

Portuguese Myths and Time

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By Portuguese myths we mean several kinds of narratives, all of which actualize fundamental aspects of the Portuguese national imagination.¹ Some are foundation narratives (São Mamede, Ourique); others are historical facts that were sung so often over the years by Portuguese and foreign poets that they came to signify basic schemes of the human imagination (Inês de Castro's pure love, whose realization was frustrated by a fight between two men, father and son); other so-called Portuguese myths, on the contrary, are built around concepts that give metaphysical shape to supposed characteristics that define the national soul (*saudosismo*, the doctrine of nostalgia, which attempts to define the Portuguese national soul as the search for a mythical initial unity that would create a wholeness in which contraries would be abolished; the Fifth Empire as its realization on Earth); other Portuguese myths express the supposed divine predestination of the people and of the Portuguese Man, based upon divine intervention in the founding of the nation in Ourique (the Fifth Empire that would be the Age of Spirit announced by Joachim de Fiore); still others are based on historically negative facts (King Sebastian and the defeat at Alcazarquivir) but transformed through archetypal elements to show the capacity for renewal out of the defeat, a renewal that goes beyond real historical renewal to include spiritual renewal of the Portuguese Man and his fatherland, which should produce the Fifth Empire conceived either in earthly or spiritual terms. To these myths I will add a legend preceding the formation of the nation, King Roderick's Legend, because it attempts to justify the loss of Visigothic Spain to the Arabs.

Along with these I will not fail to mention *The Lusíads*, a book that contains all the Portuguese myths created up to the 16th century (except King Roderick's legend, which is not specifically Portuguese).
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tuguese) and which succeeds in giving them national coherence by presenting the myths as decisive moments in an heroic and collective destiny.

In every Portuguese myth we will see that great importance is attributed to the construction of time and, within it, to the notion of Beginning.

The Legend of Roderick

The earliest narrative, in chronological terms, that we will look at is the legend of Roderick, the last king of the Goths. This narrative, created over several centuries with elements from Christian and Muslim sources, was one of the legends that had the greatest influence on European literature, at least until the 19th century.² I will base the following discussion on the version found in the Portuguese *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*.³

When Vitiza, called Costa in our text, died, he left two minor sons. Two antagonistic parties sprang up around them, devastating Spain. To remedy this situation a group of noblemen elected Roderick, a distinguished and brave noblemen himself, as ruler of Spain until the princes' majority. Roderick promised to return the kingdom to the prince who was designated king. However, Roderick did not keep his word and became king himself.

The Twelve Wardens of the House of Hercules came to see Roderick and asked him to put a lock on the House of Hercules, as every new king before him had done. Hercules had built this house in Toledo, through divine art, during his sojourn in Spain. After building it Hercules put a lock on it and commanded that all the succeeding kings of Spain should do the same. But Roderick, who was a courageous man and a good king in spite of being a usurper, wanted to know the secret that had been hidden in the house and therefore refused to put a lock on it. As this was a sacred space, opening it against the will of its founder was a *violation*.

The legend then turns to Alataba, the daughter of Count Julian of Ceute, the Lord of the Strait of Gibraltar, which implies Lord of the Border. This lord stands between the Moors of Africa and the Christians of Spain. Roderick invites this Alataba, Julian's daughter, to be

educated at Court with the queen, which is an honor to Julian. Unfortunately, the king falls in love with the young woman and forces her into a relationship she does not want. Ultimately she sends a letter to her father, the Lord of the Border, and tells him about the situation. He comes for her and takes her back to Ceute, bent on revenge.

The narrative next shifts the House of Hercules, which is being opened. Inside the house there is a column, an image of the *Axis Mundi*, and inside the column a box with a cloth that Roderick unfolds. He sees that it has paintings of Arab soldiers with an inscription that reads: "When this cloth is unfolded and the pictures seen, men armed in this way will take Spain and become its lords."

Later on Count Julian, the Lord of the Border, invites the North African Arabs to invade Spain, thereby accomplishing the prophecy that Roderick had seen in the cloth in the House of Hercules, the sacred space he had violated as he had violated the daughter of the Lord of the Border. Through the invitation Julian becomes in reality the Lord of the Border, for he says in the letter to Muça "that he would grant passage to him".

We will now take a closer at the legend to see what it tells us about the construction of time.

To begin with, in the way it organizes the materials the legend asserts that the invasion was made possible when Roderick opened the borders of several spaces; of the House of Hercules, for one. Hercules had linked the house, which in the legend was doubtless a sacred space, to an interdiction (the lock on the door). The two worlds, the human time of the Visigothic kingdom and the sacred time of the House, had cohabited in the same space for centuries because the interdiction was respected. It was the interdiction that had kept the borders closed (the door of the House), which had prevented the Other who was inside the House from coming into the Visigothic kingdom, as the inscription on the cloth explicitly states: "When this cloth is unfolded and this pictures seen, men armed in this way will take Spain and become its lords." By respecting the interdiction the worlds were kept separated: their spaces could not mingle and one world would not conquer the other. By opening the house Roderick freed the enemy's time which the House had contained since Hercules had been in Spain, many centuries before. The time of the enemy had been "imprisoned," "frozen," we could

say, in that house. By violating the interdiction of keeping the “borders” closed and the spaces separated, Roderick set the time of the Other in motion. Moreover, this motion could lead only to the invasion of his kingdom, since it was the borders between his kingdom and the world imprisoned in the house by “divine art” that were now opened. Count Julian, lord of the Strait of Gibraltar – which means “the Border,” as he explicitly states in his letter to Muça – merely carries out of the law of non-delimitation, non-separation of the spaces, that Roderick’s own attitude had created.

A closer look at the legend will reveal that Roderick had disregarded the borders of the Other on other levels as well. By forcing Alataba into a relationship she did not want, Roderick forced the space of the young woman’s individuality, when in fact he should have given her the husband he had promised her. If we assume that the space of a person’s individuality is what gives to that person the possibility of living his or her present moment in liberty, then we can say that Roderick placed his own Present within the Present of the young woman, abolishing its borders as he had done with the House of Hercules.

Something similar had happened in regard to the sons of Vitiza. Roderick did not keep his promise of giving the kingdom back to them. Although he treated them well he nevertheless reigned in their royal space, which would be decisive at the battle of Guadalete: he lost the battle because the sons of Vitiza betrayed him. Once more Roderick occupied the space of the Other’s (royal) identity. Roderick’s present occupied the present of the princes. As he had only been elected to rule until the princes’ majority, he had no right to reign. By abolishing the borders between them and becoming king himself, Roderick occupied the space of the other and created a composite royal character. It can be said that his royalty was spurious because it didn’t have a Beginning. As the coronation was illicit, his reign was illicit, his kingly condition a fraud. We can see now that to be spurious, to be without a beginning, is linked here to the abolition of the borders between him and the others in whose symbolic space he had placed himself or – to speak in terms of time – his present. Also, as he always treated the sons of Vitiza well, he hadn’t emptied the space of the royalty before taking it.

We can therefore say that the time constructed by Roderick is a time in which moments are superimposed and overlap: the present of Roderick overlaps with the present of Alataba and the present of the princes. Furthermore, Roderick, in his parental relationship to the princes and to Alataba, represents – because of superimposition of his present onto theirs – an overlapping of the past and the present; and because he substituted himself for the future husband he had promised to give her, we can see that the three moments of temporality – Past, Present and Future – are without borders and intermingle. Well-organized time – that is, in which moments don't overlap and are free from each other as people should be free and have a space for their identity – is one that has borders to separate the different moments. The story of the House of Hercules, with its violation of an interdiction that leads to the mingling of spaces and thus to the Arab invasion, is a way of dramatizing the central discourse of this legend: the construction of time. Through this discourse the legend shows that there was no beginning because there were no delimited identities. Roderick, *as a king*, could not come into existence because the space of royalty was not his to occupy; he reached it by creating a composite royal character which led to his defeat at Guadalete, a direct consequence – as the legend describes it – of the bad construction of time. Alataba, who was at Court to be educated and create an identity for herself, could not “take possession” of her identity because the king forced himself on her and installed himself within her identity, as a result of which she could never begin to be herself. The girl who was removed from Roderick's Court by a father bent on revenge was a degraded being, as the text explicitly says: she had even lost her great beauty. In her case youth was short-circuited to old age, which erased the maturation phase she should have experienced in the palace among the queen's maids. In the end she would have acquired her personal and social maturity, that is to say the capacity to rule her own present, if we understand her present to be the transposition, in terms of time, of the symbolic and spiritual space of her identity.

The story of the House of Hercules does not signify a beginning but the revocation of the sacred space that the House demarcated for centuries. The loss of the identities and borders separating the realms of the sacred and profane was caused by the king's viola-

tion of the interdiction: a tragedy whose emblem is the disgrace of Alataba and the Arab invasion.

The borderless and undelimited world depicted in King Roderick's legend shows us that when time is not well-organized kingdoms can not stand nor identities be created. This legend also shows that the creation of a beginning requires respect of the interdiction and for the space of the Other. The interdiction represents a place of mediation where two worlds can meet without one dissolving into the other. Because the interdiction prevents the overlapping of spaces, the two worlds may exist with separate identities. The beginning is related to the creation of borders and thus – because it is a space of separation from the Other – it is a *mediation*. Like the interdiction of the House of Hercules, it separates but unites too, since in forcing the difference it creates a relationship without fusion.

The message of this legend is that the Christian Spain was lost because its last king did not live a true kingly life. His kingly condition didn't begin because the man who wore the crown abolished borders instead of installing them to create individualities. Such a king could do nothing but lead his nation to defeat. The time he built for himself and his kingdom was a time where moments overlapped, without symbolic borders to separate them. Count Julian, the lord of the Strait and the Border, who gave way to the enemy, simply executed the law that the king himself had created.

The function of the new Christian kingdoms that must reconquer Spain will be to create a time different from that of the last Gothic king; a new time where a new beginning will be possible. As this legend was created over several centuries, the centuries of the *Reconquista*, it is no surprise that this conception of time and beginning was accepted by all the Christian kingdoms that were to close the real borders of Spain to the Enemy; for it was the bad construction of time by the last Goth – as Roderick is sometimes called – that had brought this tragedy to the Peninsular space.

Afonso Henriques and the Battle of Ourique

When Afonso Henriques, who was later to become the first king of Portugal, wanted to take possession of the county that was his legit-

imate patrimony, his mother, Queen Teresa, refused to give it to him. She was married, at the time, to a Galician nobleman, Count Fernão Peres de Trava, who was very influential in the affairs of the county and around whom was a party of Galicians and also some Portuguese noblemen. In these circumstances, Afonso Henriques had to fight the battle of São Mamede in order to win "his" county by the sword. According to legend, Afonso Henriques, after winning the battle, had his mother put in prison and was cursed by her for it. The curse took effect many years later when, at the end of his reign, he tried to conquer Badajoz and broke one of his legs on the latch of a city door. Camões himself, narrating this fact in *The Lusíads*, links it to the curse of the king's mother, who was in jail (III, 69).

Whatever the historical truth, what interests us here is the function of this episode in the Portuguese national imagination. The battle of São Mamede created a legend that gave to this historical fact a mythical dimension, that of a Founder who must fight against his oppressive origin. Here, curiously, the oppressive origin is his own mother, at least in the legendary tradition. Afonso Henriques becomes a hero who begins a process, by severing himself with his sword from an engulfing origin, that will lead him to be the founder of a nation and hero of the *Reconquista*. Similar to Chrétien de Troyes's Perceval who, eager to join with the chivalric king who makes knights (Arthur), abandoned his mother to die of sorrow at her door, Afonso Henriques begins his heroic way with a "dialethic" act, an act of separation from an origin (his mother) who will haunt him with a curse that will take effect at the end of his life. In other words, the Beginning is made possible here by an opposition, a struggle against the past (the same situation as in *The Lusíads*), a fissure that creates a border between him and his origin. If not for this border he would not exist but instead would have been swallowed up by a past that tried not to give him its individuality, symbolized here by the county usurped by the second husband of his mother. Thus the past did not want to give to the young Afonso Henriques the social and symbolic space needed by him to live in and take possession of his present. And his mother's curse will haunt him until the end of his life.

As we have seen with King Roderick, beginning and mediation go together. In fact the creation of borders, understood in terms of

time, requires that moments of time be separated from each other. The person who does so is someone who stands between the past (from which he separates) and the present. The situation generated by this mediation is stable to the extent it succeeds in maintaining the separation, which means the difference. In Badajoz Afonso Henriques is unable to prevent the return of the past, but as the founder of a nation he succeeds in creating a space that won't die with him. According to another legend, this was because the mediation that was created between the past and the present when he severed himself from the engulfing origin was duplicated and magnified by another, greater mediation; the intervention of Christ himself.

In defeating his mother and his stepfather in São Mamede, the young prince only won a county. It was not until he fought the battle of Ourique that his men acclaimed Afonso as king.

The battle of Ourique (1139) is one of the great moments of Portuguese mythology. According to legend (established since the 15th century in the first known documents that refer it, and definitely consecrated in the 17th century by the historian monks of Alcobaça), Afonso Henriques, after a raid deep into Muslim country (in what is now the Portuguese province of Alentejo), encountered a very numerous force of five Muslim kings. Seeing the disproportion of forces, the knights of Afonso Henriques advised him not to give combat but he ignored them.

Synthesizing the several versions of this legend, we may say that on the night before the battle Christ – on the cross – appeared to Afonso, assuring him (personally or through a hermit) of his victory in this battle and the others that he and his descendants would fight. He also announced that his knights would acclaim him their king before the battle. Finally, Christ commanded the young prince (or he decided for himself) to put on his flag the thirty coins and the five wounds of the Passion. This heraldic aspect proves the tardy formation of the legend, because “in 1139 the custom of using a blazon was not still established, not even in the region where this custom was earlier documented: Flanders.”⁴ The oldest known manuscript where reference is made to the miracle of Ourique is the *Livro de Arautos* (The Book of Heralds), published in 1416.

The birth of the nation is, thus, linked to the violent separation from the negative mother who curses her own son, and to the divine apparition in Ourique announcing victory and royalty. Before the battle the Portuguese, fulfilling the divine proclamation, acclaim Afonso Henriques King of Portugal, which is the moment where the Portuguese nation is formally born.

The association of a supernatural intervention with the birth of Portugal and the holy meaning of the Portuguese blazon, which contains in itself the signs of the Passion of Christ, "is a way of saying that the nation corresponds to a divine archetype that men cannot change. It inscribes itself in the essence of things and expresses the belief that it [the nation] is an unchangeable and eternal fact."⁵

But perhaps more important for our purpose is the fact that the founder becomes the explicit mediator between men and God. Already a mediator between the past and present, he becomes a mediator between the present and the future when God announces that his offspring will always have divine protection.

By getting rid of the Moors who had taken Spain from Roderick and, in the beginning of his reign, freeing himself from the King of Leão, Afonso Enrique fulfilled the symbolic need of keeping the past away (symbolized in the permanence of the mother's curse). In other words he always tried to keep the moments of time separated. Roderick, on the other hand, had disorganized national time and, consequently, lost the kingdom. Afonso Henriques keeps the moments separated, one autonomous from the other, so that he can become a founder, the Beginning of a new kingdom. Later, in the 16th century, in his *Lusiads*, Camões depicts the past in the person of Baco, the mythical ancestor of the Lusitanians who doesn't want to give the necessary space to his descendants for them to show their courage and perhaps surpass him. This is important not only because it confirms the psychological truth usually expressed in the myths of heroes, but also because Afonso Henriques is one of the kings and knights who leads a military action, the *Reconquista*, in order to compensate for the loss of land caused by the disorganized time of Roderick, which is depicted in the version of the legend in the *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*. This compensatory action clearly shows the need for a good construction of time. *The founder of a nation shall be, in first place, a constructor of time.*

Saudade

The need to increase Portuguese space during the *Reconquista* introduces, from the beginning, the theme of absence into Portuguese culture, which is what the *Cantigas de Amigo* are all about: the absence of the friend (he is far away, at war) which the female character sings about: absence creates a breach, a crack in the present that brings *saudade*, the nostalgia for someone (or something) absent or lost in the past. The present is, in some way, separated from a part of itself, the part in which the absent person or lost thing was present; that part now belongs to the past and it is possible and hoped that in the future everyone or everything will be reunited again. This hope for reunion is the feeling of *saudade*, a hope of annulling the breach in the present that absence creates. The *saudade* is, thus, a feeling that contains past and future, but mainly past, and it is an overwhelming feeling which implies a totalization. This totalization is found in a metaphysical context in the so-called *saudosismo* of the beginning of the 20th century.

The first author who attempted to theorize the *saudade*⁶ was the philosopher-king dom Duarte who, in the 15th century, defined it as “a feeling of the heart that comes from sensuality and not from reason” and may cause sadness or pleasure.⁷ It is clearly assumed here that *saudade* has nothing to do with reason, and in the 15th century *saudade* already had enough cultural relevance to be theorized about after being sung in the first Portuguese lyric. At the very beginning of the Portuguese culture there is, as we have seen, the feeling of a lack, an absence, that causes a breach in the present. In the *Cantigas* it is the loved one who is absent. The *Cantigas* create a long-lasting association between love and the absence of the loved one. *The Lusíads*, *par excellence* the book of Portuguese heroic deeds, posits heroic initiation as the only way of closing the gap of absence. The loved one is absent because the people have not yet conquered the totality of the space required to establish its identity. The conquest of the New Kingdom (India) will bring love and a new example of the mastery over time, as we shall see below.

The story of Inês de Castro will give shape to one of the most beautiful themes of Portuguese and European literature, in which

absence, love and the relationship with the Other are treated in a way that goes far beyond the historical reality, giving a mythical aura to a true love story.

Inês de Castro is executed by order of the king, a king who is the father of Pedro, the heir to the throne who loved Inês and had four children by her. Inês was an attendant to a Castilian princess whom Pedro had married some years before and who died giving birth to their second son. Inês is murdered for political motives: several counselors to the king through that Pedro, because of his love for her, was being influenced by the Castros, Inês's brothers. In fact, the Castros want to go to war against Pedro I of Castile. The counselors fear that the country will get involved in a political and military adventure of disastrous consequences. This is why, after trying in vain to separate Pedro from her, they finally convince the King Afonso IV, Pedro's father, to order her death, which was carried out on January 7, 1355, when Pedro was away. After becoming king himself Pedro comes to an agreement with the king of Castile to swap some Castilian refugees in Portugal for the murderers of Inês de Castro. Once he gets them he extracts a terrible vengeance: the hearts of two of them are ripped from their bodies, one by the chest and the other through the back (the third counselor had managed not to be taken). Then, as tradition has it, he has Inês crowned queen:

A year later, at night, the corpse that had been in Santa Clara for six years was conveyed in triumph the 17 leagues separating Coimbra from Alcobça, the entire way illuminated with torches lit by the people. In the monastery, a tomb was prepared, admirably carved in the form of a reclining figure representing Inês crowned "as if she were a queen".⁸

This story of love and absence caused by death is the theme of some of the most beautiful *saudades* in Portuguese literature and reaches the metaphysical dimension of the *saudosismo* in a play by A. Patrício, *Pedro o Cru*.⁹ In this play we find the *saudade* of a past that has no absence, because the present is cracked by the absence of the beloved being; a part of the present is changed to the past, remains in the past. Therefore the present is neither delimited nor bordered which, as we have seen in the early legends, it ought to be. That is why the Pedro of Patrício's play, as it is normal in the mental universe of the *saudosismo* of the early 20th century (Patrício

cio is linked to the *saudosismo*), has the metaphysical *saudade* of the absolute beginning and the perfect union of a fusional type embracing himself (Pedro), the beloved being (Inês), and the universe. The beloved being is depicted as a cipher for the totality, a metaphor that opens the door to the relationship with the totality; and although this may be true of love in general, here it has a fusional character completely alien to the construction of time we have seen up to now, where borders were drawn between the moments of time so that the past could not invade the present. Here the present is stuck in the past; this is why the encounter with the lost, beloved woman is a catalyst for entry into a mystical time of fusional unity that includes the whole universe, which Pedro of Patrício's play calls "The Great Kingdom."

The tragedy *Castro*, which was written by A. Ferreira in a period (16th century) closer to the era in which Inês's death really happened, is one of the best literary realizations of the Inesian drama. In this play the death occurs because the prince was *absent* from Coimbra and the king failed to fulfill his royal and paternal functions, which is also a form of *absence*. (Cf. II, 745-746; 750-753; 769; IV, 1489-99; 1511; III, 1094-5; V, 1721-23). The physical absence of Pedro and the spiritual absence of the king, who washes his hands like Pontius Pilate, caused the death of Inês.

Looking retrospectively at the development of the Portuguese national imagination, we can say that absence in the *Cantigas de Amigo* – which is an absence of the male – prepares the way for the absence of the king and the prince in *Castro*. However, in the *Cantigas* it was a positive absence because of the war to increase the national space and keep it free; here it is a negative absence because of the incapacity of the male characters to assume the functions of king and lover, respectively.

The Lusians

The exploration of the differing functions of Alataba and Inês has helped us better understand the function of the Other and love in the construction of time. *The Lusians* show, even more clearly, how the two are connected. Following the logic of the mythic scheme

of heroism, the poem demonstrates that the hero can find the Other only after having learned to free his own present and having built his own identity in the symbolic space of this identity. This is because it requires an individuated self: as a free identity he will be able to find the other as Other instead of transforming it into variations of the Self. Only then, after constructing himself and constructing his own internal time, is the hero ready to be a founder. Only then has he a beginning as an individuality and only then is he ready to create a kingdom: a New Kingdom.

The history of the Portuguese people is presented as a quest to exceed the past, both on the level of heroic deeds and poetic art (Camões claims to exceed the ancient poets because the deeds he sings of are greater than those sung by the Ancients). In the space between them, the law of Quality is created because the ancient heroes and the ancient poets are models. It is the good past that creates the *measure* that the present accepts and seeks to exceed in order to become a new measure for the future.

At the same time the history of the Portuguese is presented as separation from a closer and less glorious past (excepting Bacchus, who comes from far in the past); a past that seeks to engulf and prevent the Portuguese people from having space for their national individuality and even wants to prevent them from increasing the borders of the kingdom by means of a voyage (Velho do Restelo). In this engulfing past Camões includes São Mamede, Ourique, and Inês de Castro, but also Bacchus. This is the past that, *because of its negativity, gives an ethical justification* to the fight against it; a fight to create a separated present for a new individuality. Without this negativity, a new individuality could not exist and time would be paralyzed. This centuries-long struggle has made the Portuguese great and allows them to be measured against the ancients who are the model: the positive model.

The Lusíads is an epic poem of maturation and transformation in which the construction of time plays an unusually important role. Besides the references to the negative past, *The Lusíads* tells of a voyage that a mythical and divine ancestor, Bacchus, tries to frustrate. Although it is clear that *The Aeneid* is the model for this situation, the opposition of the mythical ancestor works differently here than in Virgil; for if the Portuguese reach India their fame will exceed, in India,

the fame of Bacchus and he will die symbolically as a venerated hero. This means that the Portuguese will become what Bacchus was.

It is clear that the past does not want to make room for the present, which, in this case, is the present of his own descendants, because Bacchus, according to the mythical genealogy used by Camões, is the father or the companion of Luso, the mythical character from whom the poem says the Lusitanians descend. Bacchus is the Opponent who pursues them during the entire voyage, trying to prevent them from arriving and even trying to kill them.

As Bacchus is the opponent who tries to prevent the voyage and the maturative time necessary for the new beginning of a New Kingdom in the land of the Aurora (as Camões calls it), Venus is the Assistant responsible for the success of the voyage and the construction of time. Here we re-encounter Virgil but, in the economy of the poem, it is interesting to note that time wears a feminine face (just as with Inês de Castro, who represented the present that Pedro could not live). We should add to this the fact that the New Kingdom, acquired by means of a voyage (Venus), brought Love and Woman into the heroes' lives. Once more we see the habitual link between the hero's conquest of a territorial space – after a difficult and dangerous voyage – and love, because this space is the material image of the interior space of the identity of the hero: an identity acquired through maturation (and, sometimes, initiation). In temporal terms this identity is the place for the present of the hero, a place and identity obtained after fighting the past and its representatives (Bacchus, for instance).

Halfway to India, in the Cape of Good Hope, the Portuguese meet a personage who symbolizes what the Portuguese would have been (or would become) if they had given up (or give up) their voyage: the Giant Adamastor. Adamastor is a fascinating character, who fought a mythical war against the Olympian gods as “captain of the sea” and fell in love with Tétis, the Nereid. In order to deliver the ocean from war, Tétis pretends to surrender on the condition that Adamastor give up the war. Adamastor agrees. On the appointed night Tétis pretends to appear before him, but it is only an image of her and the giant embraces the jagged mountain. His sorrow and the anger of the Gods – who had in the meantime won the war – change him into a rock.

Adamastor gave up his war against the gods because of his

love for a goddess, who it turned out was an enemy. Without his own present, his own identity, he had no spiritual and psychological consistence, so the Other becomes a swallowing and paralyzing presence, which is shown by his petrification. Petrification makes it impossible to travel (Adamastor was a sailor, just as the Portuguese are). He is the negative of what the Portuguese would have been had they given up their voyage.

The Portuguese will continue the voyage and fight against Bacchus in order to insure their Fame. We have already seen that Bacchus wanted to prevent them from reaching India because the fame of the new conquerors would exceed his own. When the Portuguese, after having been in India, begin their return voyage, Venus prepares a prize to honor their courage and their successful voyage. She lures them to a floating island where they will find Love and Wisdom (IX-X): love with the Nymphs who, excited by the fame of the Portuguese, surrender to them; wisdom by means of the knowledge of the Mechanism of the world and the Future that Tétis shows them.

The time of *The Lusíads* does not lead to death but to love because it is the time of the voyage that unites the Old and New Kingdoms, West and East. Unlike the *Cantigas de Amigo*, and especially the story of Inês de Castro in which the absence of the beloved Other is depicted as a present broken by the *saudade* of the presence become absence, we can see that in *The Lusíads* love and the beloved person are brought together (with a character of initiation) after a voyage that unites West and East as two margins of a single kingdom, which abolishes the disjunction of Presence/Absence. *The Lusíads* is thus a book that sums up, in several ways and on several levels, Portuguese national aspirations: the creation of an increased space to symbolize a strengthening of national identity by perfecting the construction of time and its extreme consequences; the relationship with the Other, now fully present; and the finding of a happy love taken to its logical extreme.

Sebastianism

The Portuguese mythical conception of how time is constructed can clearly help us understand the rise of Sebastianic messianism.

Camões was contemporary of D. Sebastião, to whom he dedicated *The Lusíads*. Camões died in 1580, two years after the disaster of Alcazarquibir and the disappearance of the king (1578). In his heroic poem Camões must, in the way time is constructed, face the defeat of Alcazarquibir and the disappearance of D. Sebastião. I say disappearance because the king's body was never found, which was decisive for the creation of the legend of the Hidden King. The body that the Moroccans handed over to Filipe II was never proved to be the king's. It was buried in Jerónimos with the epitaph: *si vera est fama*. Thus absence has returned, but now with a dimension of national tragedy it had never before had, and with a fatal consequence: the absorption of Portugal into the crown of Castile because of the rights of succession of Filipe II (D. Sebastião died with no heirs). The Other is now the engulfing other who prevents the freedom of the present and the development of national identity.

As a consequence of this situation, there developed a popular belief that the king was not dead (based on the fact that the body was never found); he was only hidden, "*encoberto*." Exactly where he was hidden was disputed, although some believed that he lived on the Happy Islands of the Celtic tradition.

Sebastianism took different forms over the centuries. At the end of the 16th century, immediately after Alcazarquibir, the hope of the coming of the *Encoberto* was incarnated in D. Sebastião. In the 17th century, as Dom Sebastião had not arrived, these hopes were transferred to the Dukes of Bragança; first to Dom Teodósio and, afterwards, to his son who became king under the name of Dom João the First and who restored national independence. It was in this period that the prophecies of Vieira flourished. These prophecies, which concerned the establishment of a Fifth Empire, were based both on the prophecies of a cobbler of the 16th century (by the name of Bandarra), and on chapters seven and two of *The Book of Daniel*, which reveals and interprets Nebuchadnezzar dream concerning the four great empires: Assyria, Medo-Persia, Greece (Alexander the Great) and Rome. The Jesuit Vieira assumed that Dom João IV would be the founder of this Fifth Empire. As reality remained sadly different from prophecy, Sebastianism cooled down until the beginning of the 19th century, with the Napoleonic invasions (1807-1810). After this period it became a literary sub-

ject. As can be seen, from the 17th century onwards Sebastianism was a name that had little to do with the historical King Sebastian. It instead referred to the belief that the *Encoberto* would be incarnated in the successive figures that reality could find in order to sustain the belief in the prophecies.

Absence and *saudade* were always linked. Sebastianism, however, gave a dimension of national tragedy to absence and *saudade*. It is thus no surprise that a constellation of beliefs sprouted up around it, including not only the Fifth Empire, as we saw, but also *saudosismo*, which was a literary and philosophic movement that sought to characterize the Portuguese culture on the basis of *saudade*. João Lúcio de Azevedo wrote that Sebastianism, "born from sorrow, fed by hope, is to history what *saudade* is to poetry: a feature inseparable from the Portuguese soul."¹⁰

We have seen, concerning Inês de Castro, how *saudade* represented a breach in the present, suddenly split between a present absence and a past presence, of which the present retains a memory. The presence that formerly insured the unity of the present has absented itself (or herself: Inês) because of the force of a "paternal" past. This represents a loss of the freedom of the present because submitted to the past. Inês cannot come back and, so, in the play by Patrício, Pedro has nothing but the mystical hope of meeting her again in another life, in another land he calls the "Big Kingdom" in opposition to his "Small Kingdom" on Earth, in Portugal. It should be emphasized here that the hope of a mystical re-encounter in "«another (Big) Kingdom," which is as large as Heaven and Eternal Life, is an attempt to abolish the disjunction of the present created by the absence of the beloved woman. Patrício stresses the same outlook that will link Sebastianism not only to *saudosismo* but also to the Fifth Empire; the domination of the world (a big kingdom) under a king who would reincarnate the *Encoberto*, and whose mystical character is underscored by its association with Joachimism that itself would identify the Fifth Empire with the advent of the Age of Spirit. The Fifth Empire and the Big Kingdom of Pedro are both linked to the re-encounter of the Presence, whose absence split the present and transformed it into a kind of Waste Land. To find the missing presence is tantamount to gaining the big kingdom: the voyage in *The Lusíads* had

the same consequence, uniting West and East in the creation of a New Kingdom. As it united West and East, the voyage unified a big space, abolished the gap and led to the woman, image of a presence that was formerly absent.

The myths of the hero reveal that the travels or wanderings of the hero can create a material space which is an image of the spiritual space of his identity and of his autonomous present. That should help us understand how the big kingdom of Pedro – where he would have found Inês –, and the Fifth Empire, resulting from the encounter of Portugal with the *Encoberto*, are associated by the same symbolic logic. The Fifth Empire is the magnification of the space of the identity of a Nation that had lost its independence shortly after Alcazarquibir; and even when the nation regained its independence it did not get rid of the decadence that had afflicted it for such a long time and had prompted the prophecies of Bandarra.

It should be recalled that D. Sebastião and Inês de Castro represent moments when time was disorganized because *there were no longer any borders*: borders of the present of the son, and the past of the father (Inês); and real borders of national independence after the death of D. Sebastião. The return of the *encoberto* should restore national independence or, even better (after independence is already restored), national glory. In this case we are dealing with real physical borders: the *encoberto* would restore national borders (independence) or would stretch them to the size of the whole world (Fifth Empire). But real or imaginary, it is always a way of dealing with the space of the present: it is necessary to free it or to increase it in order to strengthen the borders so that the Other cannot annul them. To create or stretch real geographic borders is, as it was with the symbolic ones, to free the present and organize time. He who frees Time will be the mediator between two (or more) kingdoms or two moments of time. He will be the creator of a new beginning; and thus he will be a founder and the foundation of a great empire. The archetypal strength that justifies the literary diffusion of the figure of D. Sebastião is the longing for the beginning, which is only possible when there is construction of time; and this can only happen when a founder becomes a mediator who creates borders and unites what is separated, just as the ego does in the second Freudian topic. Founda-

tion, Beginning and Identity are constructed as mediations in order to make the construction of time possible.

As the mediation between Heaven and Earth is the mediation *par excellence*, the so-called miracle of Ourique is sometimes referred to as a guarantee that the nation will recover its glory or that the Fifth Empire, prophesied in the Bible, will be Portuguese (A. Vieira and F. Pessoa). Portugal, thanks to Ourique, becomes the place of mediation between Heaven and Earth, which also means – within the logic of time we have been discussing – , that it becomes, by divine will, *the potential present of the time of men*; a present only waiting for the revelation of a founder, sometimes hidden, so that the present may come into existence in the space of a vast empire that will accomplish the regeneration of humanity.

The feeling of *saudade* has always been, as we have already seen, of great importance to Portuguese culture. In the early years of the 20th century (1912) Teixeira de Pascoaes began to theorize, particularly in the magazine *A Águia*, about the significance of *saudade* and attempted to define it as the most characteristic feeling in the Portuguese soul. The movement that grew up around this idea was known as *saudosismo*, which is the religion of the *saudade*, as Pascoaes defined it.¹¹ The nation had to become aware of its most distinctive characteristic, which is the *saudade*, in order to revive and begin new enterprises to restore its lost glory. In his youth Pessoa himself had some links with this movement.

One important element of Pascoaes's definition of *saudade* is the convergence of opposites. It is a "feeling born from the marriage of Greco-Roman Paganism with Jewish Christianity."¹² *Saudade* thus defines the national soul as a convergence of opposites, creating a totalization. The totalizing and liberating effect of *saudade* is easily linked to Sebastianism, seen as the advent of the revival and salvation of the nation. Pascoaes even wrote a «Sebastianic Prayer» (*A Águia*, 1922). Moreover, since *saudosismo* also brought with it an interest in national traditions, some *saudosista* poets explored Sebastianism as a traditional Portuguese subject or motif. The return of D. Sebastião, in the mythical Future, would bring the kingdom back to a stage before decadence.

In his youth Fernando Pessoa was a contributor to the review *A Águia*. Having the "immense *saudade* of a better future," Pessoa

identified himself with a time that definitely wanted to contribute to a change from the present era of decadence. However, in order to change time for the better, time had to recover the past, because the past was necessary for the continuation of national identity. This past came from afar, from the period in which Christ appeared to Afonso Henriques and established the Portuguese nation as a mediator between heaven and earth. Recovering the past was not to be seen as returning to the past: it is using the past to construct a time that cannot erase its past because it needs it; it is one of the moments needed for the construction of time as such. The sleeping nation must awake, the *encoberto* must be revealed. In so doing, the nation would accomplish what it needed to accomplish since Ourique: the Fifth Empire.

Although what Pessoa says about it may at times be contradictory, the Fifth Empire is seen mainly an empire of spirit and of personal revival:

[...] The Fifth Empire. The future of Portugal ... That future is to be everything. Who, being Portuguese, can live within the narrow confines of a single personality, of a single nation, of only one faith? To be everything, in every way, because the truth cannot be lacking in anything!¹³

In this context it is interesting to note that, instead of interpreting it as a succession of material empires – where the fifth Empire would, at that time, have been the English – Pessoa substituted a succession of spiritual empires. One of the cultural conditions for that Empire of Culture is “a language able to carry it out; a language that is: (a) rich; (b) grammatically complete; (c) strongly national.”¹⁴

Clearly Pessoa’s poetic and cultural enterprise, with his heteronyms, was linked to the Fifth Empire, which the return of D. Sebastião was to set in motion. The *Encoberto* now takes the form of a poet, in some writings assimilated to Pessoa himself as the *Supra-Camões*.¹⁵ That is why “we are not brothers, although we may be friends of those from whom we speak a different language: because by that they show they have a different soul.”¹⁶ It is in this context that Pessoa’s famous phrase must be understood: My motherland is the Portuguese language.

* * *

In closing I would like to point out that in Portuguese myths there implicitly exists a painful awareness of the need for well-constructed time, and of living this time in an irreversible way, each moment separated from the next by symbolic borders. This irreversibility is completed by a memory that brings to the present a glorious past whose quality of being in the past is emphasized by an extreme imitation, as *The Lusiads* clearly demonstrates. It is the relationship with the past that makes it possible to abolish the distance between the two margins of a kingdom or between ourselves. While there is distance we are in the kingdom of absence, brilliantly expressed by *saudosismo*, in which love and the relationship with the Other is not possible because in this context the other is, radically, *the invader*; an image that assumes the overlapping and thus non-freedom of the moments of time, as the legend of Roderick shows.

We have seen the important links between the construction of time, love and the relationship with the Other. It should be recalled that the legend of Roderick (that extraordinary repository of implicit thought on the construction of time) clearly expresses the idea that power itself depends also, and *deeply*, upon the form of time constructed by the one who uses power. That was why Roderick's country was invaded. As a curious fifteenth century Portuguese book on moral edification, the *Horto do Esposo*, says: 'the soul that is in sin, that is to say without life or power, is one that has lost its function of mediator between God and Creatures. Because of the sin it has fallen totally into the world of creatures.' Once more, the loss of the situation of mediation – conceived as a relationship that separates moments and preserves borders – is represented as a symbolic fall or swallowing up by one of the sides. Too much "strengthened" on one side the mediator loses his autonomy just as the present, when dominated by the past, loses its borders and capacity to mediate. Thus an *absence* is created; an absence that leads to impotence, like Roderick in the face of the invading Arabs. Beginning is then impossible because, without autonomy, there is no generation of a future, and the present is unable to create a new present for the future.

In order to make a new beginning, it is necessary to reestablish mediation, to open the mist, as Pessoa wanted, so that borders

become clear and identity autonomous. Only then can time continue its irreversible movement. The beginning is the creation of borders to delimit the new entity, which we have translated temporally as a new Present.

The beginning as a mediation is, like the ego, a space of coherence. This space is prolonged in the Permanence of the created being as separation, until it returns to the undifferentiated. This is a way of showing that this permanence also belongs to the irreversible movement of time, is integrated into it as mark of autonomy and creation, which means a mark of beginning. This also means that human time, when separating moments to construct itself, creates an autonomous present which can be ideally thought of as permanence as long as it remains aware of its different identity. It is from within that permanence that power can be used, because power (as expressed in Roderick's legend) is only legitimate and useful when it stimulates liberty, that space of the identity of citizens, which means within the good construction of time. By stimulating the creation of identities, autonomy-producing borders are constructed; borders that preserve the coherence of the differentiated entity, translatable, as we have seen, in terms of a new present.

Thus the construction of time finally leads us to the permanence upon which identity is maintained. The arrow of irreversible time is now enriched, thanks to the creative consequences of its own movement, of a dimension of permanence that human time cannot discard. This is the consequence of a beginning generated by the movement of time seen as a coherent individuality. The Portuguese myths teach us that time must be kept flowing so that the identity of the nation may be preserved (may itself be a form of permanence).

Notes

1. This article is adapted from a paper read in Ascona at "Recontre d'Eranos," August 21–30 1994: "Anfänge / Commencements / Beginnings."
2. Cf. R-M Pindal, *Floresta de leyendas heroicas españolas. Rodrigo, ultimo godo*, III volumes, Madrid, 1942, 1944, and 1948.

3. Luís F. Lindley Cintra, *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*, vol. II, Lisbon, 1984, pp. 298–332.
4. Luís F. Lindley Cintra, «Sobre a Formação e Evolução da Lenda de Ourique (até à Crónica de 1419)», *Revista da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa*, XXIII, 3rd vol., no. 1, 1957, pp. 168–215, p. 198.
5. J. Mattoso, «A Primeira Tarde Portuguesa», in *Portugal Medieval, novas interpretações*, Lisbon, 1985, pp. 11–35, p. 14.
6. We should recall that *saudade* comes from the latin word, *solitatem*, which links it to solitude. See Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos, «A Saudade Portuguesa», in *Filosofia da Saudade*, sel e org. de Afonso Botelho e António Brás de Oliveira, Lisbon, 1986, pp. 145–160. According to her, the foreign word that best translates *saudade* is probably the German word *Sehnsucht*, especially when the *saudade* has a metaphysical implication.
7. Dom Duarte, «Do Nojo, Pesar, Desprazer, Avorrecimento e Suidade» (*Leal Conselheiro*, cap. XXV), in *A Filosofia da Saudade*, pp. 13–17.
8. Maria Leonor Machado de Sousa, “Pedro I de Portugal e Inês de Castro,” in *Portugal. Mitos Revistados*, Y.K. Centeno (ed.), Lisbon, 1993, pp. 51–68.
9. António Patrício, *Teatro Completo*, Lisbon, 1982 (*Pedro o Cru* is a play written in 1918).
10. Cf. *A Evolução do Sebastianismo*, 1947, p. 8, quoted by Joel Serrão, in *Dicionário de História de Portugal*, “Sebastianismo,” Lisbon, 1971.
11. Cf. Teixeira de Pascoaes, «O Espírito Lusitano ou o Saudosismo» in *A Filosofia da Saudade*, sel e org. de Afonso Botelho e António Braz Teixeira, Lisbon, 1986, pp. 21–36, p. 27.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
13. Cf. Fernando Pessoa, *Sobre Portugal. Introdução ao problema nacional*, recolha de textos de Maria Isabel Rocheta e Maria Paula Morão, introdução e organização de Joel Serrão, Lisbon, 1979, pp. 45–6 and 245–6.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 52 and 229.
15. See also Joel Serrão, *ibid.*, pp. 53–4
16. *Ibid.*, p. 121