

## Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa" and Júlio Dantas's *A Severa*: The Genesis of National Folklore in the Death of a *Mouraria Fadista*

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**Abstract:** This article examines the genesis of the folkloric figure of the nineteenth-century Mouraria *fadista* as a national icon in twentieth-century Portuguese popular culture. In his drama, *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos*, Júlio Dantas establishes a metaphoric correlation between Maria Severa, the Mouraria, the *fado* and Portugal, when his heroine dies in the arms of the *fado*, thus realizing the fate of all Portuguese (according to Dantas's protagonist, the Count of Marialva). Dantas's *mise-en-scène* of Severa's death is followed by the refrain from Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa," the last lines of the play. *Fado novo* lyricists from the 1930s to the 1970s recontextualize Sousa do Casacão's lyrics and Dantas's proposal of a folkloric Mouraria—the cradle of the national song—to elevate the urban song in the Portuguese collective conscience.

Since Teófilo Braga catalogued Sousa do Casacão's eulogy to Maria Severa, "O Fado da Severa" (1848), in the *Cancioneiro popular* (1867), the prostitute's legend has problematized the *fado's* interpretation of its own history.<sup>1</sup> Pinto de Carvalho refers to Severa as: "inspiradora de um dos mais antigos fados, mas cuja biografia tem sido deturpada" (61). Pimentel adds: "se toda a gente falla ainda da Severa, é fóra de duvida que a geração de hoje em dia não tem sobre o assumpto senão uma vaga ida fugitiva, que apenas as cantigas do fado alimentam ainda" (140). But the *fado novo* of the mid-twentieth century does not merely continue a tradition begun by Sousa do Casacão's verses; rather, it elaborates on an isolated nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary fascination with the figure

of the Mouraria *fadista*. Before Júlio Dantas created Severa's popular incarnation, in his novel and drama, *A Severa*, (1900, 1901) the *fadista* had been mentioned in Camilo Castelo Branco's *Noites de insónia* (1874) and *Eusébio Macário* (1879).<sup>2</sup> Luís Augusto Palmeirim's interview with Severa at her apartment in the Bairro Alto, in *Os excêntricos do meu tempo* (1891) had traced sketches of the *fadista* that would serve as the foundations for her specious biographies.<sup>3</sup> Eça de Queiroz's ambivalence towards the Mouraria *fadistas* of the nineteenth century had surfaced in his essays and fiction as well.<sup>4</sup> Dantas's *A Severa*, however, has altered twentieth-century Portuguese popular culture's image of the nineteenth-century Mouraria *fadista* by identifying Maria Severa as an emblem of both the Mouraria and Portugal, and thus cultivating a sympathetic relationship between the Nation and the degraded quarter of Lisbon.

In this article, I shall study the impact of Júlio Dantas's portrayal of the life and death of Maria Severa on the twentieth century's folkloric memory of the nineteenth-century Mouraria. I shall demonstrate that Dantas's literary figure is really a composite sketch that reproduces biographical information of Severa's contemporaries. However, because of the diffusion of Dantas's *A Severa*, in musical-theatre (1909) and cinematic adaptations (1931); and because the inception of Portuguese radio in the 1930s coincided with the success of Dantas's "Novo Fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)" (1931), Dantas's Severa has become Portugal's Severa, and, consequently, Dantas's Mouraria is Portugal's Mouraria. Furthermore, Dantas's *mise-en-scène* of Severa's agony, in the presence of the *fado* and the consequent spontaneous chorus of Mouraria *fadistas*' singing Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa," has promoted the *fado*'s association as the national song: "Chorem, chorem os fadistas / E chore toda a nação / Morreu a Severa, a flor / Da Rua do Capelão!"<sup>5</sup> As a result, *fado novo* lyricists from the 1930s to the 1970s have elevated the urban song in the national psyche by recycling Dantas's dramatization/novelization of Severa's life and death as relevant to Portuguese life outside of Lisbon. Further, Sousa do Casacão's refrain from the "Fado da Severa" is recontextualized in the *fado novo* to draw the nation's attention to the imminent death of the *fado*, or rather, the death of Portugal's national song, in the modernization of Lisbon's Mouraria.

The dissemination of Dantas's Severa has problematized critics' understanding of the *fadista*'s biography throughout the twentieth century. Pinto de Carvalho remarks: "nós mesmos confiamos demasiadamente na lenda chula, que se adensou em volta do nome desta tronga de viela, lenda elaborada pela fantasia popular e pela cumplicidade dos literatos" (61). Pimentel notes that

“através do confuso nevoeiro da versão oral,” Dantas traces sketches of Severa and the Count of Vimioso “empallidecidos pela acção do tempo” (141). And as late as 1994, Sucena notes: “Deve-se a Júlio Dantas a divulgação, embora romantizada, dessa singular figura feminina, cujo nome ficou para sempre ligado ao fado, de que se tornou uma autêntica lenda” (22).

Pimentel and Pinto de Carvalho gloss what they consider Dantas’s artistic distortions by referring their readers to Severa’s contemporaries: Palmeirim and Queriol. Pinto de Carvalho vows to “tirar a limpo a vida desta meio-soprano dos conservatórios do vício” (62). In a similar tone, Pimentel declares: “a lenda é boa; mas a história é melhor” (156). Sucena confirms that even within *fadista* circles, many believed that Severa was a figment of Dantas’s imagination (22). And the *fado* “Maria Severa” asks us of the late *fadista*: “Sabem quem era? / Talvez ninguém.”<sup>6</sup> But is the demand to discredit Dantas’s picturesque Severa warranted? To what extent is Dantas’s Maria Severa a fictional creation? In 1938, Norberto de Araújo maintains that whether Dantas exaggerated the *fadista*’s celebrity, certainly Severa: “foi ‘alguém’ no seu tempo, no tempo do Bairro Alto e da Mouraria turbulentos, fadistas, pitorescos,” but that Lisbon’s popular quarters of the mid-nineteenth century “dariam ‘águas fortes’ de preferência a ingénuas aquarelas” (*Peregrinações* 70).

Despite Pinto de Carvalho’s *amende honorable* and Pimentel’s proposal to put aside the *fadista*’s legend, these authors ignore that some of Dantas’s theatrical and novelistic embellishments of a few years earlier coincide with the biographies of Severa in *História do fado* and *A triste canção do sul* (Pinto de Carvalho 61; Pimentel 144). Dantas’s recounting of Severa’s life can be traced to the same sources that Pimentel and Pinto de Carvalho deem as the dependable foundation of their histories; Dantas’s characterization of the *fadista* synthesizes the inconclusiveness of the oral tradition and Palmeirim’s and Queriol’s biographical accounts.<sup>7</sup> Dantas’s ambivalent portrait of Severa—at times a silver-tongued virago, at times timid and gracious—constitutes a composite sketch of the conflicting reports of Severa’s interviewers.<sup>8</sup> In their criticism of Severa’s literary avatars, Pinto de Carvalho and Pimentel overlook Dantas’s piecing together fragments of Severa’s contemporaries’ testimony to present an objective vision, however idealized, of the singer. Dantas did not exaggerate Severa’s portrait; rather, he filled in the gaps of the scant biographical data on the *fadista* to create the folkloric figure of the Mouraria *fadista*/prostitute.

Later characterizations of the nineteenth-century *fadista* return us to Dantas’s dramatic and novelesque Severas. Already by 1910 we observe the plausible

impact of André Brim's contemporary operetta adaptation of Dantas's *A Severa* (1909) on José Malhoa's painting, *O fado* (1910).<sup>9</sup> The coincidence between Malhoa's and Dantas's representations of the *fadista*/prostitute has provoked misinterpretations of the artist's subject, Adelaide da Facada, as Severa.<sup>10</sup> The *Mouraria fado* "Cinco Quinas" alludes that Severa's Mouraria is the background for the painting: "Mouraria mãe do fado / Que Malhoa quis pintar / Triste canção que nasceu / Para sofrer a cantar."<sup>11</sup> "Fado Malhoa" identifies Severa as the feminine figure in *O fado*: "Dali vos digo que eu ouvi / A voz que se esmera / Boçal dum faia banal / Cantando à Severa."<sup>12</sup> Adelaide da Facada has been confused with Severa in twentieth-century political cartoons that parody Malhoa's painting.<sup>13</sup> And Amália Rodrigues's role as Severa in the 1955 stage production of Dantas's play resembles her portrayal of Adelaide da Facada, as she sings "Fado Malhoa" from within the 1910 painting, in Augusto Fraga's 1947 video-clip.<sup>14</sup>

But the coincidence between Malhoa's rendering of Adelaide da Facada and Dantas's descriptions of Severa is not due solely to the creativity of the author. We observe similarities between Malhoa's prostitute and Palmeirim's Severa: "Estava ella fumando, recostada n'um canapé de palhinha, com chinellas de polimento ponteados" (288). And Palmeirim's details of Severa's bedroom are mimicked in Malhoa's painting: "pendente da parede (sacrilegio vulgar nas casas d'aquella ordem) uma pessima gravura, representando o Senhor dos Passos da Graça" (288). We might say that Dantas turned Palmeirim's anecdote into literary folklore and Malhoa tailored it to the plastic arts.

If *A Severa* determined for the twentieth century the folkloric image of the nineteenth-century Mouraria *fadista*, Dantas's theatrical and novelesque setting of Rua do Capelão served as a precedent for Portuguese popular culture's treatment of the Mouraria. The novelty of Leitão de Barros's filmic adaptation of *A Severa* (1931) thus would make Dantas's Mouraria Portugal's Mouraria. That is, Portugal saw the Mouraria for the first time through Dantas's eyes and Leitão de Barros's lens.<sup>15</sup>

As *A Severa* was Portugal's first talkie, it made an aesthetic impact on Portuguese film during the 1930s through the 1950s. The Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional profited from Leitão de Barros's and Dantas's images of the Mouraria of "faias e boleiros, dos fidalgos e 'severas,'" and promoted similar, yet ingenuine images of the quarter in Portuguese movies, despite that by 1943, all that remained of that Mouraria were "ecos de anedotas, perspectivas, quadrinhos, águas fortes, aguarelas de fundo branco, algumas pinceladas lúgubres" (Araújo, *Legendas* 133).<sup>16</sup>



The popularity of Dantas's 1931 song, "Novo Fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)," coincided with the launching of Portugal's first radio station, Rádio Colonial.<sup>17</sup> Thus the Mouraria's "Rua Suja"—as Capelão was known in the nineteenth century—became a relevant street for a national audience, as Dantas's and Leitão de Barros's quaint portrayal of the Mouraria of the 1820s to the 1840s was presented to the Portuguese as an urban reality. Already in 1938, Norberto de Araújo demonstrates the association between the Mouraria and Dantas's Severa, in his lamentation: "O fado que [Maria Severa] sabia chorar com a alma na voz—chorou-a por sua vez. Não a choremos nós, evoquemo-la, visto que nos encontramos na Mouraria" (*Peregrinações* 70).

In his recontextualization of the twentieth-century Mouraria in the Romantic memory of the early nineteenth, Dantas forges a metaphoric relationship between the Mouraria, Severa and the *fado*. Because Dantas's vision of the nineteenth-century Mouraria is the nation's first image of the quarter, presented as massive popular culture, *A Severa* guarantees automatic national identification between the Mouraria and the *fadista*. Severa declares to the gypsy Romão: "A Mouraria não é aqui nem ali [...]. É onde eu estiver! Para onde eu fôr, vai agarrada a mim. A Mouraria sou eu!" (*A Severa* 70). Dantas complicates his metaphor when Severa claims: "O fado, sou eu!" (70). By proposing Severa as the personification of both the Mouraria and the *fado*, Dantas facilitates a passive national curiosity of the theretofore deplorable Lisbon quarter; national sympathy towards the remarkable singer connotes a consequent sympathy towards the Mouraria and the *fado*.

Once Dantas has convinced his audience of the association between Severa, the Mouraria and the *fado*, he establishes a relationship between the *fado* and the Portuguese national character. In Dantas's drama, a teary Count of Marialva hands Severa a *guitarra* and declares: "É destino de Portugal morrer abraçado ao fado!" (110).<sup>18</sup> In Leitão de Barros's film, Severa echoes Marialva's lines in verse: "Tenho o destino marcado / Desde a hora em que te vi / Ó meu cigano adorado / Viver abraçada ao fado / Morrer abraçada a ti."<sup>19</sup> Dantas's formula concludes that if Severa is the Mouraria, if she is the *fado*, and if she shares Portugal's fate to die in the *fado*'s arms, then she also must be Portugal. Thus, Dantas's characterization of Severa exceeds the local boundaries of the Mouraria and the unfortunate consequences of the *fadista*'s life to propose the singing prostitute as an emblem of the Portuguese people. In his proposal, Dantas, perhaps unwittingly, cultivates a sympathetic relationship between the nation and the Mouraria; the *fado novo*'s lyricists profit seemingly from Dantas's metaphor.<sup>20</sup>

But, why does the *fado novo* appropriate Dantas's literary fantasy to understand its own history? The *fado's* status as a national expression, while popularly accepted, was met with intellectual protest. In 1909, António Arroio writes:

O Fado para mim exprime o estado da inércia e de inferioridade sentimental em que o nosso país está mergulhado há muitos anos e do qual urge que saia. Portugal é positivamente um doente moral e o Fado basta para se formar o diagnóstico da doença. (58)

Arroio believes that as long as the Portuguese sing the *fado* “de cigarro ao canto da boca, olhos em alvo e paixão a arrebentar o peito” they will remain an inferior people, unable to understand the modernity of civilized nations (58). For aesthetic reasons, in 1929, Afonso Lopes Vieira opposes the *fado* as a Portuguese anthem:

De modo algum considero o “Fado” a canção nacional. Apenas a canção de Lisboa, torpe mas muitas vezes pungente. A nação que adoptasse como seu hino poético toada semelhante estaria em verdade perdida. O “Fado” é a lastimosa glória de Lisboa—uma vergonha lírica. (352)

The *fado novo* tries to overcome the critical schism concerning the *fado's* value for a Portuguese society by demonstrating that the song has an universal audience. The *fado choradinho* that characterized the poor urban *fadista* class, the plangent song that Luís Moita would call the “canção dos vencidos,” recedes as the *fado novo* appeals to Dantas's benign romanticization of the degraded nineteenth-century Mouraria. The lyricists exploit three stages in Dantas's fictionalization of Severa's life in their attempt to link Severa's Mouraria and the *fado* to the Portuguese character, in order to vindicate the song in the Portuguese collective conscience. Some verses of the *fado novo* of the 1930s to 1970s attribute the origins of the *fado* to the union between the disparate classes of the *fidalgo* and the prostitute. Others support the *fado's* candidacy for national song by marginalizing the deplored *fado choradinho* to the poor urban quarters, by signaling the dissolution of the relationship between Severa and the Count as the birth of the Mouraria *fado*. Yet, still others link Severa's death to the death of the *fado* by recontextualizing Sousa do Casacão's “Novo Fado da Severa” for an audience growing alien to the *fado* during Lisbon's inevitable modernization.

Many *fados* of the twentieth century refer to Dantas's interpretation of the

romance between Severa and the Count of Vimioso/Marialva to appeal to a national audience by defending the *fado* as good taste, thus reinvigorating Avelino de Sousa's 1912 support of the *fado* as the national song: "Que importa que o rufião ou a meretriz estropeiem o Fado? Isso que prova? Simplesmente que essa bela trova está na alma popular, e que, justamente porque é cantada do mais baixo ao mais alto da escala social, é que tem foros de canção nacional (42)."<sup>21</sup> By reiterating the social disparity of Dantas's literary lovers, the *fado* indicates its universal appeal in an attempt to promote its identity as the national song.

"Ah, Fado dum Ladrão" alludes to the nineteenth-century *fidalgos'* predilection for the Mouraria prostitutes: "Todos dizem mal do fado / Mas dizer mal foi sempre moda / pois ele já é cantado / por gente de alta roda."<sup>22</sup> The song reminds the *fado's* detractors of the noblemen who visited the Mouraria to hear Severa: "Noutro tempo a fidalguia / Dava-se ao luxo ditoso era / De passar na Mouraria / As noites com a Severa."<sup>23</sup> It also suggests an inherent Portuguese aesthetics of the *fado*: "Ouvir dizer mal do que é nosso / Não é um bom português." In a similar manner, "Anda Comigo" is an apology of the *fado* as a Portuguese tradition that pervades all classes.<sup>24</sup> A *fadista* invites a friend to visit the Mouraria to hear *fado*. "Anda comigo / Porque vais gostar de veras." The singer reminds his guest of the custom of the nobility's mingling with the lower classes, giving the example of Dantas's characters: "Por aqui também andaram / Marialvas e Severas"; he suggests that they continue the tradition: "Veste a samara / Põe o teu chapéu de lado / Traz contigo uma guitarra / E vamos cantar o fado"; and at last reflects on their own perpetuation of not only urban, but also national folklore: "Depois dirás mais uma vez / Como isto é bom e português."

While many *fados* view the birth of the national song as the fruit of an union between *fidalgo* and prostitute, "Tia Macheta" attributes the origins of the sad Mouraria *fado* to the dissolution of that very relationship.<sup>25</sup> The sentimental *fado choradinho* of the degraded Mouraria that Lopes Vieira and Arroio reject as a mere urban expression ill-suited for national heritage, is relegated to the status of Lisbon's song: a song that does not appeal to all classes nor to all regions. By exiling the Mouraria *fado* from the canons of national songs, "Tia Macheta"'s lyrics support the *fado castiço* as a national expression. In the *fado*, Severa seeks counsel from Dantas's novelesque clairvoyant go-between, when the Count has disappeared: "O amante não aparecera / A triste Severa sempre fiel / Chamou a Tia Macheta / Velha alcoveta p'ra saber

dele.”<sup>26</sup> Tia Macheta reads Severa’s cards: “A velha pegou nas cartas / Sebentas fartas de mãos tão sujas / E antes de as embaralhar / Pôs-se a grasnar como as corujas”; and Macheta’s hand reveals Severa’s fate: “Ele não vem minha filha / Tirou a espadilha de maus agoiros”; and implies that the Count has abandoned Severa for a noble woman: “Há também uma viagem / Uma personagem e a dama doiros.”<sup>27</sup> Severa waits for the Count until morning. When he does not return, the sad *fado* of the Mouraria is born: “O fidalgo não voltou / Severa esperou até ser dia / E desde essa noite / Aqui existe / O fado triste da Mouraria.”

“Tia Macheta’s” context remits us to a scene in Dantas’s play, which in turn reiterates the *fado novo*’s and Avelino de Sousa’s discourse concerning the national song; its appeal to all classes in Portuguese society. When the Count of Marialva locks Severa in his apartment so that she cannot associate with the *fadistas* of Bairro Alto and Mouraria, he appropriates the *fado* for the aristocracy by stealing it from the poor. By imprisoning the *fadista*, and allowing her to sing only with piano in salons, Marialva attempts to elevate the *fado* as an elite song. But, the Mouraria *fado* is, as Palmeirim narrates: “Um ‘hymno nacional’ [...]. Para o fadista, cidadão dos bairros infamados, *habitué* das espeluncas e dos bordeis, todo o paiz se resume n’esse mundo, que é o seu, a ‘sua pátria,’ o seu *habitat*” (86). Severa escapes through a window by jumping into a passing laundry wagon. She narrates to Timpanas: “O Conde tinha-me fechado em casa, num segundo andar. Não me pude ter! Cheguei à janela, passava a carroça duma lavadeira, atirei-me p’ra cima das troixas!” (148). Pinto de Carvalho attributes Severa’s fleeing to the *fadista*’s boredom and nostalgia for the milieu of the *faia* (78-79). Pimentel suggests that Severa feared that the Count of Vimioso would lose interest in the affair: “Antes ‘sardinha’ toda a vida do que ‘foie gras’ uma hora” (155).<sup>28</sup> I believe that both arguments serve Dantas’s propagandistic designs on the *fado* as a national song. Pimentel notes: “[O fadista] lisonjeia-se de que as classes superiores da sociedade executem o Fado no piano, em sumptuosas salas; como um estrangeiro se póde lisonjear de ouvir o hymno da sua nação, apreciado n’uma terra que não é a d’elle” (87-88). Besides being a prisoner of the Count, Severa was an exile in a foreign land; Severa did not want to sing only for the elite, but for the variety of classes that constituted her audience in the Bairro Alto and Mouraria. In Dantas’s play, Severa confronts Marialva:

E daí, prisões não me servem! Quero o sol, a gandaia, andar na rala, um dia tudo, outro dia nada, ser livre como o vento, gastar o riso e as chinelas, chamar meu a



todo o mundo, não ter rei nem roque, e mostrar ao sol de moinar de rua em rua, o meu lenço encarnado e a minha liberdade! Se me queres assim, muito bem; se me não queres, é graça! Oiro há muito; Severas há uma só. (157)<sup>29</sup>

In the following act, after Severa has not seen Marialva, she reads her own cards. Her fortune reveals that the count will return (174-79). The *fado* “Tia Macheta,” Severa’s biography and Dantas’s novel, however, concur that the Count and the *fadista* do not reunite.

Nevertheless, Dantas’s dramatic Count returns. And his heroine dies beside him as she sings: “Fui desgraçada no mundo / Desde que a saia vesti [...] / Eu quero morrer cantando / Já que chorando nasci” (196).<sup>30</sup> Thus the theatrical Severa realizes Portugal’s destiny to die embracing the *fado* (110). Within the context of the four-act play, Severa’s fatal collapse while singing the national song is significant. The *fadista* is transformed through her agony. She is no longer a miserable prostitute on Rua do Capelão, nor is she a mere emblem of the Mouraria, or even Lisbon; rather, Severa reenacts the death of all Portuguese in her final *fado*: a national song.

We have noted that Teófilo Braga’s publication of Sousa do Casacão’s “Fado da Severa” has played a crucial role in the diffusion of the legend of the Mouraria *fadista*. The lyricists of the 1930s to 1970s reinterpret Sousa do Casacão’s lament of Severa’s death as the death of the Mouraria as the quarter yields to Lisbon’s modernization, and as a new generation moves away from the *fado*.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Severa’s death is the death of the Mouraria, and the consequent death of the *fado*. In its reiteration of Dantas’s proposal of Severa as an emblem of the *fado* and the Mouraria, the *fado novo* announces the death of the national song and the destruction of the cradle of the national song. As a consequence, the destiny of the Portuguese to die in the arms of the *fado* is made impossible by the progressive extinction of the song, as a result of the architectural death of the Mouraria and the changing values of the Portuguese who shun the *fado* as an outdated genre.

The *fado novo* criticizes the ahistorical venture of urban modernization by calling the public’s attention to the destruction of the *fado*’s patrimony. What might appear to be a cause relevant to residents of the Mouraria or perhaps to architectural conservationists in Lisbon becomes relevant to a nation, thanks to the *fado* and to Dantas’s cultivation of an inextricable correlation between the national song and the endangered quarter. Sousa do Casacão’s lyrics, which serve to announce Severa’s death in Dantas’s play and

novel, constitute a criticism of the Estado Novo and the Câmara Municipal de Lisboa in the *fado novo* of the 1930s to 1970s.<sup>32</sup> The *novo-fadista* does not bemoan simply the death of a singer, but rather the death of the national song as a consequence of the death of the Mouraria.

A 1952 cartoon entitled “Fado da Demolição” depicts a crying nineteenth-century *fadista* who wanders through the rubble of the twentieth-century Baixa Mouraria, as he sings to the tune of the “Fado da Severa”: “Chorai, fadistas, chorai / Que a Mouraria lá vai / E está quase no ‘squeleto / Apesar da tradição / É bairro sem Salvação / Com o Salvação Barreto.”<sup>33</sup> As Lisbon tradition cedes to the Estado Novo’s imminent modernization, the *fado novo* reestablishes its folkloric link to Dantas’s and Leitão de Barros’s Mouraria. The *fado novo*, thus, expresses its protest to the Mouraria’s demolition in Manichaean terms; Severa’s Mouraria represents the *fado*’s Golden Age and modernization proposes to eradicate all architectural vestiges of the *fado*’s heritage. The envisioned new Mouraria is a sterile shell of Severa’s Mouraria, devoid of tradition and alien to the *fado*.

“Anda o Fado n’Outras Bocas” borrows the refrain of Sousa do Casacão’s “Fado da Severa” (“Chorai, fadistas, chorai / Como dizia a cantiga”) to lament that, while the *fado* appears to be alive, it has been distorted by a generation that does not understand Severa’s Mouraria: “Cantai, fadistas, cantai / Com vossas gargantas roucas / Que anda o fado n’outras bocas / Que não são bocas p’ró fado.”<sup>34</sup> The lyrics conclude that without the Mouraria, the *fado* will soon be extinct. In a similar manner, the *fado* “Maria Severa” remarks on the absence of tradition in the endangered Mouraria, by posing the question of what will become of the orphaned *fado*: “Que vai ser desse enjeitado / Se perdeu o maior bem / O amor de mãe.” Or, rather, what will happen to the *fado* when the Mouraria has disappeared? And the singer resigns to accept her role as part of the last generation of Mouraria *fadistas*, by alluding to Sousa do Casacão’s *fado* in her refrain: “Fadistas chorai / Porque ela morreu.”

In a concert in Boston, Mouraria *fadista* Mariza alluded to the legend of Maria Severa as an introduction to her version of Gabriel de Oliveira’s “Há Festa na Mouraria.”<sup>35</sup> In a shy, yet coquettish gesture, Mariza lifted the hem of her skirt to her knee to reveal black and white striped stockings identical to those worn by Dina Teresa in her role as Severa in Leitão de Barros’s film, *A Severa*. More than a century after Dantas created his folkloric avatar of the Mouraria *fadista*, and over a century and a half after Sousa do Casacão recorded in verse the impact of Severa’s death, the memory of the nineteenth-

century Mouraria *fadista* persists for Portuguese popular culture, so much so that it is being exported to Massachusetts Luso-American audiences of the twenty-first century. “Fadistas chorai / porque ela morreu”?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Palmeirim comments: “[A celebridade da Severa] depois logrou a consagração do livro, no fado em que se lastima a sua morte, e o sr. Theóphilo Braga recolheu no seu *Cancioneiro Popular*, na secção destinada a perpetuar pela impressão os “Fados e canções das ruas” (285-86). Palmeirim believed that the popularity of the “Fado da Severa” was due to the anonymity of its author: “Quem foi o poeta anónimo que deu forma ao sentimento popular? Ignora-se e foi de certo do mysterio que nasceu a sua popularidade” (287). Pimentel attributes the lyrics of the “Fado da Severa” to Sales Patuscã (61-2). Pinto de Carvalho identifies Sousa do Casacão (João José de Sousa) as the *fado*’s author (78, 100). Sucena details the discrepancy between the three authors, but later calls Sales Patuscã “presumível autor do ‘Fado da Severa’” (33, 58). António Manuel Morais cites Sousa do Casacão as the “Fado da Severa”’s author. We learn from Sucena that Sales Patuscã and Sousa do Casacão were the most distinguished *fado* lyricists during Severa’s lifetime (58). Teófilo Braga reproduces the Coimbra version of the “Fado da Severa” in his anthology. Variations on the “Fado da Severa” appear in César das Neves’s and Gualdino Campos’s *Cancioneiro de músicas populares* and Júlio de Castilho’s *Lisboa antiga: Bairros orientais*. Pimentel and Pinto de Carvalho add more recent verses from the contemporary oral tradition.

<sup>2</sup> While Pimentel blames the “Fado da Severa” for the cult of the Mouraria *fadista*, he recognizes Camilo Castelo Branco’s contribution to Severa’s legend.

<sup>3</sup> Pinto de Carvalho believed that Severa had lived on Travessa do Poço da Cidade in 1844 or 1845 (62).

<sup>4</sup> Eça de Queiroz mentions the *fado* in *Os Maias* (1888) (400, 402, 507, 531, 575, 650-51, 697) and *A Ilustre Casa dos Ramires* (1894) (57, 255-56, 288). We may contrast the opinion of Eça’s character, Ega, that there is nothing, in art, as beautiful as the *fado*, “nossa grande criação nacional,” with Eça’s most famous pronouncement on the Mouraria *fado*: “Atenas produziu a escultura, Roma fez o direito, Paris inventou a revolução, a Alemanha achou o misticismo. Lisboa que criou? O Fado [...]. Fatum era um Deus no Olimpo; nestes bairros é uma comédia. Tem uma orquestra de guitarras e uma iluminação de cigarros. Está mobilada com uma enxerga. A cena final é no hospital e na enxovia. O pano do fundo é uma mortalha” (*Os Maias* 650; “Lisboa” 1).

<sup>5</sup> Pinto de Carvalho collected these verses from oral tradition (104).

<sup>6</sup> “Maria Severa”: José Galhardo/Raul Ferrão.

<sup>7</sup> Queriol’s article appeared in *O popular* in April 1901 shortly after the 25 January 1901 debut of *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos*, as a vindication of the Count of Vimioso’s character. Raimundo António Bulhão de Pato, also a contemporary of Severa, responded that same year to support Queriol’s apology of the Count. Queriol’s portrait confirms some of the gentler characteristics of Dantas’s Severa.

<sup>8</sup> When Palmeirim visits Severa in the Bairro Alto he calls her a woman who lacked “dois dos principaes predicados femininos—a modestia e a timidez” (292). When Queriol meets Severa at the Count of Vimioso’s Palace in Campo Grande, he characterizes the *fadista* as “serviçal e não com pretensões a dona de casa.” He attributes Severa’s shyness to her discomfort among nobility (1).

<sup>9</sup> André Brim adapted Dantas’s novel and play as an operetta, with music by Filipe Duarte,

in 1909. In the late 1920s and 1930s, Dantas's play, *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos*, appeared in other parts of Europe. It had been translated to Catalan by Ribera y Rovira, and later appeared in Spanish, at the Teatro Roméa, in Barcelona (translated by José Palacios and Eugenio López Aydillo). Louise Ey translated the drama into German in 1920. *A Severa* was adapted to Spanish musical theatre by Francisco Romero and Guillermo Fernández Shaw, with music by Rafael Millán. After having appeared at the Teatro Apolo, in Madrid, the musical adaptation appeared at the Coliseu de Lisboa, in 1931 (*A Severa: Peça em quatro actos* 7-8).

<sup>10</sup> Malhoa's painting was exhibited for the first time at the Sociedade de Belas Artes, in 1917 (Sucena 359-60). *O fado* is on display at the Museu da Cidade in Campo Grande.

<sup>11</sup> "Cinco Quinas": Fernando Farinha.

<sup>12</sup> "Fado Malhoa": José Galhardo/Frederico Valério. "Fado Malhoa" profits from Dantas's proposal of the *fado* as the national song in its verse: "Pintou numa tela com arte e com vida / A trova mais bela da terra mais querida"; and again in the verse: "Subiu a um quarto onde viu / À luz de petróleo / E fez o mais português / Dos quadros a óleo."

<sup>13</sup> In Pinto de Magalhães's cartoon entitled "Um Desastre. 'A Severa' [...] Já Morreu," (*A paródia* 25 June 1931), Maria Severa is wearing the same skirt that Adelaide da Facada wears in Malhoa's painting. Francisco Valença's caricature "O Legado José Malhó," (*Sempre fixe*, 24 July 1941) satirizes the painting *O fado* through a parody of the lyrics of Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa." And Stuart Carvalhais's "No Centenário de Mestre Malhoa" (*Os ridículos*, 14 May 1955) reads: "Maria em Situação Severa tem tido sempre no 'Zé Fadista' um grande acompanhador!"

<sup>14</sup> Ângela Pinto debuted in the role of Maria Severa in 1901 at the Teatro D. Amélia. The performances of *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos* starring Amália Rodrigues (Teatro Monumental 1955) and Lena Coelho (Teatro Maria Matos 1990) perpetuated Dantas's image of the Mouraria, well into the last years of the twentieth century. Augusto Fraga directed a series of short films based on Amália's *fados*, including "Fado Malhoa" in Madrid in the summer of 1947. The video-clip appeared with feature films in Portuguese movie theaters in 1948 and 1949 (Pavão dos Santos 292; 296). The video-clip appears in RTP's 1995 documentary, "Amália: Uma Estranha Forma de Vida," based on Vitor Pavão dos Santos's interviews with the twentieth-century *fadista*.

<sup>15</sup> Jorge Cid's cartoon, "1901-1932" (*Guitarra de Portugal*, 10 February 1932) signals the impact of Dantas's *A Severa* and Leitão de Barros's *A Severa* on two generations: "Os trajes no carnaval de 1901 [...] sofreram a influência da peça 'A Severa', que então subiu à cena. Também o carnaval de 1932 vem sofrendo a influência da mesma obra, agora filmada, segundo temos constatado com a aproximação da quadra carnavalesca."

<sup>16</sup> The *fado* accompanied mainstream Portuguese cinema of the 1930s-50s. Portuguese film featured *fadistas* turned actors who often played *fadistas*. And as the decadent Mouraria and Alfama were the obvious loci in movies such as *A canção de Lisboa* (1933), *O pátio das cantigas* (1942), *Costa do Castelo* (1943) and *Fado, história d'uma cantadeira* (1947), the directors (re) constructed the popular neighborhoods in a picturesque form.

<sup>17</sup> Dina Teresa Moreira sang the "Novo fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)" (Júlio Dantas/Frederico de Freitas) in Leitão de Barros's film. Sucena attributes the 1930s launching of Rádio Colonial with having brought the *fado* to a national audience (213-14).

<sup>18</sup> In 1900, when Júlio Dantas was preparing his stage production of *A Severa* for its debut at Teatro D. Amélia (S. Luís), Hintze Ribeiro, acting on behalf of the Count of Vimioso's family, asked the author to omit the nobleman's character from the play. Dantas gave the character the apocryphal name of the Count of Marialva (Sucena 23; Morais 169-70).

<sup>19</sup> "Novo fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)": Júlio Dantas/Frederico de Freitas.

<sup>20</sup> António Porto accuses the Estado Novo of having cultivated a national curiosity surrounding the *fado* as a means to centralize the nation in Lisbon, thus to avoid northern resistance to the regime: "A burocracia lisboeta, para destruir uma certa resistência ao regime e ao centralismo,



por parte dos nortenhos, fazia ir para o ar, através da rádio e da televisão, doses maciças de *fados lisboetas* e as coisas chegaram ao ponto de se considerar, mesmo no Porto, que não se era português se não se fosse, pelo menos uma vez na vida, não a Meca mas à Mouraria ou a Alfama, ouvir uma sessão de ‘fadinho’ muito choradinho, como convinha às desgraças nacionais, começadas em Alcácer Quibir, onde segundo alguns foram encontradas 10 mil guitarras, depois da trágica derrota” (13; Sucena 354). Porto ignores the fact that the *fado* had earned the reputation, however controversial, of national song before the existence of the Estado Novo.

<sup>21</sup> Pinto de Carvalho and Pimentel disagree about Severa’s relationship with the Count of Vimioso. Pimentel does not believe that the Count was in love with Severa: “não se deixou arrastar nunca por uma paixão delirante e degradante. Nunca deixou de ser um fidalgo, um gentilhomen; nunca enloqueceu por amor da Severa. Foi na primeira sociedade, um bohemio, mas não perdeu nunca a sua linha aristocratica” (154). Pinto de Carvalho, however, concurs with Dantas’s portrayal of the relationship between the *fadista* and the Count: “o aristocrata não teve um simples capricho epidémico por essa franduna salaz, por esse ouropel fanado que se atirava para os bastidores depois do espectáculo. Gostou deveras dos seus beijos, que se desviavam em colar e que eram como que um prelúdio de guitarra para os acordes ferozes dos abraços” (79).

<sup>22</sup> “Ah, Fado dum Ladrão”: Oscar Gusmão Martins/Carlos dos Santos.

<sup>23</sup> In Dantas’s novel, after having attended an opera at the Dona Amélia Theater, the Count of Marialva and his friends go to the Bairro Alto to hear Severa sing.

<sup>24</sup> “Anda Comigo”: João Nobre.

<sup>25</sup> “Tia Macheta”: Manuel Soares/Linhares Barbosa.

<sup>26</sup> Dantas’s Macheta advises Severa’s mother (Cesária/Barbuda), arranges a deacon as her paramour and intervenes to help keep young Severa in boarding-school at the Coleginho. Dantas’s Cesária/Barbuda is based loosely on Severa’s mother, Ana Maria Gertrudes Honofriana, and the late nineteenth-century *fadista*, Cesária (a Mulher da Alcântara). Dantas’s Barbuda arrives in the Mouraria, fleeing from a gypsy caravan, in the Alentejo. Pinto de Carvalho, Alberto Pimentel and Miguel Queriol refute Severa’s gypsy heritage; Norberto de Araújo, perhaps influenced by Dantas’s and Leitão de Barros’s creations, believed that Severa had come to Lisbon with a horde of gypsies (Pinto de Carvalho 62; Pimentel 143; Queriol 1; *Peregrinações* 70). Because A Barbuda—so called because she was rumored to have whiskers—lived in a tavern on Rua da Madragoa (officially Rua Vicente Borga in 1863), in 1820, she was probably a *varina*. Dantas’s Cesária (Barbuda) does not love Severa; however, she is compelled by a maternal instinct to protect her daughter, especially from her likely fate: prostitution. When Dantas’s Severa discovers the *fado* and subsequently loses her virginity, Cesária is devastated. Pimentel, however, believed that Barbuda lacked maternal compassion and that it was she who prostituted Severa (142). When Severa is an adult, Macheta brings Barbuda the news that her daughter is the Count of Marialva’s lover. And, toward the end of the novel, Macheta advises Severa, after she has rejected the Count.

<sup>27</sup> Here, the *fado* alludes to Dantas’s delicate novelesque character of the Marquesa de Ceide, whom the Count of Marialva rebuffs in favor of Severa.

<sup>28</sup> Both Pinto de Carvalho and Pimentel believe that Dantas’s scene of Severa’s flight in a laundry wagon is based on a true story. Dantas may have written the episode of Severa’s escape based on Pimentel’s article from the *Diário de notícias* (12 June 1893), based on stories that he had gathered from the oral tradition. Pimentel reproduces the article, in his book, in which he narrates the search for Severa. One of the Count of Vimioso’s friends found her in a tavern on Rua dos Inglesinhos, in the Bairro Alto, playing the guitar and surrounded by an audience. The Count’s friend peeked into the tavern and sang: “Todos aquelles que são / Da nossa sucia efectiva / Lamentam a fugitiva / Da Rua do Capellão.” Pimentel continues: “A Severa levantou, contrariada, a cabeça, tendo conhecido aquella voz. Estava apanhada, fôra descoberta, pareceu-lhe que perdia a liberdade n’aquella hora” (155-56).

<sup>29</sup> In Dantas's novel, Severa delivers a similar speech to Tia Macheta, in which she explains her motives for having left the Count: "Se eu quisesse tornava. Mas não quero. Não posso! Não estou decidida a fazer a ninguém o sacrifício da minha liberdade. Quero o sol, a independência, ser senhora dos meus passos, sem prisões de ninguém, sem dever favores, livre como o vento, poder ter coração para quem eu quiser, rir e chorar à minha vontade. Porque a vida é isso! Ah! Mas como eu gosto dele, tia Macheta!" (292).

<sup>30</sup> In Dantas's drama Severa collapses between Custódia and Marialva (196). In the novel, Custódia brings the news of Severa's death to the Count (301). Colvin comments that Pimentel and Araújo believe that the *fadista* died of indigestion, but that Pinto de Carvalho believes that she died in a hospital bed of complications related to syphilis. According to Severa's burial record, she died at 9:00 p.m. on 30 Nov. 1846. Her death certificate, issued 16 Nov. 1848, lists apoplexy as the cause of death (141n27).

<sup>31</sup> See Colvin, "Gabriel de Oliveira's 'Há Festa na Mouraria' and the *Fado Novo*'s Criticism of the Estado Novo's Demolition of the Baixa Mouraria" for more on the allusion to Severa's death as the death of the Mouraria in the Salvação Barreto urban rehabilitation projects, between the 1930s and 1970s (138-42).

<sup>32</sup> Sousa do Casacão's lyrics: "Chorai, fadistas chorai / Que a Severa já morreu [...]" are the last lines of Dantas's play and novel, as the mourning *fadistas* of the Mouraria break into a spontaneous chorus (200; 303). Dantas, however, must resort to ellipsis, to avoid anachronism, as the previous lines of the "Fado da Severa" would read: "Hoje mesmo faz um ano / Que a Severa faleceu."

<sup>33</sup> Eduardo Faria "Fado da Demolição," *Os ridículos*, 17 May 1952. See Colvin and Macedo de Sousa for a contextualization of this cartoon among others that denounce the Salvação Barreto program between the 1940s and 1960s (Colvin 136-37; Macedo de Sousa 48).

<sup>34</sup> "Anda o Fado n'Outras Bocas": Artur Ribeiro. Variations on "Fado loucura" (Júlio de Sousa/Frederico de Brito) have echoed Sousa do Casacão's refrain from the "Fado da Severa": "Chorai, chorai, guitarras da minha terra / O vosso pranto encerra / A minha vida amargurada / E se é loucura / Amar-te desta maneira / Quer eu queira / Quer não queira / Não posso amar-te calada"; "Chorai, chorai, poetas do meu país / Troncos da mesma raiz / Da vida que nos juntou / E se vocês / Não estivessem ao meu lado / Então não havia fado / Nem fadistas como eu sou." Pinto de Magalhães's cartoon "Um Destastre. 'A Severa' [...] Já Morreu," (*A paródia*, 25 June 1931) criticizes Dantas's and Leitão de Barros's distortion of Severa's biography. His drawing depicts Dantas's sitting on Severa's lap, playing a *guitarra*, while a nineteenth-century *fadista* covers his ears. The accompanying text—a criticism of the 1931 film—recycles Sousa do Casacão's refrain: "Agora é que já pode cantar-se, com verdade, mesmo ao respeito da fita: chorai, fadistas chorai—que a Severa já morreu [...]. A tão pregoada fita, realizada em Paris, é tudo menos a Severa. Inferior como argumento, inferior como realização, inferior em tudo. A dois ou três escudos, em qualquer cinema barato, ainda se tolera. Com preços altos, não."

<sup>35</sup> Mariza sang at the Berklee Auditorium in Boston on 22 Oct. 2004.

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