

pioneers in this field, deserve much credit for their courage and enterprise. They do not shy away from difficulties, and for the most part they are accurate. Yet their versions can read rather flatly, partly because they have a tendency to use the closest English equivalent of a Portuguese word or turn of phrase. Sometimes a slightly less respectful attitude to the original can pay off. Here is an example: 'De casa, e das portas adentro tendes o exemplo de toda esta verdade' is rendered 'There are examples of all this truth from homes and indoors'. A freer translation seems justified, perhaps: 'Your own private lives at home provide an example of this truth in its entirety'.

The translators refer to Arnaldo do Espírito Santo's critical edition of Vieira, still in progress, which has reached two of the sermons in the present volume. They might have made more use of the editor's glossary and notes: 'generoso' is glossed as 'noble', not 'generous', and 'com suas pensões' has nothing to do with lodgings; as Espírito Santo explains in a note, the phrase means 'à sua custa' [at his expense].

But this reviewer's quibbles are not to be taken too seriously. The translation is an important enterprise, and for the most part carried off with success.

JOAQUIM VIEIRA, *José Saramago: Rota de Vida. Uma Biografia* (Porto: Livros Horizonte, 2018). 752 pages + 8 pages of illustrations. Print.

Reviewed by DAVID G. FRIER (University of Leeds, CLEPUL/FLUL)

This extensive biography of Saramago offers a portrait of the novelist's lengthy life and ascent from rural poverty in the Ribatejo to his crowning success as a Nobel Prize-winning novelist. Vieira has conducted extensive research to inform his ambitious project: he has sought out documentary evidence (including detailed records of Saramago's schooling, civil personal records, and PIDE files compiled under the dictatorship); he has conducted extensive interviews with individuals who had in-depth dealings with him, obtaining frank insights from his widow, Pilar del Río, and also from his long-time editor at Editorial Caminho, Zeferino Coelho, from members of the Portuguese Communist Party, and even from those whose relations with him had become strained or broken down during the course of his life (not least relatives of Ilda dos Reis and Isabel da Nóbrega, his two previous partners before Pilar del Río). In particular, Vieira makes an honest attempt to assess the extent to which Isabel da Nóbrega may have assisted the novelist's ascent to fame, partly due, no doubt, to the contacts which her privileged background helped him establish in Lisbon.

It is to be commended that Vieira has thus sought to reflect both the positive and the negative angles on the author, eschewing (although frequently noting) the all-too-frequently polarized opinions expressed both about his personality and his work. The portrait offered is of a fundamentally private individual whose relentless pursuit of creative success and recognition (including the

sustained ambition for achieving the award of the Nobel Prize) owed much to a need to prove himself to be in no way inferior to more privileged talents. The discussion of some of the more controversial moments in Saramago's life (such as the dismissal of dissenting journalists during his time as an editor at the *Diário de Notícias* in 1975 or the abrupt break with the *Sociedade Portuguesa de Autores* in 2003) is sensitive, seeks out multiple perspectives and does not attempt to offer definitive judgements on issues where many of the principal protagonists are now dead. Equally, while Vieira acknowledges and offers lengthy and serious discussion of allegations made against Saramago of sexual harassment and infidelity towards his partners, he also seeks out instances of his generosity (including paying for representatives of the rural community in Monte Lavre to attend the launch of *Levantado do Chão* at the Casa do Alentejo in Lisbon in 1980), his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty in helping others, and the immense energy which he devoted to supporting causes close to his heart. Vieira is also resourceful in examining the nuances of the novelist's fluctuating and occasionally difficult relationship with the Portuguese Communist Party. In short, this is an attempt to offer a portrait of a complex, contradictory individual who cannot be summed up by simplistic labels.

There are inevitably flaws in the approach adopted: one might wonder whether readers really require the detailed records of all of Saramago's school tests; more significantly, academic judgements on his work are reflected largely through the eyes of one particular critic (Carlos Reis, who had privileged access to the novelist over a long period of time), while international reception of his work is reflected almost exclusively through newspaper reviews, with virtually no acknowledgement of the wide-ranging academic publications on his work in a number of languages other than Portuguese (even the brief acknowledgements of Harold Bloom's much-publicized admiration for Saramago's work do not take into account the relatively superficial nature of the analysis offered by this critic). While we need to bear in mind that this is a biographical portrait and not primarily a work of critical reception, the very essence of Saramago's focus on his professional development as a writer over several decades requires us to offer some insights into his critical reception, and, while it can be anticipated that the readership for this work will be largely Portuguese, the author's status as a major figure in contemporary literature might justify casting the net somewhat wider than Vieira has.

Nonetheless, the author is to be commended for his insights and for some of the genuinely unfamiliar information which he has covered, including a lengthy excerpt from Saramago's earliest known surviving fictional text (dated 1946) and the enigma of his apparent early work as an editor for a journal entitled *Síntese* in Coimbra at the age of sixteen (where Vieira believes that the name of the future novelist may have been a useful cover for others to publish prohibited material at the time). Of particular interest are the insights

into Saramago's reflections on his own work before he discovered what was to become the successful formula for his mature work in the 1980s and his shifting relationships with many other significant figures in Portuguese cultural circles from the 1950s through to the 2000s. Vieira also provides thorough listings of works which Saramago translated from other languages into Portuguese; of books which he reviewed; and of short stories which he published in important journals such as *Seara Nova* and *Vértice* before he turned to writing as a full-time profession in the 1970s. This work, therefore, will prove an invaluable tool of reference for those who wish to contextualize Saramago's work within the fascinating shifting patterns of Portuguese political and cultural life over the past century, and (in spite of the challenging length of the volume) the informed but accessible discourse adopted by Vieira will do much to sustain and provoke further interest in his work.

DUARTE DRUMOND BRAGA, *As Índias espirituais: Fernando Pessoa e o orientalismo português* (Lisbon: Tinta-da-china, 2019). 327 pages. Print.

Reviewed by STEFAN HELGESSON (Stockholm University)

Using Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) as a methodological point of reference, Duarte Drumond Braga investigates the *longue durée* of Orientalism in Portuguese literature. As the subtitle to his book indicates, Fernando Pessoa — particularly the Álvaro de Campos poem 'Opiário' — is of central importance to this study, but the theoretical and historical build-up to the Pessoa chapter takes up more than half the book, with good reason.

There are two sides to Braga's argument. The first concerns a crucial supplementation of Said's account of Orientalism. Portugal, he demonstrates, has been both a producer and recipient of Orientalist discourse. And in both cases, Portugal is curiously *external* to Orientalism as it is described in Said's famous work. Put differently, the early phase of Portuguese colonialism in Goa and Macau produces a distinctly Portuguese archive of Orientalist texts which both precede and are occluded by Said's main focus, namely British and French Orientalism in the high-imperial nineteenth century. Conversely, however, Braga argues that there is also a distantiation relative to this primary Orientalism in Portugal itself. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Portuguese writers become deeply affected by the British and French Orientalists, producing thereby an internal split in the Portuguese literary tradition. In addition, the late nineteenth century also evidences a further split between the interests of political power — focused at the time on Africa — and Orientalist discourse, which becomes largely a literary concern.

This strikes me as an unusually wise deployment of the Saidian framework. The numerous wrinkles in Said's magnum opus — which have generated decades of commentary by now — can easily inspire wholesale dismissals of *Orientalism*. But to do so would be to sacrifice the significant advances enabled