The Portuguese Mr. Bloom (?): Orientalism in *Ulysses* and in *Uma Viagem à Índia*

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1. Orientalism and Modern Literature

There is little doubt that the works of modernist authors such as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot played a definitive role in the aesthetics and themes explored by contemporary writers. In the case of Gonçalo M. Tavares's *Uma Viagem à Índia*, published in 2010, one could argue that the text echoes both Eliot and Joyce due to its imagery of a disenchanted world and because of the way the book was composed. Some stanzas bring to memory the verses of Eliot's anti-epic poems and, in the same way as Joyce did with Homer's *Odyssey*, Tavares defies *Os Lusíadas*, uses it as hypertext and creates a contemporary version of Camões epic masterpiece. During an interview with TV Cultura, in 2011, Tavares acknowledged that the main character of *Uma Viagem à Índia*, Bloom, is named after Leopold Bloom, in homage to James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). Both writers explore epic masterpieces and try to bring them into their contemporary realities. Just like it would be wrong, reductive, and unjust to limit Joyce's *Ulysses* to an adaptation of the *Odyssey* to modern times, *Uma Viagem à Índia* does not rely entirely on Joyce and Camões. Tavares explores the culture and issues of contemporary

Western societies and some myths that characterise Portuguese identity and culture, like the legend of Pedro and Inês de Castro. In this brief study, I will address how both authors use "Oriental" features to escape reality and how the East is an essential motif for the main characters to evade the monotony of their worlds. Despite valid criticism, I will rely on Edward Said's theory on *Orientalism*.

According to Said, "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences". (1) Said argues that the British and French Empires established political dominion over their colonies and that the works of prominent European artists and intellectuals, like those of Flaubert, Goethe, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Lord Byron, helped create a collective Western imaginary of the Orient that had little to do with empirical reality. Instead of being a topographical site, the East became a myth and a mental construct that meant exoticism, mysticism, despotic power, richness, erotism, danger, and liberal sex interaction. Furthermore, depictions of the Orient brought forth divisive stereotypes in which the East represented the Other, considered as an inferior culture if compared to Western societies. The aesthetics used by Romantic authors to depict the Orient during the 19th century, such as those used by Lord Byron in *Turkish Tales* (1813-1816) or by Robert Louis Stevenson in *New Arabian Nights* (1882), were pivotal for the Western understanding of the East. The Oriental world became a distorted abstraction, an imagined site both dangerous and mysterious, barbarous yet sometimes appealing, that provided individuals with the opportunity to break free from the norms and rules of their own supposedly superior cultures. At the same time, the East represented the uncivilised world and the place for personal discovery and liberation from the shackles of Western societies.

From Said's perspective, since the Orient was a mere imagination and not reality itself, what representations of the East allow us to study are the fears, urges, and constraints of Western societies and the relations of power between the East and the West. Similarly, for Orientalism to last and to "make(s) sense at all depends more on the

West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, 'there' in discourse about it". (22)

2. Portugal and Orientalism

Portugal was one of the European countries that contributed to Western art and culture with representations of the Orient, especially of India and China. Portuguese nautical explorations to the East would inspire authors like Luís Vaz de Camões and Fernão Mendes Pinto to write books that dealt with dangerous sea expeditions and adventures in Oriental countries. *Os Lusíadas*, Camões' epic masterpiece, was published in 1572, and the travel writings of Fernão Mendes Pinto, *A Peregrinação*, would be published in 1614. These endeavours were pivotal in shaping Portuguese cultural identity to the present day and stand as literary representations of European Empires over the East before those of the British and French Empires. The West's fascination with Eastern civilisations grew, above all, from the 17th and 18th centuries onwards, in the case of The Netherlands, Great Britain, and France, which then began to establish trading posts and colonies on the Indian Subcontinent and the Far East, from where they would expel the Portuguese and Spanish.

By the end of the 19th century, the Portuguese Empire's influence over the Orient had diminished significantly, politically and economically. The French and British Empires expanded and took over most of the Orient. Despite that, Portuguese authors kept on writing about the East and assumed a somewhat nostalgic posture over Portugal's ventures in the past. Since other European Empires were hegemonic in Asia and over the East, the Orient, still an essential part of the Portuguese identity, became a foggy mental construct. In this sense, Portugal went through an identity crisis and reconsidered its idea of the Orient because the East was only reachable through the appropriation of cultural representations made by other European Empires.

I agree with Duarte Drumond Braga when he argues that Orientalism is essential to the understanding of the early writings of Portuguese modernist authors like Fernando Pessoa, Mário de Sá-Carneiro and Almada Negreiros. In his study, Braga analyses some of the literary productions published by these authors in the first issue of *Orpheu* and concludes that "o Oriente modernista português já nasce orientalizado, isto é, claramente construído ou, no mínimo, mediado por outros discursos orientalistas, como pela poesia finissecular francesa, mas também pela partilha de uma cultura esotérica." (28) To some extent, Portuguese modernist authors show awareness of Orientalism and, in their approach to Oriental themes, they attempt to deconstruct the idealisation of the East. Pessoa, for instance, reflects on India and China in "Opiário" and questions if the mysticism and metaphysics attributed to the Orient are indeed in faraway lands or if they are only idealisations in his mind. Through Álvaro de Campos, Pessoa wonders if the efforts of visiting China and India are worth it, considering that the exoticism and peace of mind he hopes to find in the East are only part of his imagination.

As argued by Braga, the literary productions published by Mário de Sá-Carneiro and Almada Negreiros in the same issue of *Orpheu* show that the authors deliberately use cultural representations of the Orient made by other European Empires to mediate their connection with the East. In "Distante Melodia…", it becomes clear that Sá-Carneiro is not depicting the Orient itself but rather the Orientalized French version of the East, one too distant for him to experience. In the case of "A Taça de Chá", Almada Negreiros uses an ekphrasis to distance himself from the Orient. Negreiros creates a narrative based on imagery associated with China and Japan, with geishas, coloured idols and bamboo plants, and then reveals that his inspiration comes from the images printed on a teacup, a common good associated with the British and French Empires. (Braga 23-28)

These writers' approach to Oriental themes deconstructs Orientalism, exposes the stereotypes associated with the Far East and presents it as a concept rather than a reality. This way, the Orient remains rooted in Portuguese culture but changes from a geographical place

into a symbol of mysterious transcendence, identity and soul crises and the frustrated search for spiritual healing. Despite the Portuguese acknowledgement of the Orient as an idealisation, or perhaps, precisely because of that, as Eduardo Lourenço states, "Para nós, todas as viagens são viagens à Índia". (15)

3. Ireland and Orientalism

Ireland assumed an ambiguous geo-cultural position within the British Empire that interfered with the cultural representation of the East. After The Acts of Union of 1800, Ireland formally became a part of the British Empire. However, the numerous crises throughout the 19th century and the differences with the British Crown led to nationalist movements that found means of cultural expression in the Celtic Revival. While benefiting to some extent from being part of the Empire, Irish people also established an attitude of resistance towards the British. At the same time, Ireland was both an invader and a colony, which created an identity crisis among the Irish. According to Joseph Valente, and following his concept of metro-colonialism,[1] Joyce's Dublin "was a border zone both joining and dividing an imperialist and an irredentist culture under the always contestable titles of United Kingdom and Irish nation respectively." (327)

Publications from the early 19th century, like Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1807-34) and *Lalla Rookh* (1817), and the translations of German, Persian, Arabic, and Irish works by James Clarence Mangan, became popular among the authors of the Celtic Revival having paved the way for efforts of the Irish Revival to, later on, search in Ireland's Celtic past for the bases of Irish identity. Just as the East was mystical and mysterious, so were the authentic Irish people

1. According to Valente, British metro-colonialism occurs when "The nominally self-consistent metropolitan state, a prototypically strategic realm, contrived to aggrandize itself, in every sense, by simultaneously assimilating and othering the proximate areas of the Celtic fringe, thereby sustaining them as doubly/divisible inscribed portions of its own now fissured identity." (327)

and their original language. Nationalist organisations and movements, like the Gaelic League of Douglas Hyde, sought the de-anglicisation of Ireland, tried to revive the Gaelic language and published books and newspapers written in Irish. By the end of the century, the Irish Literary Revival, led by prominent authors like W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and George Russell, took an interest in ancient heroic legends and folk culture and tried creating distinctly Irish literature. The mysterious and esoterically aesthetics of works by authors such as W.B. Yeats and George Russell share so many similarities with the nature of Oriental writings that Brandon Kershner describes Dublin as "a centre for the study of Eastern mysticism or speaks through a sixteenth-century Moorish antiself". (284) Despite not agreeing with the main principles and aesthetics of the Revival, even Joyce would depict ancient Ireland as the "Island of Saints and Sages" (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing* 108) in his lecture at the Università Popolare in 1907.

It is fair to recognise that the Irish Revival had cultural and political purposes and that the conflation between Ireland's Celtic past and the East fit most of the revivalists' interests. In this sense, while exploring Oriental themes, the works of the Irish Revival authors sought more autonomy from the British Empire. Joyce was no unionist, but his vision of Ireland was much more of a prison than of a world of faery. He addresses Ireland's identity crisis but opposes the Revival's solution to find Irish idiosyncrasy in its Celtic past: "Just as ancient Egypt is dead, so is ancient Ireland." (125) Despite the vibrant cultural ambiance of Dublin at the time, he would describe the city as "the centre of paralysis" (*Selected Letters of James Joyce* 83) to Grant Richards and depict Irish people as sometimes complicit with the Empire and as "the most belated race in Europe." (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing* 50)

Joyce's approaches to Oriental themes may inherently criticise the British Empire but are also techniques for portraying a divided society and a way for characters to try to escape or confront dilemmas and the dullness of everyday life. For instance, the dismal surroundings of the narrator in "Araby" contrasts with the Otherness of the

bazaar, initially envisioned as a means of escaping his tedious reality and a way of fulfilling his youthful love. The narrator is disappointed both by his uncle's behaviour and by the fact that Araby does not meet the romanticised expectations he had made of it. The exotic and Oriental bazaar is just an ordinary place, colonised by the British presence and its expensive goods. In *Dubliners*, it is undoubtedly in "The Dead" that Joyce addresses the Irish identity crisis most profoundly. It is Miss Ivors' provocation, calling Gabriel Conroy a "West Briton", (*Dubliners* 163) which triggers his pride and leads to the argument that disrupts the Christmas party. Gabriel's Europeanism contrasts with Miss Ivors' Irish Nationalism and Michael Furey's provincial roots. Despite the numerous and sometimes contradictory interpretations of the main character's epiphany, it is clear that, by the end of the story, Gabriel fully embodies the problematics of Ireland's identity crises.

4. James Joyce's *Ulysses* and the Orient: A Day(dream) in Dublin

Oriental representations are so abundant in *Ulysses* that Kershner argues that the book has more direct allusions to *Arabian Nights* and pantomime shows, such as "Turko, the Terrible" and "Sinbad, the Sailor" than it has to Homer's *Odyssey*. (277) Even though none of the main characters has visited the Orient, one could argue that Stephen Dedalus and the Blooms have Orientalist traits. These Eastern features and Orientalist nature vary between characters and interfere with how they interact with Dublin society.

Stephen Dedalus embodies the figure of the artist in search of his talents, still struggling with his identity and being misunderstood by others. Even though he is Irish, Stephen remains almost a foreigner in his homeland, simultaneously conflicted and rejected by reality and the ones surrounding him. If this Otherness towards the world conveys a feeling of displacement and emphasises Stephen's Oriental features, his prophetic dream bestows upon him the kind of mystic power

associated with the Magical East or Celtic Ireland.[2] In the Proteus episode, while at the beach, Stephen recollects dreaming of "Open hallway. Street of harlots. Remember. Haroun al Racshid. I am almosting it. That man led me, spoke. I was not afraid. The melon he had he held against my face. Smiled: creamfruit smell. That was the rule, said. In. Come. Red carpet spread. You will see who." (Joyce, *Ulysses* 58-9) The mysterious Eastern man from Stephen's dream is Leopold Bloom, who helps and takes care of him throughout the night and welcomes him to his home. Thus, the first depiction of Leopold Bloom is as the mythical fifth Caliph of the Abbasid Caliphate in the 8th century, known for reigning during the peak Islamic Golden Era, when the Arts, Culture and Science flourished in the Caliphate, and for establishing diplomatic relations with Western Empires.[3] Later, it becomes clear that the melon Stephen remembers from his dream is a reference to Molly Bloom, establishing another connection between the Blooms and Oriental motifs. Furthermore, it is significant to note that, in contrast to Stephen's conflicting relationships with Westerners, his contact with the characters he orientalises in his dream is of greater affinity, trust and confidence. This way, it seems he imagines the Orient as more fondle than the West and Eastern people as more sympathetic than the Irish, which is typical Orientalist attitude.

In his turn, Leopold Bloom is also a character with Oriental features and prone to Orientalism. Bloom's origins and attributes make him much more of an outsider in Irish society than Stephen Dedalus. In the novel, he is the figure whose Otherness interferes the most with the other characters. Despite being the son of Ellen Bloom, Catholic and Irish, and having been baptised three times, Leopold

2. One of the nicknames Buck Mulligan uses to address and mock Stephen is "the bard", (Joyce, *Ulysses* 3) tying him to Ireland's Celtic past.

3. Harun al-Rashid was a complex historical personality, so there are different perspectives on his character. On the one hand, he was a patron of Arts and Sciences and Baghdad became economically and culturally prosperous during his reign. On the other hand, Harun al-Rashid is also known for his cruelty and the luxury and extravagance of his court. The end of his realm began the war for succession between his two sons, which led to the Empire's decline. In the *Arabian Nights* he is chiefly depicted from a positive perspective and is described as a just, generous and wise caliph. Despite that, his flaws are also subjacent in some of the stories. For example, in "The Tale of Attaf" his cruelty and ruthless behaviour are overwhelming and show how he can abuse his power.

is discriminated against by the other characters in *Ulysses* because his father was Jewish and Hungarian. Due to his Jewish origins, for most of his Dublin compatriots, he is too Oriental to be European and not Celtic enough to be Irish. How other characters single out Bloom negatively and sometimes mistreat him exposes the discrimination and prejudices of the Irish conservative society in 1904.[4] Bloom's origins are not the only thing contributing to his Oriental profile. His quirky personality also sets him apart from other Dubliners. Different in his humour and the sober way he interacts with others, his insight and sensitivity are sharp enough to make him empathise and assume a more humane attitude towards people. If sometimes he is mistreated by fellow Dubliners, on other occasions, being Oriental works in Bloom's favour. In the "Nausicaa" episode, he remembers that Molly chose to be with him precisely because he was "so foreign from the others". (Joyce, *Ulysses* 496)

Just as he is an Oriental character to others in *Ulysses*, there are multiple times when Bloom leans toward Orientalism in his daydreams. We first meet Leopold Bloom in the "Calypso" episode. He leaves home to buy breakfast and then returns with the mail. It is unclear if he already suspects his wife is having an affair, but he gets more certain of it when Molly hides the letter from Blazes Boylan under the pillow. During the day, Bloom has to deal with his suspicions while also carrying out the dull tasks of everyday life. Balancing the two things has a decisive impact on Bloom's reveries. A pattern tends to repeat itself when he initially fantasises about the Orient. Generally, elements of the environment or mundane objects trigger his physical senses and cause him to daydream. Whenever he starts to reverie, he thinks of Molly Bloom and relates her to the Orient. In the "Calypso" episode, it is the warmth of the day that leaves him sleepy, leading Bloom to think of all sorts of clichés associated with the Orient: "strange lands", "awned streets", "turbaned faces going by",

4. Discrimination and anti-Semitism come to an extreme in the "Cyclops" episode, when Leopold Bloom argues with The Citizen, the character Joyce uses to portray chauvinistic Irish nationalism of the highest order.

"dark caves of carpet shops", "Turko the terrible", "Cries of sellers in the streets" and the "colour of Molly's new garters". (Joyce, *Ulysses* 68) Leopold Bloom appropriates all this Oriental imagery, borrows it to Dublin and uses it to transfigure its everyday life into the exotic and magical East.

There is, however, a significantly relevant aspect of this daydream that is important to underline. The last thing he fantasises about is "A girl playing one of these instruments what do you call them: dulcimers. I pass." Then, Bloom seems to get hold of himself and thinks about his reverie, remarking that "Probably not a bit like it really. Kind of stuff you read: in the track of the sun." (Joyce, *Ulysses* 68) Bloom does recognise that the way he imagines the Orient has probably nothing to do with empirical reality and that his image of the East derives from representations of books and cultural productions. If "Turko, the Terrible" is evidently a reference to the pantomime show,[5] as Eishiro Ito points out, the image of a girl playing the dulcimers comes from Frederick Diodati Thompson's *In the Track of the Sun* (1893). As asserted by Ito, the travel writing book Bloom alludes to has many photographs and illustrations, one of which is the image of an Asian girl playing the samisen on the title page (Ito). This way, in parallel to the Portuguese modernist authors, Bloom's approach to the Orient seems to deconstruct Orientalism. The original East is not accessible to the character, so he can only imagine the Orient relying on others cultural representations of it, even if they have little to do with empirical reality. Just like Almada Negreiros, Bloom resorts to common goods and popular productions to convey an image of the East and, while doing so, exposes the Orient as a made-up concept rather than reality.

Still in the "Calypso" episode, while returning home after buying a kidney for his breakfast, a cloud covers the sky. Once again, the

5. According to John Hunt, "The 'Turko the terrible' that Stephen thinks of in *Telemachus*, and Bloom in *Calypso,* had been performed in Dublin for decades. Thornton notes that William Brough's pantomime *Turko the Terrible; or, The Fairy Roses*, first performed in 1868 at London's Gaiety Theatre, was adapted by the Irish author Edwin Hamilton for performance in Dublin's Gaiety Theatre, first in 1873 and then many times more in the remainder of the 19th century."

environment triggers Leopold Bloom's senses and makes him daydream about the East. The Orient is not only related to wonder and adventure, it is also the place from which the Jewish population had to flee because of persecution. While the previous sunlight inspired him to think positively of the East, the cloud that covers the sky makes his mood gloomy. Instantly, Bloom starts describing a bleak world and thinks of the "dead sea in a dead land, grey and old", "poisonous foggy waters", "no fish", "the grey sunken cunt of the world", and "Desolation". (Joyce, *Ulysses* 73) Unlike Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom is more practical and tries to counter negative thoughts rather than philosophising them. In order to reverse his depressive mood, Bloom thinks of Molly and "Be near her ample bedwarmed flesh". (74) This reverie is also important because it immediately precedes the moment Bloom picks up the mail, anticipating Blazes Boylan's letter and his suspicions regarding Molly's marital affair. If we analyse both of the daydreams highlighted in the "Calypso" episode, it becomes apparent that the Orient is, as Said suggests, an ambivalent mental construct that manages to represent both positive and negative states of thought.

Traditionally, the Orient is associated with transgression, narcotics and liberal sex. If we stick with Leopold Bloom, we get to see all kinds of representations of the East. In "The Lotus Eaters" episode, we get a depiction of narcotics. After breakfast, he plans to go to Paddy Dignam's funeral, but he has plenty of time to kill. He starts daydreaming again, now triggered by the labels he sees through the window of the Belfast and Oriental Tea Company shop, associated with the British Empire. The thought of warm tea leads him to envision Ceylon in the Far East. While questioning himself about the likelihood of things being as he imagines, the stereotyped version of the Orient comes to his mind again: "the garden of the world", "those Cinghalese lobbing around the sun, in *dolce far niente*" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 86-87) intoxicated and sleeping for a long time, lethargic. As argued before, Bloom does not believe that the Eastern world is like that, but he establishes a parallel between this kind of inebriated state and the dull life in the West. He thinks of how Western societies have their

traditions and mores of escapism to attain the same purposes as the consumption of narcotics in the East. While at the mass, he mocks how Latin and religious ceremonies stupefy people and ponders on the addictive nature of gambling. Following his considerations on the difficulties of Christianising the "heathen Chinese that prefer an ounce of opium", (Joyce, *Ulysses* 98) one can argue that Bloom feels sympathy towards the Oriental way of living. At the end of the episode, he goes to the Turkish bath and, as idle as the Orientals he previously imagined, Bloom contemplates "the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower". (107)

Bloom's fantasies are closely related to sex besides functioning as a means to cope with the suspicion of his wife's infidelity. The stereotyped Orient allows the reversion of traditional concepts and positions of power. It enables unconventional sex and grants the possibility of inverting the typical relationship roles between men and women in Western societies, subverting the patriarchy. This way, Leopold Bloom uses Orientalism to explore his sexual kinks and to eroticise Molly. On several occasions in the book, Bloom fetishises and accentuates his wife's sensuality associating her with Eastern features. In the "Naausica" episode, Bloom thinks Molly has "the blood of the south. Moorish" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 486) and, later on, after thinking about her childhood in Gibraltar, he recalls having a strange dream. In this dream, mentioned again in the "Oxen of the Sun" episode, Molly "had red slippers on. Turkish. Wore the breeches. Suppose she does" (497) and dresses a "pair of Turkey trunks". (519) Like Stephen Dedalus's dream, Bloom's has a premonitory character and prepares the reader for the "Circe" episode.

Here, as Dedalus and Bloom go to a brothel that functions like a harem, Orientalism reaches its apex. Bloom loses touch with reality and starts hallucinating, revealing his kinkiest fantasies alongside his insecurities and guilty feelings. He is put on trial and accused of being a voyeur, a "dynamitard, forger, bigamist, bawd and cuckold", (Joyce, *Ulysses* 595) then getting punished, beaten and sodomised. Bloom imagines Molly in different roles, as an odalisque wearing a

Turkish costume and a "white yashmak violet in the night", (570) as one of the witnesses that accuse him and as a judge who sentences him because of his faults. Orientalism allows the subversion of the traditional representation of men and women as well as of husband and wife, so Bloom's cuckold fetishism turns Molly into the master and him into the slave. She confesses her affair with Boylan and mocks him for being effeminate, a cuckold on top of taking pleasure in being dominated by women, retaining her power over him in his imagination. In the hallucination, Bloom escapes the brothel disguised as Haroun al-Rashid, confirming thus the premonitory nature of Stephen's dream.

Finally, Molly Bloom is also a character with Oriental traits. She is the daughter of Irish Major Brian Tweedy and Lunita Laredo, of Spanish descent. Molly's childhood in Gibraltar is one of the reasons Leopold associates her with the East and, in the interior monologue in the "Penelope" episode, she recognises that part of the reason her husband was attracted to her in the first place was because of her "being Jewish looking after my mother". (Joyce, *Ulysses* 916) Despite not being singled out as her husband by other Dubliners, her mother's origins raise questions about whether she might be of Jewish descent. In his analyses of the character, Phillip F. Herring argues that because of her mother's lineage, she has more of a right to claim her Jewishness than her husband. Herring recognises, though, that "in *Ulysses* any Jewish qualities Molly might have are swamped by the Spanish-Moorish-Irish emphases and her husband's role as Wandering Jew cum Odysseus". (Herring 507) However, since Lanita Laredo died when Molly was very young, she remains a mysterious figure, there are no certainties that she was Jewish and even her daughter thinks of her with little knowledge: "my mother whoever she was". (Joyce, *Ulysses* 904)

Regardless of her mother's identity and her husband's tendency to portray her as an Eastern woman, Molly identifies herself as Catholic Irish and Leopold even converted to Catholicism to marry her. Nonetheless, during her interior monologue, Molly also shows the tendency to feel attracted to the Orient. She remembers Gibraltar

as an exotic place and recalls her childhood kindly. After rejecting her other suitors, while thinking of her husband's qualities, Molly compares Bloom to the statue of "that Indian god he took me to show one wet Sunday in the museum". (Joyce, *Ulysses* 917) To some extent, the vivid and intense memories of the period of courtship with Leopold borrow a mythical component from Gibraltar and the Orient. Reversely, the emotional intensity with which Molly lived these moments also lends a certain exoticism and an Orientalist idealisation to Leopold Bloom. When she remembers her husband's first kiss and the moment he proposes to her, Molly describes the environment of Gibraltar and this period of her life in an idyllic way, from the "handsome Moors all in white and turbans like kings asking you to sit down in their little bit of a shop" to "how he kissed me under the Moorish wall", (932-33) where she emphatically says yes to Leopold Bloom.

Kershner is right when he points out the numerous allusions of *Ulysses* to the *Arabian Nights* and other works that explore Oriental imagery and themes. Orientalism and representations of the East are present in different ways in each character and allow exploring intricate themes, such as Ireland's relationship with the British Empire, distinctive social spheres in Dublin at the time and the fragmentation of Irish identity. Most of the time, the main characters resort to Oriental themes and Orientalist perspectives as a strategy to face their crises and counteract the monotony of their everyday life. The constant use of Oriental landscapes and motifs contributes to representing Dublin through an aesthetic that, despite its exoticism, remains realistic and portrays the city in the historical time of the narrative. Thus, how Oriental themes are explored in *Ulysses* distances Joyce's approach to the East from the Orientalist aesthetics used by the Celtic Revival.

5. *Uma Viagem à Índia* and the Orient: Bloom's Journey to India

The India of Gonçalo M. Tavares establishes a close relationship with the deconstructed Orient of the modernist tradition. More than a geographical place, India represents the ambivalent symbol of mysterious transcendence and spiritual healing. While dealing with an identity and a soul crisis, the rationalism and materialism of the Western world do not allow Bloom to find answers to his metaphysical problems or a means to heal his troubled spirit. Faced with the disenchanted West, he must turn to the East and its mystical knowledge to find healing or spiritual solace. From the beginning of the book, the romanticisation of the Orient prevails. Therefore, choosing India as the travel destination to search for "sabedoria/ e esquecimento" (Tavares, *Uma Viagem à Índia* 32) is directly related to the Orientalist view of the Eastern world. However, there are hints that Bloom already suspects India is not quite the soul rehabilitation centre he expects.[6] Like Leopold, Bloom is a well-read man, so when he gets to his destination, he wonders if "a Índia, apesar de tudo/ ainda existe fora da linguagem". (306) The way he puts it strongly implies that Bloom is not looking for a geographical place but for the Orient described by its Otherness in Western literature and Fernando Pessoa's plane of transcendence and mysticism.

We learn about the heavy burden Bloom has to carry in Canto III and IV when the hero confides about his past to Jean M.. He left Lisbon after killing his father as revenge for orchestrating the assassination of Bloom's lover, Mary.[7] He flees home and heads to India, acknowledging that the only hope for happiness is if he reshapes the way he thinks about the world. To do so, he needs to forget about his past and learn a different way of living. Since the story takes place

6. From Eduardo Lourenço's perspective, it is clear that Bloom already knows that he will not find what he is looking for in India. In his analysis, Lourenço argues that Bloom only confirms what he already knew: "Mas não volverá o mesmo. Agora sabe o que já pressentia. Que não viajamos para nenhum paraíso." (15)

7. The name of Bloom's lover may also be referencing *Ulysses*. The name Molly is Irish, but one of its possible origins might be a diminutive of Mary.

in 2003, there is no necessity for a long trip and Bloom could easily take a plane to reach India quickly. However, he needs to make room for Oriental wisdom and it takes him time to unlearn who he is. India is an idea rather than a geographical place, making it essential to have a long journey in order for him to empty himself of his past and his worldview: "Quero primeiro chegar à Índia por dentro/ – pensava Bloom –, construindo o esquecimento/ da vida anterior como se constrói com paciência um edifício." (Tavares, *Uma Viagem à Índia* 232) Bloom's inner journey begins when he leaves Paris and starts unlearning about himself and preparing for a life-changing revelation in India. To some extent, in order to understand the mystical East, Bloom borrows Pessoa's depersonalisation process and Alberto Caeiro's method of learning through unlearning: "O essencial é saber ver, / Saber ver sem estar a pensar,/ Saber ver quando se vê,/ E nem pensar quando se vê,/ Nem ver quando se pensa.// Mas isso (triste de nós que trazemos a alma vestida!),/ Isso exige um estudo profundo, / Uma aprendizagem de desaprender." (Pessoa 58)

In Bloom's perspective, there is no mid-term between the materialistic West and the magical East, where he hopes to find a new and different way of living: "queria conhecer a parte mística da Europa. / Mas a Europa não tem parte mística: foi/ já toda vendida a uns homens nas Américas/ que falavam um inglês que funciona". (Tavares, *Uma Viagem à Índia* 230) Just as India is idealised in Orientalist style, most European cities Bloom passes through are portrayed in association with Western culture. For instance, when Bloom is in London, the British establish a plot to rob and murder him. As Lourenço points out, Bloom's experiences in London resound the crime novel tradition of Agatha Christie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. (Lourenço 17) He dreams of Paris and borrows the title of Ernest Hemingway's book to describe the city as "Paris é uma festa". (Tavares, *Uma Viagem à Índia* 97) Paris is also the place for eroticism and sexual transgression, the latter as in the writing of Marquis de Sade. Referencing Sigmund Freud, Bloom falls ill in Vienna, leading a doctor to claim he is suffering from bad dreams whilst other professionals try to treat him using psychoanalysis. Bloom's journey through Western cities allows

for a nostalgic revisitation of Europe's cultural imaginary and conveys that, in the past, Western culture was not limited to materialism. His journey marks the attempt to detach himself from European culture and, at the same time and paradoxically, an even greater bond with Western culture since his Orientalist stance is a product of it.

When Bloom arrives in India, he is eager to find evidence of spiritual transcendence: "O espírito existe. Bloom quer prová-lo./ Matou viu matar quem ama, sentiu tudo e o seu oposto. / O espírito existe e a anatomia falha desde os pés/ até à cabeça". (Tavares, *Uma Viagem à Índia* 293) He is so desperate to convince himself of spirituality that it meddles with how he sees his surroundings. Instead of getting a critical first impression of India, he finds magic in the noisy and crowded streets, sees poverty as mystical wisdom, thinks of the old man urinating next to him as a lesson to be learned and finds serenity in the food. Consequently, his misrepresentation of the world contributes to a humorous edge to the character and ridicules Bloom's Orientalist quest for transcendence. He is so deluded that Anish, a friend of Jean M., feels the need to tell him he is wrong and to present him with India's authentic reality: "vou falar-te da Índia. O que tu/ conheces são postais". (300) However, Anish argues that since living beings have comparable necessities, they behave alike even on different continents. His version of India is that of a country with no superior spiritual knowledge, in all the ways similar to other places in the globalised world. To overcome the crisis that led him to India, Bloom cannot accept Anish's description and therefore remains hopeful of encountering Eastern mysticism while exploring the city. On the other hand, during a city tour with Anish, a local guide describes Greek art and politics in a ridiculous outdated way to Bloom, which leads him to wonder: "Que sabe este sobre a Europa?" (310) This moment is significant because it shows that just as Bloom misconceives the East, Indian people also have wrong ideas about the West.

Despite all evidence, only after meeting Shankra, the sage, Bloom recognises that India has as much of a transcendent quality as any other place worldwide. While addressing Shankra, Bloom believes he is finally getting to his mystical revelation, which leads him to share

his past and the crimes he has committed. Shankra remains silent like a priest, listening to Bloom's traumatic story, and only speaks to ask him about the possessions he has brought to India. After Bloom resumes talking, the sage reveals his opportunistic nature and, rather than providing him with advice, proposes a book trade. On top of discovering Shankra is a fraud, Bloom is robbed of his possessions by the sage's followers. Only then Bloom recognises that: "Em todo o mundo o mundo é mundo. / Não há interrupções em forma de não-humanidade – pensa Bloom". (372) In a last turn of events before fleeing India, Bloom steals a rare version of the Mahabharata from Shankra and manages to recover his possessions. Bloom's interaction with Shankra is critical to the story. After confiding his past to Shankra and realising he is a fraud, Bloom understands there is no redemption for his guilt and recognises that he knew all along that he needs to accept his nature completely: "De facto, Bloom já o sabe há muito:/ somos inseparáveis do nosso pior./ Pode-se fingir durante anos,/ mas cada um é inseparável da sua maldade." (358) Furthermore, while talking to Shankra, he finally recovers his pride in being Portuguese and European and acknowledges that Europe might still have a future.

The end of the book is bleak and nihilistic. Alongside Anish, Bloom returns to Europe and meets Jean M. in Paris. Curiously, drug consumption, unconventional sex and crime, themes generally associated with the Orient, take place at a party organised by Jean M. near Paris. During an orgy with prostitutes, Bloom's thoughts become gloomy, and he concludes that there is no higher spirituality or transcendence: Foi à Índia e veio, Bloom, e aí percebeu que/ não há Espírito. // Está vivo e, por isso, é menos ingénuo,/ não é santo nem sábio; é um corpo e move-se, nada mais". (401) Despite still having bodily pleasures, he gives up on his spirit and loses touch with ethics. Before leaving France and returning to Lisbon, he kills a prostitute and remains indifferent to his crime. As his journey ends, Bloom thinks life is tedious and meaningless and contemplates suicide: "Chegar ao fundo religioso/ pelo tédio e pela abjecta neutralidade, eis agora o que lhe resta". (447) A woman asks to talk to

him, maybe realising his suicidal intentions. He shrugs, concurring, knowing there is no cure or hope for a man who discovers that there is nothing but reality in life.

6. Final Considerations

Homer's *Odyssey* follows Ulysses back home, where the hero ends his journey by killing Penelope's suitors and rejoining his family. Historically, Camões' *Os Lusíadas* unfolds in a different context, 23 to 25 centuries later. Even though the Portuguese epic poem ends with Vasco da Gama's return to Lisbon, the narrative also portrays the expansion of the Portuguese Empire and the discovery of the sea route to India. Furthermore, one could argue that *The Odyssey* mainly celebrates Ulysses' return to Ithaca while *Os Lusíadas* leaves room for divine punishment if the Portuguese do not follow Christian and humanistic values.

Ulysses and *Uma Viagem à Índia* share connections in their approach to the epic classics but are also products of different times and contexts. Naturally, the books explore different themes and perspectives. However, they both use the journey theme to dig into their heroes' adventures and tribulations. On this basis, like Ulysses, the primary purpose that drives Leopold Bloom's journey is returning home, where he can maybe make amends with Molly. On the other hand, in *Uma Viagem à India*, Bloom's motivation is to discover the extent of the mystic and transcendental plane hinted at by modernist authors and find solace. Thus, while Leopold's final destination is always home, Tavares' Bloom relies on the validity of the deconstructed Orient, which he sees as the only means to find mystical knowledge and heal his troubled soul.

Both authors use Orientalism to develop the main characters, but they do it differently and with distinct purposes. In *Ulysses*, Bloom's Oriental traits are used to single him out from other Dubliners, working both in his favour, as in the case of Molly and Stephen Dedalus, and against him, as when he is a victim of social exclusion.

Furthermore, Leopold Bloom uses Oriental themes to escape the dullness of everyday life, explore his erotic fantasies and deal with his suspicion of Molly's infidelity. During the "Circe" episode, Orientalism gets to its apex and allows Bloom to confront himself with his insecurities and kinkiest fetishism. To some extent, Bloom depersonalises himself and comes out of the brothel feeling more confident and secure.

On the other hand, Gonçalo M. Tavares picks up Orientalism from the modernist tradition and unmasks it further to describe a world without mysticism or transcendency. Tavares' Bloom seeks redemption in the Orient and believes that only mystical knowledge can help him accept his traumatic past and reinvent himself. However, he realises there never was a mystical salvation in the Orient and deconstructs Orientalism completely. India is a place like any other in the world. Just as Leopold in the "Circe" episode, during his interaction with Shankra, he confronts himself with his inner feelings and hypocrisies, but does not come out stronger of the encounter. He finds that his journey was an effort to discover that there are no more magical Orients to look for or any place to go to heal spiritual crises.

The theme of the journey to the East and the usage of Orientalist features establishes a connection between the two main characters. In his analysis of *Uma Viagem à Índia*, Eduardo Lourenço argues that "todas as viagens são sempre um regresso ao passado de onde nunca saímos" and that Bloom's journey is "ao fim e ao cabo, a não-viagem que nós próprios somos". (15) This assessment applies to both protagonists because it is through their journeys that they find ways of confronting themselves with their natures and with who they really are. At the same time, Leopold Bloom goes home as the same and as a different man. He still eroticises the world and has the same problems to deal with, but now that he has faced himself, he embraces his identity and accepts who he is. When Tavares' Bloom gets to Lisbon, he still mourns Mary and is guilty of having murdered his father. He is the same man, but after his journey to India, Bloom knows he cannot avoid his nature or escape his problems by fleeing. Despite the different outcomes, their journeys serve as a means for them

to confront themselves and as attempts to accept reality for what it really is.

In their singular way, both authors move the Orientalist themes to Europe. During Leopold Bloom's day, the Orient becomes present everywhere in Dublin. Through his daydreaming, Bloom turns Dublin into an exotic place with all kinds of Oriental features, where narcotics, taboos and unconventional sex are present in everyday life. In his turn, Tavares' Bloom finds the same level of alterity in European cities, for instance, in the unique plants of Germany or the cryptic languages in Prague, as in India. The transgressive themes traditionally associated with the East occur in Europe, especially in France and Portugal, where he participates in orgies, experiences drugs and kills people. It is fair to recognise that neither of the authors' approaches aligns with the Orientalist point of view.

Finally, Tavares goes further than Portuguese modernist authors in deconstructing Orientalism because he does not limit himself to demythologising the East. Tavares' Bloom's search for Otherness and alterity leads him to stumble in a globalised world dominated by capitalism, with little diversity and no mysticality or mysterious places to discover. In this sense, he comes close to Claude Lévi-Strauss's perspective of a monocultural and massified world in *Tristes Tropiques*: "Il n'y a plus rien à faire: la civilisation n'est plus cette fleur fragile qu'on préservait […]. L'humanité s'installe dans la monoculture; elle s'apprête à produire la civilisation en masse, comme la betterave. (Lévis-Strauss 36-7) However bleak and boring the reality is, maybe the answer is not to search for Otherness somewhere else, like in the idealised East, where there are no miracles or new formulas for spiritual healing. Perhaps the answer resides in looking for the Orient inside ourselves, as Leopold Bloom does, and accepting the tedious reality that is as tough as it ever was.

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