isolated problem, in hegemonic discourse over multiple centuries: 'There is an evident unevenness in the dominant consciousness. In a sense, it seems, everything about the city — from the magnificent to the apocalyptic — can be believed at once'.[13] Similarly, Marxist geographer David Harvey has emphasized 'the restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes' which, in his view, reflects 'the inner contradictions' of capitalist economic structures: 'Capitalism perpetually strives [...] to create a social and physical landscape in its own image and requisite to its own needs [...], only just as certainly to undermine, disrupt and even destroy that landscape at a later point in time'.[14] Harvey's suggestion that resistance to such processes has allowed 'regional structures and class alliances' to emerge is fundamental for understanding how, in Saramago's fictional environments, 'the struggle for community, regional or national solidarity [...] may support, reconstitute or [...] actively create local and regional cultures and traditions'.[15] Furthermore, this geographer calls for political militancy and activism to work *through* and *beyond* parochialisms, given that '[o]nly struggles which overcome the parochialisms inherent in the geography of our situation and in the situation of geography hold out any prospect for success';[16] this, in turn, reflects the localized politics of solidarity that Saramago's narratives invoke.

A final theoretical concept to consider here is 'militant particularism', first coined by Williams and then developed by Harvey. Initially described as the notion that 'the defence and advancement of certain particular interests, properly brought together, are in fact the general interest', militant particularism is subsequently defined by Harvey as the process through which '[i]deals forged out of the affirmative experience of solidarities in one place get generalized and universalized[,] as a working model of a new form of society'.[17] In Harvey's view, the essence of this concept lies in the 'battle between different levels of abstraction': it hinges on whether extrapolation from localized material experiences can, without resorting to generalization, constitute effective political organization, given the inevitable 'loss' involved in moving from 'attach[ment] to place' to 'reaching out across space'.[18] This conundrum corresponds to central ideological tensions within both *Levantado* and *Caverna*: while Saramago's 1980 novel links regional particularities to broader political coalitions, his 2000 narrative is highly allegorical and abstract, yet enters into dialogue with precise material conditions, both within the author's native country and in a trans-national context.

Accordingly, both sections of this chapter (on *Levantado* and on *Caverna*) will follow a bipartite structure, focusing on the interplay between spatial or regional dynamics and ideological messages within these two narratives. My analysis of

Levantado will: (a) examine the narrative's (apparent) paradigm of Alentejan peasant isolation, separation and exclusion from political and economic power, which the author systematically undermines; (b) assess the spontaneous, autonomous agency of peasant resistance within this narrative's regional setting, while evaluating how this local political militancy interacts with national and international circumstances. Subsequently, my reading of *Caverna* will: (a) consider how this narrative evokes, challenges and surpasses simplistic geographical dichotomies, in its critique of pernicious spatial transformation attributed to late twentieth-century capitalism; (b) explore the novel's multiple strategies of 'resistance' to this new socio-economic hegemony, through its destabilization of nostalgic tropes relating to rural decline, and its construction of a geographically localized, humanist and Marxist form of 'mourning'. Thus, this chapter will posit spatiality and 'regionalist' discourse as inseparable from Saramago's ideological militancy, in two key novels from his *oeuvre*.

Levantado do chão: Local and Global Struggles

Levantado — Saramago's first significant literary success within Portugal — is an Alentejan historical saga, tracing four generations of the fictional Mau-Tempo family and the lives of their contemporaries and peasant comrades, who reside in and around the village of Monte Lavre (within the Montemor-o-Novo municipality). The diegesis — which commences in the first decade of the twentieth century and concludes in 1975 — explicitly mentions the tumultuous political events that occurred in Portugal during this period, such as the collapse of the Monarchy, the First Republic, authoritarian dictatorship, the Carnation Revolution, and the agrarian conflicts that immediately followed it, culminating in the peasants' occupation of Alentejan agricultural estates. Thus, the narrative illuminates the Alentejan peasantry's peripheral, supposedly uninformed perspective, alongside its portrayal of peasant resistance against capitalist (landowner), state-directed (Republican; *Estado Novo*) and religious (Catholic Church) repression. While the shiftless, alcoholic and violent Domingos Mau-Tempo does not contribute to contemporary political struggles, his son João involves himself in numerous peasant revolts, Communist cells and acts of subversion, leading to his interrogation and imprisonment on two occasions during the dictatorship. João's son, António, also engages in political struggle against the regime (having spent years away from Monte Lavre, in the army and in France), as does his granddaughter Maria Adelaide, both of whom participate in the *latifúndio* occupations that conclude the novel.

The narrative's denunciation of poverty and exploitation in the Alentejan latifundia — informed by the author's first-hand observation of a revolutionary co-operative farm, in the village of Lavre — has repeatedly been compared to Portugal's neo-realist literary movement, undoubtedly influenced by Saramago's description of *Levantado* as 'o último romance do Neo-Realismo, fora já do tempo neo-realista' [the last neo-realist novel, but after the neo-realist period].[19] Nonetheless, as Sabine notes, the novel's dust jacket contests neo-realism's 'aesthetic premise', while 'affirming his solidarity with [its] social and political agenda';

Saramago affirms that 'o meu sonho foi o de poder dizer deste livro [...]: "Isto é o Alentejo". Dos sonhos, porém, acordamos todos [...]. Por isso me limitarei a escrever: "Isto é um livro sobre o Alentejo" ' [my dream was to be able to say about this book [...]: 'This is the Alentejo'. That said, everyone wakes up from their dreams [...]. So, I will simply write: 'This is a book about the Alentejo'].[20] This statement denotes Saramago's dismissal of 'reflectionist' or 'mimetic' (i.e. neo-realist) fiction, with his narrative focusing instead on an object that is 'deformed, refracted, dissolved', to cite Terry Eagleton.[21] Hence, although this narrative is anchored within the rural Alentejo, it does not simply seek to 'mirror' a specific regional reality, nor is its significance *limited* to that region. As my reading will demonstrate, although *Levantado*'s historical and geographical specificity might initially arouse 'suspicions that the novel is provincial and anachronistic',[22] it surpasses those seemingly parochial contours, offering a partial perspective that is in constant contact with external socio-political struggles.

Monte Lavre — remoteness as paradigm?

Firstly, *Levantado*'s construction (and simultaneous undermining) of geographical binaries is significant, with 'backwater' (Monte Lavre) versus 'metropolis' (Lisbon) and 'country' versus 'city' dichotomies being particularly evident. This discourse — according to which Alentejan peasants are seemingly posited as remote, isolated and detached from events in the wider world — emerges early in the diegesis, as the Mau-Tempo family wander between different hamlets: 'há tanta poeira no caminho e alguma bosta seca ou bonicos de cavalo, que por longe de lugares habitados ninguém veio apanhar até aqui' [there's so much dust on the roads as well as the occasional dried cowpat or lump of horse dung, which no one has bothered to pick up, this being too far removed from any inhabited place].[23] In subsequent chapters, the narrator and the peasants themselves depict a bleak rural landscape, often assuming a quasi-biblical tone: 'por caminhos que o diabo só às costas dos homens' [paths that the devil would only walk if carried on the shoulders of men]; 'lugares por onde o Senhor nunca andou, e que andasse, onde é que estava o ganho dele e nosso' [places where the Lord never trod, and even if he had, what would he or we have gained]; 'caminhos que Deus nunca andou e o Diabo só obrigado' [paths that God never walked and along which the Devil would only walk if forced to].[24] These excerpts — echoing Ribeiro's *Terras do demo* and its references to the Beira Alta, where 'nunca Cristo ali rompeu as sandálias' [Christ never ventured there] — also lampoons ruralist imagery in Portuguese public discourse, positing territories like the Alentejan *latifúndio* as spaces of blissful escape, as I will address presently. Simultaneously, the narrator's claims that neither God *nor* the Devil would set foot in such places seemingly presents *Levantado*'s diegetic environment as isolated from external influences and/or potentially 'corrupting' forces.

Such notions of apparent geographical isolation extend to the peasants' haphazard knowledge of external 'major events', via a generally inaccessible, 'privileged' and media-based process of osmosis, leaving 'only the faintest impression'.[25] When reports of the First World War in Europe reach the Alentejan peasants, for example, the narrator emphasizes their alienation from the continent within

which they physically exist: 'Correram vozes em Monte Lavre de que havia uma guerra na Europa, sítio de que pouca gente no lugar tinha notícias e luzes' [There were rumours in Monte Lavre that a war was being waged in Europe, a place that few in the village knew much about].[26] Subsequent news of the war — and of Portugal's participation in that conflict — predominantly arrives via newspapers, a mostly incomprehensible medium for the largely illiterate rural proletariat: 'A Monte Lavre, de guerras, só chegavam notícias de jornal, e essas eram para quem as soubesse ler' [Monte Lavre hears about these wars from the newspapers, but they are only for those who can read].[27] Later, however, the narrator's attitude towards this apparent remoteness becomes ironic and hyperbolic; when alluding to the Spanish Civil War and the peasants' supposed unawareness of it, the terms 'ignorância' [ignorance] and 'afastamento' [isolation] are deployed in sardonic comments: 'por quanto se pode saber, e não é muito, em terras de tanta ignorância e afastamento do mundo, está a Espanha em ruínas' [from what one can ascertain, which is not very much in a land of such ignorance, so removed from the rest of the world, Spain is in [...] a state of ruin].[28]

This image of a geographically and culturally isolated peasantry also pervades *Levantado*'s final chapters, taking place in the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution. At this point, reports of the military coup in Lisbon arrive in the Alentejan countryside in a diffuse, disorganized manner: 'Pelo meio da tarde chegaram à vinha notícias que desassossegaram o pessoal, ninguém tinha certezas do que tivesse sido, Diz-se que há qualquer coisa com a tropa em Lisboa, ouvi na radio' [About halfway through the afternoon, troubling news arrived in the vineyard, no one knew quite what had happened, Something about the army in Lisbon, I heard it on the radio].[29] Although this radio broadcast spreads the breaking news aurally (*ergo*, comprehensible to illiterate peasants) and much more rapidly, the Alentejans' awareness of external events remains mediated and confused, through the remarks 'I heard' and 'something about'. The narrator then suggests a perceptive as well as physical distance between the Alentejan *latifúndio* and national political changes (the surrender of Marcelo Caetano and government loyalists in Lisbon's Largo do Carmo): 'Neste lugar do latifúndio, tão longe do Carmo de Lisboa, não se ouviu por aqui um tiro nem anda gente a gritar pelos descampados, não era fácil entender o que é uma revolução e como se faz' [In the latifundio, so far from the barracks in the Largo do Carmo in Lisbon, not a shot has been heard and no one is wandering the fields shouting slogans, it's hard to understand what revolution means and what it involves].[30] In this passage — which I shall return to presently — Saramago deploys the demonstrative pronoun 'este lugar' [this place][31] to denote geographical precision within the Alentejan plains, suggesting that *some* (but not necessarily *all*) inhabitants of the area are politically disengaged.

Nevertheless, the Alentejans' bewildered reaction to these events reveals a conspicuous cultural chasm between the revolutionary forces in Lisbon and the South's agricultural proletariat: 'o governo devia vir aqui explicar, não vale a pena pôr nos jornais que a gente não os entende, na televisão passa tudo tão depressa, [...], e na rádio não vemos as caras das pessoas' [the government should come here

and explain the situation, there's no point setting it down in newspapers that we can't read, and they talk so quickly on the television [...], and on the radio we can't see people's faces].[32] Here, Saramago highlights these peasants' evolving knowledge of ongoing events via emerging technologies (e.g. the television), but continues to suggest a chasm between mediated news bulletins and the peasants' demand for a 'face-to-face' explanation of revolutionary developments (much like Jesuína Palha's protestations in *Dia*, discussed earlier). In *Levantado*, however, the author critiques the armed forces' relative absence from the Alentejan countryside during this PREC revolutionary process, in their aforementioned 'Cultural Dynamization' and 'Civic Action' campaigns.

Overwhelmingly, though, the narrator's references to the Alentejan peasantry's detachment are (increasingly) self-conscious and sarcastic. This is clear when João and Faustina Mau-Tempo discuss how he has been compelled to attend a political rally in Évora (organized by the dictatorship to support General Franco's Nationalist army in neighbouring Spain). Immediately after this exchange, the narrator, addressing an implied urban reader, seemingly associates the Alentejan populace with political and historical ignorance: 'E quem por este diálogo clamar que o povo está perdido, não sabe o que se passa, é tempo de dizer que o povo vive longe, não lhe chegam notícias, ou não as entende' [Anyone overhearing this conversation might declare that the people are a lost cause, but he or she has no idea what it's like here, these people live miles from anywhere, they either get no news at all or don't understand it when they do].[33] This description of 'o povo' [the people], however, is exaggerated, simplistic and vague, thereby indicating a parodic tone on the author's part. In fact, such narratorial commentary is contradicted by the *latifúndio* peasantry's developing political activism and various acts of resistance at subsequent stages of the diegesis (as I shall outline shortly).

A further geographical assumption interrogated in *Levantado* is that of Lisbon as a privileged centre of political authority — regardless of the regime in place — operating in contrast to seemingly apolitical Alentejan peasants.[34] This is apparent at the beginning of Chapter 5, when the new Republican government in Lisbon is announced with an elliptical sentence, beginning with an adverb: 'Então chegou a república' [Then the republic arrived].[35] Following this rather flippant introduction to Portugal's evolving political reality, Saramago portrays the new government as being dispatched from the national capital to the Alentejan plains: 'A república veio despachada de Lisboa, andou de terra em terra pelo telégrafo, se o havia, recomendou-se pela imprensa, se a sabiam ler, pelo passar de boca em boca, que sempre foi o mais fácil' [The republic rushed in from Lisbon, travelled from village to village by telegraph, if there was one, advertised itself in the press for those who knew how to read, or passed from mouth to mouth, which was always by far the easiest way].[36] Thus, *Levantado* suggests a systematic incursion of Lisbon-based government institutions not through a physical presence, but via print media, unevenly developed technology (the telegraph), and haphazard 'gossip'.

This notion of dominance from a political epicentre is reinforced in chapters referring to the *Estado Novo* regime; during the aforementioned Évora rally, for instance, many attendees are revealed to be politicians, civil servants and army

personnel who have travelled from the capital (or from the nearby army barracks of Setúbal): 'o comandante da legião, o major que veio de Setúbal, os deputados, o da união nacional deles, [...], um que é do i-ene-tê-pê, se não sabes pergunta, instituto nacional do trabalho e previdência, e todos os mais que vieram de Lisboa' [the major from Setúbal, the members of parliament, the man from their national union, [...], a man from the en-i-double-u-double-u, if you don't know what that means, just ask, the national institute of work and welfare, and all the others who have travelled from Lisbon].[37] Here, the phonetic spelling of institutional initials, followed by the enlightened narrator's explanation of their meaning, and the third-person possessive 'deles' [their] associated with the government party, all suggest a cognitive divide between the *marginal* Alentejan peasantry and government organizations managed from the *centre*.

Upon closer inspection, however, one can detect a destabilization of this apparent dichotomy, as Vecchi notes.[38] This is chiefly achieved through irony, regarding the Alentejan peasants' understanding of their situation. In 1911, for instance, the striking labourers' presumption that the Republic will treat them justly denotes a naïve and simplistic understanding of the national government's morality: 'Sim, Lisboa é uma grande cidade, têm-nos dito que a maior do mundo, é lá que mora a república, por direito nos hão-de pôr em liberdade' [Yes, Lisbon is a big city, the biggest in the world they say, as well as home to the republic, which should, by rights, set us free].[39] This segment reveals the striking Alentejans' belief that the Republican government is *settled* and *rooted* in the capital (and, therefore, only existent *there*), apparent in the verb 'morar' [to reside]; meanwhile, their perception of Lisbon as the world's largest city denotes a provincialism that has been actively encouraged by the State (via the third-person plural, 'têm-nos dito' [they say]). Further evidence of this metropolis versus backwater binary emerges when João Mau-Tempo works as a cork cutter west of Monte Lavre, in an area from which the capital can be seen. The following remark denotes the peasant's realization: 'De cima destes sobreiros vê-se Lisboa, se está claro o dia, quem diria que é assim tão perto, afinal julgávamos que vivíamos no cabo do mundo, são erros de quem não sabe nem teve quem lhe ensinasse' [From the tops of these hills, on a clear day, you can see Lisbon, who would have thought it was so close, we imagined that we lived at the end of the world, the mistaken ideas of those who know nothing and have had no one to teach them].[40] Thus, Saramago illustrates the Alentejans' psychological internalization of a false consciousness, regarding their apparent remoteness from urban civilization; they are, in fact, a relatively close, near-walking distance to the capital, when compared with the Beira Alta, Entre-Douro-e-Minho and Algarve regions.[41] One is therefore reminded that, as Edwin Ardener outlines, 'the actual geography is not the overriding feature' in 'remote areas'; assumptions pertaining to a specific area's isolation are often due to 'perceptions from the dominant zone, not part of its codified experience'.[42] Along similar lines, Saramago exposes the construction of 'isolation' as a psychological condition, rather than a physiological reality.

In fact, Saramago's narrative often reflects 'perceptions from the dominant zone' about Portugal's provincial communities back onto the capital itself. This is particularly evident when João Mau-Tempo imagines a visit to Lisbon with his

companions; here, the rustic labourers exhibit 'wide-eyed innocence regarding the city', seemingly ignorant and unfamiliar with this metropolis: 'nós sem prática destas calçadas, todo o tempo a escorregar [...], e a puxar-nos uns aos outros com medo dos eléctricos' [we're not used to walking on pavements, we keep slipping and sliding [...], and we cling to each other in our fear of the trams].[43] In this same sequence, however, the city's inhabitants demonstrate their own obliviousness to 'outsiders', through the lexicon they deploy in reference to the visiting Alentejans: 'uma risota para os lisboetas, Eh, saloio' [the Lisbonites laugh, What bumpkins, they cry].[44] The *lisboetas*' use of 'saloio' here is particularly relevant: this 'ethno-geographic term' has a topological significance within Greater Lisbon, pertaining exclusively to agricultural/semi-rural settlements on the capital's outskirts.[45] Accordingly, the labelling of *Levantado*'s southern peasants as 'saloios' is incorrect — as the Alentejans vehemently protest[46] — evidencing the capital-dwellers' own ignorance of Portugal's internal heterogeneity, and their parochial, inadequate vocabulary to describe such regional variations.

At other moments, the author explicitly denounces the fragility of official, urban-based knowledge,[47] chiefly through narrative digressions and metalepsis. This is apparent when the narrator describes the realities of agricultural work to the implied reader, who is assumed to be urban and (therefore) ignorant of such practices: 'as pessoas da cidade cuidam, em sua ignorância, que tudo é semear e colher, pois muito enganadas vivem se não aprenderem a dizer as palavras todas e a entender o que elas são' [townspeople think, in their ignorance, that it's all a matter of sowing and harvesting, well, they're much mistaken unless they learn all the other verbs involved and realise just what they mean].[48] Saramago develops this playful condescension towards the urban dweller in a later chapter, when an anonymous visitor to the *latifúndio* engages with the narrator and learns about the rural Alentejo from them ('Muito me conta' [You amaze me]), despite the fact that *both* are supposedly from urban environments: 'nós que somos da cidade a esta sombra nos acolhemos' [let us city dwellers withdraw into the shade].[49] Such manipulations of the narratorial voice are, in fact, essential to Saramago's development of a 'narrador instável' [unstable narrator] in his fiction, which, in his own words, 'poderá mesmo ser o instrumento ou o sopro de uma voz coletiva' [can even be the instrument or breath of a collective voice].[50] In line with this literary doctrine, designed to address a broader audience, one can argue that *Levantado* confronts an implied urban, 'cultured' reader with their own ignorance, regarding the realities of peasant existence within specific regional environments.

Simultaneously, *Levantado* lampoons traditionalist and essentialist depictions of Portugal's agrarian heartlands as bucolic, peaceful locations of retreat (which, as outlined in Chapter 1, were characteristic of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship).[51] This is epitomized in parodic narratorial comments, such as the following: 'admirável é ver o gado derramar-se pela encosta, [...], que serenidade, longe das malsãs agitações urbanas. Do tumultuar infrene das metrópoles, Começai, Musas minhas, começai o canto bucólico' [it's wonderful to see the sheep pouring down the hillside [...], so peaceful, far from the insalubrious urban hubbub, from the disorderly tumult of

the metropolis, Begin, O muses, begin your bucolic song].[52] In this passage, which follows considerable peasant agitation in the *latifúndio*, Saramago comically imitates assumptions of idyllic tranquillity throughout agricultural Portugal, and of these areas' insulation from urban 'vices' and 'dangerous ideologies'. Specifically, the 'canto bucólico' [bucolic song] is an allusion to classical, idealistic pastoral poetry, dating back to Theocritus's *Idylls* and Virgil's *Eclogues*, as well as the Salazarist regime's 'pastoral ideology'.[53] At other points, the narrator makes explicit, cynical references to the classical eclogue ('Estas éclogas são assim. Dedilham pastores os alaúdes, fazem as pastoras capelas de flores' [In the eclogues of old, the shepherds played their lutes, and the shepherdesses wove their garlands of flowers])[54] and, by extension, to the *Estado Novo*'s ideological instrumentalization of such aesthetic tropes.

Alongside these parodic sequences, Saramago systematically undermines idealistic and generic images of the Portuguese countryside, presumably held by the implied urban reader.[55] When describing the physical impact of agricultural toil on the Alentejan proletariat, the narrator addresses the dictatorship's tendency to glorify agrarian work and the supposedly superior quality of life in rural communities: 'Um povo que se lava é um povo que não trabalha, talvez nas cidades, enfim, não digo que não, mas aqui, no latifúndio' [People who wash regularly are people who don't work, well, maybe it's different in the cities, I don't deny that, but here, on the estate] is contrasted with 'afinal viver no campo não dá vida acrescentada, são invenções da cidade' [living in the country doesn't exactly extend your life, that's an urban myth].[56] These remarks exemplify two characteristics of *Levantado*'s regionalist ideological critique: its denunciation of the *Estado Novo*'s reactionary ruralism, designed to avoid outward migration from inland communities and political radicalization within urban centres; and, more generally, its observation that binary divisions between the 'city' and the 'country' have historically been 'abstract[ed], as a huge isolated problem', thereby obscuring the multiple interlocking causes of poverty, inequality and repression in rustic *and* metropolitan environments.[57]

Rather, *Levantado* denounces the multiple *loci* from which political and economic power emanated across Portugal throughout much of the twentieth century. This is apparent from references to the May 1926 coup that originated in Braga: 'Vem aí uma época de grandes tempestades [...], vindas de Braga que é longe' [A time of great storms is approaching, [...], coming from far-off Braga].[58] These comments recall the (distant) North's anti-Republican, politically conservative precedents — as mentioned previously — as well as the fact that national army barracks were located in this particular city. Regarding the *Estado Novo* period, Saramago posits both the national capital (Lisbon) and the closest municipal centre (Montemor) as spaces of repression for combative Alentejan peasants.[59] There is not necessarily an increase in severity from municipality to metropolis, however: although the Montemor local authorities threaten agitators with the Lisbon-based political police ('Acabam por ir todos para Lisboa, era melhor que confessassem aqui, na vossa terra, entre conhecidos' [You'll end up being sent to Lisbon, you'd be better off confessing

here, on your home territory, amongst people who know you]),[60] the Alentejan town bears witness to the dictatorship's most violent acts within the diegesis, such as the murders of actual historical figures Germano Santos Vidigal (at the hands of the PIDE) and José Adelino dos Santos (due to machine-gun fire from the National Republican Guard). There is, then, a clear equivalence established between repressive mechanisms devised in the metropolis, and their local implementation within the rural Alentejo.

What emerges, then, is a nationally integrated structure of oppression and discipline, which nevertheless regards small communities like Monte Lavre as irrelevant, as indicated by members of the Republican Guard: 'isto aqui em Monte Lavre não é vila importante, é uma aldeola do latifúndio, não precisa de mais que um cabo da guarda, o qual responde tão firme como o general comandante que em Lisboa manda' [Monte Lavre [...] is such an unimportant place, just a tiny village in the latifundio, that here the corporal is the commander and he responds as firmly as the commander in Lisbon who gives him his orders].[61] Saramago reinforces this comprehensive chain of command (zoomorphized as a horse), extending from the highest echelons of the Lisbon-based State down to the smallest possible settlement: 'Em todas as cidades, em todas as vilas, em todas as aldeias e lugares este cavalo está' [This horse can be seen in all the cities, towns, villages and hamlets].[62] This exhaustive list of urbanistic denominations within Portugal — from the 'cidade' [city] to the 'lugar' [hamlet] — denotes a permeation of dictatorial authority at every demographic level.

In fact, *Levantado* shares with *Lobos* and *Dia* a critique of the *Estado Novo*'s hierarchical, 'highly centralized political system', with significant power concentrated in the national government and tight local control via municipal councils, administrators and State-run, ostensibly charitable *casas do povo*.[63] This is evident when João Mau-Tempo and other Communist activists share their experiences of exploitation, with one worker convinced that local institutions are under the control of their exploitative employers: 'Nos meus sítios, a casa do povo está de combinação com os patrões, senão não fazia o que faz' [Where I live, the workers' associations are in cahoots with the bosses, if they weren't, they wouldn't act the way they do].[64] Moreover, through the patronizing sermons of the Monte Lavre priest, Padre Agamedes, the narrative denounces the collusion of local political figures and landowning economic interests:

> até o pai é às vezes obrigado a bater no filho a quem tanto quer e ama, [...] assim, meus filhos, é a guarda, e já nem falo das outras autoridades civis e militares, o senhor presidente da câmara, o senhor administrador do concelho, [...], e outros senhores que têm encargo de mandar, a começar por quem vos dá trabalho [...].
>
> [sometimes even a father is obliged to beat the child he so loves and cares for, [...], that, my children, is how it is with the guards, not to mention the other authorities, both civil and military, the mayor, the administrator, the civil governor, [...], and all those other gentlemen in positions of power, beginning with those who give you work [...]].[65]

Here, the priest's enumeration of local government and authority figures that 'benevolently' commit violence is accompanied by references to employers, thereby suggesting an unholy alliance between the State, economic interests (the *latifúndio*) and the Catholic Church. This 'santíssima trindade' [Holy Trinity] is represented by the monstrous 'bicha de três cabeças e uma só vontade verdadeira' [serpent with three heads and but one desire],[66] which acts with apparent unity.

That said, there are several significant historical moments when the 'three-headed serpent' exhibits increasing signs of internal division. This schism surfaces when the *Estado Novo* agrees to demands for an eight-hour working day in 1962, opposed by the landowners: 'que eu saiba o governo não deu ordem para se trabalhar oito horas, e que desse, nas minhas terras mando eu, que sou o dono delas' [as far as I know, the government has issued no edict regarding an eight-hour day, and even if they have, I'm in charge here, I own the land].[67] Following the Carnation Revolution, these landowners articulate further indignation when faced with the provisional government's radical economic policies, which endanger their privileges: 'Podem os demónios de Lisboa devastar a herança que nossos avós nos deixaram, aqui no latifúndio temos outro respeito pela sagrada pátria e sagrada fé' [Those devils in Lisbon may be willing to ruin the legacy our grandparents left us, but here on the latifundio we respect the sacred fatherland and the sacred faith].[68] The three-headed monstrosity, therefore, is depicted as fragile and prone to division, with the landlords resorting to regional parochialism and fulmination against Lisbon-based 'devils' whenever their interests are threatened.

Thus, while regional space is an important component of the novel's ideological critique, Saramago rejects a solely geographical explanation for these Alentejan peasants' oppression and poverty; multiple, inter-linked 'differences of class, power and privilege' are evident throughout.[69] The local landlord families, for instance, clearly enjoy financial privilege and significance beyond the *latifúndio*, despite the fact that their primary residence is (supposedly) in that region.[70] The author emphasizes their absenteeism, particularly when younger generations emigrate elsewhere ('Tinham prédios em Lisboa, e os mais novos da família [...] começavam a afastar-se de Monte Lavre' [They owned property in Lisbon, and the younger members of the family were gradually moving away]), and when these employers become geographically distanced from their employees: 'Não se vêem nestas alturas feitores nem capatazes nem manajeiros, muito menos se veriam patrões, todos fechados em suas casas, ou longe na capital e noutros resguardos' [At such times, there's not a foreman or an overseer to be found, far less a landowner, they're all shut up in their houses, or far away in the capital or some other hiding place].[71] Eventually, the landlords lazily convey instructions from the metropolis ('tendo dito, ou avisados para Lisboa indolentemente o proferiram, [...] Pois sim' [if informed [...] in their Lisbon homes, indolently say [...], So be it]), reinforcing an apparent spatial 'deixis' between the distant property owners and the *latifúndio* itself.[72] The question, however, is not of a simplistic urban/rural dichotomy, but of the increasing gulf between the rural proletariat and the ownership of this (regionally specific) means of production.

More broadly, Saramago deploys geographical dynamics as a *metaphor* within this novel, from its first chapter (prior to the diegesis). Here, the author establishes a productive tension between the concepts of 'terra' [land] and 'paisagem' [landscape], from the opening sentence: 'O que mais há na terra, é paisagem. Por muito que do resto lhe falte, a paisagem sempre sobrou, [...] a paisagem é sem dúvida anterior ao homem, e apesar disso, de tanto existir, não se acabou ainda' [There's never been any shortage of landscape in the world. Whatever else may be lacking, that's one thing that has never been in short supply, [...] the landscape clearly pre-dates man, and despite its long, long existence, it has still not yet expired].[73] This excerpt, describing 'landscape' as a part *and product* of the land, posits both of these entities as seemingly unpoliticized, 'natural' territorial forms (in Marxist terms, the means of production or the 'base').[74] The notion of 'landscape', however, denotes a political, economic and/or cultural ordering of geographical territory by humankind — in other words, what Marxist critics would regard as a 'superstructure'.[75] Thus, the narrator's claim that landscape is both prehistoric and eternal can be read as ironic; it only *appears* so, when it is actually the result of dominant ideologies.

Accordingly, Saramago outlines the repeated transformation and allocation of land by land*scaping* (political and economic) processes, on a national and local level: 'como palma de mão coberta de linhas e caminhos, suas estradas reais, mais tarde nacionais, senão só da senhora câmara, [...] e todo o mais deste destino está explicado nas linhas de ir e voltar' [And like the palm of a hand, it is criss-crossed by lines and paths, its royal or, later, national roads, or those owned by the gentlemen at the town hall, [...], all the other paths arise from repeated comings and goings].[76] Through this unequal division of land from past to present (over successive political regimes), *Levantado*'s opening chapter corresponds to Harvey's aforementioned claim that 'the restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes' reflects capitalism's 'inner contradictions'. What disadvantages these fictional peasants, therefore, is not their apparent 'remoteness' from the capital or the mere fact that they reside in the Alentejan *latifúndio*; rather, Saramago critiques the authoritarian and capitalist landscaping of Portugal's inland environments, both within the Alentejo and elsewhere. It is according to these criteria that one can talk of a regionalist ideological discourse in this novel, and, as I shall now outline, it is against such malign forces that *Levantado*'s peasants resist.

The politics of the (Alentejan) peasant

Throughout the novel, Saramago stresses the intrinsic political consciousness of this Alentejan agricultural proletariat. From an early stage in the diegesis, the rustic labourers demonstrate a tendency towards political contestation, which develops in intensity as the narrative progresses towards rebellion and, ultimately, revolution. This is already apparent at the onset of the First Republic; when the workers deliver a petition to the district administrator for more favourable working conditions, the narrator mentions their 'agitation', their resentment of humiliating salaries and centrally imposed taxes, and the threat that they pose: 'os camponeses andavam agitados, protestavam contra as geiras e outras servidões, [...] impostos e tributações

várias, [...] na petição em tom de comedimento, talvez para disfarçar outras piores intenções' [the workers were agitating for change and protesting about the forced loans and other such impositions, [...] various taxes and tributes, [...], all there in the letter of petition, albeit expressed in measured tones, but perhaps these tones only disguised other, worse intentions].[77] Following this cryptic tone, the reader soon learns of coordinated rural strikes, which establishes a precedent for multiple acts of insurrection during the *Estado Novo*: in 1945, João Mau-Tempo leads an illegal strike for a 33-escudo daily wage; in 1958, local peasants protest in Montemor against unemployment and the rigged Presidential Election of that year; in 1962, the labourers secure the concession of an eight-hour working day; following the April 1974 Revolution, the workers begin occupying large estates within the *latifúndio*. At no point are these Alentejan peasants *managed* or *instructed* by an external organization or entity.

Indeed, from *Levantado*'s aforementioned opening chapter, the reader is positioned to interpret this development of political agency as innate, rather than directed, as expressed through the natural metaphors of crops (wheat) and trees (cork oak):

> Mas isso depende do que no chão se plantou e cultiva, ou ainda não, ou não já, ou do que por simples natureza nasceu, sem mão de gente, e só vem a morrer porque chegou o seu último fim. Não é tal o caso do trigo, que ainda com alguma vida é cortado. Nem do sobreiro, que vivíssimo, embora por sua gravidade o não pareça, se lhe arranca a pele. Aos gritos.
>
> [This, however, depends on what has been planted or what has not yet been planted, or what has sprung up unaided and died simply because it reached its natural end. This is not the case with wheat, which still has some life left in it when it is cut. Nor with the cork oak, which, despite its solemn air, is full of life and cries out when its skin is ripped from it.][78]

Through this vivid symbolism, Saramago recalls images of 'the radicalized proletariat as an "organic" social force rising from the earth', seen in Émile Zola's fiction and Antonio Gramsci's political thought;[79] the author gestures towards vegetation which has developed independently, much like the single flowers brought by João and António Mau-Tempo to the birth of Maria Adelaide, leading to valleys and hills covered in flowers by the end of the diegesis. Moreover, the prologue's brief reference to cork cutting underlines the Alentejan peasantry's inherent potential for active resistance against violent repression, establishing an expectation of peasant political organization from the beginning.

Nonetheless, the Alentejan proletariat's activity often diverges from pre-determined political tactics, as evidenced by the sudden, instinctive refusal of Manuel Espada and his comrades to continue working with the noxious threshing machine. When their overseer warns that he will blacklist them as 'grevistas' [strikers], the narrator highlights these peasants' unfamiliarity with such terms, and their propensity to act independently and innately: 'Do que tal seja não sabem os insurrectos, por inocência da pouca idade e ignorância da prática' [The insurrectionists are too young and innocent and ignorant to know what this word means].[80] Years later, this conception of resistance as an intuitive, natural response

to adverse material circumstances characterizes João Mau-Tempo's leadership of a harvest boycott, in order to secure a wage increase: 'João Mau-Tempo abre a boca e as palavras saem, tão naturais como se fossem água a correr de boa fonte, Ficará a seara no pé, que nós não vamos por menos' [João Mau-Tempo opens his mouth, and the words come out as naturally as water flowing from a good spring, The wheat won't get harvested then, because we're not working for less].[81] Unlike the (mostly) non-partisan highlanders of *Lobos*, though, Saramago's Alentejans explicitly engage with Communist principles and party members, while rejecting a dogmatic approach to their localized struggle.

The overriding image of peasant politicization, then, is an autonomous one, as evidenced when the narrator equates the rural proletariat's growing political consciousness with the unnoticed biological processes of the earth:

> olhando nós este brejo que parece morto, só cegos de nascença ou por vontade própria não verão o frémito de água que do fundo vem subitamente à superfície, obra das tensões acumuladas no lodo, entre o fazer, desfazer e refazer químico, até ao rebentar do gás enfim liberto. [...]. Se por um tempo nos afastarmos, distraídos em paisagens diferentes e casos pitorescos, veremos, ao voltar, como tudo estava afinal mudando e não parecia.
>
> [when one looks at this apparently lifeless swamp, only someone born blind or choosing not to see could fail to notice the watery tremor rising suddenly from the depths to the surface, the result of accumulated tensions in the mud, caught up in a chemical process of making, unmaking and remaking, until the gas finally explodes. [...]. If we were to go away for a while, distracted by different landscapes and picturesque events, we would notice, on our return, how, contrary to appearances, everything is finally changing.][82]

Through its evocative references to bubbling liquid and concealed activity within a seemingly lifeless swamp, this extract corresponds to Ardener's argument that supposedly 'remote' areas are often 'event-rich', for 'Event-richness is like a small-scale, simmering, continuously generated set of singularities'.[83] Likewise, Saramago's novel implies that political tensions within the Alentejan plains, although concealed, are gradually undergoing a repeated process of chemical reaction, until a moment of liberation becomes inevitable. Deploying the first-person plural 'nós' [we], the narrator addresses an implied reader presumed to be distracted by bucolism and unaware of genuine peasant political activity.

In addition to revealing invisible (or unnoticed) political processes, Saramago ironically critiques both the *Estado Novo*'s attempts to secure 'political apathy' within the Portuguese peasantry,[84] and any lingering doubts in the late 1970s regarding Alentejan labourers' engagement with politics. This humoristic approach manifests itself during the aforementioned Évora rally, when a speaker extolling the supposed obedience of Alentejan peasants is interrupted by a crude outburst from one such labourer: 'lembremo-nos de que a vida alentejana, ao contrário do que muita gente pensa, não é propícia ao desenvolvimento de ideias subversivas, porque os trabalhadores são verdadeiros sócios dos proprietários, [...], ah, ah, ah, Onde é que eu posso mijar' [we must remember that life in the Alentejo, contrary to what many people think, is not propitious to the development of subversive ideas,

because the workers are the true partners of the landowners, [...], ha ha, ha, where do I go to take a piss].[85] Aside from exposing the corporatist dictatorship's claims of partnership between the Alentejan labourers and their employers, the passage above ridicules the regime's idealization of rural communities, as supposed conservative 'bastions' against urban/industrial radicalization. The peasant's urge to urinate immediately after hearing the orator's words suggests a disdain for such bucolic discourse and a desire to exhibit that derision; to vulgarize Scott's thesis, there is political resistance involved in pissing, as opposed to outright 'peasant rebellion'.[86]

Pissing, however, is the least of the authorities' concerns in later decades, as Alentejan peasant opposition develops in scale and sophistication. Padre Agamedes, for instance, expresses concern regarding the secret meetings of subversive peasants in the 'wilderness', and in hidden locations: 'Andam homens pelo latifundio [...], em sítios escondidos, nos ermos, às vezes em casas abandonadas, [...], outras vezes na abrigada de um vale, dois de aqui, dois de além' [There are men roaming the latifundio, they can be found hiding away [...], in solitary places or abandoned houses, [...] or in the shelter of a valley, some from here, some from elsewhere].[87] Like the prosecutors in *Lobos*, though, *Levantado*'s priest declines to credit these rebels with an effective and coherent organizational structure of their own: 'São malteses, são ciganos, são apóstolos, e quando acabam dispersam-se na paisagem, [...], levando papéis e decisões, A isto tudo chamam organização' [They're itinerant workers, gipsies, apostles, and when they have finished talking, they scatter, [...] carrying with them papers and decisions. This is what is called organisation]. Rather, Agamedes and local bureaucrats conclude that such behaviour must have been imported into the region: 'o senhor presidente da junta [...] me disse, [...], olhe que a fatal doença já pegou na nossa vila, é preciso fazer qualquer coisa contra as perniciosas doutrinas que os inimigos da nossa fé e civilização andam a propagar' [the president of the council [...] said to me, That fatal disease is already afflicting our village, [...], we must do something to counteract the pernicious doctrines being spread among our families by these enemies of faith and civilisation].[88] Thus, the regional authorities imagine a revolutionary virus that is being spread into the supposedly docile and placid rural Alentejo.

This refusal to countenance any possibility that the rural proletariat has established a political consciousness of its own is also apparent when the authorities address these subversive labourers directly: tenente Contente is determined to discover who has instructed Manuel Espada and his co-workers to down tools and strike ('quem é que vos ensinou, vocês têm bons mestres' [who taught you, because you've obviously had good teachers]) and, when the labourers are released, the administrator condescendingly instructs them to resist dangerous propaganda: 'se aparecer alguém a querer dar-vos papéis ou de conversas subversivas, avisem a guarda que ela trata do assunto' [if anyone comes along wanting to give you things to read or to engage in subversive conversations, tell the guard and they'll deal with it].[89] Until the early 1960s, then, local representatives significantly underestimate the Alentejan rural proletariat's innate potential for rebellious actions, independent of (Communist) party direction.

This is not to suggest, though, that these Alentejan peasants do not engage with PCP doctrine or support that party's objectives when they encounter them. Prior to João Mau-Tempo's participation in (and leadership of) organized struggles against the *latifúndio* landowners, he reveals to Faustina that he has already read Communist propaganda: 'não entendo nada destes comunismos, bem, não é tanto assim, ainda na semana passada estavam uns papéis debaixo dumas pedras' [I don't know anything about communism, well, that's not quite true, last week, I found some papers wedged under a stone].[90] João's comment here — revealing him to be more cognizant of printed Marxist doctrine than the peasants in Ribeiro's *Lobos* — is complemented by his attendance, alongside Sigismundo Canastro, at the aforementioned PCP meeting in Terra Fria.

Nevertheless, *Levantado* 'breaks with the [PCP] tenet of "democratic centralism" ', and stresses 'the need for grass-roots level dialogue' as Sabine argues;[91] the novel repeatedly contrasts organized military rebellions with the independent, self-directed revolutionary activity of the Alentejan proletariat. Specifically, Saramago distances contemporaneous military revolts (Henrique Galvão's 1961 hijacking of the Portuguese ship *Santa Maria*; the 1961–62 rebellion in Beja's barracks) from the *latifúndio* labourers, who consider themselves excluded: 'bem esteve que se tivesse tomado o Santa Maria, e daí, bem está que em Beja se tentasse, [...], mas a nós, [...], ninguém nos veio perguntar se aquelas eram as nossas navegações e estes os nossos assaltos' [it was good that they hijacked the Santa Maria and the attack in Beja was good too, but no one came to ask us [...] if either the ship or the attack had anything to do with us].[92] In 1974, when news of Lisbon's Carnation Revolution reaches the peasants in and around Monte Lavre, their reaction reveals how the terms 'revolução' [revolution], 'democracia' [democracy] and 'igualdade' [equality] have been repeatedly defined and monopolized by others (as in Jorge's *Dia*): 'andam aí a rádio e a televisão a pregar democracias e outras igualdades, [...] quem me explica que revolução é esta' [on the radio and television they preach democracy and equality, [...], tell me, what kind of revolution is this].[93] Such remarks, far from illustrating the minimal political consciousness of these agricultural labourers, actually suggest that the April 1974 coup did not, in itself, bring revolutionary change for the agrarian South's workforce. Instead, *Levantado* describes as 'revolutions' the peasants' victories against their employers, when they secure an eight-hour day in 1962 ('é uma revolução, oito horas de trabalho no latifúndio' [it's a revolution, an eight-hour day on the latifundio]), and when they occupy empty estates: 'os anjos varrem o céu, é dia de revolução' [the angels are busy sweeping heaven, it's a day of revolution].[94] Saramago therefore corroborates Bermeo's view that southern Portugal's land occupations were not directed 'from above', but rather initiated 'from below', as well as Williams's statement that so-called 'rural idiots' have often been 'the main revolutionary force in the world'.[95]

What remains, then, is to discuss how *Levantado*'s rural proletariat interacts with that outside world; the novel contains a certain degree of universality, without neglecting its regional specificities.[96] For Sabine, this liminality materializes in the 'integration' of different demographic groups beyond the Alentejan peasants'

immediate context, thereby allowing 'effective' consciousness-raising to occur.[97] This is evidenced by the aforementioned PCP meeting, in which João Mau-Tempo and Sigismundo Canastro share their life experiences alongside members of the urban proletariat, and by João's time in a Lisbon prison, during which he converses with subversives from across the country: 'Conversa-se muito [...], discutem-se assuntos de política e outras matérias, [...] é uma universidade popular' [There is much talk [...], they discuss politics and other matters, [...], it's a people's university].[98] João's post-incarceration stay with Ricardo and Ermelinda Reis (derived from Fernando Pessoa's heteronym) is equally significant: just as the support and compassion of these *lisboetas* softens João's attitude towards the capital ('terra afinal branda de Lisboa' [Lisbon has turned out to be a kindly place]), he also educates the urban couple about his recent imprisonment, which elicits an empathetic response.[99] Coalition-building strategies are clearly at work here, mirroring Williams's assertion that 'Neither will the city save the country nor the country the city. Rather the long struggle within both will become a general struggle'.[100]

Levantado's construction of trans-geographical coalitions is not limited to a simple rural/urban conciliation, however — Monte Lavre's material struggles also exist within an international context. Alentejan labourers within this novel interact and collaborate with like-minded individuals beyond Portugal, as exemplified by António Mau-Tempo's correspondence with his Spanish comrade Miguel Hernandez, while working in France: 'é como se ambos estivessem a fazer sinais de um lado para o outro da fronteira' [it's as if they were signalling to each other across the frontier].[101] Moreover, Saramago equates the Alentejans' struggles both with the First World War ('Guerras também as havia ali, e não pequenas' [They had their own wars to wage, and not small ones either]) and with WWII, in which Portugal claimed neutrality despite selling locally sourced raw materials to both belligerents: 'No inventário das guerras tem o latifúndio a sua parte' [In the inventory of wars, the latifundio plays its part].[102] The author hereby depicts this regional workforce as a *bona fide* participant in transformational global events, insisting, like Harvey, that such political movements 'overcome the parochialisms' of geographically specific material struggles.

Saramago's elevation of the Alentejan rural proletariat to a broader demographic horizon is also apparent in the association that it makes between localized unrest in the *latifúndio* and the armed struggles of subjugated populations, across the Portuguese Empire.[103] This equivalence is made explicit towards the end of the diegesis, when an unidentified peasant laments the continued socio-economic injustice and conflict in their vicinity after April 1974, while the wars of independence in Portugal's African colonies are concluding: 'que libertação foi esta, então já se fala que vai acabar a guerra em África e não acaba esta do latifúndio' [what kind of liberation is this, people are saying that the war in Africa is nearly over, and yet the war on the latifundio goes on].[104] Through this commonality — between Alentejans and African indigenous populations fighting in the so-called 'Colonial War' — *Levantado* establishes an affinity between regionalized populations (within continental Portugal) and colonized subjects (throughout the Portuguese Empire).

It must be said, though, that this allusion is fleeting, as opposed to the sustained parallel seen in *Lobos* between Beira Alta highlanders and indigenous populations in Portuguese colonial territories.

A notable limitation to these trans-national allusions, however, is *Levantado*'s regional imbalance: although the novel acknowledges nation-wide opposition to Salazarism in the 1958 Presidential Election ('entre o Minho e o Algarve, entre a costa do mar e a raia do levante' [from the Minho to the Algarve, from the coast to the eastern border]),[105] all direct political action involving Saramago's proletariat is dominated by areas (agrarian and urban) of southern Portugal. This regional preference can be ascertained, for example, in the peasants' coordination of strikes in 1945, which do not extend further north than the towns of Portalegre and Santarém: 'Há ali no grupo quem pergunte, E nos outros sítios, há quem responda, [...] É o mesmo, em Beja, em Santarém, em Portalegre, em Setúbal, que isto não é ideia duma cabeça só' [Someone in the group asks, What's happening in those other places then, and someone answers, [...], It's the same in Beja, in Santarém, in Portalegre, in Setúbal, this isn't just one man's idea].[106] Although the notion of solidarity and common purpose is certainly present here, Saramago's focus on the Alentejo (and northern Ribatejo) suggests a certain reluctance to involve communities in Portugal's North and Centre which, as outlined previously, have consistently been associated with conservative attitudes and actions. In the final chapter, there is a clear convergence between revolutionary activity in different vicinities: 'De todos os lugares de trabalho confluem as máquinas, [...] é preciso ligar com os que vêm dos outros sítios, [...] e a coluna engrossou' [The machines flow forth from every workplace, [...], intending to meet up with more tractors coming from other places, [...], and the column grows in size].[107] This imagery is tempered, though, by the knowledge that these 1974–76 occupations were vigorously opposed by agriculturalists north of the Ribatejo — a historical reality that Saramago does not acknowledge. There is, then, a certain reticence and inconsistency in terms of the trans-regional political community that Saramago otherwise champions.

Nonetheless, to suggest that this narrative never engages with peasant communities in northern and central Portugal would be incorrect. An illuminating confrontation takes place in 1911, between striking Alentejan peasants and a group of 'ratinhos' (a pejorative term for migrant workers from the Beiras) who have been recruited to break the industrial action:

> Estão agora dois grupos de trabalhadores frente a frente [...]. Dizem os do norte, [...] queremos trabalhar. Dizem os do sul, Sujeitam-se a ganhar menos, vêm aqui fazer-nos mal, voltem para a vossa terra, ratinhos. [...] Dizem os do sul, Aqui não trabalham, [...] Dizem os do sul, Esta terra é nossa.
>
> [There are now two groups of workers face to face [...]. Those from the north are saying, [...] we want to work. Those from the south say, You've agreed to work for less money, you come here to do us harm, go back where you came from, you rats [...]. Those from the south say, Well, you're not going to work here. [...]. Those from the south say, This land is ours].[108]

At the beginning of this conversation, the Alentejan labourers exhibit a certain

territorialism and hostility towards the outsiders, but, as Sabine highlights, this narrow focus on 'regional identity' fails to 'cut much ice', leading them to pursue a fraternal 'common bargaining position': 'Irmãos, dêem ouvidos ao que dizemos, juntem-se a nós' [Brothers, listen to what we're saying, [...], join us].[109] Nonetheless, the *beirões* reject this approach, engaging in physical conflict with the Alentejans despite their shared material conditions: 'fome contra fome, miséria sobre miséria' [hunger against hunger, poverty against poverty].[110] This exchange represents a potential limitation in *Levantado*'s attempts to construct wider political alliances: although it allows the southern peasants to develop organizational strategies and empathy with other labourers, the same cannot be said of the Beira workers who, incidentally, are never mentioned again (nor are any other northern or central peasant communities).

To what extent, then, is Saramago's novel geographically circumscribed, insofar as it illustrates how 'a regional social revolution emerged within the national political revolution' in mid-1970s Portugal,[111] but does not insert these Alentejan protagonists into broader anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist struggles outside of their own locality? Furthermore, does this narrative accept or challenge Hobsbawm's assertion that instances of peasant politicization 'all appear to be regional, or coalitions of regional movements'?[112] Key to these questions are the militant particularist metaphors deployed throughout *Levantado*. The first of these is Saramago's concept of an 'inland sea', which, before being mentioned explicitly, is evoked indirectly. As Faustina Mau-Tempo travels across the Tejo to visit João in prison, the Atlantic Ocean beyond the river mouth is depicted as a space of apparently infinite possibilities and epic exploits: 'uma ânsia líquida e infinita, um remexer continuado de massas de vidro e espuma, uma dureza mineral que amolece e enregela, o lugar dos grandes peixes e dos lutuosos naufrágios, poesias' [an infinite, liquid longing, a continuous sifting of glass and foam, a mineral hardness that softens and chills, the home of the great fish and of sad shipwrecks and poems].[113] There are echoes of Ribeiro's *Faunos* and Jorge's *Dia* here, in Saramago's interrogation of marine possibility, within an ostensibly rural narrative. Later, the narrator overtly depicts the *latifúndio* as a maritime entity (albeit a Mediterranean one, as opposed to the Atlantic Ocean facing much of Portugal):

> O latifúndio é um mar interior. [...] É mediterrânico mar, mas tem marés e ressacas, correntes macias que levam tempo a dar a volta inteira, e às vezes rápidos surtos que sacodem a superfície. [...] São comparações que tanto servem como servem pouco, dizer que o latifúndio é um mar, [...], se esta água agitarmos, toda a outra em redor se move, às vezes de tão longe que os olhos o negam [...].
>
> [The latifundio is an inland sea. [...]. It's a Mediterranean sea, but it has its tides and undertows, gentle currents that take time to complete the circuit, and occasional sudden churnings that shake the surface [...]. Comparing the latifundio with the sea is as useful as it is useless, [...], if we disturb the water here, the water all around will move, sometimes too far away to be seen [...]].[114]

This imagery — interpreted as an ironic, peasant-oriented rendering of Portugal's

maritime and imperial history[115] — suggests concealed or undetected activity, spanning unseen volumes: 'na escura profundidade se enrolam lentamente as vagas' [in the dark depths the waves slowly roll].[116] Moreover, the *latifúndio*/sea metaphor links specific, localized political struggles to external patterns of agitation and disturbance, with its reference to the ripple effect of waves. Lastly, the synchronicity of two seemingly incompatible territorial concepts ('sea' as noun and 'inland' as adjective) portrays the Alentejans' seemingly remote struggles as intrinsically linked to a trans-national, collective revolutionary consciousness. If, in Saramago's words, ideology can be understood expansively, as a 'sort of sea', then his use of the qualifying adjective 'interior' can be interpreted as a localizing and particularizing political strategy.

A further complication of the Alentejans' regional versus global positioning comes in the narrator's depiction of the earth — in relation to Monte Lavre — as a delicate time-keeping device:

> o mundo é, visto de Monte Lavre, uma coisa delicada, um relogiozito que só pode aguentar um tanto de corda e nem uma volta mais [...]. [...]. Mas, se lhe tiram a casca, se o vento, o sol, e a humidade começam a girar e a bater por dentro dele, [...] acabaram os dias venturosos. Visto de Monte Lavre, o mundo é um relógio aberto, está com as tripas ao sol, à espera de que chegue a sua hora.
>
> [this world, seen from Monte Lavre, is a very delicate thing, a small watch that can only take so much winding and not a turn more [...]. [...]. But if you remove its shell, if the wind, sun and rain begin to spin and beat inside it, [...] the happy days are over. Seen from Monte Lavre, the world is an open clock, with its innards exposed to the sun, waiting for its hour to come].[117]

While this image inevitably invites diachronic readings,[118] the passage above also has geographical implications. Specifically, in Saramago's repetition of the phrase 'o mundo é, visto de Monte Lavre', the syntax is inverted, giving precedence to 'o mundo' [the world] in the first instance and to 'visto de Monte Lavre' [seen from Monte Lavre] in the second, suggesting a foregrounding of the peasants' particular perspective and localized standpoint. Furthermore, Saramago's evolving use of the noun 'relógio' [watch/clock] — from the diminutive 'relogiozito' [small watch] to an exposed 'relógio aberto' [open clock] — represents a shift from a limited, parochial mindset towards an expansive, open and politically engaged attitude, made possible only by removing insulation (the watch's glass case). According to this symbolism, only by rupturing an externally imposed isolation can the Alentejan rural proletariat comprehend their specific positioning within, and interaction with, a (potentially) global network of resistance.

Subsequently, *Levantado* deploys lunar imagery to illuminate Monte Lavre's complex, developing relationship with the outside world, positing moonlight as a tool for the rural labourers to increase their awareness of external circumstances, and for (temporarily) revealing their position, within a much wider context: 'Se lua têm, deste alto de Monte Lavre vê-se o mundo todo, faz de conta, não somos assim tão ignorantes que não saibamos que o mundo é muito maior do que isto' [if there's a moon, you can see the whole world from high up in Monte Lavre,

well, let's pretend you can, we're not that ignorant, we know the world is much bigger].[119] Using lunar illumination here to evoke 'hope', 'enlightenment' and anti-Salazarist 'resistance' (as in *Memorial do convento*),[120] Saramago's metaphor is nonetheless heavily caveated; much like the aforementioned remark 'vê-se Lisboa, se está claro o dia' [on a clear day, you can see Lisbon], 'se lua têm' [if there's a moon] indicates a contingent process of self-realization, only as reliable as the weather conditions and calendar cycles that (may or may not) allow moonlight to illuminate the surrounding environment. The connection between Monte Lavre and the world in which it exists, then, is far from linear, and is better understood as a strategic fluctuation between different geographical scales, resembling Hobsbawm's argument that major peasant movements operate on a liminal plane, 'somewhere inbetween' 'micro-politics' and 'macro-politics'.[121]

Finally, Saramago oscillates between regional particularism and trans-geographical struggle in *Levantado*'s aforementioned opening chapter, through the demonstrative pronoun ('esta paisagem'; 'esta terra' [this landscape; this land]), the indefinite article ('uma terra' [a [...] piece of land]) and the definite article ('A terra' [The land]). This rapid alternation between specificity and universality also characterizes the statement that 'não faltam ao mundo cheiros, nem sequer a esta terra, parte que dele é e servida de paisagem' [The world does not lack for smells either, not even here, which is, of course, part of the world and well provided with landscape],[122] a complex syntactical construction simultaneously positing *landscape* as part of the *land* and *land* as part of the *world*. The intimate association between 'land', 'landscape' and 'world' is reinforced by the final chapter, in which the narrator posits the exact location of the first peasant occupation as unknown, but also unique: 'E então num sítio qualquer do latifúndio, a história lembrar-se-á de dizer qual, os trabalhadores ocuparam uma terra' [And somewhere on the latifundio, history will record the exact spot, the workers occupied a piece of land].[123] Here, an initial suggestion of insignificance combines with territory occupied by peasants, thereby associating an isolated location, of apparent non-importance, with revolutionary and militant activity.

Levantado, then, exposes and destabilizes common misconceptions of rural isolation, city versus country (and capital versus province) dichotomies, and assumptions regarding the Portuguese peasantry's political disengagement. Moreover, the author presents the Alentejans' material, geographically specific struggles as simultaneously connected with a national and international context. As Sabine indicates, this narrative does not claim to present a simplistic 'microcosm' of the nation,[124] as evidenced by its refusal to associate rural labourers of northern and central Portugal with the South's radicalism. Nevertheless, Saramago's oscillation between regional precision and global political struggle corresponds to Williams's view, that 'almost all labour struggles begin as particularist', and that 'certain particular interests, properly brought together, are in fact the general interest'. Thus, this narrative presents a geographically rooted and regionally specific revolutionary politics, which opens itself outwards to trans-regional and trans-national spheres of militancy. Conversely, *Caverna*'s diegetic environments are geographically

imprecise, and yet share many of the spatialized ideological dynamics of *Levantado*, as I shall now demonstrate.

A caverna: The Non-specific Particular

When *Caverna* was published in 2000, the 'activist-author' Saramago had already become an international literary 'celebrity', primarily due to increasing translations of his fiction, and his Nobel Prize in Literature.[125] The 1990s constituted a period of transition for Saramago's novels, from historically and geographically precise settings to ambivalently located, allegorical narratives; Christoper Rollason regards this shift as a response to radical socio-economic change, within Portugal and elsewhere ('as if cultural particularity had vanished under the standardizing pressures of globalisation'),[126] an argument that I shall interrogate presently.

In contrast to *Levantado*, *Caverna* is concerned not with a collective peasant proletariat in a particular regional setting, but with a single family (the ageing potter Cipriano Algor, his daughter Marta and his son-in-law Marçal Gacho) inhabiting a nondescript village. *Caverna* depicts this household's struggle to survive the existential threat posed by 'o Centro' [the Centre] — an enormous, expanding commercial and residential complex — from which their village is separated by several intermediary spaces: a 'Cintura Agrícola' [Agricultural Belt] (ironically nicknamed the 'Cintura Verde' [Green Belt]), a 'Cintura Industrial' [Industrial Belt], a neighbourhood of 'barracas' [shacks] that represent the urban boundary, a constantly shrinking 'terra-de-ninguém' [no-man's-land], and finally the 'cidade' [city], within which the *Centro* is located. Cipriano's pottery business, having supplied the Centre with hand-crafted clay crockery for some time, is forced to cease trading and dispose of its unsold wares, when his contract of exclusivity is cancelled due to declining demand. The potter then places his rejected products in an abandoned 'gruta' [cave] beyond the village, hoping that they can be recovered by future generations. Although Cipriano and Marta persuade the Buying Manager to test their newly devised products (clay figurines painted to resemble livelihoods), this endeavour fails too, when the Centre's clientele displays little enthusiasm. Simultaneously, Marçal's shift work at the Centre as a security guard grants the whole family residence there, leading to Cipriano's reluctant decision to join them in the artificial complex. *Caverna*'s final chapters portray the Centre's interior and the family's rejection of its synthetic environment, having discovered a manifestation of Plato's Cave underneath: human bodies chained to a bench, staring at a wall of images (the shadows of Plato's original allegory). Upon realizing that these corpses reflect themselves, the family members flee the Centre forever (and also depart from their village, with Cipriano's new girlfriend and dog), travelling towards an unknown final destination.

Scholars like Chris Schulenburg highlight *Caverna*'s 'nebulous relationship' between urban and rural environments, and its critique of late twentieth-century, neo-liberal globalization trends.[127] Some readings go beyond this, however, addressing the narrative's denunciation of the 'commodity form', its struggle

between 'centripetal and centrifugal' forces, its examination of hyper-capitalist 'surveillance', and its defence of a 'responsible human ecology'.[128] These are all significant aspects of the novel's political message, but it is important not to lose sight of its 'particularism', as Rollason notes,[129] and to understand how this positioning strategy is inherently militant. Accordingly, I will first examine how Saramago destabilizes spatial binaries and preconceptions, through *Caverna*'s multiple territories shaped by ideological forces, culminating in the Centre — a spatial manifestation of hyper-capitalism's replacement of reality with simulacra. Secondly, I shall outline the narrative's refutation of bucolic nostalgia and highly politicized articulation of mourning, involving a meticulous placement, positioning and preservation of historical remnants. I will therefore complement my earlier analysis of *Levantado*, which, as mentioned, contains a finely balanced dialectical relationship between localized and global political consciousness.

Spatial preconceptions and their undoing

Firstly, *Caverna*, like *Levantado*, systematically deconstructs an apparent rural/urban dichotomy. This is apparent, for instance, in the narrator's musings on Cipriano's community and on its supposed isolation and simplicity: 'A povoação [...] era pouco mais que a estrada que lhe passava ao meio, umas quantas ruas [...] uma praça irregular [...] um poço fechado, com a sua bomba de tirar água e a grande roda de ferro' [The village [...] consisted of little more than the road that passed through it, the few streets [...] an irregularly shaped square [...] a disused well, with its water pump and its great iron wheel].[130] This passage presents an apparently primitive and unsophisticated community, with a low population density and a lack of infrastructure.

Later, however, Saramago problematizes the notion that this settlement is isolated from civilized society. When mentioning that Marta studied in the city, for example, the narrator ironically posits that metropolitan areas must have at least *some* advantage over rural communities: 'Marta [...] já gozou da sorte grande de ir estudar à cidade, que alguma vantagem hão-de ter sobre as aldeias os grandes núcleos de população' [Marta [...] already had the great good fortune of going to study in the city, well, those large centres of population have to have some advantages over villages].[131] Similarly, in reference to the Algor household's extensive personal library, Saramago's hyperbole critiques presumptions of rural simplicity/idiocy and urban civilization/knowledge:

> Como será fácil imaginar, a biblioteca da família Algor não é extensa em quantidade nem excelsa em qualidade. De pessoas populares, e num sítio como este, apartado da civilização, não haveria que esperar excessos de sapiência, mas, ainda assim, podem contar-se por duas ou três centenas os livros arrumados nas prateleiras [...].
>
> [As you might imagine, the Algor family library is neither extensive nor of exceptional quality. You wouldn't expect great erudition in ordinary people and in a place like this, far from civilisation, but even so, there are some two or three hundred books on the shelves [...].[132]

This reference to a 'place [...] far from civilisation' is subsequently repeated verbatim, in reference to Cipriano's difficult in-laws: 'Não é só em aldeias afastadas da civilização que os apêndices cerebrais humanos são capazes de gerar ideias assim' [It is not only in villages far from civilisation that the human cerebral appendage is capable of generating such ideas].[133] Subsequently, when the pottery is abandoned it is labelled 'as derradeiras sobras de uma antiga civilização' [the last remains of an ancient civilisation];[134] thus, Saramago irreverently repeats the noun 'civilização' throughout *Caverna*, to decentre presumed locations of knowledge, erudition and self-awareness along simplistic geographical divides. The author's ideological target, as I shall outline shortly, is the Centre, alongside everything that it represents.

Before examining this complex, one should evaluate the multiple intermediary spaces between the Centre and the village, given that they reflect actual economic exploitation, political repression and territorial transformation (in Portugal and elsewhere). One such locale is the shacks on the city's boundary, housing marginalized communities: 'aglomerações caóticas de barracas feitas de quantos materiais, na sua maioria precários, pudessem ajudar a defender das intempéries [...] os seus mal abrigados moradores. É, no dizer dos habitantes da cidade, um lugar assustador' [chaotic conglomerations of shacks made by their ill-housed inhabitants out of whatever flimsy materials might help to keep out the elements [...]. It is, as the inhabitants of the city put it, a frightening place].[135] Here, the image of spatial exclusion and peripheral existence is clear,[136] particularly when compared with the city's (seemingly) idealized environment: 'não a cidade propriamente dita, essa avista-se lá adiante, tocada como uma carícia pela primeira e rosada luz do sol' [not the city proper, for that can be seen beyond, touched by the caress of the first, rosy light of the sun].[137] Later, the repression of these communities by armed authorities is evidenced when Cipriano observes the military's forced entry on the premise of subduing violence: 'o camião não fora queimado pela gente das barracas, mas pela própria polícia, era um pretexto para a intervenção do exército' [the truck had not been burned by the people in the shacks, but by the police themselves, it was just an excuse to bring in the army].[138] This liminal space reflects real-life socio-economic injustices in various urban environments, from the *favelas* of major Brazilian cities to Greater Lisbon's *bairros de lata* [shanty towns] (such as Cova da Moura and Bairro da Jamaica), increasingly associated with social exclusion, racial discrimination and police brutality from the 1980s onwards.[139]

Secondly, Saramago's characterization of the so-called Green Belt lampoons idyllic stereotypes of agricultural labour. In Chapter 1, for example, the narrator describes stark greenhouse structures disfiguring a polluted, non-bucolic and explicitly *regional* landscape:[140]

> A região é fosca, suja [...]. Alguém deu a estas enormes extensões de aparência nada campestre o nome técnico de Cintura Agrícola, e também, por analogia poética, o de Cintura Verde, mas a única paisagem que os olhos conseguem alcançar, [...] são grandes armações de tecto plano, rectangulares, feitas de plásticos de uma cor neutra que o tempo e as poeiras, aos poucos, foram desviando ao cinzento e ao pardo.

> [The area [...] is dull and dirty [...]. Someone gave these vast and decidedly unrural expanses the technical name of the Agricultural Belt and also, by poetic analogy, the Green Belt, but the only landscape the eyes can see [...] are vast, rectangular, flat-roofed structures, made of neutral-coloured plastic which time and dust have gradually turned grey or brown.][141]

Through this murky image, dominated by rectangular horticultural buildings, Saramago recovers his parodic, pastoral 'poetic analogies' from *Levantado*, this time with reference to late twentieth-century agribusiness practices. Presenting a 'dystopian'[142] semi-rural environment dulled by human architecture, the author instantly confounds romanticized expectations of idyllic rural vistas, much like Ribeiro, Bessa-Luís and Jorge.

Simultaneously, Saramago's Agricultural Belt denounces exploitation of agricultural labourers, through the unbearable heat and unrelenting conditions that they experience while toiling in the surrounding greenhouses: 'Lá dentro não há frio, pelo contrário, os homens que ali trabalham asfixiam-se no calor, cozem-se no seu próprio suor, desfalecem, são como trapos encharcados e torcidos por mãos violentas' [Inside, there is no cold, on the contrary, the men who work there suffocate in the heat, they cook in their own sweat, they faint, they are like sodden rags wrung out by violent hands].[143] While this excerpt echoes the travails of Alentejan peasant labourers seen in *Levantado*, it also critiques intensive greenhouse food production — an increasingly prevalent international phenomenon by the late 1990s (particularly in southern Spain and, subsequently, Portugal), notorious for its negative environmental impact and mistreatment of migrant workers.[144] Thus, *Caverna* destabilizes preconceptions of rural 'escape' from arduous industrial labour, in an evidently sardonic tone.

Another important ideological component of the Green Belt is the greenhouses' comparison to an infinite sea, 'cobrindo sem solução de continuidade perceptível muitos milhares de hectares' [covering many thousands of apparently uninterrupted hectares], albeit cold, artificial and constructed from plastic: 'esta cor de gelo sujo que cobre o chão, este interminável mar de plástico onde as estufas, talhadas pela mesma medida, se assemelham a icebergues petrificados, a gigantescas pedras de dominó sem pintas' [this slush colour that covers the ground, this endless sea of plastic where the greenhouses, all cut to the same size, look like petrified icebergs, like gigantic dominoes without the spots].[145] While this image is likely a parody of Spain's *mar de plástico* [sea of plastic] (in Poniente Almeriense), it also evokes both the Alentejan 'inland sea' of *Levantado*, and Saramago's aforementioned perception of ideology *itself* as a 'sort of sea'. The (potentially) limitless hidden depths of a plastic sea, then, stand for the proliferation of a specific ideological hegemony, which I will outline presently.

While *Caverna*'s Agricultural Belt is depicted as an over-developed, contaminated and exploitative agrarian zone, the neighbouring Industrial Belt presents another non-urban territory, devoid of vegetation, containing only polluting factories and waste:

> Diz-se que a paisagem é um estado de alma, que a paisagem de fora a vemos com os olhos de dentro, será porque esses extraordinários órgãos interiores de visão não souberam ver estas fábricas e estes hangares, estes fumos que devoram o céu, estas poeiras tóxicas, estas lamas eternas, estas crostas de fuligem, o lixo de ontem varrido para cima do lixo de todos os dias [...].
>
> [They say that landscape is a state of mind, that we see the outer landscape with our inner eye, but is that because those extraordinary inner organs of vision are unable to see these factories and these hangars, this smoke devouring the sky, this toxic dust, this never-ending mud, these layers of soot, yesterday's rubbish swept on top of the rubbish of every other day [...].][146]

The narrator's remarks above recall the aforementioned first chapter of *Levantado*, which posits 'landscape' as a superstructure, maintained by the 'land' (as the base). In *Caverna*, the narrator refers to landscape as a subjective, mental construct, contrasted with a contaminated (and contaminating) industrial base.[147] Moreover, the atmospheric pollution emitted by this area ('laboratórios químicos, refinarias de petróleo, cheiros fétidos' [chemical laboratories, oil refineries, fetid [...] odours') extends to the Algors' village, as evidenced by the identical vocabulary describing the waters there: 'uma ribeira de águas escuras e fétidas' [a large stream containing dark and fetid water].[148] Here, Saramago suggests a defilement of *both* locations, through the repeated adjective 'fétido' [fetid].

Caverna's various *loci*, then, are significant not for their binary opposition to one another, but for their constant correspondence *with* each other and, in some instances, their mutual dependence. Specifically, Cipriano's rural pottery relies on the village, the city and the Industrial Belt for its supply of raw materials: 'o oleiro viajou à cidade para comprar o gesso cerâmico destinado aos moldes' [the potter went into town to buy plaster for the moulds]; 'vai abastecer-se nos arredores da povoação, encomendar aos mateiros e agricultores umas quantas carradas de lenha [...], comprar nas serrações e carpintarias da Cintura Industrial umas quantas sacas de serradura' [[he] will get supplies from the surrounding area, order a few cartloads of wood from foresters and farmers, buy a few sacks of sawdust from sawmills and carpenter's workshops in the Industrial Belt].[149] Thus, Saramago upends 'traditional' spatial stereotypes of 'the country as cooperation with nature, the city and industry as overriding and transforming it';[150] the narrative's various demographic zones function collectively as a 'base' or 'means of production', whose sole purpose is to serve a (physical and ideological) superstructure: the Centre.

This hyper-capitalist structure, whose shadow 'looms over the entire novel',[151] frequently dominates its urban surroundings. Cipriano's and Marçal's journey through the city, for example, is abruptly terminated by one of the complex's walls ('Ao fundo, um muro altíssimo, escuro, muito mais alto que o mais alto dos prédios que ladeavam a avenida, cortava abruptamente o caminho' [At the far end, an extremely high wall, much higher than the highest of the buildings on either side of the avenue, abruptly blocked the road]); elsewhere, the narrator ironically subverts the proverb 'all roads lead to Rome', to foreground the Centre: 'Qualquer caminho que se tome vai dar ao Centro' [Any road you take leads to the Centre].[152] Thus,

Saramago dislodges the traditional centrality of the 'metropolis', and replaces it with a centripetal and imperious built environment. Hence, although the city's buildings are associated with militaristic expansion, advancing 'em linha de atiradores' [like a line of riflemen], Marçal's 'conclusão logicamente impecável' [logically impeccable conclusion] is that the Centre is responsible: 'daqui a mil ou dois mil anos não é nada impossível que a cidade tenha chegado até onde neste momento nos encontramos, [...], Ou o Centro' [in a couple of thousand years' time it's quite possible that the city will have spread as far as here, [...], Or the Centre].[153] Accordingly, images of urban development ('uma rede entrecruzada de rastos de tractores, [...] grandes pás mecânicas' [a crisscrossing network of tractor trails, [...], large mechanical diggers]) actually correspond to the complex's concealed and insidious growth: 'aqui nunca se acabam as obras, o Centro cresce todos os dias mesmo quando não se dá por isso, se não é para os lados, é para cima, se não é para cima, é para baixo' [they're always building something here, the Centre grows every day without your even noticing it, if not outwards, upwards, if not upwards, downwards].[154] What is it stake here is an *economic* impulse, disguised as simple urbanization; *Caverna* therefore recalls capitalism's 'restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes' as outlined by Harvey.

Indeed, the complex's 'permanent expansion', and its efforts to 'absorb', 'contain' and 'replace' the city, are articulated in both socio-economic and physical terms.[155] Saramago's *Centro* not only deprives the urban merchants surrounding it of their customers,[156] but also robs all other territories of their inhabitants, as Marta complains: 'os comerciantes da cidade lutam com grandes dificuldades para manter a cabeça fora de água, toda a gente vai comprar ao Centro, cada vez há mais gente a querer viver no Centro' [the shops in the city are having a real struggle just to keep their heads above water, everyone does their shopping at the Centre, more and more people want to live at the Centre].[157] Notwithstanding such remarks, the complex poses an existential threat beyond commercial or demographic concerns, as suggested by Cipriano:

> o Centro está dentro da cidade, mas é maior do que a cidade, sendo uma parte é maior que o todo, provavelmente será porque é mais alto que os prédios que o cercam, mais alto que qualquer prédio da cidade, provavelmente porque desde o princípio tem estado a engolir ruas, praças, quarteirões inteiros.
>
> [the Centre is inside the city, but it's bigger than the city, which means that the part is bigger than the whole, it's probably just because it's taller than the buildings around it, taller than any building in the city, probably because, right from the start, it has been swallowing up streets, squares, whole districts.][158]

In this image of an insatiable creature digesting streets, squares and blocks, Saramago presents the complex as a threat to an urban environment that both surrounds the *Centro* and predates it; the author distinguishes between these two entities through the verbs 'estar' [to be, contingently and temporarily] and 'ser' [to be, innately and enduringly]. Thus, *Caverna* portrays a parasitic organism that has developed within the city's confines, but which now *permanently* jeopardizes all environments beyond it.

This ominous impression is strengthened by Saramago's superlative-laden descriptions of the *Centro*'s exterior, presenting 'uma construção enorme, um edifício gigantesco, quadrangular, sem janelas na fachada lisa, igual em toda a sua extensão' [a huge building, a gigantic quadrangular edifice, with no windows on its smooth, featureless façade].[159] Elsewhere, the complex's aesthetics are associated with human imprisonment and totalitarian control: 'Exceptuando as portas [...], em nenhuma das restantes frontarias há aberturas, são impenetráveis panos de muralha [...]. [...] milhares de janelas, sempre fechadas por causa do condicionamento da atmosfera interna' [With the exception of the doors [...] there are no other openings to be seen, just impenetrable stretches of wall [...]. [...] thousands of windows, all of them closed because of the air conditioning inside].[160] This passage illustrates a complex that clearly *distinguishes itself from* — rather than *blending into* — the surrounding cityscape, with numerous façades visually separating the Centre from the outside world, and an atmospheric conditioning system designed to remove fresh air. Thus, there is an affinity between Saramago's complex and late twentieth-century, neo-liberal economic development: it approximates to the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles (1976) which, according to Fredric Jameson, 'does not wish to be a part of the city but rather its equivalent and replacement', and, in Edward Soja's view, represents 'the restructured spatiality of the late capitalist city': 'fragmented and fragmenting, homogeneous and homogenizing, [...], seemingly open in presenting itself to view but constantly pressing to enclose, to compartmentalize, to circumscribe, to incarcerate'.[161]

To this end, the *Centro*'s exhaustive array of attractions and features surpass traditional shopping centres/malls (dating back to the 1950s in the United States), encompassing not only common amenities like shops, cafés and cinemas, but also a roller-coaster, a zoo and, more ironically and absurdly, 'uma fachada de igreja, a entrada para a praia' [the façade of a church, the entrance to the beach].[162] Arguably, such facilities coalesce with recent 'destination mall' projects in the USA and elsewhere, containing 'experiential attractions' designed to 'keep people in the center longer'.[163] Simultaneously, the Centre's (lower-case) recreations of international landmarks and ethnic groups ('uma muralha da china, um taj-mahal, [...], um himalaia com o seu evereste, um rio amazonas com índios' [a wall of china, a taj mahal, [...], a himalayas complete with everest, an amazon river complete with indians') correspond to strategies widely adopted by mall conglomerates by 2000: as Jon Goss noted in 1993, 'iconic metonyms' (including the Eiffel Tower, Italian urban squares or Miami Beach), were already common, exploiting 'well-worn clichés of place' and promoting '*other-wheritis* [...] in which a distant place is preferable to here and now'.[164]

Nonetheless, Saramago's Centre does not merely represent and critique the postmodern 'mall' as a physical space, but positions itself as a political symbol. As the author himself emphasized, 'O centro [comercial] é um lugar de ideologia. [...]. Não é verdade que as pessoas não tenham uma ideologia. Mas é nova: consumir' [the [shopping] centre is a place of ideology. [...]. It's not true that people don't have an ideology. But it's a new one: to consume].[165] In addition, Saramago has explicitly

described his fictional complex as an 'alegoria de situação' [situational allegory], that is, not simply a repetition of the original Platonic allegory, but a thoroughly *grounded* allegorical exercise.[166] A clear example of the *Centro*'s wider ideological significance lies in its insidious desire for total control over visitors and residents, partly via panoptic observation and mutual surveillance,[167] but also through the amenities contained therein. This is apparent in the narrative's contrasting pairs of facilities: for instance, the narrator juxtaposes 'um centro dos pequeninos' [a centre for toddlers] with 'um centro da terceira idade' [a centre for the Third Age], suggesting that the Centre is designed for an entire lifetime of exclusive residence and consumption. Further, the coexistence of 'um hospital de luxo' [a luxury hospital] and 'outro menos luxuoso' [another slightly less luxurious hospital] (effectively, a two-tier healthcare system) removes the need for residents to seek medical assistance outside the complex's borders. The Centre's desire to perpetually 'incarcerate' is then reflected by its 'prodígios que nem oitenta anos de vida ociosa bastariam para os desfrutar com proveito, mesmo tendo nascido a pessoa no Centro e não tendo saído dele nunca para o mundo exterior' [a list of prodigies so long that not even eighty years of leisure would be enough to take them all in, even if you had been born in the Centre and had never left it for the outside world] — much like Disneyland and similar theme park environments, in which 'enclosed spaces are subtly but tightly controlled by invisible overseers'.[168] Concurrently, the Centre presents various *hyper-real* spaces and images, designed to confuse and manipulate its residents and customers, as evidenced by the contradictory coexistence of minute and astronomical scales within its walls: 'um cometa, uma galáxia, um anão grande, um gigante pequeno' [a comet, a galaxy, a large dwarf, a small giant].[169]

This complication of rational spatial distribution is, in Soja's view, typical of late capitalist architecture's pursuit of consumer obedience: 'its spaces confuse an effective cognitive mapping, its pastiche of superficial reflections bewilder co-ordination and encourage submission instead'.[170] In addition, the 'simulacra' and 'simulation' present throughout the *Centro* contain inherently spatialized contours, in Jean Baudrillard's terms:

> Simulation is no longer that of a territory [...]. [...]. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory — *precession of simulacra* — that engenders the territory [...]. It is a hyperreal, produced [...] in a hyperspace without atmosphere.[171]

Saramago's novel outlines precisely this 'simulated' (and synthetic) environment, culminating in the physical manifestation of Plato's Cave below the *Centro*'s foundations, which, when discovered, prompts Cipriano to finally distinguish between fiction and reality: 'o que ali está, sendo o que é, não tem realidade, não pode ser real, [...], E contudo [...] não foi uma ilusão, não foi um sonho, [...] fiquei a pensar que talvez o que realmente não exista seja aquilo a que damos o nome de não existência' [what we saw there has no reality, cannot be real, [...], And yet [...] it wasn't an illusion, it wasn't a dream, [...], I started thinking that perhaps what really doesn't exist is what we call non-existence].[172] Given that the complex has been constructed upwards and outwards from the direction of this

original cave, Saramago's 'superstructure' functions not only as an updated version of Plato's original allegory,[173] but as an expanded and highly politicized allegorical space, which the *Centro* openly (self-)commodifies at the end of the diegesis: 'BREVEMENTE, ABERTURA AO PÚBLICO DA CAVERNA DE PLATÃO, ATRACÇÃO EXCLUSIVA, ÚNICA NO MUNDO, COMPRE JÁ A SUA ENTRADA' [COMING SOON, PUBLIC OPENING OF PLATO'S CAVE, AN EXCLUSIVE ATTRACTION, UNIQUE IN THE WORLD, BUY YOUR TICKET NOW].[174]

Ultimately, then, *Caverna* denounces a threatening and destructive consequence of late-capitalist territorial re-organization: an increasingly exploitative and exclusionary socio-economic framework, coupled with artificial, simulated images that remove consciousness and agency from the citizen-turned-consumer, and transform them into archetypal Platonic prisoners. In this sense, Plato's spatialized Allegory of the Cave is a necessary component of Saramago's ideological critique, whereas another cave in the diegesis represents a site of particularist resistance, through *mourning*.

'What is left': militant particularist mourning

At various moments in *Caverna*, Saramago seemingly evokes simplistic and atavistic sentiments of bucolic nostalgia, or of rural loss. One can consider the novel's first chapter, for instance, which portrays 'implacáveis lâminas curvas que, sem dó nem piedade, levam tudo por diante, a casa antiga, a raiz nova, o muro que amparava, o lugar de uma sombra que nunca mais voltará a estar' [implacable curved blades pitilessly sweep[ing] everything away, the ancient house, the new root, the sheltering wall, the place where a shadow once fell and where it will never fall again].[175] The pairing of aged architecture and emerging foliage here emphasizes the scale of destruction, whereas the adverb 'nunca mais' [never again], coupled with the future tense, engenders a fatalistic tone. Concomitantly, the reader observes a gradual deterioration of the village, each time that Cipriano enters and exits his community: 'havia uns restos esquálidos de bosque, uns campos mal amanhados, [...], as ruínas de três casas já sem janelas nem portas' [there were the few spindly remains of a wood, a few ill-cultivated fields, [...], the ruins of three houses with no windows now or doors].[176] In this excerpt (and elsewhere), Saramago illustrates the 'desolação' [desolation],[177] decay and abandonment characterizing sites of former human habitation (dilapidated houses), agriculture (neglected, messy fields) and even untouched areas (the remains of a forest). Such passages recall the aforementioned phenomena of 'depopulation' and 'desertification' which have dominated discussions of Portugal's inland rural communities in recent decades; for example, *Caverna*'s village can be likened to Broas, a small settlement 30 km from Lisbon that has been lying abandoned for over forty years, with its architecture gradually deteriorating.[178]

Accompanying this demographic transformation is a process of mourning and lament, particularly within the Algor family. This is suggested in Marta's sorrow just before the Algors move to the *Centro*: 'temos a casa, uma casa com vista para o cemitério, [...], A olaria, o forno, [...], o que era e já deixou de ser, que maior

cemitério do que esse, perguntou Marta, à beira das lágrimas' [we have the house, a house with a view of the cemetery, [...], The pottery, the kiln, [...], what is and is no more, could there be a bigger cemetery than that, asked Marta, on the brink of tears].[179] This lament — deploying the imperfect and preterite tenses to underline the loss being experienced — is mirrored by Cipriano's outburst about his own redundancy: 'é o trabalho que deixou de ser o que havia sido, e nós que só podemos ser o que fomos' [it's the work which isn't what it used to be, and we [...] can only be what we were].[180] Cipriano, like Teotónio Louvadeus in *Lobos*, is profoundly emotionally affected by the family's separation from their rustic surroundings, eliciting concern from his son-in-law: 'nem a mim mesmo, que não nasci nem me criei debaixo daquele tecto, me vai ser fácil separar-me disto, que não se dirá do teu pai' [I wasn't born and brought up under this roof, but even for me it's not going to be easy to leave all this, so for your father].[181] Hence, *Caverna* appears to sanction ruralist nostalgia and grief.

Nevertheless, one must consider the novelist's public comments on *Caverna*, which firmly deny that his narrative favours returning to a (supposedly) 'idyllic', pre-urban and pre-modern age:

> Eu não gostaria que o livro fosse entendido como uma apologia [...], da vida tradicional, e uma feroz crítica aos tempos de agora. [...]. [...]. Não podemos viver como Cipriano Algor. [...]. Mas a alternativa, o que nos ficou, o caminho por onde metemos e o caminho por onde estamos, não pode ser o do Centro.
>
> [I wouldn't like the book to be interpreted as a defence of traditional life, and a harsh critique of modern times. [...]. We can't live like Cipriano Algor. [...]. But the alternative — what is left — the path we now follow and where we are — can't be the one of the Centre.[182]

This unambiguous statement of intent — to focus on 'what is left' — is reflected in *Caverna*'s sardonic narration, accompanying the decline of Cipriano's livelihood:

> Cipriano Algor carrega com algumas culpas próprias em tudo isto, a primeira das quais, [...] foi pensar que certos gostos e necessidades dos contemporâneos do avô fundador, em matéria de produtos cerâmicos, se iriam manter inalteráveis per omnia saecula saeculorum ou, pelo menos, durante toda a sua vida [...].
>
> [Cipriano Algor bears some of the blame for this himself, the main reason [...] was his assumption that certain tastes and needs common to his founding grandfather's contemporaries vis-à-vis ceramics would remain unchanged *per omnia saecula saeculorum* or, at least, for the rest of his life [...].][183]

Here, the narrator outlines the inevitability that habits and tastes should evolve and transform, as opposed to an immobile *status quo* that persists unto the ages of ages. With this tone in mind, the novel's archaic images should be interpreted as provocations, not desirable end results.

To this end, an important motif in *Caverna* is an old family encyclopaedia that Cipriano uses to develop his figurine designs, depicted as a time capsule containing frozen snapshots from multiple generations:

> as enciclopédias de hoje, de ontem e de trasantontem representam imagens sucessivas de mundos paralisados [...] exibem com [...] maníaca fixidez uma

> paisagem que, assim condenada a ser só [...] aquilo que tinha sido, [...] irá tornando ao mesmo tempo [...] mais caduca e mais desnecessária.
>
> [the encyclopaedias of today, yesterday, and the day-before-the-day-before-yesterday represent successive images of frozen worlds [...] show[ing], with a kind of maniacal fixity, a landscape which, because it is condemned to be only [...] what it was, will at the same time grow [...] more decrepit and more unnecessary].[184]

In these pointed references to 'mundos parasilados' [frozen worlds] and 'maníaca fixidez' [maniacal fixity], *Caverna* evokes the 'obsessive eternity' of *Lobos* but, unlike Ribeiro, Saramago does not defend 'conservation' as an end or outcome, but repeatedly questions the wisdom of maintaining obsolete lifestyles and atavistic practices.

An important component of this critique is a dream experienced by Cipriano, when he imagines renovating his pottery and uncharacteristically declaring:

> Deixemo-nos de saudosismos que só prejudicam e atrasam, [...], o progresso avança imparável, é preciso que nos decidamos a acompanhá-lo, ai daqueles que, [...], se deixam ficar sentados [...] a chorar um passado que nem sequer havia sido melhor do que o presente.
>
> [Let us jettison any feelings of nostalgia which will only hinder and hold us back, [...], progress moves implacably forwards, and we have no option but to keep pace with it, and woe to those who [...] are left sitting by the roadside weeping for a past that was no better than the present].[185]

Although this excerpt recalls Engenheiro Streit's brusque technocratic comments in *Lobos*, the fact that Saramago's scene is oneiric is significant; like João Mau-Tempo's imagined trip to Lisbon in *Levantado*, Cipriano's in-dream realization and rejection of redundant cultural precedents (e.g. Teixeira de Pascoaes's *saudosismo*) can be read as a fleeting moment of lucidity. Moreover, such passages evoke critical comments by Williams and Álvaro Domingues, concerning the perpetual 'escalator' of rural atavism in English and Portuguese culture respectively: 'When we moved back in time [...] to an earlier and happier rural England, we could find no place, no period, in which we could seriously rest'.[186]

While rural nostalgia is clearly repudiated, *Caverna*'s actual mechanisms of resistance are predicated on distinct grounds. The novel's ending (portraying the Algors' escape from the *Centro* and *aldeia* to an unknown location), has been read as a 'resolute attempt at resisting sanitized lives', although this does not explain why there is no post-revelation return to the place of shadows and simulacra, as in the original Platonic Allegory of the Cave.[187] Rather, the Algors simply flee, without 'assist[ing] their fellow cave-dwellers in seeing the truth',[188] leading the reader to examine 'o que nos ficou' [what is left] through smaller (yet no less significant) ideological details throughout the narrative. One can consider, for instance, the seemingly unimportant anthropological remains and natural vegetation that survive the novel's events; in the aforementioned descriptions of Cipriano's village, Saramago deploys qualifying adverbs ('os telhados *meio* caídos e os espaços interiores *quase* devorados' [roofs *half* fallen in and the rooms inside *almost* devoured])[189] to

suggest an incomplete demise. Moreover, as Cipriano drives through the no-man's-land, vestiges of human habitation are visible in fragmentary form, despite the onslaught of bulldozers and tractors:

> tal como sucede nas vidas, quando julgávamos que também nos tinham levado tudo por diante e depois reparamos que afinal nos ficara alguma coisa, igualmente aqui uns fragmentos dispersos [...] mostram-nos que este território havia estado ocupado antes pelos bairros de excluídos [...].
>
> [just as happens in our own lives when we think that everything has been taken away from us, only to notice later that something does, in fact, still remain, so here too a few scattered fragments [...] reveal to us that this territory was once occupied by the homes of the excluded [...].][190]

Here, the narrator problematizes the hyper-capitalist complex's gradual spatial domination, in that it does not completely succeed in eradicating remnants of previous human existence. Furthermore, the imperfect construction 'julgávamos que' [we thought/imagined that] — near-identical to the remark 'julgávamos que vivíamos no cabo do mundo' [we imagined we lived at the end of the world] in *Levantado* — challenges the false consciousness of inevitable totalitarian control by the *Centro*.

Such fragments are not simply a reminder of destroyed lives, however;[191] passages throughout *Caverna* posit both natural foliage and anthropological remains as silent, expectant harbingers of future redemption. This is clear when flora in Cipriano's village begins to reclaim deserted houses ('[a] vegetação que sempre irrompe dos escombros, como se ali tivesse estado, à espera da sua hora, desde a abertura dos cavoucos' [the vegetation that always irrupts out of the rubble as if it had been there, just waiting for that moment, ever since the first trenches were dug for the foundations]), thereby reflecting 'ecological' growth from a state of strategic hibernation.[192] Similarly, the mulberry tree, destined to remain outside Cipriano's pottery for eternity ('a amoreira-preta, para sempre agarrada à terra, ainda gotejava' [the mulberry tree, for ever bound to the earth, was still dripping]), represents nature's creative power and permanence.[193] Further, this tree demonstrates tenacity in the face of seemingly impossible odds, by stubbornly producing redundant fruits: 'a amoreira-preta persistirá em criar as suas amoras, mas não terá ninguém que venha apanhá-las' [the mulberry tree will still produce its mulberries, but there will be no one to come and pick them].[194] Through such futility, *Caverna*'s vegetation and anthropological remains can be read as politically symbolic.

Similar symbolism characterizes Cipriano's conservation of his rejected ceramic products, for discovery and recognition at an unknown future juncture. Appropriately, his selected location is a 'gruta' (another cave, just as important as the one discovered beneath the *Centro*), with the potter meticulously placing his ceramics so that they are hidden and untouched, in anticipation of future necessity: 'dá a ideia de querer [...] que fiquem assim, ocultas, resguardadas, até ao dia em que novamente venham a ser precisas' [it is as if [...] he wanted the pots to stay there, hidden, stored away, until the day when they are needed again].[195] Subsequently, the crockery becomes a 'tesouro arqueológico' [archaeological treasure] and, as

mentioned, a civilizational remnant: 'Qualquer diria que passaram dez mil anos desde que ali foram descarregadas as derradeiras sobras de uma antiga civilização' [Anyone would think that ten thousand years had passed since the last remains of an ancient civilisation were dumped there].[196] Thus, Saramago positions these remains of the Algors' redundant pottery as a means of preserving the family's own 'intersubjectivity',[197] but also as icons representing countless generations of working-class political struggle, in the face of impossible odds. This strategy is equally apparent in the narrative's final moments, when Cipriano places his unsold figurines at the pottery's entrance, in a defensive stance: 'agora já não é só diante da casa que as estatuetas estão de guarda, também defendem a entrada da olaria' [now the figurines are not just guarding the front of the house, they are defending the entrance to the pottery too].[198] Through this militaristic imagery, the potter not only seeks to protect any humans still free from the *Centro*'s influence,[199] but also to guard these remains for a posterior reckoning, just as the Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huang was (symbolically) defended by a static terracotta army in his mausoleum. There is evidence of ambivalence and parody involved in Saramago's image, however, given the uncertainty as to when this reckoning might take place, and that Cipriano's dolls are in miniature and include clowns; *Caverna*'s last stand, then, is slightly ridiculous and self-consciously futile.

Accordingly, Saramago's approach to mourning and memorialization can be read as a *messianic* one, which nonetheless does not expect (or even hope for) a moment of ultimate triumph. In certain regards, it approximates to Jacques Derrida's post-Soviet exploration of Marxist 'specters', defending a 'certain experience of the emancipatory promise, [...], a messianism without religion, even a messianic without messianism'.[200] Derrida's humanist understanding of the messianic is inextricably linked to a process of mourning which, unlike the imprecise and elusive object of bucolic nostalgia, involves intense *localization* and *precision*: '[Mourning] consists always in attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present [...] by *identifying* the bodily remains and by *localizing* the dead [...]. [...]. [O]ne *has to know* who is buried where — and it is *necessary* [...] that, in what remains of him, *he remain there*'.[201] In Saramago's novel, this bereavement is apparent in Cipriano's meticulous laying to rest of his ceramic items, and the narrator's subsequent fixation on that precise resting place: 'Lá adiante, no meio do campo, onde se avistam aquelas árvores juntas, escondido pelas moitas de silvas' [Over there, in the middle of the countryside, in the clump of trees hidden by the brambles].[202]

Cipriano's ability to 'ontologize' archaeological remains is brought into question, though, by natural vegetation's capacity to overwhelm the village's gravestones specifying deceased inhabitants' names: 'a erva cresce por toda a parte, não levará cem anos para que deixe de se saber quem foi metido debaixo destes montículos de lama' [the grass grows everywhere, and in less than a hundred years' time, it will be impossible to know who was buried beneath those mounds of mud].[203] Hence, while there is an explicit effort to *locate* and *specify* memorials to the village's dead, that objective is threatened by the ravages of time (and of 'Mother Earth'),[204] which potentially make the identification of tombs by future generations impossible. Hence,

Caverna's messianic gestures can be seen as conjectural, rather than unequivocal; the novel's selective deployment of grief and nostalgia is productive, not as an end in itself, but in the author's recognition that the (political) object of mourning is definitively deceased, with no prospect of resuscitation. There is an affinity here with Enzo Traverso's concept of 'left-wing melancholia', which responds to the collapse of various twentieth-century communist regimes; Traverso's melancholy is 'the result of an impossible mourning: communism is both a finished experience and an irreplaceable loss'.[205] In Saramago's novel, too, there is a recognition that a return to a pre-*Centro* (and pre-neo-liberal) environment is impossible, but there is also a desire for continued struggle against the insidious, hyper-capitalist dogma that this complex represents — even if this battle is ultimately destined for failure. When faced with the *Centro*'s malignant impact on all existing territories (and on spatial awareness itself), the Algor family's — potentially futile — militancy is concerned with *placement*, *localization* and *particularism*.

To conclude, both *Caverna* and *Levantado* contain an ideological (anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian) critique that is developed on territorial grounds, and with highly spatialized dynamics and imagery. Both novels evoke and simultaneously undermine 'urban versus rural' and 'centre versus province' dichotomies, notions of rural 'remoteness', preconceptions of urban culpability and misguided bucolic imagery. These narratives reflect upon and respond to distinct historical circumstances: Saramago's 1980 novel destabilizes the false consciousness of isolation and supposed ignorance, internalized by an exploited rural proletariat within the twentieth-century Alentejo; his 2000 narrative reflects monumental spatial transformation (in Portugal and elsewhere) in the final decades of the twentieth century, with an array of rural, urban and semi-urbanized settlements increasingly dominated by an abominable 'place of ideology' (the hyper-capitalist *Centro*). Alongside these critiques of existing circumstances, both narratives espouse a form of 'militant particularism' against those conditions. In *Levantado*, the author emphasizes the peasants' autonomous political agency within a specific regional setting, while connecting their situated material struggles to a broader — and potentially global — sphere of militant activity. In *Caverna*, the reverse is true: while the novel is devoid of geographical specificity and regional contours, the chief method used by the protagonist to challenge the *Centro*'s threat is a relentless insistence on specifying, locating and protecting anthropological remnants. If the ideological battle of Saramago's earlier novel involves universalizing *outwards* from the spatially particular, his later narrative gestures towards the need to particularize *inwards* from a geographically non-specific, largely allegorical diegetic environment. It is in these terms that one should interpret Saramago's regionalist (and socialist) ideological project, in these two novels as well as other narratives from his *oeuvre*.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. César Chávez, *An Organizer's Tale*, ed. by Ilan Stavans (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 64.
2. José Saramago, 'De como a personagem foi mestre e o autor seu aprendiz', 2023, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1998/saramago/25345-jose-saramago-nobel-lecture-1998/> [accessed 19 December 2023]; Saramago, 'How Characters Became the Masters and the Author their Apprentice', trans. by Tim Crosfield and Fernando Rodrigues, 2023, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1998/saramago/lecture/> [accessed 19 December 2023].
3. Lefebvre, *On the Rural: Economy, Sociology, Geography*, trans. by Robert Bononno, ed. by Stuart Elden and Adam David Morton (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), p. 17.
4. Saramago, cit. in *José Saramago: A Life of Resistance*, dir. by Julian Evans (BBC/Ideal Productions, 2002). Translations taken from the film's English subtitles.
5. Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago: Echoes from the Past, Pathways into the Future* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 9.
6. Saramago, cit. in Reis, *Diálogos com José Saramago* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1998), p. 73.
7. Teresa Cristina Cerdeira da Silva, *José Saramago — entre a história e a ficção: uma saga de portugueses* (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1989), p. 196; Mahamadou Diakhité, *Levantado do chão, de José Saramago: une poétique de l'exclusion* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014).
8. Seixo, *A palavra do romance*, p. 78.
9. Rui Jacinto, '(D)escrever a terra: geografia, literatura, viagem. A geografia de Portugal segundo José Saramago', *GEOgraphia*, 17.33 (2015), 9–40; Mark Sabine, *José Saramago: History, Utopia and the Necessity of Error* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2016), pp. 170–75; Klobucka, 'Introduction: Saramago's World', *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies*, 6 (2001), pp. xi–xxi (p. xviii).
10. Roberto Vecchi, 'Le città invisibili di *Levantado do chão*', in *José Saramago: il bagaglio dello scritore*, ed. by Giulia Lanciani (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1996), pp. 83–100 (pp. 87–88).
11. Mary L. Daniel, 'Ebb and Flow: Place as Pretext in the Novels of José Saramago', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 27.2 (1990), 25–39 (p. 38).
12. Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 418.
13. Ibid., p. 400.
14. David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 333.
15. Ibid., p. 334.
16. Ibid., p. 37.
17. Williams, *Resources of Hope* (London: Verso, 1989), pp. 115, 249; Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*, p. 172.
18. Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*, pp. 173–75.
19. Viçoso, '"Levantado do chão" e o romance neo-realista', *Colóquio/Letras*, 151–52 (1999), 239–48 (p. 239); Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 31; Saramago, cit. in Reis, *Diálogos com José Saramago*, p. 118.
20. Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 31; Saramago, *Levantado do chão* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1994), cover.
21. Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 48.
22. Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 29.
23. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 15; *Raised from the Ground*, trans. by Margaret Jull Costa (London: Harvill Secker, 2012), p. 5. From hereon in, all translations of *Levantado* and *Caverna* are Margaret Jull Costa's.
24. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 118, 146, 207; *Raised*, pp. 109, 136, 201.
25. Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago*, p. 60; Silva, *José Saramago — entre a história e a ficção*, pp. 198–99; Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 36.
26. *Levantado*, p. 47; *Raised*, p. 40.
27. *Levantado*, p. 57; *Raised*, p. 50.
28. *Levantado*, p. 115; *Raised*, p. 106.
29. *Levantado*, p. 350; *Raised*, p. 346.
30. *Levantado*, pp. 350–51; *Raised*, p. 346.
31. Not in Costa's translation.
32. *Levantado*, pp. 360–61; *Raised*, p. 257.
33. *Levantado*, p. 91; *Raised*, p. 85.

34. Regarding this contrast, see Diakhité, *Levantado do chão, de José Saramago*, p. 62, and Vecchi, 'Le città invisibili', p. 84.
35. *Levantado*, p. 33; *Raised*, p. 25.
36. *Levantado*, p. 33; *Raised*, p. 25.
37. *Levantado*, p. 95; *Raised*, p. 89.
38. Vecchi, 'Le città invisibili', p. 93.
39. *Levantado*, p. 36; *Raised*, p. 29.
40. *Levantado*, p. 77; *Raised*, p. 72.
41. The distance from Lavre to Lisbon is roughly 80 km and potentially walkable in 16 hours, on twenty-first-century roads. See Google Maps, 'Lavre, Portugal — Lisbon, Portugal' <https://www.google.com/maps/> [accessed 2 January 2024].
42. Ardener, 'Remote Areas', pp. 523, 532.
43. Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago*, p. 61; Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 77; *Raised*, p. 72.
44. *Levantado*, p. 77; *Raised*, p. 72.
45. Riegelhaupt, 'Saloio Women: An Analysis of Informal and Formal Political and Economic Roles of Portuguese Peasant Women', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 40.3 (1967), 109–26 (p. 110, n. 2).
46. *Levantado*, p. 79; *Raised*, p. 74.
47. Luzia Helena Wittmann, 'Olhares sobre a natureza: José Saramago e o neo-realismo português', in *Nacionalismo e regionalismo nas literaturas lusófonas: actas do II simpósio luso-afro-brasileiro de literatura*, ed. by Fernando Cristóvão, Alberto Carvalho and Maria de Lourdes Ferraz (Lisbon: Cosmos, 1997), pp. 507–11 (p. 510).
48. *Levantado*, p. 89; *Raised*, p. 83. See also Vecchi, 'Le città invisibili', pp. 92–93.
49. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 273–75; *Raised*, pp. 267–70.
50. Saramago, *Literatura e compromisso: textos de doutrina literária e de intervenção social*, ed. by Carlos Reis (Belém, Pará: Universidade Federal do Pará/Fundação José Saramago, 2022), p. 60.
51. See Besse, *José Saramago e o Alentejo: entre o real e a ficção* (Évora: Editora Casa do Sul, 2008), pp. 68–69.
52. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 275–76; *Raised*, p. 270.
53. Gifford, *Pastoral*, pp. 16–21; Figueiredo, *Portugal: Fifty Years of Dictatorship*, p. 164.
54. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 62; *Raised*, p. 56.
55. Wittmann, 'Olhares sobre a natureza', p. 510.
56. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 73, 328; *Raised*, pp. 67, 323.
57. Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 400.
58. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 63; *Raised*, p. 57.
59. Silva, *José Saramago — entre a história e a ficção*, p. 221.
60. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 158; *Raised*, p. 150.
61. *Levantado*, pp. 236–37; *Raised*, p. 230.
62. *Levantado*, p. 119; *Raised*, p. 110.
63. Riegelhaupt, 'Peasants and Politics in Salazar's Portugal', pp. 168–71.
64. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 211; *Raised*, p. 205.
65. *Levantado*, p. 120; *Raised*, p. 111.
66. *Levantado*, p. 119; *Raised*, p. 110.
67. *Levantado*, p. 339; *Raised*, p. 335.
68. *Levantado*, p. 359; Raised, p. 356.
69. Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago*, p. 43.
70. Diakhité, *Levantado do chão, de José Saramago*, pp. 45, 62.
71. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 53, 56; *Raised*, pp. 46, p. 50.
72. *Levantado*, p. 138; *Raised*, p. 129; Diakhité, *Levantado do chão, de José Saramago*, p. 55.
73. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 11; *Raised*, p. 1. Costa occasionally translates 'terra' as 'world'.
74. Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 81–82.
75. Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, p. 5.
76. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 12; *Raised*, p. 2.
77. *Levantado*, p. 34; *Raised*, p. 26.
78. *Levantado*, p. 11; *Raised*, p. 1.

79. Sabine, *José Saramago*, pp. 31, 35.
80. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 101–02; *Raised*, p. 94.
81. *Levantado*, p. 141; *Raised*, p. 132.
82. *Levantado*, p. 125; *Raised*, p. 117.
83. Ardener, 'Remote Areas', p. 531.
84. Riegelhaupt, 'Peasants and Politics in Salazar's Portugal', p. 183.
85. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 95; *Raised*, p. 89.
86. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. 29.
87. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 120–21; *Raised*, p. 112.
88. *Levantado*, p. 121; *Raised*, p. 112.
89. *Levantado*, p. 107; *Raised*, p. 100.
90. *Levantado*, p. 90; *Raised*, p. 84.
91. Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 30.
92. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 325; *Raised*, pp. 320–21.
93. *Levantado*, p. 357; *Raised*, p. 354.
94. *Levantado*, pp. 338, 364; *Raised*, pp. 334, 361.
95. Bermeo, *The Revolution within the Revolution*, pp. 56–57, 80; Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 436.
96. Silva, *José Saramago — entre a história e a ficção*, p. 197.
97. Sabine, *José Saramago*, pp. 22–23.
98. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 259; *Raised*, pp. 253–54.
99. *Levantado*, p. 265; *Raised*, p. 259.
100. Williams, *The Country and the City*, pp. 432–33.
101. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 289; *Raised*, p. 284.
102. *Levantado*, pp. 47, 115; *Raised*, pp. 40, 106.
103. Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago*, p. 49.
104. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 357; *Raised*, p. 354.
105. *Levantado*, p. 305; *Raised*, p. 299.
106. *Levantado*, p. 143; *Raised*, p. 133.
107. *Levantado*, p. 364; *Raised*, p. 360.
108. *Levantado*, p. 37; *Raised*, p. 29.
109. Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 39; Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 37; *Raised*, p. 30.
110. *Levantado*, pp. 37–38; *Raised*, p. 30.
111. Bermeo, *The Revolution within the Revolution*, p. 100.
112. Hobsbawm, 'Peasants and Politics', p. 9.
113. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 257; *Raised*, p. 251.
114. *Levantado*, p. 319; *Raised*, p. 314.
115. Silva, *José Saramago — entre a história e a ficção*, pp. 193–94; Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago*, p. 81.
116. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 319; *Raised*, p. 314.
117. *Levantado*, pp. 137–38; *Raised*, p. 128.
118. See Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 48.
119. Saramago, *Levantado*, p. 309; *Raised*, p. 303.
120. Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 107.
121. Hobsbawm, 'Peasants and Politics', pp. 3, 8.
122. Saramago, *Levantado*, pp. 11–12; *Raised*, p. 1.
123. *Levantado*, p. 361; *Raised*, p. 357.
124. Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 31.
125. Sabine, 'Saramago and the "Nobel Effect": On Literature as Cultural Capital, and the Activist-Author as Global Celebrity', in *Saramago after the Nobel: Contemporary Readings of José Saramago's Late Works*, ed. by Paulo de Medeiros and José N. Ornelas (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2022), pp. 9–34.
126. Christopher Rollason, 'Globalisation and Particularism in the Work of José Saramago: The Symbolism of the Shopping-mall in *A caverna*', in *Global Neo-Imperialism and National Resistance: Approaches from Postcolonial Studies*, ed. by Belén Martín Lucas and Ana Bringas López (Vigo: Servicio de Publicacións da Universidade de Vigo, 2004), pp. 207–16 (p. 208).

127. See, for instance, Chris T. Schulenburg, 'A Cultural Battle with the Center: José Saramago's "The Cave" and Globalization', *Romance Notes*, 44.3 (2004), 283–91 (pp. 284–85).
128. Ian Carter, 'José Saramago: Latterday Tolstoy?', *Thesis Eleven*, 83.1 (2005), 122–31 (p. 129); Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago*, pp. 111–12; João Rodrigues, 'Uma (re)leitura do romance *A Caverna*, de José Saramago, à luz dos *Surveillance Studies*', *Cadernos de literatura comparada*, 40 (2019), 271–86; Carlos Nogueira, 'For a New Way of Inhabiting the Earth: *A Caverna* [*The Cave*] and Other Writings by José Saramago', in *Saramago after the Nobel*, ed. by Medeiros and Ornelas, pp. 91–109 (p. 96).
129. Rollason, 'Globalisation and Particularism', p. 207.
130. Saramago, *A Caverna* (Lisbon: Caminho, 2000), p. 29; *The Cave*, trans. by Margaret Jull Costa (London: Harvill Press, 2002), p. 17.
131. *Caverna*, pp. 51–52; *Cave*, p. 38.
132. *Caverna*, p. 73; *Cave*, p. 58.
133. *Caverna*, p. 108; *Cave*, p. 89.
134. *Caverna*, p. 305; *Cave*, p. 266.
135. *Caverna*, p. 14; *Cave*, p. 4.
136. Raquel Baltazar, 'Sobre a convergência do espaço literário, cultural e político como questionador de uma identidade social em José Saramago', in *'O que transforma o mundo é a necessidade e não a utopia': estudos sobre utopia e ficção em José Saramago*, ed. by Burghard Baltrusch (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2014), pp. 227–40 (p. 234).
137. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 14; *Cave*, p. 4.
138. *Caverna*, p. 91; *Cave*, p. 75.
139. Janice Perlman, *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 74, 175; Ana Cardoso and Heloísa Perista, 'A cidade esquecida: pobreza em bairros degradados de Lisboa', *Sociologia: problemas e práticas*, 15 (1994), 99–111 (pp. 103–04); Francisco José Cuberos-Gallado, 'Cova da Moura: identidad caboverdiana y conflicto urbano en la periferia de Lisboa', *EURE: Revista latinoamericana de estudios urbano regionales*, 43.129 (2017), 235–55 (p. 237).
140. Costa renders *região* as 'area'.
141. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 12; *Cave*, p. 2.
142. Nogueira, 'For a New Way of Inhabiting the Earth', p. 97.
143. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 89; *Cave*, p. 73.
144. Regarding Spain's *mar de plástico*, see Manuel Delgado Cabeza and Miguel Ángel Aragón Mejías, 'Los campos andaluces en la globalización', in *La agricultura española en la era de la globalización*, ed. by Miren Etxezaretta Zubizarreta (Madrid: Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 2006), pp. 423–74; on greenhouses in Odemira, western Alentejo, see Ana Dias Cordeiro, 'Imigrantes nas estufas do Alentejo assumem luta por trabalho mais digno', *Público*, 19 February 2022, <https://www.publico.pt/2022/02/19/sociedade/reportagem/imigrantes-estufas-alentejo-assumem-luta-trabalho-digno-1996084> [accessed 9 January 2024].
145. Saramago, *Caverna*, pp. 12, 89; *Cave*, pp. 2, 73.
146. *Caverna*, p. 89; *Cave*, p. 73.
147. Nogueira, 'For a New Way of Inhabiting the Earth', p. 97.
148. Saramago, *Caverna*, pp. 13, 28–29; *Cave*, pp. 3, 17.
149. *Caverna*, pp. 154, 186; *Cave*, pp. 130, 158.
150. Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 421.
151. Rollason, 'Globalisation and Particularism', p. 209.
152. Saramago, *Caverna*, pp. 17, 274–75; *Cave*, pp. 6, 237.
153. *Caverna*, pp. 16, 109; *Cave*, pp. 6, 91.
154. *Caverna*, pp. 16, 281; *Cave*, pp. 5, 243.
155. Rollason, 'Globalisation and Particularism', p. 210; Klobucka, 'Introduction', p. xvi.
156. Rollason, 'Globalisation and Particularism', p. 212.
157. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 34; *Cave*, pp. 22–23.
158. *Caverna*, pp. 258–59; *Cave*, p. 222.
159. *Caverna*, p. 17; *Cave*, p. 6.

160. *Caverna*, p. 100; *Cave*, p. 83.
161. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 40; Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, p. 243.
162. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 277; *Cave*, p. 239.
163. See Leanna Garfield, 'The Largest Mall in the US is coming to Miami, and it will have a Massive Indoor Water Park and Ice Rink', *Business Insider*, 25 May 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/largest-mall-us-american-dream-miami-2018–5?r=US&IR=T> [accessed 11 January 2024].
164. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 308; *Cave*, p. 268; Jon Goss, 'The "Magic of the Mall": An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83.1 (1993), 18–47 (p. 40).
165. Saramago, *José Saramago nas suas palavras*, ed. by Fernando Gómez Aguilera (Alfragide: Caminho, 2010), p. 488.
166. Saramago, *Literatura e compromisso*, p. 104.
167. Rodrigues, 'Uma (re)leitura do romance *A Caverna*', p. 278.
168. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, p. 246.
169. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 308; *Cave*, pp. 268–69.
170. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, pp. 243–44.
171. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 1–2.
172. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 333; *Cave*, p. 292.
173. Andrew Laird, 'Death, Politics, Vision, and Fiction in Plato's Cave (After Saramago)', *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 10.3 (2003), 1–30 (p. 7).
174. Saramago, *Caverna*, pp. 349–50; *Cave*, p. 306.
175. *Caverna*, p. 16; *Cave*, p. 5.
176. *Caverna*, pp. 28–29; *Cave*, p. 17.
177. *Caverna*, p. 87; *Cave*, p. 70.
178. See Joana Carvalho Reis and Fernando Alves, 'Broas: a aldeia abandonada às portas de Lisboa que recusa ser fantasma', *TSF/Rádio notícias*, 15 January 2019, <https://www.tsf.pt/sociedade/aldeias-abandonadas-as-portas-de-lisboa-10440198.html> [accessed 11 January 2024].
179. Saramago, *Caverna*, pp. 293–94; *Cave*, p. 254.
180. *Caverna*, pp. 106–07; *Cave*, p. 88.
181. *Caverna*, p. 267; *Cave*, p. 229.
182. Saramago, cit. in Evans, *José Saramago: A Life of Resistance*.
183. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 147; *Cave*, p. 124.
184. *Caverna*, p. 74; *Cave*, p. 58.
185. *Caverna*, p. 193; *Cave*, p. 163.
186. Williams, *The Country and the City*, pp. 16–17, 49; Domingues, *Vida no campo*, p. 60.
187. Hania A. M. Nashef, 'Ideal Cities — Marred Individuals: J. N. Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* and José Saramago's *A Caverna*', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 54.2 (2017), 358–80 (p. 377); Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Francis MacDonald Cornford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 230.
188. Carter Smith, 'Like Prisoners in a Cave: A Problematic Search for Identity and Truth in Two Peninsular Novels', *The Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 89.6 (2012), 615–25.
189. Saramago, *Caverna*, pp. 28–29; *Cave*, p. 17 (my emphasis).
190. *Caverna*, p. 16; *Cave*, p. 5.
191. Vanessa Cardozo Brandão, 'As cavernas em *A caverna*: dialética, alegoria e multiplicidade de sentido em José Saramago', *Nau literária*, 2.2 (2006), 1–20 (p. 8).
192. Saramago, *Caverna*, pp. 28–29; *Cave*, p. 17; Nogueira, 'For a New Way of Inhabiting the Earth', p. 96.
193. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 348; *Cave*, p. 305; Brandão, 'As cavernas em *A caverna*', pp. 13–14.
194. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 267; *Caverna*, p. 230.
195. *Caverna*, p. 178; *Cave*, p. 150.
196. *Caverna*, p. 305; *Cave*, p. 266.
197. Nogueira, 'For a New Way of Inhabiting the Earth', p. 98.

198. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 349; *Cave*, p. 306.
199. Nashef, 'Ideal Cities — Marred Individuals', p. 377.
200. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 74.
201. Ibid., p. 9 (emphasis in original).
202. Saramago, *Caverna*, p. 305; *Cave*, p. 266.
203. *Caverna*, p. 45; *Cave*, p. 31.
204. Nogueira, 'For a New Way of Inhabiting the Earth', p. 103.
205. Enzo Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 45.

AFTERWORD

❖

Home and Back Again?

A novel is an impression, not an argument.[1]

— Thomas Hardy

As *Regionalisms and Resistance* has sought to demonstrate, regional-rural environments should not be regarded as static, docile or archaic, but as dynamic, volatile and fundamental components of modern Portuguese society. This monograph therefore concurs with new philosophical conceptualizations of regional space which, according to Joan Ramon Resina, are 'not about retiring to the country or rebuilding ruined landscapes', but about 'reflect[ing] on, rather than away from, the regioned specifications of space and time, and foreground[ing] them [...] instead of burning them as dispensable fuel'.[2] Indeed, as the preceding chapters have consistently argued, numerous Portuguese novels of the previous century exhibited precisely these principles, in their 'foregrounding' of regional dynamics, landscapes and tropes as integral parts of more complex ideological discourses. In particular, novels by Aquilino Ribeiro, Agustina Bessa-Luís, Lídia Jorge and José Saramago display a preoccupation with confounding territorial preconceptions, and with manipulating regional tensions, in order to articulate distinct (yet oppositional and resistant) political projects.

Chapter 1 began by underlining the central role of regional inequalities, divisions, tensions and preconceptions within Portugal's nineteenth-, twentieth- and early twenty-first-century politics, particularly during the turbulent First Republic, the prolonged dictatorship, and the post-revolutionary context. Historical and sociological explanations for ideological variations between Portugal's constituent parts were discussed, and, on occasion, offered, while avoiding a deterministic approach to political behaviours across historically and culturally defined regions. Through an analysis of political parties, regimes, movements and discourses from across the (left–right; progressive–conservative) ideological spectrum, it became apparent that historical marginalization and romanticization of the country's remote rural communities were weaponized by multiple stakeholders in Portuguese society. Subsequently, the chapter charted the evolving, dynamic relationship between modern Portuguese fiction and regional spaces and communities, with a marked emphasis on the competing ideological uses of landscapes, spatial tensions and territorial identities across multiple literary movements and authors. It was argued that regional geographies and spatialized ideological frameworks were

frequently exploited and manipulated in the service of more comprehensive and systematic political projects (e.g., regionalist-nationalism; anti-authoritarianism; anti-capitalism; feminism), allowing for some productive ambivalence in certain instances.

This political ambiguity was discussed at length in Chapter 2, which examined one novel by Ribeiro published at the end of the First Republic (*Faunos*) and another released over thirty years later, in the middle of the dictatorship period (*Lobos*). The chapter demonstrated the ability of these two Beira Alta narratives to contain and espouse both visible and concealed ideological messages, some of which can be read as oppositional, rebellious or resistant, while others can be interpreted as conservative, sexist or even reactionary (although authorial and narratorial irony complicates this latter perception somewhat). On an overt level, these narratives critique aspects of the (Republican and *Estado Novo*) political and social *status quo* within Beira Alta peasant communities, with a particular focus on corrupt local government practices and intrusive authorities, whilst undermining prevailing stereotypes of rural idiocy. The more subtle ideological facets of these novels hinge on their trite, hyperbolic and fetishized portrayals of Beira Alta landscapes, environments and peasant subjects, in a seemingly idyllic manner that destabilizes the bucolic paradigm. It was argued that *Lobos* incorporates these elements in order to denounce not only the Salazarist dictatorship's corrupt and repressive attempts at 'internal colonization', but also the extreme marginalization and material poverty experienced in one of Portugal's supposedly tranquil inland settlements, whilst rejecting Marxist-oriented, revolutionary strategies for alleviating these conditions. Finally, it was noted that Ribeiro's novels evoke a distinctly topophilic sentiment which, while initially appearing to a-critically endorse ruralist nostalgia and atavism, offer 'radical', anti-nationalist and anti-colonial interpretations.

Chapter 3 concentrated on a pertinent ideological question that Ribeiro's novels touch upon, but do not comprehensively explore or problematize: the positions held (or *seemingly* held) by Portuguese women within concrete regional contexts. In particular, this comparative section of the study concentrated on the gendered regionalist dynamics detectable in Agustina Bessa-Luís's *Sibila* and Lídia Jorge's *Dia*, and on those narratives' exploration of (regionally specific) 'matriarchal' and 'sibylline' archetypes as positive or negative models for women's advancement. The chapter affirmed that both *Sibila* and *Dia* systematically challenge (and, often, ridicule) geographical binaries and idealistic pastoral imagery, particularly when those notions are associated with reactionary gender dichotomies. It was contended that despite both authors' apparent rejection of contemporary 'feminist' agendas, the protagonists of these two novels are used to undermine misleading metonymies of matriarchal authority in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho and the Algarve, while proposing *regionalized* versions of the classical 'Sibyl'. These sibylline models provide glimpses — if not ultimate fulfilment — of a future re-evaluation of established gender roles, in a post-Salazarist era.

Finally, Chapter 4 examined the importance of regionalist dynamics for economic class struggle and anti-capitalism, which, in José Saramago's fiction, are inextricably linked to anti-authoritarianism. In its analysis of *Levantado* and *Caverna*,

this chapter outlined the strategies deployed in both of these novels to exploit and deconstruct externally projected, binary preconceptions of rural 'isolation' vis-à-vis urban 'civilization', in order to highlight the detrimental political and economic ordering of *multiple* territories, under Salazarist repression (*Levantado*), and then hyper-capitalist hegemony (*Caverna*). The chapter delineated these two narratives' localized politics of resistance, including a common strategic use of 'militant particularism' as a means of rebellion, survival and/or commemoration in the face of hostile political and economic forces.

Although the authors and novels examined here are distinct in outlook, they are united by their politicized treatment of regional geographies and spatial dynamics, not simply in the service of de-centralization, regional development initiatives or local identities, but for the purposes of grounding their respective ideological messages in concrete, material and rural lived experiences, while rejecting any notion of idealized rustic spaces. While the degree to which these novels offer *radical* solutions to political, social and economic issues varies, each of them can be described as oppositional, whether the hegemonic model in question relates to national governments (and corrupt local authorities), to patriarchal social norms reinforced by idyllic tropes, or to economic inequities and dystopian capitalist development. It was noted that, on the whole, these novels manipulate images of rural nostalgia and atavistic desires for an Edenic return, while never endorsing such sentiments, or even suggesting that such a return is possible. Overall, *Regionalisms and Resistance* has demonstrated the central role of regional dynamics in the construction of broader ideological discourses.

As acknowledged, there were certain limitations to its scope, due to a concentration on continental Portugal (at the expense of fiction from the Azores and Madeira archipelagos), and an absence of narratives set in Portugal's former colonial territories. Nonetheless, to have included such narratives would have presented its own set of problems, not least an implausible expansion of 'regionalist ideological projects' to encompass insularity, anti-colonialist discourse and post-colonial imaginaries; to maintain a focus on intra-national geographical marginalities, it was necessary to define those margins precisely and to avoid deviation from them. Other minoritized identities (specifically, racialized and LGBTQ+ ones) were not examined — except for my brief remarks on Jorge's *O vento assobiando nas gruas* — due to thematic constrictions. Nonetheless, twentieth-century Portuguese fiction offers few intersections between regional and queer identities, save certain aspects of Bessa-Luís's *Vale Abraão* and Vitorino Nemésio's Azorean novel *Mau tempo no canal* [Bad Weather in the Channel] (1944).[3] Accordingly, scholars would be advised to consult Miguel Vale de Almeida's research on masculinity/male sexuality within the rural Alentejo, or Richard Cleminson's recent study of homosexual transgression and resistance in the Algarve, during the 1960s.[4] Ultimately, while a more comprehensive intersectional analysis of Portugal's rural-regional communities is certainly possible, more suitable disciplines for addressing these concerns at present would be history, sociology or anthropology, rather than literary studies, given the themes explored in twentieth-century Portuguese fiction.

Notwithstanding these caveats, *Regionalisms and Resistance* opens up considerable scope for subsequent research, within the Portuguese/Lusophone Studies field and beyond. An examination of regionalist dynamics in twenty-first-century Portuguese fiction seems a logical starting point, to complement Martín López-Vega's pioneering 2017 thesis 'Periferias emancipadas: políticas de la representación espacial en la Iberia reimaginada'. Literary genres not discussed here could also be productively examined through a rural-regional lens; just as Gemma Edwards has examined the portrayal of rural communities in twenty-first-century British theatre, so a scholar of Portuguese Studies could analyse performances of José Régio's gothic Alentejan drama *Benilde ou a virgem mãe* [Benilde or the Virgin Mother] (1947), or theatrical renderings of Jorge's *Dia* (2010–), amongst other examples.[5] Moreover, the notion of *insularity* could be re-evaluated in an explicitly ideological sense, encompassing renowned Azorean and Madeiran writers such as João de Melo and Joel Neto, building on Brianna Medeiros's comparisons of Azorean and Cape Verdean prose.[6] On a trans-national (Portuguese and Spanish) scale, the concept of 'Iberianism' or 'Iberian regionalism' could be expanded, to incorporate additional ideological facets of Saramago, Torga, Miguel de Unamuno and other authors affiliated with Spanish-Portuguese federal unity.[7] Further afield, it would be productive to study the role of sub-national territories in post-colonial narratives, in Angola, Mozambique and Cabo Verde (amongst other former Portuguese colonies), while avoiding conflations of local identity with nationalist pretensions. The apparent 'northern matriarchy' discussed in Chapter 3, for instance, has been explored by Ana Martins in relation to the Mozambican author Paulina Chiziane, and a 'regionalist' ideological approach could aid readings of Pepetela's Angolan novels from the 1980s onwards, particularly those set outside Luanda.[8] Evidently, any such study would need to consider the role of externally imposed international (rather than regional) borders, of ethnic distinctions between (and within) sub-national territories, and of sustained armed conflict (particularly with regards to Angola's and Mozambique's Civil Wars). Even so, the diverse literary ideologies discussed in this monograph offer a path towards such scholarship.

My final remarks must reflect upon the context in which *Regionalisms and Resistance* was conceived, written and re-written. Much has changed in international politics over the seven years since this project began: in the UK, the 'regional revolt' widely associated with the 2016 Brexit Referendum was re-purposed into a Conservative 'red wall' electoral coalition in 2019, on the basis of vague and elusive promises to 'level up' England's unequal provinces; in the United States, Donald Trump's mobilization of America's so-called 'left behind' rural communities did not grant him a second term as President (in 2020), although deep demographic and ideological divisions look set to influence the 2024 elections; in the French Presidential Elections of 2022, the far-right candidate Marine Le Pen expanded her electoral support beyond the north-eastern communities that she won in 2017; in Brazil, the neo-fascist politician Jair Bolsonaro conquered all areas except the historically deprived and left-leaning states of the Northeast region in the 2018 elections, only for these gains to be partially reversed in the 2022 vote. As

mentioned, Portugal has only recently pivoted towards such extreme-right populist trends (in the form of *Chega*), but this party has already gained considerable support within the Alentejo and across the Algarve, in the 2021 presidential election and the 2022 and 2024 legislative elections. On account of farmers' protests across Europe's agricultural territories, including the Minho and Trás-os-Montes, Portugal's hinterlands can no longer be bypassed by party-political platforms, traditional print media or other public discourses. The literary regionalisms discussed herein, however, offer alternative ideological responses to populist ruralisms.

Notes to the Afterword

1. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (New York: The Modern Library, 1919), p. x.
2. Joan Ramon Resina, 'Introduction: The Modern Rural', in *The New Ruralism: An Epistemology of Transformed Space*, ed. by Joan Ramon Resina and William R. Viestenz (Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2012), pp. 9–27 (p. 27).
3. Alda Maria Lentina, 'Para uma estética queerizante em *Vale Abraão* de Agustina Bessa Luís', *Metamorfoses*, 16.2 (2019), 14–22; Eduardo Pitta, *Fractura: a condição homossexual na literatura portuguesa contemporânea* (Coimbra: Angelus Novus, 2003), p. 13.
4. Miguel Vale de Almeida, *Senhores de si: uma interpretação antropológica da masculinidade* (Lisbon: Etnográfica Press/OpenEdition Books, 2018); Cleminson, 'An Act of "Emotional Rescue"', pp. 155–73.
5. Gemma Edwards, *Representing the Rural on the English Stage: Performance and Rurality in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).
6. Brianna Medeiros, *The Eruption of Insular Identities: A Comparative Study of Azorean and Cape Verdean Prose* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2020).
7. See Sabine, *José Saramago*, p. 170; José Miguel Sardica, 'The Cultural Discourse of Contemporary Portuguese Iberianism', *International Journal of Iberian* Studies, 27.1 (2014), 55–70.
8. Martins, *Magic Stones and Flying Snakes*, pp. 65–84.

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