

Considerations on the Meaning of Maps and Territories in the Letter by Pêro Vaz de Caminha (1500) and in the poem “Tabacaria” [Tobacco Shop] (1928) by Álvaro de Campos/Fernando Pessoa

cda@fct.unl.pt

Departamento de Ciências Sociais Aplicadas
Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Abstract

We explore the thematic universe of the voyage as seen, first, in an important historical document written by Pêro Vaz de Caminha [c. 1450-1500], who relates – as the sole or the most important scribe, historically speaking, present in Pedro Álvares Cabral’s fleet – the moment of the Portuguese discovery of the Brazilian coast in 1500 and, secondly, in regard to Álvaro de Campos [1889-1933, according to his “biographer” Fernando Pessoa], who observes from his window the (modernist) boundary between sense-borne reality and metaphysical otherness, i.e., the intersection of speculative consciousness at the edge of communicability with the infinite, as seen in the poem “Tabacaria” (1928). By way of Richard Dawkins’ theory of memes (*The Selfish Gene*, 1976), as well as Edward T. Hall’s theory of proxemics (*The Hidden Dimension*, 1966) we examine aspects of maps (as models and narratives of otherness within the logic of empire) and the nature of territories (as an analogue to Barthes’ theory of the *text(e)*). Specifically, our reading of the two documents contrasts Caminha’s material and mental map making as a tool implicit within the larger narrative of empire with Campos’ use of territory as an aspect of textuality, exemplifying Pessoa’s artistic project of creating a renewed civilization of the spirit or immaterial being.

Key Words: Map, Territory, Meme, Proxemics, Empire

Resumo

Exploramos aspectos do universo temático da viagem, primeiro, num documento de grande importância histórica da autoria de Pêro Vaz de Caminha [circa 1450-1500], cuja *Carta* (a el-Rei D. Manuel) [1500] relata a chegada da frota de Pedro Álvares Cabral à costa brasileira – uma viagem historicamente transformadora e, em segundo lugar, no poema “Tabacaria” (1928) da autoria do heterónimo pessoano Álvaro de Campos [1889-1933, datas fornecidas por Fernando Pessoa ele mesmo], em que observa, a partir da janela do seu quarto lisboeta, a fronteira que para ele jaz entre, por um lado, a realidade empírica e, por outro, o *outro* metafísico, i.e., a intersecção da consciência humana em fase de intensa reflexão especulativa já no limite da comunicabilidade. Mediante a aplicação de aspectos da teoria dos *memes* de Richard Dawkins (*The Selfish Gene*, 1976), bem como da teoria de *proxemics* de Edward T. Hall (*The Hidden Dimension*, 1966), exploram-se aspectos do mapa (como modelo de captação e narrativa do *outro* no contexto da lógica de império) e a natureza do território (em paralelo à, e à luz da, teoria do *texte* de Roland Barthes). A nossa leitura dos dois documentos (uma carta e um texto poético) contrasta o mapa narrativo criado por Caminha, como uma ferramenta discursiva ao serviço da narrativa de império, com o uso que Campos faz de território, como um aspecto de textualidade, daí exemplificando o projecto artístico de Pessoa: a criação de uma civilização renovada do espírito (ou imaterial).

Palavras-chave: mapa, território, *meme*, *proxemics*, império

The map is not the territory. A map can inform a discourse, and facilitate an understanding of a territory, a domain of interest and that is just because much of the forest of information is of necessity, discarded in the process of mapmaking so that some of the trees can be better revealed. (John Paull, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University: "Meme Maps: A Tool for Configuring Memes in Time and Space," *European Journal of Scientific Research*, Vol. 31, No. 1 [2009], 17).

EMBARKATION: AN INTRODUCTORY PREMISE (A FEW CONJECTURES AND OUR TASK)

In what ways can a comparison between Pêro Vaz de Caminha's Letter (1500), addressed to King Manuel I concerning the finding ["achamento"] of the "Terra de Vera Cruz" (present-day Brazil), and the poem "Tabacaria" [Tobacco Shop] (1928) attributed by Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) to his heteronym Álvaro de Campos lead us to a more complex and more dynamic reading of "map" and "territory"? Caminha's Letter to King Manuel I¹ and Álvaro de Campos' "Tabacaria" reflect the complex tensions at play in regard to the related though distinct domains of map and territory. A reading of these two texts reveals aspects of the cultural functions of both.

A map names and organizes, represents and communicates. A map records by way of material models and symbolic representation a locus of human interaction with a determinate spatial and temporal reality. Moreover, a map participates in the history of such human interactivity within a specific spatial-temporal territory through various material and mental media. In fact, a map *performs*² a territory. A territory, as understood here, i.e., as a dimension of space not yet, or not meant to be, represented by a map, also refers to a spatial-temporal reality. However, it does not seek to represent space either as affiliated with a civilizational logic of conquest, annexation or exploitation or as the site of stable symbolic representation or even, perhaps more significantly, as a site of epistemological certainty. A territory represents nothing but its

¹ The Letter was first published in Rio de Janeiro in 1817 by Manuel Aires de Casa in his *Corografia brasileira, ou relação histórico-geográfico do reino do Brazil*. The original is located in the Torre do Tombo, Lisbon. The manuscript is comprised of twenty-seven pages, written on seven folios, each containing four of the total number of pages. Caminha had been appointed by King Manuel I as scribe, who would accompany Pedro Álvares Cabral to the Brazilian coast before the fleet continued its journey to Calecute (Calicut), located on the western coast of India in the present-day state of Kerala, charged with the mission of establishing and defending a commercial outpost there. It is believed that it was during the ensuing tensions which arose between the Portuguese and the local inhabitants that Caminha would die in battle.

² Judith Butler affirms: "Within speech act theory, a performance is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names" (13). Dino Franco Fellugi maintains a webpage dedicated in part to the work of Butler, "Modules on Butler: On Performativity," which appears in his *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*, where the author states the following in regard to Butler's conception of performativity, which we use in our approach to maps and territories to underscore the reality-engendering capacity of maps and map making and underlies the recurrent topos throughout our approach that: He who has the map, has the world. Fellugi writes: "Butler takes this [abovementioned] formulation further by exploring the ways that linguistic constructions create our reality in general through the speech acts we participate in every day. By endlessly citing the conventions of the social world around us, we enact that reality (...). In the act of performing the conventions of reality, by embodying those fictions in our actions, we make those artificial conventions appear to be natural and necessary" (Fellugi). A map possesses a potent performative force; it performs the construction of maps out of territories.

own unbounded beingness. A territory is a phenomenon of immanence, not one of rational objectification subordinate to the meta-narrative of civilization. As such, a territory is closer to the pre-conscious structures of being; it still bears within it the imaginative foreground of sentience before language intervenes. Territory acquires a history when it becomes a map. Once a territory has become a map, it belongs to the historicity of collective humankind. The immanence of a territory is generally permeable to the appropriative and transformative patterns of historical consciousness. Moreover, a civilization is an explorer of territories and a generator of maps. An empire deploys a particular usage of material and mental maps. Empire wants to be *the map of maps*. Nevertheless, there are territories which do not become maps, or which even destabilize the mapped territories of historical consciousness. Territory, when understood in the Barthesian sense of *text(e)*, a concept we will explore further below, functions as the rough draft, or semiotic source, of being as it unfolds into, and is transformed by, the imagination *outside the codified paths of our collective memory of inherited maps* (including meme maps). As we shall explore below, territory possesses its own memic center of gravity; it generates its own meme pool while exerting its own evolutionary pressure on cultural history. We will explore the conceptual tensions existing between map and territory throughout the present essay.

A map has therefore a performative effect: it designates as well as symbolically reconfigures a specific territory. A map transforms a territory into a discursive reality reflective of the cultural nexus operating between language and power. Thus, a map submits a territory to a historically determined signifying practice. Consequently, a complex relationship between map and territory arises. In view of this complexity, we assert that:

- a map performs a territory by naming it. A map also transforms it. There are therefore no neutral maps: *he who has the map has the world*, or at least *a world*. The performance names and represents, organizes and interprets a territory. It circumscribes a territory and re-presents it for a nexus of power and knowledge;
- a map speaks and reads a territory by conferring on it an interpretive framework which in turn implies a point of view, a history, and a determinate relationship between physical and social space: matter acquires a history and an identity. Territory becomes intelligible in light of a social and political reality when it becomes part of the larger symbolic map; henceforth it is integrated into a political order, a historical context, a civilizational narrative, an entire cognitive project;
- therefore, a map inscribes a territory on to a symbolic space. Matter thus inscribed becomes in turn readable in light of a civilizational logic; it then participates in the production of a specific narrative of history, a specific historical grammar of time. History is the symbolic conversion of matter into cultural space as part of the overall logic of ongoing historical transformations.

- a material reality thus acquires a symbolic identity. A symbol expresses the foundational unity of matter read, codified, known, and reread in light of the mapmaker's own symbolic mother tongue.

What does a map (including meme maps) do? According to John Paull, environmental scientist and creator and practitioner of meme maps:

Any map, including any Meme Map is a work in progress, modifiable in the light of unfolding knowledge, new understanding, and new perspectives, as new forms of interest are revealed. It has been pointed out that 'studying the past is not possible: it is no longer there' (Vincent, 2005, 9). We rely on 'fallible evidence' which is 'interpreted by fallible people', and so 'no question of finality can ever rise' (Vincent, 2005, 9). History is always incomplete, but although it is never definitive it can be indicative (Paull).

Summarizing, then, a map speaks and reads a territory. A map names and consequently organizes a territory by way of a representational model. Thus matter acquires an identity; matter is inscribed on to a social and political reality. Matter thus inscribed on to a map becomes itself part of a larger script: atoms become citizens, so to speak, or, at the very least, subjects of a determinate social and political reality. Therefore, material reality acquires a symbolic identity in the context of a socio-political domain. A map claims and projects a history, i.e., it affirms affiliation with a specific historical project (e.g., Portugal, empire). A map expresses a link between physical and social spaces; it re-presents a territory in terms of socially mediated space, i.e., a particular political idiom and historical context. A territory becomes intelligible to the nexus of power and knowledge in consequence of its transposition on to a pervasive interpretive grid. A map *performs* this multi-dimensional reality. A map is part of the array of material and symbolic media by which history manifests a civilizational logic and its epistemological wealth. *A map is not a territory but rather symbolically performs it*: a map transforms a territory into a map. A map inscribes territory within a material and mental narrative. A map is part of the signifying practices which read bodies and map these bodies into subjects. A map engenders these bodies and subjects (subjectivities) in accord with the interpretive, doctrinal, and ideological grid which underlies it. A map variously determines and grants subjecthood to the bodies it symbolically engenders and performs. Consequently, maps matter: they materialize bodies into subjects whose very consciousness becomes inscribed within a larger narrative such as that of empire.

So, what is a meme? The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, creator of the meme concept, writes in *The Selfish Gene* (1976):

I think that a new kind of replicator has recently emerged on this very planet. It is staring us in the face. It is still in its infancy, still drifting clumsily about in its primeval soup, but already it is achieving

evolutionary change at a rate that leaves the old gene panting far behind.

The new soup is the soup of human culture. We need a name for the new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of *imitation*. ‘Mimeme’ comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like ‘gene’. I hope my classicist friends will forgive me if I abbreviate mimeme to *meme*. (...)

Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. If a scientist hears, or reads about, a good idea, he passes it on to his colleagues and students. He mentions it in his articles and his lectures. If the idea catches on, it can be said to propagate itself, spreading from brain to brain. As my colleague H. K. Humphrey neatly summed up an earlier draft of this chapter: ‘...memes should be regarded as living structures, not just metaphorically but technically. When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for the meme’s propagation in just the way that a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of a host cell. And this isn’t just a way of talking – the meme for, say, ‘belief in life after death’ is actually realized physically, millions of times over, as a structure in the nervous system of individual men the world over’ (Dawkins 192).

A map is therefore a meme: it can be copied. The territory a map represents can be subsequently reproduced both in books and in memory. A map transmits an *idea* of space that is observed, measured, and geo-politically organized by human beings for human use. It is *memically* copied both in a material and symbolic sense: from edition to edition, atlas to atlas, and brain to brain. The map reproduces other sets of memes as well, referred to as memeplexes by Dawkins, in regard to the world the map represents. The world thus re-presented by the map is a world of relations: geographical and geopolitical, military and economic, scientific and anthropological, historical and hegemonic. A map is alive with conceptual memes as it gathers a multiplicity of ideas into a meme narrative. A map engages with other maps, both material and mental, which together translate territory and historical time into specific categories of apprehension. Such categories may eventually relate to the mapmaker’s mission as emissary of a specific political power and historical project. Thus maps, understood to be both the material embodiment of memes, as well as a vehicle of the memes they symbolically communicate, spread like a “virus” the ideas of a particular cultural context and historical narrative. Maps are living documents in the meme-sphere inhabited by human beings: maps, as memes, propagate within the cultural “soup”

which in turn becomes the memic mirror in which a determinate cultural entity represents and understands itself. A culture is a highly effective meme-generating and meme-copying entity. In this sense, *culture is the meme of memes*. Memes ultimately help us to participate meaningfully in human existence. As Susan Blackmore writes:

Humans are fundamentally unique not because they are especially clever, not just because they have big brains or language, but because they are capable of extensive and generalized imitation, and it is imitation that makes culture possible, for only imitation gives rise to a new replicator that can propagate from brain to brain, or from brain to artefact and back to brain (Blackmore).

The memeticist John Paull writes in turn in his paper, “Meme Maps: A Tool for Configuring Memes in Time and Space,” that “the map is not the territory. A map can inform a discourse, and facilitate an understanding of a territory, a domain of interest, and that is just because much of the forest of information is, of necessity, discarded in the process of map making so that some of the trees can be better revealed” (Paull). A map in general and a meme map in particular express what Dawkins considers to be a key instrument of cultural transmission; it is the locus of ideational content interacting with other content-rich loci (brains and artefacts) within a meme-rich cultural environment. A map, including meme maps, captures the life-cycle of a culture’s complex memic phenotype. It expresses ideational content in a state of ongoing interactive flux.

A map, as meme-rich artefact, performs and represents an important locus of cultural replication and, in the case of empire, belongs to the instruments of hegemonic memic expansion through space and time.³

³ Two other researchers into the nature and meaning of memes, besides Dawkins himself and Susan Blackmore, are John S. Wilkins: “What’s in a Meme? Reflections from the Perspective of the History and Philosophy of Evolutionary Biology” and Daniel Dennett, “Memes and the Exploitation of Imagination.” (see Bibliography) Dennett writes in this paper: “To human beings (...) each meme-vehicle is a potential friend or foe, bearing a gift that will enhance our powers or a gift horse that will distract us, burden our memories, derange our judgments. (...) So far, the meme’s eye perspective may still appear to be simply a graphic way of organizing very familiar observations about the way items in our cultures affect us, and affect each other. But Dawkins suggests that in our explanations we tend to overlook the fundamental fact that ‘a cultural trait man have evolved in the way it has simply because it is *advantageous to itself*.’” Thus, memes, like genes, belong to the logic of selection (variation, heredity, and differential suitability or fitness within the cultural or natural environment, respectively). Memes, like genes, compete for survival, not necessarily in accord with individual human wants and desires. Dennett continues: “Minds are in limited supply, and each mind has a limited capacity for memes, and hence there is a considerable competition among memes for entry into as many minds as possible. This competition is the major selective force in the infosphere and, just as in the biosphere, the challenge has been met with great ingenuity.” On a theoretical level, this raises important epistemological issues. On the ethical level, memes, as explained here, are highly problematic. Is the Letter by Caminha a founding meme-vehicle ushering in the more competitive meme-pool of Portuguese empire vis-à-vis the indigenous communities of Brazil? In the encounter between meme-pools, how can human beings mediate distinct, competing memic memories and meme-reproductive capacities without committing *memicide*? Is that even possible in the context of empire?

ON PÊRO VAZ DE CAMINHA'S LETTER TO KING MANUEL I ON THE FINDING OF BRAZIL: *He who has the map has the world* (as exemplified in four excerpts from the Letter)

The Letter marks a momentous memic event of historical bifurcation, i.e., before and after the “achamento” [finding, discovery] of the Brazilian coast on Wednesday, 22 April, 1500, specifically, a “monte” to which was quickly given the name “Monte Pascoal” rising above a dense natural setting given in turn the designation of “Terra de Vera Cruz” [Land of the True Cross].

1. “Ali por então não houve mais fala nem entendimento com eles, por a berberia deles ser tamanha que se não entendia nem ouvia ninguém” (Caminha 161). Both the historical and memic events occurring in 1500 converge in this Letter. The historical event in question marks both the vast rift between, and the sudden approximation of, two human communities, asymmetrically organized into empire and clan. Between the two communities, the Letter, the writing of which provides numerous observations (in service to posterior imperial interpretation and administration), also conveys, as memic event, the idea of the *other*, or of *otherness*, as the embodiment of “berberia,” i.e., the *other* exists outside the language of normative (i.e., Portuguese, European, catholic) subjecthood. The Letter creates a memic divide between, on the one hand, the incomprehensible speech of the Tupi and, on the other, the self-legitimizing language of scribes and kings. (The idea is, otherness is barbarous. This has proven to be a particularly virulent and enduring meme.) Caminha is both the dutiful author of the Letter and, as scribe, the representative of supreme authority (King Manuel I). Therefore, the Letter performs in situ an act of physical observation as well as a symbolic act of royal gaze and political appropriation (with Caminha as authorial proxy). The “berberia” contrasts tellingly with the Letter’s rhetorical, linguistic, and narrative prowess, whose author implicitly or at least presumably believes in the underlying logic of discovery as essentially one of naturally hegemonic appropriation and expansion. The incomprehensibility of the Tupian language by the Portuguese seamen, as recorded in the Letter by Caminha, a representative of the crown, signals the imbalance of memic survivability which the encounter of the two worlds in focus here presages.

The Letter is not written as mere reportage. Caminha’s interpretative schema is thoroughly embedded within the language of this document. Moreover, the “berberia” lies arguably not in the language of the Tupi, incomprehensible to the Portuguese, but rather in the consequences of the memic reiteration of the interpretative schema itself over historical time, contextualized by unequal frameworks of power and stages of cultural history.

2. “Parece-me gente de tal inocência que, se homem os entendesse a eles e eles a nós, seriam logo cristãos, porque eles, segundo parece, não têm, nem entendem

em nenhuma crença” (Caminha 170). Once again, the Letter, as the symbolic eyes and ears of the Portuguese crown, and buttressed by the author’s interpretive schema, records in this passage an important aspect of the narrative of Empire. The latter, as the site of power and discourse, subsumes “inocência” under the more encompassing logic of empire. The Tupi’s “inocência,” therefore, becomes part of the larger discourse of altar, crown, creed, and cross, which is not innocent but rather *effective* in its institutional and doctrinal pretention to hegemony. A hegemony which considers the Tupi’s innocence to be a sign of their incomplete *subjectivation* of power and knowledge relations.

3. “[E]sta gente é boa e de boa simplicidade. E imprimir-se-á ligeiramente neles qualquer cunho, que lhes quiserem dar”. (...) “Portanto Vossa Alteza, que tanto deseja acrescentar a santa fé católica, deve cuidar da sua salvação. E prazera a Deus que com pouco trabalho seja assim” (Caminha 170-171). Caminha continues to develop the interpretive schema of the previously analysed excerpt. The Tupi’s “innocence” guarantees their permeability to swift and effective memic invasion, in this case, that of religious content, due to their “simplicidade” and goodness. Caminha’s depiction of the Tupi, which anticipates the conceptualization of the *noble savage* in the European literary and philosophical tradition, is a problematic figure, having often been used as evidence of Portuguese beneficence vis-à-vis the indigenous peoples of present-day Brazil, in fact, a distortion of the historical record. In regard to Portugal and its treatment of indigenous populations, the historian C. R. Boxer, in his *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825*, addresses this issue in the following terms, specifically concerning Caminha’s Letter and the aftermath of the Portuguese discovery of Brazil in 1500. After quoting the excerpt of the Letter (also excerpted above), Boxer writes:

This Portuguese anticipation of the eighteenth-century French *philosophes*’ conception of the ‘Noble Savage’ is often cited by modern writers as evidence of the Lusitanian lack of a colour-bar and the Portuguese proclivity for mating with coloured women. In point of fact it was merely the natural reaction of sex-starved sailors, and it can easily be paralleled by similar reactions on the part of eighteenth-century English and French seamen to the scantily clad Polynesian beauties of Tahiti and the Pacific Islands. Moreover, this flattering comparison of these Stone Age savages [sic] with the innocent inhabitants of an earthly paradise or a vanished golden age did not last very long – any more than did the similar reactions of Columbus and his Spanish mariners to the Arawaks of the Caribbean Islands discovered on his first voyage. (...)

The enslavement of the Amerindians was categorically forbidden by the Crown in 1570, save in cases where they might have been captured in a ‘just war’, or from cannibal tribes. This decree was not taken very seriously by most of the *moradores*, but other causes combined to reduce the numbers available for work on the plantations. With the decimation of many Amerindian groups through wars and the introduction of European diseases such as smallpox, and with a high death rate among Amerindian slaves who could not endure plantation servitude, the *moradores* were increasingly forced to seek an alternative supply during the second half of the sixteenth century (Boxer 85, 88).

4. “E quando veio ao Evangelho, que nos erguemos todos em pé, com as mãos levantadas, eles se levantaram connosco e alçaram as mãos, ficando assim até ser acabado; e então tornaram-se a assentar como nós. E quando levantaram a Deus, que nos pusemos de joelhos, eles se puseram assim todos, como nós estávamos com as mãos levantadas, e em tal maneira sossegados, que certifico a Vossa Alteza nos fez muita devoção” (Caminha 93). This idyllic scenario of spontaneous memic contagion of altar, cross, and creed, presumably exhibited by the Tupi who attended Mass alongside the Portuguese before the latter’s definitive departure for India, would soon turn into one of enslavement, disease, and death, as seen above in Boxer’s examination of the historical record. Yet another approach to the scene reported by Caminha can be found in Dawkin’s discussion of religion as a kind of viral replicator. In his “Viruses of the Mind”, the evolutionary biologist writes:

I have already alluded to the programmed-in gullibility of a child, so useful for learning language and traditional wisdom, and so easily subverted by nuns, Moonies and their ilk. More generally, we all exchange information with one another. We don’t exactly plug floppy disks into slots in one another’s skulls, but we exchange sentences, both through our ears and through our eyes. We notice each other’s styles of moving and dressing and are influenced. We take in advertising jingles, and are plausibly persuaded by them, otherwise hard-headed businessmen would not spend so much money polluting the air with them.

Think about two qualities that a virus, or any sort of parasitic replicator, demands of a friendly medium, the two qualities that make cellular machinery so friendly towards parasitic DNA, and that make computers so friendly towards computer viruses. These qualities are, firstly, a readiness to replicate information

accurately, perhaps with some mistakes that are subsequently reproduced accurately, and, secondly, a readiness to obey instructions encoded in the information so replicated (Dawkins: Viruses 1991).

The Tupi's *mimetic* abilities in regard to the Portuguese catholic sailors, whom they observe and ostensibly imitate in prayer and in genuflexion – which Caminha interprets to be a sign of their pre-ordained *memetic* permeability to the rituals of faith and empire –, can therefore be seen to lie at the crossroads of complex historical and memic factors.

The Letter's reportage of otherness apprehended on the Brazilian coastline is not neutral. The Letter possesses neutrality only in the sense that the author (and, implicitly, his royal reader) considers the idiom of reportage to lie at an angle equidistant between the temporal unfolding of events witnessed and the redemptive and imperial truths which are believed to guide these very events. This authorial equidistance between reportage, reality, and truth, which the Letter performs, belongs ultimately to the logic of empire. The Letter turns historical circumstance into an instance of self-conferred civilizational inevitability and self-referring moral imperative. Ultimately, empire can be seen to seek conversion of its particular memic density into natural law, which empire both invents and imposes.

CAMINHA'S LETTER AS MAP AND NARRATIVE OF EMPIRE

The Letter presages the setting into motion of substantive changes affecting identity, for instance, from that of Tupi into Indian and from Indian into subject of empire. Indeed, the Letter performs an array of symbolic transformations we note below such as that

- from matter or material reality into geographical entity;
- from geographical discovery into Terra de Vera Cruz;
- from tribal community into commercial and military outpost;
- from outpost into outskirts of an imperial realm;
- from an extensive area of the South American continent into “Brazil”, i.e., a possession of empire;
- from indigenous cultures into cultural periphery (within the context of the history of the Portuguese empire);
- from cultural alterity into gold, silver, the red dye of Brazilwood, future religious converts and an enslaved workforce; all these multiple material and symbolic exchanges vouchsafed in part by the transformation of territory into map.

In addition, the Letter is a foundational text: it finds a new meme (“Brazil”) within the lexicon of empire and its geopolitical order. What, then, is the work of empire if not that of furnishing the map of maps, i.e., positing itself as the supreme memic center of

gravity? In the context of the imperial narrative present within the Letter as symbolic map and meme, we detect the following aspects:

- the transposition of empire's "script" on to new territories; the naming of a center and its peripheries;
- the periphery is designated to prove in a sense the very existence of the center; the center is real to the extent that it names and maps a periphery;
- the center performs its memic significance by positing difference as part of a larger and homogenizing civilizational narrative which it (the center) governs and controls;
- a map negotiates a continuity between the meaning of exchange and expropriation, communication and domination, colonization and exclusion; unity and hierarchy;
- a map transmits an administrative, discursive, pedagogical, symbolic, and spiritual model: it makes difference and otherness presumably predictable, i.e., it codifies and replicates the predictive and predicative power of empire, i.e., empire's ability to reproduce memically the center on to the periphery;
- the Letter is a founding meme, reproduced within the meme pool of Portuguese cultural memory;
- ultimately, the Letter indicates and expands the nexus joining knowledge with power.

The Letter becomes, then, a strategic memeplex for the transposition of empire on to new memic territories (i.e., minds) whereby

- the map identifies a center, expands its socio-political agency, and, as part of a civilizational narrative, instructs the reader as to the licit reading of maps and its scripted territories;
- a civilizational narrative, thus made central, becomes the map of maps, the ideational center of all narratives; it performs as the perfect mirror of the world, i.e., the official atlas of imperial memory whereby it also claims a memic equilibrium between center and realm;
- a civilizational project is a strategy for narrative survival by way of material and immaterial sovereignty over other narrative complexes or memeplexes;
- the civilizational project present in the Letter augurs the elimination of cultural agency in regard to the "índios" it describes: they will henceforth have neither cultural autonomy nor a specific narrative center of gravity within this project;
- an imperial project chooses, as its fundamental task, the spreading of its all-encompassing memic code, its self-authorized, sovereign meme pool;
- the "índios" are not seen as bearers, or initiators, or creators, of their own memic density; the center, i.e., the narrative center of empire provides, enforces, and administers the instructions contained in the very discourse of empire.

An imperial project posits the memic penury of others, of otherness, while at the same time providing a redemptive narrative for the refractive disturbance embedded in alterity. This project predicates and codifies the subalternity of other cultural maps: it purposively misreads the culture of otherness in order to reproduce itself more completely upon the hitherto autonomous itineraries of difference. Thus, the Letter speaks for the center, speaks to the center, and speaks within the center.

Furthermore, the Letter constitutes a fulcral text given: 1) *the purity, so to speak, of the historical event* of discovery in 1500, whereby members of two hitherto completely separate cultural realms meet for the first time and, simultaneously, 2) *the purity of the memic event* of this momentous encounter, whereby the empirical apprehension of the *other* brings Tupi and sailors face to face with a first-hand experience of alterity. This experience of (ethnological) difference is absolute (hence still unmediated) and without precedence (no previous historical record concerning the Tupi). Their apprehension of difference is irrefutable and foundational (having been captured by the sensory apparatus of their human physicality). Difference is therefore immediately translated into sensate reality. In this case, the sailors' senses are evidentially compelling when it comes to the powerful presence of difference, as embodied by the Tupi they meet. The memic event is doubly absolute inasmuch as the bodies and minds of the Portuguese crew, endowed with their internalized cognitive, symbolic, and cultural maps, embody they themselves the absolutely unique and yet finite memes they will henceforth transform into future personal narratives based on their direct experience of difference. (The traveller – whether sailor or scribe – is a moving vector of memes; the traveller is a living boundary-line between gene and meme, flesh and symbol, sameness and difference.) To the contemporary mind, of course, difference is neither absolute nor unmediated: we are all inhabitants of a planetary-wide Tower of Babel where we continually negotiate paths between alterity and identity both within and outside ourselves. In contrast, the fate of the Portuguese sailors' and scribe's apprehension of difference must be understood within the larger imperial narrative at work within and beyond the historical moment recorded by the Letter, as well as in the context of early, empire-building modernity. Notwithstanding these historical circumstances at play in 1500, if a meme is a function of imitation and transmission in the cultural medium, then difference, as experienced by the Portuguese sailors, portends, potentially at least, a different understanding of human beings under the guise of a new memeplex: human beings as, ultimately and revealingly, our intimate strangers; the act of discovery as also one of self-discovery; the world as a modern-day Tower of Babel in service to greater understanding and permeability to difference. Today, the Letter can therefore be seen as a highly pertinent document informing the ongoing critical dialogue of cultures in a post-empire, increasingly globalized world.

In fact, although the Letter functions as a founding or foundational text because it begins the work of transforming a territory into a map and ultimately submits this map to the map of maps which is empire, the event of the “achamento” is also, paradoxically, almost *uneventful* inasmuch as:

- difference is assimilated into a single history, a single imperial discourse;
- difference is presented as predestined to sameness, i.e., to the doctrinal, discursive center;
- thus, *there is no difference, only circumstantial (provisional) distinctiveness*;
- there is only one history, no becoming; (see Deleuze, footnote 8)
- there is only the positivity of one history, i.e., the ubiquity, immediacy and memic velocity of one history as it inflects into one identity;
- which reflects the aim of the logic underpinning the self-legitimizing history at work in the Letter: the attainment of imperial homeostasis for the ideological and geopolitical center known as Portugal.

THE TASK OF CIVILIZATION AND EMPIRE

Civilization reconfigures space, alters the meme pool, and introduces new memic events (altar, cross, crown, and creed). Civilization transforms space, thereby rendering it more memically complex, and orientates the ongoing human adaptive process at work between nature and culture. It classifies, codifies, and hierarchizes. Empire, in turn, instructs. Empire creates a filiation, not between nature and culture, but rather between center and colony. Civilization is a strategy for meme multiplication; empire transforms material and immaterial *abundance* into hegemonic maps. (Maps are sometimes treasure maps.) The ideology of empire, as seen in Caminha's Letter, brings into play the multiple dimensions of empire and civilization, colony and center, maps and territories. If civilizational history is also the history of its memetic success, then empire is a strategy for memetic survival and sovereignty over other narrative complexes (meme pools and memeplexes). Empire interprets memetic success as a means not only to transfigure territory into the productive maps of hegemony but also as a mandate *to rescue human beings from themselves*, i.e., empire rescues them from their invisibility, displacing them on to the periphery of dominion inasmuch as they have hitherto existed off the imperial-civilizational map.

Thus the narrative of empire is closely linked to the empire of narrative, i.e., empire, as the map of maps and as strategy to become the meme of memes, produces the symbolic book which reads the world, embodying a signifying practice which equates the world of empire with *the world*:

- empire names itself as center of agency, the memic author of all books (a book doesn't speak but it does instruct the reader/subject (subjecthood itself) as to how to read it);
- empire claims the memetic penury of otherness;
- empire maps, i.e., codifies, the itineraries of difference: it imputes subalternity to otherness; it discovers peripheries; it establishes the misreading of cultural

difference and, simultaneously, provides a redemptive narrative for the otherness it subsumes;

- empire is the symbolic atlas of maps; it posits unity by inventing otherness, yet also by excising alterity.

Summarizing, then, the Letter by Caminha portends memetic abundance flowing from the royal center to the barbarous periphery. It also implies the memetic penury of others. In this misrecognition of otherness, the Letter suggests a memetic divide between the Portuguese and the Tupi. From a memetic point of view, civilization could be considered to be the narrative of this division *and* its justification. Thus, Caminha's Letter – memically understood *from the standpoint of what is advantageous to the memes*, in accord with Dawkin's statements – *must* misread what Caminha believes to be the Tupi's permeability vis-à-vis the memes of Empire. The altar, the cross, the creed, and the crown would be, in that case, full of *inevitable* memetic persuasiveness inasmuch as a civilization is awash with memes possessing many means of memetic contagion. Another aspect of empire's cognitive project, as evidenced in the Letter, would be to reduce otherness to something predictable, codifiable, and mappable: the act of exchange would then become an act of expropriation. What is at stake, is empire's ability to increase its memetic power vis-à-vis difference. Such is the civilizational dialectic of empire and colony. The meme birth event of 1500 both creates and destroys a world. Communication, even in the case of the pseudo-neutrality of Caminha's Letter, is more than mere reportage or unpretentious narrative: it is above all the transmission of a power-knowledge nexus. Language, even the language of reportage, is a particularly favorable medium for the transmission of instructions: it is a vehicle for unimpeded memetic domination.

The Letter functions, then, within the continuity of a specific memetic center of gravity: the expanding narrative of the Portuguese maritime empire. The Letter, written by Caminha far from the metropolitan center of empire, acts nonetheless as empire's perfect mirror. The center is all the more real because it identifies and maps a periphery. The center becomes all the more real to the extent that it produces authors and scribes who can effectuate the symbolic and memetic reproduction of the center on to the periphery it creates.

The work of empire includes the transposition of empire's map – its memetic script – on to new territory. Despite the matter-of-factness of Caminha's epistolary reportage, it is possible to read the document in light of the logic of empire: 1) a non-emancipatory encounter between center and periphery, and 2) empire as a hegemonic signifying process. Thus, in the logic of the Letter, the Tupi are displaced historically, symbolically, and memically:

- from edge to periphery;
- from invisibility to visibility;
- from savagery to subjectivity;

- from ignorance of empire to consciousness within the logic of empire;
- from ignorance of empire to the omnipresence of empire;
- from the status of innocent immaturity to the redemptive logic of subordination;
- from barbaric limbo to subjecthood (even subaltern subjecthood) within the context of Portuguese history;
- from community to colony; from Tupi to Brazilian;
- from “berberia” [barbarousness] to assimilation into the meta-narrative of empire.

The center is (the) real. Paradoxically, the periphery must now exist to prove the existence of the center through its memic reproduction. Encounter, exchange, communication, and reproduction: these become the acts of an all-encompassing center. Caminha reports the encounter in 1500 between Tupi and the crew of the Portuguese fleet while on their way to India. Caminha reports the ensuing sequence of events relating to this encounter. By doing this, Caminha, in addition to scribe in service to King Manuel I and narrator of the first Portuguese encounter with the peoples of South America, becomes also an author of empire.

THE PARADOX OF EMPIRE (Does the territory inevitably precede a map? Can a map become a territory? Can a territory remain a territory?)

In the Letter, Caminha requests that his son-in-law be allowed to return to the Portuguese homeland from his present state of exile on the island of São Tomé. The Letter functions, then, as a multi-layered, rhetorical ritual of exchange (linguistic, symbolic, and material), e.g., the exchange of feathers and other objects between the Tupi and Portuguese sailors, which Caminha relates in his narrative, occurs in parallel to the author’s hope that the Letter be gratefully received by the King in exchange for the release of his son-in-law from exile. The author of the Letter unpretentiously and unwittingly (but not ingenuously) surpasses the matter-of-factness of reportage. Indeed, the Letter’s import surpasses by far the author’s self-awareness as author. It symbolically proffers a world to the Portuguese crown. Moreover, the organization of the Letter’s content belies, as already stated, any idea the reader might hold as to the language of reportage as a purely neutral kind of writing. The very material existence of the Letter constitutes a new kind of object in the universe: a new kind of memic invention, i.e., the Letter as a non-monetary instrument of exchange, first, for the liberation from exile of his son-in-law, second, the first step toward the exchange of human beings for enslaved labor, the concentration of economic wealth, and increased imperial power. Indeed, the Tupi people had *already* become an object of exchange in the very act of writing the Letter.

We have seen that the Letter signals the purity of a memic event: the inaugural encounter between Europeans and an indigenous people of a yet-unknown or largely unknown continent. Map making is, at this stage, literally a work-in-progress. The

Letter registers an extraordinary memetic event, i.e., where two utterly separate meme pools meet. Caminha, the Letter writer, the exchange-artist, the narrator of this memetic event, authors a document in which we, the readers, can reflect upon authorship as the embodiment of a particular memetic memory, i.e., an internalized cognitive apparatus. This apparatus is of a physical and symbolic nature: it functions like a living map.

Thus, the Letter performs as witness to a founding memetic event, as well as unwittingly reflects the author's memetic commitments as author:

- the Tupi are not seen as bearers of a stable, autonomous memetic domain, or endowed with a narrative center of gravity potentially both resistant and contributing to a dialogue of memetic regimes;
- they are therefore deemed ready to be inscribed on to the script of empire, which will carry the instructions for the rewiring of memory and the memetic colonization of consciousness;
- there is little or no attribution of consciousness to the Tupi, i.e., consciousness as narrative center or as an independent cultural center of gravity; neither will they henceforth be granted autonomy to manifest such consciousness;
- moreover, civilizational hegemony, as enacted and performed in the Letter, comprises an all-encompassing, unifying meme code;
- and, as we have seen, Pêro Vaz de Caminha, as scribe of empire, maintains a stable and loyally normative position within the signifying intention of the Letter and the civilizational project of empire, amply evident in his reportage of (what he decides to be a demonstration of) the religious readiness for conversion to catholic orthodoxy by the Tupi during a Mass given by the fleet's religious representatives).

EMPIRE: DISCOVERY AND DISAPPEARANCE

And yet, the discoverers, as described and witnessed by Caminha, of whom he is an active participant, discover almost nothing: the discoverers see solely or almost exclusively themselves inasmuch as alterity is seen through their discursive lens and the monological bias of their own consciousness. *The Letter functions therefore as an act of making the Tupi "visible" within a larger framework of invisibility.*

To write is, as seen in the Letter:

- to render opaque, i.e., to know through organized distortion;
- to see difference through sameness; to colonize alterity;
- to write the *other* is both an anachronistic and founding act insofar as everything about the *other* is ironically always, from the perspective and logic of empire, *already* known; and, memically, empire *already* occupies the entire cultural space of consciousness.

Thus, to write *about* is to write *over*:

- to speak about, is to speak over, to speak for;
- to represent is to re-present, to present anew;
- reportage in this sense is an integrally attributive or predicative act. Here reportage and fabulation are in fact synonymous: what the senses capture and the mind actually sees become a foundational, predicative act in the context of the major memic event reported by Caminha in his Letter;
- the indigenous peoples the Portuguese meet are symbolically mediated by the author. They become the object of numerous forms of appropriation which the Letter both inaugurates and presages.

Ultimately, to write the *other* or to write about alterity is both a memically founding/foundational act, as well as, paradoxically, a deeply and surprisingly anachronistic act by which the superposition of an *already* existing mental map on to another (expressed through the already operative categories of time, space, history, values, and institutions) takes place, just as one consciousness can be translated (and misinterpreted) by another. *To write is in fact also to unwrite*. To write is to include by excluding. The Letter is also this: *the appropriation of the other by way of the excision of alterity*. Brazil does not yet exist in the Letter except in the sense of belonging henceforth to the map of empire. The great memic birth event which occurred at the moment of the “achamento” of the “Terra de Vera Cruz” and the ensuing encounter with the Tupi which the Letter records inaugurate in turn the flooding inward of a meme pool to be largely determined by empire.

Summarizing, the act of discovery [“achamento”] and the act of disappearance (within the logic of empire) occur simultaneously:

- the Letter is significant precisely for what it doesn’t see: the discursive mobilization of alterity into the hegemonic narrative of empire;
- the reportage of otherness, i.e., the representation of difference through sameness, whereby the discoverers see primarily themselves;
- reportage – which the Letter purports to perform – is not a neutral act; reportage in the Letter can be shown to be an integrally attributive, predicative act vis-à-vis the alterity of a newly discovered humanity and environment;
- which means that reportage can only lay claim to being a pseudo-neutral, pseudo-objective form of writing;
- the Letter reflects Caminha’s belief in the fullness of the interpretive grid of cosmos, creed, cross, and crown embodied by empire, which he, as author, both represents and upholds. The letter is an epistolary map of empire.

A FINAL CONSIDERATION ON EMPIRE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE CONTEMPORARY TOWER OF BABEL

In modernity, knowledge does not console; it cannot conceal or dissimulate the burden of history. Neither can it camouflage the history of empire at the core of European consciousness. Modernity has come to understand the problematic nature of communication, i.e., it no longer has a ready answer for the question of whether something can be effectively said, and once said, be in fact understood. In the Letter, however, knowledge is clearly redemptive and largely free of internal critique given that Caminha possesses rhetorical, doctrinal, and institutional certainty. Consequently, there is no manifestation of risk and threat in the modern sense present in the Letter: the document bears witness to an age when a nation's seaborne history is sedimenting into empire. Thus, we are very far from the Enlightenment's cognitive project to produce the necessary theoretical and political concepts for use by human subjects within a self-conscious historicity of emancipation (leading eventually to the dissolution of the historical pattern of colonizers and colonized), or from the post-Enlightenment critique of western progress and civilizational logic, and further still from the liquid postmodernity of which Zygmunt Bauman has written. The Letter offers the reader a largely pre-modern⁴ understanding of the world: matter transmutes into symbol in a non-problematic, albeit often bellicose, fashion. Dangers abound, but they pertain to the order of fate, providence, and the folly of human imperfection. Furthermore, as a document rooted in a largely pre-modern though transitional understanding of cultural history, Caminha is a non-anthropological, non-ethnographically-minded witness. There is therefore no problematization of the perception of the otherness of others in the Letter, no question of the intrinsic value of their alterity (vis-à-vis the logic of a hegemonic civilization on the way to empire).⁵ As we have seen, Caminha does not

⁴ Nonetheless, even a pre-modern understanding of human experience in its collective and historical sequence of events belongs to what historian Hayden White considers to be a misappropriation through narrative of the essential characteristic of history: its "intrinsic meaninglessness." In Eric Charles White paper, "Contemporary Cosmology and Narrative Theory," the author examines this "meaninglessness" eventually to espouse Northrop Frye's tropological emplotment of literature and Jameson's view that "[s]torytelling is essential, then, if one would remain, in Jameson's phrase 'political and contestatory.'" (White 93). The author approaches the history of cosmological history in a conceptually rich way linking critical theory to the history of cosmological models. Furthermore, E. C. White's presentation of Hayden White's critique of historical narrative is pertinent to our reading of Caminha's Letter as not only an act of reportage but, ultimately, as a proto-narrative of empire: "Hayden White casts doubt on the legitimacy of narrative as a way of making sense of human history when he says that the importance traditionally attached to 'narrativity in the representation of real events arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of life that is and can only be imaginary.' (...) The belief that history constitutes a vast 'untold story' is thus a dangerous illusion. If all knowledge is ideological, in the sense that it serves the interests of some particular individual or group or reflects a historically relative apprehension of the meaning of reality, this 'is especially true,' White says, 'of historical knowledge ... that appears in the form of a conventional narrative.' Historical master narratives provide the means for legitimating the domination of one group over another, or if one follows Foucault, the disciplining and normalization of whole populations. (...) Master narratives embody totalizing visions that have as their practical consequences demands for consensus and acquiescence" (White 91-92).

⁵ It is in this context that we must disagree with José Augusto Seabra, who states in "A descoberta do *Outro* na Carta de Pêro Vaz de Caminha," that "[e]stamos perante um discurso que releva arquitextualmente de vários registos, desde o do género epistolar, de que se reclama, ao narrativo ou

consider the indigenous peoples the Portuguese encounter as creators of an autonomous reality, or cultural totality, endowed with a cultural paradigm to be kept independent of his own acculturated perspective. *As a pre-modern, then, Caminha does not recognize the presence of alterity within the self-sameness of his own identity.* The Letter, operating necessarily outside the historical consciousness of XXIst-century humanity, could not internalize within its discursive universe the contemporary awareness of history as accident, catastrophe, or crisis.⁶ Nonetheless, owing to the purity of the memic and historical events the Letter records, and Caminha's characteristics as author, observer, narrator, and representative of Portugal's expanding geopolitical power, the Letter is an invaluable document in regard to the history and nature of empire.

THE TERRITORY: FERNANDO PESSOA AND THE *OTHER* EMPIRE

Fernando Pessoa does not know, or rather chooses to disturb, the difference between a map and a territory, or, more radically, undermine the familiar pattern leading from territory to map. Why? Because the territory is always in the process of being created

mesmo poético passando pelo que hoje designaríamos como etnológico ou antropológico.” He refers to the “instante privilegiado de uma descoberta mútua,” when, despite the meager exchanges of goods, there is in fact no sign of mutual (self-)discovery. With regard to Caminha's observations reported in the Letter, Seabra comments: “Se na descrição da natureza luxuriante do que julgava ser uma ilha, Pero Vaz de Caminha é relativamente sóbria, já na maneira de apreender as atitudes e os traços psico-sociológicos e culturais dos aborígenes eles se alonga em minúcias de observação, mostrando como reagem à presença imprevista de estranhos irrompendo do oceano,” endowing Caminha with a critical perspective (i.e., psycho-sociological and cultural insights) which arose only in the nineteenth- and twentieth centuries with Durkheim, Marx, Malinowski, Weber, Freud et al. The author also attributes a fundamentally scientific attitude, i.e., one of organized skepticism, which Caminha could not have had, living and writing, as he did, before the advent of modern scientific practices, i.e., specialized knowledge-producing and knowledge-diffusing communities equipped with strong experimental research traditions, as well as sophisticated laboratory practices in conjunction with internal mechanisms of self-correction and a denotative enunciatory style: “Pêro Vaz pacientemente vai inventariando, por vezes suscitando reacções dos seus interlocutores com certos *stimuli* como se agisse ao mesmo tempo como semiólogo, psicólogo ou sociólogo, em suma, como antropólogo em missão” (Seabra).

⁶ Paul Virilio writes: “Since, at every moment and most often unexpectedly, everything happens, a civilization that sets immediacy, ubiquity and instantaneity to work brings accidents and catastrophes on to the scene. So as to avoid in the near future an integral accident on a planetary scale, an accident capable of incorporating a whole host of incidents and disasters in a chain reaction, we should right now build, inhabit and plan a laboratory of cataclysms – the technical progress accident museum, so as to avoid the accident of substances, revealed by Aristotle, being succeeded by the knowledge accident – that major philosophical catastrophe which genetic engineering, coming on the heels of atomic power, bears within it. Whether we like it or not, globalization is today the fateful mark of a finitude. Paraphrasing Paul Valéry, we might assert without fear of contradiction that ‘the time of the finite world is coming to an end’ and that there is an urgent need to assert that knowledge marks the finitude of man, just as ecology marks that of his geophysical environment.” (see Bibliography) The catastrophe of which Virilio writes informs the consciousness of contemporary modernity. The historical event of 1500 which occurred at the Portuguese-designated Terra de Vera Cruz at the beginning of modernity brings into play forces both incubatory and premonitory which only later would become self-consciously problematic. In the *Letter*, the consciousness of catastrophe (as something inherent within a particular civilizational logic) is deferred: there is no problematization. This non-problematization is, however, premonitory of future catastrophe. *This non-problematization is in itself catastrophic.* The history of consciousness is also the history of its catastrophic conditionality.

whereas the map performs the territory's having-come-into-being. A text is a territory or, at best, a text is an unstable map, full of lacunae and shifting boundaries. Its neighboring territories are also in flux. It may be that a territory has in fact more edge than boundary, certainly more edges than fixed boundedness. A territory, being more unstable than a map, cannot name and organize space as a map does. Instead, a territory announces its own process of becoming as such. In fact, a territory can remain a territory; it can resist the conversion into a map.

One travels with a map; one travels within a territory.

Nonetheless, even a territory, or better, a textual territory, as in the case of Pessoa's heteronymic writing, encompasses a desire to name. To name within a territory, however, is not to possess the thing named. To name within the framework of the territory means to express the beingness of things in their intentional urgency and primeval emergence, i.e., in a state of existential presence. Thus, Campos, the author-heteronym of "Tabacaria" ["Tobacco Shop"] writes in regard to fellow heteronym Alberto Caeiro's poetry:

Estes versos da sensação directa, contraposta a sua alma aos nossos conceitos sem naturalidade, a nossa civilização mental, artificiosa, contabilizada em gavetas, rasga-nos todos os trapos que temos por fato, lava-nos a cara da química e o estômago dos farmacêuticos – entra pela nossa casa dentro e mostra-nos que uma mesa de madeira é madeira, madeira, madeira, e que mesa é uma alucinação necessária da nossa vontade que fabrica mesas (Pessoa: *Notas* 84).

Campos points out in this passage taken from the *Notas para a Recordação do meu Mestre Caeiro's* the "master's" poetic mission: to read the world differently, to undo the established maps of signification, to erase civilization's infirm glossing of the real (in detriment to the real's non-conceptual empirical fullness and immediate sensorial expressiveness) into abstract foot-notes (symptomatic of the modern bureaucratization of mind) and the critique of modernity as a primary source of alienation within the logic of present-day civilization. Consequently, the established maps of memory alienate us from the emphatic presentness ("madeira, madeira, madeira") of the real. In contrast, the real is inhabited by walking, speaking territories of sentience, i.e., embodied consciousness. To travel within a territory is to speak the unmediated (and therefore undistorted) language of atoms. (No matter that Pessoa's pervasive irony subverts the apparent unilateral truthfulness of "master" Caeiro's vision: the latter's invocation of empirical fullness, his return to phenomenological presentness, and his undoing of the maps of civilizational memory are in turn acts within Pessoa's larger dramatic subterfuge which underpins his work: the deferral of any ultimate settled account of the relationship between world, mind, language, and being.) Therefore, a poem by Pessoa *performs* a map, but it is a map radically destabilized and ultimately undone. It effects the exile and rehousing of mapped being into a speculatively sentient territory.

In light of our reading of Pessoa's oeuvre, we assert that

- a poem, *which is a territory and therefore not a map*, embodies a highly reflexive state of sentience;
- in the absence of definitive maps, we are left with the (provisional yet at the same time inexhaustible) consolation of unsettled territories: the universe reveals itself to be ultimately pluricentric, identity is forever adrift (subject to states of irony without closure), and unity has definitively been denied;
- consequently, in regard to Pessoa's work, a map and territory undergo an identity crisis: their logical distinction, their cognitive sequence, and their purposes have become radically unstable;
- in brief, *a map becomes a territory* in Pessoa. It is well known how much this territory is one of heteronymic displacements of identity, with the coterminous dissolution of the traditional belief in authorial unity, and the unmapping of the bourgeois subject (i.e., as a stable, sedimented, pre-ordained entity of historical consciousness). Mimetic illusion is negated: a text is not a mirror or model of the real. Instead, a text is the performance of the real as a process of ongoing embodiment or becomingness. Pessoa's oeuvre highlights the high modern search for a language of being that both posits and negates earlier ideas of unity; it reflects the conflict between literature as a means to *rescue history* (from an internal logic of destruction) and, concomitantly, as a means to rescue us *from* history.

To carry out this vast cognitive project of re-territorialization of mind and meaning, history and being, Pessoa poses elemental yet unanswered questions: Where does consciousness most authentically dwell? Does it dwell primarily within discrete units of self-awareness called subjects? The poet's partial answer to this question lies in the creation of the heteronyms, who function less as human personalities endowed with authorial duties (which Pessoa himself disavows) but rather as textual strategies. It is true that Pessoa attributes "biographies" to his heteronyms. However, these biographies are a mask and a device: they name the unnamable, they plot shadows, and, ultimately, they posit provisional maps of the ultimately unmappable by giving sentient chaos a fictional face and sensibility. They are in fact a supreme function of fiction itself, which, in this case, engulfs the reader within a new framework for the apprehension of the real.

By dismantling the bourgeois subject (more specifically, its false stability and the equivocal contractual stasis the bourgeois subject posits as operating between world, mind, language and being), Pessoa undermines the established maps of perception subsequently to reveal fresh territories of consciousness, i.e., the immaterial abundance just beyond the shambles of empire and empire's tattered maps. We recall that when we read a map, we can also copy it. We reproduce it by internalizing it. It then becomes a highly repeatable meme. It can be memorized. It can be taught. It deploys a civilizational logic. It represents power on land and sea. In contrast, within the

interpretive framework of the territory as we have defined it, the poetic text becomes a site of reflexive and unsettled intensity. It reactivates and extends the semiotic territories of being, consciousness, world, and being. Nonetheless, like a map, a text potentially embodies a highly effective and highly memorable meme pool, bearing with it fresh insight into our collective cultural history. Unlike a map, however, this poetic territory occurs at the level of still barely documented perception, thereby restoring to language its visionary grammar and speculative edge.

Pessoa's heteronymic universe enacts a complex strategy for the introduction of a radically new set of memes, or memeplexes, within the established cultural map. The introduction of a new meme complex within a cultural reality requires a tremendous expenditure of cognitive and material resources. It strategizes by appropriating the resources of the inherited and highly copied *memeticized* material, and then proceeds to subvert this meme map into fresh territories of insight.

THE PESSOAN AGON BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND SENTIENCE

A. FROM MAP TO TERRITORY/FROM WORK TO TEXT

The Pessoa poem is above all a text and a territory. Because a territory is highly self-reflexive, it always foregrounds its reflexive coming-into-being. It admits and invites complex textual ambiguities through the medium of the self-reflexive utterance. The Pessoa text embodies presence as fragment on the one hand and points to presence as totality on the other, maintaining a disquieting signification among the competing maps and territories of knowledge and consciousness. The poetic text becomes, then, an unclassifiable (i.e., radically ironic) apprehension of the real, outside established patterns of discernment, outside memetic stasis, outside bounded paths of knowing and remembering. Tellingly, the heteronym Alberto Caeiro writes in poem XLVI of the sequence of poems titled *O Guardador de Rebanhos* [The Keeper of Flocks]: "Procuro despir-me do que aprendi,/Procuro esquecer-me do modo de lembrar que me ensinaram,/E raspar a tinta com que me pintaram os sentidos,/Desencaixotar as minhas emoções verdadeiras,/Desembrulhar-me e ser eu, não Alberto Caeiro,/Mas um animal humano que a Natureza produziu" (Caeiro 82-83). The irony of these verses lies in the seemingly irresolvable contradiction of the text in which they appear: How does one forget one's own established map of consciousness? How does one alter the already defined neural paths from animal sentience to hominid consciousness? What are the rules for such alteration? *How does one rethink thought itself in the very process of thinking?* How does one effect within oneself a radical critique of established, internalized patterns of cognition? Is it in fact possible to reinvent mind? Is there a transcendent principle at work within the contingent being of the human animal? Where is such a transcendent principle located if not, paradoxically, in the sensory limits of our finite, earthbound creaturehood? A poetry whose coming-into-being effects such a speculative journey cannot be said to constitute a verbal map in which a stable contract between world, language and being peacefully converge. Rather, it constitutes an

immaterial territory, i.e., an unsettled terrain where the poem functions as the locus of an emergent *memetic* field. This emergent memetic field reveals the scope and aim of Pessoa's radical form of poetic inquiry which seeks to bring forth new epistemological tropes and fresh patterns of cognition. Thus, Pessoa's poetry has moved us from the stable maps of cognition to the unsettled territories of perception: its meanings emerge therefore in a state of becoming, not one of location (within fixed coordinates of signification).

A book is a map; a text is a territory. Roland Barthes' seminal study of the epistemological underpinnings of both *work* and *text* in light of structural linguistics and structuralist theory of literature are highly suggestive in regard to the distinction we have established between map and territory in regard to Caminha's Letter and Pessoa/Campos' "Tabacaria." According to Barthes, "The Text is plural. This does not mean only that it has several meanings but that it fulfills the very plurality of meaning: an *irreducible* (...) plurality. The Text is not coexistence of meaning, but passage, traversal" (Barthes 59) in a way reminiscent of the traveller who traverses a territory. Moreover, the text, given the essential plurality of its signifying practice, cannot, like a map, name a center, a central *memetic* paradigm, a fixed nexus of truth. Instead, a text, like a territory, is in a state of perpetual becoming: "*the Text is experienced only in an activity, in a production*" (Barthes 58). Consequently, the textual territory *performs* this production: it performs *as* territory by disavowing the master narrative of maps, authors and rulers. Furthermore, the poetic territory of a text is an orphaned text: "The work is caught up in a process of filiation. (...) The author is reputed to be the father and the owner of his work (...). The Text, on the other hand, is read without the Father's inscription" (Barthes 61). Analogously, the relationship between Pessoa (as author) and the territories of interwoven fictive subjectivities called heteronyms he creates is also one of unstable filiation: the author "disappears" amidst a virtual forest of identities and masks. Between the author and the text there is no question of authorial paternity but rather one of difference, ironic interval, and ludic elusiveness: "It is not that the Author cannot 'return' in the Text, in his text, but he does so, one might say, as a guest" (Barthes 61). A map has a (political, hegemonic, administrative, narrative) center; a territory has edges and invites traversal. A literary *work* has an author; in contrast, a *text* "is structured but decentered, without closure" (Barthes 59). A *text* subverts long-settled classifications of power and meaning, memory and knowledge. Understood in this way, Pessoa creates a poetic territory – a heteronymic textuality – which ultimately serves imaginatively to subvert empire⁷.

The reader's encounter with the poetic text brings consciousness to a higher, more complex reflexive plane: the world is discovered anew, and maps no longer reign.

⁷ In a letter dated 19 January 1915 which Pessoa addresses to his friend Armando Côrtes-Rodrigues, the poet writes in regard to his deep sense of mission both as artist and as a *creator-of-civilization*: "Ter uma acção sobre a humanidade, contribuir com todo o poder do meu esforço para a civilização vêm-se-me tornando os graves e pesados fins da minha vida. E, assim, fazer arte parece-me cada vez mais importante coisa, mais terrível missão – dever a cumprir arduamente, monasticamente, sem desviar os olhos do fim criador-de-civilização de toda a obra artística (Pessoa: *Correspondência* 140-41).

Maps, like the literary *work* in Barthes' conceptualization, fulfill the extended duties of filiation: "[W]hat is postulated [i.e., by works] are a *determination* of the world (of the race, then of History) over the work, a *consecution* of works among themselves, and an *appropriation* of the work to its author" (Barthes 61). The subversive potency of Pessoa's poetry lies in the fact that it promotes a destabilizing *indetermination* of signification: it undoes the classificatory maps of "race" and of "History." Pessoa's poetry represents the memic territory of diffractive thought and communication. A poetic text is a symbolic territory, a memic uprising, an unbounded field of inquiry which, in Pessoa's work, is differentially encrypted within the total heteronymic fiction.

Pessoa's magnum cognitive project resides, then, in this conversion of map into territory. Moving from material to immaterial empire or, rather, territory, the poet effects a deep rebooting of consciousness. If, on the one hand, consciousness separates and demarcates by mapping a territory (which consequently becomes bounded), on the other, sentience can be seen as utterly unbounded, not yet inscribed within a specific historical narrative, or epistemological paradigm, or even the biographical unfolding of a life. Sentient states defy historical determination or cultural particularity while perpetually self-actualizing in the unbounded, infinite yet concrete here-and-nowness of embodied consciousness.

The poetic text is therefore an unstable territory of meanings in flux. At best, territories are transformed into unstable heteronymic maps where any attempt at definitive decipherment leads inevitably to the further fragmentation of authorial unity, the pluralization of heteronymic identities, and the deferral of symbolic synthesis. We recall that it is precisely this impossible decipherment leading to resolution which is at play in the *Notas para a Recordação do meu Mestre Alberto Caeiro*, a volume of flashes and remembered conversations with the "Mestre" (posthumously evoked in the *Notas*) the authorship of which is attributed by Pessoa to Álvaro de Campos (yet another heteronym).

The text is *not* the world as it *is*, i.e., as already mapped being. It performs/produces a kind of anti-matter of the world; it represents the negative condition for a new becoming within the yet-to-be discovered territories of mind⁸ and matter. Campos writes:

⁸ Gilles Deleuze distinguishes history, event, and becoming in the following terms which provide a subtle conceptualization of the complexity of human historicity, as explored in our exploration of map and territory: «C'est que, de plus en plus, j'ai été sensible à une distinction possible entre le devenir et l'histoire. C'est Nietzsche qui disait que rien d'important ne se fait sans une «nuée non historique». Ce n'est pas une opposition entre l'éternel et l'historique, ni entre la contemplation et l'action. Nietzsche parle de ce qui se fait, de l'événement même ou du devenir. Ce que l'histoire saisit de l'événement, c'est son effectuation dans des états de choses, mais l'événement dans son devenir échappe à l'histoire. L'histoire n'est pas l'expérimentation, elle est seulement l'ensemble des conditions presque négatives qui rendent possible l'expérimentation de quelque chose qui échappe à l'histoire. Sans l'histoire, l'expérimentation resterait indéterminée, inconditionnée, mais l'expérimentation n'est pas historique» (Deleuze 230-231).

O que realmente recebemos daqueles versos é a sensação infantil da vida, com toda a materialidade directa dos conceitos da infância, e toda a espiritualidade vital da esperança e do crescimento, que são do inconsciente, da alma e corpo, da infância. Aquela obra é uma madrugada que nos ergue e anima, e a madrugada, contudo, é mais que material, mais que anti-espiritual, porque é um efeito abstracto, puro vácuo, nada (Pessoa: *Notas* 84).

Between the *book* and the *text*, between the *map* and the *territory*, between the real seen as the contract between language, world, mind, and being, i.e., a settled codification of their interplay and as codified positivity in contradistinction to the real as the dialectic of virtual fields of subjectification or, rather, *subjectivation*, Pessoa creates a territory of territories whereby the material and the immaterial spheres of being are newly explored and become open-ended.

Pessoa, then, is not a mapmaker. If the empire of the Letter to King Manuel I constitutes a kind of map for imperial expansion – i.e., the absorption of difference into the larger political unity of empire –, then the poet’s legacy is one of territory-building outside the illusions and delusions of empire. *Pessoa’s empire is immaterial: it explores the territories of mind*. This reference to mind bears with it, at least implicitly, as always happens with respect to the nature of consciousness, a *theory* of mind. We cannot refer to mind without engaging to some degree with theories relating to cognition. Pessoa exemplifies to what extent communication, like the nature of territory, is a “work-in-progress.” It also reflects a *mind-in-progress*. A textual territory is akin to a living, breathing document: neural pulse, semantic territory, metaphorical bridge, intuitive breakthrough, conceptual insight, and theoretical edifice together work to rewire the mind (of the reader). Such rewiring of the mind, requiring in turn new theories of cognition and consciousness, carries both insight and risk.

Ultimately, modernity cannot console us with certain knowledge. Simply to leave one’s home is quickly to run the risk of losing one’s way back.

Summarizing: in keeping with the spirit of modernity’s risk-taking, Pessoa returns to the paradigm of the territory, a territory without empire, without a unifying logic of power, without the paradigm of the map. Such a return to territoriality pertains to the momentousness of all paradigmatic shifts of consciousness: all settled accounts of the real must subsequently be questioned anew. Taken as a whole, Pessoa’s oeuvre constitutes the radical problematization of being and consciousness. If the reader can no longer read the poem as map but rather only or principally as textual territory, then s/he is left to roam within this poetic territory without empire, without a stable centre, without a stable subject, without a foreseeable end in sight. S/he has, instead, the encounter with the text as a territorial instantiation of sentience. (But how can one map an instant of sentience?) It is in consequence of this radical reinvention of perception

that we experience our fateful participation with modernity. Thus, a textual territory, as experienced by the reader of Pessoa's oeuvre, is closer to that of metaphorical quanta of consciousness. Poetic language is not a definitive map of meanings: it is rather the project of signification articulated at the edge (of territory), i.e., mind anchored within the sea of unbounded being.

Pessoa's heteronymic universe represents a strategy for introducing a new set of memes, or memplexes within the Portuguese cultural identity. Pessoa – who seeks to rethink empire, reterritorialize memory, reinvent perception, and set identity itself ironically adrift – points toward a new civilizational model: the yet-to-be created Portugal which Portuguese history has hitherto adumbrated but not yet realized. His task would be then refractive vis-à-vis previous historical interpretations and meme complexes, e.g., the *Quinto Império*, the return of King Sebastian as a historical yet messianically redemptive figure, the spiritual-material empire envisioned by Camões in his epic *Os Lusíadas* (1580), etc. Pessoa's dialectical negation of previously canonic historiography and aesthetics becomes the “puro vácuo” or “nada” (already referred to in regard to Campos' characterization of Caeiro's verse) of his poetic textuality considered as whole. Pessoa's vision for Portugal – as the mental territory of a renewed cultural project – becomes immanent at the *textual edge* of his poetic language. There are no maps there, only a few textual glimpses of unmediated totality embedded in states of embodied sentience.

Consequently, empire for the poet will henceforth be immaterial, lived at the level of complex historical, cultural, and political reflexivity. Pessoa's modernity portends a post-empire, post-map, post-bourgeois subject. In fact, the heteronym Campos lives in rented rooms, as evidenced in the poetry, whose provisionality and material precariousness suggest the very antithesis of empire.

B. THE POEM “TABACARIA” AND EDWARD T. HALL'S THEORY OF PROXEMICS: FROM EMPIRE TO TERRITORY

The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1914-2009) is today most known for his innovative theory of proxemics the findings of which he published, notably, in *The Hidden Dimension* (1966). Proxemics theorizes on the non-verbal communication existing between human beings outside fully conscious awareness though highly specific to cultural context. It focuses on how human beings organize space in accord with types of relationship ranging from the most intimate to the least personal. Each culture, according to the anthropologist, possesses a proxemic schema which determines the appropriate distance to maintain, the type of sensory engagement (including eye and muscular movements, vocalization characteristics), as well as a typology of communication acts to be performed on the plane of discourse. Owing to the fact that this schema is culturally determined, much proxemic behavior occurs outside awareness, outside conscious choice, and therefore outside individual deliberation. Human beings find themselves *already* within a delimited and multiple space of social

choreography. Although the concrete experience of proxemics is not experienced by individuals as rigorously measured demarcations (and each culture, according to Hall organizes its respective proxemic schema and spatial distances), Hall's theory of social space is highly significant insofar as it reveals the myriad ways by which human beings interact with one another and, as a result of these interactions, come to contextualize, understand, and interpret the actions and meanings of their neighbors, friends, co-workers, public figures, intimates, and strangers. Proxemics is part of communication theory, then, in the sense that human interactions are, as understood by proxemics, tantamount to a signifying practice and are therefore endowed with an unspoken grammar of our bodies' interlocutory faculties. Proxemics reveals the signifying density of human relationships operating at the outskirts of rational discourse. Hall writes in *The Hidden Dimension*:

We turn not to the category of social experience, which is perhaps most significant for the individual because it includes the distances maintained in encounters with others. These distances are for the most part outside awareness. I have called this category informal space because it is unstated, not because it lacks form or has no importance. (...) [I]nformal spatial patterns have distinct bounds, and such deep, if unvoiced, significance that they form an essential part of the culture. To misunderstand this significance may invite disaster (111-112).

And in the opening paragraph of the chapter dedicated to "distance in man", Hall makes the following observation:

Birds and mammals not only have territories which they occupy and defend against their own kind but they have a series of uniform distances which they maintain from each other. (...) Man, too, has a uniform way of handling distance from the fellows. With very few exceptions, flight distance and critical distance have been eliminated from human reactions. Personal distance and social distance, however, are obviously still present (113).

By way of the proxemic schema underlying physical interactions in society, space becomes a territory of multiple forms of inhabitation, proximity and distance. Inasmuch as social space is the interplay of embodied consciousnesses negotiating a complex interactive network of encounters and misencounters, the theory of proxemics reveals this network as:

- the social choreography of bodies;
- the non-verbal mapping of social territories;
- a discreet "erotics" of social spaces;
- the complex interplay of interconnected and overlapping territories of embodied minds.

We will now approach the poetic territory titled “Tabacaria,” (1928) attributed by Pessoa to the heteronym Álvaro de Campos in light of Hall’s theory of proxemics. We interpret this major text as, ultimately, both an example of proxemic communication and interaction as well as a subversion of Hall’s normative categorization of proxemics into four “distance zones” (Hall 116): 1) intimate space; 2) personal space; 3) social, interactional space; and 4) public space. A brief summary of the four “distant zones” established by Hall, alongside excerpts from “Tabacaria” will permit us to read “Tabacaria” as the *subversive performance of territory*. We have seen that a Pessoaan text “exists” at the crossroads of knowledge-made-speculative and sentience-made-problematic. It should not surprise us, then, that the text presently under discussion will in turn subvert aspects of Hall’s own theoretical premises by way of strategies of ambiguation. We have seen that Pessoa subverts the maps and narratives of empire at the level of the very genesis of *subjectivation*. The poet also subverts the nuanced territories explored by proxemics.

“Tabacaria” expresses the state of radical unhousedness closely associated with the heteronym Álvaro de Campos. Without a stable map, without a bounded subjectivity, without the solid substance of (albeit an) illusory self, Álvaro is also the heteronym who vocalizes the instability of territory itself. Campos “exists” at the edge of the human community made up of streets, neighborhood, memes, and sky. His boundless state of disquiet transforms even the intimate space of his rented room into the locus of metaphysical disorientation, the nihilating site of self-reflexive critique, and the fragile spatial container of cosmic exile. Ultimately, the condition of unhousedness, as expressed in “Tabacaria,” brings us close to Pessoa’s underlying problematic theory of mind: *the impossibility of attaining certain (transcendent) knowledge by sense-borne, contingent beings*. It also extends the “distance zones” articulated by Hall’s theory of proxemics to include what we might call a *cosmic distance* or *cosmic space*. The cosmic territory, as expressed by Campos in “Tabacaria,” both animates and crushes the poet’s earthbound search for the dwelling-place of unified mind amidst the diaspora of sensation. Proxemics, which explores the interplay of spaces and people, can be seen, in light of Pessoa’s poetry, as the social *imago* of a still greater, all-encompassing metaphysical space of cosmic terror and boundlessness: the terror of which Campos is the modern martyr.

THE FOUR DISTANT ZONES AND “TABACARIA”: BETWEEN ÁLVARO AND ÁLVARO

1. Intimate Distance:

Intimate distance, the presence of the other person is unmistakable and may at times be overwhelming because of the greatly stepped-up sensory inputs. Sight (often distorted), olfaction, heat from the other person’s body, sound, smell, and feel of the breath all combine to signal unmistakable involvement with another body (116).

Vocalization at intimate distance plays a very minor part in the communication process, which is carried mainly by other channels (117).

“Tabacaria”⁹:

«Não sou nada/Nunca serie nada /(Não posso querer ser nada./Àparte isso tenho em mim todos os sonhos do mundo.»

«Que sei eu do que serei, eu que não sei o que sou?»

Intimate space is the immediate territory of embodiment, both material and mental. (It is in this mental space of extreme proximity where we are located, i.e., in the intimate environs of the text in the act of reading.) It is in this intimate interval between self-knowledge and sentience that Campos voices the decay of the agency of the self. The reiteration of “nada” in these opening verses of the text and the *agon* such nothingness expresses, situating the heteronym between boundless dreaming and crushing contingency, serve to dismantle the self as a stable narrative center. Consequently, the intimate distance is one of alienation and decay. Campos, as a textual field of virtual subjectivation, expresses the impossibility of becoming anything more than the edge of someone, or the outline of an identity, or a thinking body unable to escape the carceral, contingent character of consciousness, even though this contingency does not prevent him from experiencing the cosmic oppressiveness underpinning his metaphysical speculations. Unless, of course, the possibility of speculative knowledge is simply one more illusion.

2. Personal Distance:

The kinesthetic sense of closeness derives in part from the possibilities in regard to what each participant can do to the other with his extremities. At this distance, one can hold or grasp the other person (119).

Subjects of personal interest and involvement can be discussed at this distance (120).

“Tabacaria”:

«Escravos cardíacos das estrêlas,/Conquistámos todo o mundo antes de nos levantar da cama;/Mas acordámos e êle é opaco, /Levantámo-nos e êle é alheio,/Saímos de casa e ele é a terra inteira,/Mais o sistema solar e a Via Láctea e o Indefinido.»

⁹ All verses of “Tabacaria” cited in this essay are taken from the critical edition of the poetry attributed by Pessoa to Álvaro de Campos published by Teresa Rita Lopes. (see Bibliography)

«E tudo isto me pesa como uma condenação ao degredo,/E tudo isto é estrangeiro, como tudo.»

In “Tabacaria” personal distance is not one of interactive closeness. Campos does not interact with others in this space in which he lives alone (unless we include ourselves as readers once again alongside the heteronym). If the intimate distance *between* Campos and Campos is one of alienation, then the experience of personal distance is one of a reiteration of this radical disconnectedness. Home has become the locus of exile. Identity is not only lost: it has become impossible to retrieve, repair, or retain. Personal distance has been once again transposed on to a proxemic sphere not discussed by Hall: cosmic or metaphysical distance. Personal distance verges on cosmic oppression in “Tabacaria.” For Campos, the zone of personal, interactive distance has become an experience of an intensely felt field of ambiguities which he cannot resolve:

- A room both shelters and shackles;
- A window both illuminates and separates;
- A chair both receives and immobilizes;
- A bed both warms and fetters.

His room has become a prison cell. There is no presence of family, friend, or visitor (except the ubiquitous reader). Not only subjectivity lies at the edge of nothingness: the world of objects also appears as if it were more spectral than solid. It is in this space of personal distances and interactions where certainty has turned into disillusionment, thought into error, and aspirations into delusion. The very bed Campos routinely sleeps in has become a symbol of imprisonment. Hence there is no home, only an impermanent illusion of shelter.

3. Social distance

Impersonal business occurs at this distance (...). People who work together tend to use close social distance (121).

Business and social discourse conducted at the far end of social distance has a more formal character than if it occurs inside the close phase (122).

During conversations of any significant length it is more important to maintain visual contact at this distance than it is at closer distance (122).

Raising the voice or shouting can have the effect of reducing social distance to personal distance (123).

“Tabacaria”:

«Estou hoje perplexo, como quem pensou e achou e esqueceu,/Estou hoje dividido entre a lealdade que devo/À tabacaria do outro lado da rua, como coisa real por fora,/E à sensação de que tudo é sonho, como coisa real por dentro.»

«Janelas do meu quarto,/(...) Dais para uma rua inacessível a todos os pensamentos, /Real, impossivelmente real, desconhecidamente certa,/Com o mistério das coisas por baixo das pedras e dos sêres,(Com a morte a pôr humidade nas paredes e cabelos brancos nos homens,/Com o Destino a conduzir a carroça de tudo pela estrada de nada.»

The zone of interactional, social distance is once again the site of nihilation in “Tabacaria”: all is implausible, uncertain, at best mere conjecture. In the distance, through his window, Campos views the tobacco shop on the other side of the street. It seems to be simultaneously real and unreal to him. How can contingent being decide with certainty what or where the wellsprings of reality are? After all, consciousness is adrift in a sea of dreams and sensation. Human beings are at best able to speculate without ultimate proof that their contingency is continually inflected by higher orders of being which they themselves cannot comprehend. Meanwhile, time – the bearer of finitude – has shown itself to be a stealthy intruder («a pôr humidade nas paredes e cabelos brancos nos homens») in the midst of humanity’s divided consciousness. Or could time itself be yet another illusion, the mere phenomenological manifestation of a deeper reality impossible for humankind to grasp? Campos inhabits and interacts in the zone of social distance, not with others but rather with the ghosts of lost certainties and the presentiment of death.

4. Public distance

Distance: twelve to twenty-five feet (123).

Linguists have observed that a careful choice of words and phrasing of sentences as well as grammatical and syntactic shifts occur at this distance (123).

Thirty feet is the distance that is automatically set around important public figures (124).

Most actors know that at thirty or more feet the subtle shades of meaning conveyed by the normal voice are lost as are the details of facial expression and movement. Much of the nonverbal part of the communication shifts to gestures and body stance (125).

“Tabacaria”:

«O homem saiu da tabacaria (metendo trôco na algibeira das calças?)/Ah, conheço-o: é o Esteves sem metafísica./O Dono da tabacaria chegou à porta)/Como por um

instinto divino o Esteves voltou-se e viu-me./Acenou-me adeus, gritei-lhe *Adeus ó Esteves!*, e o universo/Reconstruiu-se-me sem ideal nem esperança, e o Dono da tabacaria sorriu.»

Ironically, it is in this public distance, which Hall considers to be reserved for public figures, formal speech, and nothing but the most general recognition of facial expressions, that Campos is most intimately in interaction with others, i.e., “Esteves” and the “Dono da tabacaria.” Although they are undoubtedly located at the far end of Hall’s zone of public distance, it is at this point of the text that Pessoa/Campos establishes an instance of speculative appeasement and of momentary metaphysical reconciliation (between the real and the unreal, the contingent and transcendent, the finite and the sublime). A sense of closeness, even of intimacy, connecting Campos to the world emerges in the final verses of the text. Here at last, in the zone of supposed greatest non-personal interaction, Campos redefines in very new terms the state of metaphysical despair which so darkly traversed the previous zones of social distance and interaction. Consciousness is no longer a source of deepening despair but rather one of bemused conjecture and almost quiescent reverie. At the farthest end of Hall’s farthest zone of proxemic distance, Campos implausibly finds a more permanent shelter which is entirely immaterial and (albeit provisionally) freed from the consciousness of death. A catharsis takes place at the moment when Campos recognizes «Esteves sem metafísica» from afar, who, in what Hall defines as a socio-petal gesture, turns to Campos, «como por um instinto divino» and waves to him. Finally, at the close of the poem, Campos states that the «Dono da tabacaria» (also turning toward him) smiles. It makes no difference that at this distance a smile would be almost certainly undetectable by the heteronym standing at the window of his rented room: the «Dono», standing at the door of his shop, appears as a mythical gate-keeper enigmatically demarcating the frontier between the illusory real of the contingent world and the impossible-to-reach (and therefore perpetually fictional, which does *not* mean false) transcendent real, whatever that might be. For Campos, there *must* be a transcendent real inasmuch as it weighs on body, mind, and thought and seems to manifest itself in time or, rather, *as* time.

At the end of “Tabacaria,” Campos has become utterly permeable to the world, which, in turn, has become radically present through “Esteves” (and his wave) and the «Dono» (and his smile). The world is suddenly no longer a prison cell but rather an instance of sublime albeit subtle elevation. In addition, consciousness, which is of a contingent nature according to Pessoa, is no longer limited to the boundaries of an individual «I», in this case, Campos. After all, Pessoa’s heteronymic project exemplifies the very erasure of fixed boundaries. Thus, we are unbounded territories of *subjectivation forever interconnecting in a multiplicity of ways with other territories of subjectivation*. In the final verses of “Tabacaria,” Campos ends his state of subjective homelessness by becoming what until then his limited, contingent being could not permit: an inhabitant of a higher sphere of perception encompassing the subjective territories of his two acquaintances. This augmented state of perception merging the contingent Campos with

the contingent “Esteves sem metafísica,” as well as the contingent “Dono,” leads Campos to a discreetly ecstatic identification with the “universo,” albeit “sem ideal nem esperança.” The lesson here is, our consciousness does not reside in a fixed subject. The self is not an empire of enclosures, boundaries, and hierarchy; mind is not a map complete with a single, fixed center. We are, as subjects, unbounded territories of sentience and self-awareness. Consciousness encompasses a plurality of provisional centers. We *are* plural. Consequently, Campos is *also* “Esteves” and the “Dono.” The lesson Campos teaches us is, *we are to the extent that we are also the other*. We are most at home when we encompass (our own) alterity. As provisionally unbounded territory, Campos finally and provisionally transcends nothingness.

Paraphrasing John Paull, quoted at the beginning, Pessoa reveals the forest anew. His work does not restrict itself to a few trees. “Tabacaria,” opens up a territory of reflection on a complex plane of poetic textuality. Pessoa’s ironic subversion of maps and even his innovations vis-à-vis Hall’s proxemic schema have brought the reader to a conceptualization of the world which is both oppressive and unpredictable, routinely quotidian and unexpectedly liberating. Pessoa has brought us to a deeper understanding of the productive origins of the real, as accomplished by the poem (by poetry itself?). What the poem produces is not – has never been – a copy of the world but rather its dynamic coming-into-being in and through language, i.e., by way of the signifying practice of language. A reproduction of the world is not – has never been – the aim of writing. Instead, a poem performs a world. It reads as instructions for the memic birth of a world, whose outward manifestation is the poetic text itself.

Without maps, without beginning, and in a way without end, we, like Campos, are forever on the verge of reinventing ourselves by way of which we fulfill an integral part of Pessoa’s stated mission as artist and creator-of-civilization. We become our own perpetual becoming. We become heteronymic territories within the immaterial (spiritual) civilization of humankind whose aim is to produce new memes.

“Álvaro” is a meme.

A territory makes for a poor empire, but it is doubtless the home of homes. It is the birthplace of our perpetual becoming.

WRITING AND TRAVELLING: FINAL PORT OF CALL

We’ve travelled from territory to map, map to territory, and from subjective maps to heteronymic territories, i.e., from contingency as prison to contingency as a territory of being-in-process. We have moved from the map of empire as practised in the Letter to the memic abundance of Pessoa’s immaterial civilization located on the threshold of a new theory of mind.

We are close to Pessoa in the XXIst century. Today, our ethical and theoretical tasks center on the creation of maps that are also territories which seek to understand life, identity, and creativity outside the logic of empire. A refutation of those who claim to possess the truth has become part of our ethical lexicon, as has our sense of living in a complex but fragile biosphere which requires the creation of an inclusive planetary civilization for its survival. Between the Letter and “Tabacaria” the reader detects a civilizational arc exemplifying what is at stake at the level of imagination and being under which human consciousness must fatefully find its way.

Bibliography

Balibar, Étienne. *The Philosophy of Marx*. Trans. Chris Turner. London; New York: Verso, 2007.

Barthes, Roland, *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

Blackmore, Susan. "Imitation and the definition of a meme." *Journal of Memetics – Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission*, 2, 1998. 16 Oct 2014: <http://cfpm.org/jom-emit/1998/vol2/blackmore_s.html>

Bloch, Ernst. *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature, Selected Essays*. Trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg. Cambridge, MASS; London, England: The MIT Press, 1989.

Boxer, C. R. *The Portuguese Maritime Empire, 1415-1825*. Carcanet in association with Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, [1969] 1991.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex.'* New York: Routledge, 1993.

Caminha, Pêro Vaz de. *A Carta de Pêro Vaz de Caminha*. Ed. Jaime Cortesão. *Obras Completas. Vol. 7*. Notes, fac-símile, transcription and modern adaptation. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2010. 16 Oct 2014: <<http://digitarq.aquivos.pt/details?id=4185836>>

Dawkins, Richard. *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, [1976] 2006.

-----, "Viruses of the Mind," 1991. 16 Oct 2014: <<http://vserver1.cscs.lsa.umich.edu/~crshalizi/Dawkins/viruses-of-the-mind.html>>

Deleuze, Gilles. *Pourparlers 1972-1990*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, [1990] 2003.

Dennett, Daniel. "Memes and the Exploitation of Imagination." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 48, 127-35, Spring 1990. 16 Oct 2014: <<http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/papers/memeimag.htm>>

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus. "The Industrialization of the Mind," *Critical Essays*. New York: Continuum. 1982, 3 – 14. 16 Oct 2014: <<http://faculty.washington.edu/cbebler/teaching/coursenotes/Texts/enzensbergindust.html>>

Fellugi, Dino Franco. *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*. Last updated: 31 Jan 2011. Purdue U. 16 Oct 2014:

<<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/genderandsex/modules/butlerperformativity.html>>

Freire, Paulo. *Extensão ou comunicação?* Trad. Rosisca Darcy de Oliveira. São Paulo: Editora Paz e Terra, Freire, [1977] 2002.

Freire, Paulo and Ira Shor. *Medo e ousadia, O cotidiano do professor*. São Paulo: Editora Paz e Terra, 1986. 16 Oct 2014:

<http://www.gestaoescolar.diaadia.pr.gov.br/arquivos/File/otp/livros/medo_ousadia.pdf>

Gadamer, Hans Georg. "On the Philosophic Element in the Sciences and the Scientific Character of Philosophy." In: Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Reason in the Age of Science*. Trans. Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge, MASS; London: The MIT Press, 1982, 3-20.

Gadotti, Moacir. "Reorienting Education Practices towards Sustainability." *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, 4:2 (2010): 203-211. 16 Oct 2014:

<<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/invent/images/uploads/Reorienting%20Education%20Practices%20towards%20Sustainability.pdf>>

Gudynas, Eduardo. "Buen Vivir: Today's Tomorrow." In: *Development* (2011) (4), 441-447. 16 Oct 2014:

<<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/development/journal/v54/n4/full/dev201186a.html>>

Hall, Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York; Toronto: Random House, [1966] 1990. 16 Oct 2014: <http://www.math.u-psud.fr/~maury/paps/CROWD_Hall.pdf>

Jonas, Hans. "The Outcry of Mute Things." In: Jonas, Hans. *Mortality and Morality, A Search for the Good after Auschwitz*. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1996.

Kant, Immanuel. "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View." In: *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*. Trans. and introduction Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Press, 1983.

Kristeva, Julia. *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*. Gallimard, 1988.

Paull, John. "Meme Maps: A Tool for Configuring Memes in Times and Space." *European Journal of Scientific Research*. Vol. 1, (2009), 11-18. 16 Oct 2014:

<<http://orgprints.org/15752/1/15752.pdf>>

Pessoa, Fernando. *Alberto Caeiro. Poesia*. Ed. Fernando Cabral Martins and Richard Zenith. Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2004.

----- . *Álvaro de Campos, Livro de Versos*. Critical edition, introduction, transcription, organization and notes Teresa Rita Lopes. Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1997.

----- . *Álvaro de Campos, Notas para a Recordação do meu Mestre Alberto Caeiro*. Introduction, transcription, organization and notes Teresa Rita Lopes. Lisbon: Edições Estampa, 1997.

----- . *Correspondência 1905-1922*. Ed. Manuela Parreira da Silva. Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 1999.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Sur la traduction*. Paris: Bayard, 2004.

Seabra, José Augusto. “A descoberta do *Outro* na Carta de Pêro Vaz de Caminha.” *Camões, Revista de Letras e Culturas Lusófonas*, 8, Janeiro-Março 2000. 16 Oct 2014: <<http://www.instituto-camoes.pt/revista/descbroutro.htm>>

Thompson, Grahame. “What is Fundamentalism?”. In: *openDemocracy*, 9 March 2006. 16 Oct 2014. 16 Oct 2014: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-europe_islam/fundamentalism_3339.jsp>

Tillich, Paul. “Frontiers” In: *The Future of Religions*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966.

White, Eric Charles. “Contemporary Cosmology and Narrative Theory.” In: *Literature and Science: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Stuart Peterfreund. Northeastern University Press, 1990, 91-112.

Wilkins, John S. “What’s in a Meme? Reflections from the Perspective of the History and Philosophy of Evolutionary Biology”, *Journal of Memetics – Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission*, 2. 16 Oct 2014: <http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/1998/vol2/wilkins_js.html>

Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth

Bio-bibliographical notice

Christopher Damien Aurretta received his doctorate in Hispanic Languages and Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He teaches at the New University of Lisbon, where he lectures on Topics in Contemporary Thought as well as on Science and Literature, focusing particularly on the aesthetic representations of technico-scientific rationality. He has published and/or participated in Colloquia in regard to the work of António Gedeão, Fernando Pessoa, Jorge de Sena, Machado de Assis, Primo Levi, and Roald Hoffmann, as well as on aspects of bioart. He has also translated poems by Fernando Pessoa and António Gedeão into English. Recent publications include: *Dez Anos in Portugal, Ensaios, Prosa, Poesia*; *Álvaro de Campos, Autobiografia de uma Odisseia Moderna*; “Fernando Pessoa’s Mnemosyne Project: Myth, Heteronomy, and the Modern Genealogy of Meaning”; *António Gedeão, Poemas/Poems*; *Diário de Bordo, Aspectos do Pensamento Contemporâneo*; *Pequeno vade-mécum ad loca infecta: para docentes, estudantes e outros mártires (=testemunhas) da modernidade cansados mas ainda capazes de uma ténue esperança*, and “David Cronenberg’s Mad Scientist in *The Fly*: Allegories of the ‘Lab’” (Presses Universitaires de Rennes), and *Em Torno do Cinema, Visualizando a Modernidade: Narrativas e Olhares do Ecrã*. He has published four volumes of poetry, three of which are published in a volume entitled *A Small Atlas of Earth, In Recollection of Legacies and Patterns of Growth*.

Nota biobibliográfica

Christopher Damien Aurretta doutorou-se pela Universidade da Califórnia, Santa Bárbara, EUA. Lecciona na Universidade Nova de Lisboa onde organiza seminários em *Pensamento Contemporâneo* e na área de *Ciência e Literatura*, focando, sobretudo, exemplos da representação estética da modernidade técnico-científica. Tem publicado e/ou participado em colóquios debruçando-se sobre a obra de António Gedeão, Fernando Pessoa, Jorge de Sena, Machado de Assis, Primo Levi e Roald Hoffmann, bem como sobre questões relacionadas com a bioarte. Tem traduzido e publicado em inglês poesia de Fernando Pessoa e António Gedeão. Algumas publicações recentes incluem *Dez Anos in Portugal, Ensaios, Prosa, Poesia*; *Álvaro de Campos, Autobiografia de uma Odisseia Moderna*; “Fernando Pessoa’s Mnemosyne Project: Myth, Heteronomy, and the Modern Genealogy of Meaning”; *António Gedeão, Poemas/Poems*; *Diário de Bordo, Aspectos do Pensamento Contemporâneo*; *Pequeno vade-mécum ad loca infecta: para docentes, estudantes e outros mártires (=testemunhas) da modernidade cansados mas ainda capazes de uma ténue esperança* e “David Cronenberg’s Mad Scientist in *The Fly*: Allegories of the ‘Lab’” (Presses Universitaires de Rennes) e *Em Torno do Cinema, Visualizando a Modernidade: narrativas e olhares do ecrã*. É autor de quatro volumes de poesia, dos quais três se encontram reunidos e publicados sob o título de *A Small Atlas of Earth, In Recollection of Legacies and Patterns of Growth*.

