Chapter 6

How to Draw a Haunted Nation: Colonial Ghosts and Spectres in Conceição Lima's Poems

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Ghosts are powerful presences in the narratives of countries addressing violent pasts.[2] The phantoms of slavery,[3] the ghostly presences of Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada,[4] Aboriginal spirits of Australia,[5] Cameroon's *wandering subjects*,[6] the revenants of the Spanish Civil War and the Portuguese Colonial War,[7] the spectralization of Myanmar,[8] the phantasms of the great Chinese famine[9] and the spirits of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau[10] – are spectral manifestations of violence. Most of these 'spectro-geographies', as Jo Frances Maddern and Peter Adey (2008) named them, are somehow related to a far from overcome colonial past and so they refer not to a dead and finished experience but are instead a product of the ongoing legacies of brutal imperial systems in newly founded nations.[11]

As 'the idiom of haunting'[12] is present across diverse geographies and substantially different colonial and postcolonial[13] histories, ghosts (and their interpretations) have to be culturally specified, as Esther Peeren states (2009, 2010). María del Pilar Blanco and Peeren are alert to the Eurocentric and ahistorical biases of Jacques Derrida's conception of the revenant in his *Specters of Marx* (1994), and so argue for a 'careful contextualization and conceptual delimitation' (2013: 15) of spectres. Taking its cue from their observation, this chapter focuses on the ways in which ghosts of the Massacre of 1953, in Conceição Lima's writings, help to unveil histories, voices and a profoundly shattered Santomean society that remains haunted by the consequences of colonialism. My argument is that, in these cases, spectres allow for renewed ways of imagining and telling the nation, in relation to both former colonies and metropolises. These ghost stories reveal as much about these nations' emergence from independence struggles as they do about their former imperial colonizers.

Following the concept of haunting – as originally defined by Avery Gordon in 1997 – articulated with the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences – proposed by Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos – I shall revisit the ghosts of Lima's poems. Phantoms can function as an important narrative element and also as a powerful historical metaphor (Kwon 2008: 2), with the capacity of bringing to life the injustices of a colonial past that persists, rendering some people spectres, in the present. Through this haunting process, homogenizing stories of the postcolonial nation are challenged.

'THE MASSACRE OF 1953': A PLACE OF GHOSTS AND SILENCES

The events that began on 3 February 1953 – now known as the Batepá Massacre and commemorated as a public holiday in São Tomé and Príncipe – victimized an undetermined number of *forros*,[14] the Santomean dominant ethno-cultural group. The perpetrators were the colonial Portuguese government of the islands, headed by the Lieutenant Colonel Carlos de Sousa Gorgulho.[15] My interest in this particular episode concerns not only the symbolic value that it allegedly acquired during the independence struggle of the Santomeans, but it also involves the rituals, narratives and performances that have been produced about it since 1953. These reveal the massacre as a haunted space that still shapes private and public memories and identities within the archipelago. The event remains largely unacknowledged in Portugal, which refuses to discuss an occurrence that disturbs the national post-imperial narrative that, mimicking Gilberto Freyre and luso-tropicalism,[16] promotes Portuguese colonialism as benign and pacific. By contrast, the history of 1953 was also exploited in São Tomé and Príncipe by their successive governments, giving rise to a dominant and normative narrative that paves over crucial aspects needed to understand the 'Batepá' incidents (Nascimento 2011).

In the islands, the prevailing public memory of the event has reconfigured identities, with victims becoming heroes – this is a discourse which Lima in her poetry chose not to condone. The creation of martyrs from corporeal people, with feelings, dreams and sufferings, is questioned by Lima in the verse 'Heroes',[17] 'Jovani', 'Proposal' and 'Archipelago', four texts where the poetic subject deconstructs the myth of the 'nationalist hero':

> The martyrs – they say – are exceptional beings, rare
> To a certain light destined.
>
> It wasn't that, I suppose, his fate.
>
> . . .

> I won't think of miracles, I won't think
> Of the crucifixion in which a man was reborn
> Without really knowing why he was falling.[18]
>
> (Lima 2006: 34)

> The enigma is another – here no gods dwell
> Men only and the sea, irremovable heritage.[19] (Lima 2006: 53)

The national narrative projects the massacre as a foundational myth of the nation, placing it at the heart of the Santomean political awakening. However, this process of unifying the nation under the rubric of the national struggle silences the social and cultural distinctions that were present in the islands – an outcome of a settlement and colonization process that forged complex dynamics of inclusion and exclusion (Margarido 1980).

According to Gerhard Seibert (2002a: 60–61), the sentiment of the superiority of the *forros*, for example, in relation to other groups in São Tomé and Príncipe – though they were also discriminated against by the Portuguese colonialists – was legitimated by their past as free men and women.[20] It is this that provided them with the status of 'authentic' Santomean and it constitutes the main reason why they want to distance themselves from the contract workers that came mostly from other former Portuguese colonies such as Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde, to work in the *roças* (plantations) (Seibert 2002a: 61).

Later, during the February 1953 events, several of these contract workers joined the *Corpo de Polícia Indígena* (the Indigenous Police Force), composed mainly of Angolan soldiers and Portuguese volunteers, which played a fundamental role in repressing the native Creole elite (Cervelló 1999: 30; Seibert 2002a: 76). The contract workers collaborated with the Portuguese colonial power in the Batepá episodes, partially because they were marginalized in the islands, but their peripheral status was also propelled by colonial propaganda that placed the responsibility for their precarious slave labour on the *forros*, claiming that the latter 'didn't want to get their hands dirty' (Seibert 2002a: 84) toiling in the plantations. However, in the 1960s, the Santomean nationalist movement decided to conceal the participation of these workers in the massacre because such information could 'put at risk the unity against the Portuguese' (Seibert 2002a: 115). This development reveals a deeply fractured society permeated by internal conflicts, where the axis of discrimination is based not exclusively on skin colour as a sign of inferiority and exclusion, but equally importantly on ethnic, national, class and sexual differences.

The nationalist and hegemonic narrative about the massacre emphasizes the suffering and heroism of the Santomean people against the Portuguese

enemy and simultaneously erases the violent acts committed by the contract workers against the *forros* during these events. Furthermore, it occludes the violence committed by some of this Creole elite, heir to the *filhos-da-terra* (sons of the land), against the contract workers and their descendants.[21] This process of agglutination that seeks total rupture with the colonial past and a consensus to forge a sense of nationhood seems also to constitute a mechanism of state control (see O'Riley 2007: 7).

Lima's poetic voice establishes a radically different approach to conceptualizing Santomean nationhood. She confronts the Santomean society with her imagining of a nation that reveals itself as mutilated. The poet relates a story of violence, only depicting not colonialism's brutality but also her people's. Thus, the archipelago emerges as a dismembered place, where the grammar of the abject and of haunting sustains a dimension of exclusion, as in the poem 'Show Me the Blood of the Moon':

> Show me the blood of the moon
> Now that the beach has spat
> The nausea of the sea
> And the loathing of the rocks
> Petrifies the screams I haven't heard
> Show me the blood
> The blood and the veins of the moon
> When the amputated tongues
> Resuscitate
> In Fernão Dias in February.[22] (Lima 2004: 29)

Fernão Dias, the Santomean pontoon where most of the *forros* during the Batepá Massacre were imprisoned, tortured and compelled to work, is here a phantasmagorical space where painful memories of colonialism are re-enacted and revived. In the literary representations of the 1953 Massacre, Santomean national and cultural identity is questioned, offering the reader the possibility to re-engage the past (see Colmeiro 2011). The contract workers, absent or marginalized in the nationalist narrative, become major presences in the Batepá texts but are also central figures in other fictions by Santomean writers.[23]

In Lima's poetry, the presence of these (invisible) workers takes on an almost obsessive dimension. In the words of Inocência Mata, 'We can almost say that this is one of her [Lima's] demons, the accusation of a community that, having fought for independence, turns out reducing some of their members to refugees' (2006: 239). Lima's poetry creates a space of phantasmal identification, where the poetic voice raises 'the exact questions, the questions that the unburied ghosts of the island for long cried out', as Margarida Calafate Ribeiro (2011: 203) notes. This can be witnessed in two sections of

‘Heroes’ and ‘Plantation’, both works from Lima’s first book, where the dead return asking for answers:

> The dead who died without questions
> Return slowly with their eyes open
> Inquiring for their crucified wings.[24] (Lima 2004: 23)
>
> The dead ask:
> Why are roots springing from our feet?[25] (Lima 2004: 30)

These spectres are also responsible for transforming São Tomé and Príncipe into something reminiscent of graveyard islands, constructed at the expense of the lives and exploitation of contract workers, which as living-dead now have come back to haunt the nation, sharing space with the living:

> Look how discreet are the roofs of the Marginal Avenue
> Listen how the bricks of the Marginal chalets gasp
> Feel the breeze when it grates the palm tree’s hair
> In the arteries of the city.
>
> It’s the spirit of those who died planting
> The pillars of this town where we laugh and feign
> Suffer and lie, betray and fight
> Struggle and love.[26] (Lima 2006: 28)

In the Santomean case, unlike most of the hegemonic occidental ghostly traditions, the phantoms do not have to be necessarily exorcized, as Freud proposes,[27] nor mourned, as Derrida advocates in *Specters of Marx* (1994), because there are no clear-cut boundaries between the world of the living and the dead (or living-dead, in some situations). Peeren reached this conclusion in her exploration of the meaning of hauntings in relation to the work of the Nigerian writers Ben Okri and Amos Tutuola using the reflections of Cameroonian theorist, Achille Mbembe:

> Freud’s uncanny and Derrida’s specter become insufficient models with which to think through the ghostliness of the everyday, since they explicitly oppose the ghost to order and routine as an unexpected, surprising figure of disturbance, the return of the repressed, and absolute alterity. (2010: 113)

In Lima’s poetry, ghosts and living share liminal realms and the same Santomean ground. This communication between spirit and material worlds represents a diverse ontology and cosmology towards the dead, as anthropologist Paulo Valverde (1998, 2000) has observed in his studies of Santomean society.[28] There are many different spectres inhabiting Lima’s writings:

the phantoms of the liberation struggle or ‘elementary ghosts’ (Lima 2011: 79–94), such as Alda Espírito Santo, Kwame Nkrumah, Amílcar Cabral and Patrice Lumumba; and the familiar phantasms of ancestors that, among the women, dwell in the spaces of affection, childhood and of the ‘House’, as in ‘The voices’, where the poetic subject recalls her aunt Spirit, the cousins of Good Death and the old Venida and Lochina, that ‘sat there in the yard/ speaking of grandfather and other ghosts’[29] (Lima 2006: 62).

The most striking spectres in her work, however, are the ones that are still alive, subjected to ‘*extreme forms of human life, death-worlds*, forms of social existence . . . that confer upon them the status of living dead (ghosts)’ (Mbembe 2003: 1) – referring to the former contract workers and their descendants. These men and women are turned into ghosts not exclusively by the dimension of exclusion in which they live, relegated to the marginal socioeconomic space of the *roças* (plantations), but also as a result of their own historical and social condition – considering they were removed from their homeland and forced to work virtually as slaves in a Santomean society that would not accept them as enfranchised members. In addition, they still occupy a minor place in the foundational narratives of the country, which continue to reproduce colonial categories and social hierarchies of inferiority to the former contract workers. To confront this reality of a haunted community, these liminal beings in Lima assume multilayered meanings: they are symbolic, indeed, but they allude also to something material, in the sense that they embody the contract worker rendered absent by the colonial and postcolonial society that constructs them as spectres.[30] In this way, the poet offers these men and women platforms via which to achieve recognition and agency in the narratives of the nation, by listening to their struggles, discussing their marginal existence and allowing for their memories to be duly noted.

According to Gordon and Derrida, recognizing the spectres and providing with them a space of enunciation, while, at the same time, making public past silences, represents an ethical attitude of social justice:

> No ethics, no politics . . . seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some *responsibility*, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead. (Derrida 1994: xviii)

> It is sometimes about writing ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a counter-memory, for the future. (Gordon 2008: 22)

The ghosts, inhabiting the visible and the invisible, the present and the absent, the good and the bad, the living and the dead, can break dominant narratives (see Blanco and Peeren 2013). To paraphrase Gordon (2008: 22–23)

and Joshua Gunn (2006: 92–93) the spectres, transcending fixed spatial and temporal boundaries, have the potential to produce different experiences, memories and narratives with distinct and ambiguous grammars otherwise systematically marginalized and disqualified by hegemonic discourses.

Gordon's influential and compelling argument of haunting has to be used, notwithstanding, with caution. For instance, in his essay, 'Place, Position, and Postcolonial Haunting in Assia Djebar's *La femme sans sépulture*', Michael O'Riley highlights his concern about the use of literary ghosts as a strategy that can detract attention from present issues (2004). O'Riley declares, 'Frequently, haunting as a mode of recovery of colonial history leads to a focus on the aesthetics of the experience of colonial oppression' that 'when taken too far . . . can obsess memory and divert the critical gesture from contemporary issues requiring intervention and immediate attention' (2007: 4). Emilie Cameron articulates similar apprehensions, stating that, 'These stories manage to *write out* the bodies and voices of living, politically active Indigenous peoples', while at the same time they, 'risk perpetuating a kind of endless "dancing around a wound" . . . neglecting to mobilize effectively for change in the present' (2008: 388–89).

While I acknowledge both O'Riley and Cameron's warnings, studying the ghosts of the Santomean literature and, particularly, the ones from the Massacre of 1953 challenges historical narratives, unveiling profound and unequal hierarchies, contradictions and power relations that still demand long overdue debate. The spectres' include the possibility of raising a discussion about knowledge realms that is often neglected or avoided (Blazan 2007: 1). It is, also, in the sense of the commitment to the voices and stories silenced in the past centuries by hegemonic discourses and narratives that the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences, posed by Santos in 2002, surface as an epistemological reflection integral to the deconstruction of the public memory of the past (2010: 87–126; 414–20).

The sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences present the world as full of inexhaustible experiences, part of them being wasted every day. At the same time, these sociologies alert us to the danger of normative narratives, that is, stories that carry silences and exclusions that we have to be vigilant about:

> Through the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences, social experience that resists destruction is unconcealed, and the space-time capable of identifying and rendering credible new counter-hegemonic social experiences is opened up. . . . The objective of the sociology of absences is to transform impossible into possible objects, absent into present objects. (Santos 2004: 14–15)

The absences, in Santos's context, are the hauntings Gordon writes of. They refer to 'what's living and breathing in the place hidden from view: people, places, histories, knowledge, memories, ways of life, ideas' (Gordon 2011: 3),

that is it is crucial that they be rescued so that a fairer and more ethical relationship with others can be developed.

Lima, notably, uses the ghost trope critically, not only to recover unheard voices and histories of the colonial past but also to stress that there are persistent forms of violence that still pervade the Santomean societal space. The trope in her writing calls for an effective change in politics. This is one of the most inspiring and attractive dimensions in Gordon's haunting proposal for a sociological imagination (2008, 2011). As the sociological imagination is not backward gazing, but also oriented towards the possible futures, it manifests a profound ethical concern for the silenced subjects of history in the present, so that different futures and other narratives can be possible. It is at this point that the sociology of emergences can also act, since it 'aims to identify and enlarge the signs of possible future experiences, under the guise of tendencies and latencies that are actively ignored by hegemonic rationality and knowledge' (Santos 2004: 24).

The social, political and cultural marginalization of the contract workers in São Tomé and Príncipe is depicted in Lima's poetry through the phantasmagorical idiom, by giving power to these ghosts, a power that, in a symbolic order, allows them the chance of becoming speakers with their own voice, something previously absent in the drama of the nation. In 'Imagined manifesto of a servant', contractual workers return from the dead demanding a place in the 'Santomean ground' (Lima 2004: 35–37), asserting themselves before those who, as Inocência Mata claims, are 'directly responsible for their destiny of refugees' (2006: 244), the *forros*, and contending that they are like them, also 'sons of the land'.

In Lima's work, particularly, in '1953', the poet offers a perspective of haunting close to the one proposed by Derrida and Gordon, where the poetic voice recognizes the suffering imposed on the Santomean by colonialism, but at the same time it reflects upon the persistent social differences and complex hierarchies in the islands. The violence experienced by the *forros* during the massacre and their 'unfair mode of loving freedom'[31] (Lima 2006: 27) works, in this text, as a call for attention to the extreme segregation experienced by the 'despised' contract workers with 'the slave stigma in the hand that executes'[32] (Lima 2006: 26). In this way, the rigid dichotomy between innocent and guilty is deconstructed, and the reader becomes aware of the necessity of more complex models of framing the massacre in order to better understand it. It is apparent in Lima's poems that the *forros* are not the only victims of the 1953 events since the massacre is not a singular annihilating and isolated explosion, but the result of a continuous process of colonial violence, and as such part of a wider context that produces many victims.

The haunting is, in Lima's case, also a mode of testing the limits of the massacre's representation, emphasizing its untold and indeterminable dimension. Faced with the difficulty of finding a suitable language for expressing

the immeasurable trauma and suffering, the poet chooses to tell the violence of the 1953 events through the phantasmagoric idiom.[33] In 'Zálima Gabon' – *zálima* meaning ghost, spectre or soul – the poetic subject assumes that these dead, the contract workers, are different from others in their demand for recognition and justice.[34] Here, the dead return as a sign of something unspeakable and unresolved, and as such a manifestation of the impossibility of portraying extreme violence and marginalization:

> They're tangible with their pupils of corpses without graves
> The pathetic shadow, their bones adrift and without shelter
> And a long, hundred-year old, tolerant fury.
>
> That's why I don't mistake them for other dead.
>
> Because they come and go but do not leave
> They come and go but do not die.[35] (Lima 2006: 22)

In 'Zálima Gabon', the spectres do not mean simply a dead person, they embody exclusions and invisibilities. Because 'the ghost always carries the message' (Gordon 2008: 98), in this poem, through the visitation of the hauntings, the idea of a homogenous national identity is contested and the verse reminds readers of the colonial heritage of injustices that persist in the islands. The ghosts stand, in this way, as a powerful reminder of past errors and discriminations that shall not be forgotten and that should not recur. The hauntings speak, also, of the particular forms through which the Santomean experienced colonial practices. This allows for a reckoning of the specific violence mechanisms inherited from colonialism, like the profound hierarchical and social categories of exclusion enacted by the colonizers. It is this everyday experience that Lima, with her poetry and ethics of justice, aspires to change by encouraging debate and action.

The poetry confronts and rescues the ghostly presences of *tongas*, contract workers or servants, within the colonial and postcolonial Santomean society that discriminates against them, forcing the community of *forros* to acknowledge their presence and actual claims for a legitimate place in the archipelago. Lima's work evokes the concept of ethical accountability before these persons – subjects with concrete desires, sufferings and struggles – that Gayatri Spivak in her classic essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988) considers fundamental: listening *to* their previously muted voices, instead of speaking *for* them.

CONCLUSION

Studying the colonial phantasmagoria in Lima's work 'illustrate[s] the anxieties of a country struggling for a postcolonial identity' (Giles 2011: 1), in

depictions that lend support to or subvert the dominant narratives that have been and continue to be constructed about the recent colonial past of the archipelago. The rescue of the figure of the contract worker-turned-ghost allows the framing of the complexities of the 1953 Massacre and makes visible the social tensions present in colonial and postcolonial São Tomé and Príncipe. In these texts, the spectres demand their place in the land of São Tomé and Príncipe and in its discourse(s), making claims for justice and recognition in a national space from which they have been excluded.

Through the idiom of ghosts, Lima recovers and questions the discourse(s) that narrate the nation, both in the former metropolis and in the colony, revealing them as the product of fallacies. The supposed originality of a Portuguese colonization without violence is exposed and Salazar's rhetoric of Portugal as a country of exceptional character,[36] dispersed over various continents, but harmoniously united, is denounced as a fantasy (Castelo 1999: 14, 97). Furthermore, the idea of a fixed and homogenous identity of the Santomean people is also shattered in the poet's texts, unveiling in these other stories many different possibilities for the future of the islands.

NOTES

1. This chapter is part of a PhD investigation with the reference SFRH/BD/81653/2011, carried out at the Centre for Social Studies/Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra and cofinanced by the European Social Fund, through the Operational Programme Human Potential and by National Funds through Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the conference 'After the Empires – Reflections of European Colonialism in a Globalized World', Roskilde University, May 2013. I am grateful to those who have discussed my research with me along the way including Professors António Sousa Ribeiro, Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, Maria Paula Meneses and Gerhard Seibert, my colleagues at Centro de Estudos Sociais and Rita Grácio. Special thanks to the organizers of the 'After the Empires' Conference and to Lars Jensen, Conceição Lima, Joana Pratas, Ronnith Morris and the peer-review referees for their insightful comments on the draft.

2. Ghosts also provide a rich strand of renewed scholarship in the humanities and social sciences that can be dated from before the 1990s. For elaboration on the 'spectral turn', see Luckhurst (2002).

3. See Gordon (2008) and Craps (2013: 60–71).

4. Read Cameron (2008) and Boyd and Thrush (2011).

5. See Gelder and Jacobs (1999).

6. See Mbembe (2003).

7. Further reading by Labanyi (2000) and Colmeiro (2011) in the case of the Spanish Civil War and for analysis of the Portuguese Colonial War, see Vecchi (2010).

8. Paper presented by Marijke Denger at Kingston University, 13 September 2013.

9. Mueggler (2001).

10. I recommend the haunted narrative of *The Battle of Tabato*, a movie by João Viana (2013). I am grateful to Papaveronoir for sending me a copy of this film.

11. For other considerations of haunting and postcolonial studies, see Joseph-Vilain and Misrahi-Barak *Postcolonial Ghosts* (2009). For a comprehensive overview of the uses of spectralization in the field of cultural studies, I recommend *The Spectralities Reader* published by Blanco and Peeren (2013).

12. The notion of an 'idiom of haunting' is suggested by Joshua Gunn (2006: 78).

13. I do not use the term 'postcolonial' as meaning a chronological step after the end of the 'colonial', but as a means to regard the present globalized world through colonialism's heritages. For accurate reflections on postcolonial thought and theories, read António Sousa Ribeiro (2010) and the book edited by Brugioni, Passos, Sarabando and Silva (2012).

14. *Forros* refers to freed slaves, men and women with full citizenship rights, natives and their descendants and is a term that also designates the prevalent ethnocultural group in São Tomé and Príncipe.

15. Concerning the political, cultural and historical contexts of the Batepá Massacre, see Mário Pinto de Andrade under the name of Buanga Fele (1955), Pelissier (1972), Moreira (1974), Seibert (1996, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2008), Cervelló (1999), Lima (2002), Santo (2003) and Mata (1998, 2004b, 2010).

16. Luso-tropicalism is a theory of hybridism without violence that shares the assumption of a gentle relationship between colonizer and colonized, presenting the mulatto as the material trophy of the miscegenation (Santos 2010: 227). For critiques of Gilberto Freyre and the ways luso-tropicalism was appropriated by the authoritarian Portuguese regime of *Estado Novo*, see Castelo (1999) and Almeida (2000).

17. See Mata (2004a: 13).

18. 'Os mártires – dizem – são seres excepcionais, raros / A certa luz destinados. / Não era essa, suponho, a sua sina. . . . / Não pensarei em milagres, não pensarei / Na crucificação em que um homem renasceu / Sem saber ao certo porque caía'. All the translations are mine, except when otherwise noted.

19. 'O enigma é outro – aqui não moram deuses / Homens apenas e o mar, inamovível herança'.

20. Although there are *forros* with many different socioeconomic statuses, the native Creole elite of the islands was composed mainly by men and women from this group. Most of the members of the local elite occupied intermediate social positions during Portuguese colonialism, holding posts in the public administration of the colony and/or being owners of plantations. For more information about this subject, read Seibert (2002a: 75, 114–15).

21. Although these workers are in the archipelago, sometimes, for more than three decades, they continue to be excluded from full citizenship, as revealed in Leão Lopes's documentary *S. Tomé e Príncipe: os últimos contratados* (2010). In the documentary Alda Espírito Santo states that while included in the country's constitution, the former contract workers and their descendants' right to vote is not assured, even though they are Santomean.

22. 'Mostra-me o sangue da lua / Agora que a praia cuspiu / A náusea do mar / E o nojo das rochas petrifica os gritos que não ouvi / Mostra-me o sangue / O sangue

e as veias da lua / Quando as línguas decepadas / Ressuscitarem / Em Fernão Dias no mês de Fevereiro'.

23. Notwithstanding, it is important to keep in mind that the depictions of these workers assume distinctive features according to the contexts in which the texts are written. For example, in the anti-colonial and nationalist poetry by Alda Espírito Santo and Maria Manuela Margarido, the priority was to create a consolidated community to fight against the Portuguese enemy, so the contract workers are referenced, but generically remain mute. More recently, however, in the new critical writings of Conceição Lima, Manuel Teles Neto and Olinda Beja, the performance of the complex voices and lives of these men and women contribute to a reevaluation of their role in the history of the nation. See Mata (2004a, 2006, 2010), Padilha (2004) and Falconi (2011).

24. 'Os mortos que morreram sem perguntas / Regressam devagar de olhos abertos / Indagando por suas asas crucificadas'.

25. 'Perguntam os mortos: / Porque brotam raízes dos nossos pés'?

26. 'Vê como são circunspectos os telhados da Avenida Marginal / Ouve como arquejam os tijolos dos chalés da Marginal / Sente a brisa quando roça os cabelos das palmeiras / Nas artérias da cidade. / É o espírito dos que plantaram morrendo / Os pilares desta urbe onde rimos e fingimos / Sofremos e mentimos, traímos e lutamos / Pelejamos e amamos'.

27. See, for example, *Three Case Histories* (1996) and *The Uncanny* (2003).

28. There are several animistic rituals in the islands. Spirit possession is a common phenomenon, namely in healing ceremonies, such as *djambi*. I recommend Inês Gonçalves's documentary *Na Terra como no Céu* (On Earth as It Is in Heaven) (2010) on this subject.

29. 'Sentadas lá no quintal / falando do avô e de outros fantasmas'.

30. See Turcotte (2009). For a critical study of how actual people are produced as ghosts in our contemporary globalized world, see *The Spectral Metaphor. Living Ghosts and the Agency of Invisibility* (Peeren 2014).

31. 'Injusto modo de amar a liberdade'.

32. 'O escravo estigma na mão que executa'.

33. For theoretical elaboration in the field of memory studies, in the extensive line of enquiry relating memory, violence and trauma, see, for example, Ribeiro (2013), Assmann and Shortt (2012), Vambe (2012) and Antze and Lambek (1996).

34. The term *gabon* from the title is a pejorative word by which the non-natives of São Tomé and Príncipe were known. It is used to designate the servants and contract workers that came from the African continent to the archipelago.

35. 'São tangíveis com suas pupilas de cadáveres sem cova / A patética sombra, seus ossos sem rumo e sem abrigo / E uma longa, centenária, resignada fúria. / Por isso não os confundo com outros mortos. / Porque eles vêm e vão mas não partem / Eles vêm e vão mas não morrem'.

36. Concerning this alleged exceptional character of the Portuguese colonialism, see Almeida (2000), Vecchi (2010) and Santos (2010).