TRANS-HUMANITIES

Title : Strange Foreigners We Are!: Identity Transits in Portuguese Immigration

Author(s) : Isabel Pires de LIMA

Source : *Trans-Humanities*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (2012), pp. 69–88
Published by : Ewha Womans University Press
URL : http://eiheng.ewha.ac.kr/page.asp?pageid=book10&pagenum=060600
Online ISSN : 2383-9899

Strange Foreigners We Are!
: Identity Transits in Portuguese Immigration

Isabel Pires de Lima (University of Porto)

Oh! Every harbour is a yearning in stone!

Álvaro de Campos

Harbour from beyond my destiny!

Miguel Torga

I. Introduction

It is well known that following the Second World War post-industrial society has been subject to a highly intense acceleration of pace, which the information technology revolution has increased exponentially. Our contemporary world is made of permanent instability, where almost all anchors have been proving ineffective. The concept of territory, itself a safe ground on which to launch anchors, has been substantially changed and 'man' faces new nomadic ways; constant experiences of moving from one place to another, quick transits, no longer over the seas, but rather through sidereal spaces that place them, now more frequently and quickly, facing the once far distant and little more than just imagined 'other.'

At the same time, on losing their place at the centre, post-modern Western society has lost epistemological and ontological safety. Acute but already forgotten crises, following the eruption of nationalism in the 19th century, have shown up here and there throughout Europe. Marking political phenomena in the second half of the 20th century, among which it is important to stress the end of colonialism, the decline of the Soviet Empire, the fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent border instability to the East, above all in the Caucasus, as well as the consolidation of the European Union project, have

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also contributed in Europe towards both some degree of identity insecurity as well as accelerating experiences of dislocation.

Portugal, once called "Europe's garden planted by the sea" by a 19th century Portuguese poet, has, over the last forty years, lived on within just that context, with extremely deep changes that have created some agitated, some other more gradual alterations as to its identity and social cartography. From 1974, after forty years of a Fascism-inspired dictatorial regime and more than ten years of colonial wars, Portugal has once again learned political democracy and participatory citizenship. It then found itself being confined once again, after a five-century imperial saga that took it to the four corners of the world, within the old medieval frontiers and regaining its European dimension as a small rectangle bordering the Atlantic Ocean. From being at the heart of a multi-continental empire that extended from India to the Americas, from the West to the East, from serving as a harbour of departures to the world, Portugal has become a political and geographical periphery to Europe and, since its seafaring days are over, it has returned home so as to seek economic and later political integration into the European Union project, and from then on, it will be seeing itself as a harbour of arrivals.

From being a country traditionally linked to the Diaspora and, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, to emigration to the New and the Old worlds, Portugal turns into a host and an immigrant country. Early in the 1970s, half a million settlers return suddenly to the old metropolis of Lisbon. Soon after, still in the 20th century, waves of immigration coming from the former African colonies started making themselves felt, particularly the ones originating from Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique. At the turn of the 20th century, Brazil having been a destination for millions of Portuguese people for centuries begins to supply a continuous flow of immigrants. At the same time, immigrants from Eastern Europe—mainly Russians, Ukrainians and Moldavians—and also from faraway China arrive in Portugal in massive immigrant waves. Black immigration of African origin and the largely coloured one of Brazilian origin, both often Portuguese-speaking and with low professional qualifications, are joined now by a white and blond immigration, highly qualified and speaking languages far different from Portuguese but able to learn quickly, and a Chinese immigration that, while showing rather greater difficulties in learning the new language, develops close and self-sufficient communities through commerce.

This framework, that has just been outlined, has inevitably generated perplexities and identity questionings, above all, amongst Portuguese people

which, since the 1980s, has brought about an explosion of essays and works of fiction around their collective being and, thus, the questioning of the existence of a Portuguese identity, as if they doubted their own existence as a nation firmly set within centuries-old territorial borders, presently fixated generally as they were by the late 13th century, that is, nearly a century after the Portuguese State's birth in 1143.

Contemporary novels written in Portuguese have been permeable to this new reality. From the plume of some of our most renowned novelists from different generations, creations have seen the light where the thinking about Portuguese reality and the configuration of its subjectivities implies the angular presence of the immigration phenomenon. This emerges as powering deep, disturbing and enriching changes, whether they are for human relations in contact with the 'other' that carries the difference, able to lead to opening up to new inter-personal worlds, or for the country's self-perception and self-understanding as a collective going through the process of finding a new identity.

II.

This paper will set out to explore three 21st century novels, two Portuguese and one Brazilian, where identity transits, intercultural experiencing, hybrid identities, alternating experiences "between two" worlds, daily ghetto lives, provide evidence of that cornerstone place immigration plays in Portugal as a creative and holistic force. Allusion will be made also to dialoguing related fictional works with origin from other cultural series produced by a film-maker and a visual artist; respectively a film documentary and a video-installation.

O Apocalipse dos Trabalhadores (*The Workers' Apocalypse*) published in 2008 by Valter Hugo Mãe, which I would like to look into first, is a powerful novel about love, death and rebirth around socially eccentric beings; two cleaning ladies in a countryside town, involved with men, themselves off-centre for different reasons. One of them, Andriy, who enjoys the sexual favours of Quitéria, is a Ukrainian immigrant to Portugal and, even after two years, still lives a painful process of adaptation to life in a country where logic imposes itself "only through the inside out" (Mãe 55), so distant from his native Ukraine where he had left a father prone to psychotic surges and a zealous mother saddened by a deprived life behind.

All the characters inhabit the fringes. However, Andriy's marginality is exponential as he is deprived of the command of the language, so determinant in whatever process of integration and acculturation undertaken as well as in the process of self-configuration of the subject that Andriy pursues: "he felt in search of being someone, therefore being inferior to his body" (Mãe 128). This failure is obviously perceived by others as difference failure and signalling.[1]

Andriy will end up metaphorically anointed by the 'word' but until he gets there he will live the process of meeting himself and the 'other,' through the mediation favoured by Quitéria, of the discovery of love. In her turn, Quitéria, a wild and disappointed woman, will learn through Andriy's mediation that sex in its completeness implies the word and the loving narratives, she will learn to say "I love you" and therefore she will become a less ferocious and more humane being.

Andriy and Quitéria, are apparently destined to be mismatched as a result of speaking different languages and to the incommunicability of, let's say, the merely 'hygienic' sex that both seek, with no perspectives beyond the moment of its mechanical happening, and as they seem to be living life in the short-term; he as an immigrant that lives a limited time in a borrowed land, and she because of her disenchantment with life which brings her to conclude: "These are just a few days and a few nights, then we are dead with nothing else and no longer with a man" (Ibid. 21). However, they will eventually meet and develop new identities, arguably more hybrid but surely more humanely richer.

In one of their routine sexual encounters, Andriy, particularly worried about the persistent lack of news from his parents, does not come up with his sexual performance to Quitéria's expectations; it will be this 'failure' episode that precisely opens a process of attention being paid to each other. Andriy feels Quitéria as being more human and understands that "what he wished for, it would be to remain there without a pretext, without a larger argument than just that, wanting and to be able to remain there" (Ibid. 43). Turned away, by the window, he allows himself to be anointed by the light of the Portuguese sun: "He was just getting the light as if he could change

1. Consequently, Andriy "would appear as substantially more inapt than he actually was, as if he was always comical, even when in need of being serious, therefore losing the possibility of convincing others of the seriousness of his issues as well as, above all, of the intelligence of his thinking" (45).

his skin and become someone else."

Changing one's 'skin' and becoming someone else, is one of so many untold experiences of the immigrant, divided between equality and difference, between assimilation and ghettoization. This scene of the novel will end up with a kind of disappointed escape by Andriy, following a later attitude of mistrusted retraction from Quitéria who:

> began to get dressed with accelerated need to leave, knew so evidently there, that even though they were two people of a big world, they had evolved as two different animals, made up with very different heads matured through so different processes that similarity between them should not be sought beyond the anatomic fitting in that favoured sex and nothing else. Nothing else, he would say to her; does not want to talk of anything else. Leaving now. So sorry. (Mãe 44)

Here it is a featuring categorical judgement coming out of the typical dilacerations of someone 'between two' and leading down to a sinking into ghettoization and self-ghettoization.

The novelist conveys Andriy's experience with metaphoric effectiveness in a process that cuts across, as is natural of migrant beings, a memory body and a present body. As a child, Andriy had got a piggy-bank from his parents named "the golden man."[2] Arguably, it will be this golden man that Andriy will want to make present when he decides to change into a "perfect working machine" (Ibid. 45) whose primary goal would be to send money forward to his family[3] and to change into a sheer sex machine:

> He would have Quitéria as many times as he wanted but never allowing that to divert him away from a progressive metallization of the body. He saw himself as being platinum-like, robotic, and unbelievably strong, all senses on full alert, as possible only to an only organic head. Not even for a single moment he thought to be interested in the woman beyond sex. (Mãe 71)

2. The piggy-bank had been bought with the intention of "providing Andriy with the incentive to be careful with things, teaching him to think of the future, to guard against it, because the future could be a beast created by the past" (Mãe 133).
3. "Life could exist just like for a perfect working machine, charged with a defined task, with reduced and already foreseen error, and thus addressing the most accurate aim, sending forward some money to the family in the Ukraine, ... thinking of the act as one more duty, an item on the list of his affairs, and extract there from the happiness of machines" (Ibid. 47-48).

This perception of a being dislocated between the layers of time and memory leads migrant beings to evasive experiences that reach limits close to delirium. Andriy is led to this through a kind of dreamlike sequence whereby he is visited by the golden man in person who encourages him to become an increasingly well oiled device on the way to a metallic happiness, that is, so as to embody a new, at the same time old, identity; a transitional identity, peculiar to being a mixed breed 'mestizo' as every migrant is, despite looking like "an albino in a country like Portugal," as Quitéria notices.

However, Andriy will end up finding in Quitéria, a mediator, an earthly angel, a seraphim carrying the worldly fire through the ferocious, tectonic, earthy strength that she conveys into a spirited sexuality she will know how to use as a gate towards love. Following one further instance of sex when Andriy appears more silent, as if aspiring to the invisibility he faces, and even desires to be out of his territory and in a ghetto inside an alien space, where he takes on a 'wild,' 'basic,' 'animalistic' sexuality of great effectiveness, Quitéria, abandons her usual ferocity and shows an "imperious willingness to become closer to him" (Ibid. 94). Then disarmed, Andriy reveals himself as a machine in agony near being closed down, that Quitéria welcomes to her shoulder and both of them expose themselves to each other in their humanity and mutual vulnerabilities.[4] The narrator comments: "Love, so poorly explained, could all of it thus being defined. As unlikely as such way of exercising it might be, love was already like that, it was that, and Andriy, so out of order a machine did not renege it" (Ibid. 95).

This process of discovery and acceptance of the other and of discovery of the transit identities it carries—Andriy accepting Quiteria's ferociously simple humanity and Quitéria accepting to listen to Andriy's lacerated memory of the fatherly Ukraine in the agony of lacking news—will also go through the issue of assuming 'the word.' As Levinas recalls, language does not come from the inner conscience, it always comes from the other (183). That's why the narrator comments further on:

4. "Andriy had switched off in a moving agony. She kissed his shoulder, got closer as if embracing and told him, I know, I know, Andriy, don´t be afraid of me, never again be afraid of me" ... "He was afraid because for her he would lose the possibility to be happy and would return to his human condition accepting that he could no longer take the absence of news from his parents or the rather more complex fixation on feelings that, generally, would be called love." (Mãe 94)

> It would take some time yet until both of them would understand what was happening to them, time during which they would have to resort to words, necessary sooner or later to truly achieve the melting of people. At that moment, they did not know, neither of them, what they would be saying. (Mãe 90-91)

They would not know at that moment, however, they would know later, with Andriy acknowledging that "It was a time to forget about the gold and to see each person as fallible but necessarily trustworthy. ... Quitéria stood up, kissed him and he did not allow her to move away. He kept her close to him, holding still his arms around her neck, and told her, I also love" (Ibid. 171-72). There Quitéria is, awakening the enchanted prince, or Quitéria, the Sleeping Beauty, being awakened by her prince—Quitéria saw an enchanted prince in Andriy's beautiful poverty ... and thought, for this one I will die if needed, a man like this who will surely teach me things that may impress God (Ibid. 157).

New identities are thus built, hybrid, inter-cultural, cross-bred, in transit, and here is how this new kind of novel, open to inter-cultural tensions, brings itself forward somehow like the new novels of apprenticeship in our increasingly multicultural societies. This is confirmed by some of the last and most beautiful reflections by Andriy and Quitéria in the novel:

> On the other side of those papers, (the tickets to Ukraine that Quitéria had bought for both of them) Andriy understood the rest of life and embraced that woman in such a grateful convulsion that he felt love like he only felt for his parents. Another kind of love. But an equally absolute one and pledged to eternity. He was telling her, thank you, Quitéria, thank you so much. And she would have her heart melting never imagining that her gesture could be the most changing of her whole life. She accepted that embrace through the most inner side of love, breaking with the past her usual wildness. In the instant, Quitéria believed she had found the most unattainable form of existence. She held on to Andriy and thanked him the best she could for the unique opportunity to be rendered human that way, and she understood the most secret intelligence of all. The most secret intelligence of all being love. (Mãe 179)

III.

Another novel looked at, *Myra*, by Maria Velho da Costa, published in

2008, is just one further incursion by this renowned writer into the fringes territory. *Myra* is a kind of coming-of-age novel about an immigrant adolescent Russian girl who, having run away from home on the outskirts of Lisbon, walks on the hard life side by side with the only twin soul on offer, Rambo/Rambô, a fighting dog pursued, just like her, and from whom she becomes inseparable.[5] They become united through blood, craftiness and strength, faced with what life had given them up till then—cruelty, violence, harshness and marginality.[6]

Myra is someone in a hostile world,—'steep' is the word used by the author[7] —in search of survival, a home and an identity, moving around the laminar space of the 'between,' between the country where she is living and the memory of the country where she came from, embodied in the lost character of her grand-mother. That much is said right at the very beginning of the novel on describing the meeting between the young girl and the dog through linguistic hybrids:

> Let's go Rambo, before they come, Myra repeated in proper Portuguese.
> Let's go little brother, in Russian. (Costa 15)

The awareness of dispossessing an identity is so intensely felt by Myra that she confesses to the dog: "Rambô, my life is not like other lives. My existence has been forbidden. I was robbed of what I could be" (55). This will serve to explain the immediate identification between dog and youngster, the deep empathy they established and the systematic identification of Myra by others as an ugly beast: "wild dog" (53), what they do call her or they speak of her saying: "You're wild, Miss, full-blooded. That monster dog really suits you" (196).

As a runaway being, she changes her name according to the circumstances. Among the names she has been given and has also given herself, she will be called: Sónia, Sophia, Maria Flor, Elena, Ektarina, Catarina, Kate and the dog will be Rambo, Rambô, César, Piloto, Douro, Ivan. This means that a name, that prime site of identity, is, for her, a balancing act, or as she will say: a 'mask.'[8]

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5. "Rambô, I am now your twin soul."—Myra says—"Was your mother a wild beast? Was she the one who left you fall from her jaws into the hands of bad owners, broken by clubbing blows? It happened to me" (Costa 55-56).
6. "Rambo is flesh from my flesh. I am Rambo"—Myra thinks (Ibid. 119).
7. The novel opens with an epigraph by Luís de Sousa Costa saying: "This world is steep. As such, it is full of steep creatures. Our task is levelling it out" (Ibid. 5).

Furthermore, such is the incorporation of that balancing into herself that she passes it onto the dog, this one being sometimes Rambo, the screen action films hero character, some others Rambô/*Rimbaud*, the damned poet, living the modern drama of off-centre deviation and erosion of the undivided identity.

Myra is metonym for the immigrant facing the invisibility that immigrants come to know and almost always wish for, as a no-name being within a foreign space, fearful of both the stereotyping 'mark' and the 'inscribing' in the new reality, to use the distinction made by Portuguese thinker José Gil.[9] In fact, when meeting someone that seems to love her, she asks: "What do you want from me? I am a pariah, with no name, no shelter" (Costa 168).

In her pursuit of a safe harbour, she will end up finding it while being a double for someone else and not so much while within a unique and distinct individuality. Likewise, it will be among foreigners like her and among those like her, physically or socially mutilated beings where she will find harbour, short-lived as it might be. Myra runs away from ghettoization and cruelty, and it will be through the contact with others, those we call the 'others,' that is, other dislocated beings like herself, and so in her 'otherness,' through the contact with the 'other' as a victim of cruelty, that she will find love.

At a gathering that follows the fairytale stereotype, Myra recognizes her 'prince,' a young coloured man, "Gray," in the words of the narrator, whose face is 'marked' by a tough scar, and who recognizes her as a reproduction of a long disappeared sister. She is one other beyond herself, he is a messenger, a kind of angel fallen from the sky, his name is Gabriel Rolando (literally, the rolling one), and will open heaven's gates to her.

In a house, all white and closed to the outside, a 'Valparaíso,' (Paradise Valley) a kind of protecting cocoon from a rough landscape, Myra will live the experience of both the inter and transculturality and the life of the most radical of differences, and will be reborn again. She can say *in extremis*, later stage of the narrative: "Myra, my name is Myra, my friend, my loved one, I am Myra" (Costa 192). "And Rambô, the dog is Rimbaud, my love" (Ibid. 193).

In the house, as she will find, everybody is a foreigner, everybody is

8. Heading towards an unknown person in her way, "Myra places it on a leash. On herself, she belt up the preparation for the mask" (Costa 76).
9. Gil says "the inscribing creates and opens up the real, the mark destroys and tends to eliminate it" (100).

someone else, everybody carrying the difference. There will be a genesis evening in which, shut off to the outside storm, the house inhabitants all together exorcize fear by using their different languages, music and dances: the servants, the white Ukrainian, Igor, plays the *balalaika* and dances the *mazurka* with Kate/Myra, the black Euclides, carries the *sanfona*, Wong, the Chinese gardener, plays the banjo, the coloured Cape-Verdean maids, Nonóia and Cremilde, dance the *torno* or the *funaná*. This dive into a redeeming 'mixedness' of races prepares Myra for the most radical experiencing of difference when faced with the castrated nakedness of her beloved angel/prince, coloured and eunuch. She then learns that "the Holocaust is not over, it never ends" (Ibid. 167) or as said in an aphoristic way by Wong, "There are always even worse ones than the bad ones" (Ibid. 111).

From then on, Myra will be a new being, made able to fully take on her hybrid, cross race identity so as to live or die. "I may have lost strength and craftiness but I have won hope" (Ibid. 177). She confesses to Rambô. Therefore, it will be without pain that on being told by her beloved boy-friend Gabriel Rolando that, after all, his name is Orlando[10] and her being asked "And you?," she replies: " Ektarina, Catarina, Kate. My name is whatever name you will call me by" (Ibid. 177). Myra expresses, therefore, the self and the hetero acknowledgement of an intrinsically plural identity. She has learnt that identity is not a full and watertight thing; it is something under an on-going process—"An identity can also be hammered out" (Ibid. 169). Gabriel had assured her. This is going to allow her a perception surrendered to the beauty of the last river she will be seeing—the Douro—as her "twisting, mysterious and black" (Ibid. 199) Volga and of her last city seeing—Porto—as "*Oporto*, final harbour" (Ibid. 201). She is ready for life and for death. She will die, but on wings.

IV.

The book by Luiz Ruffato, a non-emigrant Brazilian, *Estive em Lisboa e lembrei-me de ti* (*I was in Lisbon and thought of you*), published in 2009, in Brazil, and in 2010, in Portugal, is also somehow a coming-of-age novel that however, wants to call to itself the tone of a denouncement-document of a

10. Take note of the clear referral to the character by Virginia Woolf.

typical story on immigration. The title itself shows that documental intention by reporting to the author and his writing project rather than properly to the contents of the story to be told and by making an ironic counterpoint to the first epigraph extracted from the lyrics of a Portuguese rock music band called *Xutos e Pontapés*, a name that in this context earns irony intensity when saying: "Without remembering you/ I live/ In Lisbon/ The Magnificient one." Through this simple epigraph, almost everything is told of the estrangement of Lisbon's "branquelas" (whitish people) from the 'other.'

The short novel begins with two para-texts that help to confirm the heralded documental pretending: a poem by Miguel Torga, one of the most celebrated poets of the Portuguese 20th century, an author of poetry well established upon a telluric identity and someone who has himself known the hard experience of emigration in Brazil, to which the mentioned poem alludes to, and an explanatory note of the true statement that might be at the origin of the novel, therefore, attenuating the frontiers between reality and fiction.

Serginho, the leading character and narrator, with little sense of discerning criticism on whatever he narrates, tells the story of his life whose reins he does not control in Lisbon just like he did not control when at Cataguases; a village of the Brazilian hinterland where he comes from. Serginho, aged in his late thirties, is a poor devil with something of the crafty naivety, wronged by everybody in Portugal, like he had been in Brazil by family relatives, by friends and acquaintances and strangers, and who will learn little or indeed nothing through life. Here, unlike what happens in novels mentioned earlier, we do not see the self-configuration of subjectivity or the devise of an identity. On the contrary, the novel ends with Serginho, six years later, finding himself clandestine, no papers, smoking again, and left to minor tasks as stonemason helper at a mediocre building site in Lisbon's outskirts. He that had arrived in Lisbon following a promising decision of a new life, free from smoking, a passport in his hand, assured of a quick and better off return home, where he would then be called Doctor Sérgio and live off rental income.[11] The novel

11. His project was "once put aside the *payment* to Noemi and to Pierre, to save the maximum so as to return home quickly, buying a few houses in Cataguases, living off the rent, doing nothing all day, strolling up and down Comércio Street, sitting down at Rui Barbosa Square to keep chatting, playing *porrinha*, watching the women going by, the people, on the bus like sardines, waiving to me respectfully, Good afternoon, Serginho. Not Serginho, rather, Mr. Sérgio. Good afternoon, Mr. Sérgio. No, no. Doctor Sérgio. Good afternoon, Doctor Sérgio; who knows if possibly a candidate to localcouncillor" (Ruffato 59).

consummates the circular cocoon of dispossession of self and the world where Serginho has closed himself in.

Through Serginho, one can read the immigration spaces and typical co-experiences: the cheap hostel, prostitution, drugs, manpower recruitment and easy work dismissals, and the mafia. Through the obliquity of Serginho's inability to interpret the world,[12] reality results in denouncement as if it would reveal itself without the filter of criticism over subjectivity.

The reader rarely hears Serginho's voice on making such a denouncement. One such rare moment emerges regarding the inequality of treatment reserved to Nino at the restaurant where he works:

> Nino, poor thing, a pitch black Guinean, jack of all trades, who assembled and disassembled the tables, unloaded ..., washed up the floor and the sanitary, the first to arrive and the last to leave, and yet was treated by being kicked around mainly by Anatólio [a blond, blue-eyed Ukrainian waiter], who did not disguise his aversion to black people." (Ruffato 58-59)

Generally, it is through the voices of others that the cruel world of immigration is denounced, where some people are at the same time the victims and the hangmen, like Sheila, victim of women's trafficking and of social prejudice–"Brazilian? Then, she is a whore," states the restaurant's owner and accomplice to passport trafficking, deceiving without any scruples her unwary friend Serginho. It will be Sheila, for instance, who will be telling her paradigmatic story, it doesn't matter whether true or invented, of a hopeless young woman from the Brazilian hinterland till being caught in a net of "women recruited to work in Spain" (Ibid. 68). It will also be his friend Rodolfo

12. For example, when he meets Sheila, a Brazilian prostitute, he perceives her perfect white teeth as denouncing a "good family girl," though everybody else looks at her and recognizes her as a prostitute. Even so, Serginho presumes: "I *hardly* make errors of judgement" (Ibid. 63). Of course, on selecting to highlight in italics the word *hardly*, the author intends to stress irony and counterpoint. Another example takes place when the Brazilian Rodolfo attempts to introduce him to the city and Serginho learns almost nothing: "he would point out a building, a landscape, a cul-de-sac, and explain but I did not understand a thing, he was walking ahead, his face covered by a neck-scarf, the words coming out muffled and lost, and myself behind only gasping, "Here is the...," "Down there, it is, can you see?," "People here are...," "You have to be careful with...," "See the..." (Ibid. 49).

who will express identity dispossession when saying: "Serginho, we are broken down, here in Portugal we are nothing, we do not have even a name, we are the *Brazilians*" (Ibid. 80). The hybrid result for those who live 'between two' spaces, geographically and affectionately speaking, in the words of Rudolfo: "Sheer illusion, Serginho," sheer illusion to imagine that we soon will be returning home, "No way," drains the resources. "It is the mother sick in the health service queue it is the father with prostate cancer in need of expensive medicine, it is a brother studying, a sister getting married, a nephew with problems," hair falls off, the skin wrinkles (Ibid. 81).

Rodolfo's assertion is on the same wavelength as some verses by Miguel Torga the poet quoted in the epigraph:

> Two poles of attraction within the thinking!
> Two opposing eager desires within the senses!
> A purgatory where the suffering
> Never sees one of its desired whims.
> Ah, banished face in every face,
> Sadness of a shared split lap!
> Better a shipwreck for despair
> Between the found and the lost ground.

The hybrid stigma, as an impossibility of configuring a full identity, in the place of the fracture the poet speaks of, is also embodied in the novel through the voice of a Portuguese with emigration experience, Mr. Carrilho, who shares the same hostel as Serginho. Having lost the fortune he had accumulated over fifty years in Brazil, Mr. Carrilho, "who likes Brazilians and hates his fellow countrymen" (Ruffato 49), had attempted to find his relatives back in his village of origin in northern Portugal, "but no longer anybody knew anything about the Carrilhos, ... nor was the house where he was born still standing, and therefore he was left, 'without any past or future'" (Ibid. 50-51).

However, it is through Serginho's voice that we get the gathering, irrelevant whether due to awareness or not, of what is seen as a beautiful metaphor for the ghetto experience lived by the immigrant. At Rossio, the former central square of Old Lisbon, a meeting place for immigrants living in the old part of the city and railway departure terminals for some of the largest immigrant neighbourhoods in the suburbs, Serginho "remained staring at those poor devils, African, Arab, Indian, a babel of races and colours, trying to squeeze themselves in twos and threes inside the same telephone booth, chattering

and crying" (Ibid. 75). Cannot this telephone booth work as a metaphor for the experience of the ghetto, of public incommunicability versus ghetto communicability known to all immigrants? Serginho, poor devil, has he not been always living after all inside a telephone booth, in a ghetto within a closed circle, like his own story? Wouldn't that be the reason he went back to smoking?

V.

This last novel evokes a nearly 2-hour long documentary, *Lisboetas* (*Lisboans*), directed in 2004 by Sérgio Tréfaut, a Portuguese born in Brazil from a French mother and a Portuguese father, who enjoys his hybrid identity when saying that he feels a little like a foreigner in the three countries of his belonging. The film is a journey through a Lisbon unknown to the average Lisboan, the Lisbon of its immigrant communities and their particular problems—issues of legalization, employment and labour contracts, rootlessness, solidarity, incommunicability, nostalgia, loneliness. The film-maker of *Lisboetas*, like the author of *Estive em Lisboa e lembrei-me de ti*, wishes to provide immigrants with a voice, those new other-Lisboans that we neither see nor hear but with whom we cross paths in our daily lives. It is their eyes that lead the film, it is their voice making it heard: view and voice become an indictment.

As a film of overwhelming lyricism, it takes us into unexpected worlds in which most clear examples are perhaps the more or less impromptu religious cult places of the various communities as the only places where we can sense the immigrants experiencing their sense of belonging. All along the film, immigrants appear as lost beings, desolated, solitary and time displaced. However, the average Portuguese watching the film cannot but feel themselves foreign, when looking at those foreign Lisboans that they usually do not see or do not wish to see.

Particularly revealing about this failed meeting between the Portuguese and their immigrants, or rather, between Lisboans and the new Lisboans, is the disconcertingly smiling Pakistani patiently strolling about through Lisbon's restaurants and esplanades trying to sell a flower and systematically being turned down by people who mostly do not even give him a look.

The film then visits every kind of experience of roots loss and dispossession: "This life no longer belongs to us," a Russian opens his heart and adds that

he is not thinking of returning home because "Probably, nobody even knows about me." Or like a minister of the Nigerian church quoting from a Biblical text: "This is the destiny of immigrants: to work hard and to be mislead." It visits the experience of hybrid identities: several more or less perplexed ethnic faces move across the screen and, by way of voice-off, a Russian woman tells us that she has dreamt of her deceased mother who was asking her what was she doing at the world's end in Lisbon and to whom, in her turn, the daughter was asking: "Mother, who am I?"

Repeatedly, the film makes us face poignant scenes of incommunicability partly resulting from language command difficulties and also scenes of telephone communicability with relatives. The telephone becomes a kind of bridge launched over the departure and arrival harbours, and in the film it works as a metaphor for the awaiting of those who are here and those who have remained behind.

However, Tréfaut's film, unlike Ruffato's book, contains a sunny side conveyed by the numerous children, assertive, confident and full of future that turn up. Those children, yes, are the Lisboans, the new Lisboans who command their present, who have Lisbon as their ground and control it. Three scenes from the film offer that generational difference, the last one of which offers one of the most poetic moments of the film and highest visual intensity:

1) A black man crosses a public square in Lisbon carrying luggage and suddenly has a look at the sole of his shoes. What is it that might be attached? The past and the dust from the roads he has travelled over?

2) In the next scene, another black man wearing an ethnic shirt is held up through the telephone cable to another space and arguably to another time, but the black child at his side quickly loses interest in the telephone and leaves it in exchange for the world calling her.

3) The child is called by a group of children of several ethnic backgrounds, almost naked, who are playing in full complicity, refreshing themselves and getting rid of their thirst in a public fountain right in the same square. Off track, we can hear a sad Brazilian popular song through the voice of Caetano Veloso singing the 'retirantes' (the withdrawing ones), that is, the inhabitants of the Brazilian remote hinterland who run away from drought and hunger abandoning land, cattle and homes. As for the children, they rejoice playfully, attempting to control and enjoy the abundance of water with which

> they are bathing as a kind of inaugural rite of passage. They are the future. They are Lisboans.

The film ends actually with a birth delivery scene. The mother and father speak Russian; will the newly-born be called Alexandra, Sasha, Lessya, Olena? They have not decided yet. What is decided is that she is a native of Lisbon; a new Lisboan.

VI.

One last work to reflect upon is a video by the plastic artist José Carlos Teixeira, *Desvio e Consequência, para uma nova Revolução* (2008) (*Deviation and Consequence, towards a new (r)evolution*), which presents itself as a metaphor for that search for a new identity departing from the exercise of a co-creation of alternative lyrics for the Portuguese national anthem developed by a group of Afro-Portuguese at one of the most ghetto-like neighbourhoods in the Lisbon outskirts (Cova da Moura).

The video is made up of two simultaneous projections, something that right at the outset establishes the 'between two' experience of the fracture lived by the protagonists. In the presentational words of the project by the artist himself: "During twenty-two minutes, in a both artistic and documental tone, themes related to identity, otherness, displacement, cultural difference, the feeling of exile and/or belonging, are revealed and intensified. In the new trans-national anthem, the lyrics make visible what each one of the performers feels and thinks of the hosting culture."

The video set up comprehends also the reproduction, over the walls of the projection space, of extracts from Portuguese culture canonical texts by authors such as Antero de Quental, Fernando Pessoa and José Gil, (respectively from the second half of the 19th century, first half of the 20th century and contemporary),[13] who think about Portugal and its impasses, the Portuguese identity and its questioning.

The video begins with images of a half destroyed Portuguese map trivialized

13. The quoted extracts have the following origin: *Causas da Decadência dos Povos Peninsulares* (*Causes of Decadence of the Peninsular Peoples*, by Antero de Quental, *Os Portugueses* (*The Portuguese*) by Fernando Pessoa, and *Portugal—O medo de existir* (*Portugal—The fear of existing*) by José Gil.

over a domestic background side by side with a used cup of coffee, stepped upon by a very white foot (likely from a young white woman), to the sound of the national anthem.[14] These images fill up half the screen whereas the other half alternates with being filled by the two colours of the Portuguese national flag (red and green) under an insistence upon the sense of fracture or fractured identity.

[The following is a review of the first minute and a half of the video].

The video moves on to youth criticisms of the present anthem, felt as alien and out of time, and with several written and sung attempts at building new lyrics. The lyrics then pretend to become a 'deviant' parody version of the canonical anthem, under a double attitude of, like parody always implies, both closeness and transgression, adhesion and repudiation in relation to the parodied subject. It is, after all, a new anthem, the anthem of the 'new Lisboans,' using a designation by Serge Tréfaut, the one that the young black female, ultimate spokesperson for the group, will be singing. She will be delivering it hesitantly and divided between what she likes and what she does not like in the new lyrics and the old lyrics; she carries the past and welcomes the present. In other words, she is the image of identities in transit through distinct cultures, spaces and times. She is 'deviation and consequence,' 'evolution and revolution.'

[The following is a review of the last minute and a half of the video].

The young singer is therefore a kind of new image of the Portuguese Republic (usually represented as a white woman of generous bosom in a

14. Portugal National Anthem Lyrics:

Heroes of the sea, noble race,
Valiant and immortal nation,
Now is the hour to raise up on high once more
Portugal's splendour.
From out of the mists of memory,

Oh Homeland, we hear the voices
Of your great forefathers
That shall lead you on to victory!

CHORUS

To arms, to arms
On land and sea!
To arms, to arms
To fight for our Homeland!
To march against the enemy guns!

leadership posture); she is the metaphor for the collective Portuguese identity being re-founded. Indeed, it will not have been accidental that this video set-in has been included in one of the major exhibitions that have taken place to commemorate the centenary of the Portuguese Republic during 2010. The final cry, "Wake up!," through a powerful black voice, full of conviction, inciting to action, is a kind of incitement to the need to build a new collective discourse about Portugal, a new idea of a nation with a new anthem and a re-founding or revolutionized identity.

VII. Conclusion

The visitation developed by some contemporary creations has attempted to make evident the way the new immigration phenomena in Portugal has been felt as a prospective creative force in the sense of redefining new identities in transit, thus confirming art's anticipation feature.

Immigrants take an intense part in this transit, but so do the Portuguese, both subject to contamination, hybridism and strangeness; processes that the Portuguese only knew until recently as emigrants, beings that have been in the Diaspora for centuries. Nowadays, however, we are all of us foreign strangers, in Portugal: immigrants and the Portuguese, the old and the new Lisboans, in search of redefining a new collective identity, of a redefined identity that may allow us to design a new trans-national and multicultural anthem as the number of anthems will increase in the 21st century, where Portugal, without disowning its vocation as a departure harbour does not exclude its new contemporary vocation as an arrivals harbour as well.

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Abstract

Portugal, a country for centuries in a Diaspora fed upon by massive waves of emigration in the 19th and 20th centuries, has become a destination for Cape Verdean, Moldovan, Brazilian, Ukrainian, Chinese, and Russian immigration over the last 15 years. From an analysis of Portuguese and Brazilian contemporary fiction works in the fields of novels, cinema, video, I attempt to study how identities in transit are developed and built through processes of cultural hybridism and of 'ghettoization' experiences, leading both the Portuguese and the others, the immigrants, to become some 'others'—we are all strange foreigners in the sudden world of global migrations.

Keywords: immigration, cultural hybridism, ghettoization, identity transfers, Portuguese culture

Isabel Pires de Lima is Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of University of Porto, Portugal and Guest Professor at European, African, American, and Asian Universities. She is a specialist in Modern and Contemporary Portuguese Literature and Comparative Literature, and a member of the Comparative Literature Institute Margarida Losa, engaged in other areas of research on intercultural and interart studies. She has been a Parliamentary Member of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic (1999-2005/2008-2009) and the Minister of Culture of Portugal (2005-2008).

Submitted November 07, 2011
Reviewed January 25, 2012
Accepted January 31, 2012