

## (Re)imagining Masculinities and the Nation in Garrett's *Travels in My Homeland*

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Benedict Anderson's groundbreaking work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* has greatly influenced the literary and cultural analysis of nationhood, national identity, and nationalism in the last three decades. According to Anderson, nation-ness is a "cultural artifact" (4) formed during the eighteenth century and deeply linked to emerging cultural practices such as the development of the novel and the newspaper. Both practices, he argues, mark a shift in the mode of "apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to think the nation" (22). On the one hand, the near simultaneity of the communication conveyed by the newspaper provided a sense of calendrical coincidence between the writing and the reading within the borders of the linguistic community; on the other hand, the "immersion of the novel in homogenous, empty time," in contrast to the prefatory genealogies of ancient chronicles and holy books, "is a precise analogue of the idea of nation, which is also conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history" (26). More precisely, both practices were instrumental in the creation of a modern sense of time and space, as well as crucial to the reshaping of social bonds among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europeans, so that they became members of large, linguistically delimited communities—"the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation" (25).

Despite the importance of the nation and nationalism for various kinds of identity politics, an examination of the intertwining of categories such as

gender and sexuality in the historical construction of the concepts of nationhood and national identity is absent from Anderson's analysis. The author's gender blindness results, as Mary Louise Pratt remarks in her essay "Woman, Literature and National Brotherhood," in the repetition, at a theoretical level, of the very same androcentrism displayed in the modern idea of the nation as a fraternal community. Devising the need to place gender along with other categories, such as race and class, as well as with their intersecting relations, in the cultural and historical analysis of nationhood and national politics of identity, recent scholarship has been asking how "these categories interact with, constitute, or otherwise illuminate each other" (2), to quote the words of the editors of *Nationalisms and Sexualities*. George Mosse's examination of the creation of modern masculinity in his *The Image of Man* is exemplary, in this context, and highly relevant for the purposes of reading Garrett's novel, as I will suggest. Mosse establishes a connection between the modern reconfiguration of gender identities and other historical transformations that have occurred in the same period. He argues that contemporary Western hegemonic masculinities began to form towards the end of the eighteenth century, in a process deeply related to other social, cultural, and political factors, such as the fall of the *ancien régime*, the rise and consolidation of the new bourgeois order, and the emergence of the modern idea of the nation. However, these new constructions of masculinity did not represent a sudden shift from previous hegemonic styles. In fact, this change was a slow process of reconfiguration and reconstruction, which cannot be understood outside its context. Similar to the points made by the critics of Anderson's gender blindness in *Imagined Communities*, Mosse's examination of the modern reconfiguration of masculinity underlines the interconnection between categories of identity—both at the roots of their constitution and at the level of their historically situated reconfigurations—and other cultural phenomena. In light of this interconnectedness in the broadly understood system of modern culture, I will attempt to show in this essay that the ideologically marked representations of masculinity and male homosocial bonds in *Travels in My Homeland*, which are intertwined with the narrator's problematization of the nation's decadence, reveal dimensions of Garrett's gender and sexual politics in which homosocial relations and nationalist discourse play a greater role than heterosexual relationships in the construction and definition of ideal masculinity.<sup>1</sup> Through the following reading, I will endeavor not only to contribute to the still-open debate on Garrett's literary work and ideology, but also to shed light

upon dimensions of the reconfiguration of modern masculinities and socially sanctioned male homosocial bonds amid the consolidation of the bourgeois order. Garrett's *Travels in My Homeland*, as I will argue, reveals an intricate web in which representations of gender and nationhood correlate with and illuminate each other, which adds to its long-recognized literary value a concomitant relevance for the more broadly drawn analyses of nineteenth-century Portuguese history and culture.

*Travels in My Homeland* is a crucial text in Portuguese Romanticism, as well as within Garrett's literary production and ideological development. Born in 1799, Garrett lived through a decisive period of Portuguese history, in which the structures of the *ancien régime* were gradually and painfully overthrown and the modern state came into existence. As the narrator of *Travels in My Homeland* affirms, Garrett's "mere instinct for liberal ideas" (61), theoretically consolidated in his early years as a law student in Coimbra, led him to a politically engaged life. His political thinking evolved from a youthful hopefulness in liberalism and the nation's ability for regeneration at the dawn of the *ancien régime* to a severely critical analysis of his contemporary Portugal, characterized by political instability and attempting to recover from years of civil war. The late Garrett who travels to Santarém is quite different from the young enthusiastic poet of the liberal revolutionary cause: the hope in the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice, which considerably defines his early work, is now absent from the surface of the text and has given place to deep desolation as concerns the nation in a state of moral and physical ruin, as well as humanity itself. In 1843, when he started to write of his journey from Lisbon through Ribatejo, Garrett viewed the country, as Ofélia Paiva Monteiro puts it, as already "freed from the omnipotence of the friars," but fallen "in the even more evil hands of the barons" (16; trans. mine). It is in a portrayed context of national degeneration, disdain for the country's material and symbolic patrimony, and moral decadence during the years preceding the *Regeneração* that the first diegetic strand of *Travels in My Homeland*, that of the traveling, is situated. More specifically, the first day of the narrator's journey is the "17th of July, in this year of grace 1843" (22), and the last is little less than a week later, on the 22nd.

Apart from the first diegetic strand of the narrator's physical and intellectual digressions, an analysis of the novel's narrative structure reveals two others: the story of Carlos and Joaninha, told by the same narrator, and Carlos's confessional letter—situated at the hypo-diegetic and hypo-hypo-diegetic

levels respectively. The diegetic strand of the journey is, however, structurally and thematically unified with the other two. On the one hand, Chapter XLIII establishes the definitive structural binding, through a mutual contamination of the diegetic and hypo-diegetic strands, or metalepsis, when the narrator meets Friar Dinis and Joanhina's grandmother in person, in front of the window of Joanhina's house. On the other, the narrator's access to and reading of Carlos's autobiographical letter collapses the structural autonomy of the hypo-hypo-diegetic strand. When considered thematically, the unity of the three diegetic strands has been widely acknowledged. According to Jacinto do Prado Coelho, the narrator's digressions on the state of the nation and its moral and physical decadence have their own metaphorical equivalents in the story of Carlos and Joanhina:

A transformação de Carlos em barão e candidato a deputado [. . .] liga-se à ideia de vitória do materialismo na época de Garrett, que é uma das constantes do livro; e a posição política de Frei Dinis [. . .] deve coincidir em parte com a do autor, em 1843 já desenganado das “abstracções de escola” e convencido de que não há liberalismo autêntico sem o espírito do envangelho. (149)

Similarly, through drawing both structural and thematical links, Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez argues that the story of Carlos and Joanhina is diegetically situated on a “pedestal” (199), illustrating from that privileged position Garrett's own ideological discourse as a “*mise en abîme* of Garrett's ideas expressed throughout the text” (200). As the starting point for a reading of the intertwining of masculinity and nationhood in *Travels in My Homeland*, I suggest that this thematical and structural unity, along with its ideological dimension, also reveals a male homosocial subtext, which has yet to be considered in Garrettian scholarship. In fact, as I will argue, it allows us to perceive the central role that the correlation of textual national imagining with male homosociality plays in Garrett's political discourse and idealization of masculinity.

The history of the novel's publication, along with its dialogical communicative economy, may be considered to reflect, even under superficial scrutiny, the transformations Anderson linked to the rise of the modern idea of the nation. First published in *folhetins* in *Revista Universal Lisbonense* between 1843 and 1846, and then in book form (1846), the text went from a more simultaneous kind of communication between the narrator and the physical reader to a more deferred type, maintaining however the textual “immersion

[. . .] [in its own] homogeneous, empty time.”<sup>2</sup> As Carlos Reis affirms in “Leitura e leitora nas ‘Viagens’ de A. Garrett,” the marks of an initial publication in a periodical remain in the novel’s textual communicative strategies that attempt to guide the reader and control his or her expectations: e.g., the summaries at the beginning of each chapter, certain dialogical aspects of the narrator’s interpellations of his readers—generally male, sporadically female—which often attempt to (re)capture their attention and recall what has been said in previous chapters (8). The dialogical character of the novel, however, has deeper implications as well. In fact, the communicative economy of *Travels in My Homeland* is at the core of the book’s political contours; moreover, as I will discuss below, it is deeply implicated in the narrator’s ideological discourse, insofar as it intertwines the construction of meaning, textual national imagining, and the constitution of male homosocial bonds or the representation of their suspension.

The discourse of *Travels in My Homeland* is substantially masculine. The only exception is the “trova de *Santa Iria*” in Chapter XIII in which the narrator is Santa Iria herself: ironically, she is a woman whose throat has been cut. The other narrative voices are those of the male narrator—who also appropriates for himself the story of Carlos and Joaquina, told to him by a travel companion—and of Carlos, in his letter to Joaquina. Considering only the male voices, I shall leave Carlos’s confessions aside for now and concentrate on the discourse of the narrator and on his textual addressee, the reader.<sup>3</sup> The frequent interpellation of the reader by the male narrator in *Travels in My Homeland* has often been discussed by scholars, who have not been in agreement, however, with regard to the particulars of the gender divide underlying this address. The implications of the author’s usage of both “leitor” [male reader] and “leitora(s)” [female reader(s)], in lieu of just the male/universalizing “leitor”—as Garrett’s contemporary Portuguese would allow—are crucial for a reading of the correlation between gender and national imagining in *Travels in My Homeland*. Carlos Reis has argued that Garrett’s sporadic addressing of the female reader(s) does not negate the universalizing character of the masculine noun used on other occasions (*Introdução* 10). Nevertheless, as Victor K. Mendes remarks, if the noun “leitor” in *Travels in My Homeland* has a universalizing scope, then why does the narrator on some occasions make such distinctions along gender lines (43)? From Reis’s perspective, the addressing of the “leitor” includes both male and female readers; hence, the addressing of the “leitora(s)” is an occasional aberration that excludes the male reader momentarily from the interpellation. If by using a universalizing

male noun, the narrator already includes both male and female readers, does it then follow that his use of “leitora(s)” represents an exclusion of the male at certain moments, the female being therefore always present as the narrator’s addressee? Or perhaps, contrary to Reis’s proposal, both usages are instead mutually exclusionary? As I will argue, the division of gendered spheres underlying the addressing of both “leitor” and “leitora(s)” shows that the usage of the male noun does not have a non-gendered universalizing character, and that the addressing of the “leitora(s)” does not represent an occasional exclusion of the male reader. Moreover, I will propose that the gendered division in the addressing of the reader, along with the ideologically marked representation of male homosocial bonds (or their suspension), reflects the permanent instability of the female subject within the masculine national imagining in *Travels in My Homeland* and the novel’s male homosocial subtext.

The addressing of the “leitor”—only once in the plural form (123)—happens mainly in moments of the narrator’s reflections on Portuguese culture, its past and its present, which are frequently linked to the narrator’s “archaeological studies” (187) or to the process of telling the story of Carlos and Joantina. These interpellations always involve a positive qualification of the bond between the narrator and the reader—e.g., “dear” (49)—or of the reader himself, who is said to be “benevolent” (27) and “indulgent” (126). Through his empathetic address of *a reader*, along with the exclusion of “hypocrites” from a community of eligible readers (“I am not talking to the hypocrites” [126]), the narrator both suggests a strengthening of the bonds of proximity and mutual identification between himself and his reader and contributes to the collective definition of ideal readers (“leitores”) by naming at least some of those who are to remain outside the margins of this idealized community. Further, the narrator’s empathetic treatment of the reader reveals a crucial strategic move towards the construction of meaning in which this suggested particularization and proximity also play a significant role. In Chapter XXVII the narrator arrives in Santarém. He greets “the patriarchal symbol of our ancient existence” (149) in its olive groves and digresses on Portuguese culture, architecture, and the glorious past while describing the town. He writes about Santarém:

And all deserted, all silent, mute, dead! One thinks one is entering the great metropolis of an extinct people, of a nation that was powerful and famous but disappeared off the face of the earth and left only the monuments of its gigantic constructions.

On the left, the huge convent of Sítio, or of Jesus, then the convent das Donas, followed by that of St Dominic, famous for the tomb of our Portuguese Faust. . . . Opposite, the ancient nunnery of Santa Clara and next to it the low Gothic arches of St Francis, about whose last superior, the austere Friar Dinis, I have told you so much, dear reader, and have as much again to tell you! (150)

The now empty streets of Santarém are simultaneously a synecdoche of the decaying nation and the scenery for the exemplary story of Friar Dinis, structurally and ideologically binding the diegetic strands of the journey and the metaphorical tale of the “maiden of the nightingales” (148). The narrator’s position is one of visual, diegetic, and intellectual agency in relation to the addressed reader; he subjectively chooses what and how his interlocutor will almost photographically see. Likewise, he guides the reader through the various diegetic strands, explicitly managing his expectations and conditioning his reading. The suggestion of a certain degree of affection between the two entities functions in this unequal relation as an attempt to involve the reader in an active process of reading and interpreting signs of “the profound idea that is concealed beneath this frivolous appearance of a brief trip” (27), as well as beneath the “story of the maiden of the nightingales,” written down for the reader’s own “benefit” (147). However, as Mendes shows, the reader in Garrett’s book functions as a strategy of “hermeneutic orientation,” rejecting any “constructivist democratization of meaning” (54). In the reading process, the narrator’s role is that of a mentor, a guide to the uncovering of fixed and eternal meanings: the “eternal truths” (217). The signs of these eternal “profound idea[s],” at the same time universal and national—just as the “Blessed Friar Gil” is the “Portuguese Faust,” a national figure described in universal terms—are disseminated through the different diegetic strands of the text “for the instruction and edification of [. . .] [the] benevolent reader” (60). The “leitor” may have access to this knowledge in the narrator’s digressions on culture and society by reading the monumental signs of Santarém’s past—“the book of stone in which is inscribed the most interesting and poetic part of our chronicles” (157)—and in Carlos’s and Friar Dinis’s personal stories, the ideologically marked metaphors of the nation’s problematic present.<sup>4</sup>

In its political dimension, the “story of the maiden of the nightingales” is most of all the tale of a complex and, for a substantial part of the narrative as well, secret relation between a father and a son, Friar Dinis and Carlos, who represent the old and new generations, the old and new Portugal, with

the civil war and the nation's concomitant ideological disintegration in the backdrop. Both female figures, Joaquina and the grandmother, are peripheral to this central relationship, whose representation allegorically extends to the level of the family the suspension of male bonds in a country divided into political factions and in an undefined present amid civil war. Friar Dinis, the father, is an uncompromising absolutist, "a man of austere principles, of rigid beliefs [. . .] with the strength of the great intellectual and moral truths" (90); he stands unconditionally for the principles of the old monarchy, "even if those who invoked it were lying hypocrites" (91). Carlos, the son, is on the opposite side; he is a liberal, a soldier in the constitutional army who has experienced exile and political struggle, both intellectually and in the battlefield. He has fled his home in the valley for supposing it to be "polluted by a great sin [. . .] [and] defiled by a terrible crime" (224). Wanting to leave his past and to purify himself of its "sin," he leaves his grandmother and his cousin Joaquina and goes to study in Coimbra, where he will later give voice to his liberal ideas, which ultimately will lead him into exile. The crime Carlos has envisaged was committed by Dinis de Ataíde—the secular name of his father, the man who later becomes Friar Dinis—as the murderer of both the husband of Carlos's mother, who was his mistress, and the husband's brother, Joaquina's father. Dinis de Ataíde, "the destroyer and the dishonor of [. . .] [the] whole family" (186), as Friar Dinis calls himself to his son, over whom "there hung a tremendous accusation which had made him, Carlos, quit his parents' home" (129), killed without knowing whom he was killing, and in self-defense. The corpses were carried away by the floodwaters and discovered only when too decomposed to denounce the crime. However, the crime did not go unpunished. Dinis's love affair with Carlos's mother and the violent crime he has committed provoke in him a desire for redemption, which leads him to confess his crime to his family and to abandon secular life; it also starts a process of endless suffering for both female characters, along with the suspension of male bonds between father and son. Dinis's mistress, Carlos's mother, died of "grief and remorse [. . .] in [his] arms"; Carlos and Joaquina's grandmother cried "blood and water till she became blind" (185); the paternal bond that links Friar Dinis to Carlos remains unspeakable within the family and a secret unknown to the son (as well as to the reader) and to Joaquina, until it is dramatically revealed near the end of the novel (Chapter XXXIV) while Carlos recovers from battle wounds in a "cell in the convent of St. Francis in Santarém" (171).



Numerous clues as to the emotional ambiguity of the relation between Carlos and Friar Dinis, along with the existence of blood ties behind its complex affective structure, are dropped throughout “the story of the maiden of the nightingales.” They appear emphatically in Joaninha’s comments, who in a dialogue with her cousin goes so far as to insinuate physical similarities between the two men; when Carlos frowns at her, she affirms: “Don’t ever frown at me like that again, because you look just like . . . I never saw such a likeness” (137). She also hints at the monk’s paternal sentiments in relation to his son, commenting on Friar Dinis’s emotions towards Carlos that “a father’s love and devotion for his child are not greater than his for [him]” (135). Similarly, Carlos’s and Joaninha’s own feelings also seem to suggest the existence of ties stronger than friendship among the characters of the valley. In the eyes of both cousins, Friar Dinis is an ambivalent figure. Joaninha, who witnesses the terror he inspires in her grandmother, dislikes him: “Always frightening her, making her feel guilty! That God of his is a God of terror” (136). “I don’t like him,” she asserts, although recognizing that her “dislike of him is unjust” (135). As for Carlos, his relation with Friar Dinis is marked by conflict, but also of an ambiguous kind. Although Carlos clashes with the friar on ideological and emotional terms, the affectionate filial bonds remain experienced at a “mystic” level: “Friar Dinis, a man he wanted to hate, thought he did hate, but one on whose behalf a mystic, secret voice cried out in depths of his spirit, a voice which said: ‘It may all be true, but you cannot hate this man’” (129). As “brothers” fighting on the battlefield, “who hate each other with all the hatred that was once love” (170), father and son in a divided nation stand as well on different barricades, separated by the “cry of war” (120), not recognizing the bonds that unconditionally tie them together.

On Carlos’s return to the house in the valley, having concluded his studies in Coimbra, the relation between him and the monk reaches a crucial moment of ambivalence. The day of his arrival, a Friday, is also the day of the friar’s weekly visit to the house. After the “first greetings and embraces” (97), both men are left alone. Friar Dinis is then the first to hear the news from Carlos: he has no choice but to leave the country, due to the political stances he has taken recently. Friar Dinis deeply disapproves of Carlos’s attitude:

“That I have decided to emigrate.”

“To emigrate? You? . . . What for? What madness is this?”

“I have never been more sane.”

“Carlos, Carlos! Not another word on the subject. What bad company have you been keeping? What evil books have you been reading? You are such a . . . Carlos, I forbid you to think such madness.”

“You forbid . . . me . . . to think! . . . Well, I . . .”

“Yes, I forbid you to think. Read Horace, if you are tired of the pandects [ . . . ]”

“Why? Must I always be a child?” (98)

Carlos answers the monk's attempt at fatherly guidance—he both mocks the young man's decision and considers it a provisory result of evil external influence, infantilizing him through the questioning of his reasonability—and his subsequent interdiction with an emancipatory stance, which ultimately contributes to enforce the ambiguity of the power relation between the two men. Notwithstanding Carlos's defiance of the monk's authority, at the same time he also contributes to establishing it as paternal authority by explicitly refusing to be its childlike object. Young Carlos demands autonomy for himself from the monk's power, as well as from what the monk represents: both his position of authority and his ambiguous paternal influence. The decision to leave Portugal is “considered and unshakeable [ . . . ] [he] want[s] nothing to do with this country, nor with [ . . . ] [the] house” in the valley (98–99). Carlos rebels against what he considers to be the humiliation of “having an outsider in charge” (99) in the house where he grew up, as well as against the national social order embodied in that authority figure. In his refusal of Dinis's ascendance, Carlos is the only character able to disempower the monk, whose power over the female characters is total.<sup>5</sup> He does so mainly by way of his invocation of something unspeakable, something he has “always suspected.” The entire dialogue is saturated with silences, with the suggestion of forbidden words that might bring the monk's guilt to light. Carlos's capacity to turn the tables relies on these words that are impossible to pronounce; more precisely, on the unspeakable secret they might disclose: it is as if he were saying, “I know, Father Dinis, but do not ask me what I know.” The mere suggestion of the unspeakable made “Friar Dinis [look] like a pupil, his voice had a suppliant tone and he no longer trembled with anger but with distress. Carlos, on the other hand, spoke with the severe, earnest tone of a man who is sure that he is right and is noble in his resentment” (99). Carlos's disempowerment of the father through a suggestion of his guilt is, however, merely an episode in the tragic tale of the suspension of male bonds and male disempowerment in *Travels in My Homeland*. The son's alienation from the father and his rejection

of the social order the latter represents do not lead in Garrett's narrative to the creation of a satisfying new reality for him, nor to the construction of a new order for the nation. His alienation from his father is an alienation from the past without any positive alternative for the present. As the monk summarizes in the last chapter, after all that has happened to the country during the first decades of the nineteenth century, "society is no longer what it was, it cannot go back to what it was, but still less can it stay the way it is" (245). Moreover, it is part of Carlos's alienation from the prerogatives of masculinity, which is at the origin of his fall into an excessive heterosexual sentimentality, as I will discuss next.

Carlos's political engagement with liberalism takes him into exile, while the crime of Dinis de Ataíde leads him to impose upon himself a monastic life in a time in which monks are subject to persecution: "He wanted to be a monk, the nineteenth century's despised, taunted monk" (95). Further in his life, Carlos will become a baron, while his father will remain loyal to his principles; but a curiously similar pathos may be detected in their apparently very different lives. Heterosexual love outside the normative model of the family leads to Dinis de Ataíde's crime, from which he tries to redeem himself by fleeing from the secular world. Analogously, Carlos's heterosexual relations are not confined to the family model; in fact, he is unable to form a family due to his unrestrained heterosexual sentimentality: he falls in love with all of the three English sisters he meets in his exile, as well as with Joaninha. At the same time, he recognizes that "every woman who loves [. . .] [him] will inevitably be unhappy" (242).<sup>6</sup> Dinis attempts redemption from his pathos through the self-imposition of an ascetic life in the male homosocial context of the monastic institution. He seeks his purification in the transcendental truths after his moment of hubris, after the climax provoked by his heterosexual failure of restraint. The monk's self-imposed identity exposes the logic that underlies the adoption of self-discipline as a virtue and as a prerogative of an ultimately autonomous maleness: "he chafed his breast with the harsh austerities of his doctrine and rigid principles in order to assuage the acute pain and grief that consumed him. The monk was on the outside, the man on the inside" (102).

This discipline is imposed from the outside, but it is self-imposed: inside the monk's robe there is the man who has chosen this identity freely and who consciously imposes on himself the "rigid principles" of the ascetic spiritual program. However, the monk receives his masculine imperatives of self-restraint and asceticism from the historical past, from an immemorial legacy

of religious transcendence, which representationally constitutes these imperatives as atemporal, as prerogatives of masculinity. Carlos, on the other hand, will find no redemption: his “nature is incorrigible” (223). Though he “was brought up [. . .] for the tranquil glory and modest delights of a good family man [. . .] [his] star did not wish it to be so” (242). The young man’s ethical path diverges from that followed by the monk since, after a promising start, it has become oriented toward moral decline, which the narrator’s digressions relate to a sentimental excess—“Having felt too much [. . .] one fine day he lapsed into indifference and he turned politician” (188)—along with the “morbid instability of his social being” (134). In fact, as a young man, Carlos was among “the most generous men”:

Few sons of the social Adam had so many reminiscences of that other earlier homeland and tended so much to resemble the original type that had issued from the Almighty’s hands; few strove so hard to shake off the oppressive embrace of social constraints and redeem himself in nature’s blessed freedom as did our Carlos. (134)

Apparently, not many other men would naturally be as well prepared as Carlos to echo Rousseau’s thought in his defense of nature against society.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, his masculine attributes as a young man seem to presuppose the hegemony of nature in the constitution of his gender identity, as well as the contribution of his *natural* maleness to the construction of his ethical behavior:

He was of average height, slim in build but with the strong, broad chest a man needs for his heart to beat freely; the stalwart elegance of his military bearing was perfectly visible under his ample, thick military overcoat [. . .].

His eyes, which were grey and not very large, but extremely bright and lively, displayed the talent, the volubility, perhaps the thoughtlessness, but also the upright simplicity of a frank, loyal and generous character [. . .]. (115–16)

Young Carlos’s masculine values, such as his love for freedom and his conured spirit of a soldier, are associated with body parts and physiognomic characteristics. His body and heart are those of a free man and his posture that of a soldier, a revolutionary; his big eyes denote loyalty and generosity. The description of young Carlos establishes a correlation between his male body and his character, naturalizing both his moral values and his masculinity.

However, Carlos then goes on to become an excessive character, through an extended process that leads him to a position of ethical death: he becomes a baron. The excessive baron, who does not seem to acknowledge his limits (or the existence of limits?—it is generally unclear what these limits are), who is a creation of his century, and the awful successor of the monk (245), stands on the opposite side of the ascetic friar's ethical position.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to Friar Dinis, who after leaving behind the secular world has reappeared as the "austerest monk" (94), "a gaunt, thin man, shriveled as a skeleton" (220), Carlos becomes the unrestrained character, as he represents the crossing of borders and the negation of self-discipline in the context of the emergence of the bourgeois order in Portugal. While Carlos's social acting is based on accumulation, the ascetic friar performs abdication. In other words, as Phillip Rothwell puts it in his seminal analysis of the figure of the absent father in Garrett's book, Carlos "embodies the incorrigible articulation of an affirmative YES that contrasts, or rather competes, with his paternal NO" (58). The description of the later Carlos, made baron, in the last chapter, is eloquent: "You would not even know him if you saw him now! He has grown fat, rich and became a baron!" (244). He has accumulated fortune, his body has enlarged: he is both physically and socially excessive.

Carlos's last redemptive attempt seems to be his confessional letter. Contrary to the narrator's previous digressions on the character, which emphasize the pernicious influence of the society degrading Carlos's good nature (134), Carlos's own words accuse most vehemently the "excess" that has "destroyed" him (223). More precisely, it is the excess of heterosexual sentimentality that, in conjunction with the society, has transformed him into a "moral aberration" (235).<sup>9</sup> When he left Portugal, according to himself, "he had not been in love." It is in England that he seems to have experienced the overwhelming heterosexual sentimentality and desire he confesses to Joaninha. Carlos starts off his letter by explaining in certain detail what he considers to be the origins of male heterosexual attachment:

There are three sorts of women in this world: the woman one admires, the woman one desires, and the woman one loves.

Beauty, wit, grace, spiritual and physical qualities incite admiration.

Certain physical forms and a certain voluptuousness excite desire.

What causes love is not known; sometimes it is all of these, or more than these, or none of them. (224–25)

These considerations on the nature of love and desire function as Carlos's introduction to the confession of his love affairs with the three English sisters and of his feelings towards Joaninha, as well as towards Soledade, the Spanish nun. As he reveals, he has adored "those three angels" (225)—Laura, Julia, and Georgina—and he has fallen in love with all of them. As for Soledade, Carlos denies his love for her, stating that it was only gossip; nevertheless, he "remember[s] her." Joaninha, the cousin he left when she was still a child, was apparently the woman he has always loved. That is why, when he came back to the valley after his exile in England, he did not then fall in love with Joaninha: "it was [her he] had always loved." Now, however, after his heart has been "intoxicated [. . .] [he] cannot go back"; he must "renounce for ever the domestic hearth" (242). He says goodbye to Joaninha.

Carlos's considerations on love and desire, along with his revelations, expose the imbrication of sexuality and confession in his final letter, an overlapping Michel Foucault has identified as crucial to the transformation of literature in the eighteenth century. According to Foucault, Western societies have passed "from a literature to be recounted and heard, centering on the heroic or marvelous narration of 'trials' of bravery and sainthood, to a literature ordered according to the infinite task of extracting from the depths of oneself, in between the words, a truth," which is sex (59). Further, Carlos's attempt at "extracting from the depths of [himself] [. . .] the truth" unveils the crucial role of gender and sexuality in Garret's ideological approach to national politics and the nation itself, both at a superficial level, and "between the words." In fact, the character's decline is something more than the obvious tragedy of a romantic hero; it suggests a Garretian political program of reform deeply correlated with a reconfiguration of the masculine and of gender relations. Although Carlos's letter was originally addressed to Joaninha—"I am writing to you, Joana" (223)—it is now with Friar Dinis, who keeps it in his breviary and who passes it to the narrator with his own hands, making Carlos's originally private confession public, as well as binding the three diegetic strands. Joaninha is already dead when the narrator (accompanied by the reader) reads the letter, and there is no evidence that she has actually read its pages: the tears that stain the yellow paper might be hers, but they might just as well be the monk's.

The confession, as Foucault argues, requires "the presence [. . .] of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge,

punish, forgive, console, and reconcile" (61–62). Garrett's narrative, by constituting the narrator as the prescriber of Carlos's confession—it is he who asks the monk about the character's life after the tragedy in the valley—as well as by establishing the reader as a judge of Carlos's words, empowers as the authorities required by his confession subjects other than the letter's fictional addressee. Moreover, Carlos himself does not write to be understood by Joanhina; as he repeatedly affirms, since "A woman cannot and should not understand a man," Joanhina "assuredly [will not] understand [him]" (223). Although she is the fictional interlocutor of Carlos's letter, his words can only be understood by other men. Therefore, she can never be Carlos's confessional authority, nor can any other woman reader of his letter attain this position. In fact, the dead "maiden of the nightingales" functions in the narrative as the female vehicle of male-to-male confession, which establishes a confessional bond between the author of the letter, Friar Dinis, and the male reader ("leitor"), constituting both as the authorities that frame the fallen man's discourse. Joanhina is, in this context, the necessary peripheral addressee of Carlos's confession between men possessed of a tragically excessive heterosexual sentimentality, which extends the social and political crisis to the spheres of gender and sexuality and ultimately underlines the relation between the national instability and a certain *male malady*—conceived as the victory of unrestrainedness in men—by identifying the disorder of politics as a disorder of man.

A victory over Carlos's excessive sentimentality could only be achieved through Friar Dinis's prerogatives: self-restraint and asceticism. However, now it is too late for him; passionate love has become the cause of his own ruin and he has no other option than to "renounce for ever the domestic hearth" (242). As Garrett's narrative implies, in the course of resolving his personal conflicts, Carlos should have realized that one must first put one's own home in order if one is to domesticate the conflicts and ambiguities of emotions that give rise to individual as well as political disorder. He did not do so. Not being able to find his place within a household anymore, not being able to play a socially useful role, nor carry on the paternal line, Carlos's desire now is that the war could "give [him] the happiness of a bullet through the heart" (243). Self-annihilation reveals itself in Carlos's final confession as the result of the destructive powers of unrestrained male sentimentality and sexual desire in Garrett's *Travels in My Homeland*. By attempting empathetically to involve the "leitor" in the process of reading Friar Dinis's story and gaining access to the monk's life through his own rhetoric—"I have told you so much

[about Friar Dinis], dear reader, and have as much again to tell you!”—as well as by establishing the reader as Carlos’s judge, the narrator delineates fictional male homosocial bonds between himself, Friar Dinis, Carlos, and the “leitor,” which opens the possibility for the reader to have access to the “eternal truths” exposed both in the ascetic friar’s example and in Carlos’s confession. Through the process of his reading and interpreting, guided by the narrator, the reader may get closer to these “eternal truths,” as well as to the national substance they conceal, thus becoming unconditionally bound to the rest of the imagined community of his nation.

The interpellation of the female reader—“leitora”—in Garrett’s book occurs essentially in the context of the story of Carlos and Joaquina, and in the narrator’s considerations about Romantic writing. At the end of Chapter XXVI, while in the valley, after digressing on cultural and historical issues and relating a dream that “Portugal was Portugal again” (147), the narrator declares his intentions of going to Santarém:

But enough of the valley, it is late. Hey there! Bring the mules and let us get up. Spur on to Santarém [. . .].

“Why? Is the story of Carlos and Joaquina finished?” my gracious lady reader might ask.

“No, madam,” replies the author, highly flattered with the query. “No, madam. The story has not finished, one could almost say it is just beginning, but there has been a change of scene.” (148)

Unlike the bonds between the narrator and the “leitor,” which bear witness to the narrator’s attempt to create a certain degree of proximity between the two, his relation with the “lady reader” is tenuous, respectful of the codes of courtesy, and not ideologically marked. Addressing her often seems to suggest an emotional relation between her and the affectional side of the story of Carlos and Joaquina, as if the interest of the female reader in the text would depend mostly on the presence of this narrative within Garrett’s book. While reading the story, the female reader wants to know with “whom they are dealing” (115). She wants to know about the characters themselves and their private side, although she is said to neglect the ideological and metaphorical dimensions of their stories. The female reader’s fictional bonds are mainly sensorial links, based on feelings, and not intellectual connections drawn from the reading and interpretation of “eternal truths,” national or universal. In



Chapter XI, the narrator dialogues with his women readers about the “life of the heart.” He asks them how he can tell “the most interesting and mysterious love story ever,” like the one of Carlos and Joaninha, while having “a child in the cradle and a wife in the grave.” The women’s opinions are divergent, so he requests a vote. His suggestion to hold a vote is not accepted, however, “because there are many things that one thinks and believes and even says in conversation, that one does not dare confess publicly, declare openly, stating one’s name” (70). All these things one does not say in public belong to the private sphere: the sphere of the sentimental, the space of the woman reader in *Travels in My Homeland*.

The sphere of the male “leitores” in this fictional community of readers is the public, where universal and national truths reveal themselves and political power is negotiated in the traditional nineteenth-century male’s playground. Conversely, the “inquisitive lady readers” (126) are oriented towards what the nineteenth century has defined as the private sphere—one of sentiments and affection. This well-defined border between private and public spheres, attributed separately to the “leitores” and “leitora(s)” in *Travels in My Homeland*, shows clearly that, contrary to Carlos Reis’s assertion, the word “leitor” in the original Portuguese version of the text must be read as exclusionary of the female reader, who is relegated to the sentimental dimension of the private sphere. Moreover, the mutually exclusionary character of both “leitor” and “leitora,” in conjunction with the crucial role played by male homosociality, affect, and sexuality in Garrett’s political questioning, simultaneously reflects the instable position of the female subject in the author’s fictional national imagining and suggests a crucial interaction between ideology and gender in Garrett’s national discourse and representations of masculinity.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the division of spheres within the fictional community of readers, along with the representation of political disorder through the depiction of the consequences of male emotional excess and unrestrained heterosexual desire, exposes a political repudiation of the feminine from the public sphere, as well as a repudiation of the *feminine in man* in Garrett’s idealization of masculine social roles and of masculinity itself.

In *Travels in My Homeland*, Garrett naturalizes the categories of gender and nation, constituting both as eternal referents, and attempts to politically (re)forge the two by proposing a restoration of their natural essences. The *male malady* that has caused the metaphorical tragedy in the house in the valley, with its national referent, the country’s disaggregation amid the civil

war, demands a return to the prerogatives of self-restraint and asceticism in Garrett's political approach to the reform of man. Garrett's program of political reform through the reform of men's public role and place in the family proposes a male reconstruction apart from the feminine and from the unrestrained emotionality woman represents in *Travels in My Homeland*, as well as from expressions of male sexuality outside the family. For political change to happen, men must renounce passions and confine their expression to the household, where their affections may be carefully restrained and sublimated. On the one hand, this ideological defense of self-discipline and asceticism as ideal manly attributes may be considered as part of a "democratic" approach to male identity, different from earlier approaches based largely on class distinctions. Both self-discipline and asceticism are democratic attributes in the sense that they are available to every subject, and therefore their practice is not indicative of class status, as would be the case with the aristocratic ideals of manhood of the *ancien régime*. On the other hand, Garrett's political approach to masculinity ultimately reveals the crucial role played by the category of nation, as well as by the reconfiguration of male homosocial bonds at the waning hour of the *ancien régime*, in the modern reconstruction of masculinity that forged contemporary normative maleness.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> On the problematics of narrative and authorial voices in Garrett's *Travels in My Homeland*, this analysis follows Victor K. Mendes's suggestion, in *Crise na representação* (20), which is also sustained by Carlos Reis, in *Introdução à leitura das Viagens na minha terra* (60): according to both critics, the narrator and the author are the same entity. The impossibility of their separation will always be implied, even though I will only use the word "narrator" from now on.

<sup>2</sup> The idea of a journey lasting less than a week, in which a group of men tour the "plains of our Ribatejo" (21) and contemplate the nation's past through its monuments, may be viewed as analogous to the idea of a nation "moving steadily down (or up) history."

<sup>3</sup> This analysis follows Carlos Reis's description of Garrett's reader as a textual entity similar to Wolfgang Iser's intended reader: "a sort of fictional inhabitant of the text" (33).

<sup>4</sup> As Mendes argues: "Os monumentos são o emblema para uma possível memória salvadora através do passado da nação" (105). Through a reading of the architectonic language of the monuments of the *ancien régime*, whose decadent condition functions as a metaphor for the present state of the nation, the reader may gain access to the national truths that are capable of redeeming the country.

<sup>5</sup> Friar Dinis directs the grandmother "in each and every way" (96). Towards Joanhina, although he attempts not to interfere "with that likeable child," the relation has always been "tempered by an instinctive aversion which, by virtue of an extraordinary, inexplicable contradiction, allowed her to sympathize with everything he said and stood for" (97).

<sup>6</sup> Another romance suggested in the narrative is with a Spanish nun named Soledade. This romance is, however, denied by Carlos. I will return to Soledade further on in this essay.

<sup>7</sup> For further discussion of Rousseau's influence on *Travels in My Homeland* see, among others, Reis (*Introdução* 75), and Mendes (33). For a wider discussion of the influence of Rousseau's thought on Garrett, see Bishop-Sanchez.

<sup>8</sup> The narrator's dream in the last chapter reveals a view of "barons, shining in paper sky, from which, like snowflakes in a polar night, rained down blue, green, white, yellow notes, notes of all possible shades and colours. There were millions and millions" (246).

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the narrator has once already anticipated Carlos's confession when in Chapter XXXVI he affirmed that to have "too much heart, which is a serious defect, [is] a pathological, abnormal condition. Physically it leads to death and morally it can also destroy the emotions." As for Carlos, he indeed "had too much heart" (187), as he confesses. However, the previous digressions of the narrator have emphasized mostly the pernicious character of society in degrading man's natural goodness.

<sup>10</sup> The instability accorded to the female reader in Garrett's book clearly illustrates Mary Louise Pratt's argument that "the nation by definition situates or 'produces' women in permanent instability with respect to the imagined community" (30). Further, Pratt's analysis allows us to perceive the gender divide in *Travels in My Homeland* as reflecting the precariousness of nationalism itself: "To say that women are situated in permanent instability in the nation is to say that the nation is in permanent instability" (31).

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